

DICK TURPIN IN "STAND AND DELIVER" INSIDE!

Week Ending—
February 10th,
1923.

New
Series.

No.
212

Twenty-eight
Pages.

The POPULAR 2^D

The Story Book for Boys.

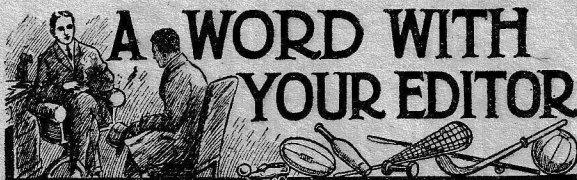
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THE KING'S RIDERS TURN THE TABLES ON THE FOOTPAD GANG!

(A Sensational Incident from the Powerful Highwayman Serial Just Starting in this Issue.)

A BUMPER PROGRAMME THAT WILL WIN PRAISE EVERYWHERE.



"THE MASKED RAIDERS!"

There is a remarkable yarn of Greyfriars in next week's POPULAR, one which will stimulate your curiosity all the way. We find most of the prime old favourites figuring here, and having their whack at the heavy consignment of valuable tuck, which treasure was the goal of the raiders. Unluckily for some of the hungry plotters who think to make a record haul of jam-tarts and other delectable comestibles, there are plenty of conspirators eager to get their share. The story swings along with a good laugh in every line.

BOB LAWLESS & CO.

Next Tuesday's tale of the Backwoods school is a real winner. This a powerful story of Alf Carson, and the title of the yarn, "The Treacherous Foe!" is appropriate in the extreme. There is breadth and splendid vigour about this romance of the Wild West. The whole thing is so ably worked out, but there is not any need for me to go into details, or explain how retribution falls at last to the lot of a black-hearted scoundrel who deserved all he got. And loyal, stout-hearted Bob Lawless has some reason to laugh at the end, and to do honour with Chunky Todgers and the rest of the chums, to plucky little Yen Chin, the sagacious Chink, who played the game in topping story, though he had been told he was not wanted that journey!

PUTTY, DIPLOMATIST.

You will roar over "A Cool Customer!" the new story of Rookwood. It is well named. A certain Putty figures here, and, as Carthew might have said, "Putty, 'tis, 'tis true." But the plain

fact is that Carthew is too much occupied with his own rather risky private affairs to indulge in any sort of banter. Mark Carthew has a bullying way with him, but there are limits. Anyway, Putty thought there were limits, and he acted accordingly. After this very interesting episode at Rookwood we may look for a pocket guide from the Putty pen on, say, "How to Make Prefects Toe the Line," or something of that kind. The story is a highly humorous one. Mr. Owen Conquest has never done better. And when you find that Putty walks off whistling—well, you will know that things pan out all right for Putty.

BUNTER THE OPTIMIST.

The porpoise is a sort of professional cheerer-up. His "Weekly" comes as a regular Tuesday tonic, and next week's issue contains a rich assortment of wit and jollity. It is the Merry Optimists' Number, and it acts up to its name in a manner which calls for much praise.

"THE COMEDY OF THE CUP!"

St. Jim's has a shock next week. General Grumpus comes to the school to present the Cup to Tom Merry—the Cup which has been the cause of as spirited a fight as was ever recorded. That's all right. The dignified military gentleman is there. If he had intended to present himself all would have been well, but when he opens the bag a quaint and interesting discovery is made. He does not let the cat out—neither shall I—nor the Cup. But you will see what happens next week. You will make sure not to miss the treat if you are wise.

DICK TURPIN.

Our grand serial, "Stand and Deliver!" has got into its stride. So has that bold buccaneer of the king's highway, Dick Turpin. The prognostications regarding this superb yarn have all come true. The new feature is a notable affair altogether, and it is in its right place in the columns of the popular POPULAR.

BRILLIANT PHOTOGRAPHS.

This "extra" of the POPULAR programme is always sure of a big reception. The series of finely produced photos is the finest obtainable. Don't miss such a chance of obtaining a portrait gallery second to none for excellence. You will be in a position next week to add a particularly fine picture to your collection.

YOUR EDITOR.

£10 MUST BE WON AGAIN THIS WEEK!

JUST SOLVE THE SIMPLE PICTURE PUZZLE HISTORY BELOW, You may win a topping cash prize.

FIRST PRIZE £5 0 0: Second Prize £2 10 0:
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What You Have To Do.

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Sunderland 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 below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Sunderland," Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, February 15th, 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 event 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 the value of 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 "Boys' Friend," "Magnet," and "Gem," and readers of these journals are invited to compete.

I enter "Sunderland" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

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GENTLEMAN DICK TURPIN!

When Dick Turpin is in trouble his old comrade, Richard Neville, stands by him and gives him help. But young Dick has to pay heavily for that good turn!

THE THRILL OF THE CENTURY!



A Wonderful Story, dealing with the daring exploits and adventures of Dick Turpin and Richard Neville—two knights of the broad highway.

By **DAVID GOODWIN.**

HOW AN OLD FRIEND CAME IN THROUGH THE WINDOW.

"PEACE on earth, good will toward men! Ha, ha!"

Dick Neville kicked out his spurred heels and rung them on the floor as he sat in the deep armchair before the huge fireplace in the dining-hall of Faulkbourne.

"An easy text to live with, when one has such a place as Faulkbourne, ecod! 'Twas not two weeks since when I rode with one hand to the butt of my pistol and the sheriffs of three counties at my heels."

Perchance it was the loneliness of the room and the solitary dinner he had partaken of that roused Dick Neville's bile. Or perhaps the memory of the wild life past—the thousand dangers of the road when there was a price on his head—stirred him against the quiet of the present. For there was the touch of a sneer in his voice as he spoke.

For long months the young Squire of Faulkbourne, exiled from his home by the treachery of his uncle, Vesey Neville, had ridden the highways of England in company with the outlaw Richard Turpin. It was through no fault of his own that he had been forced into that wild and perilous life. But at last, after many adventures, he found himself restored to his own, with a free pardon, and all was well with him.

His Uncle Vesey, who had robbed the brothers of their inheritance and procured the branding of Dick as an outlaw for a boyish escapade, in which he rode off on his uncle's coach-horse in the company of the road-rider, Richard Turpin, had expiated his sins in death. Dick and his brother Ralph had stepped into their kingdom once again—the house of their forefathers, the wide lands of Faulkbourne and Huntercombe. It was a little before Christmas that Dick and his brother, with their newly-made friends, Sir Henry Stanhope of Basing and Sir Adam Vincent, the bluff old squires who had rendered them much service at the last, came to Faulkbourne to help take possession and make merry.

A glorious Yuletide it was; never a better was kept in Old England. None who came to Faulkbourne were allowed to go hungry away, and Dick entertained like a prince. But now it was the New Year. Stanhope and Vincent had returned to their homes.

Ralph was on his separate estate of Huntercombe. And Dick, left to himself for a day or two in the great house, felt a little lonely.

"Sheriffs, ecod! The rogues are glad to dine with me now. Ay, peace to the lord lieutenant—good will to every lickspittle that cringes to Neville of Faulkbourne, and who would have hanged him for the price of his neck last year, save that never a one dared show his front to Dick the Road-Rider. Pink me! I almost think I liked that name best."

He rose and began to pace the room. The ring of his spurs as he strode seemed to wake some sleeping fiend in his blood.

"It doesn't suit us, this silk-cushion life. I am growing peevish, with naught to do but receive my rents from the land-steward. There is far more than I can spend even with the most lavish hospitality, and I care not to lose it in play to blacklegs. Had Dick the Road-Rider met Richard Neville of Faulkbourne a month ago, with what keen relish would I have clapped a pistol to the ear of my present self and stripped him of his guineas, to fling half of them to the poor! I give less to the poor now, for, beschrew me, I never feel the belly-pinch under my own belt! Neville of Faulkbourne has no need to hunger!"

He laughed scornfully

"Black Satan is the worse for it, too. He grows sleek and fat in his stall, though his temper is no meeker. Fox-hunting cannot whet his edge, for he has hunted man. A gallop after stag-hounds does not satisfy me, who have been a score times in place of the stag, with the hounds of the law straining to pull me down."

He turned once or twice up and down the hall, and then smiled at himself.

"But this life is the best. It is now free from treachery and strife and bitterness, nor is it any merit to be a felon. Vesey and the law drove me to do what I did, else I had never ridden the roads. It may be, indeed, that I harmed no man who did not molest me nor robbed any but the rich and miserly. Yet what is a robber but a robber? Though time was when half the gentlemen of England did little else."

He threw himself into his chair again with a laugh.

"No, no, Dick Neville! Faulkbourne is a fair estate. No lord in the county has longer ancestry or a better rent-roll. There are great things before me. The cloud is lifted from my life, and—'Od's pitikins! What's that?'"

He stopped short, and stared before him.

It was no vision. Right across the floor of the vast room, sharply outlined, was the form of a great gallows-tree, black and forbidding.

It was a shadow, nothing more, but so clear and exact that Dick looked in amazement. Every item was there—the upright, the crosspiece, the arm, and from the end, clear as though it were painted on the floor, hung an open noose.

Dick uttered an exclamation, and, despite his stout heart, he felt a sensation as though a tiny hand were stirring the roots of his hair. Then, pulling himself together, he strode right across the shadow, as if in contempt.

Look as he would, he could not see what cast the shadow. He moved two of the lamps; it made no difference. Still it remained there, black and grim. He would have sworn it did not exist five minutes before.

"Pooh!" he said, rising abruptly again, and resuming his walk. "I am getting the megrims sitting here alone. I'll fill the hall with a jolly company to-morrow. The thing

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DICK TURPIN—



The Gallant Knight of the Road.

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nearly scared me for a moment. How Dicky Turpin would laugh at it if he were here!" Dick began to walk quicker.

"What a merry rogue he was! What a rascal! Yet what a staunch comrade to any who played him fair. And to think I owe him my life twice over! But for Turpin I should not be here, lapped in luxury, but drying in the wind on the highest gibbet upon Black Wood! And, egad, here I am, master of Faulkbourne, while he is risking his neck upon the highway!"

"I've hit it! That's what I lack—his cheery company, and his devil-may-care laugh. Felon he may be; I met many a worse in high places. I would not care what peril it was to me could I see the rogue again, and—'Od's death! Am I dreaming?"

There was a sharp rap on the centre window, and Dick, glancing that way, gave a sudden start and an exclamation of amazement. Looking in at him through the leaded panes was a face he knew well, perhaps too well. In another moment the casement was plucked open, and the form outside vaulted into the room.

"Turpin!" cried Dick, springing forward. "Hush!" said the famous highwayman hoarsely and beneath his breath, slipping quickly against the wall so that he could not be seen from without. He was wet and haggard, and blood trickled from a wound over his forehead. "Someone may hear! Shut the window quickly!"

RICHARD NEVILLE—



The young hero of our new serial—who is befriended by the famous highwayman.

Dick did so in a moment, and turned to grip his old comrade by the hand. "Tis like a draught of the water of life to see you again, old boy!" he said heartily. "But what's wrong? You are wounded?"

"Ay, the very knife's at my throat! Where can you hide me? Can you give me refuge, Dick?"

"Refuge!" cried Dick. "Did I not tell you Faulkbourne was as much yours as mine while I live? We will soon put you out of danger. Is it the King's Riders?"

"Nay, not the law, boy. I would not have risked bringing trouble on you by coming here had it been they, nor do I give a snap for all the King's men in England. It is Captain Sweeny and his company. I have fallen to loggerheads with him."

"What, the leader of the footpad band—that murdering ruffian and his crew of thieves? You have made an ill enemy, Turpin. Step quickly across here, and into the back room. Is he at your heels?"

"Ay! He laid a trap for me, after flicking away my weapons, and I barely escaped with my life. He is the lowest, cunningest traitor in Britain, Dick, and strikes from behind, like the footpad thief he is."

Dick had heard of the notorious "Captain Sweeny," but as yet had had no meeting with him. He was the leader of a band of sneakthieves and footpads, whom he used like pawns in a game of chess, and it was his boast that no enemy ever escaped him. He was the lowest and in many ways the cleverest villain in England, and was unhampered by any of the notions of honour which some of the highwaymen observed. He would cut a sleeping comrade's throat, steal a cottage wife's petticoat hanging to dry on a hedge, or bludgeon a banker and

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strip him of his purse and clothes, even to his socks, with equal unconcern. And though the knights of the road held him in loathing and contempt, once he was on the trail of vengeance, with his fellow-cuththroats behind him, there was no more deadly foe.

"I've thrown 'em off the track, Dick!" said Turpin. "I have but to lie here till they pass. When once I get my weapons and Black Bess again—she is out in the woods—there will be a black reckoning for Captain Sweeny!"

"Ay, I'd be sorry to walk in his shoes," said Dick quietly. "And now—Ah!"

Turpin suddenly clutched him by the arm, and dragged him into the back room. The highwayman, with a muttered ejaculation, pointed to the window he had entered by.

A face showed against the glass—a dead-white, cruel, evil face, with a thin, crooked nose, and the eyes of a snake. It peered into the room.

"Captain Sweeny—the hound himself!" whispered Turpin. "Hang it, he's seen us!"

The man at the window threw up his arm as if in signal to those behind him in the outer darkness, and then, gripping the window-latch, he tore the casement open and jumped into the room.

Dick sprang through the door and faced him, furious with rage that this evil-faced bully should break into the house of a Neville as though he owned it.

"Out, hound!" he cried, as he ran at the man. "What brings such carrion as you into my dining-hall?"

"Captain Sweeny goes where he will!" said the creature, with a sneering laugh. And, whipping out a pistol, he snapped it in Dick's face before the boy could reach him.

But for once Captain Sweeny failed. The night was wet, and the driving sleet had damped the priming. The pistol flashed harmlessly.

Springing back with a snarl, the footpad captain drew his knife; but before it was clear of his belt Dick had him by the wrist and the waistbelt.

With a fierce cry of joy—the lust of battle—the powerful young Britisher caught the footpad in his grip. This was what he longed for—to feel his hands upon an enemy.

"Hands off!" screamed Sweeny, in a voice like an angry wild-cat's. "No man touches me and lives!"

With a mocking laugh Dick swung the footpad captain off his feet, and with one great heave sent him crashing through the window, glass, leadlights, and all.

Captain Sweeny's yell of pain and rage rang loud above the crash of glass, and he landed in a heap in the laurel-bushes outside. For a moment he lay, half-stunned, and then struggled painfully to his feet. He was tough as whipcord, and the fall had broken no bones; but his cruel face was transformed with bestial rage, and trickling with blood drawn by the splintered glass.

"The fiend tear your throat!" he shrieked at Dick. "Your hour has come, fool! Better you had never been born than laid hands on me! Here to me, boys, and we'll handle the hearts of them!"

He swiftly gathered together his ragamuffins, who swarmed round him at the signal, and Turpin sprang to Dick's side.

"A sword! Give me something to fight the knaves with!" he said quickly. "Oh, Dick, it was sweetly done! You have left your badge on the footpad captain, and he'll not forget it. A weapon, quick, and we'll handle the rogues!"

"Take the old Court rapier from the wall there!" said Dick, whipping out his own blade, and standing to the window. "Twas my father's, and there was never a better." He pulled the bell-rope violently, and the steward appeared in an instant. "Bar the doors, Johnson! Summon every able man of the household, and arm him! This ruffian is about to attack the house!"

"Scatter round the doors!" cried Sweeny's shrill voice. "In with you, before they have time to rally! Kill every knave of a scullion who stands in the way, and break into the room by the door! The rest of you with me to the windows!"

"Strike quick, and strike home!" said Turpin, springing to the left-hand window, while Dick took the right.

Those of the ruffians who had pistols drew them and fired; but such a soaking night was it that no priming could be kept dry, and only a single barrel went off. The ball ripped through Dick's sleeve, smashing a

mirror on the back wall of the room; and then, drawing their long knives, the knaves made a rush at the windows.

The rapiers of Dick and the highwayman played like lightning, and two of the footpads dropped back, screaming, pinked through the arms. They made another rush, but had no stomach to face the long, thin blades, and fell back again. Then, on a cry from Sweeny, they scattered out, and closed in afresh by creeping close under the walls, whence they suddenly sprang at the windows.

The casements had already been shattered with stones and faggots, and now the two defenders found themselves hard pressed. From the entrance-hall, too, rose a violent clamour, as those of the thieves who went that way fell in with Dick's sturdy cellarman and grooms, who laid about them lustily with anything that came to hand. How the fight was going there, Dick had no chance to see; but he heard a groan, and the stifled voice of his stalwart old house-steward, and guessed that a knife had sunk home. A moment later there was the sound of men hurrying to the dining-hall door.

"You must hold both windows while I keep these ruffians back!" cried Turpin, springing to the door just as it was thrown open by three of the footpads. He scored by meeting the first of the attackers with a thrust in the throat the moment he appeared; but of the other two, one had a sword, and the other a knife lashed to a long stake, and they gave Turpin plenty to do between them.

HECTOR NEVILLE—



Coward and rascal. The man who tried to send his young cousin to the gallows.

THE KING'S RIDERS!

MEANWHILE, Dick was hotly engaged at one window, and was bleeding freely from a flesh-wound made by a knife flung from the open palm of one of his assailants. A short, stout ragamuffin sprang in at the other window, to be met by a thrust that sent him howling to the floor. For a little, at least, Dick was able to hold his own.

"The plague strikes them!" cried Sweeny. "Are you never going to get at their throats? Here, keep this whelp engaged, four of you, while three more carry a torch to the wood-yard yonder! We'll burn the house about their ears and prick them back into it to roast!"

"Hi, Johnson! Baines!" cried Dick eagerly, as he plied his weapon. "Out to the front, three of you, and beat off those dogs! They'll fire the house!"

With a thrill of anxiety he remembered how dry and tinder was the old half-timber work of that part of the house. The buttresses sheltered it from the rain, and a torch or two might well set the old Hall in flames, and Sweeny's quick eye had seen the chance.

"Bring up some sheaves of straw from the stables!" cried the footpad captain. "That's it! Pile it against the house, and set a torch to it! We'll make roast meat of the dogs!"

Dick redoubled his efforts as he saw the torches flare outside, and heard the shouts and hoarse laughter of the ruffians. It cut him to the heart to think of the home of his fathers burnt to ruin by the footpad rabble; but Sweeny's men seemed to swarm,

Captain Sweeny—Coward and Traitor—Seeks Revenge! See Next Week!

and Dick's servitors were so beset that they could not get to the place of danger, nor could Dick turn his back on the foe for a moment. Turpin had plucked one of his assailants, but two more fell upon him, and with a groan Dick heard the yell of triumph as the red glare shot up from the masses of straw.

"The house is doomed!" he cried; and, beside himself with fury, he made such an onslaught on those storming the window that he had fair to beat them back and make his way through. He might have succeeded, but that two of the footpads made their way in by the other window, and fell on him from behind. He was forced to turn his attention to the newcomers. On came those outside once more, swarming through the windows, and, beset on both sides, with the fire beginning to roar without, Dick saw there was little hope for him.

"Back to the wall!" he cried hoarsely to Turpin. "Let us leave our mark on them before we go down!"

His rapier-point bent on one man's shoulder-blade as he spoke, while a knife on a stake wounded him under the arm at the same moment, and the two comrades prepared to sell their lives dearly.

Suddenly a great uproar arose outside—a loud yell and the thunder of horses' hoofs. A body of mounted men dashed up to the house like a whirlwind, and flung themselves upon the footpads. Captain Sweeney's shrill voice rang above the tumult with a savage oath:

"The King's Riders! Save yourselves!"

The words had hardly fallen on their ears when those who were within the room turned tail and bolted for their lives, flinging themselves out of the windows. The instant he was free, Dick shouted to his serving-men, who swiftly ran to the scene of the fire and pulled the blazing sheaves of straw away, battering out the flames that were beginning to seize on the wood. For a moment Dick was so full of anxiety for the house that he forgot all else.

The footpad crew scattered like flies, and Captain Sweeney fled for the road. But four of the King's men threw themselves upon him, and, overpowered by numbers, after a fierce struggle he was captured.

"Hold him fast!" cried the lieutenant of the Riders. "'Tis the thief Sweeney, as I live! We have down at the talcon and caught the crow. Now for the knave we came to find, for I am persuaded he is in yonder house!"

He rode up to the great front doors, and jumped down from his horse.

"Od's death!" said Turpin to Dick, in the dining-hall, glancing round him hurriedly. "Here's a pretty kettle of fish! The King's Riders have beaten off Sweeney and his men, but 'tis me they're after!"

"Plague on it! Why did they not leave us alone?" exclaimed Dick. "Here, Turpin, through the door and up the staircase—quick! I will find you a hiding-place!"

"Nay, I shall bring disaster on you and yours!" said Turpin hurriedly. "You must not shelter me. I will out by the window and take my chance."

"You shall not!" cried Dick, seizing him by the arm. "Every tower window is watched. Pink me! What sort of a comrade do you take me for? Up the stairs, and I will see you safe!"

He thrust Turpin to a small side staircase that ran from a corner of the entrance-hall, and the highwayman, after hesitating a moment, went up. There was such a thundrous knock at the outer doors that Dick himself paused at the foot.

"Admit no man!" he cried to the serving-man who hurried to answer the knocking.

And then he followed his comrade, who had already mounted.

"Where are you?" Dick said eagerly, pausing for a moment in the darkness of the stairs; and then he saw Turpin had turned to the right at the little landing, and had gone through a door in front. "Not that way, man; there's no place there, and no way out! It leads to a blind room. Out to the left here—quick!"

"Plague on it, I cannot tell what I am at!" muttered Turpin, as Dick came to the door to lead him the other way.

But the moment's delay had been fatal, for a heavy step on the stairs was heard, and before they could cross the landing the lieutenant of the Riders appeared. Turpin darted back into the room before the newcomer saw him.

"In the King's name," said the lieutenant loudly, "give way! I am here to arrest the outlaw Richard Turpin, whom I saw mount

these stairs, and I charge you to deliver him up!"

"Sdeath!" cried Dick, in a rage, whipping out his rapier and turning on the man. "Who gave you leave to march into my house as though it were your own? Out, or—"

The lieutenant quickly plucked a paper from his breast and held it before Dick's eyes.

"In the name of the law!" he cried fiercely. "This is the sealed search-warrant, and I am within my rights. Hinder me at your peril! Ho, there below, men! Up to 'em, and take the malefactor, for he is here!"

So furious was Dick at the danger of his friend, and at this high-handed invasion of Faulkbourne, that there is little doubt he would have run the lieutenant through the body and defied the Riders, had not Turpin himself sprung out on to the landing and seized the rash young squire's sword-arm.

"Nay, Dick; if you love me," he said, "you shall not imperil your own neck for me! Let them take me, since 'tis in your house. You shall not be ruined for my sake!"

"To me, men! Here is the felon!" shouted the lieutenant, springing at Turpin. "Come and make him fast!"

But Dick, as Turpin loosed his wrist and turned to face the danger, gripped the lieutenant's arms above the elbows with sinewy young hands and held him fast.

"Quick, comrade—I've got him!" cried Dick.

"Here come the men!"

"I say you shall not sell yourself for me!" exclaimed Turpin.

"Waste no time in folly!" he cried, struggling with the lieutenant. "Don't talk, but fly! What's done can't be undone. Go, comrade, and good luck go with you!"

Seeing that Dick was obdurate, Turpin turned with an exclamation and ran back into the room, just as the Riders rushed up the stairs.

"Not that way!" cried Dick, in despair. For it was by the other door, he knew, that the body of the house could be reached and escape made possible. "Plague on it, t'other door!" he panted, striving with all his might

with the lieutenant and blocking the way so that the men could not get past.

He held them back for some seconds, and then they hurled him aside and dashed through the door after the outlaw.

"Oh, comrade," he gasped, struggling to his feet painfully, a sob in his throat, "they have you now, in spite of all!"

There was a furious rush as the Riders ran pell-mell into the room after Turpin, and then a great uproar. Dick knew there was no hiding-place in the room, nor any way out, and the window was forty feet from the ground. He expected to see his comrade brought out, bound and defeated, when there came a cry that was music to his ears:

"He is not here!"

"He is climbing down by the ivy!" cried the lieutenant's voice. "He has nearly reached the ground. Fire on him! Hang it! Have none of you your pistols here?"

Dick's heart leaped with joy. He had never dreamed it was possible to escape by climbing down the ivy-covered wall—there was scarce a foothold for a sparrow, and a false step meant death.

"Down after him, some of you!" shrieked the lieutenant. "What are you all afraid of it? Ah, he has reached the ground! A thousand hounds! Why is there no one watching this side of the house? Out and after him!"

He and his men came tearing down the stairs and out into the grounds again. Dick raised a cheer behind them, and the lieutenant turned and shook his fist at the young squire as he ran. A great shouting arose outside, and away they all went full cry after the fugitive.

Dick walked after, and, despite his wounds and bruises, he laughed lightly at the relief of it all. He had no fear now.

"Not all the Riders in Norfolk will catch him now. He has slipped through their lines and away into the woods, and the King's men are too clumsy for night-hunting. Hurrah for the knights of the road—hurrah!"

DICK TURPIN AT FAULKBOURNE.



The casement window was plucked open and a form vaulted into the room. "Turpin!" cried Dick, springing forward. "Hush!" said the highwayman, slipping quickly against the wall. "Someone may hear! Shut the window quickly! Where can you hide me, Dick?" (See page 4.)

Dick pulled up with something of an unpleasant shock. He remembered he was no night-hawk now, but a man of landed estates and fortune. Might he not have imperilled the safety and position he had done so much to win by this defiance of the King's officers?

"Nay!" he cried, smiting his thigh. "How could I have done otherwise? All that I have I owe to that merry outlaw and good comrade; and he would have given himself up to save me. Ah, here come the Riders back! They are empty-handed—good luck to them!"

"The knave has slipped through our very fingers!" cried the lieutenant, with a savage oath. "Thanks to that blessed youngster who drew his bodkin on me! Ah, it is you, sir?" he roared, turning furiously to Dick. "This lies at your door, and you will rue it before the matter is dropped, I promise you!"

"I will answer at the proper time for all I have done," said Dick, standing erect. "Stand off, sir, and attempt no violence," he added, as the Rider strode angrily forward. "I am in my own domicile, and for what I have done you have no authority to do more than report to your chief."

The lieutenant, knowing Dick was in the right, bit his lip.

"All the worse for you," he said. "Come, men, bring up your horses! We have the knave Sweeny, at least."

At that moment one of the Riders came running up, with a pale face, and saluted hastily.

"Please, your honour, the prisoner Sweeny has escaped, and his two guards are lying dead."

UNEXPECTED VISITORS!

DICK gave a start of surprise and horror. The lieutenant rushed off, swearing roundly, and the young squire followed.

It was true. By some desperate means, or by the aid of his thievish underlings, the footpad captain had escaped, and the two Riders who had held him were lying dead on the path, with deep dagger-wounds to show how their fate had overtaken them.

Dick stooped by the men, aghast, full of horror and pity. The night which had begun so strangely was now showing its terrible side.

"This is a fitting climax!" cried the lieutenant fiercely. "It is due to you, sir. By the rood, I think you will find yourself in no better case than Captain Sweeny would have been ere long. Thanks to you, we have missed both those villainous malefactors. Had you not defied my warrant, we should have had them both. You shall answer for it, sir—you shall answer for it!"

Dick replied sadly, yet with dignity:

"I regret the death of these brave fellows, lieutenant, as much as you do. But the knave who killed them was striving to kill me when you came, and if your men have failed to hold him, the fault is not mine. For the rest, I did no more than shelter my guest, and for that I will answer when the time comes."

"Ay, by the black rood you shall!" returned the lieutenant savagely. "Think not because you are a lord of the manor that you can ruffle it as you please against the King's officers."

"No such thing was in my mind," said Dick sadly. "Twas not for that I did what you complain of. Your duty and mine were at cross-purposes, sir, and so this unhappy broil arose."

The lieutenant muttered a threat under his breath, and, gathering his men together, made ready to leave.

Dick, after arranging with his serving-men for all that was necessary to be done, went into the house in a gloomy frame of mind, and retired to his lonely library.

"Od's fish!" he muttered. "And two hours since I was grumbling that matters went too slowly at Faulkbourne. I scarce bargained for this."

It was not the struggle with the footpad gang that grieved him, nor what he had done for Turpin, but the thought of the two slain Riders—though their death was no fault of his—sat heavily on him. Moreover, he had certainly defied the law he lived

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under, and though it was impossible for Dick to betray his old comrade, yet the lieutenant of the Riders was doing no more than his duty.

"Tis a stroke of sore bad luck—nothing else," muttered Dick. "I did not wish to be at loggerheads with the King's men again so soon, with the ink of my pardon scarce dry. Can they bring me to the dock for it? Men have been hanged for less, and two weeks ago I, too, was within a few hours of the gallows."

"Nay, it will not be that. There is no Vesey to drive the blow home, and make the worst of it. I have shed no blood, save of the footpads who were at my throat. I doubt 'twill be to mulct me in a prodigious big fine, since I am wealthy—one that will tax even the riches of Faulkbourne to pay. I trust 'twill be no worse, though I own matters look black. I will write to Deerhurst. Perchance he can smooth matters a little for me in high places."

THE WARNING!



Dick flung the outer door back, and sure enough, there was a large sheet of millboard, on which was a crude drawing of a grinning skull, and beneath it: "Those who offend me never live to boast about it. Death is a little thing, but death at the hands of Capt. Sweeny and his men is a thing to speak of in whispers. Ask those who know. Your end is very near. Make ready!" (See this page.)

He sat down and penned a message to his uncle, Lord Deerhurst, a brother of his late mother's, and who had some influence at Court. Deerhurst had begun to take notice of Dick now that the boy was no longer an outlaw, but a great landowner, and head of an ancient family.

"Deerhurst is always to be found on the winning side," said Dick to himself very sourly, as he sealed the letter. "He was useful to Uncle Vesey when Vesey held Faulkbourne, now he is equally zealous for me, as I am rich, and, whatever happened, Faulkbourne would not go to him."

Four days passed, during which nothing happened, and Dick was growing uneasy as to what might be in store for him, when a reply came from Lord Deerhurst, which, reading as follows, made Dick frown thoughtfully:

"My dear Nephew.—Your unfortunate escapade is making a great stir among those in authority, and though I am doing my best to secure that you escape with a fine, I may tell you you are in some danger.

At least be assured I shall do my utmost, and I think I can pull you through.

"It is unfortunate, at this crisis, that your deceased uncle, Vesey Neville, left, as far as we know, no sons or daughters, especially in view of the hurried and somewhat slovenly way in which the legal part in your entry into possession of Faulkbourne was accomplished. Although your moral rights are certain, you should have had a better lawyer. I advise you to look into this. And remain, my dear nephew, your affectionate uncle,

"DEERHURST.

"P.S.—For Heaven's sake, break off all connections with that confounded rascal and robber, Turpin! I am persuaded he will be your ruin."

Dick folded up the letter, with a grunt. "What a croaking letter! What does it matter about the lawyers now? Yet Uncle Deerhurst is a shrewd old fellow, and knows the world. As to Vesey's sons and heirs, he never had any—at any rate, none came forward when I claimed my rights. And, what is more, Vesey was a widower these fifteen years past, nor had he ever a child. Besides, we are the older line; and for the little time he had Faulkbourne, he won it only by felony and murder."

"None the less, I'm grateful to Uncle Deerhurst for what he has done for me. He will pay himself well, there's small doubt. Well, what is it?"

This last was to a footman, who appeared before his young master with such a scared face that Dick spoke somewhat sharply.

"If you please, sir," said the man, "there is a very strange message nailed on the outer doors. We thought you would like to see it."

"Message nailed to the door?" said Dick, striding down to the hall.

He flung the outer door back, and there, sure enough, was a large sheet of millboard, on which was a crude drawing in charcoal of a grinning skull, and beneath it this inscription:

"Those who offend me never live to boast of it. Death is a little thing, but death at the hands of Captain Sweeny and his men is a thing to speak of in whispers. Ask of those who know. Your end is very near. Make ready!"

There the message ended abruptly. Dick plucked it down from its place with a contemptuous jerk.

"Is this what scared you?" he said scornfully to the footman. "Are you an old woman, to be frightened by a piece of childish bombast?"

Dick tore the placard to scraps and cast it into the pond beyond the carriage-drive.

"Captain Thief knows where to find me," he said, with a grim laugh. "Let him think well before he tries a vengeance upon me. I was not called Dick o' the Roads for nothing!"

In a careless mood, he saddled Black Satan, the magnificent horse of his highway days, and whom none of the grooms dared touch, and rode over the heaths and fields with a free rein, laughing ever and again as he thought of the footpad captain's threat. He returned to Faulkbourne after dark, splashed and mud-bespattered; he had ridden the black mood out of his spirit, and felt himself again.

It was a couple of hours after dinner when the butler announced two gentlemen to see him on most important affairs.

"Seekers after a lease, doubtless," said Dick. "Well, send them in."

Into the room very quietly came two people whom Dick had never seen before.

One was a lean, dark-faced, catlike youth, of about twenty-one, with long, white hands, and a Court rapier by his side. The other had the look of a lawyer of a rather second-rate sort—very bald, snuffy, ferret-eyed, and clad in rusty black.

Dick rose courteously.

"You do not know me, I see," said the younger man.

"I have not the honour," said Dick, "though," he added, "there is something in your person which seems familiar to me."

"I can imagine it," said the dark man airily. "I am considered like my father—my late father."

"Indeed, sir," said Dick, beginning to feel a little impatient. "Who was your late father, and who are you?"

"My father," replied the young man, taking a chair, and looking rather insolently at Dick, "was the late Vesey Neville, owner

"Your End Is Very Near—Make Ready!" That Was Sweeny's Warning! What Happens?

of Faulkbourne, and I am Hector Neville, his heir."

FACE TO FACE!

FOR a moment Dick sat as if thunder-struck. Then his face grew dark as night, and his hand sought his sword-hilt. He felt tempted to run this young man through the body as he sat.

The person who called himself Hector Neville remained immovable, not turning a hair, and Dick's face cleared. He rose, with a deep, ironical bow.

"I am charmed to meet you, Mr. Hector Neville!" he said bitingly, with a cool smile. "I presume it was a mere oversight on the part of my late uncle that he omitted to mention that he had a son. And so you came to introduce yourself to me?"

"I came to inform you that Faulkbourne belongs to me," said the dark man coolly, "and to make a small business suggestion to you."

"But I inform you that you lie," said Dick, with equal coolness, taking his seat again and ringing his spurs on the floor, "for Vesey Neville never had a son, and Faulkbourne is mine, as it was my father's before me, and his forefather's also, for six hundred years. And if my words give you any offence I am willing to make them good. You wear a rapier, I perceive. Or is it a sham one, like your name?"

The young man did not move a muscle. If he was a son of Vesey Neville, he had more control than ever his father showed.

"Not so," he said. "You may be a better swordsman than I—though I also may have my doubts of that—in which case I should not live to enjoy my inheritance of Faulkbourne."

"Do not let that trouble you," said Dick. "There is an excellent level grass-plot outside, and your chances of inheriting Faulkbourne are the same whether you die or live."

"Why, so?" said the other.

"Because, even were you Vesey's son, you are not heir to Faulkbourne, since Vesey himself never owned it. You seem to know something of the case—have you, however, heard in what way he obtained the will from my father?"

"I have heard the whole story," said the stranger coolly.

"Then you know that Vesey Neville never rightly owned Faulkbourne?"

The dark man smiled mockingly.

"In the eyes of the law, he did," he replied, "and you never upset his claim. You entered into Faulkbourne not as your father's heir, but as Vesey's."

A sudden quail seized Dick as he realised the truth of this.

"And, unfortunately for you," said the dark man, his smile still more mocking, "I, and not you, am Vesey's next-of-kin. You seem to be dubious as to that. Give yourself no concern, I beg you, for the legal proofs of my birth are registered, and I, indeed, have hardly need to prove to all the world that I am Vesey Neville's son and heir. Any judge on the circuit can satisfy himself as to that."

"And so," said Dick, rising slowly, "you have come here to suggest that I should move out of Faulkbourne and make way for you. Enough of this, sir! Say what you mean!"

"Not quite that," said Hector Neville civilly. "I am here, as I said, to make a

EXIT THE SNEAKTHIEF!



With a fierce cry, Dick caught Captain Sweeney in his grip and swung him clean off his feet. With one great heave, Neville sent him crashing through the window. The footpad's yell of pain and rage rang loud above the crash of glass. (See page 4.)

business suggestion. You are in possession here—nine points of the law, as Mr. Smear, my lawyer, agrees. It will take me some months to fight you in the courts and take possession myself, besides the cost of it. It seems to me there is enough for both. So I propose you should sign this document, which Mr. Smear has drawn up, legally surrendering Faulkbourne to me, and reserving to yourself the other estate and half of Huntercombe."

For a moment or two Dick sat motionless; then he sprang to his feet.

"You pitiful knave!" he cried fiercely. "Have you no fear for your cowardly skin, to enter my house with such a trick as this? A sorry plot, you dog!"

The sallow stranger's cheeks turned pale.

"Then it is war?" he said, with an ugly sneer. "Think well, Dick Neville. I only claim my own."

"Your own, you hound?" said Dick hotly. "You lie in your throat, and none knows it better! Vesey Neville had no more claim to Faulkbourne than a thief to the loaf he steals! Know you that he murdered my father, and that Vesey confessed it on his deathbed, and withdrew all claim? Dare you claim what he denied?"

Again the cynical smile on the stranger's face.

"What proof is there of this confession?"

"I was witness of it."

"Not enough. Your word, alone, on the statement of a dead man."

"The clergyman whom I summoned. To him your father—if such he was—laid bare his confession, as also to me. The Rector of Hulton is my witness!"

"Alas!" said Hector Neville lugubriously, but with his sneering smile belying his tones, "he died last week."

Dick looked straight into his rival's eyes, and his own blazed hotly.

"You villain!" he said hoarsely. "You mean you killed him, lest he should testify!"

Seizing Hector Neville by the throat, Dick hurled him with a crash against the panelling of the wall.

An oath burst from Hector's lips as, white to the forehead, he picked himself up, and his sword flashed from its sheath. Dick's rapier leaped out in a moment, and the two met in the centre of the room.

"This is the better way of it," said Dick, with a harsh laugh; "and the good blades are too straight to fawn or lie. Let the steel say who shall be heir to Faulkbourne!"

And the keen rapiers crossed each other with a click.

In Dick Neville's opinion a sword fight is the best way of settling the question of ownership of Faulkbourne—but there is the danger that Hector may prove a better swordsman than his young and reckless cousin. In the great dining-hall, the two meet. Which one wins remains to be seen—in next week's breathlessly thrilling instalment of our powerful serial:—

"STAND AND DELIVER!"

By DAVID GOODWIN.

You must not miss reading this next instalment, in which Dick receives an unpleasant surprise!

THE CUP FIGHTERS!

At last, after a stern struggle, St. Jim's reach the Final of the Public Schools' Challenge Cup. Pluck and courage is rewarded!

A POWERFUL FOOTER YARN!

THE GREATEST GAME OF ALL!

A Long Complete Story, dealing with the great football match—between St. Jim's and Greyminster—at Chelsea.



BY
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Merry Revellers!

"HOW many f's in 'triumphant?'" It was George Alfred Grundy who asked that inane question.

Grundy was seated at his study table, with a clean sheet of foolscap in front of him and a leaky fountain-pen in his hand. So badly did the pen leak that Grundy's right hand was smothered with ink.

As he put his question to Wilkins and Gunn, Grundy rubbed his nose thoughtfully with his hand. In doing so, he daubed blue-black ink on his nasal organ, and the effect was comical.

Wilkins and Gunn chuckled. "What's tickling you?" demanded Grundy. "Two things," said Wilkins. "Your question, and your nose."

"Eh? What's wrong with my nose?" "You've given it an ink-bath," said Gunn. "And a black nose makes you look even less beautiful than usual. You never were an Adonis, you know!"

Grundy frowned, and proceeded to dab frantically at his nose with a handkerchief. This did not improve the handkerchief, but George Alfred Grundy was not in the mood to worry about little details of that sort.

"I asked you fellows how many f's there were in 'triumphant,'" said Grundy. "I don't see anything to snigger at in that."

"Ass!" said Wilkins. "There are no f's in 'triumphant'! It's spelt with a 'p.'"

"What rot!" "Only the 'p' happens to be silent, as in 'pneumonia,'" said Gunn.

Grundy gave a snort. "It was silly of me to ask your advice," he said. "Neither of you can spell for toffee."

"Well, I like that!" said Wilkins warmly. "What are you writing, by the way?"

"A poem," said Grundy.

"My hat!" Wilkins and Gunn stared at their study-mate in profound astonishment. They had never suspected Grundy of being a poet. He was one of the most unpoetical fellows in the Shell.

"What's the poem about?" asked Gunn.

"It's in praise of the St. Jim's footer eleven," explained Grundy. "They've just licked St. Clive's in the semi-final of the Public Schools' Cup, and I think it calls for a poetic tribute. I've never been keen on Tom Merry's team. I thought Merry was making a big mistake in leaving me out, and I think so still. But when these Cup-ties came along, and St. Jim's did so well, I couldn't despise the team any longer. If only I was playing, it would be a perfect eleven. As it is, it's next-door to perfection. What are you laughing at, George Wilkins?"

"Ahem, nothing old man, go ahead!" said Wilkins hastily. "Well, dry up, you cackling asses!" said Grundy irritably. "You get on my nerves. I suppose you know there's going to be a big banquet this evening, in the Common-room, to celebrate the victory over St. Clive's? The whole of the Shell and the

Fourth have been invited. I thought it would be only fitting if I wrote a poem on the great event, and recited it when the feed was over."

"Oh dear!" gasped Wilkins. Having satisfied himself that there were two f's in "triumphant," Grundy proceeded with his task.

Wilkins and Gunn watched him with broad grins. Grundy as a poet was certainly an object of mirth.

After a time, Grundy's study-mates were bold enough to peep over his shoulder. And this is what they saw:

"Tom Merry's topping team returns
Triumphant from St. Clive's;
Where they did play, this very day,
The battle of their lives.
They've reached the Final—happy day,
Then let us shout, 'Hip, hip, hooray!'"

Merry and Figgins, Kerr and Wynn,
Desserve our admiration;
So let us dance, and gaily sing,
And jump for jubilation.
Although St. Jim's were short of Grundy
They've reached the Final, played on Monday!"

Before Grundy could commence the third verse, he was interrupted by a noise which resembled the spluttering of soda-water siphons.

Spinning round sharply in his chair, Grundy beheld his two study-mates, convulsed with mirth.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wilkins. "Ho, ho, ho!" roared Gunn.

Grundy sprang to his feet. "Are you making fun of me, or of my poem?" he demanded wrathfully.

"Both!" spluttered Wilkins.

Grundy clenched his big fists. "You—you—I'll teach you to mock my poetic genius!" he shouted. "Take that—and that!"

Grundy's right shot out, and smote Wilkins on the nose. Then Grundy's left shot out, and smote Gunn on the jaw. After which, both Wilkins and Gunn shot out—out of the study. They fled down the corridor yelling with anguish, and fearful lest their assailant was in pursuit.

But Grundy, having got rid of his study-mates, banished them from his mind. He closed the door with a slam, and turned the key in the lock, as a safeguard against interruption. Then he went on with his poem.

Half an hour later, there were sounds of hustle and bustle in the corridor.

Crowds of fellows were flocking towards the junior Common-room, where a magnificent spread had been prepared, in honour of the St. Jim's footballers.

Seldom had the old school witnessed such stirring scenes.

The St. Jim's eleven had covered themselves with glory. After a hard-fought and a strenuous campaign, they had actually reached the Final for the Public Schools' Cup.

Very few people had expected Tom Merry's team to conquer St. Clive's in the semi-final, for St. Clive's were a great power in the land.

But the miracle had been accomplished, and St. Jim's had won through to the Final. Their opponents would be Greyminster, one of the finest footballing schools in the country.

In their triumphant march to the Final, St. Jim's had beaten Wellesley College, Greyfriars, Wynport College, and St. Clive's, in turn.

No wonder the old school was thrilled to its very foundations! Tom Merry's eleven had never advanced so far in the Cup competition before.

The Common-room was soon packed to overflowing. There must have been seventy or eighty fellows present.

A long table, arranged on trestles, reached almost from end to end of the room. And the array of good things fairly set the fellows' mouths watering, particularly the mouths of Patty Wynn and Baggy Trimble.

Tom Merry occupied the place of honour at one end of the long table.

"Are we all here?" he asked.

"I fail to see any sign of Gwenday, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Instantly there was a babel of voices.

"Anybody seen Grundy?"

"Where's the silly duffer got to?"

Wilkins and Gunn tried to explain that Grundy was writing poetry in his study, but their voices were drowned in the general clamour.

Then the door opened, and Grundy came in.

The amateur poet presented a comical appearance. His hair was wild and dishevelled, where he had been running his fingers through it, and his face was so smeared with ink that he looked like a Christy Minstrel. In his hand he clutched his precious manuscript.

There was a roar when Grundy made his appearance.

"What do you mean by coming to the banquet looking like a coal-heaver?" demanded Jack Blake. "I'm master of the ceremonies, and I'm not going to admit you in that state!"

"In what state?" asked Grundy.

"Look at your face!"

"He can't do that without the aid of a hand miwvah, dear boy," said D'Arcy. "I'll lend him mine."

When George Alfred Grundy saw his reflection in the glass, he blushed beneath his coating of blackness.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped in dismay.

"Go and wash yourself, and plaster your hair down!" growled Blake. "Don't dare to show yourself in here until you're as clean as a new pin. Why, even Baggy Trimble has washed himself for this auspicious occasion!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy beat a hasty retreat. He busied himself in the nearest bath-room for ten minutes, and when he returned to the Common-room he found that the feast was well under way.

It was a festive scene. And the clatter of knives and forks made merry music.

Cardew and Clive graciously made room for Grundy at the table. And the burly

"The Comedy of the Cup!"—Next Week's Gripping St. Jim's Tale!

Shell fellow was soon enjoying himself as much as anybody.

At last the feast came to an end, and Tom Merry was called upon to make a speech. The captain of the Shell was given quite an ovation when he rose.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows—" he began.

"Dear, heart!"

"On the ball, Merry!"

"I should like to thank you, on behalf of the eleven, for this glorious spread you have provided in our honour! We have not had a smooth passage to the Final. Most of the matches have been grim and gruelling. And the game with Greyminster on Monday—which, by the way, will be played on the Chelsea football ground in London—will prove the toughest fight of all. But I'm no pessimist, gentlemen—"

"No jolly feat!"

"And now that we have struck the ideal eleven, and are working together in harmony, we've a ripping chance of beating Greyminster and collaring the Cup."

"Hurrah!"

"Large numbers of you will come up to London to see the Final, and I know we can count on your loyal support."

"Yes, rather!"

Tom Merry resumed his seat amid a storm of applause. When this had died down, it was noticed that George Alfred Grundy was on his feet.

Grundy had planned to recite his wonderful poem at the conclusion of the banquet. And the supreme moment had come!

"Listen, you fellows!" exclaimed Grundy, producing his perpetration. "I've just written a poem in honour of the St. Jim's eleven, and I will now proceed to recite it."

Grundy cleared his throat, and began:

"Tom Merry's topping team returns
Triumphant from St. Clive's—"

A roar of disapproval interrupted the rest of the verse.

"Dry up, Grundy!"

"Sit down, you frabjous chump!"

"It's been a topping banquet!" said Monty Lowther. "Don't take the gift off the gingerbread by reciting that awful piffle!"

Grundy had not expected this sort of reception. But he was not easily daunted by discouragement. Striking an attitude, he continued his recital.

But not for long. The St. Jim's fellows were fairly long-suffering. They could endure much. But they couldn't endure Grundy's poetry.

"Mob him!" arose the cry. "Stifle the silly ass!"

Grundy was seized by many hands, and dragged to the floor. His chair was knocked flying, and Grundy accompanied it in its descent.

"Keep him down!" panted Herries.

"Make Fatty Wynn sit on him!" suggested somebody.

This was a very happy idea, though not from Grundy's point of view!

Fatty Wynn's weight was considerable, and the recent feed had not reduced it.

Grundy made a noise like a punctured tyre as Fatty Wynn's huge bulk descended upon him.

"Gerroff me chest!" he gasped.

"Promise to stop spouting that piffle, then!" said Fatty.

"Ow-ow-ow! I promise!" groaned Grundy.

And Fatty Wynn removed his fourteen stone just in time, for Grundy had been almost on the verge of suffocation.

Grundy's precious poem was consigned to the flames of the Common-room fire. And then the feasters dispersed, brimming over with laughter and merriment, and keenly looking forward to Monday's momentous match.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. When Greek Meets Greek.

TOP of the morain', Miss Mawie!" Marie Rivers, the charming school nurse, smiled as she came out into the bright winter sunshine.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Jack Blake were waiting for her in the quad.

It was Monday, the day of days, and a whole holiday at St. Jim's.

Gussy and Blake were not playing in the Final. Splendid players though they were they had been obliged to stand down from the team to make way for Cardew and Clive, who had been showing such amazing form of late.

Jack Blake and his elegant chum were sportsmen enough not to betray their disappointment. They were the first to admit that on present form Cardew and Clive were their superiors. They had agreed to act as escorts to Marie Rivers, and they were taking her to London to see the Final.

Marie was not in nurse's uniform now. She wore a smart costume of blue serge, and her cheeks were glowing with health and pleasure.

"I feel as if I'm walking on air to-day!" she said.

"It's a topping day!" said Jack Blake.

"Time we made a move," said Arthur Augustus. "Everybody seems to be flockin' down to the station."

The St. Jim's eleven had left for London by an early train. And now the supporters, a noisy, happy throng, were starting on the journey. They were in high spirits as they tramped down to the station. To hear their merry laughter ringing down the road one would have imagined that St. Jim's had already won the Cup Final.

Tin-whistles and mouth-organs and rattles were in evidence. And they were likely to be even more in evidence during the great match, when Tom Merry & Co. would need all the support that could be given them.

Marie Rivers, a radiant figure, walked briskly, flanked by her two escorts.

"How do you think the game will go?" she asked.

"We shall win," said Jack Blake promptly. "But our fellows will have to fight every inch of the way."

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus. "Gweymminster are a fast, dashin' team. They'll take some stoppin', bai Jove!"

"Whatever happens," said Blake, "St. Jim's won't be disgraced. Even if they lose, they'll go under with their colours flying."

Miss Marie nodded, and became silent. She was picturing the scene to herself—the green playing area, and the eleven familiar figures, all in red-and-white with the exception of Fatty Wynn, the goalie.

Marie made a mental survey of the players. She felt confident that Greyminster would not have a goal to equal Fatty Wynn. The plump Welsh junior was a goalie in a thousand.

Then there were Figgins and Kerr, a pair of strong, resolute backs. No doubt a lot of work would be thrown upon their shoulders, but they could be relied upon to do it well.

There was no fault to find with the half-back line. Roylance, Redfern, and Noble would be sure to render a good account of themselves.

As to the forwards, they formed the most brilliant section of a brilliant team.

Cardew and Clive on the right, Levison and Talbot on the left, and Tom Merry in the middle. An ideal forward line indeed!

Miss Marie was particularly anxious to see Talbot do well. He was her best boy chum. They had braved many perils together in the old dark days, and there was a bond between them that could never be broken. If Talbot should score the winning goal!

Marie came out of her reverie, and laughed aloud at her flight of fancy. She was already taking it for granted that St. Jim's would win the Cup.

"Why did you laugh, Miss Mawie?" inquired Arthur Augustus.

"I was dreaming dreams," said Marie, with a smile, "and I laughed at myself for being so fanciful."

"You weren't dreaming that we won the Cup, by any chance?" said Jack Blake.

"Yes, I was."

"Well, it's bound to come true."

"But they say that dreams go by contraries."

"That's not always the case," said Blake.

"I dreamt the other night that I received a fat remittance from home, and sure enough it turned up next morning!"

The trio had reached the station by this time, and the train was already signalled.

The platform was thronged with hilarious St. Jim's fellows. At least, the junior and flag sections were hilarious. The seniors were doing their best to look staid and



ST. JIM'S ATTACK! Levison and Talbot, passing and inter-passing, bore down upon the Greyminster goal. "Shoot, one of you!" cried D'Arcy excitedly. It was Levison who shot. He let fly with his left foot. The Greyminster custodian jumped wildly for the ball. (See Chapter 3.)

dignified, though, in reality, they were just as excited about the Cup Final as the remainder.

There was a scramble for seats when the train halted in the little station.

Jack Blake commandeered a first-class carriage, and Miss Marie was ushered in. Her escorts followed; the guard flourished his flag, and the train, with its cargo of happy passengers, steamed out of the station.

"We shan't be long now," said Jack Blake. "It's a fast train—non-stop to Victoria. We'll have lunch at the other end, and then take a taxi to the ground."

It was a very pleasant journey. But neither Marie nor her two companions ate much lunch when they reached Victoria. They were impatient to get to the ground.

Arthur Augustus hailed a taxi-driver. "Stamford Bridge, Chelsea," he said, opening the door of the vehicle.

The driver nodded and jumped into his seat, and the taxi was soon threading its way through the stream of traffic.

Other taxis followed behind, laden with St. Jim's supporters, who sported red-and-white rosettes.

The ground was reached in record time, and it was not difficult to secure seats in the grand-stand.

The crowd numbered about three thousand, and people were still pouring in at the turnstiles. It would have been a very poor crowd indeed for a big League match, but for a public school Cup tie it was a very gratifying one.

A band was playing in the middle of the pitch. Where the band had come from, and who had engaged it, nobody knew. But it played rousing selections from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and when one of the musicians came round with the hat he received a shower of contributions.

Jack Blake glanced at his watch. "Time the teams came out," he remarked.

Even as Blake spoke, eleven players, all in white with the exception of the goalie, sprinted on to the ground.

"Greyminster!" said Marie Rivers, with a thrill in her voice. "Give them a cheer!"

"Hurrah!"

The cheer was taken up all round the ground.

Greyminster had a very handsome and attractive set of players. They were chiefly slim and tall, and their goalie was the very opposite of Fatty Wynn. He was so thin that Jack Blake likened him to the Ghost in "Hamlet."

After a brief interval there was a fresh patter of feet—the signal for the tin-whistles, mouth-organs, and rattles to get busy.

Blake and D'Arcy leapt to their feet.

"Heads they come!"

"Here are the boys!"

"Play up, St. Jim's!"

Marie Rivers stood up also. She caught Talbot's eye as he came out, and she flashed him a message of encouragement. Talbot smiled and waved his hand.

The players put in a brief spell of practice. Then the referee blew his whistle.

Tom Merry of St. Jim's and Dick Verney of Greyminster—the rival captains—came together in the centre of the pitch. They shook hands cordially, and the coin was spun.

"Tails!" said Tom Merry.

Tails it was.

"We'll kick with the wind," said Tom. And he waved his comrades into their positions.

A mighty cheer from the crowd, coupled with the deafening din of rattles and musical instruments, and the great game had begun!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Fight for the Cup!

"ST. JIM'S! St. Jim's!"

"Go it, Greyminster!"

The ball was set in motion, and the forwards sprang into action.

Tensely excited were Marie Rivers and her schoolboy chums as they sat in the grand-stand, their heads craned forward in line.

"Now we shall see what we shall see!" muttered Jack Blake. "Hallo! This looks dangerous!"

Greyminster were making ground on the right. Their extreme winger was racing away with the ball at his toes, and it looked as if he would go clean through on his own.

But Kerr dashed up, and charged him off the ball in the nick of time.

Greyminster came again, and their centre-

forward was presented with a glorious opening. But he was unnerved by the big crowd, and he ballooned the ball high over the bar. A policeman retrieved it as it dropped behind the net, and tossed it to Fatty Wynn, who caught it with a grin.

Fatty's mighty goal-kick transferred play to the other end.

Dick Redfern got the better of two opponents, and passed forward to Tom Merry, who proceeded full pelt towards the Greyminster goal, only to be pulled up for off-side.

Play was somewhat erratic at first. The ball was too much in the air, and some of the kicking was wild and aimless.

"It's a case of Cup-tie nerves," said Jack Blake. "The players will settle down presently."

"Yaas, wathah! Just look at Levison!"

The St. Jim's left-winger went galloping down the touch-line. A Greyminster half-back stood waiting for him. Levison tapped the ball between the fellow's legs, and then dodged round him, and took up the running.

"Pass!" panted Talbot.

Levison deftly touched the ball to his partner, and Talbot fired in a shot which nearly brought down the goalkeeper. It certainly brought down the house.

But the slim Greyminster goalie, though knocked backwards, did not allow the ball to cross the line. Though hampered by the attentions of Tom Merry and Clive, he managed to throw the ball clear, and one of the backs punted it away from the danger-zone.

Then came a long spell of mid-field play. The players had warmed to their work now and forgotten the crowd.

The Saints made desperate efforts to break away, but the opposing halves stood up to them like a brick wall. And when Greyminster, in turn, tried to force the pace, they found the firm of Roylance, Redfern, and Noble a great stumbling-block.

"The teams see to be evenly matched," observed Marie Rivers. "There is not a pin to choose between them at present."

"That's so," said Jack Blake. "I don't think we shall see any goals in this half."

But Blake was too premature.

Greyminster at last broke through, and their forwards swept down the field in great style.

Dick Redfern and Figgins were bowled over in turn, and before they could find their feet again, the Greyminster forwards swept past them like an avalanche.

The inside-right got the better of a thrilling duel with Kerr. Then he fired in an express shot along the ground.

Fatty Wynn dived, but he was a fraction of a second too late. The ball eluded his frantic clutch, and whizzed past him into the net.

"Goal!"

"First blood to Greyminster!" said Jack Blake. "They deserved to score, though. That goal was well worked for."

"It was, indeed!" said Marie Rivers, clapping her hands. "This ought to put new life into St. Jim's."

It did! It fairly electrified Tom Merry & Co., and when the ball was kicked off from the centre of the pitch they refused to part with it. They outwitted man after man in their sweeping onrush, and then Cardew sent in a spinning screw-shot, which had the Greyminster goalie beaten all ends up.

"Goal!"

"Two goals in two minutes!" chortled Jack Blake, waving his cap wildly in the air. "This is Football, with a capital F!"

"Will there be any more goals before half-time, I wonder?" murmured Miss Marie.

"Yaas! There's one comin' now!" cried D'Arcy excitedly, as Levison and Talbot, passing and inter-passing, bore down upon the Greyminster goal. "Shoot, one of you!"

It was Levison who shot. He let fly with his left foot, and it looked a goal all the way. But the Greyminster custodian, turning himself into a catherine-wheel, brought off a sensational save, which was loudly applauded.

The whistle blew for half-time, and the St. Jim's supporters were radiant.

The Saints had more than held their own in the first half, and the score of 1-1 left the game in a very interesting state.

"Anything might happen now," said Jack Blake. "It's a game of thrills, and no mistake! I hardly know whether I'm on my head or my heels!"

"I've got a feelin' in my bones that we shall win," said Arthur Augustus, picking up

his silk topper, which had fallen to the ground in his excitement.

The interval was short and sweet. The players came out again almost at once. And then the fireworks began!

The second half proved to be packed with thrilling incidents. Nothing quite like it had ever been seen before.

St. Jim's and Greyminster played a sort of tit-for-tat game. First Greyminster scored; then St. Jim's equalised. Ten minutes later Greyminster again took the lead, but St. Jim's drew level again almost at once.

The defences on both sides had broken down before the heavy pressure of the respective forwards; and goals came thick and fast.

The spectators were on tiptoe with excitement. They could scarcely contain themselves.

Yet another goal was obtained by each team, and five minutes from the finish the score stood at 4-4.

The players were tired and leg-weary now. The pace had told on them.

St. Jim's were a band of heroes; nothing less. Some of them could scarcely keep their feet, but they struggled on, contesting the stern struggle to the bitter end.

Greyminster attacked with the fierceness of desperation.

Three times in quick succession was Fatty Wynn called upon. He brought off a trinity of splendid saves.

Figgins relieved the situation with a mighty kick. The ball went to the feet of Cardew, who whipped up his flagging energies and went away like the wind.

"Cardew! Good old Cardew!"

The name was in everybody's mouth.

Ralph Reckness raced on, never wavered for a moment. A couple of opponents tackled him; he sent one spinning and tricked the other. He continued his lightning career, pulled himself up a yard from the corner-flag, and flashed the ball across the turf to his inside-forwards.

Tom Merry and Clive had not been able to keep pace with Cardew, and they were not up to receive his pass. But one of the forwards was.

Talbot had already scored two goals in that memorable Cup-tie, and he was bent on completing the hat-trick, and, incidentally, winning the match. He took the ball in his stride, and sent it crashing into the far corner of the net. Then he spun round dizzily, and collapsed from sheer exhaustion.

A roar like thunder went up from the massed spectators.

Marie Rivers was on her feet. Her eyes were shining. She breathed Talbot's name almost with affection.

Blake and D'Arcy were cheering wildly. Those behind them were cheering; those in front of them were cheering; those to right and left of them were cheering. Everybody was cheering.

And in the midst of this tumult of sound the referee blew his whistle to signify that the match was over.

Tom Merry & Co. were carried shoulder-high to the dressing-room by their delighted schoolfellows. And thus the curtain went down upon one of the greatest games in history—the greatest game of the season—the Final for the Public Schools' Cup!

THE END.

The Public Schools' Cup is stolen before it reaches St. Jim's School!

What has happened—Who is the thief?

Read all about it in next week's sensational story of Tom Merry & Co., entitled:

"THE COMEDY OF THE CUP!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE KIDNAPPED CHINEE!

TO THE RESCUE!

In which Wun Lung and the Chums of Greyfriars set out to rescue Hop Hi from the clutches of the mysterious kidnapper!



The juniors of Greyfriars have to keep a watch on Wun Lung who is almost beside himself now that his brother has disappeared. Read the thrilling adventures which followed!

By
FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

In Peril of His Life!

LODER awoke suddenly. He hardly knew what had awakened him. But in the silence of the night, as he opened his eyes, he heard a sharp, sudden click.

Click!

Then he started into the widest wakefulness.

That click was the sound of the key turning in the lock of his door.

In the dense darkness of midnight someone had entered his room and turned the key in the lock—on the inside of the door. Someone was in the room with him in the dark, and the door was locked.

Loder shivered. It was not likely that it was a burglar or any other dangerous intruder—such an individual could have had no motive for locking himself in the room with Loder. Most likely it was someone intending to jape him. But in the darkness and the silence Loder was oppressed with a strange fear.

The moon was glimmering through the clouds over the old Close of Greyfriars, and the light fell in at the window, and lay in a silvery bar across the floor.

Loder's eyes were fixed upon that lighted patch as he sat shivering in bed, the clothes huddled round him.

Whoever had entered his study would have to cross that patch of moonlight to get near the bed, and the prefect would see him then.

There was a soft footfall, and a little figure glided into the light; and Loder gave a gasp of relief as he recognised Wun Lung of the Remove. It was only the little Chinese! The little rascal was planning some jape—and Loder's teeth came sharply together. He intended to catch the Chinese in the act, and thrash him till every bone in his diminutive body was aching, as a punishment for the fright he had given him.

"You young hound!" exclaimed Loder, all his terrors gone now.

He made a movement to spring out of bed. Then he shrank back, with a gasp of alarm. The black eyes of the Chinese were glittering at him—and something else was glittering, too, in the glimmer of the moon. It was a long, cruel-looking, curved blade. Gerald Loder gazed with starting eyes at the deadly weapon. It was a Chinese dagger, in the grasp of the little Chinese—and over it, Wun

Lung's face appeared in the moonlight—hard and savage and cruel—a face that the Greyfriars fellows would hardly have known had they seen it, so different was it from Wun Lung's usual aspect.

Certainly Wun Lung had cause to be angry.

His minor, little Hop Hi, had mysteriously disappeared after Loder had sent him on an errand. Loder had declared that he knew nothing of the "kid's" disappearance; but Wun Lung thought he knew better.

So, despite the watchfulness of Harry Wharton & Co., who guessed what the Celestial might do, Wun Lung broke his way into Loder's study, long after everyone else had fallen to sleep.

Loder's heart almost stopped beating with terror.

"Wun Lung!" he muttered huskily. "What—what do you want?"

"Wun Lung came closer to the bed.

"You wakee!" he said.

"W-w-what do you want, Wun Lung?"

"Me wantee Hop Hi!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Me lockee door," said the Chinese, in a low, hard voice, his almond eyes glittering at Loder. "No one comee in. You call out, me killy. Savvy?"

"You—you're rotting, you savage little beast!" panted Loder, shrinking back to the farther side of the bed. "You know you dare not—"

"Call out, den, and you see, Lodee."

Loder would have given a great deal to shout for help, but he did not. In spite of his words, it was impressed upon him that the little Celestial was in deadly earnest. And the white glitter of the blade struck cold to Loder's very heart.

"You keepee quiet, Lodee," said Wun Lung, half-leaning over the bed. "Me killy if you cly out! You knowee that."

"What do you want?" stuttered Loder.

"Me wantee my minol."

"Your—your minor?" murmured Loder.

"You knowee who takee Hop Hi—you sendee him out to be kidnapee," said Wun Lung. "Me knowee. You tellee me."

"I don't know anything about it," said Loder, trying in vain to control his terror.

"I— How should I know?"

"You sendee him out to be kidnapee. Me savvy. Man waitee in wood long time for Hop Hi to comee—how he knowee Hop Hi comee?"

"I—I don't know."

"You tellee him—you sendee my rainor to be kidnapee. You knowee where Hop Hi is. You tellee me, or me killy. Savvy?"

"I tell you I don't know anything about it," said Loder hoarsely. "Keep that knife away, you young fiend! If—if you should kill me, you'd be hanged."

"No caree, if Hop Hi deadee. What me tellee fader, who sendee him here for me to lookee after? Me killy Lodee, den killy myself," said Wun Lung.

"You—you mad young idiot—"

"No wastee timee. Where is Hop Hi, Lodee?"

"I don't know."

"You say notting?"

"I can't tell you what I don't know."

Wun Lung showed his white teeth.

"Then me killy!"

He made a rapid movement towards Loder, and the curved blade glittered in the moonlight as his hand was flung up. Loder, almost paralysed with terror, realised that the little Chinese was in deadly earnest, and that his life hung upon a thread. It seemed like some evil dream; but it was real—horribly real!

"Stop!" panted Loder. "I—I'll tell you! For Heaven's sake, stop! You—you'll never find Hop Hi unless I tell you!"

Wun Lung drew back his hand.

"You knowee?"

"I—I know a little—I'll tell you all I know—I swear it!" groaned Loder.

"You tellee me—and no lies," said Wun Lung. "If I no finde Hop Hi, I comee backee and killy you, Lodee."

"I—I didn't know he was going to be kidnapped," groaned Loder. "I swear it! I—I sent him to—to Courtfield because a man asked me. I—I thought he was going to have his pigtail cut off—that was all."

Wun Lung scanned his face keenly. The moonlight gleamed on Gerald Loder's face, showing it up as colourless as wax. It was easy for Wun Lung to see that the terrified prefect was telling the truth.

"Me believe that," said Wun Lung simply.

"You sendee him out, because manee askee. Who that manee?"

"A—a man I know—"

"Who?"

"A—a man named Jobling," stammered Loder. "You've seen him about Friardale and Courtfield—a bookmaker and racing tout."

Wun Lung nodded.

THE POPULAR.—No. 212.

"THE MASKED RAIDERS!"—a Topping Mystery Tale of Greyfriars Next Week!

"Me savvy—me see him. He kidnappee Hop Hi?"

"No—but he was put on to it by another man—a Chinaman. I don't know the other man's name or where he is. I've told you all I know."

"But Jobling knowee?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Where Jobling?"

"He stays at the Cross Keys, in Friar-dale."

"Which loom?"

"I don't know his room—how should I?" panted Loder.

Wun Lung's right hand made a threatening motion. He could read in the prefect's white, scared face as soon as he began to lie.

"You gooe thele playee cardee wiz him, many times," said Wun Lung. "You knowee all about that. Tell me whele findee him?"

"He—he has a room overlooking the veranda at the back of the house," faltered Loder. "The room with the diamond-paned window."

"Me findee."

Loder sank back with a gasp. Incredible as it seemed, he knew that he had been within an ace of death. He had saved his life by telling what he knew. But what was to happen now? Indistinct visions of some fearful deed to be enacted at the Cross Keys came over his dazed and terrified mind.

"Me gooe findee Jobling," said Wun Lung. "Me askee him. If he no tellee, me killy. You stayee here, Lodee, and sayee nothing. You say wordee, me comee backee killy."

Wun Lung glided away.

The door was unlocked; it opened, and closed again. The Chinese was gone.

Loder lay back on his pillows, panting, bathed in perspiration. He could hardly believe that the scene had been real. Had he dreamt it—had he been in the grip of a horrible nightmare?

It was real enough. His life had been threatened; he had barely escaped. And what should he do now? The Chinese was gone. Even while Loder was panting there with terror that would not quite leave him, the young Chinaman was on his way to the Cross Keys to seek Jobling. What was to happen. He shuddered at the thought. But, then, it was not likely. Jobling was not of the stuff of which heroes were made. The sight of the Chinese dagger would be enough for him, if he believed that Wun Lung was in earnest. But what if he did not believe it—if he were obstinate, and carried his obstinacy too far? What then?

Loder lay trembling as he thought it out. He knew what his duty was—to give the alarm at once, and have the Chinese seized before he could reach his destination.

But he could not do that without betraying himself.

Expulsion from Greyfriars and certain ruin—that was the price he would have to pay! And yet to risk allowing a murder to be committed. But surely Jobling would have sense enough to speak, and save his life, as Loder had done?

The wretched prefect lay in fear and trembling, unable to decide; and with every moment that passed in miserable indecision, he knew that the desperate Chinese, with a deadly purpose in his heart, was approaching nearer and nearer to his destination.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

On the Track of the Chinese!

THE moon was glimmering in at the high windows of the Remove dormitory.

Twelve o'clock had struck.

Perhaps it was the deep boom from the clock-tower that awakened Bob Cherry, or perhaps it was the dream that troubled his slumber. In his sleep he had pictured Wun Lung, with the Chinese dagger in his hand, stealing into Loder's study, and he awoke with a start, almost convinced that the vision was real. He gave a gasp of relief to discover himself in bed in the dorm, and all quiet about him.

He glanced, however, towards Wun Lung's bed.

The moonlight glimmered on the white coverlet, and Bob Cherry started as he looked.

For the bed was empty!

Bob sat up quickly.

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There was no doubt about it. The little Celestial's bed was unoccupied—he was gone! With a bound, Bob Cherry was out of bed.

"Wun Lung!" he called out softly. "Wun Lung!"

But there was no reply. The little Chinese was not in the room. Bob Cherry gritted his teeth hard together.

Bob shook Harry Wharton by the shoulder and awakened him.

"Get up—quick!" he muttered. "Wun Lung—he's up to some mischief."

Wharton rubbed his eyes.

"Isn't he asleep—the opium!"

"It was a rotten trick! He's gone!"

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton was out of bed in a moment. He realised at once how serious the matter was. Bob Cherry's face was white in the moonlight.

"He's gone down," muttered Bob. "Loder"

What may have happened?"

"After him—quick!"

Without stopping to dress, the two juniors hurried out of the dormitory.

All was quiet in the house.

There was no sound of alarm; but that silence was more terrible than alarm could have been. What had the Chinese been doing?

"Loder's study—and quick!" Wharton muttered.

They ran downstairs, making no sound with their bare feet. It was chilly in the passages, but they did not notice it. Their hearts were thumping with anxiety.

They reached Loder's room, in the Sixth Form passage, in a few moments, and paused outside the door to listen.

Had Wun Lung been there?

There was no sound in the study. Had the Chinese been there? Had anything happened to Loder? The juniors felt that they must know. Harry Wharton opened the door softly.

A startled voice came from the direction of the bed in the alcove.

"You young villain! Have you come back?"

It was Loder's voice. The juniors breathed more freely as they heard it. The bully of the Sixth was safe, at all events. But his question showed that the Chinese had been there.

They entered the study, and Wharton closed the door. They could see Loder's white, scared face staring at them from the bed.

"It's us, Loder," said Harry quietly.

Loder panted with relief.

"Wharton!"

"Yes. Has Wun Lung been here?"

"Has he?" muttered Loder, between his teeth. "Yes, the murderous young hound, he has! He threatened my life!"

"He hasn't hurt you?" said Bob.

"No."

"Where is he now?"

Loder hesitated. He had been debating in his mind how to stop the little Chinese from making that midnight visit to Mr. Jobling's quarters at the Cross Keys. The arrival of the juniors came just at the right time—if he should tell them all. Should he?

"Buck up!" said Bob Cherry. "We want to find that young ass before he does any harm. Do you know where he's gone?"

"Yes," muttered Loder. "And there may be murder done for all I know."

"Quick, then, tell us!"

"He thinks you know what's become of his minor," said Harry Wharton. "I believe he's ready to do anything with that idea in his head."

"I know that!" muttered Loder, shivering at the remembrance of the curved dagger, seeming still to see the cold glitter of steel in the moonlight. "He came near murdering me, if I hadn't told him!"

"What did you tell him? Where is he gone?"

"I—I happened to know that a—a man I know had a hand in the kidnapping," Loder stammered. "I—I had to tell the little beast to save my life. Wun Lung's gone to look for him."

"Then you knew about Hop Hi—about the man waiting for him in the wood?" Bob Cherry exclaimed. "Wun Lung was right, then?"

"No, no. I didn't know. I—I thought it was all a lark. I was taken in!" Loder exclaimed hastily. "I hadn't the faintest idea of what was intended. I—I thought it was a lark to cut off his pigtail. I'll swear that was all."

"Oh! And the man you've told Wun Lung about—who is he?"

"His name's Jobling."

"Jobbing the bookie?"

"Ye-es."

"He puts up at the Cross Keys," said Bob. "Has Wun Lung gone there to find him?"

"Yes," muttered Loder. "The room with the diamond-paned window, looking over the veranda at the back—that's his room. Wun Lung's gone there, and—and he's got a knife."

"How long ago?"

"I don't know. About twenty minutes, I think."

"Twenty minutes!" muttered Bob. "He's had time to get there if he hurried. Goodness knows what may have happened."

"Murder, perhaps," said Loder, with a shudder. "It's not my fault. I had to tell him. He'd have knifed me here in bed if I hadn't."

"Come on!" said Wharton briefly.

"You're going after him?" exclaimed Loder. "Yes."

They did not waste any more time on Loder. They hurried from the room, back to the dormitory to dress themselves. There was no doubt in their minds as to what they should do. Their duty was to go after Wun Lung at once and save him from committing some desperate deed, if there was yet time.

Frank Nugent was awake, and sitting up in bed as they came into the dormitory.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "What's the row?"

"Wun Lung's gone out with a knife. He's on the track of the man who kidnapped Hop Hi," said Wharton hastily. "We're going after him."

"Great Scott! I'll come, too. Shall I wake Johnny?"

"No; three's enough. If there's anything to be done. Dress—quick!"

The three juniors bundled into their clothes. They moved silently; they did not want to awaken the other fellows and have awkward questions asked. It did not take them long to dress; and, carrying boots in their hands, they stole on tiptoe out of the dormitory.

At the end of the passage they paused to put on their boots.

Then they stole into the box-room, and Wharton opened the window cautiously. In a few minutes more they were on the ground and scudding across the Close.

Not a moment was wasted.

They climbed the school wall, and dropped into the road, and side by side sprinted down the glimmering road towards Friardale.

Not a word was exchanged as they ran; there was no need for talk. Their thoughts were following the little Chinese, and gruesome pictures rose in their minds of what he might be doing—of what he might have done. He must have reached the Cross Keys long ago. From what Loder had told him, he knew exactly where to find the accomplice of the kidnapper, and they dreaded to think of what might have followed.

"Here we are!" panted Bob Cherry, as they halted outside the Cross Keys.

The public-house was dark and silent. Not a light glimmered in any of the windows. The juniors turned into the path beside the inn, and gained the garden in the rear of the building.

There they paused, scanning the back of the house. Was Wun Lung there, or had he been, and gone again?

"Which is Jobling's room?" muttered Bob Cherry, trying to keep his teeth from chattering.

Harry Wharton pointed to a window, of which the diamond panes glimmered in the moonlight. It was open!

"He's there!" muttered Nugent.

"We shall have to go in," said Harry, in a low voice. "It's easy enough to climb over the veranda. Come on!"

But Bob Cherry clutched his arm.

"Hold on!"

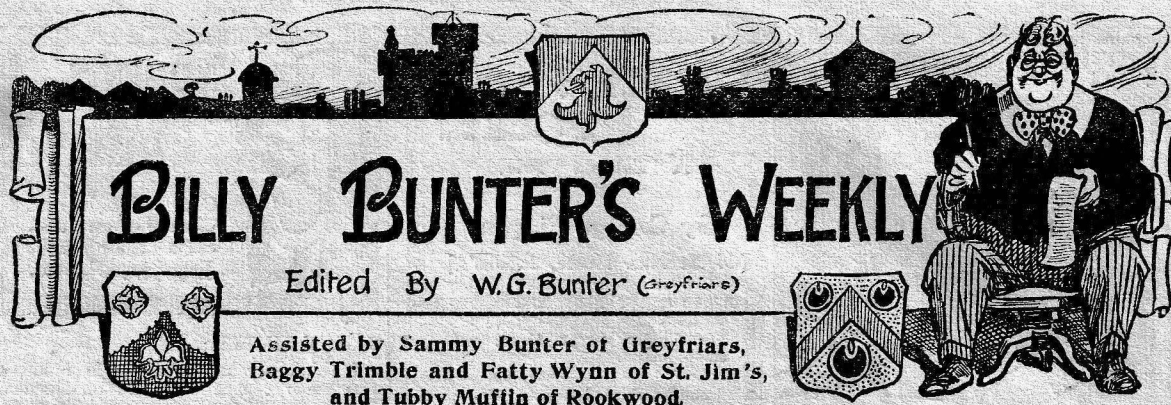
A face had appeared at the window. It showed up clearly in the moonlight; it was the little yellow face of Wun Lung.

He was looking out into the garden. The three juniors were hidden by the deep shadow of a big oak-tree, and the Chinese did not see them.

"He's coming out!" Nugent murmured.

Wharton shuddered. Whatever Wun Lung had gone there for had been done. Was it a deed of blood?

(Continued on page 16.)



Edited By W.G. Bunter (Greyfriars)

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

Supplement No. 109.

Week Ending February 10th, 1923.

ROOKWOOD PESSIMISTS!

By Jimmy Silver.



A South African chap
named Van Ryn

Has never been known
yet to grin.

He can't raise a smile
In the true British
style,

But it's time that he
learnt to begin!

A Classical fellow named Higgs
Is—well, the most surly of pigg.
He snorts and he stares,
He grunts and he glares,
But I'm thankful he doesn't smoke
“ciggs.”

I know a young fellow named Raby,
Who in some ways is dull as a baby.
He's not able to laugh
At our frivolous chaff,
Though in the near future he may be!

A sullen-faced fellow named Peele
Once heard twenty jokes off the reel.
Did he giggle with glee?
Did he chuckle?—not he!
He said, “More like weeping, I feel!”

A sad-looking merchant named Gower
Would have laughed, but he hadn't the
power.

They found him, they say,
With a bucket one day,
In which he shed tears by the hour!

A foolish Fifth-Former named Duff,
In a moment of weakness took snuff.
Ere this, it appears,
He never shed tears,
But now—well, he can't shed enough!

A sturdy Sixth-Former named Hoke
Could not see the point of a joke.
Like a motionless column
He'd stand, still and solemn,
While others would splutter and choke!

EDITORIAL!



By Billy Bunter.

My Dear Readers,—Oh, let us be
mournful! Oh, let us be mellankolly!
Let us put on sackcloth and ashes in
place of our Etona, and tell ourselves
that nothing is worth while. Let us put
on the mantle of gloom, and the black
cloak of despair. Ha, ha!

I am feeling weary and worn and fed-
up this week. Hence this Special Pessi-
mists' Number. My face no longer beams
like a fool moon. It is sicklied o'er with
the pale cast of thought, as Shakespear
would say.

To tell the trooth, I am a sort of yew-
man barometer—first my spirits bob up
into the clouds, then they sink down into
the dark dunjon of depression. This
week you have caught me in one of my
blackest moods—a mood which has kom-
municated itself to my four fat subbas,
and made them pessimists also. We are
all pessimists this week. You can search
through all the back numbers of my
“Weekly,” but you won't find a more
woeful number than this.

And yet Bob Cherry, whom I have
permitted to glance over the proofs, is
simply roaring with larfter. He declares
that this Special Pessimists' Number is
the most mirthful issuw I have ever
brought out! He says it will send my
readers into shreeks of larfter!

Of corse, that's all tommy-rott. I defy
anybody to find anything to larf at in
this issuw.

Yes, I have got the “blues” this
week with a vengeance! Next week,
when my spirits have revived, and I am
a bonny, bouncing boy again, I will give
you a Special Optimists' Number. And
then I suppose Bob Cherry will say that
it bores him to tears!

But I must switch off now. Here
comes Sammy with my sackcloth and
ashes!

Yours sorrowfully,

YOUR EDITOR.

WHAT'S THE USE?

By Dick Penfold.

What's the use of going to school?

What's the use of revelling?

We joke, we jest, we play the fool,

But what's the use of anything?

What's the use of getting up?

What's the use of going to bed?

Life is an enchanted cup?

Nay, a bitter bowl instead.

What's the use of writing verse

Paid for at a bob a yard?

Prison life would not be worse,

Undergoing six months' hard!

What's the use of being jolly?

What's the use of being sad?

Both delight and melancholy

Have sent many people mad!

What's the use of making friends?

What's the use of making foes?

Friendship only fades and ends,

Hatred only leads to blows.

What's the use of being bold?

What's the use of being nervous?

Where's the sense in hoarding gold?

Fame and riches can't preserve us.

What's the use of gorging tuck?

Is it wisdom? That's the question.

You can only trust to luck

That you won't get indigestion!

What's the use of “Bunter's Weekly”?

Why not tear it up
this minute?

“Not at all,” you
murmur meekly;

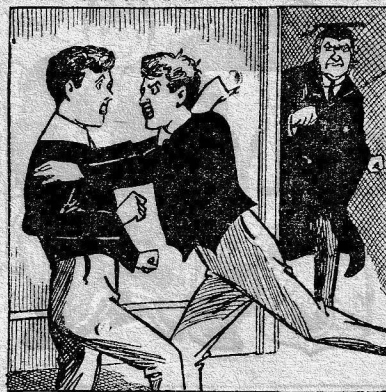
“Penfold has a
poem in it!”



Supplement I.]

THE POPULAR.—No. 212.

A Merry Optimists' Number Next Week, You Fellows!



FRENCH'S FOLLY!

A "Tabloid" Tale.

By George Figgins.

(Of the New House, St. Jim's.)

you kindly accept them, with my compliments?"

"Pills! Pills! What sort of pills?" The strident tones of Mr. Ratcliff rang through the study.

"Pankley's Pale Pills for Pessimistic People, sir," said French.

"What!"

"I know you're a fearful pessimist, sir. You take life very sadly. You are subject, if I may say so, to violent bursts of temper—"

"Boy! How dare you?"

"No offence meant, sir. When you've sampled a couple of these pills, you'll be frisking about like a little lamb!"

Mr. Ratcliff made a sort of choking noise in his throat.

"This—this is sheer impertinence!" he spluttered. "You shall pay dearly for this act of effrontery, you young rascal!"

"There you go again, sir!" said French. "Temper, peevishness, irritability. These pills will soon put you right."

"You—you—" fumed Mr. Ratcliff. "Try a couple now, sir, and you'll soon calm down. If you don't, just repeat the dose."

"Boy! I can only conclude that you are bereft of your senses, to come here and insult me in this manner! I shall proceed to cane you severely!"

"Oh crumbs!"

French's mission had ended disastrously, as I had anticipated. French was acting out of sheer kindness of heart; but it was hardly to be supposed that Mr. Ratcliff would view the matter in that light.

The next moment a cane sang through the air.

Swish!

"Ow!"

Swish, swish, swish!

"Ow, ow, ow!"

The swishing continued. Mr. Ratcliff seemed to be flogging out blindly.

French came stumbling out of the study, with the Housemaster's cane hissing and singing behind him. He fell into my arms, gasping and squirming, and then the study door slammed in our faces.

"Wow!" moaned French.

"You silly duffer!" I exclaimed. "I told you it was asking for trouble to take those pills to Ratty."

"Yow! I thought the old beast would



French removed the lid from the box. "They're Pankley's Pale Pills for Pessimistic People," he said.



MOMENTS OF MISERY!

Our Rookwood Contributors describe their most dismal experiences.

JIMMY SILVER:

I think my most miserable moment was when I contracted 'flu on the eve of an important football match with Greyfriars. I had been looking forward to the game for weeks, and then the 'flu came along and prevented me from taking an active part. I spent Saturday afternoon in the sunny, sipping thin gruel, and the merry shouts from the football field nearly goaded me to madness!

TUBBY MUFFIN:

My most memorable moment of misery was when I once opened a hamper which had arrived for me, and found that instead of containing tuck it contained stons! I sank down on to the study sofer, and wept bitterly. You can imagine my disappointment, after dragging the hefty hamper all the way from the station! Some crool beasts had perpetrated a practical joke at my eggspense.



TOMMY DODD:

For an experience of misery which it would be hard to beat, commend me to the occasion when it was Christmas Day, and I suffered from raging toothache!

I was staying at Jimmy Silver's place at the time, and I shall never forget the misery I suffered on seeing the Christmas dinner served, and being unable to eat a solitary mouthful! I had to wait two whole days before I could go to a dentist's; and my relief on getting rid of the offending molar can be better imagined than described.

TEDDY GRACE:

Moments of misery? I've never experienced such things! What are they? An incurable optimist, like myself, can squeeze pleasure out of anything. I have even grinned whilst undergoing the ordeal of a public flogging. I've no patience with sour-faced pessimists, and people who experience moments of misery have only themselves to blame. They should refuse to allow their spirits to be depressed by anything.

"If he was, he had a jolly queer way of showing his gratitude!" I said with a grin. "Come along! And don't make any more attempts to cure Ratty's pessimism."

"Not likely!" grunted French.

He took something from his pocket, and booted it with savage force along the passage.

It was the box of Pankley's Pale Pills for Pessimistic People!

The pills rolled in all directions like miniature marbles. French savagely crunched them underfoot.

[Supplement II.]

"WHAT have you got there, French?" I asked.

French of the New House was toying with a little round box. He looked up with a grin.

"Something that's going to cure the pessimism of our sour-faced Housemaster, Mr. Horace Ratcliff," he said.

He removed the lid from the box, and some white tabloids were revealed.

"What are they?" I asked in astonishment.

"Pankley's Pale Pills for Pessimistic People," said French.

"My hat!"

"They are wonderful, by all accounts. Read the directions."

I did so.

"These Pills are guaranteed to cheer up the most peevish, irritable persons. They have a bracing, tonic effect upon the system, and are very pleasant to take. Many people have been cured from melancholia through the agency of these wonderful Pills. (See testimonials overleaf.) If you know of anyone who is inclined to be moody, fretful, or irascible, give him—or her—a couple of these Pills. If there is no immediate change of spirits, repeat the dose. These Pills will transform an apparently incurable pessimist into a confirmed optimist."

"Piffle!" I said scornfully. "I never have heard of anybody who has been cured of pessimism by pills! This is all balderdash!"

"Don't condemn these pills before you've given 'em a fair trial," said French.

"Eh? What do I want with the beastly things? I'm not a pessimist!"

"But old Ratty is. And I'm going to have a shot at curing him."

"You—you're not going to offer those pills to Ratty?" I gasped.

French nodded.

"But he'll be simply furious!" I said, aghast. "You'll never emerge from his study alive!"

"Rats! These pills will cure him of his pessimism, and he'll bless me to his dying day."

"Perhaps! How did you get hold of those pills?"

"Bought 'em at the chemist's in Wayland. They were fourpence-halfpenny."

I laughed aloud.

"If it only cost fourpence-halfpenny to cure a pessimist, there wouldn't be a single grouser in the land!" I said. "We should all be bonnie, bouncing optimists."

"These pills have only just been put on the market," said French. "The public doesn't know of their wonderful properties yet. Excuse me now, Figgy. I'm going to introduce these pills to Ratty."

So saying, French walked away.

"Take a life-preserver with you!" I called after him.

Straight to Mr. Ratcliff's study French went, and I felt impelled to follow. I am not usually inquisitive, but I wanted to know what would happen at the interview.

I found the door of Ratty's study slightly ajar. Then I heard voices.

"I've brought you a box of pills, sir. Will be grateful!" groaned French.

THE POPULAR.—No. 212.

Are We Downhearted? No! We Read the "Weekly" Weekly



The Boy Who Never Laughed!

By Tom Brown.

(The irrepressible Humorist of the Remove, Greyfriars.)

YOU'VE never heard of Merriman of the Remove, have you? Matter of fact, Dick Merriman was only at Greyfriars a fortnight, so Mr. Frank Richards, the school chronicler, didn't think it worth while to introduce him into the stories.

When Merriman was due to arrive at the school, Mr. Quelch sent me down to the station to meet him.

I expected to see a happy, light-hearted fellow, bubbling over with mirth and good-humour. You'd expect a chap named Merriman to be like that, wouldn't you? If his name had been Jerry Myer, or something like that, it would have been different.

On meeting the new boy, I had quite a shock. He carried with him an air of utter dejection. His face was as long as a fiddle. He was the Complete Pessimist.

"Are you Merriman?" I asked, advancing to meet him.

"I am," moaned the new boy.

"What's the matter with you? Got a pain anywhere?"

"No."

"Then why do you moan?"

Merriman heaved a deep sigh.

"I'm dashed if I can see anything to be cheerful about," he said sadly.

I gave a gasp.

"You're not feeling homesick already, surely?"

"No."

"Then why not be happy, and smile?"

"Because, as I say, there's nothing to be cheerful about."

"Nothing? Why, you've got youth and health, haven't you?"

"True."

"Well, you ought to be simply brimming over with the joy of life!"

"But there isn't any joy in life," protested the new boy gloomily. "People say there is, but I've never found it."

"And you never will, if you go about looking like a lump of human misery," I said. "Fiddlesticks to your fiddle-face!"

Merriman beckoned to a porter, and gave instructions for his luggage to be sent up to the school. Then he turned to me.

"I'm feeling peckish," he said. "Is there anywhere where we can feed?"

"I'll take you along to the bunshop in the village," I said. "Regard yourself as my guest. I'll stand you a stunning feed, and then you'll soon cheer up! You've got a touch of the blues, that's all."

I escorted Merriman to the bunshop. And who should be sitting at one of the tables but Billy Bunter, the glutton of the Remove?

Billy was in funds for once, and he was doing himself well. There was a dish of assorted pastries in front of him, and a dish of doughnuts at his elbow.

Bunter paused in the act of consuming a cream horn.

"Hallo, Brownie!" he mumbled. "Who's that long-faced merchant?"

"Dick Merriman, a new kid," I said.

"Oh! I thought he might be a French kid named de Pression, judging by his looks. Does he never smile?"

"He assures me most solemnly that he doesn't know how to," I said. "But you'll soon make him smile, Bunt. Treat us to some of your ventriloquism."

Bunter chuckled, and nodded. Just as the waitress drifted up to his table, a voice came, apparently from one of the doughnuts on the dish.

"Don't take me, Bunter, old fellow. There's no jam inside me!"

The waitress gasped, and Bunter pretended to give a violent start.

"No—no jam inside you?" he stuttered.

"No. They charge tuppence for me, but it's a swizzle! I shouldn't eat me, if I were you."

"G-g-good gracious!" stuttered the waitress, turning pale.

Bunter tapped the doughnut with his forefinger.



Just as the waitress came along, a voice came apparently from one of the doughnuts on the dish. "Don't take me, Billy."

"Have all your companions on the dish got jam inside of them?"

"Not one of 'em. We're guaranteed to contain a tablespoonful of raspberry jam, but you can dissect us with a knife, and you won't find a trace of jam. Tuppence? Why, we're not worth a halfpenny apiece!"

Billy Bunter beckoned to the startled waitress, who looked as if she was going to swoon.

"Take these doughnuts away, miss," he said imperiously, "and bring me a dozen with jam inside!"

"Oh dear!" panted the waitress. And she clutched at the dish containing the talking doughnut, and bore it away.

By this time, I was so convulsed in laughter that I scarcely knew where to put myself. But on glancing at Dick Merriman, I saw that his face was absolutely impassive.

Bunter's ventriloquism had not made the slightest impression upon him.

"For goodness' sake, smile!" I exclaimed.

Merriman sighed.

"I only wish I could," he said, "but it's a physical impossibility."

Just then, a fresh lot of doughnuts arrived. The waitress did not bring them. She was in a state of collapse. The manager brought them in person.

"Look here," said Billy Bunter, "do any of these doughnuts talk?"

"Indeed no, sir!"

"Because a doughnut spoke to me just now, and it made me feel quite queer!"

The manager smiled.

"Both you and the waitress appear to have been under a delusion," he said. "It is obviously impossible for an inanimate thing like a doughnut to talk."

"No, it isn't!" came a voice, from one of the doughnuts.

The manager blinked, and drew back a pace.

"What the thump—" he began, in amazement.

"We're just as jamless as the rest," continued the voice. "Don't you touch us, Master Bunter! Besides being jamless, we're absolutely stale. We were made nearly a week ago!"

The manager flushed crimson. Billy Bunter looked reproachful.

"I'm surprised at you, dishing up stale doughnuts, and charging tuppence apiece for them," he said sternly.

"I—I—" faltered the manager.

"I'll pay you a penny each for these doughnuts, and no more," said Bunter.

"Very well, sir."

Billy Bunter went on with his tea, and the talking doughnut relapsed into silence.

The manager, looking quite scared, shuffled away.

"Bravo, Bunt!" I said, with a chuckle. "The way you worked the oracle was fine. But I'm not going to let you defraud the management. I'll see that you pay tuppence each for those doughnuts."

Bunter gave a snort.

"I've been watching that new kid's face, and he didn't smile once during the performance," he said. "What's the matter with him? Hasn't he got a laughing apparatus?"

"He doesn't appear to have," I said.

I settled the bill, and we strolled out of the bunshop.

If only I had more space at my disposal, I would tell you all that happened to Dick Merriman during his brief career at Greyfriars.

Well, during the fortnight that Merriman was at the school, crowds of amusing things happened. Old Gosling tumbled down the coal-cellar steps, for one thing. And Mr. Prout ran amok with his Winchester repeater, and accidentally put a bullet through the tuckshop window. Fortunately, the shop was closed at the time.

Then there was a performance of Billy Bunter's Burlesques, guaranteed to make a cat laugh.

But it didn't make Merriman laugh. Not even the shadow of a smile creep over his countenance.

The climax came when the new boy was smitten with severe toothache. He went to the dentist's to have the offending molar extracted, and it appears that he was given laughing gas.

From that time, Merriman never stopped laughing. He came back to Greyfriars almost in hysterics. You never saw such a transformation! All we could get out of Merriman was "Ha, ha, ha!" and "Ho, ho, ho!" He laughed when he ought to have done, and he laughed when he ought not to have done. He laughed in season and out of season. He laughed in the Close, he laughed in the corridors, he laughed in the Remove Form-room. Punishment had no effect on him. It appears that he had just discovered that he had a sense of humour. The laughing gas had set him off, and there was no stopping him.

Finally, he was given up as incurable, and he had to be sent away from Greyfriars. We were sorry for him, but he didn't appear to be sorry himself. He laughed louder than ever as he departed on the station hack.

This may sound like a fairy-tale, but it isn't. And I often wonder, as I lay awake at night thinking, whether Dick Merriman is still laughing, or whether his people have contrived to cure him!

THE END.

THE POPULAR.—No. 212.



THE SEARCH FOR HOP HI!

(Continued from page 12.)



"Keep close," he muttered. "We'll collar him as he comes down, and make him tell us what he's done!"

"Right-ho!"
They waited silently in the shadow of the big tree, watching the Chinese schoolboy. Wun Lung climbed lightly out of the window, active as a monkey, and dropped upon the roof of the veranda, and thence to the ground. As his feet touched the ground, the three juniors sprang forward and surrounded him.

"Wun Lung!"
The little Chinese uttered a startled exclamation, and sprang away, and there was a glitter of steel in the moonlight as a weapon appeared in his hand.

But he recognised the juniors the next instant, and the dagger disappeared into his loose clothes.

"Wun Lung!" Wharton clutched him by the shoulder. "You mad young idiot! What have you done?"

THE THIRD CHAPTER. To The Rescue!

HARRY WHARTON'S voice was thick and husky.

What had the Chinese done?
The sight of the knife, the silence of the room from which he had emerged, seemed to tell their own tale.

"What have you done, Wun Lung?"

"Allee light!"

"Tell me what you've done?"

"Nothing."

"Jobling—have you hurt him?" breathed Harry.

"No hurtee."

Wharton drew a deep breath of relief.

"Allee lightee, old pallee," whispered Wun Lung. "Me makee him talkee, that is allee. Him tellee where Hop Hi keepee prisoner!"

"And you haven't hurt him?" asked Bob Cherry, with a gasp.

Wun Lung shook his head.

"No hurtee. Allee light. Me holdee daggel to thloatee—him affaid—him tellee me allee samee. Lodee!"

"Oh, good!"

"Me flighten Lodee—makee him tellee—me flighten Jobling—makee him tellee," the little Celestial explained.

"Then—then you wouldn't have hurt Lodee?" said Nugent.

A grim look came over Wun Lung's face, and his eyes glinted like steel.

"If he no tellee, me killy," he said simply.

"Lodee savvy that, and he tellee. Samee wiz Jobling—he knowee me killy if not tellee!"

"You mad young duffer!"

"Me findee Hop Hi, or killy kidnapee. What you tinkee?"

"He's such a beastly Har," said Bob uneasily. "We've got to make sure that he hasn't hurt Jobling!"

"Lookee!" said Wun Lung, pointing up to the window he had left.

The juniors looked up. In the moonlight they caught a glimpse of Mr. Jobling's fat puffy face, white and drawn now with fear. With a trembling hand, the bookmaker closed his window, and they heard him fasten it.

"Allee lightee!" grinned Wun Lung.

"All right," said Harry. "Let's get out of this. Keep hold of him, Bob!"

"You bet!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

His strong grasp had closed on the little Chinese's arm, and he did not mean to let go again. Wun Lung submissively followed the juniors out of the garden.

They paused under the trees in the lane.

"No goee backee to Gleyliars now," said Wun Lung. "Me goee findee my minoi!"

"Tell us what you've got out of Jobling," said Wharton, "then we'll see about it. Mind, if you try to get away from us, you'll get hurt!"

"Me goee findee Hop Hi. You comee helpee if likee."

"You certainly won't go without us," said The Popular.—No. 212.

Harry. "Tell us what Jobling has told you."

"Allee light."

Wun Lung's eyes wandered; but Bob Cherry's grip on his arm was not to be broken.

The little Chinese seemed to be submissive, but Bob Cherry did not take any chances with him. His grasp never relaxed for a moment. He did not mean to let Wun Lung have any further opportunities for using his Chinese dagger that night.

"What did he tell you? Out with it!" said Nugent.

"He knowee who kidnapee Hop Hi," said Wun Lung. "Kidnappee to makee fader payee ransom—you savvy? Bad Chinaman namee Foo-Chung!"

"Do you know where he is?"

"Little cottage—downee rivee!"

"You know where to find it?"

"Jobling tellee me—little place called Ivy Cottage—"

"I know that place," said Bob Cherry. "We've often passed it in the boats. It's been untenanted for years."

"That's where Foo-Chung keepee Hop Hi prisoner. To-morrow or next day takee him away," said Wun Lung. "But no takee—me stoppee him!"

"I suppose Jobling was telling the truth," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "That's

The RESULT of The "BURNLEY" COMPETITION!

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

S. J. EVANS,
44, Regent Street,
Gloucester.

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

Leonard Hayes, 4, Little Church Street, Coventry; James Cleaver, 29, Gun Lane, Stoke Heath, Coventry; Wilfred Alworth, 8, Crieff Road, Wandsworth, S.W. 6; W. Titlow, 26, Boston Road, Ipswich.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been divided among the following fifteen competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each.

T. Foot, 77, Hills Road, Cambridge; W. E. Dalby, 7, Spring Road, Ipswich; A. Watson, 6, Withpoll Street, Ipswich; W. Foot, 25, Quilter Road, Felixstowe; W. de Gruchy, Market Street, Woodstock, Oxon; Leopold Hall, 11, Cranleigh Gardens, Bridgewater, Somerset; Rowland Hill, North Kyme, Lincoln; Thomas Williams, 43, Glamor Road, Llanelly, S. Wales; Miss E. Ekless, Queens Cafe, Chertsey, Surrey; John Gunn, 15, Waverley Park, Edinburgh; Mrs. A. Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; W. F. Pallett, 7, Sigismund Street, E. Greenwich, S.E. 10; G. E. Barnard, 9, High Street, Cherteston, Staffs; G. Stanley, 16, Madrid Place, London, S.W. 8; George Robertson, 40, Wardlaw Avenue, Rutherglen, Scotland.

SOLUTION.

Burnley is one of the oldest clubs in the League. Like numerous other football teams in Lancashire, it was originally a Rugby organisation. Of all the great footballers they have had, James Crabtree was undoubtedly the most renowned. What a splendid full-back he was when a young man.

just the place where a kidnapped chap could be hidden."

"Me savvy. Jobling affaid of daggee—me knowee. Me goee dere findee Hop Hi—what you tinkee?"

Wharton considered. If Hop Hi was kept a prisoner in the lonely cottage, and his kidnapper intended to remove him to a more distant place as soon as the coast was clear, then the sooner a rescue was attempted the better. But if the kidnapper was some Chinaman, as reckless and desperate as Wun Lung himself, or more so, it would be no light task getting the kidnapped Second-Former out of his hands.

"Shall we go to the police?" asked Nugent. "If we told old Grimes at Court-field—"

"No wastee timee," said Wun Lung obstinately. "Policee sillee foollee. Give alarmee in coming—Foo-Chung gettee Hop Hi away in boatee, plaps—plaps killy. No wastee timee—me goee findee Hop Hi now!"

"But he may be guarded—"

"Only Foo-Chung at cottage wiz Hop Hi—Jobling tellee me."

"He may be armed," said Nugent. "He may cut up rough, and we don't want the job of handling a blessed foreign desperado with a knife!"

Wun Lung grinned.

"Pletty certain cuttee up rougher," he said. "But me handle him—me stickee wiz daggee—and takee Hop Hi. What you tinkee?"

"You young lunatic, you won't stick him with a dagger!" growled Bob Cherry, compressing his grip on the Chinese's arm. "You'll hand that sticker over to me before we leave this spot! Do you hear?"

"You comee wiz me rescue Hop Hi?"

"Yes," said Wharton. "We'll cut some sticks here, and the four of us will be able to handle this rotter Foo-Chung, knife or no knife. What do you fellows say?"

"I'm on!" said Bob Cherry at once.

And Nugent nodded assent.

"It's up to us!" said Harry. "If we go to the police there will be delay—they may not even believe the story; and, then, the police won't approve of Wun Lung's methods of getting information, either. People aren't allowed to wake chaps up in the middle of the night and threaten them with blessed Chinese daggers, even if they are kidnappers. The less said about this the better!"

"Handsome Hally Whalton quite lightee." "Oh, cheese it! We'll take the job on, you chaps. Let's cut some cudgels here and get along, and chance it!"

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

"I'll have that sticker to start with," said Bob Cherry grimly. "I know you've got it about you this time. Wun; and you're going to hand it over, or I'm going to wring your yellow neck—savvy?"

Wun Lung grinned and nodded.

"Handsome Bob Chelly—"

"Cheese it, and hand over the carving-knife!"

Wun Lung obediently extracted the dangerous-looking weapon from some recess in his clothes, and handed it over. Then Bob Cherry released him. It did not occur to Bob's simple mind that the Chinese might have another weapon about him.

"Cheerful-looking thing, ain't it?" said Bob, holding up the curved dagger. "I should like to live in the country where they carry these things about—I don't think! Still, it will come in useful now—better than a pocket-knife!"

And Bob used the savage-looking weapon to cut four stout cudgels from the thickets.

The juniors took one each; and then Bob put the blade of the dagger under his foot, and snapped it off at the hilt. Wun Lung uttered a cry:

"You blakee my daggee!"

"Just so," said Bob coolly. "And you're lucky that I don't break your neck, too. You won't have a chance of doing any more damage with that sticker!"

He tossed the broken blade into the ditch. The hilt, which was encrusted with jewels, and probably of great value, he handed back to the little Chinese.

"Daggee my property!" said Wun Lung angrily. "You blakee. You bad lot!"

"You can call me all the bad rotters you like," said Bob, with a chuckle; "but I'm going to break up every sticker I find you with, I warn you! Murder isn't cultivated as a fine art in this country!"

Who Are the Masked Raiders Who Hold Up the Courtfield Carrier?

"Me-velly angly—"
 "Never mind that; come on!"
 "Come on, Wun Lung; we're going to find Hop Hi!" said Harry Wharton.
 And the countenance of the little Chinese cleared.
 "Allee light! Me forgive handsome Bob Chelly!"
 "Handsome Bob Chelly don't care two-pence whether you forgive him or not!" growled Bob. "Shut up your soft sawder, and hop it!"
 And the four Juniors started.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Fight With the Kidnapper!

THE waters of the Sark gleamed in the moonlight as the juniors came out on the towing-path. It was strange and eerie following the lonely path at that dead and silent hour of the night. The juniors could not help wondering what the Head of Greyfriars would have thought if he could have known where they were and the errand upon which they were bound.
 If they succeeded in rescuing Hop Hi, and taking him back to Greyfriars with them, the Head would know. But they felt that their infraction of the rules of the school would be justified in their success. And it would be a feather in the cap of the Co. to have effected the rescue of the kidnapped junior.
 But the rescue was not effected yet. At the lonely cottage there was a desperate ruffian to encounter, and though there were four of them they knew that the risk was great.

They stopped at last on the towing-path in sight of the little cottage, half hidden by the trees, and covered with ivy.

"There's the place!" said Bob.

"That's the place," said Wun Lung, his eyes glittering. "Hop Hi prisoner there."

The cottage was dark and silent. Kidnapped and kidnapper were both probably fast asleep at that hour. It was past one in the morning.

"How are we going to get in?" said Nugent. "If we could take the soundrel by surprise we might collar him!"

"We'll try the door."

They advanced cautiously up the weed-grown, neglected path, and entered the ivy-clad porch. Wharton ran his hand over the door. It was securely fastened within.

"The window!" said Bob.

There were three windows to the cottage. But each of them was covered by strong wooden shutters, and the shutters were fastened with padlocks.

The juniors paused, undecided.

"We've got to bust a way in, and chance it!" said Bob Cherry at last.

"Looks like it!"

"After all, we're four to one if there's trouble!" said Nugent. "And we needn't stand on ceremony with a kidnapper!"

"If fightee killy!" said Wun Lung.

"We won't kill him, you fathead; but we can stun him if necessary," said Wharton. "Come on; we've got to knock him up!"

"He won't open the door if we knock," said Bob.

"Bustee dool in!" said Wun Lung. "Blingee boatee stletcher, bustee dool!"

"That's the idea!" said Harry. "Look here! It's settled that we're going in, whether the man lets us in or not. We may as well bust in the door to start with, and save time! There's a boat down there in the rushes. We can take the rudder off and use it as a giddy battering-ram."

"Right you are!"

"Or the boat itself," suggested Bob Cherry quickly. "We can take it all together, and bump it on the door, and knock the whole blessed thing through with one whack."

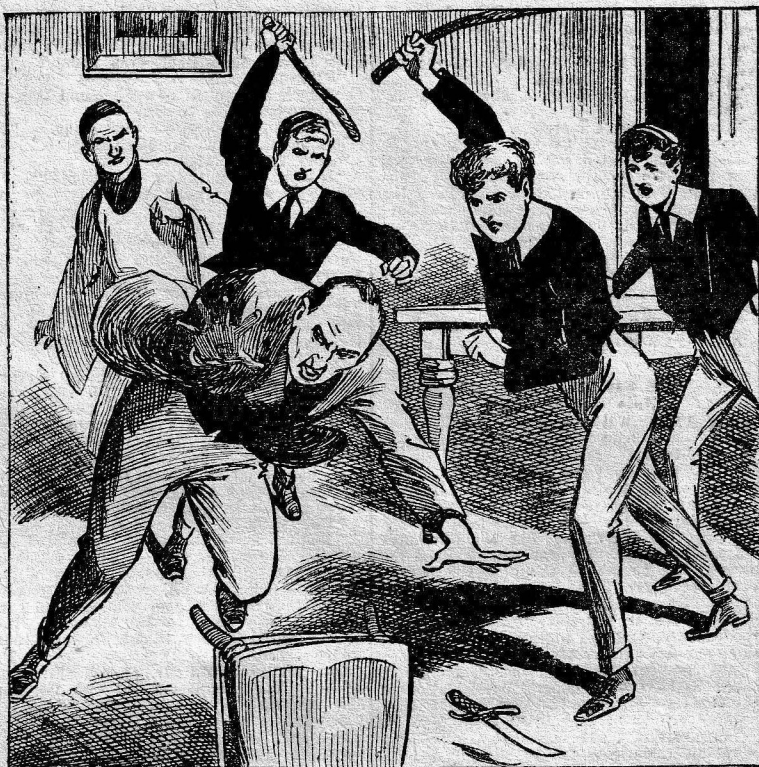
"Good egg!"

The juniors hurried down to the riverside. The boat moored in the rushes was a light skiff, easy to lift and handle, but quite heavy and solid enough to be used as a battering-ram. They lifted it, and bore it up the garden path to the porch.

Two fellows on either side of the skiff, they grasped it firmly, and at a signal from Wharton rushed forward, and dashed it against the door.

Crash!

The sudden crash of the concussion sounded like thunder in the stillness of the night. The juniors reeled back from the shock. The door shook and trembled and cracked. The cottage seemed to shake to its foundations.



VERY CLOSE QUARTERS! Foo-Chung leaped forward, and there was a clang as Bob Cherry's cudgel struck the deadly weapon from his hand. At the same moment Nugent's stick descended upon the Chinaman's head, and Foo-Chung staggered and fell like a log. (See Chapter 4.)

"Buck up!" gasped Wharton. "One more like that will do it!"

A startled cry was heard within the cottage. The juniors did not heed it. They rushed the boat forward again, and it crashed upon the door.

This time the shock burst it through. The door crashed away in fragments from bolts and hinges, and the skiff fell in the doorway. The way was open before the chums of Greyfriars.

A startled, furious face glared at them from the shadows within. There was a glimmer of steel in a sinewy hand.

"Who are you?" exclaimed a savage voice. "What you wantee?"

Wun Lung sprang forward.

"Me wantee Hop Hi!"

"Stand back!" yelled the Chinaman in the narrow passage within.

"No standee backee!"

"Hold on, Wun Lung!" roared Bob Cherry.

"He's got a knife!"

But the little Chinese did not heed. His hand was under his loose garments for a moment. It came out with a blade glittering in it. Knife in hand, the little Chinese leaped into the cottage.

Clash!

The loud sound of steel ringing on steel rang through the night.

"After him!" panted Bob.

The juniors rushed in. They were confused by the darkness as they passed out of the moonlight into the shadowy cottage. But they made out two forms fighting savagely, the knives playing like serpents of flame. Leaping, turning, twisting like tigers, the big Chinaman and the little Wun Lung attacked one another with savage ferocity.

No one would have recognised Wun Lung now as the little submissive Chinese of the Greyfriars Remove. All the ferocity of the savage East was in his drawn hard face, and glittering in his eyes.

Clash, clash! And a yell of pain. Wun Lung's blade had gashed along the arm of the big Chinaman, and there was red on the shining blade now. Foo-Chung sprang back, panting, gripping his knife for a spring.

Harry Wharton grasped Wun Lung by the shoulder and dragged him back.

"Lettee go!" panted the Chinese.

Foo-Chung leaped forward, and there was a clang as Bob Cherry's cudgel struck the deadly weapon from his hand.

Crash!

At the same moment Nugent's stick descended upon the Chinaman's head, and Foo-Chung staggered, with an inarticulate cry, and fell like a log.

Wun Lung tore himself loose, and sprang forward; but Harry Wharton hurled him aside, and he staggered away. In a moment more Bob Cherry had snatched the knife from him.

"Givee me! Me killy!" yelled Wun Lung furiously.

"Hold the mad fool!" panted Bob.

He tossed the knife far away, and it fell with a splash into the river. Foo-Chung's weapon followed it, gleaming in the moonlight as it circled in the air, and then disappeared into the waters.

Wun Lung was struggling in the grasp of Wharton and Nugent. Foo-Chung sat up dazedly, groping blindly for a weapon, and finding none. He scrambled to his feet, and made a spring through the open doorway. He realised that all was up, and he was thinking now only of escape.

"Collar him!" shouted Bob.

He grasped at the Chinaman, but the powerful ruffian hurled him aside, sprang out of the doorway, and fled.

In a moment he had disappeared into the darkness of the wood bordering the river.

"You young ass!" growled Wharton, as Wun Lung ceased to struggle. "You've let that hound get away, with your rot! Chuck it!"

"Me sorry!" murmured Wun Lung, meek and calm again as if by magic. "Me losee headee. Me wantee killy. No, not likee English boy."

"Well, he's gone," said Nugent. "Never mind, if we find Hop Hi. Let's look for him." One of the doors in the little passage was locked and bolted on the outside. It was pretty evident that that was the room

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where the prisoner was kept. To unfasten it did not take long, and Wharton threw the door open.

Wun Lung ran into the darkened room. "Hop Hi!" he called out.

There was a joyous cry in the darkness. "Mo here!"

Wharton struck a match.

Hop Hi, awakened by the attack on the cottage, had started out of bed, recovered now from the opium sleep into which the kidnapper had plunged him. Wun Lung grasped him and embraced him affectionately, murmuring words in a weird language comprehended only by his minor.

"Well, we've found him!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Good luck! Now you've recovered your lost property, Wun Lung, we'd better clear."

"Allee light," chuckled Wun Lung. And they cleared.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Safe and Sound!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. took their way back to Greyfriars in an extremely satisfied frame of mind.

Hop Hi trotted along with them, leaning on his major's arm, still weak from the effects of the opium that had been administered to him. The juniors kept a wary eye open for Foo-Chung, but the Chinaman did not reappear. He was making good his escape, and on second thoughts the juniors were not sorry that he had gone. The search the police would make for him would make it necessary for him to flee the country, and the little Chinese would be safe from any further attempt, and his escape would prevent awkward questions being asked as to Gerald Loder's participation in the matter. For the Co. had decided that nothing was to be said about Loder.

"The rotters made use of Loder," Harry Wharton remarked, as they tramped back to Greyfriars in the moonlight. "He didn't know what they meant; he acted like a rotter, but not like a criminal. But if it all comes out he may find it rather hard

to make people believe that. At any rate, we don't want to give him away. It's no business of ours to get a Greyfriars fellow sacked from the school—even Loder."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "But we shall have to explain how we found Hop Hi. What are we going to say?"

"Allee lightee," said Wun Lung. "No tellee about Lodee. Me tellee whopee."

Bob Cherry snorted.

"If I hear you telling any whoppers, I'll give you a jolly good thick ear!" he exclaimed.

"Well, we want to keep Loder out of it if we can," said Nugent. "We'll see. Here we are at Greyfriars. How are we going in, Harry?"

"No good sneaking in," said Harry. "We've got to own up and explain, and we may as well get it over. I'll ring up Gosling."

And he rang the bell.

"Which I'll report yer," growled Gosling, as he unlocked the gates. "I'll report this 'ere, you trust me. Why, my heye, if that isn't young 'Op 'I, wot was missing!"

"We've rescued him," exclaimed Bob Cherry calmly. "On full consideration, we felt that we couldn't leave it to the bobbies, as they weren't really quite up to the job, so we took it in hand ourselves, Gossy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'll be blowed!" ejaculated the astonished Gosling.

And the juniors chuckled as they walked on to the School House. Bob Cherry climbed in through the box-room window, and came down to the door to let them in. Then they made their way to Mr. Quelch's room, and knocked.

The juniors heard Mr. Quelch spring out of bed. They could imagine how the news had startled him, and they grinned.

"Thought we'd better report to you at once, sir," said Harry demurely.

"Quite right—quite right, Wharton! One moment, and I will be with you."

In a couple of minutes Mr. Quelch's door opened, and the Form master appeared in his dressing-gown. His eyes turned upon

Hop Hi at once, and he gazed at the little Chinese as if he could hardly believe that he was really there.

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Quelch exclaimed. "This is very fortunate. But—but how did you do this, Wharton?"

"Wun Lung found out where he was, sir, and we went to help bring him back," explained Wharton. "Under the circumstances, sir, we hope you will excuse us for breaking bounds?"

"Most decidedly!" said Mr. Quelch. "Certainly, Wharton! I should hardly punish you, considering what you have done. You should certainly have called me in the first place; but never mind that now, as the matter has turned out so well. Hop Hi was kidnapped, then?"

"Yes, sir. We're sorry the man got away; but—"

"Never mind. The police will probably find him. You may all go to bed now, and explain further in the morning," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. Good-night!"

"Good-night, my dear boys!"

And the juniors marched off, sleepy but with great satisfaction, to their beds.

Greyfriars woke up the next morning, to discover that Hop Hi of the Second Form was safe in the school again. And there was a buzz of wonder at the news that Harry Wharton & Co. had rescued the kidnapped Chinese.

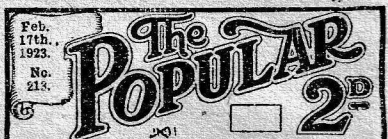
Loder of the Sixth was glad to hear that Hop Hi was safe and sound, but he trembled for the expected revelation of his own part in the affair. But the revelation was not made. Wun Lung was questioned as to how he had discovered Hop Hi's hiding-place, but his knowledge of English failed him at that point, and it was never cleared up. Both the Chinese kidnapper and Mr. Jobling had disappeared promptly, and the police searched for them in vain.

It was a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars; but the chief wonder to Harry Wharton & Co. was to see little Wun Lung become once more his old meek and mild and placid self—scarcely recognisable as the Wun Lung whom they had seen on the warpath.

THE END.

(Next week's long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is a real winner. It's called "The Masked Raiders!" and for thrill and fun it will take some beating.)

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(Author of the famous Stories of Tom Merry & Co., now appearing in the "Gem" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Pest of the Prairie!

"**W**AAI, I swear!" Frank Richards threw aside his blanket and sat up in the grass as that exclamation fell upon his ears.

Bob Lawless and Vere Beaulere looked up from their blankets.

Only Chunky Todgers continued to sleep. That podgy youth was a good sleeper, and probably the war-whoop of a Red Indian would not have awakened him.

The chums of Cedar Creek had camped for the night on the open prairie.

They had been several days on the North-West trail now, and in this region settlements were few and far between.

The morning sun was glimmering over the prairie, and the gophers were blinking out of their holes under the thick grass when Frank Richards & Co. were awakened by the bull-voice of the stranger.

Frank blinked at him, rubbing his eyes. He saw a huge long-bearded, muscular man, in leather breeches, red shirt, and a tattered Stetson hat, with a black pipe in the corner of his mouth.

A revolver and a hunting-knife were stuck in the stranger's belt, and his big, hairy hand rested on the butt of the revolver as he stood and stared at the four schoolboys.

He was rather an ugly-looking customer, and Frank's second glance was turned towards the horses and pack-mule, staked out in the grass close by.

"Jerusalem!" went on the big stranger, evidently surprised by the schoolboy camp, which he had come upon suddenly. "What do you call this hyer outfit? Search me!"

The chums of Cedar Creek jumped up. "Hallo!" said Bob Lawless.

"I guess this puts it over me!" said the stranger, staring at him. "What aire you youngers doin' out on the prairie without your mummies?"

"Travelling," answered Bob Lawless. "We're on a holiday. Where did you spring from?"

"I guess I'm hoofin' it to Last Chance," answered the stranger. He glanced at the horses, and added emphatically: "But I guess I ain't hoofin' it any farther than this hyer spot! No, siree!"

Bob Lawless understood that remark, and his jaw set squarely.

The schoolboy camp was a good thirty miles from the nearest settlement, and the big rustler evidently fancied that the horses were at his disposal for the trouble of taking them.

His eyes were wandering greedily about the camp.

"I guess I've struck fle!" he went on. "This hyer is luck, and no mistake! I reckon this is a cinch!"

"I don't see where that comes in," said Bob Lawless quietly. "You're welcome to a breakfast here, if you like."

"I guess this will pan out a bit better than that!" grinned the long-bearded man. "I reckon you'd better think twice before you jaw at Oregon Bill, my boy! Keep away from that shooter!" he rapped out suddenly, as he detected Bob moving quietly towards his rifle.

The six-shooter flashed out of his belt. Bob paused.

"I guess," said Oregon Bill, with a grin, "that you youngers would ha' done wiser to stay at school! Don't you talk to me! When I'm at home in Oregon I kill a man before breakfast every morning! That's the kind of galoot I am! You hear me yaup?"

Chunky Todgers awoke, and sat up, and he blinked in great dismay at the big ruffian.

Frank Richards & Co. looked rather undecided.

The revolver in the ruffian's hand looked rather dangerous, and he looked brutal enough to use it, if need arose.

They could see that he was a "hobo"—one of the Western tramps who are the pest of the outlying districts, and whose activities range from begging, chicken-stealing, and horse-thievery, to robbery with violence, according to circumstance.

Certainly he looked a very ugly customer for the schoolboys to tackle, though they would not have hesitated had their rifles been in their hands.

But the rifles and the shotgun were leaning against the pile of saddles, and their hands were empty.

Oregon Bill stepped between them and the rifles.

"Hands off the shooters!" he grinned. "I guess I can do all the shootin' that's wanted hyer—hay?"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Chunky Todgers. "This hyer is luck—real luck!" went on the ruffian. "I guess you'll hop it pretty spry and get me something to eat! I'm staying to breakfast, gents!"

"You're not wanted here!" said Vere Beaulere.

"What's that?"

"You'd better go on your way, my man," said Frank Richards quietly.

Oregon Bill lifted his revolver.

Frank Richards gave a jump as a bullet sang by within two inches of his head.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the hobo. "I guess that's a warning, my lad! Do you want the next one through your cabeza?"

Frank Richards clenched his hands hard. He was not frightened, by any means, as the ruffian supposed, but he realised that he was helpless.

It was not likely that Oregon Bill would risk his neck by sending a bullet through a schoolboy's head, but it was very probable that he would "wing" him if he showed fight.

Frank had no desire to be laid in the grass with a bullet through his leg.

It was evidently a time to temporise and act with caution.

As a matter of fact the schoolboy adventurers had been lacking in caution.

Now that they were approaching the wilds of the North-West, it would have been judicious to keep watch and ward in their camp.

It was rather too late to think of that now, however.

The grinning hobo was master of the situation.

"Now, I guess you're going to be spry!" said Oregon Bill. "You hop it lively, and get me some breakfast! Sharp's the word!"

With feelings too deep for words Frank Richards & Co. started work, under the eyes of the hobo—grinning, but watchful.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Desperate Measures!

OREGON BILL sat at ease, with great satisfaction depicted in his rough, bearded face, while breakfast was preparing.

The hobo plainly regarded himself as being in great luck—as having "struck oil" with a vengeance.

The schoolboys did not need telling that when he had satisfied his hunger, the prairie tramp intended to make off with their horses and packs, and all their other belongings that were of any value.

They would be left stranded on foot on the wide prairie, to make their way to some settlement as best they could.

That was not at all the outcome which the Cedar Creek fellows had planned for their North-Western trip.

As they worked under the ruffian's eyes their thoughts were busy.

Brushwood had been brought along from the last timber for the camp-fire, and Bob Lawless soon had the fire going.

Antelope steaks were soon frying, and the fragrant scent of coffee made Oregon Bill sniff with satisfaction.

It was a breakfast such as the tramp had probably not tasted for a very long time.

"I guess this is some cinch!" he remarked.

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"A TREACHEROUS FOE!" is the Title of the Next Backwoods Story!

"I ain't struck a bonanza like this hyer since I lit out of Oregon, over the line. I calculate I was wise to try Canada this summer. Haw, haw, haw!"

Quietly, but with deep feelings within, the schoolboys served the hobo with an ample breakfast.

Steaks and corn-cake vanished at a great rate down Oregon Bill's capacious throat, washed down by copious draughts of coffee.

The hobo was evidently enjoying himself. Frank Richards & Co. would not have grudged a hearty breakfast, even to so disreputable a character as a prairie tramp, had he asked for it civilly.

But serving him under duress was quite another matter.

Having supplied the hobo's wants the schoolboys retired to the camp-fire to cook their own breakfast.

They were thinking, however, a great deal more about getting the upper hand of their unwelcome guest than of breakfast.

"He's busy for a bit," murmured Bob Lawless, with the corner of his eye on the gorging hobo. "He's laid down his shooter, too. He kinder thinks we're taking this lying down."

Frank Richards' eyes gleamed.

"We're not," he said.

"I guess not. He means to run off with our horses and truck, and leave us stranded. I guess that's not in the bill," said Bob.

"We've got to handle him," said Beaulere quietly. "The only question is, how? If you could get hold of a trail-rope, Bob, and rope him—"

"He would spot it at once if I tried."

"What's the game, then?" asked Frank. "The beast will be running off with our horses as soon as he's done feeding."

"You fellows are game, of course?" said Bob. "He will shoot, there's no doubt about that, if he gets a chance; and he'll shoot to kill rather than go under, if he can."

"We're game, fathead! Have you got an idea?"

"Yes. I'm taking him some more coffee in a minute," said Bob. "I've got it in this tin jug. Well—he sank his voice to a faint whisper—"when I'm handing him the coffee, I'll pitch it suddenly into his face."

"Oh!"

"That will blind him for a minute. I'll make a jump for the revolver the next second, and perhaps I shall be able to get it away. You two fellows stop here, and the instant I chuck the coffee, you can pick up brands from the fire and run at him. Get two big brands burning ready."

"Good man!" said Frank, with a deep breath.

"Hyer, walk up!" bawled Oregon Bill. "Can't you see my coffee's finished? Do you want me to wake you up with a bullet? Hay?"

He picked up the revolver he had laid on his knee.

"Coming, sir!" called back Bob Lawless meekly.

"Get a hustle on, then!"

Bob took up the tin pitcher of coffee and carried it towards the hobo, where he was seated on the saddles and other "truck" in the grass.

Frank and Beaulere had one eye on Bob, their hearts throbbing, as he came up to the hobo with the pitcher in his hand, steaming.

Oregon Bill grinned, and laid his revolver on the knee of his leather breeches again, ready to his hand, as he held out his tin cup to be filled.

"Here you are!" said Bob.

"I guess I'm teaching you to be spry," grinned the hobo, as Bob filled the cup with steaming coffee. "I reckon— Ah! Oh! Yah!"

Swish!

With a sudden jerk of his arm, Bob Lawless hurled the almost boiling contents of the pitcher into the bearded face of the ruffian. Oregon Bill started backwards with a yell of agony.

He reared up, clutching at his face, blinded for the moment by the steaming flood.

His revolver slid and dropped into the grass.

Bob Lawless made a spring for it.

But Oregon Bill was too quick.

He flung himself forward half blinded, to grab at the revolver, and his left hand, striking out wildly, caught Bob on the chest and hurled him into the grass.

A few seconds more, and the groping hand

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of the ruffian would have grasped the six-shooter.

But even as he groped, still howling with pain, Frank Richards and Vere Beaulere were rushing on him, the burning brands in their grip, and the flaming, smoking weapons were dashed together into the face of the hobo.

Oregon Bill gave a yell of anguish, and rolled back blindly, and as he rolled over in the grass the schoolboys struck again and again.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Upper Hand!

BOB LAWLESS was on the revolver now, and he sprang up with the weapon in his hand.

In a moment it was directed towards the struggling, shrieking hobo.

"Let up!" he rapped out. "I've got him covered! If he raises a finger now I'll drill him!"

The brands had been extinguished by the violent contact with the unfortunate hobo's face.

They were still smoking and dropping sparks as Frank and Beaulere ceased to lash at the howling ruffian.

Oregon Bill sat up blindly in the grass.

His face was blackened, his eyebrows burnt almost entirely away, and his hair and beard badly singed.

His furious howls showed that he was suffering great pain.

Half blinded by the smoke in his face, he grabbed desperately at the knife in his belt, and strove to scramble up.

There was murder in the ruffian's furious face now.

Bob Lawless' voice rang out sharp and threatening.

"Drop that knife!"

Oregon Bill did not heed.

Howling with rage, he dragged the hunting-knife from his belt, and the cold steel gleamed in the sunlight.

Crack!

Bob Lawless fired without an instant's hesitation. Hesitation at that moment meant death.

Oregon Bill's right arm dropped helplessly to his side as the bullet smashed through his elbow.

The knife dropped harmlessly into the grass.

The ruffian uttered a roar like a wounded buffalo.

"Well hit!" gasped Frank Richards.

Chunky Todgers, rather late in the day, came rushing up with a billet of wood in his hand.

But Chunky's aid was not wanted.

Oregon Bill collapsed in the grass, clasping his wounded arm with his left hand, and groaning with pain.

"Let up!" he muttered hoarsely. "Let up, gents! I guess I pass hyer."

"Our win!" said Frank Richards breathlessly.

The hobo was no longer dangerous.

His wound was bleeding profusely, and his hard, tanned face was growing white.

"I guess you'd have done wiser to stay at home in Oregon!" grinned Chunky Todgers. "Canada don't want your sort, my pippin!"

"Ow! Ow!" groaned the hobo.

Bob Lawless and Beaulere took up the rifles and the knife, and Bob snapped the blade of the latter off short.

He did not care to take possession of the ruffian's property, but it was certainly wiser to leave Oregon Bill unarmed.

"You can hand me the shooter," said Chunky Todgers. "I guess it will come in useful if we meet any more hoboes, Bob."

Bob Lawless chuckled.

"More dangerous to us than to the hoboes, if you have it, Chunky," he answered. "Besides, it belongs to that unwashed coyote."

"You're not going to leave him his shooter?" yelled Chunky. "Do you want him to pot us in the back as soon as we start?"

"I guess he won't pot anybody with this shooter again."

Bob Lawless discharged the remaining cartridges in the revolver into the air, and then set the weapon on the ground, and clumped the butt of his rifle upon it.

There was a crash, and after that the

six-shooter was not likely to be of service to Oregon Bill, or anyone else.

"You can travel now, my pippin," said Bob, stirring the groaning ruffian with the toe of his boot. "You're through here."

And Bob went back to the camp-fire to finish his breakfast, keeping his rifle under his arm.

Oregon Bill sat up, groaning dismally.

Frank Richards was about to follow Bob, but he paused, looking with something like compassion at the wounded scoundrel.

He glanced at Beaulere, who smiled and nodded, and without words the two schoolboys proceeded to bind up the hobo's injured arm.

Oregon Bill, too surprised for speech at receiving that attention, blinked at them in savage silence while they tended him.

"Don't you chaps want your provender?" called out Bob Lawless.

"Wait a minute, Bob."

"Oh, look after the rotter if you like!" said Bob. "It wouldn't be any loss if he petered out on the prairie, I reckon!"

"There you are!" said Frank Richards. "We've done the best we can for you, Oregon Bill. The best thing you can do, is to take the southern trail and turn your back on Canada. Your sort don't prosper in this country."

"I guess I wish I'd stayed in Oregon," groaned the hobo. "I calculate this was a bad break. Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

He tramped dismally away from the camp. The big ruffian disappeared in the waving grass of the prairie, and Frank Richards & Co. finished their breakfast in cheerful spirits.

Their success in dealing with the hobo elated them, and was a good augury for the future, for it was very probable that further dangers awaited them in the wilds of the North-West.

Breakfast over, the adventurers broke camp.

The mule was packed and the horses saddled, and they mounted and rode out on the plain.

Bob Lawless' keen glance swept the prairie as they started.

Oregon Bill had vanished from sight long since.

But on the grassy plain, far in the distance, the figure of a rider appeared, faint to the view.

Bob put up the field glasses and scanned it.

"Jerusalem!" he ejaculated. "It's the Chinese! Yen Chin has followed us after all, you fellows!"

"The cheeky heathen!" growled Chunky Todgers. "Let him come near enough for me to give him a taste of the trail-rope, that's all!"

The glasses passed from hand to hand, and Frank Richards & Co. scanned the distant figure in turn.

It was undoubtedly Yen Chin, the "Chow" of Cedar Creek School.

The chums had seen nothing of him for several days, and they had supposed that the Chinese had given up the idea of joining the party for the North-West, and returned to his home at Thompson.

But evidently that was not the case, after all.

Yen Chin was determined not to be left behind.

Frank Richards laughed as he lowered the glass.

The pertinacity of the little Chinese worried him a little, but it amused him, too.

"The young ass!" said Beaulere, wrinkling his brows a little. "He will be out of place in the wilds. He's not the sort of chap for a journey of this kind. But as he's come so far—"

"He'll trot home again when he loses our trail," said Bob.

"It's a good, long way."

"The pesky heathen!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "He's looking for a chance of playing tricks on us again! I'll trail-rope him if he comes near enough. I know that!"

The schoolboy-party rode on, and Frank Richards glanced back several times.

Once or twice he caught sight of a diminutive figure in the distance, but later in the morning it vanished, and when the party halted at noon the horizon was clear, and nothing was to be seen of the Chinese of Cedar Creek School.

You Must Read Next Week How the Chums Rescue an Old Enemy!

Meet FERRERS LOCKE, the master Investigator, in the "Magnet"! 21

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Roped In!

IT was a couple of days later, and the Cedar Creek schoolboys were camped in a clump of timber in the lower foothills of the Cascade Range.

Frank Richards, with the shotgun under his arm, had wandered away through the wood to look for game. He was at some distance from the camp, threading his way through the trees when he heard a rustle close at hand.

He scanned the thickets and creepers round him keenly, and as he did so something dropped from a branch above upon his shoulders, and he went with a crash into the herbage.

A startled cry left his lips.

For a moment he thought that it was a lynx that had sprung upon him from above, and he expected, with a shudder of horror, to feel the fierce jaws in his flesh.

But instead of that a human knee was planted in the small of his back, pinning him face downwards in the grass.

Above him sounded a soft chuckle that he knew well.

"Yen Chin!" he gasped.

"He, he, he!" came from the unseen Chinese kneeling on his back. "Flanky caught—oh, yes! Me bully boy—oh, yes! He, he!"

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Frank, struggling to rise. "Let me up!"

"No lettee up!"

"I'll rope you, you young villain!"

"No gettee up!" grinned Yen Chin. "Me gettee! Flanky velly bad boy. Me, Yen Chin, good boy!"

"You young ass!" exclaimed Frank.

"What are you playing these tricks for?"

"Me wantee comee with Flanky!"

"Well, you won't, you rascally heathen!"

"Then Flanky comee with me."

"Wha-at!"

Frank began to struggle again as he felt the Chinese fastening a rope about his wrists behind his back.

But he struggled in vain, and in a few minutes his hands were secured.

Then Yen Chin jumped up, keeping hold of the end of the rope, and allowed the English schoolboy to scramble to his feet.

"You plisoner!" said the Chinese cheerfully.

Frank Richards panted.

He was greatly inclined to use his boots upon the pertinacious Celestial, but he refrained.

As a matter of fact, Yen Chin was expecting that movement, and he was ready to jerk him over with the rope if he began to kick.

"Have you come here to ask for a roping?" exclaimed Frank angrily. "Let me go at once, or I'll call out to Bob!"

"Bob no heal if callee," said Yen Chin. "Too fal away."

"Let me loose!"

"Flanky wantee Yen Chin comee on journey?"

"No!" roared Frank.

"Then no lettee loosee. Me takee Flanky away," said Yen Chin. "Flanky ugly old rascal!"

Frank Richards grinned in spite of his annoyance.

Yen Chin was evidently determined to be one of the party for the North-West, and he was not to be argued with.

"How did you get here, you little heathen?" asked Frank.

"Me follow trail. Follow allee way. Eassee noff!" said the Chinese. "Me lookkee, watchee, you bet. Catchee Flanky."

"What are you going to do, you young ass?"

"Takee Flanky way. You comee," said Yen Chin, pulling on the rope.

Frank Richards had no choice about following the Chinese.

He was too far away from his comrades for a call to reach their ears, and there was no help for him.

Yen Chin picked up the shotgun, and led the schoolboy away into the timber, grinning cheerfully.

It was not the first trick he had played on the party that declined his estimable company on their North-Western excursion, and it seemed likely to be more successful than the last.

Leaving the camp farther and farther

behind at every step, Frank Richards unwillingly followed his conductor through the timber.

Yen Chin halted at last in a deep ravine where a little stream followed under the heavy bushes.

In that hidden spot his pony was staked out.

"You sittee down," he said.

"Look here—Oh!"

Yen Chin jerked the rope, and Frank sat down rather suddenly at the foot of a sapling.

The loose end of the rope was run round the trunk, and knotted, and Frank was a helpless prisoner.

He stared at the grinning Chinese in great wrath.

"Oh, my hat! I'll rope you for this, you yellow rascal!" he exclaimed.

"First catchee Chinese!" grinned Yen Chin. "Flanky caught!"

"You're not going to leave me here?" exclaimed Frank, as the Chinese turned away.

Yen Chin glanced back with a chuckle. "Allee light! Soon have compance," he said.

"Eh? What company?"

"Bob, perhaps, and Chunkee—silly, fat Chunkee—and Chelub."

With that the Chinese disappeared into the timber, and Frank, in utter amazement, was left alone in the ravine with the staked pony.

He understood the extraordinary scheme of the cunning little Chinese now.

Yen Chin intended—if he could—to bag the whole party one after another, and evidently to make terms with them when they were helpless in his hands.

It was Yen Chin's way of getting himself included as a member of the holiday party where his room was preferred to his company.

"My only hat!" murmured Frank.

He wriggled uncomfortably in his bonds, striving to get his hands free.

But the attempt was unavailing.

Yen Chin had done his work too thoroughly for that.

Frank Richards was a prisoner until it

suited the heathen to return and set him free.

Overhead the noonday sun was blazing down, but the thick trees in the ravine fortunately shaded Frank from its rays.

It was very warm, however, and he was soon tired and thirsty, and his feelings towards Yen Chin were far from friendly.

It was an hour later that footsteps were audible in the ravine, and Frank looked round eagerly, hoping that his chums had found him.

He was sure that they would search for him when he failed to return to the camp.

His face fell as he saw the newcomers.

Chunky Todgers, with a face crimson with fury and his hands tied behind his back, was led into the ravine by the grinning Celestial.

Evidently the fat youth had fallen into the heathen's hands just as Frank Richards had done.

Chunky blinked at Frank as he halted.

"You here?" he exclaimed.

"Looks like it!" grunted Frank. "And you—"

"I went out to look for you, as you didn't come back," said Chunky dolefully. "This heathen beast suddenly roped me in! I'll scalp him as soon as I get loose! I'll choke him with his own pigtail! I'll—I'll—"

"Chunky silly fat jay!" remarked Yen Chin. "Sittee down!"

"I won't, you heathen! I— Yaroo!"

Chunky Todgers sat down with a bump.

Yen Chin coolly tied him to the tree beside Frank Richards.

The Celestial grinned at the unhappy pair with great satisfaction.

Two of the party of four were in his hands.

"Give me something to drink, you heathen!" growled Frank Richards.

"Allee light."

Yen Chin brought a tin pannikin of water from the spring, and Frank drank it eagerly.

"You dlinkee, Chunkee?"

"Yes, you heathen!"

"Allee lightee now!"

"Let me loose, or I'll scalp you!"

"No scalpee. No can."



DESPERATE MEASURES! "I guess I'm teaching you!" grinned the hobo, as Bob Lawless filled up the cup with steaming coffee. "I— Ah! Oh!" Splash! With a sudden jerk of his arm Bob hurled the almost boiling contents of the pitcher full at the face of the ruffian. (See Chapter 2.)

Yen Chin vanished into the timber again. Frank Richards and Chunky Todgers looked at one another helplessly.

"What's the mad little idiot's game?" exclaimed Chunky.

"He wants to join the party," said Frank, laughing in spite of his wrath and discomfort. "This seems to be his way of doing it."

"I'll—I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Words failed Chunky Todgers.

The English language would not have expressed his feelings just then.

Two more weary hours passed by.

Then footsteps were heard again.

"Beau!" exclaimed Frank.

It was Vere Beauclerc, and he did not come alone.

His hands were tied, and Yen Chin was leading him, wriggling with merriment.

Beauclerc was looking as much amused as exasperated.

The Chinese's extraordinary proceedings appealed to his sense of humour to some extent.

"So you're in it, too, Cherub?" grunted Chunky Todgers.

"You stay here with Chunkee and Flanky!" grinned Yen Chin, fastening the rope to the sapling. "Me goee catchee Bob. Then all prisoner—oh, yes! Then you all askee me velly nicey to comee with you, and me sayee yes—me good boy; velly fond of silly old Flanky!"

Yen Chin departed again.

"My hat! This is a go!" said Beauclerc.

"The little beast dropped on me out of a tree like a dashed lynx. He's going to look out for Bob now, I suppose."

"He won't catch Bob so easily," said Frank.

"I hope not! It looks as if we're hooked to have Yen Chin with us, if he does."

"We won't!" roared Chunky Todgers. "He's too full of imp's tricks for me. I'm going to lambaste him as soon as I get loose!"

"When will that be?" asked Frank.

"Br-r-r-r!" grunted Chunky.

It was a question to which Chunky could not find an answer.

For the present, at least, all the trumps were in the hands of the Chow of Cedar Creek.

All depended upon whether Bob Lawless was caught napping as his comrades had been.

And the three prisoners waited anxiously, more than half-expecting to see Bob Lawless led into the ravine, a prisoner, by the grinning Yen Chin.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Licked at Last!

"BOB!"

A long, dismal hour had passed for the prisoners in the ravine.

The sun was sloping down in the west, beyond the mountains towards the far Pacific.

Shadows were lengthening in the wooded ravine.

Frank Richards and his companions had been testing their bonds again, but they could not get their hands free.

Tired and angry, they had given up the attempt, and settled down to wait with what patience they could muster until Yen Chin returned, meanwhile promising the Chinese all sorts of dire punishments as soon as opportunity came.

A footstep in the thickets caused them to look round, and they saw the sunburnt face of Bob Lawless looking out of the foliage.

For the moment they fully expected to see Yen Chin with him, leading him, bound, to the place of captivity.

But Bob Lawless was alone.

He was scanning the ravine from the thicket for a moment not seeing the three prisoners seated at the foot of the sapling.

He started as the trio called out his name together.

"Bob!"

"This way, Bob!"

"Hurry up!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" ejaculated Bob, as his astonished glance turned upon the three prisoners.

He came quickly out of the thicket.

"What the thunder—" he exclaimed.

"Look out for Yen Chin!" said Frank hastily.

"The heathen! Is he here?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 212.

"He's in the wood somewhere—looking for you," said Beauclerc.

"You don't mean to say that Yen Chin fixed you up like this?" shouted Bob.

"Ahem! Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, let us loose!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "That heathen may come back any minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

"Look here, you ass—"

"I guess I'll have you loose in a jiffy," chuckled Bob. "Oh, this beats the whole deck, and no mistake!"

He drew his hunting-knife, and severed the ropes with a few cuts.

Glad enough were the prisoners to rise and stretch their tired limbs.

Bob Lawless was still chuckling explosively.

He seemed to see the humorous side of the matter more clearly than the other fellows did.

"How did the Chow work the riddle?" he inquired.

Frank Richards explained.

Bob greeted the explanation with many chuckles.

"Well, you are a crowd of jays!" he said. "And you mean to say that the cheeky young Chow is looking for me, to serve me the same?"

"Yes, rather! I wonder you haven't fallen in with him. How did you find us here?" asked Frank.

"I've been hunting for you, of course, as you didn't come back," answered Bob.

"I guess I was thinking that Oregon Bill might have turned up again. I couldn't imagine what had become of you. I never guessed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle, ass! I expect that Yen Chin would have bagged you, too, if he had dropped on you."

"Not in a month of Sundays!" grinned Bob. "I keep my peepers peeled when I go wondering. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, let's get back to camp," groaned Chunky Todgers. "I'm awfully hungry!"

Bob Lawless suddenly cocked his head on one side, listening intently.

"Somebody's coming," he said.

"I can't hear—" began Frank.

"Your ears weren't trained on the prairie, old scout. I reckon it's the Chinese coming home—without me!" grinned Bob. "Let him come! Sit down as you were, and let him think you're as he left you. I'll take cover."

"Ha, ha!"

The three schoolboys plumped down in the grass at once, at the foot of the saplings, with their hands behind them towards the tree.

Bob Lawless jumped behind a big tree a few yards away.

A minute or so later there was a rustling in the underwoods, and Yen Chin came down the ravine.

He grinned as he looked at the trio, not suspecting for a moment that their hands were free as his own.

"Ha, ha!"

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"Hallo, haven't you caught Bob yet?" asked Frank Richards, peering at the Chinese through the thickening dusk.

Yen Chin shook his head.

"No catchee yet. Catchee in morning," he said. "Bob no goee way without you, me tinkee. No catchee in darkee. Plenty time."

"So you're going to keep us here till morning," said Beauclerc, laughing.

"Oh, yes. Me keep. To-morrow catchee Bob—silly old Bob!"

"You think you'll be able to catch Bob, do you?" asked Frank.

"Me tinkee! Oh, yes," said Yen Chin confidently. "Bob silly old lascal—catchee like gopher asleep! Oh, yes! Ah-h-h-h!"

Yen Chin broke off with that startled howl, as a grip of iron fastened on the back of his neck.

Bob Lawless had stepped quietly from cover.

Yen Chin spun round, and his almond eyes grew almost as round as saucers as he stared at Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards & Co. jumped to their feet, and the Chinese jumped, too, as he saw that they were free.

"Keno!" said Bob Lawless cheerfully. "Owl! Lettee go neckee!"

"So I'm a silly old lascal, am I?" demanded Bob. "You'll catch me like a gopher asleep, will you?"

Yen Chin wriggled in the Canadian's muscular grip.

"No tinkee Bob silly old lascal!" he gasped. "Bob velly handsome fellee—velly nicey, clevee old chap. Oh, yes! Lettee go neckee. Me Yen Chin, good boy!"

Bob Lawless shook him forcibly.

"Hold him while I get a rope!" yelled Chunky Todgers, greatly delighted at the turn of events.

Yen Chin yelled.

"No lopee pool him! Chinese! Yen Chin bully boy—oh, yes! Likee muchee handsome Chunkee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Yen Chin's compliments did not appease Chunky Todgers in the least; perhaps he knew how much they were worth.

He grabbed up one of the cut ropes, folded it, and commenced operations on the Chinese.

"Lash, lash, lash!"

Yen Chin hopped, as Chunky lashed out with the rope, and yelled till the timber rang again.

Bob Lawless released him, laughing.

The Chinese made a desperate rush for his pony, with Chunky close behind, still laying on with the rope.

He had to bend down to pull up the stake peg, and release the pony, and as he did so Chunky plied the rope with tremendous effect.

Yelling wildly, Yen Chin dashed at the pony, and scrambled on his back.

Another lash caught him as he did so, and the next caught the pony, and the animal sprang away.

With Yen Chin clinging to his back like a cat, the pony dashed into the wood, and vanished into darkness.

Chunky Todgers stopped, panting.

"I guess that's a lesson for the heathen," he stuttered. "I guess that's a warning to him, some! Ow! I'm tired."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky Todgers had quite tired himself out, but probably Yen Chin was more tired of it than Chunky was.

The chums of Cedar Creek did not see the Chinese again as they threaded their way through the timber back to the camp.

They would not have been surprised to hear something of him during that night; but apparently Chunky's vigorous lesson had had some effect, for the Chinese did not approach the camp.

Neither was he seen when they pulled up stakes in the morning, and started on the trail into the foothills.

But when, from the summit of a ridge, they looked back at the timber they had left far behind, they spotted a diminutive rider emerging from the dusk of the trees.

It was the Chow of Cedar Creek.

Bob Lawless burst into a laugh, and even Chunky Todgers chuckled, as they rode on again into the hills.

Far behind, but sticking like a lynx to the trail, was Yen Chin—still on the track!

The little Chinese was a sticker!

THE END.

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A PUZZLER FOR JIMMY SILVER!



Another Rollicking Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Famous Chums of Rookwood School, dealing with the arrival of an extraordinary new boy.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Stories of Rookwood now appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Traveller with a Trunk.

"**R**UN for your lives!"

"What!"

"Run!" yelled Tubby Muffin.

Muffin of the Fourth came bolting in at the gates of Rookwood, his fat face crimson with exertion, and gasping with wide-open mouth.

Jimmy Silver & Co., who were chatting near the gateway, jumped aside just in time, or the fat Classical would certainly have charged into them like a steam-roller.

Jimmy Silver caught Muffin by the collar as he charged past, to stop him.

But Tubby was going full speed, and it was not so easy to stop him.

He swept round, with Jimmy's grasp on his collar, and went right round Jimmy before his fat legs became entangled and he sat down.

"Yoop!" spluttered Tubby.

He sat down and panted.

"You silly duffer!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"What's the row?"

"Run!"

"What are we to run for?" demanded Lovell.

"Yaroooh! The elephant!"

"The what?" shrieked Raby.

"Help! Run! Wild elephants! Yooop! Gimme a hand up! I'm out of breath! Help!"

"Wild elephants!" repeated Newcome. "Is he potty?"

"Oh dear! Run for your lives!" gasped Tubby Muffin, struggling to his feet. "Wild elephants—whole herds of them! You'll be trampled to death, and tossed and gored—Yaroooooh!"

"What the—!"

"Run!"

And, by way of setting an example, Tubby Muffin ran, streaking for the School House at top speed.

The Fistical Four stared after him in bewilderment.

Something, evidently, was going on outside the gates which had scared Tubby Muffin out of his fat wits.

"Mad bull, perhaps," Lovell remarked thoughtfully, as the chums of the Fourth moved towards the gates.

"Oh, my hat!" said Newcome, halting. "If there's a wild bull, I don't want to be introduced to him."

"Well, if there's anything of the sort we'd better close the gates," said Jimmy. "Hallo, there's old Mack looking out. What's the row, Mack?"

Mack, the porter, had come out of his lodge and put his head out of the gateway,

evidently having observed the remarkable flight of Tubby Muffin.

The porter did not answer Jimmy Silver's question.

He gave one glance into the road and then bounded back from the gateway as if he had been electrified.

"Oh!" gasped Mack.

He sprinted for the open doorway of his lodge.

"What is it?" roared Lovell.

Mack did not heed.

He sped into his lodge, and there was a sudden bang as the door slammed after him.

The next moment there was the sound of a shooting bolt and the click of a key, and it was followed by the louder sound of dragging furniture.

Old Mack was barricading his door.

The Fistical Four gasped.

"What the merry dickens—"

"I'm jolly well going to see!" said Jimmy Silver determinedly.

He strode on to the gates and looked out.

There was the sound of heavy, thundering footsteps just outside as he did so, and even as he put out his head a gigantic form loomed over him.

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"Look out!" shouted Lovell.

Jimmy Silver backed away with a jump.

A gigantic elephant was turning in at the gates, and the sight of Solomon in all his glory would not have astonished the juniors more than the sight of an elephant at the gates of Rookwood.

But Jimmy backed too late.

The huge animal was upon him, and as Jimmy jumped back the trunk whipped out and curled round him.

As if plucked away from the ground by a giant's hand, Jimmy Silver was swept into the air by the curling trunk, and whisked into space with earth and sky and trees whirling round him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. So Simple.

"**Y**OO-OO-OO-OOOOP!"

Jimmy Silver spluttered breathlessly.

It seemed to him like a nightmare as well it might.

But it was no dream.

The captain of the Rookwood Fourth was whirling in the air, coiled in an elephant's trunk, and the huge animal stepped on steadily, bearing Jimmy Silver with him into the quadrangle.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome jumped out of the way, aghast.

In the doorway of the School House Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth-Form stood petrified, his scanty hair rising almost on end.

There was a yell from a dozen different directions, as the elephant was sighted in the quad.

Juniors and seniors scuttled out of the way of the enormous quadruped.

It seemed to Jimmy Silver that the end of all things had come; he was too dazed even to be terrified.

The elephant trod on sedately towards the House.

Seated on his neck, apparently guiding him, was a youth of about fifteen, in Etons.

The rider appeared absurdly small in comparison with the gigantic animal he was riding, but he was rather a sturdy and well-built fellow.

Behind him on the elephant's back were a bag, a coat, and a travelling rug.

All eyes were fixed upon the elephant and his rider as they came lumbering up towards the School House.

Earth and sky ceased to swim round Jimmy Silver as he found himself carried steadily in the trunk.

A horrid feeling came upon him, for a moment or two, that he might be dashed to the earth, as he had read of wild elephants doing with their victims. But he was carried onward steadily.

As if in a dream, he heard a voice from above calling to him—from the youth in Etons astride the elephant's neck:

"Keep your pecker up, kid! He won't hurt you!"

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy.

"It's only his fun, you know!"

"Dw!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles, as the huge animal loomed up before the steps.

"Is—is—is this a dream? What—what? I am convinced that I cannot be awake! Bless my soul!"

There was a hurried tread behind him.

"What—what is this?"

It was the Head.

Dr. Chisholm had seen the extraordinary visitor from his study window.

He hurried to the door, without thinking of the possible danger of meeting such a visitor at close quarters.

The sight of a Rookwood junior in the elephant's trunk was enough to banish any such consideration from his mind.

He blinked out over his glasses in consternation.

A crowd of Rookwooders gathered round—at a respectful distance from the elephant, however.

THE POPULAR.—No. 212.

"A COOL CUSTOMER!" is Next Tuesday's Story of "Putty" Grace!

At the steps the huge animal halted. Jimmy Silver, dazed and breathless, found himself set on his feet on the School House steps.

He had not been hurt, but he was doubtful whether he was on his head or his heels for a few moments.

He stood gasping for breath, half-wondering whether he was still alive.

There was a loud trumpeting from the elephant.

The rider tapped the huge head with a stick, and it ceased.

Then he raised his cap to the astounded headmaster.

"Who—who—who are you, sir?" thundered Dr. Chisholm.

"Grace, sir."

"What?"

"Teddy Grace, sir—I mean Edward!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the Head. "You are the new junior—"

"Yes, sir!"

"M-m-my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver blankly.

Jimmy had seen a number of new fellows arrive at Rookwood in his time, but he had never seen one arrive like this before.

This new boy was evidently something rather new in new boys.

Teddy Grace did not seem aware of anything unusual in his mode of arriving at school, however.

His round, chubby, cheerful face was quite calm and unconcerned.

He tapped the elephant again with his stick, and the animal knelt down before the steps.

The new junior alighted gracefully, and picked up his bag, his coat, and his rug.

"Good boy!" he said approvingly to the elephant.

"Boy!" gasped the Head.

"Yes, sir!"

"You—you—you are Edward Grace?"

"Yes, sir. I'm often called Putty, sir," said the new boy, with an innocent smile.

"What?"

"Putty, sir. Because I'm considered rather soft, sir," said Grace meekly.

There was a chuckle from some of the juniors.

It ceased, however, as the Head's glance gleamed round on them.

Dr. Chisholm evidently did not consider it a laughing matter.

"Grace! Boy! What—what do you mean by arriving at school in this manner?"

"My father sent me, sir."

"I am aware of that, Grace. Your father did not send you, I presume, mounted upon an elephant!" thundered the Head.

"No, sir; he put me in the train at Clapham Junction."

"Then why—how—"

"There wasn't a cab in Coombe to be had, sir," said Grace meekly.

"A—a cab?"

"None at all, sir. So I looked round for something else to bring me to Rookwood."

"For—something else!" stammered the Head, as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"Yes, sir! I could have hired a bike," said Grace meekly, "but I had my bag to carry, which would have been awkward on a bike."

"Bless my soul!"

"I thought of a horse, sir—"

"A—a horse?"

"Yes, sir; but I wasn't able to get a horse."

"Boy!"

"But luckily there was a circus camped on the common, sir, so I went there, and was lucky enough to be able to hire an elephant!"

"To—to—to hire an elephant!" stuttered the Head, obviously nonplussed.

"Yes, sir; I thought an elephant a good idea, as he was able to carry my bag quite easily."

"Bless my soul!"

"And he's quite tame, sir," rattled on Teddy Grace cheerily. "He takes up people in his trunk, sir, and sets them down. The man showed me how to drive him, and how to tap him to make him take up a chap in his trunk. Would you like to try, sir?"

"What?"

"He would whisk you off in a jiffy, sir!"

"Am I dreaming?" murmured the Head.

"Whisk—whisk me—off!"

"Yes, sir; and take you round the quad, THE POPULAR.—No. 212.

and then set you down again all right. Shall I make him—"

The new junior made a motion towards the elephant, and the Head jumped back.

"Grace! You—you utterly stupid boy! I forbid you to do anything of the kind!"

gasped Dr. Chisholm.

"It's great fun, sir—"

"Silence! Send that animal away at once! I shall punish you severely for bringing it into the precincts of Rookwood!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Send it away immediately!"

The new junior glanced towards the gates.

"The man's following me, sir; he will take it away. I—I thought you'd be pleased, sir!"

"Pleased!" exclaimed the Head.

"Well, I should have arrived late if I'd walked, sir," said Grace, in an injured tone.

"I've paid quite a lot to hire the elephant, so as not to be—ahem!—late. My father told me, sir, never to be late; he says that procrastination is the thief of time, sir!"

The Head stared at the new junior.

That cheery youth's face was quite serious, and it really seemed impossible to suspect him of an intention to pull the Head's august leg.

With all his experience of boys, Dr. Chisholm had never come across one quite like this before; and it was evident that he did not know what to make of Teddy Grace—who was called Putty because he was "soft."

Either he was very soft indeed, or else he was a most reckless young rascal; and the Head could not decide which he was.

"Send that animal away at once!" said the Head at last. "Then you will accompany Mr. Bootles to my study!"

"Yes, sir!—Here comes the man!"

And Dr. Chisholm rustled back into the House.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The New Boy.

"WELL, I'm blowed!"

Thus Arthur Edward Lovell, expressing his feelings with more force than elegance.

"Same here!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"The cheeky young ass!"

"He must be soft!"

"The Head will lick him, anyway."

"Serve him jolly well right!" opined Smythe of the Shell.

"I never heard of such cheek in a fag, by gad!"

The new junior was in the Head's study with the headmaster and Mr. Bootles.

The man from the circus had led away the elephant, leaving the Rookwood fellows in a buzz of excited discussion.

The sensation caused by Teddy Grace's remarkable arrival was not likely to wear off for some time.

"Anybody know what Form he's going into?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Never heard of his existence before," said Mornington. "Where's Tubby Muffin? He will know."

"Ha, ha! Tubby's hiding somewhere!" roared Lovell. "He thought it was a wild elephant!"

"Well, I'm not surprised he was startled," remarked Jimmy Silver. "I was rather startled when the beast picked me up in his trunk. I've a good mind to punch Grace's head when the other Head's done with him!"

"Rather in a funk, weren't you?" remarked Peele.

"Blue funk, I should say!" observed Gower agreeably.

Jimmy looked at them.

"Do you want your heads knocked together?" he asked politely. "If you don't, you'd better dry up!"

"But, I say," broke in Lattrey of the Fourth, "that chap must have lots of tin to be able to hire an elephant to ride to school. It was a fool's trick, but it must have cost some money."

Arthur Edward Lovell gave him a sarcastic glance.

"A new chap, rather soft, with lots of tin," he remarked. "What a chance for you, Lattrey! How long will it be before you're teaching him how to play poker?"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Lattrey; and he turned away.

Peele and Gower went with him, and the three seemed to be engaged in earnest discussion as they went.

The black sheep of Rookwood were already discussing the possibility of making a good thing out of a youth who was evidently well off, and who was so soft that he was nicknamed Putty.

Jimmy Silver & Co. proceeded to the Fourth Form passage to look for Tubby Muffin.

That fat youth was supposed to know everything that was going on, and a little over, as Lovell had expressed it.

The door of Study No. 2 was found locked.

Arthur Edward Lovell delivered a terrific bang upon it.

There was a loud howl within:

"Yow! Help! Keep off! Drive it away!"

"You silly ass!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Do you think the elephant's come upstairs? Let us in!"

"Oh! Is that you, Jimmy Silver?" gasped Muffin.

"Yes, ass!"

The study door was unlocked, and Tubby Muffin blinked out uneasily.

He seemed relieved to find that there was no elephant in the passage.

"I—I say, is—is—is it gone?" he gasped.

"Yes, you duffer; long ago!"

"Oh, all right! Of—of—of course, I wasn't frightened," said Tubby Muffin. "It wasn't that, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I simply came in to have tea," explained Tubby. "I—I locked the door because—because—because—"

"Exactly!" assented Jimmy Silver. "Now, as you know everything, Tubby, perhaps you know who Teddy Grace is?"

"New chap coming into the Classical Fourth," answered Tubby at once. "I happened to hear Mr. Bootles—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at. He's rich," went on Tubby Muffin. "Mr. Bootles was speaking to Mr. Mooney, you know, and he mentioned that Grace was the son of Mr. Grace, a wealthy coal-owner."

Tubby had quite recovered himself now.

"I say, has he come?" he asked. "I was going to see him when he came, because—because—"

"Because he's rich?" asked Mornington.

"Certainly not! I hope you don't think I'd stick up to anybody on account of his money. I was going to see him because—because—"

Tubby Muffin paused, apparently not able to think of a reason on the spur of the moment.

"Well, he's come," said Jimmy Silver. "It was Grace who came on the elephant and scared you out of your podgy wits, Tubby."

"I wasn't scared!" said Tubby Muffin warmly. "Do you think I'm afraid of an elephant? I simply happened to be in a hurry. If I hadn't been in a hurry I should have stopped and stroked him."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look out!" yelled Flynn from the passage.

"The bullfight! Look out!"

There was a sound of loud stamping in the passage.

It was made, as a matter of fact, by Patrick O'Donovan's boots, which were of a good size.

But to Tubby Muffin's ears it was the tread of the elephant, and he uttered a howl of terror and dived under the study table.

"Keep it off!" he yelled. "Drive it away! Shut the door! Lock it! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come and stroke him, Tubby, bedad!"

"Yaroorh!"

There was a roar of laughter in the corridor.

"Hallo, what's the joke?" asked a cool voice. And Jimmy Silver looked round, to see the new junior on the landing.

Teddy Grace was strolling airily, with his hands in his pockets, and looking as cool and self-possessed as if he had been at Rookwood a couple of terms at least.

There was none of the shyness of the average new boy about him.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver. "Have you been hooked?"

Teddy Grace opened his innocent blue eyes wide.

"Licked!" he repeated. "No. Why?"

"My hat! Has the Head let you off?" shouted Lovell.

"Let me off? I haven't done anything, have I?"

"You've come to Rookwood mounted on an elephant," said Jimmy Silver. "Don't you call that something?"

"Why shouldn't I come on an elephant, if there was an elephant handy?"

Jimmy rubbed his nose thoughtfully. That question was reasonable enough, in a way.

"They wouldn't have thought anything of it in India, for example," said Grace.

"We're not in India," remarked Raby.

"Wasn't the Head waxy?" asked Oswald.

Grace nodded.

"Yes. I thought he was rather in a bate, but he cooled down. I heard him say to Mr. Bootles, as I came away, that the boy seemed to be a perfect fool. I don't know what boy he was alluding to, unless it was one of you chaps."

"Why, you cheeky ass," said Lovell, "he meant you, of course! And my opinion is that the Head's right!"

"He would be pleased to know that, I'm sure," said Teddy Grace meekly. "I say, is this the Fourth Form passage—Classical?"

"Yes."

"Thanks! I'm looking for Study No. 2. It seems that that's to be my study here."

"Here you are," said Jimmy Silver.

"Yaroor!" came from under the table in No. 2, as the new boy entered the room.

"Gerrou, you beast!"

Grace jumped.

"What the dickens—" he exclaimed.

"Yah! Drive that beast away, Jimmy Silver!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth's this game?" exclaimed Teddy Grace. "Why—what—who—"

He stared at Tubby Muffin's face as it blinked out from under the table.

"Oh!" gasped Tubby, in great relief.

"You ain't the elephant?"

"Do I look like an elephant?"

"Is he in the passage?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Some beast said he was!" gasped Tubby, crawling out from under the table at last.

"I say, are you the new chap Grace?"

"You've got it."

"You can come to this study if you like, old chap," said Tubby Muffin hospitably.

"This is a really nice study—mine, you know. You'll find Jones minor all right, too. Higgs is rather a beast, but we put up with him. You'll be comfy in this study. Do come!"

Teddy Grace stared at the fat Classical.

"The fact is, I've come," said Grace. "Mr. Bootles says this is to be my study."

"Oh, good!" said Tubby Muffin, with great satisfaction. "I say, what a lark it was, your coming to school on an elephant! I wasn't scared at all, you know. When you know me better, you'll know that I'm practically as brave as a lion."

"You look it!" said Grace.

"Yes, don't I? Sort of lofty manner and fiery eye, and all that!" said Tubby fatuously. "Being a new fellow here, Grace, you'll want looking after a little. Don't you be afraid. I shall protect you."

"Thanks!"

"Not at all; rely on me. By the way," added Tubby Muffin, glancing at the doorway and sinking his voice, "do you happen to have a half-crown about you you don't want, Grace? I've run out of tin, and I wanted to stand a rather nice tea—for you, you know; sort of welcome to Rookwood."

Teddy Grace eyed the fat Classical.

There was no doubt that Tubby Muffin thought the new junior sort, and he was certainly losing no time in getting to work.

A smile of great simplicity came over Teddy's face.

"Would half-a-crown be enough?" he asked.

Muffin beamed.

"Five bob would be better, of course," he answered. "If you could make it five bob till—till Saturday—"

"But is that sufficient?"

Tubby could have hugged him.

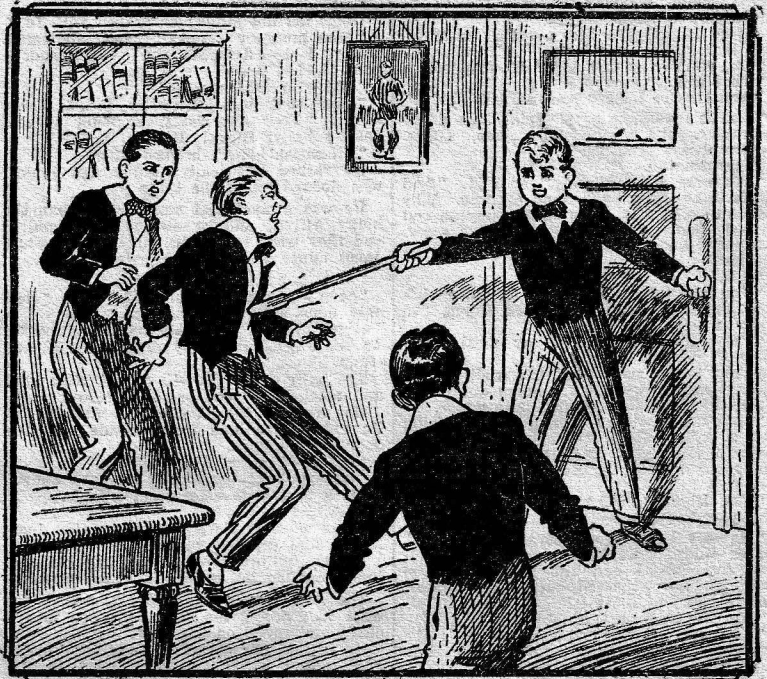
He believed in striking the iron while it was hot; this delightful, trustful simplicity might not last long at Rookwood.

"Make it ten!" he said.

"Well, if you think ten's enough—" said Grace, hesitating.

Tubby Muffin decided to go the whole unicorn, so to speak.

"I'll tell you what, Grace," he said, "make it a quid, old chap."



PLAYING "POKER"! The three nuts came round the table at Putty. The new boy did not seem alarmed. His hand came up with the poker in it. "Don't crowd a fellow," he said, backing towards the door. "If you do, you may get a lunge—like that, and that—" "Yaroor!" Peele & Co., yelling with pain, jumped back from the reckless lunges of the poker. (See Chapter 6.)

And Tubby held out a fat hand that almost trembled with eagerness.

"Gold or notes?" asked Grace. "I happen to have a gold sovereign here which my father gave me, and—"

"Eh? It doesn't matter which."

Grace felt in his waistcoat-pocket and squeezed a coin into Tubby Muffin's fat hand and quitted the study.

As the door closed after him, Tubby emitted a fat chuckle of glee.

He blinked at the gleaming coin in his hand in unutterable delight.

But that expression of delight changed somewhat as he looked more closely at the coin.

For the coin of the realm that lay in Tubby's fat palm was not a sovereign. It was a bright new halfpenny.

And Tubby Muffin looked at it, and looked, and looked; and the expression on his fat face grew quite extraordinary as he looked.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Obedying Orders!

"AFTER prep!" said Cyril Peele.

"Not at all."

"Yes. You're very good."

Jimmy Silver paused as he came along from the staircase.

Jimmy was due in the end study for prep, where Lovell and Raby and Newcome were already at work.

He had been over to the Modern side to see Tommy Dodd on football matters.

As a matter of fact, he had forgotten the new boy's existence.

But Teddy Grace, alias Putty, was brought back to his mind as he came into the Fourth Form passage on the Classical side.

Putty was chatting at the door of Study No. 1 with Peele, Gower, and Lattrey.

The trio were exceedingly civil to Grace.

In fact, their manner was flattery itself.

It was doubtless very agreeable for a new fellow, a stranger in the school, to be taken up and "battered" in this way by three old hands; and Teddy Grace was looking pleased.

But Jimmy Silver did not look pleased.

He was quite aware of the object of the shady trio in "battering" the new fellow, who seemed both wealthy and simple—quite a "catch" for Peele & Co.

The trio went into their study as Jimmy came along, and Grace moved on to his own.

Jimmy Silver hesitated a moment or two, and then overtook the new fellow and tapped him on the shoulder.

Grace looked round with a smile.

"You'll excuse me," said Jimmy. "As you're a new kid here, and don't seem quite up to the ropes, I think I ought to tell you—"

"Go ahead!"

"You've just been making some arrangement with Peele and his friends, in the first study."

"That's so."

"I don't want to butt in," explained Jimmy. "But I'm going to give you a tip."

"That's jolly good of you! My father told me always to listen to good advice."

"When you meet those fellows after prep, you may be asked to play cards, or some such rot," said Jimmy. "That kind of thing goes on in that study. I'm speaking to you as a new chap who doesn't know the ropes. You'd better keep clear of anything of the kind. It's against the rules here, and it means bad trouble if it's found out—apart from the rottenness of it. See?"

"I see."

"You seem to have more money than sense, from what I've seen of you," added Jimmy. "If you get into a little game in Peele's study, you'll have more sense and less money, see?"

Grace laughed outright at this sally.

"Thanks very much," he said. "I'll remember that."

Jimmy went on to his own study, very doubtful about whether his good advice would be of any use to the new junior.

But he had done all he could; and if Putty chose to get into trouble after that warning, it was his own look-out.

Putty looked after him with a rather amused smile, and then went into No. 2.

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where Tubby Muffin and Jones minor and Higgs were at work.

Alfred Higgs gave him a rather disagreeable look.

"Oh, you're the new kid!" he snapped.

"That same!" agreed Putty.

"And they've bunged you into this study?"

"Oh, he's welcome here!" said Jones minor tolerantly. "Let the kid alone, Higgs. You're always grousing."

Higgs grunted.

"We were three already," he said. "And Muffin takes up enough room for two. Why couldn't he be bunged in on Mornington and Erroll? Booties ought to have more sense. I suppose Booties sent you here, you young greenie?"

"Yes."

"You won't have any prep to do, as it's your first day here," continued Higgs, "so you can make yourself useful."

"I'm going to unpack my books and things."

"Your books and things can wait. You can get supper while we're doing our prep."

"Oh, let him alone!" said Jones minor.

"Shut up, Jones! I shouldn't mind giving you a thick ear, though you have got a major in the Sixth!" said Higgs. "Grace, or Putty, or Plaster, or whatever your name is—"

"Yes, Higgs, or Wiggs, or Piggs, or whatever your name is—"

"Haven't I told you not to be cheeky?" roared Higgs. "You're on the point of getting scragged, I can tell you. Now, I'm going to have toasted cheese for supper. You're going to toast it."

"Am I?" said Putty doubtfully.

"You are! You'll find the cheese in the cupboard and a frying-pan underneath. You toast it in the pan. Make up a fire."

"What with?"

"Find something!" said Higgs. "Blessed if I care what!"

"But—"

"If that cheese isn't ready when I'm ready, I'm sorry for you, that's all!" said Alfred Higgs.

And he settled down to finish his prep.

Putty remained in thought for some minutes, while his study-mates were working at the table.

Apparently, he decided to obey the orders of the Fourth Form bully, for he went to the study cupboard and got out the cheese.

Then he looked round for fuel, the fire being nearly at its last gasp.

Higgs grunted over his prep as he heard the fire crackling.

His instructions were being obeyed.

There was a pleasant scent of toasting cheese in the study before prep was over.

Jones minor was the first to finish, and he rose from the table, yawned, and pitched his books away.

"Hallo! How are you getting on, cocky?" he asked, with a grin.

"First rate," answered Putty.

"Blessed if I know where you found any fuel!" said Jones minor. "We're right out of coal and wood."

"Higgs told me to find something," answered Putty simply. "so I found something. I couldn't find anything but books. But they were all right: those with stiff covers make quite a good fire."

Jones blinked at him.

"B-b-books?" he stuttered.

"Yes; there wasn't anything else."

"You—you dangerous maniac!" howled Jones. "Have you been burning our books to make a fire?"

"Not yours: only Higgs'."

Alfred Higgs jumped up as if electrified.

"My books?" he roared.

Putty nodded, with a smile.

"Yes, I looked into them first for the name," he said. "I've only burned your books, Higgs, as it was for you, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jones minor. And Tubby gave a fat chuckle.

The expression on Higgs' face was extraordinary.

"You—you've burned my books!" he stammered, as if unable to believe the evidence of his ears. "You—you—"

"There wasn't anything else," said Putty, in surprise. "You told me to find something, and said you didn't care what."

"I—I—I—"

"You were going to lick me if the cheese wasn't ready—a hiding, you said," pursued Putty. "I was bound to get it ready. I didn't want a hiding, you know."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

Higgs did not laugh; he gasped with fury.

"Mum-mum-my books!" he spluttered.

"Why, I—I—I'll smash you! I—I'll squash you! I—I—I'll—"

"But you told me—"

"You told him Higgs?" yelled Jones minor. "Your own fault for being such a beastly bully, Higgs! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll smash him!" shrieked Higgs.

He rushed frantically at the new junior, who dodged round the table.

He was a good deal more active than the bulky Alfred, and he dodged quite easily; and they went round the table thrice, while Jones minor yelled with merriment.

"Stop him!" howled Higgs.

"Stop him yourself!" grinned Jones. "He's only done what you told him."

Higgs grasped the table to drag it aside. As he dragged it, Putty dodged out of the study.

The bully of the Fourth rushed after him, and reached the door as it slammed.

He grabbed the handle and dragged at it; but it was held from outside, and the door did not open.

"Let go!" roared Higgs.

"But you're going to lick me, you know," came a cool, soft voice from outside.

"Let go!"

Higgs clasped both hands on the door-handle and dragged with all his strength.

It was unfortunate for Higgs that the junior outside let go at the same moment.

The door flew open suddenly, and Higgs went half across the study, bumped into a chair, and rolled on the floor.

He lay on the carpet gasping for breath, and feeling as if he had landed in the middle of an earthquake, for a full minute.

When he recovered himself he scrambled up, and rushed to the open doorway with a deadly gleam in his eyes.

But the corridor outside was empty; the new junior had vanished.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Something like a Scrap!

"TROT in, dear boy!"

Cyril Peele spoke in his sweetest tones as the study door opened, after a quick tap, and Teddy Grace stepped in rather hastily.

Putty closed the door behind him at once.

Peele & Co. had finished prep—they never prolonged their labours more than they could help—and they had been making some little preparations for their distinguished guest.

A bright fire burned in the grate, and the table was cleared of books and papers, and a comfortable armchair was drawn up to the fire for the visitor.

"Sit down, old fellow!" said Lattrey.

Putty sat down.

"We're going to have a little supper," remarked Gower. "I hope you haven't had supper in your study, Grace."

"No."

"That's good. We've got somethin' rather nice."

Tramp, tramp, tramp! sounded in the passage.

Alfred Higgs was in search of the new junior.

There was a sound of the opening and slamming of doors.

Higgs was looking into studies up and down the passage, with a furious face, regardless of the surprised stares of the occupants.

"Hallo, is that somebody on the warpath?" remarked Lattrey, listening.

"I think it may be my study-mate, Higgs," said Putty simply. "He's after me, I believe."

"After you?" exclaimed Peele warmly.

"Yes; I think he's annoyed."

"Higgs is a beastly bully," said Lattrey.

"What have you done to get his rag out?"

"I did what he told me!" explained Putty. "As he said he would give me a licking if I didn't, I thought I'd better."

"But—but he's not after you because you did what he told you, surely?" exclaimed Peele.

"Yes, I believe so. He wasn't satisfied somehow."

"Higgs is a bullying rotter!" said Gower. "He'd better not come here kickin' up a shindy. Let's have supper. We might have

a little game after supper till bedtime, if you care for it, Grace."

"Certainly!"

"Ever played poker?" murmured Lattrey.

"No, never."

"We'll teach you, if you like."

"You're very good."

"Not at all, old fellow!" said Peele affectionately. "We want to make you feel at home, your first night here, you know."

Crash!

The door flew open, and Higgs' furious face stared in.

His eyes glittered as they fastened on Putty.

"Oh, here you are are you?" he roared. "Here I am!" assented the new junior, smiling at him, without moving from the armchair.

"I'm going to smash you!"

"Please don't!" murmured Putty.

Lattrey and his friends exchanged a quick glance as Higgs strode savagely into the study.

It was up to them to protect their distinguished guest, for it was pretty certain that the new fellow would not have any energy left for learning the game of poker, after a fight with the bully of the Fourth.

The three juniors gathered in Higgs' path.

"Stop this, Higgs!" exclaimed Peele, as boldly as he could. "You're not goin' to rag the new kid!"

"I'll rag you, too, if you don't let me get at him at once!" raved Higgs.

"You're not goin' to touch him!"

"Will you get aside?"

"No!" said Peele desperately. "Stand up to the brute, you fellows!"

"You bet!"

Higgs rushed furiously at the three nuts of the fourth, hitting out with his heavy fists recklessly.

He was in too furious a temper to count odds.

The trio backed away from the rush, but they rallied, and tackled Alfred Higgs together.

Peele went down, yelling, as he caught Higgs' knuckles with his chin, but the other two fastened on Higgs at close-quarters.

The bulky intruder was whirled back.

Cyril Peele jumped up, as Higgs struggled furiously with his study-mates, and piled in again.

With the three juniors clinging to him like cats, Higgs found that he had booked too large an order to be carried out, so to speak.

He went staggering towards the doorway, still struggling.

Putty sat in the armchair, with his hands in his pockets and a cheery smile on his face, watching the conflict.

It did not seem to occur to him to take part in it.

Perhaps he felt that, as a guest, it was his business to leave the matter entirely in the hands of his hosts.

At all events, he did so.

His hosts had their hands full. Alfred Higgs was a redoubtable adversary even against three.

Peele and Gower and Lattrey were gasping and dishevelled by the time they got him to the doorway.

There, with a combined effort, they ejected him, and Higgs went bumping into the passage.

"Well pitched!" chuckled Conroy of the Fourth.

Conroy was coming along with Van Ryn and Pons, and the three Colonials stopped as Higgs was hurled forth from the study.

Higgs sprawled on the floor, breathlessly, and Peele & Co., equally breathless, gasped in the doorway.

"Now clear off, you bully!" panted Peele.

"Yow-ow-ow-woow! Groogh!" came from Higgs, as he sprawled on the floor.

"Ow, ow! Woowoo!"

"Get the poker!" exclaimed Cyril Peele breathlessly. "We'll give him the poker if he comes in again!"

"Good egg!"

But Alfred Higgs did not come in again.

He was feeling as if he had been under a lawn-mower, and even the truculent bully of the Fourth had had enough for the present.

He staggered up, gasping, and shook a furious fist at the three nuts, and limped away to his own quarters.

Just the Fellows to Chum Up With—Jimmy Silver & Co.!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Playing Poker!

"THANKS so much!" murmured Putty. He smiled sweetly at Peele and Gower and Lattrey as they stood gasping for breath after the battle.

The three nuts were not feeling happy. They had driven out the invader, but he had left his marks upon them, and they had considerable damages to show.

It was some time before the dusty and dishevelled nuts had reduced themselves to order and were able to proceed with supper.

Neither were they feeling very amiable towards their guest, though their politeness did not wane.

He had landed them into that struggle, and they inwardly resolved that he should pay for it when the "little game" began.

Outwardly, all was harmony.

The supper was excellent; Cyril Peele had taken care of that.

There were good things galore, and Putty was pressed on all sides to partake of them, which he did with hearty good will and good appetite.

Supper was over at last, and Peele & Co. prepared for the more serious business to come.

The table was cleared.

Peele produced a little silver box from some recess, and opened it, displaying a pack of playing-cards.

"Never played poker before?" he asked.

Putty shook his head.

"It's quite simple," said Peele blandly.

"You'll pick it up in a brace of shakes."

"You'll like it," said Lattrey.

"Oh, I'm sure I shall!" said Putty cheerily.

"Are we going to play poker now?"

"That's it."

"Shall I get the poker?" asked Putty innocently.

"Wh-a-at?"

"You'll want the poker, I suppose."

"The—the poker!" repeated Lattrey dazedly.

"Yes; you can't play poker without a poker, surely?" asked Putty, with a look of surprise.

The nuts of the Fourth stared at him blankly.

Apparently unconscious of their transfixed astonishment, Putty rose and picked the poker out of the fender.

Poker in hand, he smiled at the astounded nuts.

"I'm ready!" he announced.

"You—you're ready!" bawled Peele.

"Oh, my hat! Oh gad!"

Lattrey drew a deep breath.

"You're makin' a mistake, Grace," he said.

"The game of poker is a card game."

Putty looked puzzled.

"Oh! Not juggling with a poker, or anything like that?" he asked.

"Nunno."

"You play it with cards," exclaimed Peele, as patiently as he could. "You have a little money on it, too—to make it interestin', you know."

"Do you?"

"That's the idea. Begin with a bob, you know," said Gower. "Of course, we wouldn't play—ahem!—for money—that is, big stakes. But there has to be somethin' on the game; that's one of the—the rules."

"Sit down, old fellow, and we'll have a round to show you," said Peele.

Putty did not sit down. He remained standing, and, for reasons best known to himself, he kept the poker in his hand.

"I'm so sorry!" he muttered.

"Nothing to be sorry about that I can see," remarked Peele, with a stare. "Now, we take five cards each—"

"Don't give me any, thanks!"

"Eh? You can't play without cards!"

"You see, you didn't say at first that it was a card game," explained Putty, with sweet simplicity. "If you'd mentioned it, of course, I should have told you that I never play cards for money!"

"Wha-at?"

"In fact, I've promised my father never to!" said Putty.

Peele & Co. exchanged glances with gleaming eyes.

The polite urbanity was wearing thin now.

"Well, this isn't really playin' cards for money, you know," said Peele, after a pause. "It's really a lark."

"Oh, we're going to play for nuts?" asked Putty.

"N-no! Just a bob or two, to make it interestin', you see."

"So sorry!" murmured Putty. "By the way, I think I'd better be getting along and seeing about unpacking my books. Would you fellows like to come and help me?"

The three nuts rose to their feet.

The expressions on their faces were decidedly unpleasant now.

There was a humorous glitter in Teddy Grace's eyes, which they did not mistake.

Under his soft manner there was the firmness of a rock, and the three young rascals realised that there would be no poker playing in that study with Putty in the game.

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It dawned upon them that the soft new junior, who was called Putty because he was so soft, had been pulling their legs all along—that he was quite "up" to their game, and had allowed them rope with which to hang themselves.

As they realised that the polite manners of Peele & Co. dropped from them like a cloak.

Their eyes gleamed at the new junior.

"So you've been foolin' us?" said Peele at last, his voice trembling with rage.

Putty burst into a laugh.

"My dear chaps, you've been fooling yourselves!" he answered. "Why don't you laugh?"

"Laugh?" repeated Peele.

"Yes! It's funny, if you look at it the right way."

Peele gritted his teeth.

"It may be funny," he said; "but you won't feel funny by the time you get out of this study! Collar him, you fellows! We'll rag the cheeky cad till he's black and blue!"

The three nuts came round the table at Putty.

Teddy Grace did not seem alarmed; perhaps he had expected that development. His hand came up, with the poker in it.

"Don't crowd a fellow," he said, backing towards the door. "If you do, you may get a lunge—like that—"

"Yaroooh!"

"Or a tap—like that—"

"Yoooop!"

"Or a poke in the ribs—like that!"

"Yah! Oh! Yooop!"

Peele & Co., yelling with pain and rage, jumped back from the reckless lunges of the poker.

Putty reached the door, and put his left hand behind him to open it, keeping his eyes on the enraged nuts.

The trio rushed forward as the door opened.

But again the lunges of the poker drove them back, yelling.

"Ta-ta, old nuts," said Putty sweetly. And he slammed the door and walked down the passage, into the arms of the Fistical Four.

"Hallo!" cried Jimmy Silver. "What are you carrying round a poker for?"

"I've been playing poker—"

"What?"

"This kind of poker; and they don't seem to have enjoyed it— Dear me, here they come!"

The study door flew open, and Peele & Co. rushed out furiously.

They stopped at the sight of Silver & Co. The Fistical Four grinned.

It occurred to Jimmy Silver that his good-natured warning to the new junior had not been needed.

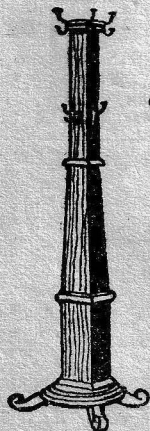
Peele & Co., with scowling faces, retreated into their study.

"Another friendship broken!" sighed Putty. "I suppose these things happen because I'm soft. I'm called Putty, you know, because I'm so soft!"

And Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled. They had discovered by that time exactly how soft the new fellow was.

THE END.

(Boys, you simply must not miss next week's stunning tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, entitled: "A Cool Customer!" in next week's Extra Bumper issue!)



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