

OUR NOVEL COMPETITION!

12 PRIZES WON THIS WEEK!

ENTER TO-DAY

NO ENTRANCE FEE!

FOR WINNERS' NAMES SEE OUR CHAT PAGE.

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d} 1^{1/2}

TWELVE PAGES!

No. 966. Vol. XIX. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending December 13th, 1919.

The Mystery of Mossoo!



UNMASKED!

The prisoner's head was wrapped in a sort of turban, which hid his hair and most of his face from view, but as Lovell grabbed, the headgear came apart, revealing to the amazed eyes of the juniors a mop of purplish red hair—and what was more amazing, the features of Monsieur Monceau were disclosed at the same moment. The Fistical Four let go their prisoner as if he had suddenly become red-hot. "Mum-mum-Mossoo!" stuttered Jimmy Silver. "Oh crikey!" The French master's hands went up to his hair and he gave a howl. "Mon Dieu! Helas! Vous avez vu!" Jimmy Silver & Co. blinked at him spellbound.

The 1st Chapter.

A Surprise for Jimmy Silver!

"Silver threads among the gold
Shine upon my brow to-day."
"Oh! Ow! Wooooop!"
Jimmy Silver was humming the old
song carelessly as he strolled under
the leafless beeches in the quad at
Rookwood.
He was suddenly interrupted.
Monsieur Monceau, the French
master of Rookwood, was pacing
under the trees. Jimmy did not

observe him as he came along the
path, until Mossoo suddenly acted in
the most extraordinary manner.
He made two rapid strides towards
the Fourth-Former, and seized him
by the collar.
Shake, shake!
Jimmy Silver was so astonished
that, after the first yell, he simply
wriggled helplessly in Monsieur Mon-
ceau's grasp.
Shake!
"Et vous aussi!" exclaimed Mon-
sieur Monceau, in the tone Julius

Cæsar might have used in making his
celebrated remark, "Thou, too,
Brutus!" "Vous aussis, comme les
autres! Mais—"
Shake, shake, shake!
"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Jimmy
Silver blankly. "I—I say, Mossoo—
Oh crikey! Wharrer you at? What's
wrong? Leggo! Yooop!"
Shake, shake!
"Mauvais garçon! Bad boy!" ex-
claimed Monsieur Monceau.
"Great Scott!"
Shake!

Jimmy Silver wriggled helplessly.
It occurred to him that the French
master must have taken sudden leave
of his senses. Jimmy had always
rather liked Mossoo; he was, as most
of the juniors agreed, a good little ass.
But this sudden and inexplicable
outbreak—
"I—I—I say, Mossoo, wharrer
marrer? Leggo!"
"You sall sheek me, is it?"
exclaimed Monsieur Monceau.
"I—I wouldn't cheek you for
worlds, Mossoo!" gasped Jimmy

Silver, in bewilderment. "Not at
all! Leggo my collar! Oh dear!"
"It is sheek! I have zat sheek
from Peele and Gower and some
ozzers—now from you, you bad boy,
Silver!"
"But I—I—I haven't—I didn't—I
wasn't—" stammered Jimmy Silver.
Shake, shake!
Lovell and Raby and Newcome
were coming along from the gates to
meet Jimmy Silver on the path under
the beeches. They stopped as they



THE REDSKIN RAIDERS.

A Grand, Complete Story of FRANK RICHARDS & Co., the Chums of the School in the Backwoods.

BY... MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

Unpleasant Expectations!

"Peckover hasn't come."

Frank Richards made that remark as Cedar Creek came out from lessons into the bright, wintry sunshine in the playground.

"Not yet!" said Bob Lawless.

"I have expected him to drop in during lessons," remarked Vere Beauclerc. "Perhaps he's not coming, after all."

"Oh, he'll come!" said Bob. "He couldn't come during lessons without leaving his own class at Hillcrest. He'll drop in before dinner. Suppose we wait at the gate and give him a few snowballs."

"Fathead!" said Frank.

"I guess we're in for it, anyhow," said Bob. "He's going to complain to Miss Meadows, and we're going to be rowed. May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, you know!"

"I think there'll be trouble enough without landing ourselves for more!" grunted Frank Richards. "If he comes, let him rip!"

"Oh, he'll come!"

The three chums of Cedar Creek strolled away towards the gates to keep an eye on the trail.

They hoped that Mr. Peckover, the schoolmaster of Hillcrest, wouldn't arrive, but they felt pretty sure that he would.

Mr. Peckover was not a good-tempered gentleman, and a forgiving spirit was not included in the list of his virtues.

Frank Richards & Co. had fallen foul of him during a raid on Dicky Bird and his comrades at Hillcrest School, and Mr. Peckover had promised to come over to Cedar Creek and lay the matter before Miss Meadows. And that was the kind of promise Mr. Peckover was certain to keep. The chums could have forgiven him freely for breaking that promise, but that was too much to hope. They knew Ephraim Peckover of old.

"Franky!" howled Chunky Todgers, as the trio walked down to the gates.

But Frank Richards did not turn his head; he was thinking of Mr. Peckover, and had no attention to waste on Chunky.

Todgers followed the chums to the gates, with a wrathful expression on his fat face.

"You blessed jays!" he exclaimed. "Have you forgotten?"

"Not a bit. We hope Peckover has," replied Bob Lawless.

"Bother Peckover! Who's talking about Peckover? Have you forgotten that it's rehearsal to-day?"

"Rehearsal!" repeated Frank.

Chunky gave a sniff.

"Well, I guess I like that!" he said. "It's you that's getting up the play, and you've been roping fellows in whether they like it or not, and now you've forgotten all about the rehearsal! We've got all the things in the barn, and there's plenty of time before dinner."

"Well, I had forgotten it, and that's a fact," confessed Frank Richards.

"Call yourself a manager!" said Chunky Todgers. "Come on at once!"

"Can't come now," said Bob.

"Rehearsals will have to wait! We're expecting a visit from Peckover!"

"Oh, bosh!" said Chunky crossly. "I want to try on my things as Black Buffalo, the chief of the Cheyennes."

"Rats!"

Chunky snorted. He really had cause to feel wrathful. Frank Richards was the founder and the president of the Cedar Creek Thespians, and, as a rule, he was very keen on amateur

theatricals. The Thespians were arranging to produce a Redskin play, written by Frank Richards, and most of them had caught Frank's enthusiasm. Redskin plays were rather easier to produce at Cedar Creek than Shakespearian drama; the "properties" were much more easily obtained, for one thing, and the Cedar Creek fellows knew a good deal more about Red Indians than about ancient Romans or Danish princes or dukes of Illyria. Quite an imposing array of "props" had been obtained for the great drama of "Eagle Eye, the Red Chief."

Frank Richards generally took a great deal of trouble in rounding up the fellows for rehearsal, and now he himself was found wanting.

"You mosey along!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers, wagging a fat forefinger at the president of the Thespian Society. "Never mind old Peckover! He can go and chop chips! The fellows are waiting for you!"

"Can't be did! You see—"

Tom Lawrence shouted across the playground.

"Waiting for you, Richards! Get a move on!"

"Oh, bother rehearsals now!" said Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards looked out on the snowy trail that ran through the leafless timber towards Thompson.

"He doesn't seem to be coming," he remarked. "Let's cut. After all, he's not worth waiting for!"

"Of course he isn't!" said Chunky Todgers. "If Miss Meadows wants you she can send for you. Come on!"

"Oh, all right!" grunted Bob.

And the chums followed Chunky Todgers to the barn behind the lumber schoolhouse.

Quite a number of the Cedar Creek fellows were gathering there.

Two or three of them were already draped in coloured blankets, and had their heads adorned with feathers.

"You're late!" growled Eben Hacke. "Call yourself a manager, Richards!"

"There isn't too much time before dinner," remarked Dick Dawson.

"Are we going to paint up, Richards?"

"No; that's not necessary. We'll keep the paint for the dress rehearsal on Saturday," answered Frank.

"Just hang on the blankets, and let's go over the lines."

"Right-ho!"

Frank Richards was stage-manager, general manager, and a good many other things, and he had plenty to do at rehearsal. He was quickly busy, and it had the effect of banishing Mr. Peckover from his mind.

But Mr. Peckover was brought back to his thoughts before long. The rehearsal was going strong, when Algy Beauclerc strolled into the barn and turned his eyeglass on the amateur Redskins.

"Richards—!" he began.

"Don't interrupt now!"

"Sorry, dear boy, but Miss Meadows wants you. Sent me to tell you, old top," said Algy Beauclerc.

Vere Beauclerc gave a whistle.

"Is Peckover there?" he asked.

His cousin nodded.

"Yaas!"

"Better get along!" growled Bob Lawless.

The three chums hastily stripped off blankets and feathers, and became white schoolboys again. Leaving the rest of the Thespians still rehearsing, they hurried out of the barn, and ran for the schoolhouse. Miss Meadows was not to be kept waiting.

The 2nd Chapter.

Mr. Peckover's Opinion!

Frank Richards & Co. arrived rather breathlessly at the door of Miss Meadows' sitting-room in the Lumber School House.

They found Miss Meadows there, with a frowning brow.

A thin, angular gentleman was standing in the room, with an exceedingly unpleasant expression on his face. It was Mr. Peckover, the master of Hillcrest School.

Mr. Peckover's thin lips came tightly together as the three schoolboys entered, and his eyes glinted. There had been trouble more than once between the Hillcrest master and Frank Richards & Co.

"Are these the boys, Mr. Peckover?" asked Miss Meadows quietly.

"These are the boys!" answered Mr. Peckover. "I am very well acquainted with them!"

Miss Meadows fixed a stern glance upon the Co.

"My boys, Mr. Peckover informs me that you entered the school premises at Hillcrest last evening

"Kindly allow the boys to explain, sir!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"How did your snowshoes come to be at Hillcrest, Richards?"

Frank hesitated.

He did not want to explain that Dicky Bird & Co. had raided the snowshoes. It was only too probable that Mr. Peckover would make that a reason for punishing the lively Dicky.

"They were your own snowshoes, I suppose?" asked Miss Meadows, as Frank did not answer.

"Oh, yes, Miss Meadows!"

"How came they at Hillcrest?"

"They were—were left there—"

stammered Frank.

"You could have called during the daylight and asked for them, then," said the Canadian schoolmistress.

"We—we—" stammered Frank.

"Of course, such a story is absurd on the face of it," said Mr. Peckover. "I found them rummaging about my premises. It is true that I have missed nothing, but that probably is because they were discovered, and interrupted."

"Why, you rotter," broke out Frank fiercely, "do you dare to say that we went there to steal?"

"Silence, Richards!"

"Mr. Peckover isn't going to call me a thief!" exclaimed Frank indignantly. "He knows he's not telling the truth!"

"He couldn't if he tried!" growled Bob Lawless.

Mr. Peckover bit his thin lip.

"This insolence will not cover up your guilt!" he said venomously.

"I am convinced—"

"Nothing of the kind!" said Vere Beauclerc coolly.

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, with a troubled look. "My boys, I am quite aware that Mr. Peckover's suspicions are absurd. But you must explain how the affair happened."

"Well, some of the Hillcrest fellows bagged our snowshoes—only for a lark," said Frank. "If we'd gone over for them while the fellows were there we should have got snowballs instead of snowshoes, that's all."

"I thought it was something of the kind," said Miss Meadows, looking much relieved. "You should not have done so, however, and you will

we gave their names. It was only a lark on their side."

"You refuse to give the names?" asked Mr. Peckover unpleasantly.

"Certainly, I refuse!"

"That is enough. Miss Meadows, I do not believe a word of Richards' statement. He does not give the names because there are no names to give."

"That isn't true!" said Frank at once.

"Silence, Richards! Mr. Peckover, the explanation is quite simple, and is true on the face of it!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

The Hillcrest master shrugged his thin shoulders.

"I do not believe a word of it!" he said. "Richards can prove his statement, if true, by giving the names. He declines to do so. I can only conclude that my first supposition is correct, and that these three boys entered my premises after dark with dishonest intentions."

"Liar!" burst out Bob Lawless, his eyes blazing.

Mr. Peckover turned quite pale.

"Miss Meadows—" he began.

"Be silent, Lawless! You must expect the boys to be indignant, Mr. Peckover, when you bring so cruel and unfounded a charge against them. I accept their explanation without reserve. I shall cane them for entering Hillcrest, and there the matter ends."

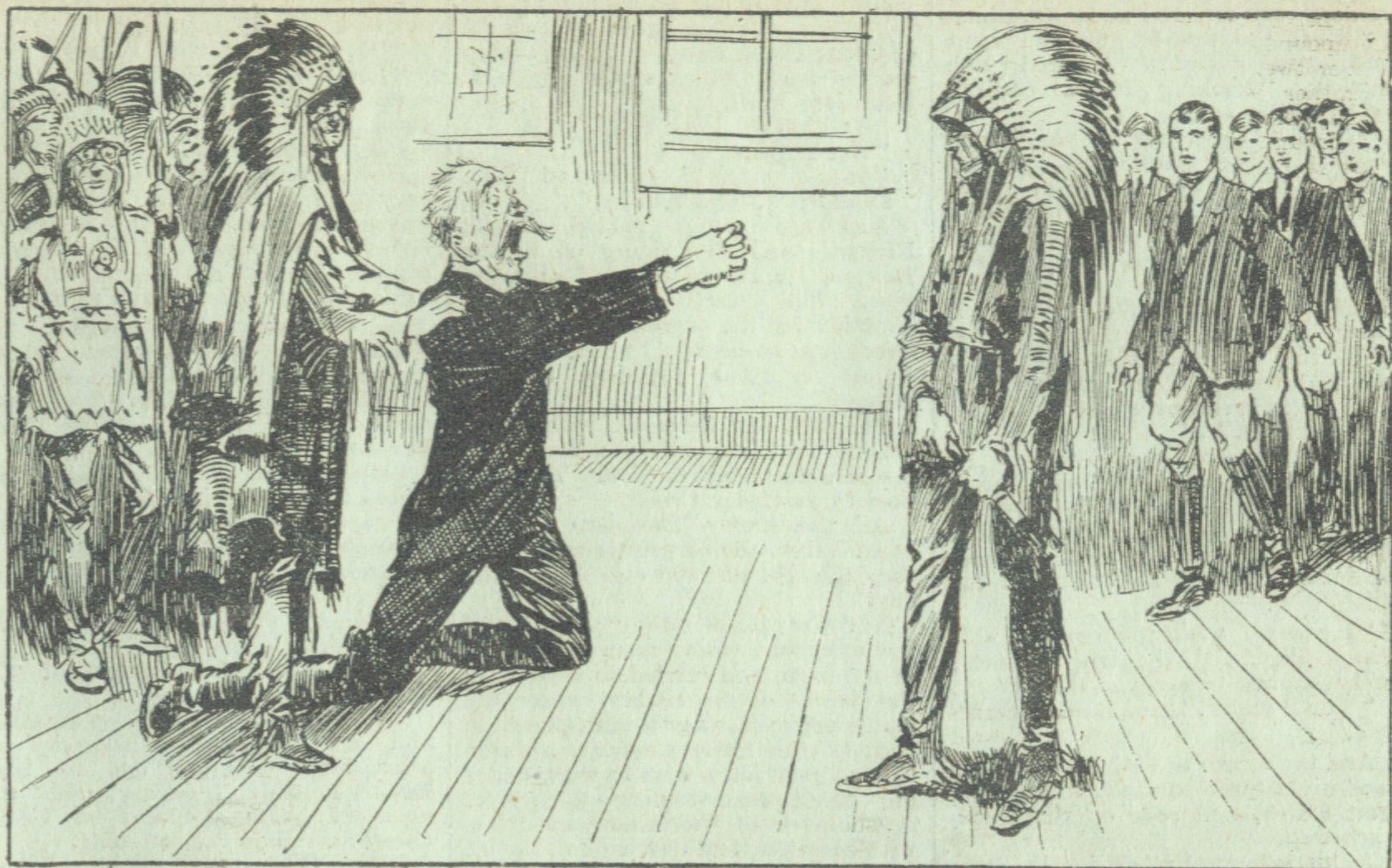
Miss Meadows picked up her cane. "You have acted very foolishly, my boys. Your reckless action has laid you open to base and unworthy suspicions."

"Madam—" stammered Mr. Peckover.

"I mean exactly what I have said, sir. Such suspicions are base and unworthy!" said Miss Meadows warmly. "You will hold out your hand, Richards!"

Mr. Peckover, trembling with rage, looked on while the three schoolboys were caned. It was rather a severe caning, for Miss Meadows' annoyance was great. The chums of Cedar Creek had certainly been reckless, though they had never dreamed of the construction that might be placed on their action by an ill-natured and suspicious man.

"You may go!" said Miss Meadows, laying down her cane. "You will kindly keep away from



MR. PECKOVER'S SCALP IN DANGER!

"Bring forth the paleface prisoner," said Black Panther in his guttural tones. Mr. Peckover was dragged towards the ferocious chief, and he dropped on his knees gasping with fear. "Mercy!" he cried. "Dog of a paleface! Why should not your bald scalp hang in the lodges of the Black Panther?" demanded the chief, fingering his scalping knife. "Ow! Mercy!" gasped the unfortunate master.

after the gates were locked for the night.

"Yes, ma'am," said Frank Richards meekly.

"He admits it!" said Mr. Peckover sourly.

Frank's eyes gleamed at the Hillcrest master for an instant.

"We shouldn't be likely to deny it, as it's true," he said.

"I am not so sure of that!" sneered Mr. Peckover.

Frank opened his lips for a hot retort, but closed them again as he met Miss Meadows' glance.

"I am sure, Richards, that you will tell me the exact truth," said the schoolmistress. "Kindly tell me for what reason you entered Mr. Peckover's premises?"

"Only to fetch some snowshoes, ma'am."

"Nonsense!" interjected Mr. Peckover.

be punished for entering Hillcrest after dark."

"Very well, ma'am!"

"I trust you are satisfied with Richards' explanation, Mr. Peckover?" said the schoolmistress, a little tartly.

Mr. Peckover smiled sneeringly.

"Not in the slightest!" he answered. "If Richards' statement is correct, he can give the names of the Hillcrest boys who took away his snowshoes. Let him do so, and I will question them."

"You know the names, Richards?"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"Will you give them to Mr. Peckover?"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Frank warmly. "Mr. Peckover would make it an excuse to cane them, and they would think we'd told tales about them. So we should have if

Hillcrest School in future. If you disregard this order, your punishment will be severe."

Frank Richards & Co. left the room silently.

"You are satisfied, I trust, Mr. Peckover?" they heard Miss Meadows say as they went into the passage.

"No, Miss Meadows, I am not satisfied!" rasped Mr. Peckover. "I adhere to my opinion of those boys."

"Then I will say plainly, sir, that I do not credit for one moment that you sincerely hold such an opinion of them!"

"Madam!"

"I believe, sir, that you are speaking maliciously and without sincerity!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, her voice trembling. "And if you venture to repeat such odious insinuations elsewhere, sir, I have no

THE MYSTERY OF MOSSOO!

(Continued from page 496.)

The last time they had seen Mossoo's hair, it was black, streaked with grey. Now it was purple-red, with a bronze tinge.

see nozzing. Now you come, and you have see! Helas! On me rit au nez! Nevair, nevair sall I show face in Rookwood vunce more!

Monsieur Monceau made a gesture of despair. "You have see my hair?" he gasped.

groaned Mossoo. "I come here; zat Hixon, he let me have zis bungalow for vun veek. I bury myself to not be seen, in zis lonely spot."

feelings. Then they lay down in the grass, and kicked up their heels and yelled.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4."

FOR NEXT MONDAY!

There is a long, complete story of Rookwood School in the next issue of the BOYS' FRIEND, which is full of excitement throughout.

amusing. Chunky Todgers decides to earn his living, but much to that worthy's amazement, he finds that his new venture is attended by hard work in plenty.

oblige readers of the BOYS' FRIEND with a splendid article dealing with the noble art, making No. 4 in his series, entitled

"THE SCIENCE OF BOXING!"

Last, but not least, there is another grand footer article specially written for the "Green 'Un," by Tom Boyle, of Burnley fame, entitled

"THE PART A CAPTAIN PLAYS!"

POISONOUS ENGLISH PLANTS.

The number of poisonous plants growing in Great Britain is small, but at the same time it is a wise thing to guard children from eating any fungus and any wayside berry, except the blackberry, raspberry, and bilberry.

MONKSHOOD.

Monkshood is another deadly plant which is often mistaken for horse radish as both plants are commonly grown in cottage gardens.

The sap of a few other plants is poisonous, e.g., that of henbane, the leaves and flower of the potato, thorn apple, foxglove, meadow rue and savin.

HEMLOCK.

The hemlock tribe includes a great number of harmless plants, e.g., wild carrot, fools' parsley, etc., the leaves of which are often mistaken for true parsley.

FUNGI.

Last, but not the least, of these poisonous plants come the poisonous fungi that somewhat resemble mushrooms, and for that reason are the cause of many serious mistakes.

THE OLD QUERY.

Among my letters is one that interested me very much, though the question the writer put has been often asked before.

CORRESPONDENCE WANTED.

Maurice Wiggett, Queen's Street, Oudtshoorn, Cape Province, South Africa, with boy readers in Great Britain or America.

THE RESULT OF OUR "RHYMESTER" COMPETITION No. 1.

Large numbers of readers entered this competition, and the work of adjudication proved to be a difficult matter, because so many smart efforts were sent in.

OUR NEW WEEKLY COMPETITION! :: CASH PRIZES FOR READERS! (No Entrance Fee required)

Have you tried our novel competition yet? Just glance down the next column and make up your mind to enter for this simple and yet interesting feature.

"MYSELF!" By Reginald Muffin. O, Rookwood is a sorry skool, The worst in all the nation;

Although I'm sadly underfed I'm quite a clever feloe, With brainy notions in my head

CASH PRIZE OF FIFTY SHILLINGS.

For the 5 next best efforts, FIVE PRIZES OF TEN SHILLINGS EACH, and for the next six, Consolation Prizes of 6 Splendid Pocket Knives.

ENTER FOR THIS INTERESTING COMPETITION TO-DAY!

who submitted the following lines to complete the five unfinished verses published:

- 1. At lessons I'm a nigger. 2. He's trapped in all his capers. 3. Of my renowned position. 4. And many a crimson "duster." 5. If I don't sing my praises.

The five prizes of 10s. each have been awarded to: Frank Farmer, Clent House, Mayfield Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham.

The six splendid penknives have been sent to: John Grant, 4, Balfour Place, Leith. Miss Doris Lucas, 25, Randle Street, Lower Tramere, Birkenhead.

Your Editor