



**Tubby Muffin
in Clover!**

Rookwood Honours its Hero!

Special Cricket Article

By H.W.T. Hardinge.

The All England And Kent County Cricketer.

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d}/₂

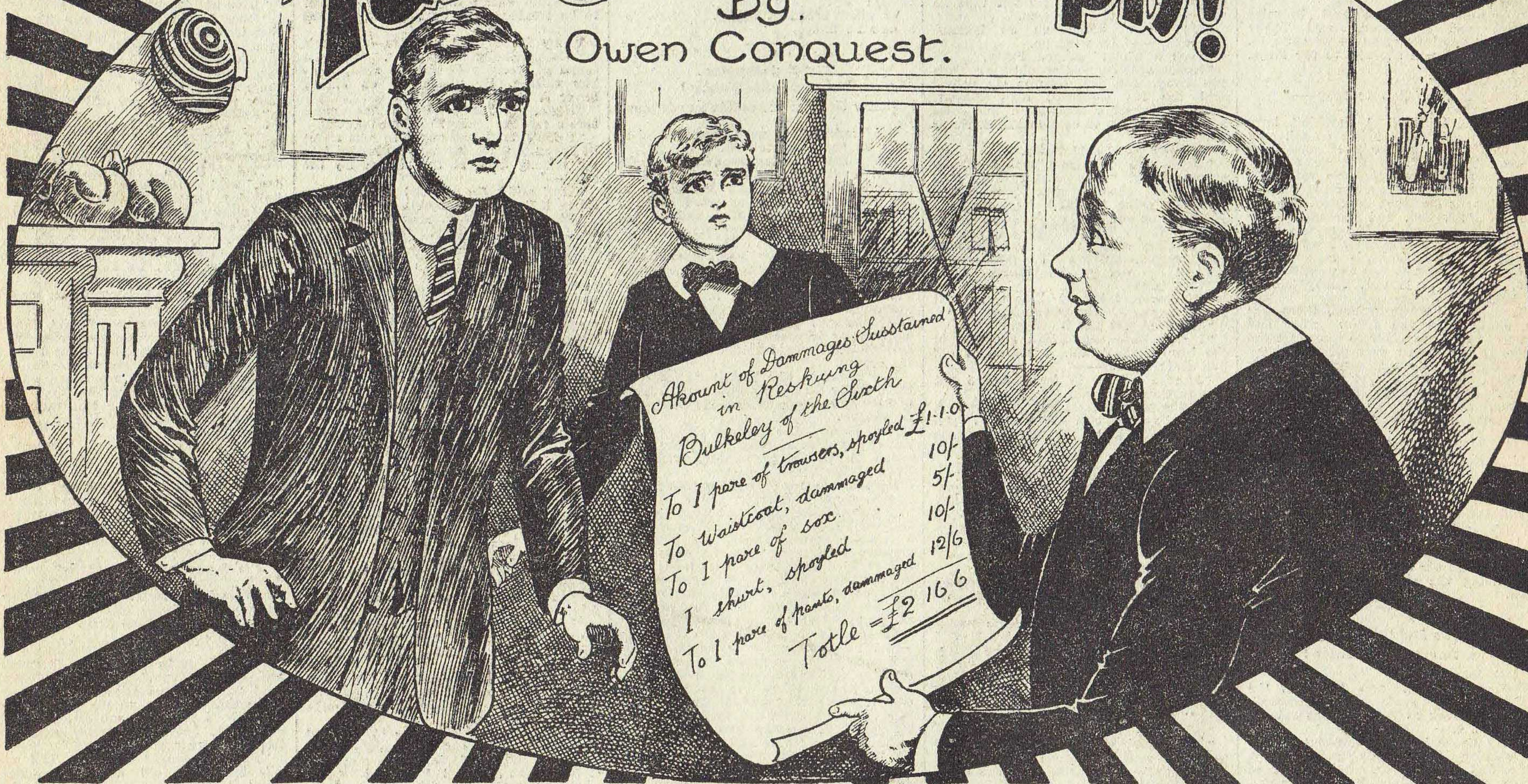
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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 26th, 1919.

Tubby's Triumph!

By Owen Conquest.



TUBBY MUFFIN'S LITTLE BILL!

"I hope you'll think it's all right," said Tubby, presenting his little bill to Bulkeley. "If there's any item you think isn't quite fair, you just tell me, George! I want to do the fair thing by an old pal."

The 1st Chapter. Heroic!

"Muffin!"
"Tubby Muffin!"
Jimmy Silver threw open the door of the Fourth Form dormitory. The dusk of a spring afternoon was closing in on Rookwood School. The sunset glimmered in at the high windows of the dormitory, and shone upon Reginald Muffin of the Classical Fourth—more commonly known as Tubby Muffin, on account of his circumference. Tubby Muffin had just changed his clothes, and he was now busily occupied in brushing his hair. Upon his fat face there was a smile of smug satisfaction. Tubby Muffin was in high feather that afternoon. "Hallo, you fellows!" he remarked. Jimmy Silver marched in, with nearly all the Classical Fourth at his heels, and a good many of the Moderns. All eyes were fixed upon Tubby Muffin, in astonishment and keen interest. For once the fat Classical was the cynosure of all eyes, and he basked in the lime-light. "Tubby, old scout—"
"Tell us about it, Tubby!"
"Go it, fatty!"

"Oh, you've heard?" remarked Tubby, in a lofty manner. "I wasn't going to talk about what I've done, you know. It was really nothing to me! Anything really plucky is just in my line!"
"Oh!"
"The fact is, you fellows have never really known the kind of chap I am," said Tubby Muffin severely. "You know now, I hope. I'm not going to talk about it. True heroes are always modest. I read that in a book once."
"Oh, my hat!"
"Tubby, my modest and unassuming hero—" began Jimmy Silver.
"That's it—that's me all over!" assented Tubby brightly. "Modest and unassuming. And the best of the bunch, all the time! That's me!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Modesty, thy name is Muffin!" murmured Raby.
"But we want to hear the thrilling yarn, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver laughing. "We couldn't swallow it at first. But we've asked Bulkeley of the Sixth, and he says you pulled him out of the water. It beats us—"
"Look here, Jimmy Silver—"
"Ahem—I mean, it's very surprising! Nobody ever suspected you of being a giddy hero before, Tubby!"
"Though we might have guessed it from

Tubby's unassuming modesty," remarked Arthur Edward Lovell solemnly. Tubby dabbed at his unruly hair with the brush. "I don't mind telling you fellows about it," he said. "I thought not!" murmured Jimmy. "Eh! What did you say?"
"N-n-nothing! Get on with the washing!"
"Well, it was like this," said Tubby, blinking at the interested crowd of juniors. "I'd gone up along the Croft Brook—you know the place, on old Sir Leicester Stuckey's land—"
"Out of bounds!" said Newcome.
"Oh, I don't care about school bounds; I'm such a daring chap, you know!"
"Oh!"
"I was after Teddy Grace—I mean, I thought he had a picnic, and he hadn't," said Tubby. "I—I was alone—quite alone—all alone, in fact—"
"Alone he did it!" murmured Lovell.
"I want it to be fully understood that I was alone," said Tubby cautiously. "If there had been another fellow there, Bulkeley might have thought he did it. And I did it, you know."
"We know," assented Jimmy Silver. "Get on!"
"Well, being alone, you understand—quite alone—I suddenly saw Bulkeley of

the Sixth coming along on the other side of the brook. He was coming over by the plank bridge. I thought the beast was going to report me for being out of bounds when he saw me—I mean, he isn't exactly a beast, he's a splendid chap—that's what I mean—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Well, on he came!" said Tubby impressively. "And the plank busted when he jumped on it. It was old, you know, and rotten, and it's been going to be repaired for dogs' ages, but it never has been. And Bulkeley was in a hurry. I believe the beast—I mean, I believe he was going to collar me, because I was on old Stuckey's ground. Old Stuckey is always complaining about fellows being on his ground—"
"Never mind old Stuckey now. Get on with the yarn!" said Mornington.
"Keep to the point, Tubby!"
"Well, the plank went, and Bulkeley went!" continued Tubby. "He banged his napper on the plank, and he went into the water like a—a—a—like anything, in fact."
Tubby gave his hair another dab, putting in a dramatic pause at the most thrilling moment of the stirring tale. "And then?"
"Well, what could I do?" said Tubby. "There was Bulkeley, whiffling along into

deep water, unable to help himself. I thought it out with marvellous swiftness. Without stopping to think a moment, I—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"What are you fellows cackling at?"
"Never mind; run on!"
"Without stopping to think a moment, I plunged into the raging flood—"
"Into the which?" yelled Tommy Dodd.
"The raging flood!" replied Tubby warmly. "Into the brook, you know."
"The Croft Brook isn't a raging flood. It's as smooth as a pond."
"If you're going to carp at everything I say, it's not much use my telling you about my heroic deed!" said Tubby Muffin loftily.
"Ha, ha! Shut up, Tommy! Let's get on to the heroic deed."
"Go it, Tubby!"
"I plunged into the raging flood," repeated Tubby Muffin, with a blink of defiance at Tommy Dodd. "The thundering billows nearly overwhelmed me—"
"My hat!"
"But with heroic resolution I fought my way to Bulkeley—"
"Phew!"
"Seizing him by the hair, I bore him ashore—"

(Continued on next page.)

exhibit a little fact: but fact was not one of Reginald Muffin's gifts.

It really looked as if the fat junior intended to "hang on" till Bulkeley's patience was worn out; and it was a rather interesting question how long that would take.

Tubby came rolling down the corridor with a fat and contented face, and Teddy Grace caught him by the shoulder at the corner. There was a half-crown clutched in Tubby's fat paw.

"Hallo, Putty!" said the fat Classical genially, if a little uneasily. "Come along to the tuckshop, old chap. I'm standing ginger-pop."

"Where did you get that half-crown, you fat fraud?" muttered Putty.

"Look here—"

"Where did you get it?" growled Putty, shaking him. "Have you squeezed it out of Bulkeley, you fat rotter?"

"Ow! Look here, Putty. What does it matter to you if my pal George makes me a loan?" demanded Tubby indignantly. "I'm going to settle up; I suppose you know that?"

"You've stuck Bulkeley for half-a-crown—"

"He's lent me half-a-crown!" answered Tubby Muffin, with dignity. "Why shouldn't he, after what I've done for him? There's such a thing as gratitude, Teddy Grace—Yaroooh!"

Tubby Muffin fled, with Putty's boot to help him. But he fled in the direction of the tuckshop.

Teddy Grace remained in painful thought for some minutes. The affair was taking a serious turn now.

He realised that Tubby was too thoroughly obtuse to understand that he was doing wrong or acting unscrupulously. But the fact remained that the captain of Rookwood had been swindled out of money—for that was what it amounted to, whether Tubby understood it or not.

It was a very unpleasant position for Putty of the Fourth. To reveal the facts was to ask for a flogging from the Head, but the alternative was scarcely less unpleasant.

He walked away at last to Bulkeley's study. He found the captain of Rookwood looking very thoughtful. How to deal with the clam-like Tubby was growing to be a problem for the head of the Sixth.

Putty laid a half-crown on the table. "From Muffin, Bulkeley," he said quickly. "He doesn't need it, after all, and he's much obliged!"

"All right!" said Bulkeley, with a smile.

Putty left the study quickly. He had relieved his mind and his conscience by repaying Tubby Muffin's debt. But evidently that was a process that could not be continued indefinitely. Tubby Muffin could play at that game much longer than Teddy Grace could.

The 5th Chapter. Bulkeley Sees Light!

"Trousers—one guinea!"

Jimmy Silver stopped as he came on Tubby Muffin in the Form-room passage after lessons on Saturday morning. Tubby was seated at a window there, with a stump of pencil in his hand, a soiled sheet of paper on his knee, and a thoughtful frown on his brow.

He was evidently making calculations.

"Trousers—one guinea!" he was murmuring. "That's cheap. I'm letting Bulkeley off too lightly—but, after all, he's a pal. There's the waistcoat; but I won't say anything about that now. That will keep!"

Jimmy Silver dropped his hand on the fat junior's shoulder, and Tubby looked up with a start.

"What are you up to?" asked Jimmy Silver, very quietly.

"Making up an account, old chap!" said Tubby affably. "I say, what do you think? Is a guinea enough for my bags? I spoiled them, you know, rescuing Bulkeley from the water. I'm entitled to compensation, aren't I?"

"Compensation!" repeated Jimmy.

"That's it! Considering that I saved Bulkeley's life, he can't grumble at paying for the trousers, can he?"

"Oh!"

"It's up to him, I think," said Tubby Muffin. "What do you think, Jimmy?"

Jimmy Silver breathed hard through his nose.

"I think you're a disgusting fat worm!" he answered. "Have you the neck to get money out of Bulkeley because you pulled him out of the Croft Brook?"

"That's a rotten way of putting it—a very rotten way. It shows a low, suspicious mind, Jimmy!"

"What?"

"I don't want to rub it in, but I've noticed before that you're not so high-minded as I am, Jimmy. I never look at things in that low, suspicious way," said Tubby Muffin calmly. "Besides, this is simply a matter of business. My trousers—"

"You fat rotter—"

"My trousers have been quite spoiled—well, very nearly spoiled. I think, if Bulkeley knew, he would be willing to pay for the damage. I feel bound to tell him. I don't mind doing brave and generous things—that's me all over—but I can't afford to stand Bulkeley the price of a pair of trousers, and that's what it amounts to. Of course, I shall offer to let him have the trousers, if he pays for them!" added Tubby, with dignity. "I'm honest, I hope."

Jimmy Silver looked at him. There seemed to be no words in the English language equal to the occasion.

"Trousers—one guinea!" repeated Tubby Muffin, returning to his calculation. "That's fair, and Bulkeley can't grumble. I'm really letting him down lightly. Some fellows would make it thirty shillings; but I hope I'm not a profiteer. The waistcoat will keep—another time, perhaps—"

"What about the socks?" asked Jimmy Silver sarcastically.

Tubby nodded.

"Yes, the socks were wet," he said. "Not exactly spoiled, but there was damage—there certainly was damage. But the socks will come in another time, Jimmy. I think a guinea for the trousers will do at present. What do you think?"

"I think you're a measly toad!"

"It's rather ill-natured of you, Jimmy, to call me names, just because I've done a splendid act of courage, and put you in the shade. Look here, talk sensibly, and give me your opinion! Shall I make up a complete bill, with all the items, or shall I spring them on Bulkeley one at a time?"

Jimmy Silver did not answer that question.

He took Tubby Muffin by the collar and knocked his head on the wall, by way of expressing his opinion and his feelings, and went his way, leaving Muffin yelling.

"Silver!"

Jimmy Silver stopped, as he was going out into the quad, at the sound of Mr. Bootles' voice.

"Yes, sir?"

"Kindly tell Bulkeley that the Head wishes to see him in his study."

"Certainly, sir!"

Jimmy Silver hurried out and found the captain of Rookwood on the cricket-ground, and delivered his message.

Bulkeley frowned.

"Stuckey again, I suppose!" he muttered. And he strode away to the School House.

Putty of the Fourth was coming out as Bulkeley entered, and the Sixth-Former stopped him.

"Don't go out of gates, Grace!" he rapped out.

"Eh! Why not, Bulkeley?" demanded Putty.

"You may be wanted."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Putty. "More trouble! What have I done this time, Bulkeley?"

"I fancy you know. You can wait, anyway!"

Bulkeley went on to the Head's study,

"Exactly. Sir Leicester states that the photograph was taken at about four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. I should like you to ascertain, Bulkeley, where Grace was at that time on that day."

"It is very odd, sir. It was about a quarter-past four when I came back from Abbeywood, by the footpath," said Bulkeley. "I saw Muffin there, but I certainly saw nothing of Grace. I will question him at once, sir."

"Please do so, Bulkeley."

Bulkeley quitted the Head's study with a thoughtful frown on his brow. The news that Teddy Grace had been by the Croft Brook almost at the time of his rescue was startling. A curious suspicion had risen in Bulkeley's mind.

His rescue by Tubby Muffin was astonishing enough in itself—and was still more astonishing in the light of Tubby's subsequent vagaries. Another possible explanation now occurred in Bulkeley's mind.

"Grace!" he called out.

Putty of the Fourth was waiting in the doorway of the School House, with a worried brow. In spite of the care he had exercised, and of the fact that Tubby Muffin had kept his secret, he had a feeling that his disobedience of orders on that memorable occasion was destined to come to light. And Putty was thinking of the Head's birch with a feeling of great discomfort.

"Yes, Bulkeley?" he answered, quite dispiritedly.

"Come to my study."

"All right. Any old thing!"

Teddy Grace obediently followed the captain of Rookwood into his study. Bulkeley fixed his eyes upon him sternly.

"Where were you at four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon?" he demanded.

"At—at which—"

"Were you on Sir Leicester Stuckey's estate?"

No answer.

"I warned you that afternoon about going there, Grace."

Tubby nodded and smiled, though he was looking rather suspiciously at Teddy Grace from the corner of his eye.

"I thought you would be, George," he replied. "I've just dropped in, old chap, to show you this little account."

"That what?"

"I hope you'll think it's all right," said Tubby, presenting his little bill. "If there's any item you think isn't quite fair, you just tell me, George, and we'll discuss it. I want to do the fair thing by an old pal."

George Bulkeley's face assumed a quite extraordinary expression as he looked at the grubby sheet of crumpled paper presented by Tubby Muffin.

It was quite an interesting document. It ran:

ACCOUNT OF DAMAGES SUSTAINED IN RESCUING BULKELEY OF THE SIXTH.

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| To 1 pair of trousers, spoiled | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| To waistcoat, damaged | .. | .. | 10 |
| To 1 pair of socks | .. | .. | 5 |
| 1 shirt, spoiled | .. | .. | 10 |
| To 1 pair of pants, damaged | .. | .. | 12 |
| Total | 2 | 16 | 6 |

Bulkeley read that precious document and read it again, and stared at it, and then stared at Tubby Muffin. The fat Classical met his stare with a happy smile.

"How does that strike you, George?" he asked.

"How—how—how does it strike me?" babbled Bulkeley.

"Yes, old infant. If there's anything that doesn't seem fair, don't mind telling me. I'm a businesslike chap."

"My—my hat!" gasped Bulkeley.

Teddy Grace was looking on in silence, but with a gleam in his eye. He had a suspicion of what was on the paper. Bulkeley turned to him.

"Look at that, Grace!" he said.

"Oh, I say—" began Tubby Muffin unceasingly.

Teddy Grace looked at the paper, and his face flushed with wrath. "You fat swindler!" he roared, forgetful of Bulkeley for the moment, and he made a stride towards Tubby Muffin.

The fat junior jumped back in alarm. But Bulkeley interposed.

"Hold on, Grace! Muffin, this account appears to be for damages sustained in getting me out of the Croft Brook the other day?"

"Yes, Bulkeley," gasped Tubby Muffin. "If—if you think I've overcharged you—"

"Never mind that now. I was surprised at the time that you were able to get me out of deep water," said Bulkeley. "It was rather a hefty job for a junior."

"I—I'm a splendid swimmer, you know," stammered Tubby, with a very uneasy blink at Putty of the Fourth.

"You must be, if you did it. Did you do it?"

"Oh, I say, Bulkeley! If—if Putty says—"

"Never mind Putty! Did you do it?" thundered Bulkeley.

Tubby Muffin cast a longing glance towards the door. This interview was turning out unexpectedly painful.

"If you doubt my word, Bulkeley—" he murmured feebly.

"I do."

"Oh, I say! Fancy that!" gasped Tubby. "After I plunged into the raging flood and rescued you at the risk of my life—now you begin making a fuss over a few items—"

"Hold your silly tongue a minute, Muffin! Grace!"

"Yes, Bulkeley!" groaned the unfortunate Putty. "Go it! Don't mind me!"

"Was it you got me out of the water? Tell me the truth, you young rascal!"

Putty hesitated.

"You needn't be afraid of the flogging," growled Bulkeley. "I've a pretty clear idea how matters stand now, and if it was you who saved me, I'll do my best with the Head to let you off with a caning."

"Oh, good!"

"I—I say, it wasn't Putty!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin in great alarm. "He wasn't there at all! I never followed him to the brook because I thought he had a picnic there—"

"What?"

"And I never yelled to him when I saw you fall in, Bulkeley. I never did! And I didn't promise to keep it dark that he was there!" spluttered Tubby Muffin in a great hurry—rather too great a hurry, in fact. "Nothing of the sort occurred, Bulkeley. You can take my word for it. As for the feed he promised me, it never came off. Putty will bear me out in that."

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Putty.

"We had a bit of a feed in the study, but it wasn't for that. I never agreed to keep it dark that Putty was there. Besides, I did get wet, you know. He splashed me—"

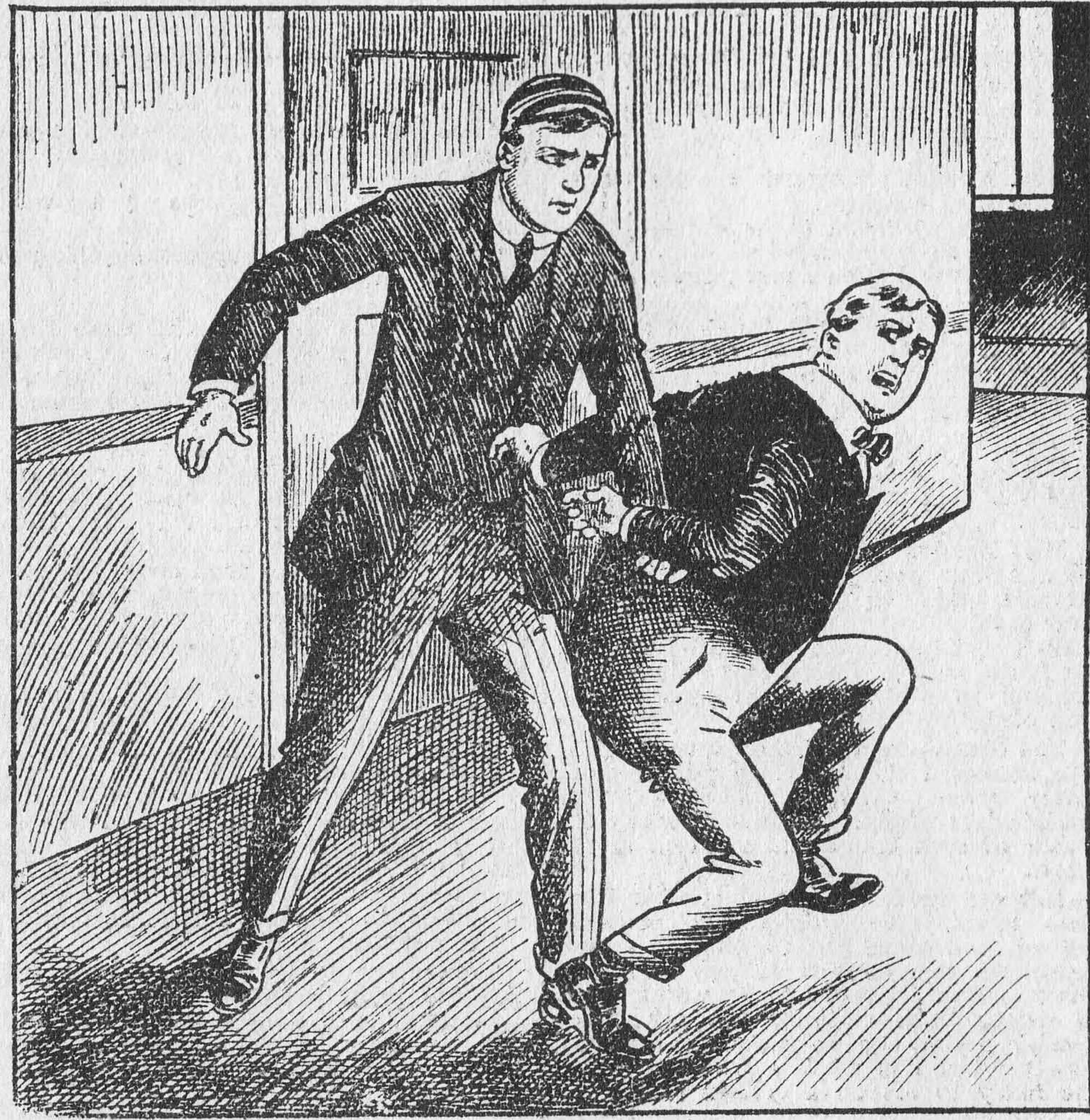
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well for you to cackle, Putty—"

"Muffin, you lying little rogue!" thundered Bulkeley.

"Oh, dear! He's accusing me of lying now, just because I want him to pay for the trousers!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "It's ungrateful! It's sharper than a serpent's tooth, just like you read in Spokeshave—I mean, Shakespeare. I—I'm shocked at you, Bulkeley! A chap ought to be grateful when a chap's saved a chap's life at the risk of a chap's life—Yaroooh!"

The heroic rescuer suddenly found him-



TROUBLE FOR THE HERO! "You'd better look out, Carthew!" said Tubby Muffin. "If you bully me I'll tell George—yaroooh! Wharrer you at, you beast!" "Giving you something to tell George!" grinned Carthew.

and found Dr. Chisholm with a knitted brow.

"Sir Leicester Stuckey has communicated with me again, Bulkeley," said the Head, in a rather acid voice. "It appears that his complaint is not without grounds, as I thought at first. It is certain that some Rookwood boy was trespassing upon his grounds on Wednesday afternoon."

"Muffin was there, near the footpath; but, owing to what he did for me, I thought he could be excused for breaking bounds, for once."

The Head nodded.

"Quite so, Bulkeley; but this does not refer to Muffin. A Rookwood boy has been seen sketching there—taking unwarrantable liberties with Sir Leicester's property, is the way he describes it."

"On Wednesday afternoon!" repeated Bulkeley. "It was on Wednesday afternoon that I was pulled out of the brook by Muffin. At that time there was certainly no other Rookwood boy there."

"It appears to be certain that some boy was there during the afternoon. Sir Leicester informed me over the telephone yesterday that a guest of his was taking photographs in the ground, and one of the negatives, when developed, showed the figure of a schoolboy seated sketching by the brook. The photographer, apparently, had not seen him, but the figure came out in the photograph."

"Oh!" said Bulkeley.

"In order to place the guilt upon the right shoulders, as he chooses to express it," went on the Head drily, "Sir Leicester has had an enlargement made of the photograph, and now tells me that he recognises the boy perfectly as the boy who was reported on a previous occasion for the same conduct."

"Grace of the Fourth Form, sir."

"I—I remember—"

"And you went immediately afterwards, apparently—"

"Ahem!"

"Did you pull me out of the water?"

"Eh?"

"I asked you a question," said Bulkeley grimly. "I was unconscious in the water, owing to knocking my head. Someone pulled me out. I found only Muffin with me when I came to. You must have been there a few minutes earlier, at any rate. Tell me the truth."

"The—the fact is—"

"Was it you pulled me out, and have you been keeping it dark because of the flogging to come?"

"Ahem! You—you see—" stammered the unfortunate Putty.

"It is known that you were there about four, Grace. A photograph was taken, as it happens, and you show up in it."

"Oh, what rotten luck!" groaned Putty. "Who'd ever have thought of a thing like that? Oh, dear! There's no rest for the wicked!"

"And now—"

Tap!

There was a knock at the door, and it opened to admit Tubby Muffin. The fat Classical rolled in with the familiar case that was now natural to him when he visited his friend George's study.

The 6th Chapter. Tubby's Little Bill—and the Payment Thereof.

"I say, Bulkeley—"

"I'm glad to see you, Muffin," said the captain of Rookwood grimly.

self caught by the collar, and a caning whacking upon his plump person with considerable energy. Tubby Muffin's indignant protestations changed to yells of anguish.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo! After I saved you—yaroooh!—life! I wish I hadn't—Wow! Yooop! Oh, crieke! I—I'll let you off with ten-and-six for the trousers, Bulkeley—yaroooh! I say, old chap, I won't charge you anything—yah! Oh! Yooop! Whooop!"

Tubby Muffin was bundled out of the study, and he fled, roaring. It was the end of Tubby's triumphant career as a hero. He looked anything but heroic as he streaked down the Sixth Form passage yelling.

"And now, Grace, you young rascal—"

Teddy Grace sighed.

"Lay it on lightly, Bulkeley," he murmured. "I did pull you out of the river, you know, and if I hadn't broken bounds I couldn't have done it, could I? And—and I'm not going to send in a bill for damages."

Bulkeley laughed.

"You're coming with me to the Head," he said. "I'll get you off as lightly as I can."

"You're a brick!" said Teddy gratefully.

And he followed Bulkeley to the Head's study with all the fortitude he could muster.

Jimmy Silver & Co. heard the news later, and they were not very greatly surprised. True, they had not thought of Putty of the Fourth in connection with Bulkeley's rescue, but anything was less surprising than an heroic rescue by Tubby Muffin. The Fistical Four looked for Putty in his study, and found him rubbing his hands, while Tubby Muffin was groaning dismally in the armchair.

"So it was you?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Putty grinned faintly.

"Little me!" he answered. "Ow! It's all right. I've been caned by the Head. But I don't mind. It was the flogging I objected to. As for the caning, I shouldn't wonder if I didn't deserve it. These headmasters have to be given their head, anyway."

"They do," agreed Jimmy. "I think you've got off lightly."

"So do I," answered Putty. "If I'd known it before, I think I'd have chanced it; but floggings aren't to my taste. Bulkeley put in a word for me, and the Head was rather decent about it. Ow!"

"And you—you fat rascal!" exclaimed Jimmy, turning to Tubby Muffin.

Tubby blinked at him dolorously.

"Bulkeley licked me!" he gasped.

"Me, you know! Jever hear of ingratitude like that? I never did! Sharper than a serpent's tooth, you know. Ow!"

"Ingratitude!" stuttered Lovell. "What had Bulkeley to be grateful for, when you never did anything but spoof him all the time?"

"That's a rotten way of putting it, Lovell—ow! Mr. Bootles himself said I was a credit to the Form—wow!"

"That was before he knew you were lying."

"Look here, Lovell—ow-ow! I've been licked, you know!" gasped Tubby. "I'm suffering an awful lot! But the worst of it," said Tubby, with doleful indignation, "is that Bulkeley somehow seems to think that I've acted badly in the matter. Fancy that!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"He does!" said Tubby. "You'd hardly believe it, but he does! Me, you know! Old Spokeshave—I mean, Shakespeare—was right about the serpent's tooth, wasn't he? I'm not going to speak to Bulkeley again. I won't go to his study to tea any more, if he asks me on his bended knees! If there's anything I can't stand, it's ingratitude—ow! I used rather to like old Bulkeley, but I must say he's turned out an ungrateful brute—ow! What do you think, Jimmy?"

But Jimmy could not say what he thought. He could only gasp.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.
LOVELL'S GREAT-AUNT!
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WANTED— A POET!

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the Chums of the School in the
Backwoods.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

The 1st Chapter. Latent Talent!

"Read it again, Frank!" Bob Lawless spoke quite excitedly. The chums of Cedar Creek School were clustered outside the schoolhouse of the school in the backwoods, reading the latest edition of the "Thompson Press." The news in that diminutive paper was not usually of a very exciting order, and was very soon read. Mr. Penrose, the enterprising man who acted as editor, compositor, printer, and salesman of the "Thompson Press" usually had his work cut out to fill the few sheets which represented this week's labours.

But this week he had something there which certainly created an impression at Cedar Creek School.

"It's an advertisement from a chap who is looking for budding poets," said Frank Richards. "This is what the merchant says."

And he read the advertisement from the paper.

It was displayed in good, bold type which no one could miss, and ran:

"WANTED! A POET!
(You may be a poet,
Altho' you don't know it!)

The proprietor of a new magazine of poetry which will shortly be published wants to find crisp, live poems with a punch—poems with the scent of the backwoods and real life in them.

He guesses that the scholars of the backwoods' schools have much latent talent among their number. They should be able to write the goods for him. He is, therefore, offering a prize to the best poet in each district, and Thompson has been nominated for one.

Lads, here is your chance for sure. Get right down to it now. Send along the stuff and you get a prize—a bully gift for nix.

A prominent local man will present the prize when doled out.

Mail your effort right now to Box 657,432, Chicago Daily Monitor."

"I guess that sounds the goods!" said Bob Lawless enthusiastically, as Frank finished reading. "I've always fancied myself as a bit of a galoot for poetry."

"Good thing someone has—if it's only yourself!" grinned Frank. "Still, I suppose it's up to us to do something!"

"Of course it is," said Chunky Todgers. "I guess that's a ten-strike stunt! They've come to the right shambarg for the stuff here! I hope the prize is a hamper of tommies—it's mine already!"

The three chums of Cedar Creek laughed at the fat boy's smiling face. They knew that, with such an incentive, Chunky Todgers would write reams if necessary. The only question was whether his efforts would come up to the standard required by the live gentleman of Chicago who wanted poetry with a punch.

"I ought to do rather well at that," observed Vere Beauclerc, who completed the third of the famous trio at the little school. "You want to talk about soft carpets of pine-needles and warbling birds and nifty hemlocks—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Frank Richards. "Well, you know what I mean!" growled Beauclerc. "I guess you want to harp on about a full-blooded canter in the invigorating air of a morning—"

"Cut it out, Cherub!" advised Bob, grinning. "That stuff looks all right on paper, but the way you say it makes me feel ill!"

"I tell you we've got to collar that prize!" the Cherub snapped. "You don't seem to have got that notion in your thick cabeza yet!"

"I guess I've got that all right," said Bob. "The Hillcrest fellows are sure to have a go at it, too, so we're bound to do our best. They'll crow no end if they get the dollars!"

"They will," said Frank Richards thoughtfully. "We must certainly try and turn out something good. Let's show it to Miss Meadows, and ask her if we can get on with it in school, shall we?"

"That's the stunt!" said Bob excitedly. "We'll get off a lesson, too."

The three made their way into the schoolhouse and approached the mistress at her desk. Frank Richards pointed to the advertisement in the "Thompson Press."

"Please, miss," he said meekly, "we intend to go in for that."

Miss Meadows read the advertisement, and her eyes opened slightly. She read it through again, and then smiled.

"It seems a very generous offer, my boys," she said, "and I certainly think that you will do well to go in for it. There is only one other school in the district to compete, and," she added, with a touch of pride, "you ought to be able to beat them."

"Oh, easily!" said Bob Lawless.

"Not easily," said Miss Meadows, with a smile. "But where there's a will there's a way. We will have a poetry

lesson this afternoon, and I will give you a few hints."

"Thanks very much, miss!" said Frank.

The news of the competition soon spread round the little school as the boys and girls who went home to their dinners rode or walked back to the school, and Miss Meadows' decision was hailed with delight.

During the afternoon everyone was all attention. The worthy schoolmistress was very fond of poetry and well versed in her subject. What she said about pentameters, dactyls, metres, and scansion were more or less Greek to the pupils, although she explained very fully. But everyone listened attentively.

"Seems a bit of a mystery to me, this poetic stuff," said Bob Lawless later, as the three chums led their horses to the gate of the compound. "I don't quite know where to start."

"It's only using common-sense," explained Frank Richards. "Anyone with a mind for poetry at all naturally falls into iambic hexameters, or whatever they intend to write."

"Is it painful, Frank?" asked Bob.

"Is what painful?" asked the youngster, in surprise.

"Falling into iambic gas-meters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Cherub laughed, and Frank joined in good-humouredly.

"What I mean to say," he said, "is that if you understand what sort of poem you're going to write you naturally have to do it in one of the forms Miss Meadows spoke about, to make it read decently."

"That's good!" said Bob cheerfully. "I'll see what I can think out to-night."

He sprang into his saddle, and the others followed suit. They cantered silently along the trail for a little, deep in thought.

Frank looked across at Bob and grinned. The hardy backwoods' youngster was rather out of his depth in attempting poetry, but he was evidently thinking hard, for all that.

"What's the matter, Bob?" asked Frank.

"Bit of a difficulty," said Bob shortly.

"I can only get, 'Bumpety-bump went the cowboy's mustang, bumpety-bumpety-bump—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess there's nothing to laugh at in that!" howled Bob.

But the others only answered:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The 2nd Chapter. Divided Attention!

To say that Cedar Creek seethed with poetry on the day following the announcement of the competition would be putting it mildly.

Bob Lawless, to whom the task of put-

ting his feelings into elegant language was about as serious as having to fell a forest of trees, walked about in a brown study, continually mumbling. Frank Richards and the Cherub had chaffed him without avail.

The first lesson was geography, and Miss Meadows soon saw that the attention of her class was wandering. Chunky Todgers, for one, was furtively scribbling on a piece of paper. It was evident that the fat junior cherished the idea that the first prize would be something good to eat, and in that case Chunky intended to shine.

Dick Dawson and Mayhew were sitting at the back whispering earnestly when they had the opportunity, and several others were almost as inattentive. But the most distracted of the lot was Bob Lawless.

Miss Meadows' eye rested on the junior with growing impatience. She had started off the morning in a very good humour, but her nerves were getting rather tried.

"Lawless," she said suddenly, "if you went to Bombay, what would you find there?"

Bob's mind was still running on poetry. He framed a couplet automatically.

"The lovely smell of the morning air," he said innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Meadows frowned as the class roared with laughter.

"I don't wish you to be cheeky, Lawless!" she said, colouring slightly.

"I—I guess I didn't mean that, miss!" stammered Bob.

The mistress did not reply. She gave the youngster a displeased look, and continued with the lesson.

Bob concentrated his attention on his work for the next few minutes, but the effort was not lasting. Bob's mind was fairly running on the poetic opportunity and the honour of Cedar Creek being at stake.

Miss Meadows proceeded with the lesson slowly. She pounced on Frank Richards several times for quick answers, but he was usually ready. The matter of writing poetry did not weigh so heavily on him as it did on the others, and he was wise enough to see the danger-light in the schoolmistress' eyes.

The Cherub followed the lesson dumbly. He answered the questions put to him, after much thought. Miss Meadows watched carefully, but failed to see the cause of such unusual inattention in her class.

Her eye suddenly lighted on Bob Lawless again. He was gazing dreamily ahead and mumbling to himself. Miss Meadows was on the subject of ocean routes; Bob happened to be working out a dainty little verse on the subject of prairie routes. So when the mistress suddenly asked him what a traveller would be likely to see on a certain route, the

youngster leapt to his feet and completed the verse that was in his mind before he knew what he was saying.

The verse went like this:

"You catch him a sneezer,
Upon the cabeza,
And down goes the silly galoot!"

There was a wild yell of laughter from the class.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Meadows went scarlet with anger. She held up her hand for silence, but for once the pupils of Cedar Creek had to have their laugh out.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Lawless flushed scarlet. He realised what he had done, and he saw that Miss Meadows took it as an insult.

"Pup-please, miss," he stammered, "what-dud-did you sus-say?"

The laughter was dying down, but one or two could still see the funny side. Chunky Todgers sat in his seat literally gasping, with the tears of laughter rolling down his fat cheeks.

"He, he, he!" he cackled. "Catch him a sneezer on the cabeza—he, he, he!—and the silly galoot goes—"

"Todgers!" snapped Miss Meadows.

"Y-y-yes, miss!" gasped Chunky, coming to a sudden stop in his mirth.

"You will stay in for half an hour this evening for disrespect!" said Miss Meadows angrily.

"Jumping snakes!" groaned Chunky.

"What was that?"

The fat boy flushed.

"I—I didn't say anything, Miss Meadows, really!" protested Chunky.

The remainder of the class saw that the schoolmistress was in a dangerous mood, and they suppressed their sniggers. Bob Lawless silently wished that the ground would open for a few moments and swallow him up.

"I cannot understand you this morning, Lawless!" said Miss Meadows in her iciest tones.

"I really, miss—that is, I—you see, I—you—I—you—you see, I—"

"I do not intend to stand barefaced impertinence like that!"

"I guess I didn't mean that, miss!" said Bob quickly.

"Oh!"

"You see, I was not really listening just then, miss!" explained the youngster.

"Why not?"

"I—I—that is, suppose you were me—"

"I do not wish to suppose anything of the sort, Lawless!"

Bob Lawless gasped.

"No, I guess I don't quite mean that, miss!" said Bob, seeing that he was plunging from bad to worse. "I was thinking of something else that I thought was awfully important."

"Yes?"

"And I was just doing a jolly good one when you asked that question," proceeded Bob, "and I said it before I really knew what I was doing."

"You were doing a good one?" repeated the mistress. "What do you mean?"

"A very good verse, miss."

"Verse?" repeated Miss Meadows, in greater mystification.

"For the competition," explained Bob Lawless, seeing no other way out of it.

A light of understanding broke on Miss Meadows at last.

"So that is how you have been wasting your morning, Lawless?" she asked coldly.

"If I had thought that that would happen I should not have encouraged it yesterday. As it was I gave up a whole afternoon to it—wasn't that sufficient?"

"Ye-ye-yep!"

"Then how is it that you were still thinking about verses?"

"I thought of such a good one, miss," said Bob glibly, "and I was afraid I might forget it, so I was just saying it over to myself."

"Do you think you can remember it now, Lawless?" asked Miss Meadows.

"Yes, miss."

"Well, it would be a pity to forget it," said Miss Meadows, with a faint smile. "You will stay behind this afternoon and write it out one hundred times to help you remember it!"

"Jee-Jerusalem crickets!" gasped Bob.

"You may sit down, Lawless."

"Certainly, miss!"

The schoolmistress picked up her book and resumed the lesson. This time she had more attention. The majority of the pupils of Cedar Creek knew Miss Meadows sufficiently well to realise that she would come down still more heavily on the next offender.

Bob Lawless did some more hard thinking during the dinner-hour, but he was wise enough to drop it when afternoon school started again.

In spite of his good behaviour, however, Miss Meadows did not relent. And when the other scholars left the schoolhouse and started for the homesteads Chunky Todgers and Bob Lawless remained.

Frank Richards and the Cherub waited with their horses for a quarter of an hour, and then softly approached the schoolhouse window. Miss Meadows was not in the room.

"How many have you done, Bob?" asked Frank softly.

"Beat it!" snapped the poet tersely.

"Will you be long?" queried the Cherub, otherwise Vere Beauclerc.

"Mosey off!"

The two chums grinned and watched. From Bob Lawless came the scratching of a pen, and the faint words of a doggerel he muttered as he wrote:

"You catch him a sneezer,
On the cabeza,
And down goes the silly galoot!"

A faint chuckle came from the window. Bob Lawless sprang up angrily, with an inkpot in his hand.

But Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc were in full flight.

The 3rd Chapter.

Old Man Gunten is Kind!

"Frank!"

"Hullo?"

Frank Richards turned in the saddle as he heard his name.

He was riding for Thompson after afternoon school on the following day with his pocket full of letters addressed in various schoolboy fists to Box 657,432.

Chunky Todgers galloped breathlessly up.

"Are you going to Thompson?" asked the fat junior.

Frank nodded.

"Do you mind mailing something to— to Chicago for me?" asked the junior innocently.

Frank grinned.

"I thought you'd sent in your poem, Chunky," he said.

The other looked at him in surprise.

"How did you guess what it was?" he asked.

"Fluence!" said Frank mysteriously.

"Well, it is a poem," said the fat boy confidentially. "It's a jolly good one, too. It's bound to collar the first prize—that hamper of tuck."

The British junior laughed.

"I don't suppose it will be tuck," he said. "More likely to be some dry old books on stars, or monkeys, or something."

Chunky Todgers' face fell.

"I guess that would be a rotten trick," he said. "I've done some jolly good stuff there, Frank. How does this sound?"

"I love a walk, I love a ride,
I love to climb the mountain-side;
And there's one thing that you can't whack—
A fine big feed when you get back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky blinked indignantly.

"What do you think of it?" he growled.

"Rotten!"

"I think it's jolly good!"

"The feed may be, Chunky, but the poem isn't."

"It's true, I tell you."

"Rather! But you don't put that sort of thing into verses describing the country."

"Do poets live on fresh air, then?" asked the fat junior, in disgust. "I'm not a big eater, myself, but that wouldn't suit me."

"Ha, ha! No!"

Chunky grimaced. He was not usually conceited, but his hopes of a large hamper of tuck had been rather high.

"Of course you're a competitor, too," he said bluntly. "Perhaps you're afraid that I'm going to scoop up the first prize."

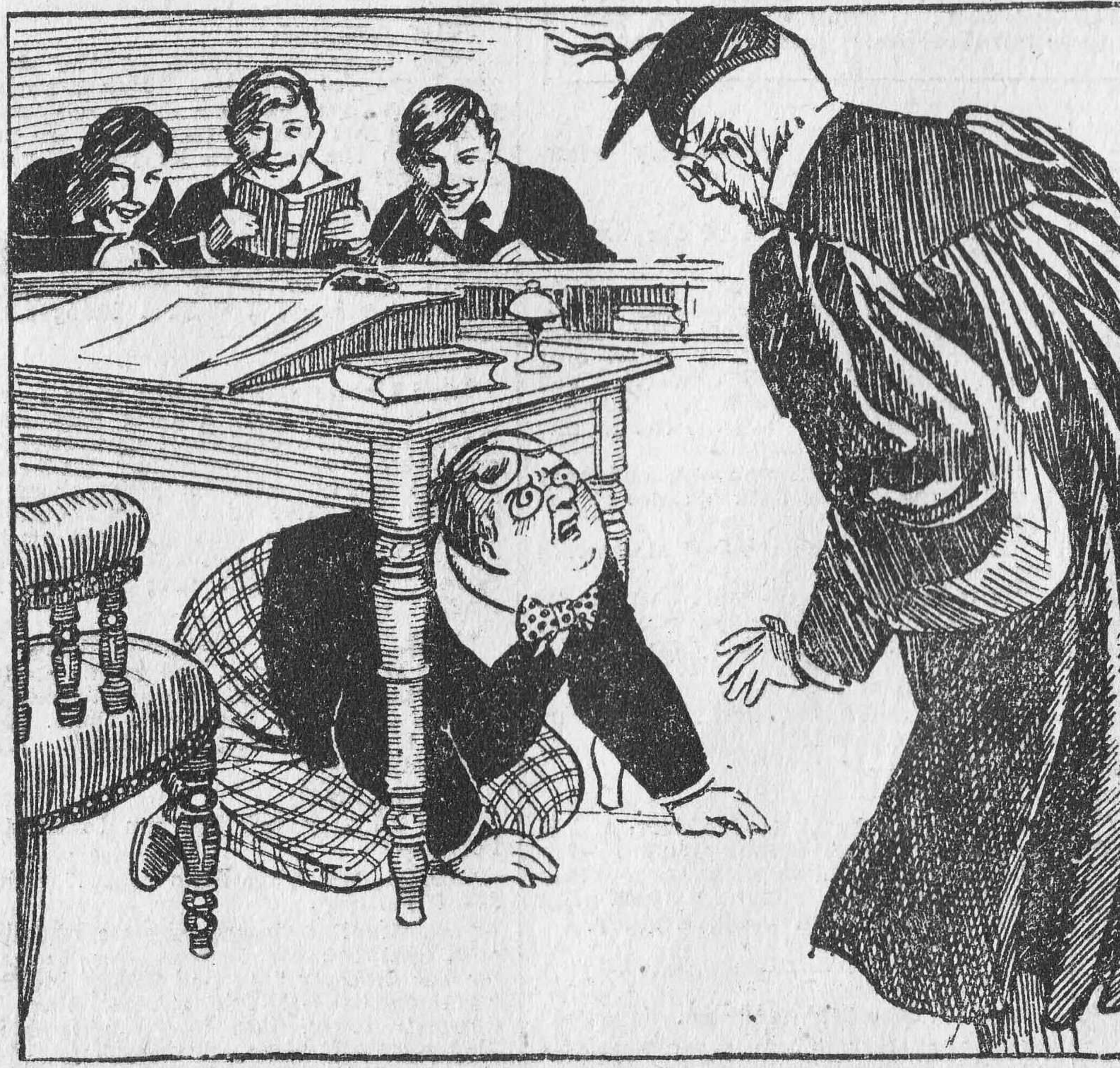
"Not afraid!" laughed the British junior. "It's a cert. I'll ride off right away with it now, Chunky."

He waved his hand, and set off down the trail at a good pace. There was a quiet grin on Frank Richards' face as he went.

His own effort was amongst those he carried, and although he did not consider it good, he thought that it was certainly ahead of the mundane lines composed by Chunky. To be considered jealous was something of a joke.

Frank rode steadily on. He wanted to deliver his mails and get back to the ranch quickly. He was alone because Bob Lawless had managed to get detention again, and Vere Beauclerc had to be home early. But it was a beautiful evening, and Frank's thoughts were quite enough to keep him from feeling lonely.

The township of Thompson soon hove in sight, and Frank dismounted at Gunten's shop. The Swiss storekeeper



"Bunter is the most unpunctual boy in the Form!" said Mr. Lathom crossly, as he went to his desk. "Why!—What!—Bless my soul!—BUNTER!"

THE GEM OUT TO-MORROW

Contains a Mag-
nificent Long,
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Tale of St. Jim's
entitled

BUNTER— AND BUNTER!

By
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One of the Funniest
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Written!

THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER!

A SPLENDID NEW
ADVENTURE SERIAL

— BY —

DUNCAN STORM.

FOR NEW READERS.

The astounding news that the KAISER has escaped in a super-U-boat reaches CY SPIAGUE, the famous American detective, and

CAPTAIN HANDYMAN, who resolves to go in search of the arch-villain and bring him to justice.

They leave the London docks in a vessel called the South Star, taking with them a merry band of boys, chief amongst whom are DICK DORRINGTON, CHIP PRODGERS, ARTY DOVE, SKELETON, PORKIS, and PONGO WALKER.

LAL TATA, a cheery Hindu, and TOOKUM EL KOOS, a native wrestler, are also amongst the party, as well as the boys' pets, CECIL, the orang-outang, HORACE, the goat, and GUS, the crocodile.

It has already been described how Captain Handyman discovered a large submarine base belonging to the Kaiser, and blew it up. The Kaiser, however, had got away on a super-U-boat.

Later the boys captured Baron von Slyden, one of the Kaiser's agents. Captain Handyman told the boys to take Slyden in hand, and they dressed him in Etons and forced him to do ordinary school work with them.

Leaving Santa Cruz, the South Star steers for the Cape de Verde Islands. Dick Dorrington, pacing the deck at night, discovers Von Slyden flashing an electric-torch over the side of the ship—evidently signalling. Dick creeps up to him, and fops a bucketful of black grease and soft-soap over the treacherous German's head.

(Read on from here.)

Mangled and Ironed.

Baron von Slyden had caught the grease-bucket on his head, sure enough.

Dick and Chip heard him roll over, and heard the bucket tapping on the deck as the treacherous Hun spy, unable to realise what had happened to him, rolled over and over.

The small electric-torch which he had been using to flash his signals over the dark sea rolled on the deck, its little bulb still glowing in a spot of light on the planks.

The two boys gave the treacherous rascal no time to recover. They dropped down over the rail on to the deck, where they found Von Slyden with the bucket firmly fixed on his head, trying in vain to pull off his uncomfortable headgear.

He was holding the bucket in his hands, and the greasy mixture it contained was rolling in fine treacle gobs down his sleeves.

The boatswain of the South Star had a very patent mixture for greasing his blocks. He believed in having his running-gear for the boats well-oiled, more especially when there were submarines about, and he had mixed up a fine jorum of graphite, mineral lubricant, vaseline, and soft-soap—capital stuff, with lots of jossop in it, something that would stand the weather and remain greasy.

The boys seized the baron and pulled the bucket off his head with no very gentle hands.

Indeed, the great flat head came out of the bucket with a sucking noise and a pop, just like pulling a cork out of a bottle.

Von Slyden could not speak, for the very good reason that his head was one solid lump of black grease, which obliterated his ugly flat German face completely.

The boys pulled him into the alleyway and shoved him into a bath-room.

Chip stood by to watch the prisoner, whilst Dick knocked up Porkis, Pongo, and Mr. Lal Tata from their cabins.

Mr. Lal Tata was not asleep. He was lying in his bunk devouring books of British school life, his favourite and his only literature.

"Please, sir!" said Dick, tapping at the door of the cabin.

Lal was lying in his bunk, with the electric light flaring down on the closely-printed page. He was chuckling.

"Ha, Dick! What you want?" he asked. "I am reading most laughable episodes in this book. This fellow Bunter has got his postal-orders, and—"

"Never mind about Bunter!" said Dick impatiently. "We have just caught that chap Von Slyden signalling with an electric-torch! My torch, too! The brute pinched it out of my cabin!"

"Signalling!" exclaimed Lal, leaping from his bunk and clapping his turban on his head. "To what does he make his signals?"

"Why," replied Dick, "if he's taking the trouble to flash an electric-lamp over the side, when we are steaming without lights, and with everything covered up, it is a pretty safe sign that there is a submarine cruising somewhere about in these parts, and that Von Slyden knows it!"

"Ho! Crikers!" exclaimed Lal. "What have you done?"

"Dropped a bucket of grease on his head!" replied Dick. "Now we are going



A SHAMPOO FOR THE SPY! The Baron kicked—so his feet were tied together. Then he was sat on the edge of the bath, while Pongo started to shampoo him with a mop of sand and soft-soap.

to shampoo him. But you go forward to the bridge and tell Captain Handyman what the scoundrel has been up to. He must know that the submarine is about in these parts, or he would not have taken the trouble to flash the light!"

Lal scuttled through the passage-way, making his way up to the bridge to carry this information to the captain, whilst Dick ran off to the bath-room, where preparations were being made to shampoo the spy.

Von Slyden had started to struggle when left alone with Chip. But a man, no matter how powerful he may be, who has his head covered, and his eyes and nose bunged up with an inch of black grease, is no match for an athletic boy. Chip had settled the matter by tripping him into the bath when Pongo and Porkis made their appearance.

"Look here, Von Slyden!" said Porkis. "If you are going to be fractious we shall tie your hands behind you. You need not be frightened. We are only going to shampoo that stoker's brilliantine out of your head."

The baron, mad with rage, struck out as he rolled in the dry bath.

So Pongo and Porkis fell upon him,

and tied his hands behind him with a length of stout cord.

The hot-water tap of the bath was turned on, and a tub of hot fresh water was produced, with sand and deck-scrubs and piles of cotton-waste.

The baron kicked, and his feet were tied together. Then he was sat over the edge of the bath, whilst Pongo, who fancied himself as a bit of a wag, pulled on a big white apron, which he had stolen from the cook's galley, and started to shampoo his victim with a mop of sand and soft-soap.

"Very nice day we've had to-day, sir, considerin' the time o' year!" said Pongo, giving his victim's head a thump with the mop. "Keep your head a little bit lower over the basin, sir. We don't charge anything extra for the smell of the drains."

The unhappy baron gurgled. "Yes, sir," went on Pongo, ruthlessly thumping at the flat German head with his mop of sooji-mooji, "this is a very good barber's shop. We don't employ any Germans here. It is the real old Sweeny Todd establishment. Can I sell you a bottle of brilliantine? Our hair elixir is very good. We rubbed some on

the capstan-head yesterday, and it's growing whiskers to-day!"

"Mow-wow!" mumbled the baron, as Pongo wiped his face with a lump of cotton-waste.

"I hear that the Germans are cutting one another's throats as hard as they can, sir!" pursued Pongo. "Rotten lot the Germans, sir! I am glad I was born a Swiss myself. Were you ever in Germany, sir?"

The baron was coming clean at last as Pongo barbered him with a deck-swab. He had ceased to struggle when the boys seized him and held him down, whilst Pongo finished him off with a gush from the full force of the fire-hose, which knocked the wind out of him.

"Now, sir," said Pongo, as he scrubbed the baron's head with brilliantine or the spray, "you had better make up your mind quick, for we may be blown up by a torpedo in a few minutes!"

The baron had no breath left in him to make answer.

There was a clinking of steel in the passage outside the bath-room door, and Mr. Lal Tata made his appearance, carrying a couple of pairs of handcuffs.

"The captain, he says that this mis-

THE VALUE OF PRACTICE.

A Special Article for Young Cricketers.

By H. T. W. HARDINGE.

I have been asked by the Editor of the BOYS' FRIEND to write the first of a series of cricket articles, and although, of course, I am not a writer, yet I feel sure it is possible for me to help the young reader in his efforts to become fairly proficient in a game which I regard as one of the best in the wide world.

Most young players begin to get ready for the cricket season during the Easter holidays; in fact, by the time these lines of mine appear in print there will be very few lovers of cricket who have not started practice. Those who have not can take it from me that there is no game which requires more practice than cricket, although I know of many who think there is no reason for it until the season has really commenced, or until the month of April has become a thing of the past.

There is, however, one essential to proper practice, and that is a good level pitch. I know full well that in the case of the open-space or open-park player the quality of wickets is something over which he has very little control, and he has my deepest sympathy.

But even the junior club, with its limited financial resources, is not altogether incapable of providing a remedy for the rough practice pitches that are provided by public authorities, for although I have always advocated the use of a good turf wicket in preference to one covered with matting, yet the latter is far and away better than the "death-trap" pitches upon which one so often sees the junior cricketer trying to get some kind of pleasure.

Nevertheless, season after season the same thing occurs, and young enthusiasts take their hour or two's daily practice in serious mood on what one can call ludicrous wickets, imagining they are improving their cricket.

One frequently notices players in a junior team, who certainly cannot impress any onlooker with their prowess on the field, apparently getting far more enjoyment out of a match than those who are so-called first-class cricketers.

Then how much more pleasure would they obtain if, instead of four balls out of six jumping up in the vicinity of their eyebrows, they could rely upon each delivery keeping sufficiently low for them to at least have an opportunity of playing it with the bat?

A certain well-known journalist who, I believe, indulges in occasional games of golf, told me only a few days ago that

the finest and most sporting cricket-match he ever witnessed was played in a country village, and upon a wicket across which there were some cart-ruts.

This gentleman said it was delightful to witness the manner in which those cricketers went in and took sporting chances. "That was the good old English game of cricket," was his remark.

And now I am left wondering what

H. T. W. HARDINGE,



the famous All-England and Kent Cricketer, who has written this Article specially for the BOYS' FRIEND.

golfers would do if they hadn't properly-kept "greens."

Of course, there must always be a

large number of people who speak of the participation in games as a means to an end, meaning that one doesn't need to aim at any degree of proficiency so long as it is possible to get sufficient exercise in order to keep the body healthy.

Then why play cricket at all? Under such conditions a man would be better employed with a skipping-ropes, a pair of dumb-bells, and a punching-ball. No! Every man who plays cricket has a natural desire to improve; and real improvement can only be relied upon by constant practice on good wickets.

At present there are some thousands of young batsmen who regularly practise, but will never make much headway, and the reason is quite simple—they play almost entirely by guesswork. And, what is still more peculiar, if I were to tell one of the worst offenders that such was the case with him he would not believe me.

They do not absolutely watch the ball right on the face of the bat; and I put this mistake down to early neglect, and consequent formation of a bad habit.

In the case of the fellow who has to practise on wickets of the ploughed-field variety, there is an excuse; but for those who have good turf pitches or matting wickets there is no forgiveness. They kill their cricket because they do not try to do the right thing.

We hear of a certain batsman being a great stylist. It may be surprising to most people when I say that the stylist knows nothing about elegance, and that what is termed style is perfect timing of the ball, hitting with the middle of the bat, and getting the maximum of power in his shots by proper footwork. Careful watching of the ball alone makes for these essentials, and so "style" comes naturally.

And as proficiency with the bat is the outcome of diligent practice, so does a bowler learn his tricks, but not on wickets that alter the course of the ball by the mere fact of the presence of lumps and holes, but on those on which the sphere travels straight through unless deviated by "breaks."

Practice makes perfect, and good wickets help to make the best cricketers.

H. T. W. Hardinge

creant fellow shall be well ironed!" announced Lal.

"Well, he's been pretty well mangled already!" laughed Dick.

"And he shall be locked in his cabin," continued Lal. "And if we are attacked no attempt shall be made to save him. He shall go down in rolling deeps with the ship he love—I do not think!"

The irons were clipped on the baron's wrists and about his ankles. The boys picked him up and carried him to his cabin, where they dumped him on his bunk.

But when they came to examine the lock of his cabin door they found that it had been tampered with, and that it would not lock.

"I'll fix him!" said Pongo.

He darted off and returned, lugging Horace by his massive horns. He had found Horace sleeping tranquilly on a pile of sacks in the steerage. Horace had eaten half his bed for supper, and was dreaming uneasily, his stomach being full of tar twine.

"There you are Horace!" said Pongo, pointing to the recumbent figure of the unhappy German on the bunk. "If that merry Hun tries to get out of his bunk put him back into bed again!"

Horace settled himself down on the floor and commenced to eat the baron's straw hat.

"Maw!" said he, as much as to say, "Trust me to watch him!"

The boys scampered up on deck, having kicked the slumbering Skeleton out of his bunk, telling him to dress and get up on deck, as the ship might be torpedoed in the next half-hour.

Skeleton did not hurry himself. He got up slowly, and made a careful toilet, and, pulling his tuck-hampers out from under his bunk, carefully repacked them.

Skeleton was not going to starve in an open boat at sea if he could help it. He carefully packed sugared cakes, with lots of almond-icing on them, and a fine assortment of chocolate and sweet biscuits.

"Bride-cake and chocolate are very sustaining," said Skeleton to himself, as with lifebelt hanging round his chest he stooped at his work. "If the worst comes to the worst, we will divide the bride-cake into those mingy little pieces that they send you after a wedding, and the strongest man in the boat shall eat the ornament."

In the meantime Horace, with a baleful green eye that glittered like an emerald, watched the baron.

The baron was very uneasy. He did not want to be down below if the submarine he had been calling up should attack the South Star.

The baron knew the Kaiser very well, and he knew that his illustrious master would not hesitate to slap in one of his largest size Wilhelmshaven torpedoes on the South Star, even if his pet spy was on board. As a matter of fact, Von Slyden realised that it might prove convenient to the Kaiser that he should go down with the South Star. Great men who use dirty instruments are not very particular what becomes of these when their purpose is accomplished.

A cold perspiration broke out on the baron. He hated to lie manacled hand and foot in the close, stuffy little cabin, whose porthole was tightly shuttered by its dead light.

He swung his legs over the edge of the bunk, and the irons clipped about his ankles clinked as his feet touched the floor of the cabin.

Horace did not take any notice of him beyond staring at him with a baleful green eye, like a signal-lamp.

"Goot goat!" said the baron encouragingly.

Horace said nothing in reply to this. He merely kept his green eye steadily on the baron.

The baron was encouraged. He could not walk, as his ankles were secured close together. But he made a little jump, with the intention of jumping past Horace and getting to the door of the cabin.

Horace let him jump twice, like a hopping sparrow.

Then, without any warning, he rose and boosted the baron to the ceiling of the cabin, catching him again neatly on his horns, and pitching him into his bunk like a truss of hay.

Then he settled down again and finished eating the baron's straw hat, riband and all.

Meantime, all the boys were gathered on deck, peering out through the thick, black night. There was no sign of a submarine in the neighbourhood of the South Star as she rolled through the oily, black swells.

The night was a good night, for it was as black as the inside of a cupboard.

Captain Handyman was not the commander to disregard the warning that the German's treachery had given him. If it was good enough for the spy to escape from his cabin and to signal out through the darkness with that tiny hand-torch, it was good enough for him to start zig-zagging on his course, so that there should be less chance of being hit by a German torpedo.

So up on the bridge the little steering engine was running rapidly as the helm was swung from side to side every two minutes, sending the South Star swinging round off and off her course as a drunken man staggers up a street.

"I don't believe there's any submarine about!" said Porkis, after he had stared into the dark night till he could see red and green spots dancing in front of his eyes. "Old Fritz von Slyden was off his nut, that was all!"

"Don't you make any mistake about it!" replied Dick, as the steering-chains rattled to and fro and the clatter of the steam steering-gear was plainly audible from the bridge. "Captain Handyman would not be waltzing around across the sea in this fashion if he thought the road was clear."

The words were hardly out of Dick's mouth than there was a fizzing and bubbling alongside the ship.

THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER

By DUNCAN STORM.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Looking down into the black water they saw a huge shape, illuminated by a faint glow of phosphorescence, racing along the ship's side, only about four yards from her plates.

The South Star was swinging hard to her helm at the moment, so it seemed to the boys watching from the deck that a huge fish had darted at the ship and had sheered off again.

"That was a big porpoise!" said Porkis. "It was a tin porpoise!" replied Dick, pointing to the luminous wake which the shape had left behind it.

Here and there was a faint glimmer of lights under the water.

It looked for all the world as though a huge liner were rising from the depths, for the submarine that was coming to the surface, even as she travelled, was a craft much larger than the South Star herself.

The two hulls did not touch, but the boys gave a gasp as they realised that for a few seconds only a few feet of water lay between the keel of the South Star and the giant submarine that was the last U-boat of the German Empire.

To them it seemed as though the South Star heeled over. But this was probably only the immense pull of the rudder of their ship as the helm was put over.

They saw the submarine break water, her huge superstructure rising like a castle from the surface as she dropped astern.

"My hat!" exclaimed Dick. "We nearly rained the brute!"

The crew at the stern gun of the South Star were ready.

They fired as the giant submarine dropped astern, and their shell burst with a crash on the tip of the armoured conning-tower.

Then the increasing distance between the vessels made the German invisible. Captain Handyman lessened the angle of zig-zagging and rang up the engine-room for full-speed.

The black squad down below in the stokehold had been getting ready for the past half-hour to answer this call for speed. The boilers were quivering under full pressure, and the South Star was now fairly roaring through the dark oily water and pouring out clouds of black smoke from her funnel.

The boys could not see the smoke, the night was too dark. But they could smell it as the cinders rained on deck from the black cloud above the ship.

Then the smoke-boxes were started, fireworks which poured out huge volumes of thick vapour which enveloped the ship as though in a cloud.

The little group of boys on the deck choked and coughed, and the tears ran from their eyes as the heavy, still air of the night was filled with a black fume.

Boom! A red flash far astern and a shell whining through the air high overhead showed them that the enemy had dropped behind to get clear of their fire, so that he could bring his heavy guns to bear in safety.

The gunners of the South Star did not answer. They had no target, and they were not going to give away the position of the South Star by the flash of their gun.

Another shell rattled through the dead air like the passing of a train, followed by the heavy boom of its firing.

It was plain that the super U-boat was armed with the heaviest gun that the Germans had ever sent to sea on a submarine. The huge gun platform afforded by the Kaiser's last hope allowed him to carry big guns.

Boom! The next shot was a closer one. The submarine had gained a bit on her chase, and was coming up as near as she dared.

Her gunners, even though the night was so dark, could probably sight the loom of the South Star's smoke.

But Captain Handyman on the bridge was looking ahead for his deliverance. He knew that rain was coming—not a drizzle of rain, but a tropical downpour that would blot out everything within a few hundred yards in its tremendous veils of falling water.

There was a swizzle and a fizz in the sky, and a huge, rippling flash of lightning, ripping the blackness from the zenith to horizon, lit the night as clear as day.

The guns of chaser and chased crashed together, snap shooting by the lightning

flash, which revealed both ships for a fraction of a second as plain as day. A huge fountain of water shot up from the sea close alongside the South Star, splattering the boys with foam.

That was the German shot. Luckily for the South Star the eyes of the German gunners had been dazzled by the lightning as they fired, whilst the South Star gunners had their backs to it.

Their shell crashed on the gun platform of the enemy, scattering death and disaster amongst the gun crew.

But the next flash of lightning showed the submarine still coming on. It was plain that she was heavily armoured, and probable that the gun had not been damaged by the shot.

Cecil made his appearance amongst the boys, trembling and frightened. At the first shot he had taken refuge with Nah Poo, the Chinese cook, in the galley. He had tried to get into Nah Poo's bed, but Nah Poo had kicked him out of it. So Cecil, putting a saucepan on his head, by way of a shrapnel helmet, had come aft to join the boys as they watched this strange fight.

For a few minutes it was a fight by lightning flashes, but luckily the coming storm was yet ahead, and the tremendous flashes were playing up the eyes of the new gun crew who had stumbled up to the gun platform of the submarine to take the places of those who had been knocked out.

A shell howled close over the ship. It was getting a close thing now. Probably the next would hit them, and one shell from the great gun was about the South Star's dose.

But the luck of the sea had never failed Captain Handyman. Before that fatal shot could be fired there came a roar and a fizzling over the face of the sea ahead.

The heavy, black clouds which had threatened so long seemed to open like a waterspout.

The rain roared and sizzled down, blotting out everything. It was the sort of rain that is seen only in the neighbourhood of the great belts of calm, north and south of the Equator, which are known to sailors as the "Doldrums."

It drowned even the tremendous flashes of lightning, which played behind the smoking veils of the rain like a glow of fireworks on the huge jets of many fountains.

The Germans, with their usual stupidity, were banging away with their gun again, which was just what Captain Handyman wanted.

He sheered right off his course in a wide circle, dodging round behind their enemy, who still held on his course firing at the wide Atlantic.

The boom of the guns drew farther and farther away as the two vessels parted in the smother.

Then Captain Handyman came down from the bridge, his oilskins streaming with water, leaving great pools on the deck.

He laughed as he saw the boys standing there, some in pyjamas, some fully dressed.

"This is a lucky little shower for us!" said he, as the rain roared down on the shelter deck above and fell in great cascades over the ship's side as she rolled. "We've lost old Bill in the smother, but if he had come up five minutes sooner, I think he would have got us."

"Where do you think he is now, sir?" asked Dick.

"Goodness knows!" replied the captain. "But I'll bet that we sha'n't see him again till we run him to earth where I want to find him. On the open sea he is our master. But let me get him in narrow waters and I'll hit him like a pile-driver. Now, boys, I'm for a cup of coffee, and, if you take my tip, you will take the chance of getting the best shower-bath you have ever had in your lives!"

The boys were not slow to take the tip. They raced below for their towels, and up they came again, stripped and ready for the shower-bath, straight from the sky.

All they had to do was to walk out into the well deck astern.

Then the rain, cool and refreshing, came roaring down on them as though it were poured down from a gigantic bucket.

Its force knocked the wind out of them, and made them gasp with its tremendous fall. It ran down their naked legs in streams. Though it was roaring out of the scuppers in great jets, it was ankle-deep on the deck.

It was full of electricity, and it seemed to bring new life with it as it sizzled down, bringing all hands out in a healthy glow.

They pulled Cecil out into it with his saucepan on his head.

But Cecil, wet through in an instant, soon had enough of a tropic shower-bath in the Doldrums. He leaped for shelter, and, streaming with water, raced for the baron's cabin, where the fine, goaty flavour of Horace filled the atmosphere.

Chattering and jibbering with the comparative cold of his ducking, Cecil leaped upon the unhappy Von Slyden as he lay manacled on his bunk, sitting on his chest and trying to dry himself on the sheets.

This was the last straw for the unhappy German. Jumping up in his bunk, he snarled and bit at Cecil with his manacled hands, sending him flying across the cabin.

Cecil, who had learned dormitory games from the boys, responded by picking up a pillow and slugging the baron cheerfully over the head in good old-fashioned style.

But pillow-fighting is not understood by Germans. With a yell of rage, the baron leaped from his bunk and smote at the playful Cecil viciously.

Cecil yelled with pain as the steel handcuff hit him.

And that was enough for Horace. With a tremendous boost he butted his prisoner back on to his bunk. But not content with this, he leaped on the bunk himself, whacking at the Hun with his heavy head, tearing the pillows to pieces,

and sending the feathers flying like a snow over the cabin.

Cecil, thoroughly frightened, seized Horace by the tail, whilst the baron yelled for help at the top of his voice. The boys came rushing into the cabin, closely followed by the captain, who had heard the yells far away in the saloon.

Horace was hauled off the bunk, and Von Slyden sat up, his eyes blackened by his putting contest with the angry goat.

He started to splutter and to threaten, but Captain Handyman cut him short.

"Look here, Fritz," said he, "we've had about enough of you for this evening. You called the submarine down on us, your cabin looks more like a pigsty than a cabin, and now you are raising a kibbory when everybody ought to be in bed and asleep. There's only one fit place for you, and that's the coalhole. So down you go. You can spend the rest of the night sitting in the No. 4 bunker, and if your pals find us out again, you will go down with the coals to Davy Jones' locker, same as you deserve. Take him away, quartermaster!"

The quartermaster, who had followed the captain, clapped his hand on Von Slyden and picked him up, swinging him over his shoulder like a feather bolster.

And so Baron von Slyden departed, to spend the rest of the night uneasily seated on the coals in the No. 4 bunker, where he could think over his sins at leisure, and wonder what would happen to him if his Imperial master picked up the South Star's trail again.

San Antonio.

But the South Star, in that tremendous downpour of rain, had given her enemy the slip.

The rain roared down all night in varying showers, and it tumbled down at intervals all the next day, filling the decks of the ship in roaring torrents.

Not till the following morning did the weather clear.

Then the boys woke up to find the ship steaming in to the shore of a wild, volcanic-looking island, rugged, sun-baked, and sterile, from which rose a series of tall, jagged peaks, seven thousand feet in height.

This was the island of San Antonio, Cape de Verde, which lies, hot and flaming, on the southern limit of the north-east trade winds, and about two hundred miles off the coast of Senegambia, on the West Coast of Africa.

The surf was beating heavily on the coast, bursting in great surges at the foot of the tall lava cliffs; and it looked as though the island must be entirely unpopulated and that it was entirely inaccessible.

But Captain Handyman steered his course straight on to this savage-looking coast. The cliffs seemed to open, and the South Star steamed into a tiny, land-locked harbour, from which rose a narrow, fertile valley, with plantations of bananas, coconuts, and indigo.

"You can have twelve hours' liberty, boys!" said Captain Handyman, as he entered the saloon at breakfast-time. "You can go where you like, but you have got to be back home at twelve o'clock to-night. There's nothing much to do ashore but to walk around and to look at the figgers; or you can take a stroll along the coast, and mind you don't tumble over the cliffs."

The boys were not long in making up their minds to go ashore.

Cecil knew that there was something domg. He was at the gangway before the boat was lowered, attired in his best Eton suit, natty socks, and a straw tile, nibbling the handle of his silver-mounted cane.

Soon, with a cheer, the boat was rushed, and they rowed ashore, where they were received by a crowd of laughing niggers, who were greatly excited at the sight of Cecil. They soon found their way into the gardens of rich tropical fruit, and Skeleton, settling himself in a nigger's garden, bought the whole crop of a large tree of blue figs, and declared his intention of staying to clear every fig off it.

But Dick, with Chip and Lal, made up their minds for a long walk. They set off over the ragged spurs of the mountain that jutted in a large cape into the sea, and walked steadily along the magnificent coast.

The going was rough, so they climbed down to the beach of a wide bay, which opened with a grand sweep in the bold outline of the coast.

Here the lava cliffs were full of caves, and Lal, hot and perspiring, led the way to one of these.

"Here we shall rest in the nice shades," said he; and he marched into the great vaulted arch, which appeared to be the entrance to a huge series of caves, for here and there they could see the light falling through other openings in the cliff face.

The place was floored with soft sand, which deadened the sound of their footsteps. And a queer silence fell upon them as they made their way amongst the great jagged rocks of lava that stuck up from the sand, for they felt as though they had entered a cathedral.

The cave, indeed, with its huge pillars of lava, was a cathedral of nature.

Lal was about to speak, and to point out the resemblance of a great jagged pile of rock, which rose in the gloom, to some vast altar.

But suddenly he went down on his hands and knees behind a mass of rock, motioning to the boys to follow his example.

They did so, dropping on to the soft, white sand. And from the hollow of the cave beyond them they heard, echoing like the talk of people in some vast building, the deep gutturals of German voices. The enemy were in the cave!

(Another magnificent long instalment of this amazing adventure serial in next Monday's issue of THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

THE SCAPEGRACE OF REDGLYFFE!

A GRAND NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY HERBERT BRITTON.

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with a stormy interview between Jack Turner and his father, in which the latter informs Jack that he is removing him from Beecher's School at the request of the headmaster, who stigmatises Jack as "undesirable." Realising that his son is a hardened young scapegrace, Mr. Turner decides to send him to Redclyffe, in the hope that he may be steered by the good influence of his twin brother, Dicky—a boy of the right sort. Dicky Turner does not much appreciate this arrangement, as he does not get on well with Jack, but promises his father to do his best.

Jack begins badly at Redclyffe by using his feet, contrary to all the laws of fair-play, in a fight with a boy named Drake. His Form-master allots Jack to Study No. 5, which is shared by his brother Dicky, Bob Travers, and Jack Jackson. This leads to trouble at first, but Bob Travers smooths things over, and Jack appears to be making an honest attempt to reform.

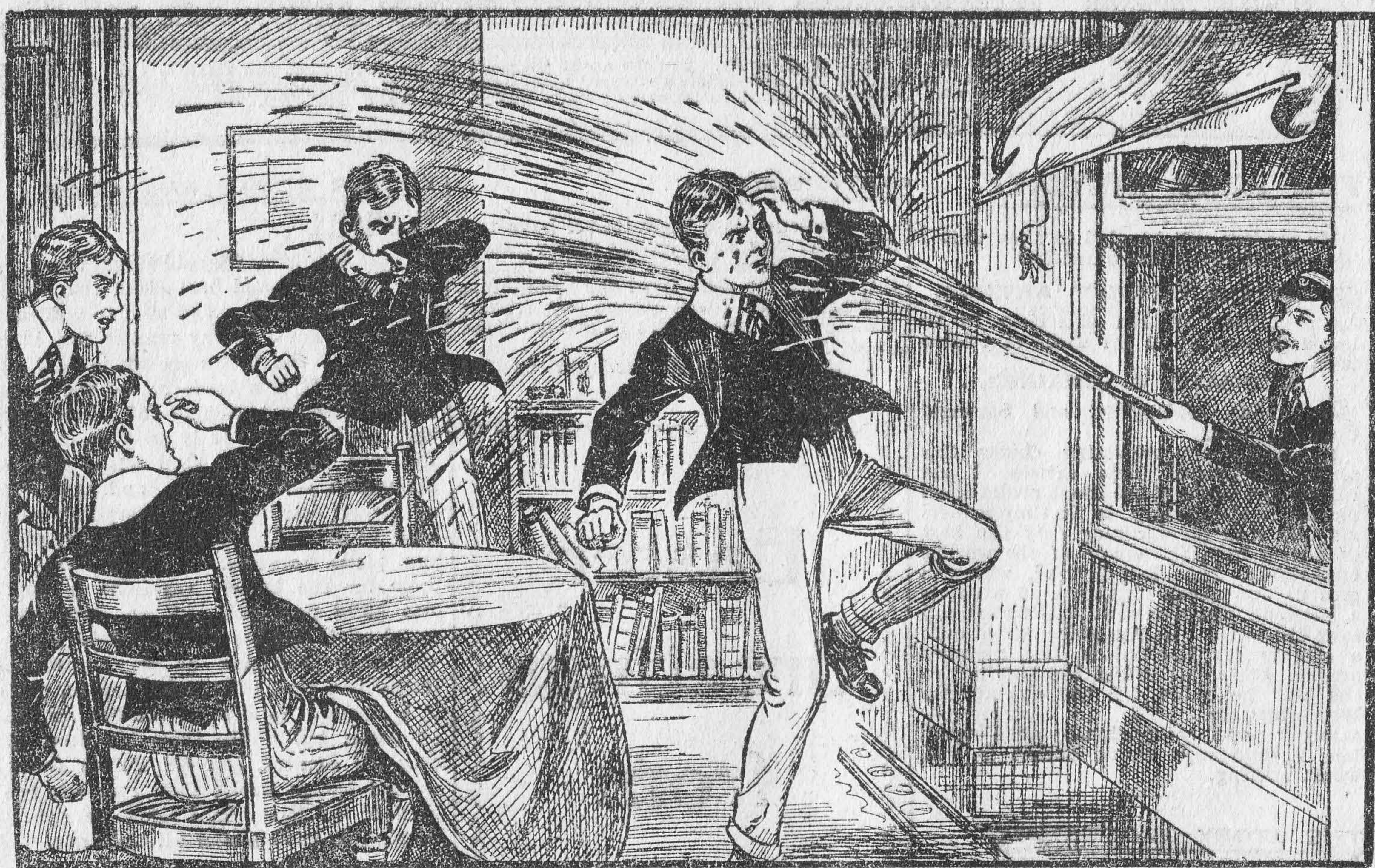
(Read on from here.)

The Dandies' Discomfiture!

"Buck up, Jack, and change into your footer togs!"

It was Bob Travers, the captain of the Fourth Form at Redclyffe, who spoke. Bob was attired in his footer shorts and jersey, as were his chums, Dicky Turner and Jackson.

It was Wednesday, a half-holiday, and the football season being nearly at an end, a match had been arranged between



A DUCKING FOR THE DANDIES! "You boundah!" exclaimed Drake. "Ow! Yow! Yoop!" A stream of black water from Dick's syringe caught the dandy full in the face.

the School House and the New House Juniors.

Jack Turner had been sitting in the easy-chair, reading a book, but he looked up in surprise at Bob Travers' remark.

"I don't see that there's any need for me to change," he said. "I'll come down presently and watch the game."

"I don't want you to watch it," said Bob Travers, with a cheerful smile.

"What?"

"I want you to play, old son," said Bob. "Appleby has just sprained his ankle, and I want you to take his place."

Jack Turner's face lighted up.

"Right-ho!" he said at once. "I'll buzz along and get changed. Don't wait for me; I'll follow on."

"Good!"

Jack Turner ran off to the dormitory, whilst Bob Travers & Co. strolled slowly

in the direction of 'Little Side.' Dicky Turner was looking very thoughtful as they strode across the quad.

Bob Travers clapped his chum on the shoulder.

"Wherefore that worried brow?" he said cheerily.

"Oh—er—nothing!" faltered Dicky. "I—I was only thinking."

"Well, don't," said Bob. "It makes you look too much like a boiled owl."

Dicky grinned.

"I was thinking about my brother," he said. "I can't understand this sudden change in him."

"I can," said Bob. "But—"

"He is now," broke in Bob, smiling.

"Somehow or other he's taken a liking to me, and he's allowing me to lead him on the straight path. If Drake & Co. had taken him up, they would have had little difficulty in persuading him to follow their shady ways."

"But Drake & Co. won't have anything to do with him," said Dicky.

"Exactly," agreed Bob. "And we must see that Jack gives them a wide berth in future. Whilst he's under our merry wings, there's no fear of him going wrong. He's become jolly keen on footer."

"But, Bob, old son, he's hardly good enough to be played in the House team," protested Dicky.

"Well, I suppose he isn't quite up to Appleby's form," said Bob. "But it's

(Continued on next page.)

