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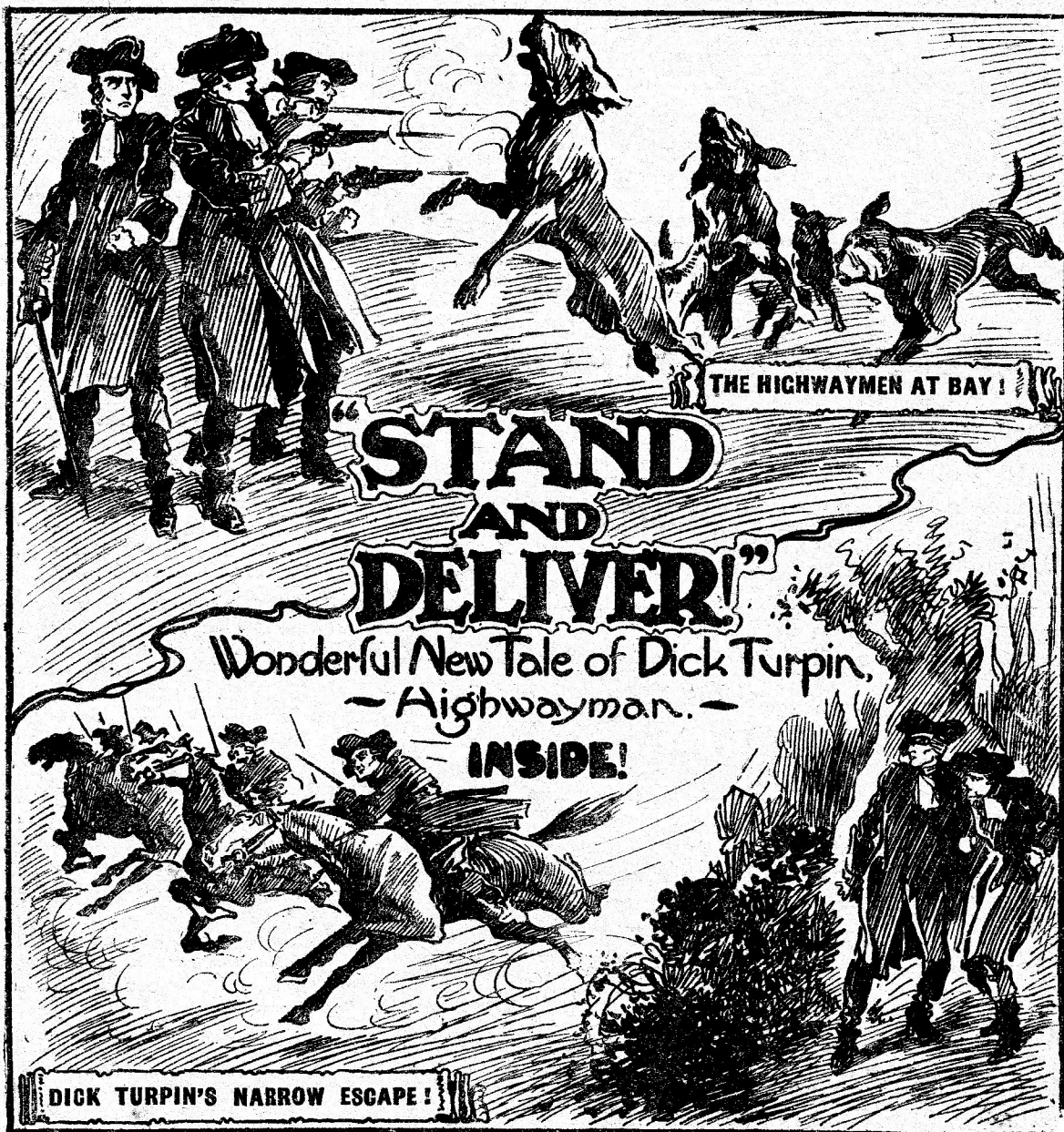
No.
214

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2 There's a grand Rookwood Story in the "Boys' Friend" every week!



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

"THE BOUNDER'S FIGHT!"

A thrilling yarn of Greyfriars with Vernon-Smith to the fore is one of the big outstanding features of next week's "Popular." Look out for this magnificent yarn. It shows you what the Bounder is made of, and reveals still further the simply amazing complexities of his character. We all know the Bounder pretty well, or think we do. Everybody has been thoroughly interested in him. Often enough he has set a fine example of out-and-out pluck. And then you get evidence of a kink in his temperament, something jolly hard to understand, or attempt to explain. In next Tuesday's record story Vernon-Smith finds himself up against Loder, not for the first time, either. Gerald Loder is a mighty difficult proposition. He asks for trouble. From a grunt a pig—I have not got this quite right, but no matter. Anyhow, Loder is a bit worse than usual, and he receives a crack on the head from a cricket bat. The blow knocks him senseless, and Vernon-Smith, who struck it, blanches with horror at what he has done. He never meant that! Too late now for regret! Loder lies there without a sign of life—a bully who has received his

punishment—too severe a punishment even for a tyrant! And the Bounder, conscience stricken, beside himself with remorse, takes to flight. You will say this yarn has a grip in it. It has all that, and, what is more, it plumbs the depths of human feeling.

"THE TEAM THAT BAGGY BUILT!"

Surely this latest achievement of the mighty Trimble takes the biscuit. Mr. Martin Clifford has a theme here which gives scope for the display of wit, and the working up of some fine sporting situations. There is plenty of wit to boot. Baggy comes into ample funds. Baggy as a millionaire is something suggestive of all sorts of happy stunts, but a fool and his money—we know the rest. Baggy thinks he will do something particularly striking, and he gets up a footer team. It is not altogether a cheery team. Baggy has found recruits of the most undesirable sort, hefty brutes, and the strange eleven sizes up in a truly amazing fashion, prepared under the orders of Baggy and Tom Merry. Don't miss the startling denouement of this capital yarn. Tom Merry & Co.

know a thing or two, luckily, and they can play the game.

"STAND AND DELIVER!"

The coming instalment of this great serial is crammed full of dashing adventure. It will prove to be the most irresistible yet.

A SPECIAL DIARY NUMBER!

The Supplement, otherwise "Bunter's Weekly," has hit on a topping idea for next week. Diaries are nearly always interesting. Bunter has the true spirit of the up-to-date journalist, say what you will. He has collected a few splendid features for this brilliant issue.

There will be another magnificent Free Glossy Photo in next week's issue. Add it to your fine collection.

"LOVELL'S VISITOR!"

Rookwood turns up in good style next week. You will meet most of the immensely popular chaps of Jimmy Silver's school in the new tale. They have been dealing extensively with ructions at Rookwood, but through all the trouble Jimmy Silver and his pals keep smiling.

"THE 'SPORT' OF LAST CHANCE CAMP!"

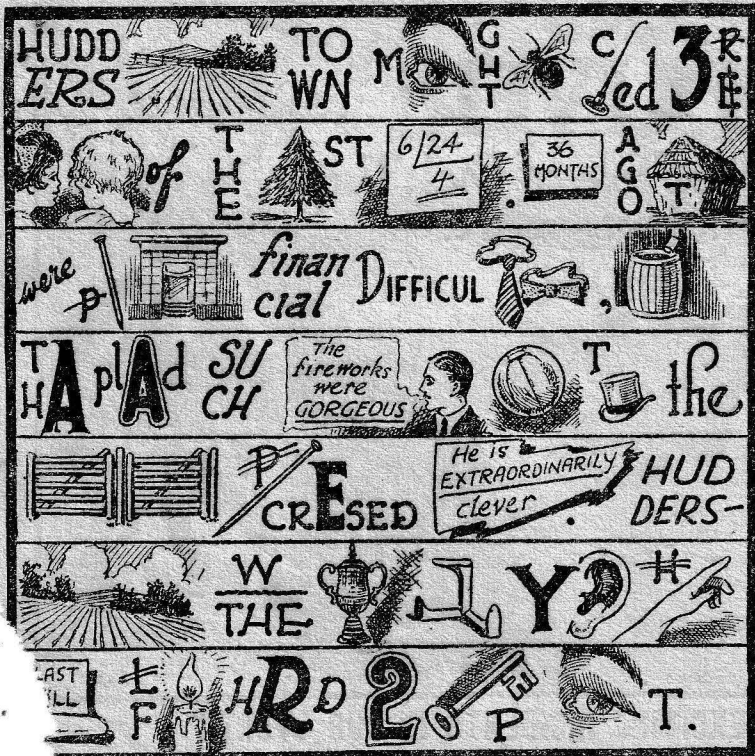
Bob Lawless and his chums put in some good work next week. The Cedar Creek brigade of adventurers simply jump into fresh sensations. Next week you will like the whole crowd better than ever. They are sportsmen to the core.

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:
TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH.



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 Huddersfield 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 "Huddersfield" Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, March 1st, 1923.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the 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 "Huddersfield Town" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

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Here is another grand long instalment of the finest serial ever written!



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.**

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Dick Neville, the young Squire of Faulkbourne, is turned out of his rightful inheritance by the low-down treachery and deceit of an adventurer who calls himself Hector Neville, Dick's cousin. Hector is helped in his vile plotting by reason of the fact that Dick has fallen into disgrace with the Government, owing to the assistance he has rendered the famous highwayman,

Dick Turpin. The young squire has also another deadly enemy in Captain Sweeny, a notorious footpad. Hector Neville is determined to obtain possession of the lordly mansion wherein Dick has taken up his abode. The rogue has been foiled the first time, but he returns to the charge armed with legal warrants. He imagines it is all over bar the shouting, but he little

knows Dick and the loyalty of his serving-men. Hector and the bailiff's officers get a hot reception from the defenders, for the latter tip a cauldron full of hot porridge from the roof on to the attackers. Splish! Splash! Splish! Down comes the blinding hot gruel.

(Now Read On.)

HECTOR ROUTED!

"O H, the fiends—the villains!" shrieked the head bailiff, rolling over, with two of his men a-top of him. 'Tis rotten with stirabout they are!"

The battering-ram struck the gates with terrible force, and shattered them; but down came the whole contents of the second cauldron just in the nick of time. There was more meat in it this time, and large slabs of fat bacon and pork decorated the batteries. The rout was complete, and the men, picking themselves up, fled inconspicuously, swearing that all Hector Neville's money should not bribe them to assant Faulkbourne again. Ralph and Dick, racing down the stairs, were at the entrance in a moment.

"Charge, boys!" he cried to his men. And the two Nevilles swept out through the shattered gates at the head of their retainers, and flung themselves on the routed mob.

Half a dozen of the enemy, who had not been caught with the rest, were just about to dart in and take legal possession; but the staves of the defenders drove them back, and Dick and his men swept on. The bailiffs tried to rally, but the household of Faulkbourne fell upon them with a cheer, and plied their staves so lustily that the porridge-covered bailiffs could not face them.

"Away, you scum!" cried Dick, smiting right and left. "Back to Hensford with you, and tell the sheriff that if he would take Faulkbourne he will need to send better men than you!"

"Stand to them! Don't give way!" screamed Hector. "You fools! You cowards! You are six to one against them!"

And so they were before the stirabout thinned them out; but now half their number were cooling themselves in the pond, and the other half were utterly demoralised. Some of the hangers-on—poachers, wayside thieves, and other riff-raff—made a stand with their cudgels, but so pluckily did the boys lead their stalwart retainers, and so shrewdly did they hit, that in less than a minute the whole crew—bailiffs, rogues, and all—were in full flight, running for the park boundaries with all their might, with the men of Faulkbourne in hot pursuit.

"Guard the doors! See that no one slips in unawares!" cried Dick. "Where's that knave Hector? I see him not! Has he stolen a march on us?"

"He thought to do so!" said Ralph, with a shout of laughter. "Ha, ha! Look yonder!"

Hector, seeing his men routed, still did not lose hope, for if by some trick he could gain a foothold in the house, his warrant would hold good, and, having gained possession, could return and bring armed men to forcibly turn the former owners out of his newly-gained property. So, seeing the defenders outside busy routing the bailiffs, Hector ran swiftly towards the house, and made for one of the windows of the kitchen, which had been unbarred.

He smashed the casement in with a club which one of the cudgel-men had dropped, and was clambering in with a cry of triumph, when he suddenly found himself face to face with Dick's head cook—a gigantic, stout woman with a fiery temper—with a wet dishcloth in one hand.

"Who are you, ye skinny whipper-snapper?"

she said, advancing fiercely upon him. "Who gave ye leave to come gallivanting into my kitchen?"

"Stand out of the way!" cried Hector, blundering through the window and waving her aside. "I come into my own. Out of my path, woman!"

"What, ye long, lean rascal!" bawled the cook, in a rage. "Did ye call me a woman?"

"Of course I did!" retorted Hector impatiently, trying to get past her.

"Then take this for your impudence!" cried the cook, flinging one brawny arm round him, and rubbing her wet dishcloth in his face. "I'll woman ye, ye young sand-hopper!"

"Let me go! Help!" cried Hector, as the gigantic cook held him fast and scrubbed him with the cloth, which smelt abominably of greens. "Death and hounds! Let me go, I tell you!"

"Come a-busting into my kitchen as if it belonged to ye!" said the cook. "An' then call me a woman! Hold still, ye long-legged little sinner, an' have your face washed!"

"I'll have you whipped for this!" roared Hector, struggling frantically, beside himself with rage. "I'm the new master here, I tell you!"

"You the new master!" cried the cook. "A spindle-shanked fool like you master o' Faulkbourne! See here, then, I'll put you in possession!"

And picking up the kicking Hector under one arm, she soused him, head over ears, in the great trough in which the dishes were washed up. Howling and spluttering, he came to the surface, and she ducked him under the greasy, warm water again three times, when, with one final scrub, she crammed the dishcloth into his mouth, and

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"Up with you and ride!" cried Dick Turpin, as he thundered up. "Here is Black Satan, ready saddled! Up with you! Your pardon has been withdrawn!"
(See this page.)

shot him bodily out through the window again.

"Well done, Janet!" cried Dick and Ralph, laughing till their sides ached. "The fellow never comes to Faulkbourne but he gets a bath."

"What, is yonder the rapsallion that thinks to turn ye out, Master Dick?" cried the cook, beginning hurriedly to force her huge bulk through the window. "Od's, if I'd known that, I'd have given him some more! I thought the rascal was jestin'. Let me get at him again!"

But Hector hastily scrambled up and took to his heels, not stopping till he had put a hundred yards between himself and the house, when he turned and shook his fist at Dick.

"You will laugh on the other side of your mouth soon, you dog!" he cried. "You little think what is in store for you. In two hours I return with the Carabineers to hunt you out of Faulkbourne with a bullet between the ribs—if it chance you are not by then on the road to the gibbet!"

"A brave accident to happen in two hours!" laughed Dick mockingly. "Pick up your feet and run, my mannikin; here comes the cook on your trail."

And with one last furious glance at the boys, Hector Neville dashed away after his men.

"Carabineers, quotha!" said Ralph, wiping the tears of mirth from his eyes. "Two can play at that. If it comes from strabout to musket-balls we could hold Faulkbourne against fifty. But what did he mean by saying you might be on the road to the gibbet? Some foolish threat, belike."

"Doubtless," said Dick. "Though I think there's more afoot than I have learned of."

"Well, I'll ride off to Huntercombe and bring down a troop of my men," said Ralph, "and between us we'll make it so hot for the Carabineers that they'll be blithe to leave us alone."

He caught his horse and cantered away, leaving Dick to see to the strengthening of the gates. When all was made tight and ready, the evening was fast drawing in.

"I think we may hold our own against a regiment now," said Dick to himself, "though what the upshot of it will be goodness knows! Hallo! Who comes here?"

He turned, as a dark figure on horseback, leading a second horse, came thundering at full gallop across the drives and flower-beds, and pulled up with a jerk close by Dick's side.

"Turpin!" cried Dick. "What brings you here, comrade?"

"Up with you and ride!" cried the highwayman, for he it was. "Here is Black Satan, ready saddled!"

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Satan, ready saddled, and the pistols in the holster! Up and away!"

"Nay, I will not run from a handful of Carabineers," returned Dick. "Odso, man, there's sport before us! They think to turn me out."

"Carabineers!" cried Turpin. "Pish! Have you not heard? The gallows-rope is upon your neck! Barrington, the Secretary of State, is dead! Your enemies have seized their chance. Your pardon is withdrawn, and the King's Riders are closing in upon us even now! Mount and ride!"

"Zounds, do you tell me so!" cried Dick, springing to Satan's bridle. The great horse he had ridden in his highway days, and which no other man save Turpin dare touch, neighed with joy to see his young master again. "Then Faulkbourne cannot save me from the gibbet!"

"Nay, 'tis the very place to trap you in."

"We must away to the open road with all speed. Hang it, here are the knaves down upon us already! Into the saddle with you. We shall have a fight for it."

A bugle sounded somewhere ahead, and the quick beat of horses' hoofs rang upon the night air. Turpin drew one of his double pistols, but Dick, after a swift glance round, took his foot from the stirrup again.

"They are all around us!" he said beneath his breath. "Down with you, quick, and lead the horses in among the cedars here. They will come to the front gates, and while they wait there and search the house we shall slip away unseen."

"Ay, that's the plan," muttered Turpin, slipping down quickly. "You know the ground best, Dick. But be quick, if you would save your neck!"

Dick led the way, and in a few seconds the two comrades had led their horses in among the dark cedar-trees a little beyond the house. The fallen leaves made a noiseless carpet for the horses' hoofs, and there they waited, well hidden, to see what befell.

"Shlood! 'Tis like old times—ch, Dick!" chuckled Turpin. "A good hiding-place, save that there's no coach-and-four for us to spring out upon. Yonder come the rascals."

Hardly had they hidden themselves when eight or nine King's Riders rode out upon the gravel, and made for the gates of the tower, passing so close that Dick easily recognised their leader as the lieutenant who had caused all the trouble when Turpin took refuge at Faulkbourne a week before.

"Scatter out and guard all the exits!" commanded the lieutenant. "We are bound to have him now."

"Are you, in sooth!" murmured Dick.

And as soon as the Riders had passed on to the tower-gates he gave a low, chirping whistle.

A small figure that had been following the Riders some way behind, staring at them, started at the sound. Dick whistled again, and, following the whistle, the figure on the path slipped into the shrubbery, and was soon at Dick's side. It was a sharp little page-boy, devoted to Dick, and just the messenger he wanted.

"Johnny," whispered Dick, "slip into the house, and tell all the serving-men and maids to leave it as soon as yonder men enter. They are searching for me. Off with you!"

The page saluted, and was away in a moment.

"Open!" said the lieutenant's voice, as he hammered on the gates. "Come, you men, gather round. There is but the one way he can escape, and that is here; they have barred up all the other doors. Six of you will enter the house with me, while two remain here to guard the gate."

A serving-man put his head cautiously through the little trap in the door, and peered out to see who was knocking.

"Who be you?" he said to the lieutenant. "I'll soon show you who I am, fellow! Open in the King's name!"

"Come, Dick," whispered Turpin, plucking at his comrade's sleeve; "they are all behind us now, and there are none to bar our path to the open. Let us ride on while we may."

"Nay, wait a little," murmured Dick. "See, all but two of them are to enter the house. Since they are so eager to visit Faulkbourne, perchance we can press them to stay there while we ride our way."

"Burn me if I see what you're at," muttered Turpin. "However, I know you for a rare hand at tricking a foe, and if there's any sport to be had, let's at it. They are somewhat too many to fight."

"And no need for it," said Dick. "See, there they go into the house."

The lieutenant had shaken his sealed warrant before the serving-man's eyes, but that good retainer would have refused even the King's warrant admittance, without an order from his master, but that the little page came up and whispered to him. The door was suddenly flung open.

"He is within!" said the lieutenant. "Hang me, I can smell him! Stand to the doors, Hawkes and Walters; the rest of you enter with me!"

And, holding the warrant in his left hand and a pistol in his right—for he had already felt Dick Neville's teeth—the lieutenant marched fiercely in, with his six men behind him. Soon there was a great commotion inside the house, as the Riders searched it, and the men of the household came trooping out, according to Dick's orders to the page, till only the searchers were left inside.

"Now for it!" said Dick to his comrade, and he whispered rapidly in Turpin's ear.

The highwayman listened and nodded, a mischievous smile growing on his face. Separating, the two friends crept along through the shrubbery in opposite directions, stole across the drive, and gained the walls of the house, one on each side of the gates, but at some distance from them. That done, they began to sidle gradually towards the gate themselves.

The two Riders on guard, one at each door-post, were leaning forward and staring into the house, instead of looking out, as they should have done. Inside could be heard the banging of doors, the tramp of feet, and the sound of hoarse voices, as the search-party ransacked room after room. Meanwhile, Dick and his partner slowly closed in upon the two sentinels.

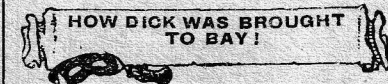
Suddenly, with a rush, Turpin and Dick seized the two Riders from behind, and, with hand and boot, sent them staggering into the hall with such force that both fell headlong. Before they could get up the two friends pulled the gates together and shut them in, Dick shot the outside bolts and let fall the crossbar.

"Trapped!" he cried, with a roar of laughter.

"Neatly done!" said Turpin. "A very pretty trick of yours, Dick. Now we may ride where we will and spare our horses."

They rode quickly over the moor for nearly an hour, talking lightheartedly of the future, when Turpin glanced back over the moor.

Dick turned in his saddle, and then a cry of amazement burst from his lips as he recognised the newcomer—the very last person in the world he expected or wanted to see.



"CAREFUL, lad! Here comes somebody on our track, and riding hard. 'Tis but a single horseman, though a boy, rather. Od's fish! 'Tis your young brother Ralph!"

"Why, Ralph, how came you here?" cried Dick, as his young brother cantered up. "What the plague brings you across the moor by night? No matter. I'm glad to see you."

"Ay, but how did he find us—that's the question!" growled Turpin, who did not seem too well pleased, "seeing that we have ridden zig-zag over four miles!"

"I guessed you would ride for Bramham

Moore," said Ralph, "when I heard you had left by the west side of the park, so I rode here by the shortest way, and, now the moon has risen, I soon spied you."

"Tis well the King's Riders have not your wit, or we should soon adorn the gibbet," said Turpin, taking a pinch of snuff. "And, now you have found us, young cock o' the woods, what is your pleasure?"

"Dick, is Faulkbourne lost?" cried Ralph. "Ay, and my pardon, besides. I am Dick o' the Roads once more, Ralph, with three hundred guineas on my head. Or, perchance, they will raise it to four. As for Faulkbourne, let it go hang—for the present. Black Satan and a pair of pistols are enough for me, since I am driven to it," said Dick, looking with kindly eyes at his brother, yet a little sadly.

"Pink me if it isn't more fun than partridge-shooting!" cried Ralph. "Dick, I'll ride with you, and perchance they'll put three hundred guineas on my head, too!"

"Nay, lad, you shall not," said Dick. "My enemies have outlawed me, but I'll never see you pulled down to my level. I kept you out of it before, and I will again. Besides, there is no need. Though through carelessness I failed to make good my claim to Faulkbourne, and Hector Neville jockeyed me out of it, 'tis not so with Huntercombe, which is still your estate. I made that sure at once, after Vesey's death, and it was proved by a flaw in the will Vesey induced our father to make, that Huntercombe was never rightly Vesey's. I think Hector will not be able to swindle you out of it."

"I care nothing for Huntercombe while you are riding the highways!" said Ralph gloomily.

"Nay, boy. 'Tis your part of the family heritage and you must guard it. There is no outlawry hanging over you."

"Come, let us water our horses at the brook," said Turpin, "while you and your brother are juggling with estates. When that's done, we must ride again, for the dawn must find us on the county border."

"Let your beast drink lightly, Ralph," said Dick, as they all three dismounted by the brook, "for you must ride back to Huntercombe to-night. If any danger threatens you there, you must spend the term at St. Austell's School again, with Dr. Trellawney. That will be the safest haven for you, either way."

"I shall be glad enough," cried Ralph. "Egad, what sport we had then—eh, Dick?—between Vesey and the boys. Rare fun it was!"

"Od's death! What's that?" exclaimed Turpin.

A deep, sonorous baying came whiffing on the night wind, as of some strange beast out a-hunting. Turpin ran up the steep side of the brook, and leaped on to a boulder, gazing out over the wild moor.

"To the horses, and ride for your lives!" he cried. "They have put the bloodhounds on our track. See, yonder come the brutes!"

It was now light as day upon the moor, and racing towards the three comrades, their heads up and in full cry, came four gigantic bloodhounds, baying wolfishly as they sighted their quarry.

The three fugitives made a dash for the horses, but they were too late. Ralph's big roan, suddenly panic-stricken at the sight of the oncoming brutes, flung up his head and galloped away like the wind, and the two highwaymen's horses, caught by the bad example, stampeded after him. The fugitives were left helpless.

"Here comes the Riders on the trail of the hounds!" cried Turpin, pointing to a troop of horsemen in the distance, galloping furiously towards them. "Hang it, our last chance is gone!"

"There will be little left of us when they arrive, unless we strike shrewdly," said Dick, with a grim laugh. "I care not for all the Riders in England, but to be dogs' meat—'tis outside the bargain. Here, Ralph, shoulder to shoulder, out with the steel, and fall not. He who misses his stroke shall have his throat torn out!"

Even as he spoke, the great brutes, with gaping jaws, sprang upon them. Dick's pistol flashed, and lodged its contents full in the chest of one, while Ralph prepared to meet the other with his sword.

Crack! went Turpin's pistols. The foremost hound rolled over with a howl and a gasp, right in the track of his fellows, the other leaped over his body, and sprang at the three defenders like thunderbolts.

Again the pistol cracked, but the ball

failed to stop the rush, and the great hounds were upon their quarry, mad for blood.

"Give 'em the steel!" cried Dick. "Stand close to me, Ralph, and I'll cover you."

The dawn was breaking over the cold moorland, and the onslaught of the bloodhounds was horrible to see. No human foes could have been so perilous. The three comrades were ready for them with the steel, but the hounds were four to three, and the boys knew that if a single stroke missed its mark the attacking dog would bear the defender down.

Turpin had flung down his empty pistol, and stood with drawn rapier in his right hand and a dagger in his left. As the hound which attacked him leaped clear from the ground at his throat, the outlaw received him neatly on the point of his sword, which passed under the dog's chin and met it full in the breast. By the weight of its own spring the hound spitted itself right up to the sword-hilt, causing the powerful highwayman to stagger backwards ere the brute collapsed and fell. In a moment Turpin, cool as ever, put his foot on the body, plucked his blade from it, and was ready for the next.

The largest of the hounds sprang at Dick, and he delivered a thrust full at its gaping jaws. It was a less safe stroke than Turpin's, being apt to glance and miss; but Dick had never stood up to bloodhounds before, and had to win his experience. By good luck the thrust went home, the point drove out through the back of the brute's neck, and the sword-hilt clashed on its yellow fangs.

At the same moment the third hound flew at Ralph, and the plucky youngster, who had drawn his little Court rapier, stood to it like a man. He received the hound's neck on his point, but, though sturdy, he was not strong enough to stand against the weight of the brute's rush, and it knocked him flat on his back.

With a ferocious growl the bloodhound turned on him, and in another moment Ralph would have met his death. Dick, seeing what had happened, sprang forward with a cry. His own sword was so deeply fixed in the hound he had killed that he could not withdraw it on the moment, and,

desperate with fear for Ralph, he left it, and threw himself on the great dog with his bare hands.

"Roll away, Ralph! Get clear!" he cried, gripping the loose folds of the brute's throat. In another instant Dick, Ralph, and the dog were rolling over together, the hound gnashing its teeth madly and writhing desperately in its efforts to get at its captor. It would very soon have succeeded, so agile was it, had not Turpin darted forward, plunged his dagger into its side, and turned again to face the fourth dog once more.

The hound which had so nearly finished Ralph's career dropped with a howl, and Dick, leaping up, sprang to his sword and dragged it with a couple of strong tugs from the lifeless body of the dog he had killed.

Ralph also was on his feet in a moment, but his ferocious assailant had only been wounded by Turpin's dagger, and, springing up, it came at Ralph again, and gave him enough to do to defend himself; while the fourth hound, as yet unhurt and with twice the cunning and agility of the others, was flying from Turpin to Dick and back, keeping them both busy, as it sought to find a grip.

"Od's burn it! Finish the brute quickly!" cried Turpin impatiently, making a savage lunge at the dog, which avoided him with equal skill and nearly dashed under Dick's guard. "Have you never a pistol, Dick? Mine is empty. We are horseless, and the Riders are nearly upon us! Ralph, spit that wounded pup of yours, for Heaven's sake!"

The troop of Riders, which were far distant when the dogs fell on, had galloped their hardest, and now were barely three hundred yards away. A sudden check pulled them up—the three foremost blundered heavily into a wide strip of bog which lay between them and the fugitives. Turpin and the boys, on their way thither, had found a narrow path, over which they led their horses; but the Riders charged at it in ignorance, and in a few moments the leaders' horses were bogged up to the hocks.

Their riders floundered back to the edge, cursing, while the others galloped along the side, seeking a way over. There was none that they, in their haste, could find.

"A thousand curses!" cried the leader of the Riders. "There is no way! Leave the



The great black horse, his eyeballs glaring and his teeth bared, came plunging through the mob of Riders like a thunderbolt, knocking them down like ninepins. "Down with them to the dust!" cried Dick Neville.

(See page 6.)

horses, and cross on foot. The knives are mounted. We have them neatly, even if they beat the dogs!"

"The black death strike this capering brute!" said Turpin; for the fourth bloodhound still attacked so savagely and shrewdly that they could neither kill it nor turn their backs on it. "Ah, well done! Down he goes at last! And young Ralph's, too!"

As the hound dashed at Turpin, a swift thrust from Dick transfixed it, and Ralph at the same time spitting the brute that still beset him, laid the last of the bloodhounds low. It was more than any of the three defenders had hoped for when the contest began; but still they were little better off, for a round dozen of Riders were crossing the bog, and there was no way of escape.

"Dogs—meat or the gallows!" said Turpin, with a little laugh. "That's the choice they've given us. But it shall be neither, by the black rood! We shall fight it out till the life leaves us—they shall never take us alive! A curse on those horses! 'Twas that blundering brute of Ralph's that led them astray!"

He clapped his hands to his mouth, and gave a long, quavering whistle. Dick did the same. It was the call Black Satan always answered. But the three horses were still circling wildly over the moor, out of earshot, and the dismounted Riders came up fast.

"Have you never a pistol?" cried Turpin. "Here, take this! I have two. Load swiftly from the horn at your belt; we may still have time to put in a shot or two. I'll wager the fools have left their own pistols in their holsters. Here, Ralph boy, run for it while you may. This is no quarrel of yours, and you may escape while we hold them in check."

"Ay, away with you, Ralph!" cried Dick. "They'll serve you the same if you stay with us. Take to your heels!"

"Nay, I've stood to the dogs, and I'll stand to the men," said Ralph, hitching his little rapier well to hand.

"Go, I command you!" cried Dick angrily. "Twill cost you your neck if you stay!"

"My neck's my own, and I'm master of Huntercombe," said Ralph doggedly. "I ask for no better than my brother gets."

"A game little cock—I'd like well to have the training of him," said Turpin approvingly, loading his double-pistol with wonderful swiftness. "Tis a pity he should be thrown away on this forlorn hope, nevertheless, for if a bullet or a sword-thrust saves us from public hanging, 'tis all we have to hope for." He gave a last despairing call to the distant horses, and then turned to meet the foe. "Stand each to your man and sell your lives dear—here they come!"

"Surrender!" roared the foremost of the Riders, as they gained the solid ground and came running towards the fugitives, leaving one of their number in charge of the horses on the other side of the bog, which they had crossed by springing from one tussock to another. "Surrender, you knaves and catiffs, or we slay you where you stand, and bear your bodies back for the gibbet!"



DICK stood firm, with white, set face. Of all encounters, he liked this least. In open fight, with enemies and betrayers, he had no such scruples, but for all his lawless career he had never brought himself to take the life of a King's man, however hard pressed he might be.

The law had hounded him from his own, and proclaimed him outlaw—so bitterly had he been used, aforetime and now, that he felt himself justified. Yet he had the feeling that to slay a King's servant, even to save his own neck, would put him beyond the pale for ever.

Turpin had no such qualms. His pistol cracked, and the first of the oncoming Riders pitched forward and lay quiet. Turpin had no ambition to adorn a gibbet—these men came to bring him to a shameful death. Crack! A second Rider dropped in his tracks. Still the others came on.

Bang, bang, bang! the Riders pistols spoke. **THE POPULAR.**—No. 214.

—three shots only. One struck Turpin in the left forearm, making him drop his empty weapon. But he was none the less pleased the Riders threw away their shots by firing as they ran, instead of waiting to come to close quarters, and the other two bullets whistled harmlessly overhead, for the attackers were blown with their run. Their leader called on them savagely to shoot again; but Turpin had guessed rightly. All but three, in their hurry, had left their pistols in the holsters of the saddles, and were armed only with the steel.

"Cut the knives down!" roared the leader. "Take them alive or dead!"

A rush, a shout, and the Riders swept down upon the three comrades like a whirlwind. So clumsily did they attack that Turpin spitted the first one through the shoulder, and Dick, parrying the thrust of a big corporal who rushed blindly at him, gave the man such a buffet with his head and sword-guard that he dropped senseless.

The blundering rashness of the attack gave the first advantage to the defenders, but it could not last. The Riders became more wary on finding with what skilled opponents they had to deal, and the odds were hope-



Dick Turpin leaped on to a boulder, his eyes gazing over the moor. "To the horses, for your lives!" he exclaimed. "They have set the bloodhounds after us!" (See page 5.)

less. They closed in on all sides, and the rapiers began to play like lightning.

Had the Riders possessed the skill of the highwaymen, our three comrades would have been annihilated at once—as it was, with the utmost difficulty Turpin and Dick kept their skins whole for a few moments, Dick covering his young brother as best he could.

Back to back the three fought, but the weight of numbers soon told. Dick was wounded in the thigh, Ralph had his wrist laid open, and Turpin was so hard pressed that even his strength began to fail.

With an inward groan, Dick realised that the end was near. Attack was impossible—with three swords against him, however clumsily used, he could only defend himself, and that not for long.

"Oh, Ralph boy, why didn't you go when you might?" he muttered, between his teeth.

The words had barely left his lips when a great black body swept past, and two of Dick's assailants were sent flying. A yell of dismay arose, and a second upheaval followed.

"Satan! It's Black Satan!" cried Dick. And in an instant his despair was changed to joy. "Here, boy! Down with 'em into the dust!"

The great black horse, his eyeballs glaring and his teeth bared, came plunging through the mob of Riders like a thunderbolt, his terrible forehoofs striking out left and right, and the riders went down like ninepins. Behind him followed Turpin's beautiful Bess, tearing with teeth and hoofs, transformed into a female demon by her master's peril.

Both horses, recovering from their coltish panic when they bolted with Ralph's frightened hunter, had begun to look for their masters, and, seeing the fight, they galloped over the moor and added themselves to it. Black Satan, even as he had scattered Vesey Neville's ruffians in the old days, came to his master's rescue once again, and the Riders staggered before his terrible onslaught like chaff before the wind. The men, taken by surprise, and half of them already on their backs, halted, uncertain what to do.

"Saved, by the rood!" cried Turpin. "Here, Bess!"

"Satan, here to me!" shouted Dick; and the great horse was beside him in a moment. He vaulted into the saddle, gave Ralph a quick lift behind him, and galloped away like the wind, Turpin by his side on Black Bess, leaving the Riders raving and cursing on the field.

"In the very nick of time!" cried Turpin, patting Bess on the neck as they flew like birds across the heather. "See, there come more of the rascals, up to the bog! Bess, my girl, you nearly lost me my neck to-day, but you've made amends."

"Hold tight, Ralph!" said Dick, as the wind sang in his ears. "It was all that fiddle-headed roan beast of yours that did the mischief. I never knew Black Satan to fear man before. I can see by the set of his ears he's rightly ashamed of himself. Never fear for those rogues behind. Even if they crossed the bog they would never see us in a cross-country ride!"

The discomfited King's men, indeed, were by this time no more than dots on the horizon, and the second troop, finding such havoc, and seeing they had no chance, had stopped to tend their comrades.

"Yonder's a horse!" said Turpin, pointing to a riderless beast cantering some way ahead. "Egad, 'tis that brute of Ralph's! You had best catch him and put the boy on his back; 'tis not fair that Satan should carry double. And then we must put half a county between us and the Riders, for we have seen enough of them to last the day out."

They caught Ralph's horse, and he mounted it, after which they set off at a steady gallop, leaving the moors and gaining the wooded country to the westward, where they set to work to make a trail that, for distance and doubles, the Riders would never be able to follow up.

Dick, who had been strangely silent for some time, drew rein and turned to his brother.

"We must part here, Ralph," he said. "Do you make the best of your way back to Huntercombe."

Ralph flushed, and looked gloomy.

"Have I not shown myself fit to ride with you, Dick?" he said.

"You have shown yourself a Neville to the backbone, youngster," replied Dick, "for which very reason I am going to see that you keep your neck out of the noose that is being woven for me. I am outlawed, Faulkbourne is in the hands of Hector Neville; and between the gallows and Captain Sweeney I am like to have my hands full. Believe me, Ralph, if you wish to serve me, you can do it best at Huntercombe or St. Austell's school. Hector may not hold Faulkbourne for long. Either he or I must die before the question is settled in full."

(A further instalment of our powerful Highwayman serial will be found in next week's topping bumper programme of tales.)

The Fight in the Secret Underground Hiding-place—Next Week!

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. find that their holidays bring them exciting and dangerous adventures.



A Dramatic Story of the Backwoods of Canada.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"LOOKEE out!"
Yen Chin, the Chinese of Cedar Creek School, yelled out the warning suddenly.

Frank Richards started, and looked round. He could see no danger.

Frank and Yen Chin had left the school-boy camp on the plateau in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains to look for game.

Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc had gone in another direction, while Chunky Todgers remained in charge of the camp.

Frank Richards and the Chinese were clambering up a steep track on the hillside, picking their way amid great boulders and stunted trees that cropped out here and there among the rocks.

Yen Chin was following the English school-boy, and he was perhaps a little sharper on the look-out than Frank Richards.

Frank stopped on the rugged ascent, and looked back, half-suspecting that the Chinese was playing one of his many tricks upon him.

"What's the matter, Yen Chin?" he demanded.

"Lookee out!"

Yen Chin was staring past Frank Richards, at a spot higher up the steep ascent.

Suddenly he sprang at Frank, grasped him by the arm, and dragged him over to one side.

Taken quite by surprise, Frank Richards went reeling and stumbling on the rocks with a yell.

He landed in a thicket five or six yards from the spot where he had been standing, to the left, and a dozen yards lower down.

The thicket caught him and the Chinese, who was clinging to him, and they sprawled into it together.

Frank scrambled dazedly into a sitting posture.

He was considerably knocked about by that sudden plunge downhill, and almost out of breath, and quite out of temper.

"You young rascal!" he panted

"Lookee!"

Crash, crash, crash!

Frank Richards stared out of the thicket. Down the hillside, on the very spot where he had been standing a few moments before, a huge boulder was rolling.

It crashed from rock to rock with a sound like thunder.

Frank turned pale.

But for Yen Chin's prompt action in dragging him away, he would have stood in the

path of the rolling rock, and would have been dashed to instant death.

"Good heavens!" he muttered.

He was almost stunned for a moment, with the sight of the terrible peril he had so narrowly escaped.

Crash, crash!

A hundred yards lower down the steep slope the crashing boulder came to a stop, splintering on hard rocks.

"Flanky killee if no pullee way!" gasped Yen Chin. "Gettee gun—quickee! Bad man lollee down 'nother lock."

"What?"

For the moment Frank Richards had supposed that it was a loose rock that had rolled down the declivity, unlodged by wind or rain.

But as his eyes followed the direction of Yen Chin's pointing finger he saw that that was not the case.

The heavy boulder had been rolled down with murderous intent by human hands.

A dozen yards above a dark face looked down, and Frank caught the flash of black eyes and the glitter of gold earrings.

"Handsome Alf!" he gasped.

"Shoottee—shoottee!" panted Yen Chin.

Frank scrambled to his knee, dragging up his rifle.

Handsome Alf, the "sport" of Last Chance, was staring down, watching the effect of the rock he had hurled downwards at the schoolboy of Cedar Creek.

His dusky face grew grim and savage as he looked.

Frank and Yen Chin had vanished from sight in the thicket, but the Californian could see that he had failed in his purpose.

He stared down the slope in search of the schoolboy, ready to roll another boulder at the sight of him.

Frank Richards' eyes gleamed over his rifle.

He thrust out the muzzle from the thicket, taking careful aim at the man with the earrings.

At that moment there was no mercy in Frank's heart; his narrow escape from a terrible death banished all thought of it.

Only a few days before he and his chums had saved the life of Alf Carson, when the Californian was "treed" by a grizzly bear, but that service had not wiped out the ruffian's old grudge against them.

Crack!

Frank's intention was to send the bullet through the ruffian's shoulder as he looked over the rocks.

His aim was good, but even as he pulled

the trigger, Handsome Alf caught the glimmer of the rifle-barrel from the thicket, and sprang back into cover.

The bullet struck a rock and glanced off into space.

Frank, standing up now, thrust in a fresh cartridge, and waited and watched for the rascal to appear again.

But the dusky face of the Californian did not emerge.

There was a sound of scrambling over rock and stone, as Carson retreated, keeping in cover among the great boulders and stunted trees that patched the rugged hillside.

In a few minutes the sound died away.

Handsome Alf was gone.

"No hittee?" asked Yen Chin.

"No."

"Baddee luckee! Betttee killee."

Frank Richards smiled.

"If lettee me killee other day, no heavee lookee at Flanky," persisted the Chinese. "Flanktee stoppee me killee. Velly silly—oh, yes!"

"Best if I don't think you're right, Yen Chin!" answered Frank. "You've saved my life, anyhow, old chap. I'm jolly glad you joined our party, after all, kid."

"Mo glad! Velly fond of silly ole Flanky," said Yen Chin.

There was a shout from the distance.

"This way, Frank!"

They joined Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc, who were returning to camp with an antelope that had fallen to Bob's rifle.

"Any luck?" asked Beauclerc.

"Well, yes, lots," answered Frank.

"You've brought nothing back," said Bob. "Only my skin," answered Frank, laughing. "But I was lucky to be able to do that."

He explained what had happened as they walked back to the camp.

Bob Lawless knitted his brows.

"So that bull-dozer is still hanging about, looking for a chance at us!" he exclaimed. "We were a set of jays not to let the grizzly chaw him. Lucky we took away his rifle, or he'd have potted you, sure."

"He would have got me with the rock but for Yen Chin."

"Good old Yen Chin!" said Bob. "I guess, Franky, that the popper would have put his foot down on this summer holiday in the North-West if he had known the snags we were going to run up against. But we're going to settle with Carson to a finish, I guess. After dinner we'll take the trail and look for him. What he wants is a rope."

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YOU SIMPLY MUST read "The Bounder's Flight!"—Next Tuesday!

"My hat! You're not proposing to lynch him!" exclaimed Frank.

"Ha, ha! No; I'm proposing to rope him in, though, and take him down to Last Chance, and hand him over to the sheriff," said Bob. "We're a good many miles outside law and order in this region; but there's enough law in the foothills to round up a rustler like Handsome Alf!"

"Good idea!" said Beaulere.

Frank Richards nodded.

His own narrow escape was a warning of what was to be expected from the malice of the Californian, if he was allowed to go free.

The chums arrived at the camp, where the antelope was handed over to Chunky Todgers, the chief of the party.

Chunky was soon hard at work.

And when dinner was prepared the chums of Cedar Creek School discussed, over the meal, their plans for the afternoon—plans which, if they succeeded, would have the result of putting Handsome Alf Carson where he could do no further mischief.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

On the Trail!

CHUNKY TODGERS rolled in the grass under the shade of a tree after he had finished his dinner.

It was Chunky's custom to do more than justice to the excellent meals he cooked, and on this occasion he had fed not wisely but too well.

His eyes closed at once, his fat face looking very shiny, and his deep and resonant snore mingled with the voices of his comrades as they chatted.

Bob Lawless rose from the log he was seated on and examined his rifle carefully. It was very probable that there would be shooting if they succeeded in tracking down the Californian.

Frank Richards and Beaulere followed his example.

Yen Chin had no rifle, but he buckled an axe and hunting-knife to his belt.

Bob stirred Chunky Todgers with the top of his boot.

"Wake up, Chunky!"

"Yaw-aw! Warrer marrer?"

"You're going to stop in the camp. Chunky," answered Frank.

"Oh, good!"

"And look after the horses and the mule."

"All right."

"You can keep the shot-gun, as we've got a rifle each," said Bob Lawless. "If Handsome Alf should happen to show up, blaze away without stopping to talk."

"Rely on me!" said Chunky, with dignity. And Chunky set himself to march up and down, with the shotgun under his arm, as Frank Richards & Co. started.

From a distance the four looked back and saw Chunky still marching to and fro close by the horses and mule that were staked out near the stream.

But when they were out of sight the fat schoolboy ceased his sentry-go.

He stood and blinked after them for some time after they had disappeared, lest they should come in sight again.

Then he gave a deep yawn.

"Rot!" murmured Chunky. "That rustler won't come back here, and there's nobody else nearer than Last Chance. The hosses are all right—right as rain! A galoot wants a nap after he's worked hard, of course. I've got to keep up my strength, as I've got to do the cooking this evening. I'm jolly well going to sleep!"

It is much to be feared that that was really Chunky's secret intention, even while he was doing the active sentry-go for the edification of his departing comrades.

But Chunky, though a good deal of a duffer, and very sleepy, was not quite lost to all sense of caution.

The chance was remote that he would see anything more of Alf Carson; but there was at least a chance, and even for the sake of a comfortable nap in the grass he did not want to run the risk of being knocked on the head.

After some thought he took a waterproof coat and a rug and a Stetson hat, and set them up with an arrangement of sticks and rocks inside, so that the effect was that of a fellow sitting by the fire.

Having completed his handiwork, he surveyed it with great satisfaction.

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From a little distance the figure looked exactly like that of a fellow seated on a log, leaning forward, wrapped in the coat, with the hat drawn down over his face to keep off the sun.

"I guess that fills the bill!" murmured Chunky.

Leaving the dummy on guard, as it were, Chunky retired into a thicket a dozen yards away, and vanished from view.

In the heart of the thicket, completely screened from sight, the fat schoolboy settled down to sleep, with the loaded shotgun by his side.

Feeling quite secure now, Chunky closed his eyes, and in a few seconds he was deep in the land of dreams.

Meanwhile, Frank Richards & Co. were pursuing their way.

They reached the place where Frank and Yen Chin had encountered the Californian, keeping their eyes well about them and their rifles ready.

Higher up among the rocks Bob Lawless soon discovered traces of the rustler.

Bob had a skill in scoutcraft that was a standing marvel to his comrades, though they had learned a good deal of the craft since they had lived in Western Canada.

There were faint traces where the Californian's boots had scraped on the rocky soil, and plainer traces where he had broken through thickets, or pushed his way among stunted trees.

"I guess we'll run him down," said Bob Lawless confidently.

A little later they came on the bones of a bird, by the dead embers of a fire in a shadowy ravine. It was where the outcast had camped.

Bob Lawless felt over the ashes.

"Not quite cold yet," he said.

"Then we're not far behind him," said Frank.

"I guess he's not making tracks," said Bob. "He's hanging about the place, I reckon, looking for another chance at us. He reckons he will wipe out the crowd, the pesky coyote, and rope in our hosses and lumber. Hark!"

It was the clink of a falling stone among the rocks at a little distance.

"He's not far away," said Beaulere.

"I guess not."

The trackers pursued their way, keen and watchful.

From the ravine they gained the hillside, and Bob Lawless gave a sudden shout at the sight of a figure clambering up the steep bank of a torrent that leaped and foamed down into the ravine below.

His rifle fairly leaped to his shoulder.

"Alf Carson! Stop, or you're a dead man!"

The Californian was running for cover, and on the open hillside he was at the mercy of the trackers.

He did not stop, only casting back one savage look over his shoulder as he ran.

Crack!

The bullet splintered the stones at his feet as he ran, as a warning.

"The next ball goes into your back!"

roared Bob Lawless.

Handsome Alf stopped.

He spun round, his face furious, and his black eyes gleaming with rage.

Three rifles were bearing on him.

"Surrender, Handsome Alf!" called out Bob Lawless. "You're a prisoner, my pippin, and if you don't put up your hands you'll get lead through your carcase!"

The Californian cast a wild glance round him.

He was standing close by the mountain torrent that cut off his retreat further, and he had backed to the very edge of the water.

Before him were the Cedar Creek party, with a couple of rifles levelled; behind him the torrent.

"I guess you pass, my pippin!" said Bob Lawless, advancing steadily towards him.

"You're my antelope, Handsome Alf!"

Carson panted.

"Get a rope for him, Franky!"

"Right-ho!"

Frank Richards, with a noosed cord in his hands, strode towards the Californian, while Bob and Beaulere kept him covered.

Frank had nearly reached the rustler when he stepped back a pace.

"Look out!" shouted Bob.

Whether by accident, or whether he was taking a desperate chance, the schoolboys did not know, but a moment before Frank

Richards could reach him Handsome Alf went backwards into the torrent.

In a flash he was whirled away under the horrified eyes of the trailers.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Handsome Alf's Luck!

JERUSALEM!

"Good heavens!"

Frank Richards & Co. stood rooted to the rocky bank of the torrent, staring into the foaming waters with horrified gaze.

Villain as the Californian was, that sudden and terrible happening struck horror to the chums of Cedar Creek.

The waters raced through their rocky channel, foaming and splashing on the jagged rocks in their course, and it seemed impossible that the rustler could escape being dashed to pieces as he was borne away.

They caught a glimpse of his dark head above the waters as he went whirling over a cascade, where the stream plunged abruptly into the ravine below.

Bob Lawless drew a quick breath.

"He's a gone coon!" he said.

No cry reached their ears, nothing but the boom of the falling waters.

Frank Richards' face was pale.

"Let's go down!" he muttered.

Bob Lawless nodded, and they scrambled hastily down the hillside into the ravine they had left.

In a few minutes the chums were down in the ravine, and, standing beside the stream, they looked up at the masses of water falling from above.

Then their eyes sought the lower stream for a trace of the Californian.

He was not to be seen.

Below the waterfall the stream followed the bottom of the ravine, broader and calmer, though still swift.

Frank Richards & Co. hurried along the bank.

They expected to find the body of Handsome Alf, tossed, disfigured, ashore, or floating in the water.

But when they had covered two or three hundred yards without seeing any trace of him, Bob Lawless halted.

The ravine narrowed here, and the stream filled it from side to side, leaving only a precarious footing on abrupt rocks if they wished to follow it further.

Standing on a high rock, Bob Lawless gazed along the further course of the stream, searching the water and the steep banks for a sign of the man who had gone to his doom.

He uttered a sudden exclamation.

"By gum! Look!"

He pointed with his rifle.

Far away down the stream a man was clinging to a floating log that drifted with the current.

It was the Californian!

Almost by a miracle he had escaped destruction in the wild plunge over the falls, and in the stream below he had caught the drifting trunk, and held on for his life.

The first feeling of the schoolboys was relief that the rascal had not gone to his death, but the sight of the Californian reminded them of their task.

"I guess we're after him!" said Bob grimly.

"How?" asked Frank, with a glance along the channel, where only mountain goats could have found secure footing above the water's level.

"I reckon there's plenty of drift," answered Bob.

"Oh!"

"Lend a hand!"

Close by there were a good many drift-logs that had been dashed ashore among the rocks, some of them lying half in the water, and stirring to the motion of the stream.

Bob Lawless slung his rifle, and grasped the largest of the trunks, and with his comrades' help pushed it out into the stream.

He scrambled astride of it as it floated, and his comrades followed his lead, Yen Chin bringing up the rear.

The four sat astride of the trunk as it floated down-stream, Bob paddling with a loose branch to keep its head to the current.

Handsome Alf had climbed on his log by this time, and he was still in sight,

Loder is Completely Knocked Out—And Exit Vernon-Smith!

drenched and dripping, and pale as death. His hat was gone, and his long black hair clustered dripping about his dusky face.

The rascal was a good distance ahead, but the pursuers, all of them now paddling with branches, were gaining on him.

Handsome Alf looked back as he suddenly became aware that he was still pursued.

He released one hand to shake a clenched fist at the schoolboys.

"I guess I could wing him from here!" muttered Bob.

The same thought had evidently come into the Californian's mind, for he steered the log to the edge of the stream.

It crashed on the rocks, and the Californian plunged ashore.

For a moment or two he was visible as he clambered away, and then he vanished into the thick pines above the bank.

Bob Lawless steered the driftwood to the same spot, and the trailers landed a few yards from the abandoned log.

They plunged to the bank, taking care to keep their rifles out of contact with the water.

Handsome Alf's trampled trail lay before them, and Bob Lawless took up the pursuit without a moment's pause.

Carson was not more than five minutes ahead of the pursuers.

For some distance the wet trail was easy to follow, but after that Bob had to depend on "sign" among the thick trees, and progress was slower.

Beyond the pine-forest the trailers emerged upon a rocky waste of basalt, and there even Bob Lawless had to confess himself beaten.

It was possible that the fugitive was lurking within a hundred yards of them, crouching in some cranny of the rocks, but the hard surface of the basalt retained no trace of him.

Bob knitted his brows.

"I guess he's given us the slip, after all," he said ruefully. "If we come on him now it'll be sheer luck; but we'll try."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Face to Face!

CRASH!

"Ah-h-h-h!"

That sudden crash had awakened Chunky Todgers awoke suddenly, him, and the fat schoolboy sat up, blinking and rubbing his eyes.

"What the thunder—" murmured Chunky.

He rose on his knees and peered out of the thicket in which he had been fast asleep.

His fat face paled as he looked.

A dozen yards from him, by the embers of the dead fire, a man was standing, whose dusky face and gold earrings Chunky well remembered.

He had a full view of the profile of Handsome Alf.

But even his dread at the sight of the rustler could not prevent a fat grin overspreading his face as he saw what had been the cause of his awakening.

The dummy he had left seated on the log was lying on the ground, crumpled up. The hat, beaten in at the top by a jagged rock, lay close by.

Chunky knew what had happened as he observed that.

There was no sign of Frank Richards & Co. They were far away in the foothills, hunting for the Californian, and while they were so engaged Handsome Alf had eluded them and made for the schoolboy camp.

He had seen the dummy on guard, and had crept up to the camp with the rock in his hand.

At a safe distance he had hurled the missile at the figure by the camp-fire.

Had it been Chunky Todgers sitting there, his brains would have been dashed out by the murderous missile.

As it was, the dummy had collapsed under the attack, and Handsome Alf, rushing on, had found a coat, a hat, and a bundle of sticks spread out before him.

He was standing staring down at the scattered dummy, with astonishment and rage in his dusky face.

Chunky Todgers could hear him muttering savage words, though he could not distinguish them at the distance.

Todgers drew back into the cover of the thickets.

He grasped the shotgun, his fat heart throbbing.

Carson was looking round him now, cautiously and keenly, evidently in doubt as to whether the camp was watched or not.

He moved at last across towards the stream, where the horses and the pack-mules were staked out, resting in the grass at the end of their trail-ropes.

Chunky's jaw squared.

The camp had been entrusted to him, and the Californian's intention was plain enough—to run off with the animals and leave the Cedar Creek party dismounted.

But to step out of the thicket and face the ruffian was more than Chunky felt equal to.

If the volley of shot did not stop the Californian, his knife would be at Chunky's throat in a moment after.

Chunky was no coward, but he did not feel equal to setting his life upon a cast.

But as he heard a movement among the animals he stirred. He could not let the ruffian steal the horses under his nose.

"I've got it!" murmured Chunky suddenly.

In the thicket he had slept under a big tree, and now he slung the shotgun over his shoulder, and started clambering up the gnarled trunk.

Fat as he was, Chunky Todgers was active, and in a few seconds he had reached the lower branches.

He heard a subdued exclamation, and knew that the sounds he made in climbing had reached the ears of the Californian.

Higher he clambered in almost haste.

On a branch twenty feet from the ground he was above the height of the screening thicket, and could look over the underwoods to the stream, where the horses were staked within reach of the water.

Handsome Alf was close by them, but he was looking intently towards the thicket, his hands clenched, and his black eyes glittering.

Chunky Todgers sat astride of the thick bough, his fat back supported by a forking branch, and unslung the shotgun.

The noise he made was a guide to the Californian, who looked up suddenly, and saw the fat schoolboy in the tree.

Chunky Todgers grinned down at him.

He knew that Carson had no firearms, and he felt quite secure now.

Chunky Todgers was a fair shot, and from the height of twenty feet it was easy enough to pepper the horse-thief; and if the first charge did not "lay him out," the second or third would.

Handsome Alf set his teeth as he looked up at Todgers. His hands were clenched almost convulsively.

Chunky had put the gun to his shoulder, and was taking aim.

On the open bank of the stream Carson was an easy target.

"I guess this is a cinch!" grinned Chunky, as he took aim.

Bang!

Handsome Alf made a spring back as Chunky pulled the trigger, so desperate a spring that it took him five or six feet from the line of fire, and the small shot smashed into the ground where he had been standing.

Then he dashed forward, with glittering eyes, and plunged through the thicket, and reached the tree, and clambered desperately up the trunk.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Chunky's Great Fight!

CHUNKY TODGERS hastily shoved in a fresh charge.

The Californian's hope was to reach him before he reloaded. But he had plenty of time to reload, and he was ready.

He squirmed round on the branch, to have his face to the trunk, which was about eight feet distant from the spot where he was ensconced out on the almost horizontal branch.

Handsome Alf was climbing the other side of the trunk, and was as yet out of sight.



A SHOCK FOR HANDSOME ALF! Chunky kicked frantically as the ruffian came on, and his heavy boot caught the Californian under the chin. There was a gasp of pain, and Handsome Alf went backwards! (See Chapter 5.)

Sitting firmly on the thick branch, his feet jammed in the two forking boughs, Chunky waited for the Californian to appear in view, ready to fire point-blank as he did so.

He could hear the man swarming up the trunk, keeping it between himself and Chunky. But Carson did not attempt to reach the branch where Todgers sat.

He knew that the shotgun must be ready by this time.

He climbed higher into the tree, from bough to bough, till he was ten feet over Todgers' level.

Chunky heard him, and watched upwards for the evil face to come peering through the foliage.

Overhead the foliage was thicker than below, and it was rustling and swaying as the branches moved under the Californian's weight.

"Hang him!" murmured Todgers uneasily. "I wish he'd show himself. If I got one fair chance at him—"

His reflections were interrupted as an evil, warlike face appeared for a moment through the parting leaves.

Bang!

Chunky fired instantly.

The shot swept through the branches, tearing away a shower of leaves that fluttered away on the wind.

Chunky's heart throbbed as he listened for a cry or a fall.

But neither came to his ears.

The Californian had been too quick for him, and, lying full length on the thick branch overhead, he had escaped the shot.

Chunky heard him moving again, with an activity which showed that he had not been hit.

The fat schoolboy's heart almost died within him as the lithe form of the Californian swung down from the higher branch to the lower.

There was no time to reload.

Handsome Alf dropped on the branch only three feet from Chunky, catching it actively, and dragged himself into a posture astride of it, facing the schoolboy.

Chunky clubbed the shotgun.

The Californian was panting with his exertions, and for a few minutes he made no movement, only staring at the boy with a deadly look.

Chunky dared not attempt to reload the gun. He had to hold it clubbed, ready to beat off the rustler if he came on.

His fat face was white now.

From his white face his little round eyes stared, saucer-like, at the ferocious face before him.

Watching him like a panther, Handsome Alf rested on the branch, to recover his strength before attacking, but ready to spring forward in a second if Chunky lowered the clubbed gun.

"K-keep off, you villain!" stuttered Chunky breathlessly. "I'll brain you if you come an inch nearer!"

Carson grinned evilly.

He had no doubt of his ability to deal with the fat schoolboy, though if Bob Lawless had been in poor Chunky's place the rascal's task would not have been an easy one.

"My game, I guess," said Carson, with a grin that showed his white teeth, and he drew his hunting-knife.

The gleam of the bare steel so close at hand sent a chill to Chunky Todgers' heart.

But he dared not give way to the fear that was rising in his breast. His life was at stake.

Like an animal fascinated by the eyes of a serpent, Chunky watched the ruffian in breathless silence.

Handsome Alf made a movement at last.

Keeping astride of the branch, he worked his way a few inches nearer to the fat schoolboy, who held the clubbed gun ready to strike as soon as he was near enough.

Chunky Todgers knew well that if he missed the first blow he would not have time for another, and all his nerves were at tension.

The Californian threw his body forward along the branch, reaching out with the knife to thrust.

Down swept the clubbed gun in a flash. But the cunning rascal was only tricking poor Chunky.

His legs, astride the branch, and gripping it, had not moved, and his lithe body swung instantly back as the butt descended.

The blow missed him, falling two or three inches short; but an inch was as good as a league.

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The butt crashed on the branch instead of upon the Californian's head, and slipped past it downward, and Chunky Todgers nearly fell with the swing of the blow.

Then the ruffian flung himself forward in good earnest before Chunky could draw up his weapon.

Hardly knowing what he did, Chunky Todgers released one foot from the fork in the branch, and kicked frantically at the Californian as he came on.

The thrust of the knife missed his knee by an inch, and his heavy boot crashed under Handsome Alf's chin, nearly knocking him from the branch.

The ruffian swayed sideways, overbalancing, and in his frantic effort to regain his balance, the knife slipped from his hand, and dropped into the grass twenty feet below, the shotgun whizzing after it.

Chunky was holding on with both hands and legs as the branch rocked, for the kick had overbalanced him, too, and had the Californian been able to attack him at that moment the fat schoolboy's fate would have been sealed.

But Carson had no chance of attacking him then; all his strength was being exerted to save himself.

With all his efforts he could not avoid swinging over the branch, and for a moment it looked as if he would follow his knife downwards.

But he managed to catch the branch with both hands, and hung underneath it, embracing it with both arms and legs, and frantically striving to climb on it again.

Chunky Todgers panted breathlessly as he righted himself.

For a second he thought that the ruffian had fallen, and then he discerned Carson's hands and legs gripping the branch a few feet from him, and, looking down, he saw the ruffian hanging.

"By gum!" gasped Chunky.

He was master of the situation now.

In a few minutes the lithe Californian would have succeeded in dragging himself upon the branch, but Todgers did not give him a chance.

The shotgun lay in the grass twenty feet below him; but his hunting-knife was in his belt, and he drew it quickly, scrambled forward, and slashed at the hands gripping the branch from below.

There was a terrible cry from the Californian.

Handsome Alf released the branch, and swung head downwards by his legs.

For a moment he hung thus, but his hands, clutching at space, came in contact with a lower branch, and his legs released their hold and he swung on the lower branch, out of Chunky Todgers' reach.

Exhausted by the effort, he lay across the lower branch, panting and dizzy, Chunky glaring at him from above.

Had the shotgun been still in his hands Todgers would have made short work of the ruffian, but the gun lay in the grass below.

Chunky clambered along the branch towards the trunk, to get to the lower branch and deal with the ruffian before he could descend and recover his weapon.

But Carson realised his danger, and he roused himself to effort.

He swung himself to a branch lower down, and then to another, and from the lowest dropped lightly to the ground.

He recoiled there, and fell in the grass, panting; but the shotgun was in his grasp.

As he lay in the grass he glared up at the schoolboy in the tree, not in a hurry to move now, for he knew he held the trump card.

Chunky Todgers knew it, too, and he despaired.

The gun was unloaded, but there was ammunition in the camp—plenty of it—and Carson had only to look for it.

A savage grin was on the ruffian's dusky face now.

As poor Chunky stared down at him from the tree, Handsome Alf rose to his feet at last, the shotgun in his hands.

"I guess it's my game, after all," he grinned.

From the high branch he scanned his surroundings, in the faint hope of seeing Frank Richards & Co. on their homeward way.

Handsome Alf ran into the camp, and was not long in finding a box of ammunition, taken from the mule-pack.

He grinned as he loaded the shotgun, and returned to the big tree.

Chunky Todgers clambered desperately higher into the tree, seeking safety in the topmost branches.

Bang!

A charge of shot came whistling up through the tree, scattering leaves on all sides.

Chunky was not hit, but some of the shot passed very close to him.

He clambered higher while the Californian was reloading, the more slender branches at the top of the tree rocking under his weight.

But as his head emerged from the foliage he saw a sight that gladdened his very heart.

Four figures were in view, running towards the camp, Bob Lawless in the lead.

Frank Richards & Co. were returning at last, and they had heard the shot from the distance.

They were running now as if for their lives, though it was Chunky's life they were running for.

Bang!

The Californian had reloaded, and he emptied the shotgun into the tree again, with a fresh scattering of leaves.

The foliage hid Chunky from his sight, but some of the shot came very close.

A few minutes more of the fusillade would of a certainty have brought Chunky Todgers to the ground like a very fat bird, but the clumps of Cedar Creek were at hand now.

The Californian was reloading again when a rifle cracked at two hundred yards, and a bullet whistled past his head.

With an oath Handsome Alf spun round, the shotgun dropping from his hand.

Crack, crack!

Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc fired together, and the Californian threw himself on the ground.

For a moment it seemed that he had been shot down, but the next he leaped to his feet, and dashed for the timber.

Bob Lawless pulled trigger again as he ran, but the Californian plunged into the trees just in time.

"After him!" panted Bob.

They dashed into the timber, reloading as they ran.

But the thick trees had swallowed up the Californian, and they returned disappointed to the camp.

Pursuit in the forest was impossible with darkness coming on.

Chunky Todgers slithered down the tree, and joined his chums, shaking in every limb.

"Oh, you fellows!" he gasped.

"Not hurt?" asked Frank Richards.

"N-n-no; I—I don't think so," stuttered Chunky, hardly sure whether he was hurt or not. "Oh dear! That villain! Ow!"

"Is this the way you look after the camp?" demanded Bob Lawless severely. "What did you give him your shotgun for?"

"I—I didn't!" roared Chunky indignantly. "He got it, the beast! I've had an awful narrow escape! Oh dear!"

"Catch me leaving you alone after this!" grunted Bob.

"I guess I'll take jolly good care you don't!" gasped Chunky.

And Chunky was as good as his word.

Two of the party remained the next day at the camp, when the trail of the Californian was taken up. But Handsome Alf was not seen again.

"I guess he's let up on us, and lit out," was Bob Lawless' conclusion. "The rotter hangs out at Last Chance Camp, and most likely he's scooted for home. But I guess we're not letting up on him. We'll take the trail for Last Chance, and round up Mister Handsome Alf Carson there. I reckon."

And Frank Richards & Co. took the trail for the mining-camp in the heart of the Cascade Mountains.

THE END.

**Will Frank Richards & Co.
succeed in bringing Handsome
Alf to Justice? See Next
Week's Stunning Tale!**

**"THE 'SPORT' OF LAST
CHANCE CAMP!"**

**A Tale with a Grip from be-
ginning to end.**

If Your Pal Doesn't Read Our St. Jim's Stories—Tell Him About Them!

ROLLING IN RICHES!



A Fine Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. An Amazing Adventure!

"WISH I wasn't alone!" Baggy Trimble, the Falstaff of the School House at St. Jim's, shivered a little as he made that muttered remark.

Baggy was passing through the village street in the gathering dusk, and he was afraid. He was about to pass that disreputable hostelry known as the Green Man. A number of village louts had just emerged from the place, and they were shouting and brawling on the pavement.

Baggy Trimble had to run the gauntlet of these roughs before he could proceed on his way. He hoped they would not see him, but it was a forlorn hope. Baggy was far too fat to be inconspicuous.

There was a sudden shout from the leader of the gang.

"Ere's one of the kids from the college! Collar 'im!"

"Oh crumbs!" muttered Baggy Trimble, turning pale with terror.

He started to run, but there was no escape for him. The "lads of the village" surrounded him, and he was like a fat fly being drawn into a spider's meshes.

"Lemme alone, you beasts!" gasped Baggy. "If you lay so much as a finger on me, I'll lick the lot of you!"

Baggy's knees knocked together as he spoke. His attitude did not square with his warlike threat. He was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and the villagers had him at their mercy.

A burst of mocking laughter followed Baggy's remark.

"Look wot's goin' to lick us!"

"Why, it couldn't lick a fly!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Collar 'im!"

"Let's duck 'im at the pump!"

Baggy Trimble shuddered. He had a dread of cold water, and the prospect of being ducked at the village pump was truly terrifying.

A couple of burly louts laid violent hands on the unfortunate Baggy, and he was hustled, shrilly protesting, along the village street.

"Help! Rescue! Police!" he squealed.

But the Rylcombe Police Force, which consisted solely of P.-c. Crump, was not likely to render Baggy Trimble much assistance.

Baggy struggled and kicked as he was taken to the slaughter. And his struggles only made matters worse for him. His clothes were torn and

rumpled; his collar broke loose from its moorings; and his cheek was grazed by collision with the pavement.

Baggy kept falling down, only to be heaved to his feet again and hustled onward.

Presently the pump was reached, and the fat junior screamed in sheer terror.

"Don't duck me! I shall die of shock! I—I've got a weak heart! Lemme go! I'll give you all the money I've got on me, if you'll lemme go!"

The roughs hesitated.

"How much yer got?" asked the leader.

"Search 'im an' see, Bill," said one of the others.

The leader of the gang swiftly ran through Baggy's pockets. He brought to light a slab of toffee, a couple of letters, a bladeless penknife, a stick of chalk, and a watch with half a face and no hands. Money there was none.

"He's kiddin' us!" shouted the leader angrily. "He ain't got so much as a copper!"

"Talkin' of coppers," said a red-headed youth, "ere comes old Crump!"

The portly figure of P.-c. Crump advanced majestically down the village street.

Crump looked very stern and business-like, but when he saw that he had a lawless gang of roughs to deal with, he wisely decided to view the proceedings, like Nelson of old, with a blind eye.

The constable turned suddenly aside, and disappeared down an alley.

"Help! Rescue!" shrieked Baggy Trimble.

Crump heard, but he did not heed.

It would have required a whole battalion of constables to rescue the St. Jim's junior.

Finding himself hopelessly cornered, Baggy resigned himself to his fate.

Two of his assailants held him in position under the pump, while the leader of the gang worked the handle.

Swish! Swoosh!

The water descended in a deluge upon the hapless Baggy. It reduced his school cap to a limp rag, and it streamed down his face and clothing.

"Gug-gug-gug! I—I'm swamped! Yow-ow-ow!" he spluttered wildly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep the pot a-boilin', Bill!"

The leader of the louts pumped away with tremendous energy. The village blacksmith, swinging his heavy sledge, could not have displayed more vigour.

A never-ceasing torrent of water descended upon Baggy Trimble, who was speedily drenched to the skin.

At last Bill desisted, owing to a lack of breath and to a sudden failure of the water supply.

"Looks like a drenched porpoise, don't he?" he panted, pointing to the hapless victim. "Better let 'im go now, mates."

On being released, Baggy Trimble promptly took to his heels. But some of the roughs did not seem to think he had had enough. They pursued him down the village street, and Baggy put on the pace, speeding along like a champion of the cinder-path.

Whatever happened, he told himself, he must not be recaptured. His baptism at the village pump would last him a whole term. He wasn't anxious for an encore.

Baggy had a good start of his pursuers, who were too helpless with laughter to make much progress. But the terror-stricken junior imagined they were close behind him, like a pack of ravening wolves. And he ran on harder than ever.

Presently he reached the entrance to the woods, and he promptly plunged into the dark recesses.

Twice he stumbled over tree-trunks, and went sprawling. But he was on his feet again in a twinkling, and speeding on his way like a hunted fugitive.

As a matter of fact, the villagers had already given up the chase. But Baggy was not to know that. Although well-nigh exhausted, fear lent him wings.

After a time, he came to one of the boundaries of the wood. It was a tall hedge.

Baggy Trimble had never been known to fame as a high-jumper. He carried too much avoirdupois, so to speak. But fear, like madness, will enable a fellow to perform physical feats which in normal circumstances would be impossible.

Baggy cleared that hedge with one mighty leap. He went hurtling down on the other side, to alight, not in a plot of grass, as he had anticipated, but on to a human form, which was in a crouching attitude in the meadow.

"Hellup!"

There was a startled cry from the person on whom Baggy Trimble had fallen.

The man scrambled to his feet, and promptly took to his heels. He had been scared out of his wits, and not without reason, by that human thunderbolt which had suddenly seemed to descend upon him from nowhere.

Baggy Trimble was able to get a

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fleeting glimpse of the runaway. He was a coarse-looking man of the vagrant type. And he had been crouching over another man, who lay motionless in the grass.

"M-m-my hat!" murmured Baggy, in amazement. "What have I stumbled upon all of a sudden?"

It was indeed a strange situation—so strange that Baggy had already forgotten his pursuers, in the light of these unexpected developments.

The fat junior took stock of the man who lay stretched out at his feet. He was an elderly gentleman, immaculately dressed. And he was apparently unconscious.

"A giddy aristocrat!" muttered Baggy. "That tramp fellow was about to rob him, I believe."

The moon came out from behind a bank of clouds, and at the same instant the elderly gentleman opened his eyes. He seemed dazed and badly shaken.

Presently his gaze rested upon Baggy Trimble, first in a sort of wonder, and then with a gleam of understanding. He jumped to the conclusion—quite a natural conclusion, in the circumstances—that this fat fellow had rescued him from the clutches of the footpad.

"My—my dear boy—" he murmured slowly.

Baggy dropped on to one knee beside the stranger.

"Who are you, sir?" he inquired.

"I am Sir Jeffery Manning."

"Great Scott!"

Baggy Trimble had often heard the name, but he had never seen Sir Jeffery in the flesh until now.

Sir Jeffery Manning was one of the biggest landowners in the district. He was reputed to be enormously wealthy, and he was a kindly old gentleman who had done much to relieve unemployment in Wayland.

Sir Jeffery managed to struggle into a sitting posture. He groped in his breast-pocket, and then uttered a cry of satisfaction.

"My wallet is safe, at all events," he said. "Has—that scoundrel gone—that ruffian who sprang upon me un-awares and overpowered me?"

"Yessir," said Baggy Trimble. "I saw to that! I happened to come along just as he was about to go through your pockets, sir, and I tackled him right away!"

Sir Jeffery nodded approvingly.

"Give me your hand, boy. You have displayed great courage and resource. It is no exaggeration to say that you have saved my life!"

"Nothing to make a song about, sir," said Baggy modestly.

"Isn't it, by Jove? You have acted with signal bravery. My assailant was by no means a weakling, and I am still wondering how you contrived to drive him off."

"It was no easy job, sir. I challenged him, and he brought out a brace of revolvers and levelled them at my head—"

"Bless my soul!"

"I sprang at him, and a bullet whizzed by each ear—"

"Gracious! I had no idea the scoundrel was armed!"

"He was, sir—armed to the teeth. I closed with him, and we fought desperately, locked in fierce embrace. 'Surrender!' I cried. 'Never!' he replied. To and fro we swayed beneath the pale rays of the moon—"

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"But the moon was obscured when I was attacked!" protested Sir Jeffery.

"Yes, sir; but it popped out again while you were unconscious. As I was saying, sir, we grappled in deadly embrace—"

"Why, my dear boy, you are wet through!" interrupted Sir Jeffery.

Baggy Trimble nodded.

"I rolled in the ditch with the ruffian, sir," he explained. "Just look at the state I'm in!"

Sir Jeffery looked searchingly at the speaker.

Baggy Trimble's appearance certainly bore out his story. His clothes were torn as well as drenched, and there was an abrasion on his fat cheek.

"To make matters worse, sir," said Baggy, taking up his tale and giving his imagination full rein, "just as I was getting the better of the rotter, up came two or three of his pals. There might have been five or six; I was too busy to count."

"And you vanquished the lot?" asked Sir Jeffery incredulously.

Baggy nodded. He puffed out his chest with pride, and there was an alone-I-did-it expression on his face.

"I rushed into them, hitting out right and left," he said. "Two of them I knocked senseless—"

"Then they must be still here!" said Sir Jeffery, gazing round into the shadows.

"Nunno, sir! They made off—that is to say, their pals carried them off, sir."

Sir Jeffery smiled slightly. He was not so gullible as to believe Baggy Trimble's story in full. But he believed it up to a point. He was convinced that Baggy had accounted for the desperado who had tried to rob him, and he felt that he owed his life to the fat junior.

"I see you belong to St. James' College," he said. "What is your name?"

"Trimble, sir—Bagley Trimble."

"Very well, Trimble, I will see that this great service you have rendered me receives fitting recognition."

Baggy's eyes sparkled at the prospect of a reward. He was acting very dishonourably and despicably in allowing Sir Jeffery Manning to regard him as a rescuer. But then, Baggy Trimble knew no code of honour.

"I must now make an endeavour to get home—" began Sir Jeffery.

Even as he spoke a couple of men came into view, one of them swinging a lantern. They were gamekeepers in the employ of Sir Jeffery, and, suspecting that some mischief had befallen their master, they had set out to search for him. Sir Jeffery's face brightened at the sight of them.

"Brown! King!" he exclaimed. "You have turned up at a most opportune moment. I have been savagely attacked, and would have been robbed—perhaps killed—but for the bravery of this boy. Kindly assist me to the house. You had better accompany us. Trimble, in order to get a hot bath and a change of clothes. I have a spare suit of Etons, the property of one of my sons. I shall also be pleased to give you some supper. You are doubtless hungry."

Baggy Trimble was never otherwise, and the magic word supper had a most cheering effect upon him.

Sir Jeffery's mansion was situated at no great distance. The two gamekeepers carried their master between them, for he was too weak to walk; and Baggy Trimble, beaming as broadly as the full moon above him, brought up the rear of the procession.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Horn of Plenty!

"WOT I says is this 'ere. Young rips wot comes in late ought to 'ave their 'ides tanned!"

Thus Taggles, the porter.

Taggles frowned darkly at Baggy Trimble as he swung open the school gates for the fat junior to enter.

"Where you bin?" he asked.

"That's no business of yours, Taggy!" said Trimble cheerfully.

"Which I 'opes you hunderstand that I've reported you to Mr. Railton!" growled the porter. "Comin' in at this time o' night! It's disgusting, that's wot it is!"

Baggy Trimble was in too happy a humour to wish to argue with the crusty Taggles. His heart was light as he made his way across the quad. He was clad in a spotless suit of Etons, and his own torn and tattered suit he carried in a brown paper parcel under his arm.

Sir Jeffery Manning had extended his hospitality right royally to the junior to whom he believed he owed his life. He had treated Baggy to a sumptuous repast in his oak-panelled dining-room, and he had bidden the fat junior call at the mansion next day.

In view of these sensational developments, what did it matter about being late for locking-up? That was a mere trifle.

Tom Merry & Co. were standing in the hall when Baggy Trimble came in.

"Cheers!" said Monty Lowther. "Our prize porpoise has rolled up at last!"

"You're late, Baggy!" said Tom Merry. "Where on earth have you been?"

"Mind your own bizney!"

"You'll get it in the neck from Railton, you fat duffer!" growled Manners. "He wants to see you in his study."

"Go hon!"

"You don't seem to realise that you're in for a licking!" said Tom Merry, in surprise. "What have you got in that parcel?"

"Oh, really, Merry, that's no concern of yours! I wish your fellows wouldn't always be poking your noses into other people's affairs!"

"Well, I like that, coming from a Peeping Tom like Trimble!" said Monty Lowther. "For two pins, I'd suggest a jolly good bumping!"

"No time now," said Tom Merry. "You'd better buzz along to Railton's study, Baggy. Every minute's delay will mean an extra stroke of the cane."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a jaunt step, Baggy Trimble made his way to the Housemaster's study.

Mr. Railton eyed the fat junior grimly. "You are extremely late, Trimble," he said. "Have you any explanation to give?"

Baggy hesitated. He had very good reasons of his own for not wanting to say anything about Sir Jeffery Manning.

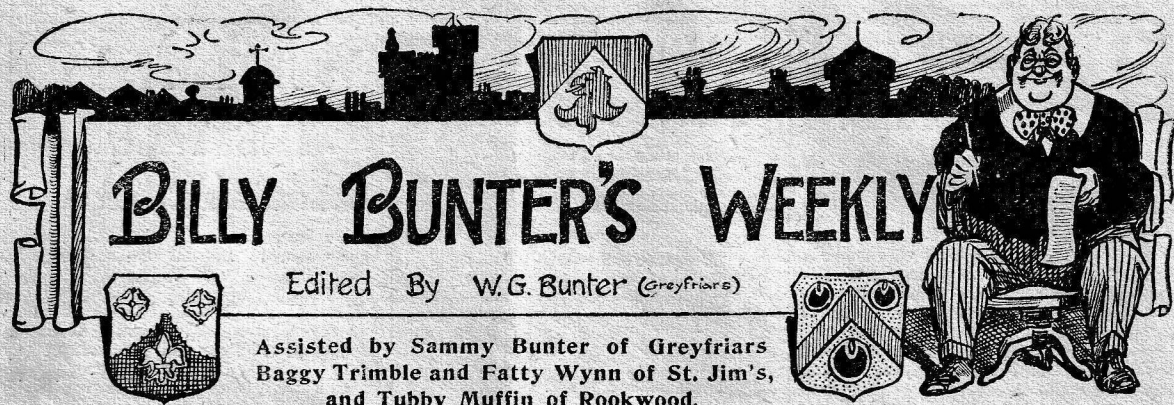
"Ahem!" he faltered at length. "I went down to the village, sir, and in coming home through the woods I lost my way."

"Is that the truth, Trimble?"

"Absolutely, sir! Have you ever known me to tell a lie?"

"Unfortunately, Trimble, I have never known you to tell the truth, except by accident. You are by no means a prototype of George Washington. But on this occasion I accept your explanation. Kindly come home by way of the road in future. You may go."

(Continued on page 17.)



Supplement No. 111.

Week Ending February 24th, 1923.

TEN TINY THIN BOYS!

By Sammy Bunter.

[In our Special Fat Boys' Number, Dick Penfold wrote some doggerel about "Ten Foolish Fat Boys." I will now retaliatory to the best of my debility; but I don't pretend to be a wonderful poet. Anyway, I'm better than Penfold.]

How's this for a start?

"Ten tiny thin boys, standing in a line,
A gust of wind blew one away, and then
there were 9."

Now we've got to get rid of the others, and
that's soon done. I will proceed:

"Nine tiny thin boys, on the ice did skate:
One fell through a narrow crack, and
then there was 8."

"Eight tiny thin boys cycled down to
Devon.

One collided with a car, and then there
were 7."

I will now get rid of the whole lot of them
at one fell swoop.

"Seven tiny thin boys, rolling on the floor,
Three of them were trodden on, and then
there were 4."

You see, if a hefty fellow like me were to
tread on a thin boy, he wouldn't have a
hope. A twelve-stoan lump of humanity is
enuff to squash the life out of anybody!

"Four tiny thin boys, bathing in the sea,
One was caught in a currant, and then
there were 3."

"Three tiny thin boys, vizziting the Zoo,
A crockerdile devoured one, and then
there were 2."

Rather a trajick poem, isn't it? But then,
I've no simperthy with thin boys; that's
why I'm making them come to a sticky end.

"Two tiny thin boys, playing in the sun,
One was skorched to sinders, and then
there was 1."

Only one of the young pests to dispose of
now, and that's soon done.

"One tiny thin boy met my brother Bill,
Who gave him one terriffick swipe, and
then there were nil."

You will gather from this poem that I
have a holesome kontempt for thin boys.
Thin people are the cause of half the miz-
ery on the earth. If only everybody was
as plump as me, mankind would be a happy
famby.

Why duzzent our Government pass a Bill
kompelling all thin people to fatten them-
selves up? When I become M.P. for Plump-
ington, I shall see that this is done.

EDITORIAL!



By Billy Bunter.

My Dear Readers,—I hope the
majority of you happen to be fat boys,
bekawse those of you who don't happen
to be plump will have rather a "thin"
time when you read this number.

Our Special Fat Boys' Number is still
fresh in the memmery, and many readers
have written demanding a Thin Boys'
Number. Who am I that I should say
them neigh?

There are several scraggy fellows in the
Greyfriars Remove, and also at Rook-
wood and St. Jim's. A few of these
have been aloud to kontribute to this
issew; but it must be clearly understood
that the editor does not share their views.

It is not a criminal offence to be thin.
I've never yet heard of a person being
sent to hard labor just bekawse his boans
happened to be sticking through his flesh.
At the same time, there is sumthing about
thin people that I don't like at all. In
the langwidgew of the classicks, they are
"long, skinny, and mizzerable."

I hope you don't think I'm making
these remarks bekawse I happen to be a
trifle plump myself. Not for one moment
would I dream of so doing. But any im-
partial critick will agree that fat boys are
sooperior in every way to their bony
brethren. Look at Falstaff. He was fat
and jolly. Then look at Uriah Heep—
as thin as a rake, and as crafty and
cunning as they make 'em.

Some of the thin boys are taking up
the cudgels on behalf of themselves in this
issew. But if you are wise, you will take
no notiss of what they say. They are
only jellus bekawse they're not as fat as
me!

Many gallons of midnight oil have been
consumed in the production of this
number, and I trusted it will be devoured
with eager interest by all and sundery. I
trusted, too, that it will prove once and
for all that fat boys beat thin boys all
along the line.

Your plump pal,
YOUR EDITOR.

IF I WERE FAT!

By Dick Penfold.

If I were as fat as Bunter,
I don't know what I'd do;
I'd have to give up footer,
And all athletics, too.
I'd roll instead of walking,
And look extremely silly;
They'd call me "Tub," and make
me blub.

If I were fat as Billy!

A special suit of Etons
They'd have to make for me;
A special bed to sleep on,
As wide as it could be.
A special motor-omnibus
To ride in Piccadilly,
Or else, you chaps, it would collapse
If I were fat as Billy!

I'd have to give up eating,
For fear that I should burst;
I'd have to give up drinking,
However great my thirst.
I'd be ashamed to visit
My charming cousin Milly;
I'd sit and mope, without a hope,
If I were fat as Billy!

Though Bunter is a porpoise,
I do not envy him;
I'd rather be a scarecrow—
No harm in being slim.
I briskly ride my bicycle.
Although the roads are hilly;
But I should stop, and go off pop
If I were fat as Billy!

SPECIAL "DIARY" NUMBER

Next week, you
fellows!

ANSWERS TO KORRESPONDENTS!

By **BILLY BUNTER.**

"Merry Joker" (Windsor).—"If you were to fall into the hands of cannibals, Billy, they wouldn't need to fatten you up for a feast!"—Only too trew, dear boy! And I bet they'd vote boiled Bunter simply delishus!

"Curious" (Exeter).—"When will your Special Summer Number appear?"—Oh, about next Christmas!

"Nosey Parker" (Balham).—"Who is the fattest fellow at Greyfriars, and who is the thinnest?"—See my jenneral remarks at the foot of this kolumn.

Jack R. (Southend).—"Has your postal-order turned up yet, Billy?"—Which one? The one my Uncle Reuben prommist me when I was three years old, or the one that would have arrived this morning if it hadn't miscarried in the post?

Edwin H. (Highbury).—"There's too much Bunter about 'BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY.'"—Natcherally, dear boy. An editor should be sumthing more than a mere figger-head.

"Musical" (Canterbury).—"I was going to ask you to come and hear me sing at our recent concert, but at the last moment I thought better of it."—I am trooly grateful for my lucky delivver-ance!

H. V. P. (Manchester).—"You are a fat duffer, and I always say what I mean."—Yes; but I'm sure you don't mean what you say.

"Farmer's Boy" (Devizes).—"My grandfather was ninety-three on Friday."—Give him my kind regards, and tell him I hope he's good for another century!

C. Stanley (Regent's Park).—"Have you ever seen the lions feed, Billy?"—Yes, I've often seen the Lyons feed, but when in town I jenneraly get my grubbi at the Hotel de Lockhart!

"Scottie" (Dundee).—"How many platefuls of porridge do you have for brekker?"—Seven or eight, as a rool; but I have been known to get into cubble figgers. It all depends how menny of the other felloes are off there feed!

REPLIES OF JENNERAL INTEREST.

The fattest fellow at Greyfriars is—Yours trooly!

The thinnest fellow at Greyfriars is Alonzo Todd.

The merriest fellow at Greyfriars is Bob Cherry.

The noisiest fellow at Greyfriars is Horace Coker.

The tallest fellow at Greyfriars is George Wingate.

The shortest fellow at Greyfriars is Stump of the First.

The laziest fellow at Greyfriars is Lord Mauleverer.

The most industrious fellow at Greyfriars is Mark Linley.

The most intelligent fellow at Greyfriars,

The nicest fellow at Greyfriars,
The most hansom fellow at Greyfriars,
The greatest hero of Greyfriars

is **YOUR EDITOR.**

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ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS!

By **TEDDY GRACE.**

The Rookwood Rhymor.

Tall boys, small boys,
At Rookwood you will find;
Prim boys, slim boys,
Cruel boys and kind.
Beefy boys and burly boys,
Sullen boys and surly boys,
Slacking boys and early boys—
I can call to mind.

Glad boys, sad boys,
Boys who never laugh;
Bad boys, mad boys
Boys who jest and chaff.
Modest boys and haughty boys,
Decent boys and naughty boys,
Studious boys and sporty boys—
Lengthy list? Not half!

Loud boys, proud boys,
You find in every Form;
Glum boys, rum boys,
In study and in dorm.
Funky boys and fearless boys,
Chirpy boys and cheerless boys,
Priggish boys and peerless boys—
Why, they simply swarm!



Sweet boys, neat boys
(I am one of these!)
Weak boys, meek boys,
Boys who taunt and tease.
Happy boys and healthy boys,
Winning boys and wealthy boys,
Silent boys and stealthy boys—
(Pass along there, please.)

Keen boys, clean boys,
Numerous, no doubt.
Tough boys, rough boys,
Who throw their weight about.
Huffy boys and humpy boys,
Stalwart boys and stumpy boys,
Grinning boys and grumpy boys—
Boys who bawl and shout.

My list is not exhausted,
I haven't named the rest:
The witty boys, the pretty boys,
The boys divinely dressed.
The crafty boys and curious boys,
The gentle boys and furious boys,
The genuine boys and spurious boys—
But **FAT BOYS** I detest!

TUBBY TELLS THE TALE!

Letter from Master Reginald Muffin, of
Rookwood, to Robert Robertson, Esq.,
J.P.

Dear Uncle Bob,—I have written to you several times this term, but forgot to post the letters, so you cannot say I have wilfully neglected you.

As a matter of fact, I haven't the price of a postage stamp. Both myself and my exchequer have been in a low state for weeks.

When you last vizzited me at Rookwood, I was a fine plump fellow, weighing fourteen stoan or thereabouts. But I have thrown my weight about so much since then I have nearly lost it all. I am now only nine stoan, and as thin as a skellington. I don't get half enuff to eat, and am waisting away to a shaddo in konsequence.

The door of the tuckshopp is slammed in my face every time I go there, simply bekwase I have no munney. I am absolutely down and out. Noboddy loves me. And I implore you to send me a fat remittanse right away, so that I can start building up again, and get as plump as I was before.

I would have asked you long ago to send me some munney from your coughers, but my pride prevented me.

Give my love to Aunt Susan and to my young cuzzens, and send me the remittanse by return, please, or I shall have to obtain parrish relief. I am despritt!

Your skinny newvew,
REGINALD.

II.

Uncle Robert's Reply.

My dear Reginald,—I was delighted to get your letter (undated and unstamped), and to hear that you have been successful in working off your superflous fat.

Your extreme plumpness always alarmed and disgusted me, and it is refreshing to know that you are now of slim and slender proportions.

This being the case, it would be folly on my part to send you a remittance. You would become a greedy, gluttonous boy again, and be as fat as ever—a state of affairs which I wish particularly to avoid.

I shall be glad if you will send me a photograph, so that I may see for myself how thin you have become.

Your affectionate
UNCLE ROBERT.

III.

Postcard from Tubby Muffin to Uncle Robert.

You are an old skinflint. Yah! You can keep your munney in your coughers. I don't want it. I can't send you a photograph, bekwase I can't get anyboddy to take one on tick. I am starving hand over fist, so you can get ready to attend the inquest!

[Supplement II.]

Keep Your Eyes Open for EXTRA-SPECIAL Numbers!



Ructions in the Ring!

By DICK RUSSELL.

HOLD me up, somebody!" It was Bob Cherry who made that plea for support.

Bob was weak with laughter, and the other members of the Famous Five equally helpless. They stood before the notice-board in the hall, and the following quaint announcement greeted their gaze:

"A CHALLENGE TO THIN BOYS."

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER
(Champion of the Fat Boys)

heavily challenges the Thin Boys of Greyfriars to produce their champion boxer, to meet the aforesaid William George Bunter in fistick combat in the jim.

"The kontest will take place this evening at 8. No steaks will be fought for. W. G. Bunter will meerly fight to uphold the onner of the Fat Boys."

"If they're not going to fight for steaks, I suppose they'll fight for chops?" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I reckon Bunter will need a steak at the finish—a beefsteak!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

And there was a fresh burst of laughter. "It will be great sport to see the champion of the Prize Porkers fighting the champion of the Scraggy Scarecrows," said Harry Wharton.

"The sportfulness will be terrific," agreed Hurree Singh.

"We shall have to dig up a thin fellow from somewhere, to take up this challenge," said Johnny Bull. "What about Skinner?"

"Talk of angels," said Bob Cherry, "and you're bound to hear the flapping of their giddy wings! Here's Skinner himself."

Skinner strolled up to the notice-board, in company with Snoop and Stott and Fisher T. Fish.

Billy Bunter's notice caused explosions of mirth, as it had done in the case of the Famous Five.

"Here's a chance for you, Skinny!" said Nugent. "Going to take it on?"

Skinner shook his head.

"Dashed if I'm going to make a laughing-stock of myself," he said.

"You surely don't funk a scrap with Bunter?" said Wharton, in amazement.

"Of course not! I could lick the fat duffer blindfold, and with one hand tied behind my back."

"Then why don't you?"

"Because I'm not a comedian," said Skinner. "If some other slim fellow likes to give a comic turn, let him go ahead."

"What about you, Snoopey?" asked Bob Cherry. "You're not exactly a second Falstaff. Going to take Bunter on?"

"No jolly fear!" said Snoop.

Stott also declined to take up the challenge. And so did Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess I'm dead in this act," said the American junior. "I had a scrap with Bunter once before, and he accidentally biffed me in the ribs. I thought an earthquake had hit me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But somebody will have to take up this challenge," said Wharton, "or Bunter will be saying that all the thin fellows are funks."

"What about Peter Todd?" suggested Nugent.

"I'm afraid if Peter took on the job, Bunter would have to go to the sanny for a week!" grinned the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peter would certainly reduce the ludicrous Bunter to the esteemed pulpfulness,"

said Hurree Singh. "But Peter's cousin Alonzo—"

"Ah!"

"Lonzy's the man!"

The Famous Five promptly went in quest of Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of the Remove.

Alonzo was one of the thinnest fellows at Greyfriars. According to Bob Cherry, "the muscles of his brawny arms stood out like sparrows' ankles." His legs were often compared with matchsticks, by reason of their excessive slinness. His chest was flat; and, altogether, Alonzo was about as bony a specimen as could be found in a day's march. If Alonzo met Billy Bunter in the gym, it would be a case of two extremes meeting.

Alonzo was run to earth in the school library. The Famous Five told him of Billy Bunter's challenge to thin boys, and urged him to take it up.

"But, my dear fellows, I cannot box!" pleaded Alonzo.

"No need to be a master of ringcraft, to lick Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"But I—I have a horror of fistic encounters," stammered Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin declares that our fists were never fashioned in order to disfigure the faces of our fellows—"



Alonzo bent over his fallen foe. "Are you going on, my dear Bunter?" he asked politely.

"Your Uncle Ben is a chump!" said Nugent cheerfully. "Don't take any notice of him, Lonzy. Regard yourself as the champion of the thin boys, and give Bunter a jolly good licking!"

After further pressure had been brought to bear, Alonzo agreed to take up the challenge.

When Billy Bunter heard that Alonzo had been selected as the thin boys' champion, he was hugely elated.

"Alonzo?" he said scornfully. "Why, I shall put him on his back in the first round! You fellows had better bring dustpans and brushes along, to sweep up the pieces!"

"Whose pieces?" asked Bob Cherry innocently.

"Alonzo's, of course!"

"You seem mighty confident of licking him," said Johnny Bull, "but I fancy you'll have all your work cut out."

"Oh, really, Bull— One blow from my fist, and Alonzo will be an ambulance case!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The gym was packed at eight o'clock.

Rather a feud had sprung up lately between the fat boys and the thin boys. Billy Bunter himself had started the feud, by publishing a Special Fat Boys' Number of his "Weekly," in which he had maintained that fat boys were superior to thin boys all along the line.

Now came a test between the plumpest fellow in the Remove, and the slimmest. Most of the onlookers supported Alonzo Todd, but they couldn't quite see how he was going to win. As a boxer, he was about as hopeless as Bunter. It was, as Bob Cherry pointed out, a case of dud meeting dud.

Roars of laughter greeted Bunter and Alonzo as they stepped into the ring. The contrast between them was extraordinary. One was so fat that he seemed to waddle; the other was so thin that he appeared to walk on air. One had tremendous biceps, which were flabby instead of muscular; the other had no biceps at all.

Harry Wharton acted as referee. Rocking with laughter, he rapped out the word "Time!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Put your weight into it, Lonzy!"

Billy Bunter set up a hurricane attack. He had been obliged to hand his spectacles to the referee, and he was rather at sea without them. Instead of attacking his opponent, he vented his fury on the empty air.

Harry Wharton jumped hurriedly aside to avoid one of Bunter's savage blows. As for Alonzo, he watched Bunter's antics in amazement.

"I—I thought Bunter was supposed to be fighting me," he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sail in and smash him, Lonzy!"

Alonzo tripped lightly towards his opponent, and dealt him a blow in the chest. So light was the blow that Bunter was not aware that anything had happened. The onlookers were almost in hysterics.

Alonzo, who was absolutely unseated so far, owing to Bunter's wild tactics, grew more courageous. Bringing both fists into action, he beat a tattoo upon his opponent's ribs.

Billy Bunter conscious of a tickling sensation, uttered a bellow of rage. He drew back his left, and then shot it out with terrific force.

Had Alonzo stopped that blow, he would have been bedridden for the rest of the term.

Fortunately, the Duffer of the Remove had the presence of mind to step smartly to one side.

Bunter's fist tore through the air, and, meeting with no resistance, it was only natural that the fat junior lost his balance. He went to the boards with a tremendous crash. Every bone in his body was shaken, and he lay dazed and helpless, totally unable to rise.

Alonzo bent over his fallen foe.

"Are you going on, my dear Bunter?" he asked politely.

"Ow-ow-ow-ow!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter rang through the crowded gym.

The champion of the fat boys was knocked out—by himself!

Harry Wharton counted ten, but he was laughing so heartily that he took about five minutes over it.

"Alonzo wins!" he spluttered, at length.

And the audience staggered out of the gym, doubled up with merriment.

THE END.

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Supplement III.]

Billy Bunter Frequently Writes for "The Greyfriars Herald!"

A THIN BOY'S DIARY!

By Herbert Skimpole. (of St. Jim's.)

MONDAY.

Alarmed to find how thin I have become of late. My Eton jacket hangs on my bony frame like a sack. My trousers are baggy in the extreme.

Trimble volunteered some advice on the subject. "Take your cue from me, Skimpy," he said, "and when you are in the dining-hall, eat exactly the same quantity as I do. Then you'll soon get fat!" I will try this experiment to-morrow.

TUESDAY.

At breakfast, Trimble consumed six rashers of bacon and a similar number of fried eggs, to say nothing of sundry slices of toast and marmalade. With great difficulty, I followed suit. Result—chronic indigestion in the Form-room this morning. I writhed and groaned in anguish. But I resolved to persevere with the experiment.

For dinner, Trimble devoured four helpings of steak and kidney pudding.

I managed to get through three after a mighty struggle, and then I was compelled to stop, or I should have burst.

I was unable to eat any more food to-day. I lay on my study couch, a martyr to dyspepsia. On looking in the mirror, I find that I am more thin and haggard than ever.

WEDNESDAY.

I bought some patent flesh-forming food at the chemist's. According to the picture on the wrapper, I shall be as fat as Falstaff in less than a week. I took a dose after every meal, but it had no effect upon me.

THURSDAY.

My schoolfellows declared that I was not getting sufficient exercise, and they compelled me to take part in a paper-chase this afternoon. By the time I had crossed a dozen ploughed fields, and scores of hedges and ditches, I was thinner than ever!

FRIDAY.

I consulted Fatty Wynn on the subject of my loss of flesh, and he gave me precisely the same advice that Trimble gave me last Monday. "Build yourself up by eating plenty of good, nourishing food," he said. "It's the only way. And drink at least a gallon of milk a day."

Once again I tried to keep pace with Trimble in the dining-hall. I forced myself to eat exactly the same as he did. A whole string of sausages for breakfast, three helpings of everything at dinner, and unlimited pastries for tea.

This evening I was attacked by violent pains in the chest, and compelled to go to bed early.

SATURDAY.

The doctor called on me, and I told him all my troubles. He laughed heartily when I told him of my strenuous efforts to get plump. "You are naturally thin, my boy," he said, "and you will never get any fatter. You don't need to, either. One can be perfectly healthy without being plump. You've been worrying about your condition, and that's what has made you thinner. Stop worrying, and you will soon revert to your normal state."

So I must resign myself to lifelong thinness, and I shall make no further attempts to become a Fatty Wynn or a Baggy Trimble!

THE FAT FOOTBALLERS!

By Fatty Wynn. (New House, St. Jim's.)

Billy Bunter rang me up on the telephone the other day, and I went along to Mr. Ratcliff's study to take the message.

"I say, Wynn," said Bunter, "we're going to have another footer match between the fat fellows and the thin fellows. Will you turn out for the Fat Boys?"

"Certainly not!" I replied warmly. "We shall only be licked, like we were before. The thin fellows were all over us."

"Oh, really——"

"If you insist in playing such duffers as Baggy Trimble, Tubby Muffin, your minor, and yourself, you must expect to be licked," I said.

"What!" shouted Bunter. "How could you possibly have a team of fat boys without me? And yet you're suggesting I should drop myself from the team! How absurd! Who would skipper the eleven if I didn't?"

"I should," I replied.

"You?"

"Yes. And I'll do it, too! I'll advertise in the paper for ten fat fellows who are good footballers, and bring my eleven over to Greyfriars to play the skeletons."

"Look here, you rotter——"

"Oh, ring off!" I growled. And I replaced the receiver abruptly on its hooks, and strolled out of Ratty's study.

Having resolved to raise a team of fat fellows to play the Greyfriars "scraggs," I lost no time in getting to business.

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caused the following advertisement to be inserted in the Personal Column of the local paper:

"TEN FAT FOOTBALLERS WANTED.—Weight must exceed fourteen stone, and plumpness is essential, also a sound knowledge of the game. Applicants should apply in person to D. L. Wynn, New House, St. Jim's."

As soon as this advertisement appeared I was besieged with fat boys.

I paraded the applicants and reviewed them, and then I took them down to the football-field in order to size up their form. Some of them showed a remarkable knowledge of the game, and I had no difficulty in forming a team to take over to Greyfriars. My men wanted their railway expenses paid, and that was all. They were quite willing to play against the thin boys without demanding a fee.

What a sensation we made when we turned up—I should say "rolled up"—at Greyfriars on the following Saturday! Howls of merriment greeted our appearance on the football-field.

The thin boys certainly had a useful team. That is to say, it was good in parts. Peter Todd and Frank Nugent and Dick Penfold were playing, as they were all on the slim side. But the inclusion of Alonzo Todd and Fisher T. Fish tended to weaken the side.

Wingate of the Sixth was referee, but

he could hardly blow his whistle for laughing.

It was an extraordinary game. Our fellows had all the weight, and they didn't scruple to use it. Heavy shoulder charging was the order of the day. The thin boys were bowled over like skittles, and they looked pretty sick as they scrambled to their feet, only to be bowled over again.

Our five fat forwards did great damage. They crashed the ball past Hazeldene—the thin boys' goalie—three times in the first half.

As for me, I had an afternoon off. I was supposed to be keeping goal for the fat boys, but the two backs in front of me defended so stoutly that I had no work to do.

The thin boys played pluckily, but they scarcely got a look in. When you come to figure it out that the united weight of our team was 160 stone, while the combined weight of the thin boys was only 80 stone, you will realise what they were up against.

Our forwards bagged three more goals in the second half, and we ran out easy winners by six to nil. I had not been called upon to handle the ball once during the whole of the ninety minutes!

The Greyfriars fellows were good sports, and when we took our departure there were loud and prolonged cheers for the Fat Footballers!

**If you're ever feeling gloomy and down in the dumps read—
"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY"—the mirth-maker.**

[Supplement IV.]

Another Great Laughter Issue of Our Supplement Next Week!

"ROLLING IN RICHES!"

(Continued from page 12.)

Baggy went willingly enough, delighted at having got off so lightly.

That night the fat junior found sleep impossible. He was much too excited.

It had been a day of thrilling adventure—incident piled upon incident—and Baggy had had the fortune to get into the good graces of a baronet. And he had been asked to call on Sir Jeffery Manning next day—doubtless to receive his reward.

The fact that he was not entitled to any reward didn't worry Trimble. Although he himself was wide-awake, his conscience slumbered soundly.

Baggy was so excited next day that Tom Merry & Co., meeting him in the quad, asked him what was the matter.

"I'm expecting a remittance, you fellows," said Baggy.

"Not really?" said Monty Lowther sarcastically.

"Yes, really: My Uncle Solomon is—"

"Who is he—a pawnbroker?"

"Dry up, Lowther! My Uncle Solomon has promised to send me a fat remittance. And when it comes—"

"When?" murmured Tom Merry.

"I mean to have the time of my life!"

The Terrible Three were unimpressed. They had heard this story so many times. Trimble had trotted it out from time immemorial. It was a "Beaver" among stories. And it always left Baggy's listeners cold.

"What is your Uncle Solomon—if he exists?" inquired Manners.

"A miner."

"A coal-miner?"

"No, you ass—a gold-miner! He's been prospecting out in Klondyke."

"And he keeps all his nuggets in the coal-cellar, I suppose?" said Lowther blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble gave a snort and rolled away. He had not yet succeeded in impressing his schoolfellows. But wait!

Morning lessons seemed a slow nightmare to Baggy. Twice he dropped off to sleep in the Form-room, and on each occasion he was caned. But at last the ordeal of lessons was over, and as the day was Wednesday, a half-holiday awaited St. Jim's.

Baggy Trimble had arranged to call on Sir Jeffery Manning at three o'clock. He donned his Sunday best for the occasion, and sneaked out of the gates unobserved. The majority of the St. Jim's fellows were on the football-ground.

Ten minutes before the appointed time Baggy mounted the front steps of the mansion, and rang the bell.

A manservant answered the summons.

"I've dropped in to see Sir Jeffery," explained Trimble. "I'm a pal of his, you know."

He was about to add, "We grew up together." But, in view of Sir Jeffery's age as compared with his own, Baggy decided that this statement might not be believed.

"I regret, sir," said the manservant, with studied politeness, "that Sir Jeffery is out."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Would you care to see his sekkertery, sir?"

"Yes, rather!"

"What name, please?"

"Bagley Trimble."

The manservant disappeared. And after a brief interval Baggy was ushered

into the presence of the secretary, a middle-aged gentleman, who wore an enormous pair of spectacles.

"Good-afternoon, Master Trimble," he said. "I regret that Sir Jeffery is not here. He passed a very troubled night, and this morning he was conveyed by car to a private nursing-home in Wayland. But he left me some instructions regarding you."

"Oh, yes!" said Baggy eagerly.

"His instructions were that I am to give you anything you may require, within reason."

Baggy's eyes glistened.

"I understand that you saved Sir Jeffery's life," the secretary went on, "and he naturally feels that he is under a great obligation to you. You have only to state your requirements, and I will write you a cheque on Sir Jeffery's behalf—"

"I don't want a cheque," said Baggy. "They are awkward things to cash. If you would let me have notes—"

"To what extent?"

Baggy hesitated. He was thinking furiously. He didn't want to put the figure too high, or he might meet with a rebuff. On the other hand, if he asked for a comparatively small sum, there would be a possibility of his getting more on future occasions.

"I expect Sir Jeffery intended to give me a big sum—a couple of hundred pounds or so," said Baggy. "But I couldn't accept all that. It would be sheer robbery. After all, I only saved his life, and I've saved dozens of lives in my time. I should be quite satisfied with ten pounds—for the time being, at any rate."

The secretary nodded. He crossed the room and unlocked a safe, and produced a couple of rustling "fivers." These he

handed to Baggy Trimble, who was all a-tremble with excitement.

"I will trouble you to write out a receipt for this sum, Master Trimble," said the secretary. "Just a formality, you know."

Baggy's hand was trembling so violently that he could scarcely hold the pen. But at last he managed to write the receipt, and he left Sir Jeffery Manning's residence with his head in a whirl.

"Ten quid!" he muttered, over and over again. "Oh, how glorious! And more to come, too, if I play my cards properly!"

Baggy fairly danced his way back to St. Jim's.

No longer was he as poor as a church mouse—driven to all sort of shifts in order to make ends meet. All in a moment, it seemed, he had jumped from pauperism to wealth—for ten pounds was certainly wealth in the eyes of a Fourth-Former. And Baggy Trimble confidently believed that there was more to come.

The fat junior had struck a horn of plenty, and he meant to exploit it for all he was worth!

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Swimming in Shekels!

"MY only Aunt Sempronia!"

It was Monty Lowther who made that ejaculation.

The Terrible Three had strolled into the tuckshop, after their exertions on the football-field, to find Baggy Trimble "doing the grand."

Baggy was perched on a stool at the counter, and he appeared to be engaged in buying up the shop. There was tuck to the right of him, tuck to the left of him, and tuck in front of him. And Dame Taggles was now employed in fetching more.



Sir Jeffery struggled into a sitting position, and groped hastily in his breast pocket. "Ah! My wallet!" he said in great satisfaction. "You have saved my wallet, my boy, at any rate!" (See Chapter 1.)

"I think that will be enough for the present, ma'am," said Baggy at length. "How much does that little lot come to?"

Dame Taggles made a rapid mental calculation.

"Two pounds five-and-six, Master Trimble," she said, in an awed tone. "You can't surely want all this food for your own consumption?"

"I'm going to treat my study-mates," said Baggy.

"But—but you can't afford—"

"Can't I, by Jove?"

With an air of great ostentation, Baggy plunged his hand into his breast-pocket, and produced, with a flourish, a five-pound note.

Tom Merry blinked, Manners stared. Monty Lowther again called upon his only Aunt Sempronia.

As for Dame Taggles, she was almost overcome. So seldom was Baggy Trimble in funds that the production of a "fiver" on his part came as quite a shock.

"Where did you get that note, Baggy?" gasped Tom Merry, when he had recovered in a measure from his astonishment.

"Oh, really, Merry! I didn't find it at all! My Uncle Solomon—"

"Has he really and truly turned up trumps?" asked Lowther.

"Yes. He sent me a fiver. And there was a postscript to his letter saying there was more to follow."

"My hat!"

"Trimble in funds!" gasped Manners. "Wonders will never cease!"

Dame Taggles took the five-pound note and examined it intently, a faint suspicion crossing her mind that Baggy might have made it himself. But the note was genuine enough, and, anyway, Trimble was not nearly clever enough to be a forger.

"I suppose you fellows want me to treat you?" said Baggy, turning to the Terrible Three. "Well, you're going to be unlucky. You've never treated me when I've been down and out, and you can go and eat coke!"

"Thanks, but we prefer to eat doughnuts," said Monty Lowther cheerfully. "Half a dozen, please, Mrs. Taggles!"

"You're only trying to hide your jealousy," said Baggy Trimble. "You're really furious to think I've come into all this money!"

"Bosh!" said Tom Merry. "Likewise, tosh! We don't want your blessed money. And we're not envious, either."

Baggy Trimble collected up his numerous bags of cakes and pastries, and passed out of the tuckshop, leaving the Terrible Three discussing his sudden and surprising accession to wealth.

Baggy's ten pounds didn't last very long. Most of it was expended at the tuckshop. With the balance Baggy bought a gramophone, for the delectation of himself and his two study-mates, Melish and Kit Wildrake. But Baggy got more enjoyment out of it than they did. They had strong objections to eating their tea to the accompaniment of "Annie Laurie," or "That Coal-black Mammy of Mine."

Within twenty-four hours Baggy Trimble's funds were exhausted. Nothing daunted, he paid a further visit to Sir Jeffery Manning's mansion, and was again cordially received by the secretary. What was more to the point, he came away with a further ten pounds.

With this money, Baggy stacked the cupboard in Study No. 2 with provisions, and purchased a brand-new suit of Etons.

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Tom Merry & Co. were fairly staggered.

"Baggy! Uncle Solomon seems to have as much brass as the original Solomon," said Monty Lowther. "How long is this going on, I wonder?"

"Until Uncle Solomon gets fed-up with sending fat remittances, I suppose," said Tom Merry. "And that won't be long."

Baggy Trimble allowed two whole days to elapse before he again ventured to approach Sir Jeffery Manning's residence.

He found that Sir Jeffery was still in the nursing home.

"I haven't come to badger him for more money," Baggy informed the secretary. "Don't imagine that for a moment. I just dropped in to inquire how Sir Jeffery was getting on."

"He hopes to be home at the end of the week," said the secretary. "In the meantime, I have communicated with him concerning you. He has decided to make you a definite reward for your gallantry the other evening. The sum is to be fifty pounds. You have already received twenty. I am now to give you the balance."

"Oh, good!" said Baggy, dancing a hornpipe on the carpet. "I'll have it in notes, please!"

Thirty pounds more! It was wealth untold to Baggy Trimble. His assets usually amounted to less than thirty pence.

Baggy accepted the bundle of notes handed to him by Sir Jeffery's secretary, and wrote out a receipt at that gentleman's bidding. He seemed to walk on air as he made his way back to St. Jim's.

"Talk about a land flowing with milk and honey!" he chortled. "I've found it at last. It won't be any use tapping the secretary for more money; but then, I sha'n't need to. Thirty quid is a small fortune!"

It was a very pompous and important Baggy Trimble that mingled with his schoolfellows that evening.

"Still swimming in shekels?" asked Monty Lowther, when Baggy rolled into the Common-room.

"Yes, rather!"

"That uncle of yours seems to be making a tremendous fuss of you all of a sudden," said Manners.

"He's only just realised what a fine fellow I am," said Baggy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By the way Merry," said the fat junior, "I heard you saying that the footer club had run short of gear."

"That's so," said Tom.

"Well, I shall be pleased to buy you a new set of equipment—flags, jerseys, footballs, and so forth."

Tom Merry was almost overcome. He neither accepted Baggy's offer, nor refused it. He was too dazed.

But Baggy had not spoken idly. Next morning a handsome set of football gear was delivered at St. Jim's from the sports outfitters in Wayland. And Baggy handed it over to Jack Blake, who was secretary of the junior club.

There was method in Baggy Trimble's extraordinary generosity. Now that he had made such a handsome donation to the club, he hoped to secure a place in the junior eleven.

But Baggy was doomed to disappointment.

St. Jim's were playing Rookwood on Saturday afternoon, and the list of players did not include the name of Baggy Trimble.

"What a mean trick!" hooted the fat junior. "After I gave 'em all that club gear, too! I shall have to see Tom Merry about this!"

And he rolled away indignantly to Tom Merry's study.

"I see you've left me out of the team!" he exclaimed, bursting into the apartment.

"Sure thing!" said Tom Merry, with a grin.

"Look here, Merry, why don't you put an end to all this personal jealousy, and give me a place in the eleven? I'm no longer a blessed pauper. I'm a fellow of substance now!"

And Baggy tapped his breast-pocket, which contained a bundle of banknotes.

"You ought to know by now that I select the team strictly by merit," said Tom Merry. "Whether a fellow happens to be rich or poor makes no difference."

"Oh, really—"

"Fade away!" growled Manners.

"Buzz offski!" said Lowther. "Get outovitch!"

But Baggy showed no sign of fading away, buzzing off, or getting out. He produced from his pocket a crisp and rustling "fiver," and handed it to Tom Merry.

"As you don't seem disposed to give me a place in the team, I'll buy one!" said Baggy Trimble.

For a moment there was a stupefied silence in the study.

Never in the course of his career as captain of junior football had Tom Merry received such an impertinent offer.

Baggy Trimble was actually under the impression that he could purchase a place in the eleven! Like many other people, he was under the delusion that money could secure everything.

When they had recovered from their stupefaction, Tom Merry & Co. kicked Baggy out of the study—and they didn't stand on ceremony either.

With a wild yell, Baggy rolled over on the linoleum of the passage.

"Yaroooooh! I'll make you sit up for this, you beasts! Just you wait! You'll rue this to the end of time! I'm not a pauper now. I've got pots and pots of money, and money commands everything!"

But does it? And would it? Money can certainly command much, but there are limits to the power of the purse, as Baggy Trimble was destined to discover in the near future.

THE END.

(Now turn to page 2 and find out all about next week's fine St. Jim's tale.)

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THE BUSINESS MAN OF GREYFRIARS! Fisher T. Fish, the cute American Junior of the Remove, has another brain-wave—and receives another shock!



An amusing, complete story, dealing with Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, and Fisher T. Fish's latest wheeze.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fishy Comes Home.

FISHER T. Fish, the American junior in the Remove Form at Greyfriars, had got his "mad up." That was how he expressed his stage of rage. The juniors in the Remove agreed that certainly Fisher T. Fish had cause to lose his wool. They were right. Fish certainly had.

The American junior had just started upon another of his famous schemes. It was in connection with a tuckshop, at which all Greyfriars could obtain comestibles on the easy payment system.

Something, however, had gone wrong. A huge crate, full of goods which were to be offered for sale, had not arrived. Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe had seen to that, after Coker of the fifth, with Billy Bunter and a few cronies, had raided the tuck from the carrier in the first instance.

Fisher T. Fish therefore went to Highcliffe to demand payment. The Removites chuckled when they heard that, for beyond a plain postcard, bearing the one word "Thanks" received from Highcliffe, there was nothing to really connect Ponsonby with the raid.

Having found his bicycle unridable, the American junior had walked off, at the risk of missing his dinner by being late back. A second supply of tuck had been ordered, and was to be delivered, and the money had to be found. Fisher T. Fish often declared that his "popper" in New York had so many millions of dollars that it would hardly be possible to count them; but it was noticeable that the dollars did not find their way to Greyfriars in any large number. For the son of a multi-millionaire, Fish was remarkably careful with his money, and did not seem to be over-supplied with it. Apparently the loss of two pounds was sufficient to nip the great easy payments business in the bud.

As it happened, Fish did not need to go so far as Highcliffe School to see Ponsonby. Ponsonby and his chums, Gadsby and Vavasour, were outside the school, and amusing themselves with the gentle occupation of pelting a donkey in a neighbouring field, when they sighted the Greyfriars junior on the road. That kind of amusement was a favourite one with Ponsonby & Co., and they roared with laughter as the unfortunate donkey careered about the field in the vain attempt to escape the whizzing stones.

"Hallo, here's a Greyfriars cad!" Gadsby exclaimed suddenly.

"And all on his lonesome!" Ponsonby said, with a grin. "It's Fishy! Collar him!"

Fisher T. Fish marched directly up to the Highcliffe juniors.

"I guess I was looking for you," he announced.

"I guess I was looking for you, too!" said Ponsonby. "What a coincidence!"

"You owe me ten dollars," explained Fish. "You raided my packing-case the other day. Ten dollars, please!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess you're going to pay up!" said Fish, glowering at them. "I'm a business man. If you don't shell out, I'm going to your headmaster!"

"And how are you going to prove that we did it?" asked Ponsonby pleasantly.

"I guess I've got your postcard hyer!"

"My what?"

"The postcard you sent me."

"My dear chap, you're dreaming! I never sent you any postcard!" said Ponsonby, with a look of astonishment.

"Look at that!" said Fish, taking the postcard from his pocket and holding it up for the Highcliffe juniors to see. "What do you call that? Hyer, hands off—you rotter—yah—you cad!"

Ponsonby had snatched at the postcard, and he jerked it away from Fisher T. Fish. The American junior sprang at him, but Gadsby and Vavasour interposed, and Ponsonby calmly tore the postcard into fragments and threw the pieces into the ditch. Fisher T. Fish gasped with rage. With all his boasted cuteness, he had allowed the Highcliffe fellow to deprive him of his only piece of evidence. Fisher T. Fish prided himself upon never "getting left," as he called it, but had decidedly "got left" this time.

"I don't think you'll show that postcard to Dr. Voysey," said Ponsonby sweetly.

"Look here!" roared Fish furiously.

"You're going to pay up!"

"I guess not!" grinned Gadsby.

"Absolutely not!" smiled Vavasour.

"Besides, it wasn't us raided your blessed packing-case!" said Ponsonby. "It was your Coker. We only got it away from him. Coker had scoffed a lot of the tuck before we dropped on him."

"Coker!" ejaculated Fish.

"Coker and Potter and Greens and Bunter," said Ponsonby. "They got it away from the carrier, and we got it away from

them. But if you go to Dr. Voysey with any yarn on the subject I'm afraid we sha'n't know anything about it. In fact, we weren't anywhere near the place that day. Were we, you fellows?"

"Hardly!" said Gadsby. "We had gone over to Lantham to—to see a football match, I think."

"Exactly!" agreed Ponsonby. "We were at Lantham, and we can produce a dozen fellows who saw us there—if necessary."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish glared at the Highcliffians. His chances of extracting two pounds from Ponsonby & Co. seemed decidedly slim now.

"I guess I'll get it out of Coker!" he muttered angrily.

"You're welcome to," chuckled Gadsby. "I say, you're not going, are you? Don't deprive us of the pleasure of your company so soon."

"I guess I'm off."

"Ain't you tired with walking so much?" asked Ponsonby, with a wink to his comrades. "I really think you ought to ride back to Greyfriars. And there's another donkey here all ready."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess— Hands off, you jays!"

Fisher T. Fish struggled as the three Highcliffians closed round him and collared him. But he had no chance against the three of them. According to Fisher T. Fish's own glowing accounts he was a terrific fighting-man when he got his "mad" up. But perhaps his "mad" was not "up" just now. At all events, Ponsonby & Co. made short work of him.

"Hold him while I catch his relation!" grinned Ponsonby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" said Gadsby, closing his finger and thumb upon Fisher T. Fish's long and prominent nose. "This is where you cheeze it!"

"Gerrroogh-hooh!" gurgled Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving Fish a helpless prisoner in the grasp of Vavasour and Gadsby, Ponsonby jumped the ditch, and caught the donkey in the field. He led the scared animal out into the road.

"Whoa!" said Ponsonby. "Now, shove him up, you fellows! Face to the tail, so that he can admire the scenery."

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Never Let Tuesday Go By Without Buying "The Popular I"

"Yow-ow! You rotters! Ow!"
 "Heave-ho!" chuckled Gadsby. "Up with him!"

Fisher T. Fish was heaved upon the donkey's back, with his face to the animal's tail. Fish was not a good rider at any time, and in that uncomfortable position he was less expert than ever. He jammed his knees convulsively against the donkey's ribs to avoid being pitched off into the road.

"Beautiful rider, ain't he?" said Ponsonby. "We shall have to tie him on to make him safe. Don't want to break his valuable neck."

"Look here, you rotters— Yow-ow!"
 Ponsonby took the rope from the donkey's neck, and fastened Fisher T. Fish's feet with it, under the animal.

"Now lead him home!" grinned Ponsonby. And the Highlife juniors, roaring with laughter, led the donkey away down the road towards Greyfriars.

Fisher T. Fish was crimson with wrath. But he was helpless, and he had to hold on to the donkey's rough hide with both hands to avoid slipping sideways, which would have led to disaster.

Right down the road to Greyfriars Ponsonby & Co. led the donkey, Fisher T. Fish addressing them all the time in fluent American.

Outside the school gates they halted. The gates were wide open, and they could see some of the Greyfriars fellows within.

"I guess you're not going to send me in like this," howled Fisher T. Fish. "Look hyer, you let me go, and—and I guess I won't say anything more about the two pounds."

"You can say as much as you like about it, my dear chap," said Ponsonby. "You can go on talking about it till you're black in the face, if you like."

"I guess— Ow—ow!"
 "Start him!" said Ponsonby.

The donkey was headed into the gateway, and Ponsonby gave him a sharp cut across the legs. The donkey broke into a run, and disappeared through the school gates, and the Highlifians, yelling with laughter, ran back down the road.

Fisher T. Fish, clutching wildly at the donkey's back, charged backwards through the gateway into the Close.

He could not see where he was going, as his face was turned to the animal's tail, and it was all he could do to hold on and keep his seat. There was a roar in the Close at the sight of the donkey and his peculiar looking rider.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
 "It's Fishy!"

"He's brought his brother here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Yaroo!" roared Fish. "Stop him! Help! Yahl! I guess I'm just going to fall! Yaroo! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The donkey, startled and scared by the yells of the Greyfriars fellows, was fairly galloping now.

Fisher T. Fish clung wildly and convulsively to his back.

The donkey reared round the Close, and fellows gathered from all sides to watch the extraordinary sight.

The roars of laughter brought Mr. Quelch to his study window, and he looked out into the Close, his eyes growing wide at the sight of the American junior careering along with his face turned to the donkey's tail.

"Fish!" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Hellup! Yaroo!"

"Wharton! Nugent! Coker! Stop him at once!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. "This is disgraceful. Stop him! Bring him here! Goodness gracious!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows made a rush for the careering donkey, and headed him off just in time from the doctor's garden. The donkey backed away from the crowd, and backed towards the School House, and the juniors succeeded in cornering him under Mr. Quelch's window. The donkey's tail being turned towards the house, Fisher T. Fish was facing the Form-master at the window, and the expression upon their faces as they looked at one another made the Greyfriars fellows shriek.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

No Payment!

MR. QUELCH stared at Fisher T. Fish, and Fisher T. Fish stared at Mr. Quelch.

The donkey, quiet at last, was backing against the window-sill, the circle of fellows in front of him keeping him from bolting again.

Mr. Quelch waved his hand.
 "Silence!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, I say. Fish, how dare you ride about the grounds in this ridiculous manner. You know perfectly well that you are not allowed to ride in the Close, especially in that utterly absurd manner, like a—a—a circus performer!"

"Ow! I guess— Oh dear—"

"I think he's fastened on the moke, sir," said Bob Cherry demurely.

"On the what, Cherry?" rapped Mr. Quelch. "The— the donkey, sir."

"Unfasten him at once."

The grinning Bob cut through the rope, and Fisher T. Fish was free. He rolled off the donkey's back, and landed with a bump and a yell upon the hard and unsympathetic ground.

The donkey startled by his yell, threw up his heels and bolted, the fellows making room for him to pass, and with a clatter of heels the frightened animal disappeared out of the gates.

Fisher T. Fish scrambled breathlessly to his feet.

He was dusty and dishevelled, and utterly out of breath, and he stood gasping like a newly-landed fish.

"Now, Fish, explain what this means," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "What is the meaning of these extraordinary antics?"

"Ow! I guess I couldn't help it," stammered the American junior. "I kinder reckon I didn't ask them to fasten me on to the burro, sir."

"Oh, you were fastened upon the donkey against your will?" asked Mr. Quelch, his frown relaxing a little.

"I guess so, sir."

"Kindly name the persons who played this absurd joke," exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his gimlet eyes roving round upon the grinning crowd.

"It was the Highlife chaps, sir," panted Fish.

"Oh, that alters the case! You may go and make yourself tidy, Fish."

"Groo! All right, sir!"

Mr. Quelch closed his study window sharply. He did not want to hear any more complaints about the Highlife fellows. There had been more than enough trouble with the neighbouring school of late.

Fisher T. Fish staggered away, still panting. He was followed by yells of laughter from the crowd in the Close. Fishy's wild ride round the Close on the mettlesome donkey was a sight not likely to be soon forgotten by the Greyfriars fellows.

Fisher T. Fish was still looking flushed and breathless when he came in to dinner. But there was a determined gleam in his eye. He had not succeeded in getting anything but a free ride from the Highlife fellows, but he had obtained the information that Bunter and Coker were responsible for the raiding of the packing-case. And so he still had a lingering hope of recovering his two pounds.

After dinner, his long, thin fingers closed on Bunter's fat shoulder as the Remove fellows came out. Bunter blinked up at him.

"I want to know," remarked Fish.

"Leggo!" growled Bunter, alarmed by his expression.

"You had a hand in raiding my tuck the other day," said Fish, compressing his grip.

"You and Coker and Potter and Greene."

"Oh, really, Fish, it was the Highlife chaps—"

"Ponsonby's told me."

"Ahem! Coker might have had something to do with it," said Bunter, in a reflective sort of way. "Now I come to think of it, I saw him there. But I wasn't there myself. I was miles away."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "How did you see Coker there, if you were miles away? Those specs of yours must be a real marvel!"

"I—I mean that—that—I— Ahem—"

"You meant to tell whoppers," said Fish.

"You owe me ten bob, Bunter. That's your share of the damage. Pay up!"

"You—you see, Fishy—"

"I see that I'm going to be paid for my tuck," said Fish. "Where's that ten bob? Or do you want me to go to Mr. Quelch about it?"

"If you're going to take it like that, I'll settle up my share," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

Fisher T. Fish held out a bony hand.

"Shell out, then!" he said laconically.

"At the present moment I happen to be short of money," said Bunter. "But I am expecting a postal-order this evening—"

"Good old postal-order!" chuckled Harry Wharton. "If Fishy waits till then, and lives to get it, he will beat Methuselah hollow!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I guess I want two dollars and a half out of you, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish, "and I guess I'm going to get it! Shell out!"

"I tell you I'm stony!" howled Bunter.

"Leggo my shoulder. I'll settle up when my postal-order comes, you beast!"

"I'll give you till this evening," said Fish.

"I guess I'm going to see Coker now. Anybody know where Coker is?"

"Coker's in his study," grinned Bob Cherry. "If you make Coker shell out, it will be worth seeing. I rather fancy you won't get anything but a thick ear."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish sniffed and walked away to the Fifth Form passage. Coker and Potter and Greene were in their study when he arrived there. Peace and plenty reigned once more in Coker's study. Aunt Judy had come up to the scotch, as it were, and Coker was in funds again, and no chums could have been more chummy than Potter and Greene.

"Hallo! What do you want?" demanded Coker of the Fifth, as Fish presented himself without ceremony in the study.

"I guess I want two dollars and a half out of each of you merchants!" said Fisher T. Fish promptly.

"When will you have it?" queried Potter banteringly. "Now, or when you can get it?"

"I guess I'll have it now."

Coker picked up a cricket-stump.

"Where will you have it?" he asked.

"Look hyer," said Fish, backing a little.

"I know all about it. You fellows raided my packing-case the other day, and the Highlife chaps raided you. That packing-case of grub cost me two pounds, wholesale prices. You've got to pay. Two dollars and a half from each of you galsots, and Bunter. Shell out!"

The Fifth-Formers laughed in chorus.

"I guess I'm going to have the spondulics!" howled Fish. "If you think I'm going to stand a loss like that, you're mistaken! You hear me?"

"I hear you," assented Coker. "I could hear you at the end of the passage for that matter. You Remove kids have raided my feeds often enough. This is a Roland for an Oliver. See? Now get out!"

"I guess I'm not going without my money. Two dollars and a half from each of you."

"There's two ways of going out of a study," said Coker cheerfully. "On your feet, or on your neck. Which way do you prefer?"

"I guess I want my ducrocks!"

"Feet or neck?" asked Coker.

"I guess—"

"My hat! He thinks it's a guessing competition!" said Coker. "I'm fed up with his guessing! Chuck him out!"

"Hands off!" yelled Fish, as the grinning Fifth Formers collared him. "I guess I want to be squared! I guess— Yaroo!"

Bump!

Fisher T. Fish descended violently into the passage, and the study door was slammed after him.

The American junior picked himself up slowly and painfully, and shook a bony fist at the closed study door, but did not venture to open it again. There was evidently nothing to be had from Coker & Co.

Fisher T. Fish limped away, a sadder, if not a wiser, junior.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! How did you get on with Coker?" asked Bob Cherry, as the

Removites met him at the end of the passage.

Fish groaned.

"Ow! The beasts chucked me out! Ow! I guess I'm hurt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I kinder reckon I'm going to have the tin!" declared Fish. "I guess I'm going to their Form master now!"

Harry Wharton held up his hand.

"You're not!" he said.

"I guess—"

"Sneaking's barred."

"Do you think I'm going to be done out of two pounds' worth of tuck?" howled Fish. Wharton nodded calmly.

"Yes, I do!"

"Why, I—I—I—" Words failed the indignant Fish.

"We've raided Coker often enough, and you've had your whack in what we've raided," said the captain of the Remove. "Now you've got done you've got to grin and bear it, same as we do when we get done. See?"

"I guess I—"

"Never mind what you guess. You're not going to Mr. Prout, and you're not going to Mr. Quelch, and you're not going to the Head. You're going to take it quietly, and make the best of it," Wharton explained.

"I suppose I can do as I like!" roared Fish.

"That's where you make a mistake," said Harry. "You can't! So long as you belong to the Remove, you've got to play the game. Mind, if you say a word to the masters you'll get a Form licking. We bar sneaks in the Lower Fourth."

"But this a matter of business," protested Fish. "It isn't a joke, you know. This is cold business from the word go."

"And if you complain," went on Wharton, "how long do you think you'll be allowed to carry on an instalment-system business in the Remove, you ask? As soon as Quelch hears of it, he'll be down on you like a ton of bricks."

Fisher T. Fish started. He had not looked at it in that light.

"I guess this is rotten!" he groaned. "Slap goes ten dollars of good American money! I guess it's not good enough!"

"Well, chuck up the silly business, and stop playing the giddy goat," Bob Cherry suggested comfortingly.

Fisher T. Fish snorted defiantly.

"I guess that business is going on, and it's going to hum!" he said. "I guess this hyer firm don't shut down for one loss! No, siree! I guess the F.E.P. Company is still going strong! You hear me?"

And Fish walked away, with his long nose high in the air, realising at last that he had no choice but to cut his losses, but as determined as ever to carry on the famous business of supplying tuck of the best quality on easy terms to suit all purses.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Business Proceeds!

BUSINESS now proceeding!" That notice appeared in large letters on the wall beside the door of Study No. 14, at the end of the Remove passage.

The door itself was wide open.

The Removites, as they came in after the football match, crowded along the passage to No. 14.

They were curious to see the business that was now proceeding.

The study was soon crowded.

The new packing-case had come, and Fish had unpacked it. Good things of all sorts and sizes and varieties were crowded upon the table—a sight that made Billy Bunter's mouth water when he blinked into the study.

The consignment had arrived—unpacked this time. Fisher T. Fish had seen to that. He had sat on the packing-case, in the carrier's cart, all the way from Friarale to the school, and it had been carried up to his study under his personal supervision.

Now all was ready for business, and business was proceeding.

Fisher T. Fish was in his shirt-sleeves behind the table which served as a counter, and he had his big ledger open to enter therein the names of all his clients, with the amounts due from them.

Few of the juniors had any objection to getting tuck on easy terms—they took the good things, and disposed of them internally with wonderful despatch, and trusted to luck about making the payments afterwards.

Exactly how Fish was to collect the weekly payments if the purchasers did not choose to make them was a point the smart American junior had probably not thought out at all carefully. It was quite certain that in case of non-payment he would not be able to recover the goods. On that point there could not be any possible doubt whatever.

"I'm jolly well going to be your best customer, Fishy, old fellow!" said Billy Bunter affectionately. "I think this easy-terms bizney is a topping idea. Lemme see. It's a penny down and a penny a week for sixpennyworth. What?"

"Yep!"

"How much down for ten bob's worth?" "One-and-eightpence," said Fish; "and the same regularly every week till the whole amount is squared."

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter, in a burst of confidence. "You don't charge enough. You'll ruin yourself with these easy terms. They're too easy. Why not make it, say, two bob a week, or even half-a-crown, and—nothing down? That initial payment is the only defect in the system."

"Get off!"

"You see, I'm expecting several postal-orders shortly, and I shall be able to keep up the payments as easy as anything," Bunter explained. "The only difficulty is that I happen to be short of money at the present moment. I'll make it half-a-crown a week—three bob if you like—and—nothing down. Is it a go?"

"Next customer," said Fish.

"Oh, I say, Fishy—"

"Get out!"

"Look here, Fishy; isn't my money as good as anybody else's?" roared Bunter indignantly.

"Your money is, if you've got any—but your gas isn't. Get out of the way. You're taking up my time, and time's money."

Bunter went despairingly through his pockets. As he had said, it was the initial payment that presented difficulties. He would have promised to pay anything in the future, and would have fixed any date and any amount that was desired. He fished out

a halfpenny that had already been refused by Mrs. Mimble in the school shop, and by Uncle Clegg in the village.

"I suppose I can have threepennyworth on the same terms?" he growled.

"That's a halfpenny down and a halfpenny a week for six weeks," said Fish.

"Here you are. I'll have tarts."

And Bunter helped himself as Fish picked up the halfpenny. The next moment there was a roar of wrath from Fisher T. Fish.

"Let those tarts alone! This is a bad 'un!"

"It's all right!" said Bunter, gobbling away at the tarts at express speed. "You look at it again, Fishy. Ow, ow, ow! Leggo!"

The indignant merchant seized Billy Bunter, and there was a sound of a bump in the passage. But Bunter had a tart in his mouth and one in either fat hand, so there was a contented grin on his plump face as he picked himself up and travelled.

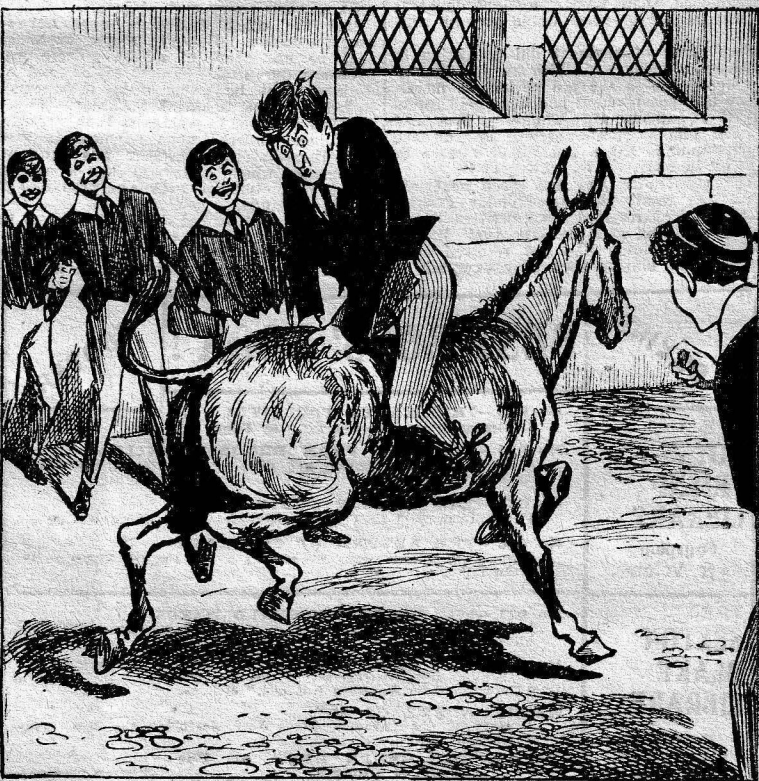
Fortunately for the American merchant all the customers were not like William George Bunter. Quite a little harvest of coppers rattled into the money-box Fish was using as a till.

But when the supply of ready cash was exhausted, Bunter's suggestion of purchases without any initial payments being made seemed to gain general favour. But Fisher T. Fish wasn't taking any, as he put it.

Customers who could not pay were politely told to clear off. Bolsover and Skinner were rather inclined to raid the amateur tuck-shop, and help themselves by force, but the Famous Five generously came to Fish's aid at that perilous moment, and put their foot down on it.

When the business had finished proceeding, so to speak, and the crowd had cleared off, Fisher T. Fish was left with a considerable stock in hand, which he packed up carefully in the packing-case, announcing that business would be restarted on Monday after lessons.

Fish was counting over his gains when Johnny Bull came into his study later on to do his preparation. Study No. 14 did not look tidy. There were fragments of eatables



Fisher T. Fish, clutching wildly at the donkey's back, charged backwards through the gateway into the Close. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors "Fishy's brought his brother here!" chuckled Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 1.)

and empty ginger-beer and lemonade bottles, and corks, and bits of packing-paper strewn over the carpet and in the grate, and Johnny Bull looked round with a discontented frown. "Pretty sort of bear-garden this!" he growled.

"Well, you can clear it up, can't you?" said Fish. "You can't expect a busy business man to waste his time on such things. I tell you, this yer business is going strong—it's going strong, sir! You hear me? Nine-and-ninence in cash. That's not bad for the first day, on the easy-payment system—what!"

"Blow your nine-and-ninence!" said Johnny Bull crossly. "Who's going to clear up all this muck?"

"Oh, that will be cleared up in time, if it's left!" said Fish, without looking up from his account-book. "Don't bother a busy man with such trifles!"

"It's going to be cleared up—and it's not going to be left!" said Johnny Bull grimly, taking up a cricket-stump. "And you're going to do it!"

"Don't bother!"

"Are you going to clear up this study?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Nope! I guess— Yaroooh! Keep that stump away, you jay!" yelled Fish. "By gum, if you rap me again I'll go for you and slaughter you! Yaroooh! Don't you do that again, you silly mugwump! Gerroooh! Stoppit! Chuckitt! I'll clear up the rotten study if you like!"

And he did

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Sad End of a Great Business!

IN spite of that eminently successful start of the great easy-payments business, Fisher T. Fish did not look happy the next day or two. On Monday afternoon business proceeded again, but it was not lively. Money was not so plentiful, and the best part of the stock had been sold off. At the end of the week considerable sums were due to Fisher T. Fish from various members of the Remove, the Third, and Fourth. But the debtors had no intention of paying up before the money was due; indeed, there was some slight doubt as to whether all of them would pay up even then.

Easy terms of payment did not bring in much ready money, and Fish was haunted by the knowledge of the bill he had to meet.

The first consignment had been paid for in advance, and so the wholesale firm had trusted him with the second lot, on the understanding that a remittance was to be sent off immediately on receipt of it.

The remittance had not been sent off. With the result that on Monday evening Fisher T. Fish received a typewritten letter, gently pointing out to him that Brown, Jones, & Robinson had not received their cheque, and hinting that they expected to

receive it on Tuesday; otherwise, their collector would have the pleasure of calling for the account on Wednesday.

Whether it was a pleasure to the collector to call or not, there was no pleasure whatever in the prospect for Fisher T. Fish.

Indeed, for those few days the thought of Messrs. Brown, Jones, & Robinson's collector haunted him, and considerably detracted from his satisfaction in having made so excellent a start in the instalment-system business.

He made desperate efforts to induce unsuspecting juniors to take shares in the business, but in vain.

The shares were at a fearful discount.

Skinner offered to purchase his remaining stock at half cost price, if he liked; a generous offer, which Fish refused with deep indignation.

Billy Bunter offered to take it all off his hands at full price, payment to be made on the arrival of a postal-order which Bunter was expecting hourly. That offer also was declined, without thanks.

Fish was reduced to the necessity of writing a letter to Messrs. Brown, Jones, & Robinson, requesting them to send their collector for the small account on Saturday, by which time he would be able to meet it with ease.

The reply of Messrs. Brown, Jones, & Robinson was decidedly icy. However, they agreed to let the promised visit of the collector stand over till Saturday, adding that on that date he would call without fail.

Fish had no doubt that he would call without fail; what would fail would be the expected payment.

But on Saturday the first fruits, so to speak, were to fall in—Fish had a large number of pennies to collect. Not enough to make up the required two pounds, certainly; but he had a vague idea of offering the collector half the amount, and requesting him to allow the rest to stand over for another week or two.

On Saturday Fish was very busy.

He caught the Famous Five as they came out of the Form-room, and presented his little account. Each of the Co. was indebted to him to the extent of sixpence, and they paid up their penny each cheerfully.

But the other customers were not so accommodating. Bolsover major explained that he was short of money. There was fivepence due from Bolsover major, and he declared that he would make it tenpence instead on the following Saturday. Fisher T. Fish objected strongly to that arrangement, and insisted upon payment in spot cash immediately, and there was quite an argument, which ended in the American junior being bundled neck and crop out of Bolsover's study.

Fisher T. Fish looked decidedly lumpy as he limped away in search of his next customer. He had devoted his great business abilities to working up that great business, and had

left out of consideration certain little difficulties that might crop up afterwards. They were cropping up now, and the business man of the Remove did not quite know how to deal with them.

He ran Billy Bunter down in the passage, and demanded a halfpenny. Bunter blinked at him with great indignation.

"Well, of all the spoofer!" he exclaimed. "Do you call that business? You refused my ha'penny—you know you did! Lots of fellows saw you refuse it!"

"But you had the tarts!" shouted Fish.

"That's got nothing to do with it. You refused to take my money, and so the transaction fell through, of course!"

"Look here, I want half a brown from you!"

"You can want it, but you jolly well won't get it!" said Bunter.

"Then I'll take it out of your hide!" exclaimed the exasperated Fish.

"I say, Fishy, I'll tell you what. I'm expecting a postal-order this evening, and—"

Bunter had no time to finish. Fisher T. Fish had heard quite enough about the postal-order he was expecting, and was fed up on the subject. He went for Bunter right and left, and mopped up the passage with him—passing on to Bunter, as it were, what he had received from Bolsover major. He left the Owl of the Remove roaring, and there was some slight satisfaction in that—but no cash! And it was cash of which Fisher T. Fish was sorely in need.

Skinner was the next man, and Skinner blandly informed the worried merchant of the Remove that he was short of cash, but would settle up the whole amount due in a lump sum at the end of the term. Fish looked at him as if he would eat him.

"You know what the arrangement was, I guess?" he shouted.

"Do I?" said Skinner carelessly. "I've forgotten! What was it, Fishy?"

Skinner asked that question in quite a casual way, as if the matter did not really possess very much interest for him.

"You had two shillingsworth of tuck," said Fish, consulting his notebook. "That was fourpence down, and fourpence a week for six weeks. I want fourpence out of you!"

Skinner turned out his pockets, disclosing a ball of string, a stick of toffee, a broken fountain-pen, and several other articles, possessing a certain amount of interest as examples of the remarkable contents of a schoolboy's pockets, but of no value whatever to Fisher T. Fish.

"Take your choice, and call it square!" he said generously.

"I guess I want fourpence."

"And you won't be happy till you get it?" asked Skinner agreeably. "You'd better go to Lloyd George—he's a fourpence and ninence merchant, you know. I'll see you another day, Fishy!"

"Look here, I've got an account to meet," said the hapless Fish. "I simply must have my money, you know. I haven't been able to pay for the things yet!"

"Did you agree to pay cash?" asked Skinner.

"Yep!"

"And you haven't done it?"

"Nope. I haven't been able to."

Skinner chuckled.

"Then we're both in the same boat," he said. "You agreed to pay cash, and you haven't been able to; I agreed to pay, and I'm not able to. I sympathise with you, Fishy, and you ought to sympathise with me, instead of growling in that manner. Good-bye!"

And Skinner walked away whistling. Fish's troubles did not, apparently, weigh very heavily upon Skinner's mind.

"Oh gum!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I never expected this part of the bizney! Blessed if it isn't like drawing teeth to get my own money out of the galoots! I shan't raise much at this rate!"

And he did not. After his round of collecting was over he found his available capital increased only by the moderate sum of eighteenpence. Some of the fellows made excuses, and some did not; but nearly all of them failed to pay up.

Some of the excuses were reasonable enough, but they were utterly useless to pass on to Messrs. Brown, Jones & Robinson's collector, who was to call at four o'clock that afternoon.

Messrs. Brown, Jones & Robinson had

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THE POPULAR.—No. 214.

Keep Your Eye on This Paper—It's Where You'll Find the BACKWOODS Stories!

stated very clearly in typewriting—there was no chance of misunderstanding—that “our Mr. Twist” would call at four that afternoon; and as the hand of the clock in the tower crawled round towards four Fish’s apprehensions of the call of our Mr. Twist grew more and more acute.

When our Mr. Twist discovered that the debtor possessed in the wide world only the sum of eleven shillings and threepence, there was no telling what our Mr. Twist would do. As our Mr. Twist had positive instructions not to depart without the money, and as Fisher T. Fish had not the money to pay him, it looked like an insoluble problem.

Our Mr. Twist could scarcely take up permanent quarters at Greyfriars; but if he refused to go without the money, there was certainly nothing else that could be done.

At four o’clock Fisher T. Fish was in his study in a most unenviable frame of mind. He had asked Trotter, the page, to show our Mr. Twist up to the study the moment he came, being extremely anxious to keep our Mr. Twist from meeting any of the masters. Fish knew that it meant very serious trouble for him if his Form master or the Head discovered that he had been ordering large quantities of goods that he could not pay for.

It would certainly lead to punishment, and to his allowance being stopped till the bill was liquidated, if to nothing worse.

Promptly at four o’clock our Mr. Twist arrived.

Trotter showed him up to Study No. 14. He was a large man, with a silk hat and an aquiline nose, and a very decided manner. Probably Mr. Twist had been warned by Messrs. Brown, Jones, & Robinson that he had to deal with a schoolboy, who had recklessly ordered goods, without being in a position to meet the bill; and, consequently, Mr. Twist’s manners were cold and formal in the extreme.

“Master Fish?” he asked, as the grinning Trotter vanished down the passage.

“That’s me, I guess,” said Fish. “Won’t you sit down?”

“Thank you; my business here will not detain me long,” said the collector, declining the proffered chair. “There is a small amount due—two pounds, I think.”

“Yep! Just so! Rather warm to-day, isn’t it? Can I offer you some lemonade?” groaned Fisher T. Fish.

“Thanks, no! As a matter of fact, I am rather pressed for time,” Mr. Twist explained, consulting his watch. “I should be obliged to you if you would settle up that small matter now, Master Fish.”

“Lemme see. I—I suppose you’ve got the bill with you?” said Fish desperately.

“Certainly. Here it is!”

Mr. Twist laid the bill on the table, and prepared his fountain-pen to sign the receipt. “Sure you won’t have some—some ginger-beer?” murmured Fish, with a vague idea of placating and softening Mr. Twist.

“Thank you, no!”

“The—fact is,” said Fish haltingly. “I guess I can’t settle up the whole of this amount this afternoon!”

Mr. Twist’s manner had been cold. Now it became positively freezing. The unhappy Fish almost thought he could detect a change of temperature in the study, so icy did Mr. Twist become.

“I am instructed to take the money, and, in fact, not to depart without it,” Mr. Twist said, in a grinding voice. “If not forthcoming, I have instructions to apply to your headmaster.”

“Oh gum!”

“You will, therefore, oblige me by settling the matter at once, and saving further waste of time!”

“I—I guess I’ll scout round and see if I can raise it!” groaned Fish. “Some of the fellows may stand by me. Oh gum, this is the last time I’ll try to wake things up in this sleepy old place! They can snore on till doomsday for all I care!”

“My time is valuable,” said Mr. Twist. “I—I guess I won’t keep you long,” said Fish miserably. “Sit down! I’ll be back before you can say, ‘No sugar in mine!’”

Mr. Twist sat down stiffly, and Fisher T. Fish hurried from the study. The hapless merchant of Greyfriars had no clear idea where he was to borrow the money; but he knew that he had to borrow it somewhere and somehow, or else face serious trouble in the Head’s study.

Fish thought of Coker—Coker had raised his packing-case and caused all the trouble—but Coker & Co. were gone out for the after-

noon. He thought of Mauleverer, but there was no sign of Mauleverer. Harry Wharton & Co. were playing football; but the match was near its termination, and Fish hurried down to the playing-fields as a last resource.

“Goal!” the juniors were shouting as he arrived there.

Fish did not care much for goals just then, and he did not care twopence whether the Remove beat the Shell, or the Shell beat the Remove.

“I say, Wharton—” he called out anxiously.

The teams were lining up after the goal. Wharton glanced for a moment towards the American junior, but did not trouble to answer him. He was not likely to pay much

RESULT OF NEWCASTLE UNITED PUZZLE-PICTURE COMPETITION.

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

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Cork, Irish Free State.

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

H. Morgan, 27, Victoria Rd., Folkestone;
R. J. Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset;
Rose Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Stourbridge;
John Budd, Gellynron Rd., Pontardawe, Swansea;
V. A. Chapman, 8, Stirling Rd., Walthamstow, E. 17;
Louisa Arnold 27, Delorme St., Fulham, W. 6.

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

Stanley Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset;
Alfred Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Stourbridge;
George Arnold, 27, Delorme St., Fulham, W. 6;
Len Baskett, 15, Hall St., Chelmsford;
Thomas Combe 10, Hawthornvale, Leith;
Sarah Carroll, 45, Duncan St., Oldfield Rd., Salford;
George Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Stourbridge;
Ernest Massey, 27, Endell St., Long Acre, W.C. 2;
Alfred Carr, 70, Barge E, Boston;
S. J. Evans, 44, Regent St., Gloucester;
Lily Taylor, 4, Drapers Field, Coventry;
Frances Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Sunderland;
Miss M. O. Aitken, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan;
Albert Taylor, 53, Flaxby Rd., Darnall, Sheffield;
Mary Kennedy, 4, Flanders Vennel, Perth;
James W. Clark, 37, River View, Black Hall Mill, Hamsterly, Colliery, Durham;
Miss M. Giles, 1, Phoenix St., Stonehouse, Plymouth;
Samuel Bishop, 45, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Stourbridge;
C. Porterfield, 80, Milton Rd., Hanwell, W. 7;
James Lynch, 8, Greenhough St., Ancoats, Manchester;
G. Sharp, Countisbury, Hayling Island, Hants;
Mrs. A. Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan;
C. Ayres, 19, The Walk, Birdwell, Barnsley;
A. Woodcock, 9, Warton Terrace, Bootle, Liverpool;
David Hamilton, 20, Duke St., Motherwell;
Bernard Wallis, 14, Egerton Rd., Bishopston, Bristol;
John Simpson, 8, Mill Rd., Halfway, Cambuslang, Lanarks;
L. Spencer, 3, Ropewalk, Gt. Brickkiln St., Wolverhampton;
Charles H. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Howarth St., Sunderland;
J. Aor, 68, Nugget St., Oldham;
H. Kimmings, 36, Ritches Rd., West Green, N. 15;
D. Whetnall, 31, Wellington St., Burslem, Staffs;
Mrs. Bert Wolf, 4, Prospect Place, Keston, Kent;
Leonard Mullineaux, Sunny Side, Victoria Rd., Preston.

SOLUTION.

Newcastle United is the most difficult Association football club in this country for a young footballer to enter, as it engages only the finest talent it can obtain. Newcastle has consistently been a splendid side, but its Cup history is a disappointing one.

attention to Fisher T. Fish while engaged in playing footer.

But Fish was desperate. He ran on the field, only to be collared by a linesman, and bundled off faster than he came.

But the match finished at last, amid a roar of cheering. The Remove had beaten the Shell by three goals to two. Fisher T. Fish had not even noticed the winning goal, so great was his anxiety and agitation.

As the players came off the field he rushed up to the captain of the Remove, and caught him by the arm.

“I guess I want you!” he gasped.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. “You been watching the match for once, Fishy?”

“Watching the match!” grunted Fish. “Blow the match! I say, I want you fellows to help me; I’m in an awful hole!”

“Something gone wrong with the easy payment business?” grinned Bob.

“Yep.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Tain’t a laughing matter, you jays!” roared Fish. “There’s a man waiting in my study for two pounds, and I’ve only got eleven-and-threepence. And if I don’t settle up he’s going to the Head!”

“My hat!”

“He may be gone already!” groaned Fish. “You know what that will mean?”

“Trouble!” grinned Bob.

“You shouldn’t play the giddy ox, Fishy,” said Nugent comfortingly. “Let this be a lesson to you, my young friend! Let—”

“Oh, don’t cackle! Lend a galoot a hand when he’s in a corner,” said Fish indignantly.

“I suppose we’ve got to,” said Harry, half-laughing, and half-angry. “It means booking up all our pocket-money.”

“I guess I’ll settle some day—ahem—”

“You’ll hand over all you’ve got left of the tuck, if we settle the bill,” said Harry Wharton. “We can use it for tea, anyway.”

“Oh, come off! At wholesale prices—”

“Rats! The stuff isn’t worth one pound eight-and-ninepence, I know that. It’s the least you can do, I think.”

“Waal, I guess I’ll do it!”

“Then we’ll see the man,” said Wharton; “and mind, if you ever enter into any business of any kind, on any occasion again, we’ll take you out and bump you till you’re black and blue. That’s understood?”

“I guess you make your own terms. Come on!”

And Fisher T. Fish hurried the Famous Five into the School House. The chums of the Remove contrived to collect the required sum by combining their resources, and then they accompanied Fish to Study No. 14. They found our Mr. Twist growing decidedly impatient.

“You have kept me waiting a very considerable time!” exclaimed the representative of Messrs. Brown, Jones & Robinson. “I expect the matter to be settled at once, Master Fish. Otherwise—”

“I guess I can pay you up now!” said Fish. “Please do, then!”

And the two pounds—in coins of all sizes and value—being duly handed over to Mr. Twist, and that gentleman, having counted the sum, and found it correct, the receipt was handed over to Fisher T. Fish, and our Mr. Twist took his departure, leaving behind him a certainty that Fish would never be able to do any more business on credit with Messrs. Brown, Jones & Robinson.

Fish heaved a deep sigh of relief as he watched the collector go.

“I guess I’m well out of that!” he remarked. “Now, I owe you fellows one pound eight-and-ninepence—”

“You owe us all the stuff you’ve got left in that packing-case,” said Wharton grimly, “and we’ll take it with us now.”

“Look here, I guess—”

“And if you spring any more new ideas on us we’ll bump you on the spot,” said Harry sternly. “That’s a promise!”

“I guess—”

Fisher T. Fish was left to waste his guesses upon the desert air. The chums of the Remove departed, taking the remainder of the stock with them; and that afternoon there was a feed in Study No. 1, a partial compensation for their loss of the sum of one pound eight shillings and ninepence.

THE END.

(There will be another rollicking long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars entitled: “The Bounder’s Flight!” in next week’s extra bumper issue.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 214.

Dick Turpin and Dick Neville—Comrades of the Road! Follow Them!

Teddy Grace, the new boy at Rookwood, scores again! He brings off the greatest jape of his career!



A Screamingly Funny Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., at Rookwood.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Collision on the Line.

"HERE he is!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell. Teddy Grace of the Fourth looked round quickly.

The new junior at Rookwood was sauntering down to the gates, after lessons, when Arthur Edward's dulcet tones fell upon his ears.

"Stop!" called out Jimmy Silver. The new junior stopped. He gave the Fistical Four a nod and a cheery smile as they came towards him, but his look was very wary.

For the expressions of Jimmy Silver & Co. boded trouble.

Trouble was not a new experience to Teddy Grace; indeed, he seemed to be born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, so to speak.

"Coming out for a run?" asked the new junior, as the Fistical Four came up.

"No!" grunted Lovell.

"We've been looking for you," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, now you've found me."

"Mind he doesn't dodge?" said Raby.

Teddy Grace backed away a little.

Raby and Newcome moved round him to cut him off from the gateway, while Jimmy Silver and Lovell were evidently prepared to collar him if he tried to bolt.

"Anything the matter?" asked Teddy mildly.

"Lots!" answered Jimmy Silver. "You haven't been at Rookwood long, Teddy Grace. We thought you were rather soft when you first came—"

"I'm called Putty because I'm considered rather soft!" murmured the new junior meekly.

"But we know better now," continued the captain of the Fourth, unheeding. "And the fact is, Grace, you have too much nerve for a new kid, and you're too funny."

"Much too funny!" concurred Newcome.

"We don't mind you playing your monkey-tricks on the Modern chaps," said Jimmy Silver, "and you can pull Mr. Bootles' leg, or play tricks on Carthew of the Sixth as much as you like; but when you begin on us it's time the stopper was put on. See?"

"Oh!" murmured Putty of the Fourth. "Tricks—on you! I really shouldn't have the nerve. Really important people like you chaps have to be treated with respect."

"None of your cheek!" roared Lovell.

Putty raised his eyebrows.

"But I'm only acknowledging your im-

THE POPULAR.—No. 214.

portance, old man," he said. "Isn't that what you want?"

"Don't waste any chin wag on him!" growled Lovell. "Bump him! That's what he's been asking for ever since he came."

"Wait a bit," said Jimmy Silver. "We had a pie in our study cupboard, Putty. We've just taken it out, and we've found that there's nothing but an old boot under the crust. We thought of you at once."

"Just one of your games!" said Raby. Putty of the Fourth looked more wary than ever.

"So kind of you to think of me," he murmured. "I really take that as friendly, Silver."

"So we looked for you," continued Jimmy. "We've decided that you are too funny, Master Putty, and that you've got to be reduced to a proper state of seriousness."

"Thank you so much!"

"The best method we can think of is to give you a jolly good ragging. You understand?"

Teddy Grace nodded.

"I think I catch on!" he assented.

"I thought I'd explain first," said Jimmy.

"Next time you can't resist being funny, you can select some other study. The end study is taboo to practical jokers. See?"

"I see."

"And now bump him!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell impatiently.

"I'm sorry, Putty," said Jimmy Silver, "but you've got to have your lesson. I really hope it will do you good."

"That's very kind of you."

The soft answer is said to turn away wrath, but Putty's soft answers seemed to have the reverse effect upon the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

"Nail him!" snapped Lovell.

And he made a stride towards Teddy Grace.

That cheery youth made a sudden jump away at the same moment, in the direction of the gateway.

He collided with Raby and Newcome, who collared him at once; but the new junior slipped through their hands like an eel. Newcome staggered away, and George Raby sat down with a sudden bump.

And Putty of the Fourth was fleeing for the gates at top speed.

"Oh!" gasped Raby.

"After him!" roared Lovell.

The Fistical Four rushed in pursuit.

Putty's flight had been so sudden that he had gained a start, but Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed hotly after him.

Putty was quite as fleet of foot as the Fistical Four, however, and he kept his lead,

and reached the gateway well ahead of his pursuers. He went through the old stone gateway like a deer.

But Teddy Grace's luck was out.

It was unfortunate for him that someone was about to enter the gates just as he sped out with full steam on. It really was a thing that could not be foreseen, especially in the hurry of the moment.

A tall gentleman, in a white hat and an eyeglass, was just turning in at the gates, and Putty saw him—too late!

Bump!

Crash!

Right upon an ample white waistcoat the new junior crashed, a good deal like a battering-ram.

Jimmy Silver & Co. halted suddenly as they beheld that awful catastrophe.

"Mum-mum-my hat!" stuttered Lovell.

"That's Sir Leicester Stuckey! Oh crumbs!"

"Hook it!" gasped Raby.

The Fistical Four "hooked it" at great speed.

Like the gentlemen in "Macbeth" they stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once.

In a moment almost they had melted away from view.

Putty of the Fourth would have been glad to melt away, too; but he had no chance.

He tottered dizzily from the shock upon the well-filled white waistcoat of Sir Leicester Stuckey, gasping for breath; what time Sir Leicester staggered back and sat down in the road.

Sir Leicester's white hat went in one direction, his eyeglass in another, and the baronet himself sat in the road and spluttered.

"Oh! Ah! Groogh! By gad! Hoop!

Yoop! Begad! Ow!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured the dismayed Putty. "I—I—I'm sorry, sir—"

"Yow-ow-wooop!"

Teddy Grace recovered his breath, and dodged round the seated gentleman to flee. From the expression on Sir Leicester's face he judged correctly that a prolonged interview with him would be of a painful nature.

But the baronet was active for his years. As Teddy Grace dodged, Sir Leicester reached out with his walking-stick, and hooked him with the crook of the handle.

"Stop, you young rascal!" he panted.

Teddy Grace had to stop, for his leg was hooked from under him, and he stopped on his hands and knees.

Sir Leicester Stuckey scrambled up, and gripped the junior by the back of the collar, jerking him to his feet. Still holding the unfortunate Putty in an iron grip, he collected up his hat and his eyeglass with the other hand. Putty wriggled painfully in his grasp.

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"I—I'm really sorry, sir!" he gasped. "It was an accident!"

"Ow! Oh! Begad! Ooooooh!"

"I didn't see you, sir—"

"You should have seen me!" roared Sir Leicester.

"I—I—I—"

"Come with me, you young rascal! I shall take you to your headmaster!" thundered the baronet.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Putty. "I—I assure you, sir—"

"Come!"

And Putty of the Fourth was marched in at the gates with a grasp like a vice on his collar.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Catching It!

"MORE trouble!" grinned Mornington. "Putty again!" chuckled Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

From all directions the Rookwood fellows looked on as Putty of the Fourth was marched across the quadrangle, with Sir Leicester Stuckey's grip on his collar.

Sir Leicester was well known at Rookwood, though Putty, as a new fellow, had never seen him before.

He was a governor of the school, and his place, Stuckey Croft, was only a mile from Rookwood. He was a rather lofty gentleman, and was known to have a temper. Indeed, disrespectful Rookwooders had described him as an old Hun. Certainly he looked rather Hunnish as he marched Putty of the Fourth towards the School House.

Teddy Grace went quietly and meekly; there was nothing else to be done. But he was not feeling happy.

Sir Leicester did not heed the stares and grins on all sides as he progressed across the quad. The Rookwooders had never seen a Rookwood fellow marched along by the collar before, and they were interested.

"Putty's in for it, and no mistake!" remarked Mornington, as the baronet stalked into the House with his victim. "What on earth has he been up to, I wonder?"

"Some of his tricks!" grunted Higgs of the Fourth. "He's always up to something. A licking will do him good."

"He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin. "He biffed into old Stuckey at the gates. I saw him. Knocked him over! He, he, he!"

"I—I say, sir," gasped Putty, as he entered the School House with his conductor, "I assure you it was an accident!"

"Nonsense!"

"On my word, sir—"

"Hold your tongue!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Putty.

"Bless my soul! What is this?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, whisking out of his study. The master of the Fourth blinked at the baronet and the junior over his glasses in great surprise.

Sir Leicester halted.

"Is this boy in your Form, Mr. Bootles?" he demanded.

"Yes, certainly! What—what—"

"Then, sir, I hand him over to you for punishment! He has assaulted me, sir—assaulted a governor of the school!" roared Sir Leicester, in great wrath and indignation.

"Bless my soul! Grace, what—what—"

"It was an accident, sir!" faltered the unhappy Putty.

"It was not an accident!" thundered Sir Leicester. "The boy rushed at me, sir, like a mad bull—like a ferocious bull, sir! Look at my hat! Look at my waistcoat, sir! I have been rolled in the dust! I, sir, a governor of the school!"

And Sir Leicester spluttered.

"Pray come into my study, sir!" gasped Mr. Bootles, with a glance at the crowd of Rookwooders gathering round.

"Boy, go into your master's study!"

Putty cast a longing look at the doorway on the quad, but there was no escape for him. He walked meekly into Mr. Bootles' study, followed by Sir Leicester, who had released his collar at last. Mr. Bootles whisked in after them in a state of great agitation. Mr. Bootles was a nervous little gentleman, and easily flustered; and he was very much flustered now by the wrath of so great a personage as Sir Leicester Stuckey.

Teddy Grace set his collar straight, and looked as meek as he could.

"Now, sir—" murmured Mr. Bootles. The baronet pointed a podgy forefinger at Teddy Grace.

"That boy, sir, rushed at me and knocked me spinning—me, sir! I demand the most severe punishment for his insolence! The most condign punishment, sir!"

Mr. Bootles took up his cane.

"Have you anything to say, Grace?" he asked.

"Yes, sir! I—"

"What does it matter what the boy says, sir?" snorted Sir Leicester. "I have told you what occurred!"

"Really, sir—"

"The boy will speak untruthfully. He has done so already!"

"That's not true!" exclaimed Putty indignantly.

"What—what!"

"I've told you the truth—it was an accident. I didn't see you before I biffed on you—I—I mean, before we collided."

"You should not have been rushing about at such a speed, Grace, as to collide with people you do not see!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles severely. "I shall certainly punish you—"

"I should think so!" exclaimed Sir Leicester. "Begad, I should think so, indeed!"

"But it was an accident, Mr. Bootles!" pleaded Putty.

"You should not have such accidents, Grace!"

"But, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!"

There was evidently nothing more to be said.

Swish, swish, swish!

With Sir Leicester looking on, purple with indignation, his white moustache bristling with wrath, Mr. Bootles laid on the cane with unusual energy.

Swish, swish, swish!

Putty of the Fourth had been caned before—not underservedly—but he had never had anything like this.

Swish, swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Even Sir Leicester Stuckey was satisfied with the infliction, as he testified by a deep grunt, which was to be taken as a sign of approval.

His angry face cleared a little as he left the Form master's study and strode away to the Head's quarters.

Mr. Bootles laid down his cane.

"You may go, Grace," he said quietly. "I warn you, my boy, not to play these foolish practical jokes—"

"Ow! But really, sir— Yow!"

"You must learn, Grace, to restrain your unruly sense of humour," said Mr. Bootles severely. "Yesterday my cane in the Form-room was split. I suspect you of this outrage, Grace."

"Oh, sir!"

"But this latest prank passes all bounds—an actual assault upon a governor of the school!"

"But I assure you, sir—"

"You may go—"

"Yes, sir. But—"

"Leave my study, Grace!" snapped the master of the Fourth.

And Putty left it, rubbing his aching palms, and with a decidedly lugubrious expression on his face.

His unruly sense of humour, as Mr. Bootles called it, had landed him in trouble before, and was probably destined to do so again. Whenever a fellow found a boot in his pie, or gum in his inkpot, or ink in his slippers, he thought of Putty at once. Putty was not always guilty; it was a case of a dog with a bad name.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you?" Jimmy Silver came into the School House and discovered Putty of the Fourth going through what looked like a weird series of gymnastics. "Got a pain anywhere?"

"Yow-ow!" said Putty dismally. "It's all your fault! I've been licked! Ow-ow-ow!"

"For biffing old Stuckey?" grinned the captain of the Fourth.

"Ow! Yes. He marched me in to Bootles. Ow!"

"Why didn't you dodge him?"

"Yow! I couldn't!"

"My dear chap, you're not so bright as you think you are!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "We dodged, and we thought you'd dodged."

"He hooked me with his walking-stick—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you silly ask?" booted Putty. "I've been jolly well skinned—"

"Wasn't it funny—old Stuckey hooking you with a walking-stick?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Yow! No, it wasn't! Ow!"

"Ha, ha! That's the weakness of you merry humorists—you never see the humour when it's up against yourselves!" grinned Jimmy. "Think over it, old infant, and you'll see that it's quite funny!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" was Putty's reply.

Possibly it was funny; but for the present, at least, the humour of it was quite lost on the humorist of the Fourth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Putty's Little Scheme.

"WOOP!"

"Putty again!" grinned Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was the following day, which happened to be Wednesday, a half-holiday at Rookwood. The Fistical Four were strolling in the quad after dinner, discussing what was to be done with the afternoon, when they heard that loud and lamentable howl under the old beeches.

It was Putty of the Fourth—evidently in trouble again! He was wriggling in the grasp of Knowles of the Modern Sixth, and the Modern prefect was laying on his ashplant with considerable vigour.

"Whoop! Yoop! I didn't—I wasn't—" yelled Putty.

"That's for the gum in my slippers!" said Knowles. Whack! "That's for the oil in my ink-bottle!"

"I didn't—"

Whack, whack!

"And that's for being a cheeky young cad!"

"Yarocoo!"

"Here, hold on, Knowles!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Moderns can't cane Classical chaps. Put the brake on!"

Knowles scowled at the captain of the Fourth, and bestowed another sounding whack on Putty, as if to show that he could cane Classics, in spite of Jimmy Silver's opinion to the contrary.

Then he tucked the ashplant under his arm and strode away.

"Ow, ow!" gasped Putty. "The beast! I've a jolly good mind to go to Bulkeley! Ow!"

"Bulkeley would give you another licking for playing tricks on a prefect!" grinned Raby.

"I haven't!" roared Putty.

"Bow-wow!"

"It's all put down to me!" gasped the unhappy humorist. "I haven't been near Knowles' study. Some silly Modern duffer has been playing tricks on him, and he thinks—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "That's what comes of being such a jolly funny merchant. You get the benefit of the doubt."

Putty glared indignantly at the Fistical Four as they yelled. Again he failed to see the humour of the situation.

"I'm getting fed up!" he growled.

"You cackling asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll jolly well make you all sit up somehow."

"You can't, old bean!" chuckled Lovell. "Every time you let your giddy sense of humour get out of hand we shall know it was you, and you'll get it in the neck. And every time it isn't you, you'll get it, anyway. Serve you jolly well right, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four walked on, laughing. The woes of the humorist struck them as funny.

Putty wriggled painfully, and there was quite a thoughtful expression on his face as he moved away.

He was feeling very much injured.

But as he reflected the cloud left his face and a smile took its place.

The glimmer in his merry eyes showed that some new idea had come into his fertile brain, and that the trouble that had fallen upon him had not had much effect upon his cheery proclivities.

"By Jove!" he murmured. "What a wheeze! What a thumping wheeze! Bootles—and Knowles—and those silly asses—and old Stuckey! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Do you like being licked?" asked Tabby Muffin, joining him under the beeches. "You seem to be enjoying yourself, Putty."



"Young rascals, sweeps, scoundrels—take that—and that!" roared Sir Leicester. Whack! Whack! Crash! The juniors, scurrying in all directions, went down the drive as if they were on the cinder path. (See Chapter 5.)

"Just thinking of you, old bean!" answered Putty cheerfully. "I want a chat with you, Tubby. You know everything, don't you?"

"I fancy I know most things that go on in Rookwood, anyway," said Tubby, with pride.

"You always will, old fellow, so long as they make keyholes to doors," agreed Putty.

"Look here, you ass—"

"About old Stuckey," said Putty. "I hear that he's a governor of Rookwood, and lives near the school?"

"That's so. I know all about him," answered Tubby Muffin. "His place is called Stuckey Croft, off the Coombe Road. He's a jolly old tartar, too! The Head doesn't really like him dropping in at the school the way he does; but he can't say so, as the old donkey is a governor. He, he, he!"

"Isn't he a nice man?"

"A regular Hun!" answered Tubby impressively.

"Doesn't he often ask the fellows to tea at his place, and all that?"

Tubby stared.

"No jolly feat! He's had Knowles of the Sixth there, I believe. Knowles is rather a sly chap, and he knows how to butter anybody. You have to pull old Stuckey's leg a lot to get on with him."

"Still, he'd be pleased if a fellow dropped in to tea, I should think."

Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"I shouldn't like to be the fellow!" he answered.

"Why not?"

"Well, it would be check—and old Stuckey's about the last man in the world to stand check. If a fellow walked in there without being asked, he would go out on his neck, I should think. It's a fine place, too!" said Tubby. "I've seen it through the gates. Old Stuckey's no end wealthy—bunks, and all that, at Stuckey Croft. I'd go if he asked me."

"But he hasn't?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 214.

"Nunno. He's not a nice man."

"But if a chap came in there in a friendly way—suppose I did, for example—to have tea with him—"

"Don't you be such a silly ass, Putty," said Tubby Muffin warningly. "He would lay a stick about you as likely as not!"

"Oh! Then I jolly well shan't honour him with my company!" said Putty, laughing.

And he strolled away to the gates. He passed Carthew of the Sixth in the gateway, and Carthew gave him a scowl.

Putty was not on good terms with the bully of the Sixth.

"Hallo, Carthew! Have you lost something?" asked Putty, stopping suddenly.

Carthew stopped.

"Lost something? Not that I knew of. What—"

"I think you have, though."

"If you've found something that belongs to me you can hand it over!" said the Sixth-Former, staring at him. "What is it?"

"I haven't found it—but I think you've lost it."

"What is it?"

"Your temper, old bean."

Carthew made a jump towards the Fourth-Former, who scuttled out into the road and fled.

Putty did not drop into a walk till he was at a safe distance. His cheery face wore a happy smile as he sauntered on to Coombe.

Arrived in the village, he entered Lamson's, the establishment that supplied most of the Rookwooders with bats and balls and other paraphernalia of outdoor games. Putty was not in search of a new cricket-bat, however. He politely requested permission to use the telephone.

Lamson's telephone was not infrequently used by Rookwood fellows, and Putty's polite request was at once acceded to.

He was shown into a stuffy little office at the back of the shop, and left to his own devices there.

He sat down at the instrument after

seeing that the door into the shop was closed. He was very desirous that his little talk on the telephone should not be overheard.

Probably Mr. Lamson would not have been so obliging if he had known why, and to whom the humorist of Rookwood wished to talk on the telephone. Fortunately he did not know.

Putty removed the receiver from the hook and called up the exchange. And the number he gave was the Head's number at Rookwood, and the voice in which he spoke was remarkably unlike his usual tones. He had assumed for the occasion a deep, bass voice, which was astonishingly like the gruff tones of Sir Leicester Stuckey, of Stuckey Croft.

He asked for James Silver, and when it became apparent who was speaking at the other end of the line, James Silver was commanded to hasten to the telephone in the prefects' room.

Jimmy Silver's amazement when he heard that well-known gruff voice bid him and his friends attend Stuckey Croft for tea that afternoon knew no bounds. Before he had recovered from his astonishment, Jimmy was asked to extend the invitation to Knowles of the Sixth, who was wanted at half-past four o'clock.

Knowles was present in the room, and he came to the phone to thank the baronet for his kindly invitation.

"Rubbish!" said the gruff voice. "Don't waste my time, boy! Is Carthew there?"

"Y-y-yes, sir!" gasped Knowles, and called Carthew.

Carthew came like a shot.

His voice was as honey-sweet as he accepted this invitation.

"I shall expect you at four o'clock, then, Carthew!" came the deep, gruff voice on the wire.

"Certainly, sir—delighted, I'm sure—indeed—Hullo, he's rung off!"

Carthew gave the other seniors in the room a rather boastful look as he left the telephone. Whether it was a pleasure or not, it was a great distinction to be asked to tea by Sir Leicester Stuckey.

Carthew's satisfaction, like that of some other persons at Rookwood, would have been considerably diminished if he had seen the "baronet" at the other end of the wire.

Teddy Grace, with a sweet smile, rose from the stool in Lamson's office and put the receiver back on the hook. He had finished telephoning for that afternoon. With really noble self-denial he had resisted the inclination to ask the Head himself to tea at Stuckey Croft. Even Putty of the Fourth felt that that would be going a little too far.

He passed out through the shop, and thanked Mr. Lamson very sweetly, and sauntered down the village street with a smile upon his face which showed that he was placidly at peace with himself and all the world. He was feeling quite grateful to the inventor of that wonderful instrument, the telephone.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Visitors for Sir Leicester.

MARK CARTHEW, the first on the list of Sir Leicester Stuckey's distinguished guests, arrived in good time at Stuckey Croft. Carthew was looking very pleased with himself, and he was sporting his best tail-coat and his shiniest hat. He glanced at the extensive and well-kept grounds as he came up to the magnificent portal, and was still more pleased. Sir Leicester Stuckey was undoubtedly an acquaintance worth cultivating, even if it did require no inconsiderable amount of buttering to keep him in a good humour.

He gave his name to the footman who admitted him, and was rather surprised that he did not seem to be expected. His name was taken in to Sir Leicester, who was in the library, and the footman returned with a lurking grin of impertinence upon his smooth face.

"Sir Leicester is sorry that he cannot see you, sir."

Carthew stared and reddened.

"Sir Leicester is expecting me!" he exclaimed warmly. "My name is Carthew—Mark Carthew. Sir Leicester asked me to call at four o'clock."

"Sir Leicester's gout is bad to-day, sir, and he is not receiving anyone."

The Story of Jimmy Silver & Co. Next Tuesday is a Real Ripper!

"There's some mistake," said Carthew. "Sir Leicester telephoned to me personally, asking me to call at four o'clock. Perhaps he has forgotten."

The footman gave him a doubtful look, but he returned to his master. A deep voice was heard from the open door of the library.

"Show him in!"
The voice did not sound agreeable, but Carthew was relieved. He had begun to feel very perplexed and uncomfortable. The footman showed him into the library, where Sir Leicester Stuckey sat by a huge fire, with one foot propped upon a cushioned stool. His red face was a little redder than usual, and his eyes had a far from hospitable glitter in them. Carthew, considerably abashed, approached him in some trepidation.

Sir Leicester fixed a glittering eye upon him.

"So—what is your name?"

"Carthew, Sir Leicester. You—you telephoned—"

"When did I telephone?"

"This afternoon, sir—"

"I did not telephone this afternoon!" snorted Sir Leicester. "I am not in a state to telephone this afternoon. Yow-ow!" That ejaculation, apparently, was due to a twinge in Sir Leicester's gouty leg. "What do you mean, boy, by coming here with a statement that I telephoned to you, when I did nothing of the sort?"

"But—but—but—" stammered the bewildered Carthew. "You—you did—"

"What?"

"At least, I—I—I—"

"James!" roared Sir Leicester.

James appeared.
"Show this young gentleman out, James! As for you, Carthew, or whatever your name is, I shall mention this to your headmaster. Yow! A schoolboy joke, I presume—a joke—yow!—on me!"

"Oh, no, no!" gasped Carthew. He would as soon have thought of joking with a tiger in the jungle as with Sir Leicester Stuckey. "I—I was rung up—"

"Show him out!"

"I assure you, Sir Leicester, I—I—"

"Show him out!" roared Sir Leicester.

James touched Carthew on the elbow, and the prefect of Rookwood almost tottered out of the library. Sir Leicester gave a snort of angry contempt, followed by a yelp, as he caught another twinge from his leg.

The footman was grinning as he almost pushed the Rookwood prefect out of the door. Carthew wondered whether he was on his head or his heels as he almost limped away down the drive.

Sir Leicester Stuckey snorted and snorted again. His temper was never good, and when the gout had the upper hand it was worse than ever. He regretted that he had not laid his crutch about the Rookwooder who had disturbed his lofty repose that painful afternoon.

And when James—a little nervous himself—announced another visitor, at half-past four, Sir Leicester indulged in a snort that could be heard in the hall by Knowles of the Modern Sixth.

"Have I told you, James, that I cannot see anyone, or have I not?" he demanded.

"Master Knowles—"

"Another boy from Rookwood! What does he want?"

"Ahem! Master Knowles says you telephoned, Sir Leicester—"

Sir Leicester sat boldly upright, and yelped as his leg twinged.

"Telephoned!" he thundered.

"Ye-es, Sir Leicester—"

"Begad! Telephoned! Show the young rascal in!" gasped Sir Leicester. "This is a piece of concerted insolence—what they call, I believe, a rag! Begad, I'll rag them! Show the young scoundrel in!"
The young scoundrel was shown in.

Knowles of the Sixth advanced towards the baronet with an insinuating smile upon his face; but the smile became a little frozen as he saw Sir Leicester's purple face and the expression upon it.

"So I telephoned to you, did I?"

thundered Sir Leicester.

Knowles jumped.

"Ye-es, certainly—"

"You young rascal!"

"Wh-a-at?" stuttered Knowles.

"Telephoned! By gad! I shall certainly telephone to your headmaster and report this insolence!"

Knowles blinked at him.

"But you—you asked me to tea!" he stammered. "You—you telephoned to—ask me—"

"How dare you stand before me and utter such falsehoods, boy?" thundered Sir Leicester. "I am very well acquainted with your motive. I am aware of what you call a rag. A rag, by gad! James, turn this fellow out!"

"B-b-b-but—" spluttered Knowles, in blank bewilderment.

"Kick him out!" roared Sir Leicester. James took Knowles by the arm and led him away. He deposited Knowles, as it were, outside the great door, and closed it on him, leaving the unfortunate Rookwooder wondering whether he was dreaming. It was several minutes before Knowles recovered himself sufficiently to limp away.

Sir Leicester puffed and fumed in his chair. Excitement was decidedly not good for a gouty leg; but Sir Leicester's temper had a will of its own, and was not to be denied. And Sir Leicester had reason to be wrathful. He could only conclude that he was being made the victim of a concerted practical joke, which, in the case of so important a person as himself, almost amounted to sacrilege.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Nice for the Fistical Four!

"H ALLO! You fellows look in great form!"

Teddy Grace smiled cheerfully at the Fistical Four. The cheerful new junior was hanging about the lane, not far from the entrance to Stuckey Croft, when Jimmy Silver & Co. came along.

Certainly the Fistical Four looked unusually spick and span. Their jackets were nicely brushed, their trousers nicely creased, their ties nicely tied, and they wore their best hats and their best smiles. It was a distinguished occasion, and the chums of the Fourth were doing justice to it.

"We're going to make a rather special call, you see," explained Jimmy.

"Dropping in to see Sir Leicester Stuckey, you know," remarked Lovell negligently.

"Not really?" exclaimed Putty.

"Yes; he rang us up this afternoon," said Raby carelessly.

"Lucky bargains!" said Putty enviously. "Could you take a pal in?"

"Not quite!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

And he walked on with his chums.

"Jolly decent place, this!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell, as the Fistical Four walked up the drive. "Shouldn't mind coming here sometimes. Tea on the lawn would be all right, wouldn't it?"

"Topping!" said Newcome.

"Old Stuckey can't be such a bad sort," went on Lovell. "It's really decent of him to pick us out and ask us to tea. Well, here we are!"

Jimmy Silver rang.

He observed a rather peculiar expression on the well-shaven face of James, as that well-fed menial opened the door. James was positively getting fed up with visitors from Rookwood School.

"Sir Leicester is expecting us!" Jimmy Silver explained, as James showed a disposition not to open the door very wide.

"Sir Leicester cannot see anyone this afternoon," said James.

"He is expecting us. Take in our names!" answered Jimmy, rather sharply.

"Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome."

"Sir Leicester has given instructions for no one to be admitted—"

"What rot!" said Lovell. "He must be expecting us, as he telephoned—"

James gave a start.

"Telephoned!" he repeated.

"Yes, to Rookwood!"

"If this is a joke, young gentlemen—"

began James.

"I don't see any joke!" said Jimmy Silver, surprised, and not pleased by the footman's manner. "Take in our names to Sir Leicester at once!"

"I'm afraid I cannot—"

"I tell you Sir Leicester telephoned to us to come at half-past live!" exclaimed Jimmy angrily. "Come on, you chaps!"

And as James showed no disposition to grant a passage, the Fistical Four pushed him aside and entered. The man's conduct was really amazing, and they could not help suspecting that he was not quite sober.

"Now, show us in at once!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"I tell you, young gentlemen—"

"Where is Sir Leicester?"

"In the library, sir. But—"

"Well, we want to see him. It's an appointment, man! Don't you understand?" snapped Jimmy.

James stood nonplussed. He could see that the juniors were there in good faith, but he simply dared not announce them to his irascible master. A bell rang, and James hurried to the library.

"What is it, James? Is it some more of them?" came a gruff, ferocious voice, which made Jimmy Silver & Co. blink at one another.

"Yes, Sir Leicester!" gasped James.

"Four young gentlemen from Rookwood—"

"Begad!"

"They—they say you telephoned, Sir Leicester—"

"Telephoned!"

It was a roar, in a voice like unto the voice of the bull of Bashan.

"Show them in! Telephoned! Begad! I'll give them telephone! Show them in!"

James made a sign to the amazed juniors, who entered the library.

Sir Leicester Stuckey was standing by the hearth, leaning on his crutch, his face purple.

"So—so you have come to—to see me?" he gasped, with a glare at the Fistical Four.

(Concluded on page 28.)



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See this mark.

"Yes, sir!" stammered Jimmy Silver, in dismay. "We—we—we've come to tea, sir."

"You have come to tea! You—we have come to tea! I—I presume I telephoned—what?"

"Yes," answered Jimmy Silver. "You telephoned to Rookwood—"

"By gad!"

What happened next was like an earthquake to the astounded juniors.

Headless of the twinges in his gouty leg, the angry gentleman strode forward to wards them, grasping his crutch.

"Telephoned!" he spluttered. "Telephoned, by gad! T-t-t-telephoned—"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Yoooop!"

The juniors jumped right and left, with yells of astonishment and anguish, as Sir Leicester started in with the crutch.

Whack, whack! Biff!

"Yarooop!"

"Help!"

"Run for it!" shrieked Lovell. "He's mad! Run for your lives!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Helter-skelter the juniors scattered into the hall. Behind them came Sir Leicester, raging, with brandished crutch.

"Telephoned! I'll give you telephone! By gad! Young rascals, sweeps, scoundrels, take that—and that! Telephoned! Take that!"

Whack, whack! Crash!

"Run for it!"

How the unfortunate juniors got out of the door they never knew; but they got out, and went down the drive as if they were on the cinder-path. Lovell's hat remained in the hall. Baby's on the doorstep, and Newcome's on the drive. But they did not stop for their hats. They would not have stopped for the treasures of Golconda.

They ran!

The lodgekeeper stared at them as they came whooping down the drive. They boiled frantically out into the road.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Lovell, pausing to gasp for breath at last. "What—what—what the thunder—"

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Yow-ow! I'm hurt!"

"Oh dear!"

The chums of the Fourth had not enjoyed their visit to Stuckey Croft; but Teddy Grace, to judge by his look when they passed him again, was enjoying himself.

The mystery of the telephone remained a mystery. After a visit from Sir Leicester Stuckey, the following day, the Head made a stern inquiry. Nothing came to light—officially. But unofficially Jimmy Silver & Co. came to a conclusion on the subject which caused them to pay a visit to Putty's study, and without stopping to ask questions, fall upon that youth and smite him hip and thigh, which was some solace to the victims who had been sold again!

THE END.

(There is another grand story of Rookwood in next week's POPULAR. It is entitled "Lovell's Visitor!" The only other paper publishing stories of Rookwood is the BOYS' FRIEND. Now on sale.)

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