

Tubby's Golden Dream!

A GRAND, COMPLETE STORY OF
THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD
SCHOOL.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Raising the Wind.

"I say, you fellows!"
Thus Reginald Muffin, of the Classical side at Rookwood, as he halted outside the end study in the Fourth Form passage. The Fistical Four were just finishing tea when Muffin's dulcet tones broke the silence.

"Buzz off!"
"Travel!"
"Get out!"
"Scat!"
Tubby Muffin's reception was not at all encouraging, but the fat junior was blessed with a thick skin. Instead of making his exit, his ample form advanced further into the study.

"Really, you fellows, I've come—"
"Your mistake," granted Arthur Edward Lovell. "Tea's finished. There's half a sardine you can take away with you, though!"

Tubby Muffin sniffed.
"I've not come to tea, Lovell, and you can keep your mouldy sardine!"
"Good! Now travel! Can't you see we are not exactly yearning for your company?" chimed in Newcome.

Another sniff.
"I've a jolly good mind not to tell you that I've won thirty thousand pounds," said Muffin indignantly.
"Thirty thousand which?"
"Pounds," repeated the fat junior.

"Been robbing a bank?" asked Lovell sarcastically.
"Ahem—I mean I'm going to win it! That is to say, I've practically won it!" spluttered Muffin.
"Go it!" grinned Jimmy Silver encouragingly. "We shall get the truth soon."

"Really, Silver!" said Tubby peevishly. "If you doubt my word—"
"Not at all," chuckled the leader of the Fistical Four. "You are such a truthful chap!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, the money's practically mine. All I have to do is to send ten bob to a Johnny in Switzerland and I get thirty thousand pounds. Think of it!" said Muffin.
"My hat!"

"Is he potty?"
"It's a lottery, you know," explained the fat Classical.
"Oh!"
"My pater's written to say that he has entered for it, so I thought I'd—"

"Follow in father's footsteps!" grinned Lovell. "And you think you are going to draw the first prize?"
"That it! Now, if you chaps will advance me ten bob between you—"
"Nothing doing!"

"But I tell you I'm bound to win it. I think you fellows ought to back me up. I'll make it worth your while when the money arrives!"
"Go hon!"

"It won't arrive," said Newcome decisively. "Those blessed lotteries are generally frauds."
"Hear, hear!"

"But this is a genuine one, you know. My pater says so!" replied the fat junior.
Tubby seemed to think that this was conclusive. The Fistical Four did not seem so sure of it.

"Can I rely on you, Silver, to lend me the ten bob?" asked Muffin.
"You can't!" replied the leader of the Fistical Four emphatically.

"Why, you beast—I mean, old chap, I must have the money!" said Tubby hastily.

"Try Lovell," suggested Jimmy Silver, grinning.
"Will you lend me ten bob, Lovell, old chap?"

"I'll lend you a thick ear in a minute!" growled Arthur Edward darkly.
"Snort!"
"Raby?"
"Nothing doing!" replied Raby.
"What about you, Newcome?"
"I'll give you two seconds to clear out!" said Newcome, reaching for the poker.

"Why, you beasts!" snorted Reginald Muffin indignantly. "I sha'n't forget this meanness when the thirty thousand arrives!"
"Oh, ring off!"

"I call it jolly mean. You ought to be proud to lend me such a trifling sum! Ow! Wharrer you doing?"
Tubby Muffin's colloquy came to an abrupt ending as Arthur Edward Lovell's hand tightened on his collar and propelled him into the passage.

"Now travel!" said Lovell, releasing his grasp and bringing his right foot into play.
"Yow-ow! Stop it, you beast!" howled Muffin.

With a parting shot that sent the fat junior staggering, Lovell closed the study door.
Tubby Muffin, his face red and furious, paused to shake his fist at the closed door, and with a muttered threat departed in high dudgeon.

Conroy, the Colonial junior, was at the end of the passage, and the fat junior ambled towards him.
"I say, Conroy!" he shouted.
Conroy paused.

"What do you want, Tubby?"
"It's a matter of ten bob—I say, where are you going?"
The Colonial junior was walking away. He did not stop to listen for any more.

"Beast!" muttered Muffin.
And the fat junior rolled disconsolately away to Study No. 2.
Putty Grace and Jones minor were writing on the corner of the table when their fat study-mate entered. They did not look up. There was a wrinkle in the brow of Putty Grace. Evidently that cheerful youth was engaged in a deep problem. And Jones minor seemed to be absorbed in a letter he was writing.

"I say, Grace!" began Muffin.
"You'll say your prayers if you interrupt!" hooted that junior grimly.
"I'm busy!"
"Snort!"
"Jones, old chap!"
"Run away!" grunted "Jones, old chap!"

"Can you lend me ten bob?"
"No!"
Jones' reply was emphatic, if not polite.

Tubby Muffin, with another indignant snort, rolled out of his study and made his way over to the Shell quarters. On the way he encountered Mornington of the Fourth, who was coming down the stairs.
"I say, Mornington!" he began. "I've got something to tell you."
"Don't trouble, dear boy. Save your breath!" grinned Valentine Mornington.

"But I want to win thirty thousand pounds!"
"Begad, I wish you luck, then!"
And with that encouraging remark Mornington hurried on his way.
"Beast!" spluttered Tubby Muffin after his retreating figure. "Here's a fortune practically within my reach, and none of the beasts ready to lend me a paltry ten bob! I call it mean!"

"I should keep your sentiments to yourself, or someone might hand you out a thick ear!"
Tubby Muffin started. He had not noticed the presence of Howard, of the Shell, who had just left Adolphus Smythe's study.

"Would you care to lend me ten bob, Howard?" he asked. "I'm entering for a lottery."

"No fear!" replied Howard.
"But I tell you I'm certain to draw the winning number!" exclaimed Muffin.
"I'll believe that when I see it in black and white. Anyway, you'll get no ten bob out of me. Buzz off!"
And Howard strode on, leaving the hapless Tubby muttering things under his breath.

The 2nd Chapter.

Muffin Answers an Advertisement.

"The very thing!"
Reginald Muffin was responsible for that remark which interrupted the studies of Putty Grace, Jones minor, and Higgs, who occupied Study No. 2.

"The very thing!"
"What are you burbling about, fathead?" inquired Putty Grace.
"How's a fellow to do his prep with that idiot gassing away?" roared Higgs.

Tubby Muffin was the only member of the study who was not engaged in the all-important task of preparation; his attention was centred on the "Rookwood Recorder" he was reading. Evidently, something in its pages had aroused his enthusiasm. But that enthusiasm was not shared by his study-mates.
"The very thing!" repeated Tubby.

"I'll shove your head in the coal-locker if you don't stop chin-wagging!" said Higgs threateningly.
"Really, Higgs, I suppose a fellow can speak in his own study?" said Muffin.

"Rats! Get on with your prep!" growled Higgs.
Tubby Muffin snorted. Prep was a minor detail when thirty thousand pounds was at stake. He had found no one willing to advance him the necessary entrance-fee for the lottery, but a chance scanning of the "Rookwood Recorder," a local paper, had revealed to him a means of raising the ten bob. In the personal column was a paragraph to this effect:

"Gentleman desires to hire a bicycle for two days. Must be in good condition, with three-speed gear; 24-in. frame. Good references.—Apply, G. Dalkney, Heathway House, Coombe."

Tubby Muffin's eyes lit up with excitement. Here was a way out of the difficulty. He was not the possessor of a bike himself, but the fat junior did not believe in putting obstacle in the way. Anyone's bike would do. After all, he reasoned, it would be returned safely, and nobody would be the loser, whereas he would indirectly gain a fortune.

"Twenty-four inch frame," he mused. "Jimmy's will do!"
And with that comforting reflection he commenced his prep. On the morrow he would "borrow" Jimmy Silver's bike, and hire it out to the advertiser. Wednesday was a half-holiday at Rookwood, which was rather convenient to his plans.

His programme was already mapped out when Bulkeley put his head round the door.
"Bed-time, kids!" said the school captain.

And the occupants of Study No. 2 trooped up to the Fourth-Form dormitory. Reginald Muffin was very soon in the land of dreams—dreams that were gilded with the thirty sand pounds that was to be his.

When the rising-bell clanged out in the morning he came back to earth, so to speak, but the fortune was for ever dangling before his eyes.
Mr. Bootles found Muffin rather a refractory pupil in the class-room that

morning. His thoughts were on anything but lessons.

The little Form-master frowned as he noted the fat junior's inattentiveness.

"Are you ill?" asked Mr. Bootles.
"N-nunno, sir!" stammered Tubby.
"Then kindly pay more attention to your lessons!" rapped out the Form-master.

"Y-yes, sir!"
And Tubby Muffin tried to centre his attention on English History. But his concentration did not last out the lesson.

"What did Cardinal Wolsey say to Henry the Eighth?" asked Mr. Bootles, as his eyes alighted on the fat junior.

"Thirty thousand pounds, sir!" replied Muffin abstractedly.

Mr. Bootles gasped.

"What? Bless my soul!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth were laughing, but the Form-master quelled their hilarity with a frown. He was under the impression that Reginald Muffin was joking, and Mr. Bootles did not approve of joking in class.

"Come out here, Muffin!" he said grimly.

Tubby rose to his feet and ambled towards the Form-master's desk.
"I will not have this unseemly behaviour in class. Hold out your hand!"

"But—but, sir—!" stammered Tubby.

"Enough! Hold out your hand!" rapped out Mr. Bootles.

The fat Classical reluctantly held out his hand.

Whack!

"Ow-yow!"

"Silence, boy! Hold out the other!" commanded the Form-master.

Whack!

"Yowp!" yelled the hapless Tubby.

"Now go back to your place, and kindly remember that the class-room is not the place for joking!" said Mr. Bootles severely.

And Reginald Muffin rolled away to his place. For the remainder of lessons that morning his golden dream of thirty thousand pounds remained in obscurity, owing to the fact that Mr. Bootles' eye was constantly upon him. But everything comes to an end, and morning lessons drew to a close eventually.

As the juniors streamed out Jimmy Silver stopped Muffin in the passage.

"How's the lottery going on?" he asked, with a grin.
"Oh, I'm going to win it!" replied Tubby loftily.

"Don't forget your old pals when you come into your fortune!" grinned the leader of the Fistical Four.
"Brrrrr!"

And Reginald Muffin rolled away to Hall for dinner. Thoughts of his coming fortune did not upset his voracious appetite. Instead, it seemed to give him an extra hunger. Anyway, three portions of pudding disappeared in his direction. He was the last to leave the Hall, and, looking cautiously around, the fat junior rolled over to the bike-shed.

Five minutes later he emerged with a bike—Jimmy Silver's handsome jigger, and, with another cautious glance around, he mounted it, and pedalled away to the gates.

Taking the road to Coombe, Tubby Muffin pedalled laboriously along the road, without encountering any of the juniors.

He inquired the way of the local constable to Heathway House, and in due course arrived at his destination.

Mr. Dalkney was at home, as luck would have it, and he ran an approving eye over Jimmy Silver's bicycle.

"Good-morning!" was his greeting.
"Good-morning!" replied Tubby, labouring for breath. His unaccustomed exercise had told on him, but his urbanity remained.

"I've come in answer to your advertisement," said Muffin. "I happen to be rather short of tin at the present moment, owing to a delay in the post, and as I sha'n't be wanting Jim—I mean, m-my bike for a couple of days—"

"Exactly!" broke in Mr. Dalkney.
"You're willing to let me have it on hire for that period?"
"That's it!"

"I think it will suit my purpose admirably," said Mr. Dalkney.
"What is your charge?"

Tubby Muffin was not ready for that question, but his brain worked swiftly. He wanted ten shillings for his entrance-fee, and ten shillings to satisfy his inner man. A lot of jam-tarts and pork-pies could be purchased for that amount. Consoling himself with the thought that he would amply repay Jimmy Silver for

the loan of his bike when his fortune arrived—he had no doubt that it would arrive—Tubby hastened to name his figure.

"A pound," he said.
"Very well," replied Mr. Dalkney. And he extracted a crisp currency note from his wallet, which was hastily pocketed by the fat Classical.

A receipt followed the currency note, and, with an expansive grin of satisfaction, Tubby Muffin rolled away to the village post-office.

Three juniors looked up in surprise as Tubby's ample figure entered that establishment, and Muffin shivered with apprehension as he saw Cecil Pankley & Co., of Bagshot. Rivalry was at its height between the two schools.

"Hallo, you chaps!" faltered Tubby.

"Hallo, Tubby!" grinned Cecil Pankley. "I didn't know they allowed little boys out alone at Rookwood!"

Muffin grinned feebly.
"I'm entering for a lottery, you know," he explained, "and I've just dropped in here to post off my entrance fee to a chap in Switzerland."

"A lottery!"
"Yes; and the first prize is thirty thousand pounds. It's practically mine!" said the fat Classical.
"Oh, good!" replied Pankley gravely.

And he winked with the eye that was farthest away from the Rookwood junior. Poole and Putter received that wink in astonishment. What was working in their leader's brain?

"You'll just catch the post," continued Pankley. "What's the name of the promoter?"

"A chap named Hookit," said Tubby, consulting an addressed envelope.

"Thanks! I might try my luck for the thirty thousand," said Pankley.

And, with another wink at Poole and Putter, the Bagshot trio left Tubby Muffin to purchase his postal-order and despatch it to Mr. Hookit in Switzerland.

"What's the game?" asked Poole when the Bagshot juniors were outside.

"Gather round!" grinned Pankley. And in a few words he explained to Poole and Putter a scheme that had taken root in his brain. When those two cheerful youths had fully grasped its significance they roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"This is where we smile!"
"Hear, hear!"

And with those comforting remarks the Bagshot Bounders departed.

The 3rd Chapter. Great News!

"Letter for you, Muffin!"
Valentine Mornington uttered those words as he encountered Tubby Muffin in the Fourth Form passage two days later.

"Hand it over!" grunted Muffin. "I expect it's my lottery ticket."
His prophecy proved correct, and his fat hand closed on a slip of paper bearing the number 1613.

"So you raised the tin, then?" drawled Mornington.
"Y-yes!" stammered the fat Classical. "Had it from home, you know."

"Hum!"
Valentine Mornington's tone did not express belief, but it was no business of his, he argued. Tubby's ways and means of raising cash were unlimited.

The Fourth soon heard the news that their prize porpoise had received his ticket, but their interest in the matter there and then ceased.

Muffin approached several of the juniors on the subject of a loan to be settled up when his thirty thousand arrived, but, needless to say, no one was willing to risk that uncertainty.

The next few days were days of anxiety for the fat Classical. Mr. Bootles found him wandering in mind during the space allotted for lessons. Every question put to him drew the answer of "Thirty thousand pounds!"

The good-natured Form-master began to think that Tubby was verging on insanity. He did not know anything about the lottery, but the fat junior's constant reference to thirty thousand pounds puzzled him exceedingly. But he was soon to be enlightened.

The Fourth was engaged on Latin one morning when Tupper, the page-boy, made his appearance. He was carrying a buff-coloured envelope, the sight of which caused Tubby Muffin to jump from his seat.

Mr. Bootles looked up from his books inquiringly.
"Well, Tupper," he said, "what do you want?"

"Which as 'ow I've brought a telegram for Master Muffin," said the pageboy.

And, handing the telegram to the Form-master, he made his exit, leaving the Fourth in a buzz of excitement. Muffin never received telegrams as a general rule, and the juniors could only put this one down to the fact that he had drawn the first prize or a prize of some sort in the great lottery.

"Silence, boys!" commanded Mr. Bootles. "Come here, Muffin!"

The latter command was quite unnecessary. Tubby Muffin had bounded from his seat the moment he had caught a glimpse of that telegram, and had been beside the Form-master in a twinkling.

"G-give it to me, sir!" he said, his little, round eyes gleaming with excitement.

"I trust it isn't bad news, Muffin!" said Mr. Bootles kindly.

The fat Classical vouchsafed no reply to that remark. He was feverishly slitting the envelope, and when he finally came to the message enclosed he gave a whoop of delight and triumph.

"Hurrah! I've won, you chaps!" he exclaimed.

And he commenced to dance a jig in the exuberance of his spirits.

Mr. Bootles gasped in astonishment.

The Fourth followed suit. Tubby's prophecy had proved correct, after all. It was amazing; nevertheless, it seemed to be true.

"Thirty thousand pounds! Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"Great Scott!"

"I told you I'd win!" yelled Tubby Muffin, crimson with excitement.

"Bless my soul! What does all this mean?" bellowed Mr. Bootles.

The fat Classical flourished the telegram before the Form-master's eyes.

"Read it out to them, sir!" he said.

Mr. Bootles took the missive, and actually did as he was bid. Some of the excitement had taken hold of him, and naturally his curiosity was aroused.

"Silence, boys!" he commanded. "Muffin has requested me to read the contents of this telegram to you."

"Go it, sir!"

"Ahem!"

Mr. Bootles cleared his throat, and commenced to read:

"Muffin draws winning number. Congratulations. Cheque follows in three or four days. COOKIT."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great snakes!"

"It can't be true!"

These and other remarks of a similar nature greeted the bewildered ears of Mr. Bootles as he handed the telegram back to Muffin. He was completely in the dark.

"May I ask what all this means?" he said.

"Certainly, sir!" replied Tubby Muffin. "It means that I entered for a lottery in Switzerland, and have been successful in drawing the winning number."

"G-good gracious!" stammered Mr. Bootles. "I must congratulate you!"

"Thank you, sir!" said the fat Classical.

"But don't let this good fortune turn your head!" cautioned the Form-master kindly.

"Oh, that's all right, sir!"

"But thirty thousand pounds is a large sum of money for a boy to handle!"

"Of course, that depends on the chap!" said Muffin loftily. "I shall know what to do with my money!"

He did not add that a regular supply of tuck from Sergeant Kettle was the first thing he intended to do with his money. Mr. Bootles would not have been impressed with that statement.

Lessons after that went by the board. All the juniors were too excited to pay much attention to Latin, and Mr. Bootles was very lenient with them.

"It beats me," whispered Jimmy Silver to Muffin. "I suppose that's a genuine telegram? It's signed 'Cookit,' you know!"

"It's a mistake for Hookit, of course!" granted Tubby Muffin.

And he handed the telegram to the leader of the Fistical Four.

"It's got Geneva, Switzerland, marked on it," said Lovell, who was looking over his shoulder.

"That's so."

"Seems genuine enough."

"Hum!"

The junior captain did not wax enthusiastic. Although it was in black and white before him, he could not bring himself to think that Reginald Muffin had been the lucky winner.

And for the remainder of the morning Uncle James was very thoughtful.

**The 4th Chapter.
Muffin the Blade!**

Muffin's extraordinary luck was the subject of conversation for all the school the next day. And the fat Classical was the centre of attraction. Fellows who had never concealed their disgust of the egregious Tubby suddenly cultivated his acquaintance.

Adolphus Smythe remarked to his chums, Howard and Tracy, that they could put up with the fat little rotter now, and consequently Muffin was a constant visitor to their study.

With this good fortune Reginald Muffin had acquired sporty ways. He played cards for money, and smoked like a veteran. Howard, Smythe, and Tracy each had his I O U's for debts incurred at poker, but that little matter did not upset the cheerful Tubby. His new friends were content to wait for their I O U's to be settled when Muffin received his cheque for thirty thousand pounds. He was a Muffin in a different light, as Arthur Edward Lovell expressed it.

"It's completely turned his head," remarked Jimmy Silver to his chums in the end study.

"Wonderful what a difference money makes," said Lovell thoughtfully.

"Hear, hear!"

"We are just looking for him ourselves," replied Jimmy Silver.

"I'll come along with you," said Putty Grace.

The juniors halted outside Adolphus Smythe's study in the Shell passage. From within came the sound of voices with the fat Classical's high pitched voice as loud as any.

Jimmy Silver did not stand on ceremony, but jammed his foot against the door, which flew open.

The room was half-full of smoke, and the table strewn with cards, which Tracy endeavoured to conceal under his elbow.

Tubby Muffin was puffing away at a cigarette with evident enjoyment, and each of the nuts held a lighted cigarette between their fingers.

Adolphus Smythe looked up nervously as Jimmy Silver & Co. strode in.

"Trot in, old scout," grinned Tubby Muffin. "These cigarettes are prime."

"Put those rotten things away!" said Jimmy Silver grimly.

"Eh?"

"Put them in the fire!"

"No jolly fear!"

"Well, I will! Pile in, you chaps!"

The "chaps" needed no second bidding, and before the Giddy Goats could collect their scattered wits, they were borne to the study carpet by the Fistical Four and Putty Grace.

"Yowp!" howled the great Adol-

fistical Four. "I can hardly breathe with all this smoke in the room!"

The window was duly opened.

"What shall we do with these rotters?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell, who was sitting on Howard's chest.

"Half a dozen with the stump will meet the case," said Jimmy Silver.

"Right-ho!"

"We'll start with Tubby. He deserves a lesson the most!"

"L-look here, Silver, I'm not going to be stumped—I tell you I—ow-yow-yowp!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Jimmy Silver was busy with the stump. He did not stop to hear Muffin's objections.

"Yow-grouh-ow!" yelled the fat Classical.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Next, please!" said the leader of the Fistical Four as he released Tubby Muffin from his position across the table.

Adolphus Smythe was the next, and he underwent a similar punishment.

"You'll pay for this, Silver—ow-yow!" he yelled.

Whack, whack, whack!

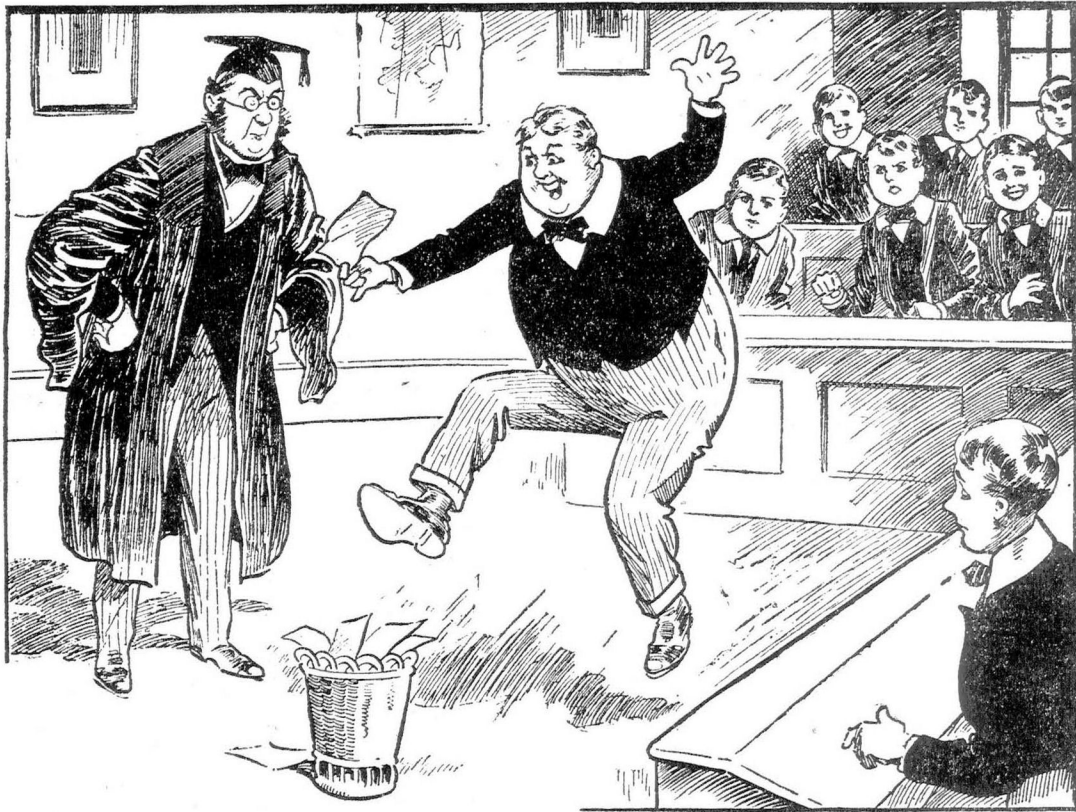
"Now Howard!"

Arthur Edward Lovell dragged Howard to his feet, and led him, struggling, to the table.

"Look here, I'm not going to—"

"Your mistake, you are!" growled Jimmy Silver.

Whack, whack, whack!



TUBBY'S GOOD NEWS! "Hurrah, I've won, you chaps!" exclaimed Muffin, brandishing the telegram. And he commenced to dance a jig in the exuberance of his spirits. Mr. Bootles gasped in astonishment, and the Fourth followed suit. "Great Scott!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Read it out to them, sir!" yelled the fat junior, his face crimson with excitement.

"Smythe & Co. seem to be very pally with the fat little beast," said Newcome. "I saw them arm in arm just now. Two days ago the great Adolphus wouldn't have been seen within a hundred yards of him."

"He's going the pace, too, the silly idiot!" exclaimed Raby.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"That's what's worrying me," he said. "The silly ass smokes and plays cards for money. He doesn't know any better!"

"If he's like this before that blessed cheque for thirty thousand pounds arrives, what's he going to be like after? The place won't hold him!" said Newcome.

"It won't," chimed in Arthur Edward Lovell. "The silly chump will be spotted by a master or prefect and fired!"

"Let's go along and talk to him," suggested Jimmy Silver.

"Fat lot of good that will do!" grunted Lovell.

"Well, it's up to us to warn him," said the leader of the Fistical Four. "Come on, I expect we shall find him in Smythe's study."

And the four juniors left the end study to remonstrate with Muffin.

On the way they ran into Putty Grace, who shared Study No. 2 with Higgs, Jones minor, and Tubby Muffin.

"Seen our porpoise?" asked Putty Grace.

phus, as his stately nose was rubbed in the fender.

"Yow-ow!" chorussed Howard, Tracy, and Topham.

"Hallo, what's the giddy rumpus?" It was the voice of Kit Erroll, who halted in the doorway in astonishment.

"Lend a hand. We're teaching these cads a lesson!" sang out Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Right-ho! Morny!"

"Coming, Kit!"

And a moment later Valentine Mornington joined his chum. He asked no questions, but closed the study door as he entered, and turned the key in the lock.

Jimmy Silver seized hold of Tubby Muffin by the ear, and persuaded him to give up his cigarette.

"Yow-ow—leggo, you beast!"

"Chuck it in the fire!" said Jimmy Silver grimly.

Tubby did as he was bid.

The box of cigarettes on the table followed it, and were soon a heap of ashes. And Mornington collected the cards, and put those on the fire also.

The merry nuts viewed these proceedings with feelings too deep for words. But they could do nothing to help themselves. Each of them was held down by one of Jimmy Silver's party and none too gently at that.

"Now open the window, Morny, old chap," said the leader of the

And Howard was released from his uncomfortable position after he had received his dose of the stump.

Each of the nuts were treated in turn with the same prescription—six with the stump, and they looked a sorry lot of nuts when Jimmy Silver desisted.

"I think that will teach you a lesson," remarked the leader of the Fistical Four.

"You rotters!" yelled Adolphus Smythe who was smarting from the effects of the stumping.

"Ow! Yow! Beasts!" muttered Tubby Muffin.

"You're coming along with me, my fat pippin," said Putty Grace. "Tea's nearly ready, and I want you to cook the herrings."

"I'm not going to cook your mouldy herrings!" roared Muffin indignantly. "I'm having tea with Smythe—ain't I, Smythe?"

"Yow-ow!" moaned Smythe.

"A fellow in my position doesn't fag for the likes of you," said Tubby loftily.

"That's where you make a little mistake, my son," answered Putty Grace. "You've always cooked them before this blessed lottery business happened, and I don't see why you shouldn't now. We only have you in to tea because you can cook pretty decent. You never pay your whack."

Reginald Muffin sniffed.

"I sha'n't trouble you with my

presence at tea any more," he said. "I'm going to tea with my pals."

Putty Grace did not waste any more time in arguing. He gripped the fat Classical by the back of the collar, and propelled him towards the door.

"I tell you I'm not going to cook your rotten herrings!" wailed the hapless Tubby.

But when the Fistical Four looked in at Study No. 2, a few minutes later, it was to see a fat and perspiring figure before the fire cooking herrings, which went to prove that Putty Grace had succeeded in convincing Tubby Muffin that his statement was wrong.

**The 5th Chapter.
Pankley's Little Joke.**

"I'm going down to Coombe to see about that new football," said Jimmy Silver to his chums in the end study the next day.

"We'll cut down on our bikes, then," said Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Good egg!"

And the Fistical Four made their way over to the bike-shed.

"Hallo! Someone's been using my bicycle!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "I only had it cleaned the other day."

His fifteen-guinea bicycle was looking decidedly grubby. It looked as if it had been ridden a few miles over a ploughed field.

"I expect Muffin's been borrowing it," said Newcome.

"I'll slaughter him if he has!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver grimly.

Little did he know that Newcome's guess was near the mark. Tubby Muffin had visited Mr. Dalkney in Coombe, and had brought the bike back to Rookwood after dusk. No one had spotted him take it out or bring it back, and as Jimmy Silver had not missed it, Muffin had decided to keep mum. Since he had had time to reflect over his actions, it had occurred to him that the leader of the Fistical Four would not look upon them in the same light that he did. It didn't need very much thought to convince him of that.

The Fistical Four mounted their bikes and rode away to the sports' shop in Coombe.

The new football was secured, and they were about to return to Rookwood, when a news poster caught Jimmy Silver's eye. It ran:

**"GREAT LOTTERY SWINDLE!
PROMOTER
EMBEZZLES FUNDS AND
ABSCONDS."**

"Hallo! I wonder if that's anything to do with the lottery Muffin's supposed to have won?" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"Get a paper," suggested Lovell.

And the leader of the Fistical Four entered the newsagent's and purchased a London paper. It contained a detailed account of a lottery swindle that was supposed to have been drawn in Switzerland, and the juniors scanned its columns eagerly.

"There's the Johnny's name!" exclaimed Lovell excitedly. "Hookit! That's the fellow who sent Tubby his ticket!"

"And the rotter's bunked with the cash!" said Raby.

"Oh my hat!"

"Poor old Tubby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Muffin will be pleased," grinned Lovell. "I fancy Smythe won't be so pally when he knows, though."

"Ha, ha! No."

"But who sent Tubby the telegram that came from Switzerland?" said Jimmy Silver.

"The Hookit merchant," grinned Raby.

"But why should a chap like Hookit take the trouble to wire Muffin if he knew there wouldn't be any first prize? Says in the paper that Hookit's bunked, doesn't it?"

"Oh, he's acted up to his name, and hooked it, right enough!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "But I can't throw any light upon the telegram. If I were a swindling lottery promoter, I shouldn't take the trouble of sending out wires."

"Oh, give it up!"

"Hallo, you chaps!"

The Fistical Four started as that voice fell on their ears, but a glance revealed to them Cecil Pankley & Co. of Bagshot. The rival trio were grinning. Something was amusing them very much.

"What's the joke?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Nothing much. Did Muffin get anything in that lottery he entered for?" asked Cecil Pankley.

"How did you know anything about it?" asked Jimmy Silver suspiciously.



TUBBY'S GOLDEN DREAM!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Oh, we met him in the post-office, and he told us all about it!" replied the leader of the Bagshot juniors. "He seemed to think he was a certain winner."

"Well, he received a telegram to the effect that he had drawn the winning number," said the leader of the Fistical Four.

"Yes, we know!" grinned Pankley.

"What?"

"You see, I arranged for him to receive that telegram," explained Pankley coolly.

"You did?"

"Gammon!"

"It's a fact!" chuckled Pankley. "I have a cousin staying at Geneva—"

"Geneva! That's where the telegram came from," broke in Lovell.

"Exactly. When Muffin had told me the particulars about this blessed lottery, I thought it would be a grand stunt to get my cousin to wire him a first prize. I'm glad to see it worked all right!" chuckled Pankley. "I got him to sign it Cookit, because we did cook it—see?"

"Cheeky bounder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Poole and Putter.

Jimmy Silver's eyes gleamed.

"Just like your cheek, Pankley! But we are going to convince you that it isn't safe to jape Rookwood chaps," he said. "Collar 'em!"

The Bagshot juniors backed away hastily, but the Fistical Four were on them in a twinkling, and the three japers went down in a heap, with Lovell, Silver, Raby, and Newcome astride them.

"Chuck it, you asses!" roared Pankley.

"Take your boot off my nose!" howled Poole, as Lovell's foot scraped against his nasal organ.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Rookwood juniors were laugh-

ing now. As expressed by Lovell it was a case of he who laughs last laughs best.

"Say you're sorry for being naughty," said Jimmy Silver gravely, "and promise to be good in the future; then we'll let you go!"

"Don't be an ass!" roared Pankley, struggling to free himself. "I'll slaughter you!"

"Naughty, naughty!" said Lovell, wagging an admonishing finger at the leader of the Bagshot juniors.

"Say you're sorry, Putter," said Newcome.

"Rats! I mean—Ow! Yowp!" howled Putter, as Newcome rubbed his nose in the gravel. "Leggo! I'm s-sorry, you rotter!"

"That's a good boy!"

And Newcome stopped in his kind work of rubbing the Bagshot junior's nose in the gravel.

"Rescue, Bagshot! Bagshot!" yelled Cecil Pankley.

And he struggled fiercely, but Jimmy Silver's and Raby's combined weight was too much for him.

"Bagshot! Bagshot! Rescue!"

There came an answering call:

"Coming! Hang on!"

And round the corner of the street came running four or five juniors wearing the Bagshot colours.

Jimmy Silver looked up hastily. With the rescue party the Rookwood fellows would be outnumbered by two to one. But the leader of the Fistical Four swiftly decided that discretion was the better part of valour.

"Hop it, you chaps!" he said briefly.

The "chaps" needed no second bidding. Relinquishing their grasp of the Bagshot juniors as though they had suddenly become red-hot, they bolted for their bikes, and before Pankley & Co. could scramble to their feet, were mounted and beginning to pedal away in the direction of Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver turned in his saddle, and kissed his hand to the leader of the Bagshot Bounders.

"Au revoir, Panky!"

Cecil Pankley shook his fist after the retreating figures of the Rookwood juniors. It was hopeless, he knew, to try and catch them, and he inwardly determined to settle up that little score some future date when a

more favourable opportunity presented itself.

The Rookwood juniors slowed down when they saw that Pankley & Co. did not intend to follow them.

"Fancy old Pankley having the nerve to carry out that telegram wheeze!" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"What will Muffin think of it?" mused Lovell.

"He'll die of shock!" grinned Raby. "I should think he's borrowed about a hundred pounds out of his thirty thousand already, what with his I O U's and his loans."

"I fancy it will be Smythe & Co. who will get the shock!" chuckled Newcome.

"Hear, hear!"

And the Fistical Four rode back to the gates in silence.

The 6th Chapter. Back to Earth!

"Your deal, Smythe, old chap!"

The high-pitched voice of Tubby Muffin reached the ears of the Fistical Four as they halted outside Adolphus Smythe's study.

"He's at it again!" whispered Lovell.

"This is where we write finis to Tubby's short life as a roaring blade!" muttered Jimmy Silver grimly.

And he accompanied his words by pushing open the door of the study.

The nuts looked up in surprise at this sudden interruption, and their faces showed disapproval.

But that did not deter Jimmy Silver.

"I've got something to say to you chaps," he said.

"Don't trouble, dear boy!" said the great Adolphus. "Save your breath!"

Arthur Edward Lovell closed the door and put his back to it, a proceeding that dismayed the nuts.

"I've just been down to Coombe," went on Jimmy Silver, "and I bought a London paper which will interest you all. It concerns Tubby Muffin's thirty thousand pounds!"

The nuts were all attention.

"Hand it over, Silver!" said Muffin eagerly.

The leader of the Fistical Four withdrew a paper from his pocket and gave it to the fat Classical.

There was silence in the study for two minutes or so as the nuts perused the column indicated by Jimmy Silver.

"The fraud!"

Adolphus Smythe was the first to break the silence, but Tubby Muffin was a close second.

"G-god heavens!" he stuttered.

"Swindled!"

The faces of the nuts wore puzzled expressions as they hastily perused

the column giving full details of the great lottery swindle.

"The fat rotter hasn't won a fortune after all!" howled Adolphus Smythe. "He's taken us in!"

"B-but the telegram!" stuttered Tubby Muffin, who saw his castle tumbling down like a pack of cards.

"Pankley was responsible for that," said Jimmy Silver.

"P-P-Pankley!"

"Yes. He got a cousin of his that lives in Switzerland to send you that telegram!" explained Jimmy Silver.

"M-mum-my hat!"

The fat Classical was almost overcome. He wasn't the winner of thirty thousand pounds after all! It knocked him all of a heap.

Adolphus Smythe & Co. favoured him with savage expressions. It was only the presence of the Fistical Four that held their feelings in check. They would have dearly liked to fall upon Reginald Muffin and strew the study carpet with his bones, so to speak.

"Oh dear!" gasped out the fat Classical helplessly.

"What about our I O U's?" roared Howard. "The fat rotter has had five pounds out of me!"

"And a tenner from me!" added Smythe fiercely.

"Eight pounds of mine!" exclaimed Tracy.

"It serves you jolly well right!" broke in the leader of the Fistical Four. "You intended to fleece him in the first place!"

Adolphus Smythe & Co. had nothing to say to that. It was true.

"I'll collect those I O U's," said the junior captain grimly.

"Eh?"

"No fear!"

"I want my money!"

The Giddy Goats did not seem to approve of Jimmy Silver's high-handed methods.

"Turn the key in the lock, Lovell!" Arthur Edward Lovell hastened to obey.

"I'll give you two seconds to hand over those I O U's," remarked the leader of the Fistical Four, rolling back his cuffs.

"But the fat rotter has had my money!" howled Smythe. "He's swindled us!"

"One second!" said Jimmy Silver unheedingly.

"I'm going to Bootles!" declared Howard. "I'm not going to be done out of five pounds!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Two seconds—time's up! Are you going to hand them over?" asked the junior captain.

"No!" roared the nuts in unison.

"Well, I shall have to point out to you that you're wrong. Like that!"

And Adolphus Smythe reeled back

from a straight left that caught him on the tip of his aristocratic nose.

"Yowp-ow-yow!"

"Pile in!" roared Jimmy Silver.

Lovell, Raby, and Newcome needed no second bidding. They each selected one of the nuts for their target, and Howard, Tracy, and Topham met the same fate as their aristocratic leader.

It was not long before the Fistical Four finally convinced the nuts that their I O U's had to be handed over.

They lay groaning on the carpet, and no one ventured to make any remark when Jimmy Silver collected those scraps of paper and placed them in the fire, where they were speedily reduced to ashes. Jimmy's way of convincing was drastic but effective.

And when the Fistical Four left the study, taking with them the now impetuous Muffin, they left behind them a chorus of groans.

The news soon spread that Tubby Muffin was no longer the possessor of thirty thousand pounds, and most of the juniors who had cultivated his friendship cut him dead.

When the fat Classical rolled into Adolphus Smythe's study some days later he was thrown out. Smythe & Co. were not exactly yearning for his society. Muffin with only twopenny in his pocket was quite a different Muffin from the one they had welcomed with thirty thousand pounds, and the nuts took no pains to disguise the fact.

And it was a long time before Rookwood ceased to discuss Tubby Muffin's Thirty Thousand Pounds!

THE END.

DON'T MISS!

Next Monday's Long Complete Story

— OF —

ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

entitled:

'THE WHIP HAND!'

—By—

OWEN CONQUEST.

—O:O—

Order your copy of next Monday's BOY'S FRIEND TO-DAY!



THIS WEEK: "DOES FOOTBALLING PAY?"

A Chatty Article dealing with the Remunerative Side of Football, By S. HARDY, The Famous Aston Villa and International Goalkeeper.

Just now there is an almost frantic search by the big football clubs for young and promising players. This is well-nigh inevitable, as the result of the new building-up process which had to be undertaken after four years of war and very little football.

This search for coming talent means, of course, that clubs are offering to sign on practically any player who shows any sort of exceptional aptitude for the game. In fact, it is scarcely going too far to say that of all times these are the days when the young player who wants to get ahead in football can do so.

Under such circumstances, the question naturally arises as to whether it pays to be a footballer, and perhaps if I tell just what being a first-class professional means it may help some young players to make up their minds as to whether it is worth while.

At the present moment the maximum amount which any footballer is allowed to receive is £390 a year. In order to qualify for this maximum he must have spent some years with his present club. The £10 a week which he is paid for the thirty-nine weeks of the playing season cannot be offered to the young player.

Still, we will leave it at the higher sum, just to show the extreme possibilities, and to paint the profession in its rosiest light. There are people, of course, who argue that the maximum wage idea for the professional footballer should be swept away, leaving each club to pay each man according to its purse and his individual merits. With that argument we are not much concerned here. The maximum wage is the rule, and it is rules only which can be of use in dealing with the pay possibilities for the player.

Of course, £10 a week for the thirty-nine weeks of the playing and training season is not an amount to be sneezed at. On the other hand, what must not be overlooked in these times is the all-important fact that the pound has not the value which a pound had in the old days.

Really, it is something less than ten shillings, and as the professional could be paid over £5 per week all the year round before the war, it is naturally argued that he is really worse off than he used to be.

However, the present payment to the leading players is recognised as temporary, and at the moment the Players' Union is endeavouring to get the maximum raised, so that the foot-

baller's salary shall be nearer a level which will enable him to meet the present high cost of everything.

Then there are ways in which the professional footballer may add to his income. For instance, it is allowable to pay a bonus for success in Cup-ties, and there is also consolation for real success in the League games. But these extras, of course, cannot be relied upon, and do not really amount to much in the career of the average player.

Keeping to the possibilities in the way of additions to income, there is also a chance for the good player who stays with one club to get a benefit at the end of five years, and if he happens to be with a more or less wealthy organisation, this benefit may bring him a lump sum of £500, or even a bit more. Alternatively, if the player does not stay with one club, but gets transferred, it is allowable for him to be given a share of his transfer fee.

That little lot sums up the monetary considerations about which the young player who turns professional should know and think before he takes the step. So that you will be able to weigh up the pros and cons and decide accordingly.

Let us now have a look at the other side of the scale. In the first place it is obvious that the calling of a professional footballer is more or less of a lottery. No man who goes in for it can be sure that he will be a real success, although, of course, if he is doing particularly well in his present football sphere, and has the necessary ambition, he will probably "get on."

Getting on in football, however, is not always just a mere question of the will to come out on top. The risk of accident has to be taken into consideration, and at the very best a footballer cannot hope to stay in the front rank for a great number of years.

Incidentally, this is the strongest

argument in favour of the star player getting more money when he is actually at the top of his game. He can't expect to stay there anything like the same number of years that people stay at the top in other professions.

In this connection I myself have been particularly lucky, for it is quite

S. HARDY,



Who has written the accompanying Footer Article specially for the BOYS' FRIEND.

a long time now since I became a footballer with a first-class club. And people point to the experience of a man like Meredith as showing that a player is not necessarily too old for first-class matches even at forty.

Such a case as Meredith's is, however, little more than the exception which proves the rule, and the only safe guide on this question of how long a footballer is likely to remain in the first class is the guide of averages. And this, as you do not need to be told, is much less than twenty years. In fact, I don't

think it is going too far to say that the average life of a footballer in the first class is less than half twenty years. One kick may finish a player's career just when he seems to be settling down to become a real champion. That is the big risk which the professional footballer runs.

Summing up, then, my advice to the young player who is given an opportunity of signing on as a professional for a first-class team is to think the matter over carefully. And as the result of my experience I should certainly not advise any young player to give up a job with prospects of advancement for the sake of doing nothing but playing football for a living.

That, mind you, is not the same as saying don't take up football. If you imagine you will make good, and other people imagine it, too, then the life has many pleasures and many compensations, as well as many risks.

In these days, however, it is being more and more generally recognised that it is not necessary for the first-class footballer to spend all his week doing nothing but training. Most clubs now allow, and even encourage, their players to work at some congenial task during the week. And I should advise the young player to hang on to his job.

There is real wisdom in this advice from several points of view. In the first place, if the young professional doesn't make good in football he has not thrown up everything, and still has his job. If he meets with an accident at the outset of his career, he also has something to fall back upon, and, finally, the professional with a job during the week has two sources of pay.

S Hardy



The SCHEME THAT FAILED!

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

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

The Rivals.

"You pesky heathen!" "You fattee lascal!" "Go it!" sang out Bob Lawless cheerily. "Pitch into him, Chunky! Mop him up, Yen Chin! I guess you both want a hiding." "Ha, ha, ha!" There was quite an excited scene in the playground at Cedar Creek. Outside the porch of the lumber schoolhouse, a crowd of grinning fellows surrounded Chunky Todgers and Yen Chin. Chunky Todgers was shaking a fat and somewhat grubby fist at the little Chinese, and Yen Chin had his thumb to his little nose, and his yellow fingers extended, in a gesture that was disrespectful in the extreme, and implied the profoundest contempt for Chunky.

Both Chunky Todgers and the Chinese were peaceable fellows as a rule, but they were very warlike now. Chunky's fat face was almost crimson with wrath and indignation.

"You got-darned, pesky, slabsided yellow heathen!" he exclaimed, as he shook his fat fist. "I guess I've a jolly good mind to give you the lambasting of your life."

"No can!" said Yen Chin scornfully. "Chunkee velly great coward!"

"By gum! I-I guess—" "Chunkee tellee whoppee!" said Yen Chin. "Chunkee velly bad boy. Oh, yes! Me, Yen Chin, velly good boy; always tellee tluth! Yah!"

Chunky Todgers gasped with wrath. "I guess I'm going to smash him!" he exclaimed. "You fellows can pick up what's left of him when I'm through."

"Go it!" grinned Frank Richards. Chunky Todgers "went it."

He made a sudden rush at the Chinese, his fat fists lashing out, and Yen Chin jumped back. But he could not escape; the wrathful Chunky was fairly upon him, and Yen Chin yelled as he caught a drive with his nose. The next moment he was clutching Todgers, and they were struggling.

There was a roar of encouragement from the Cedar Creek fellows. "Go it, Chunky!" "Pile in, Chink!" "Give him socks!"

It was a terrific struggle. There was not much hitting, for each of the combatants seemed rather nervous about exasperating the other by real punching. But they struggled, and trampled, and shouted, and gasped for breath, in terrific style, and they made enough noise for a battle-royal.

There was a step in the porch, and Miss Meadows, the headmistress of Cedar Creek, looked out with a frowning brow. Miss Meadows had heard the disturbance from within, as she could scarcely fail to do, and as perhaps both the combatants were well aware.

"Boys! Todgers! Yen Chin! Cease this instantly!" she exclaimed. "Oh!" gasped Chunky. "Yes, ma'am!"

"Yes, Missy Meadee!" murmured Yen Chin. The combatants separated at once. No harm had been done, though both looked very breathless and crimson and ferocious.

Miss Meadows eyed them sternly. "Now, what does this mean?" she demanded.

"I-I guess I was going to smash up that lying heathen, ma'am!" said Chunky Todgers truculently.

"Me lickee fattee Chunkee," murmured Yen Chin. "You cheeky heathen—" "You fattee lascal!"

"Silence! What are you quarrelling about?" "I guess we weren't exactly quarrelling, ma'am," said Chunky Todgers. "I was bound to lick the Chink for

telling whoppers, ma'am. He makes out that he was the chap who piled in to rescue Mr. Peckover from a rustler the other day, and it was me all the time."

"Chunkee tellee whoppee! Me!" said Yen Chin.

"Pair of pesky fabricators!" growled Bob Lawless. "It wasn't either of you, as you jolly well know."

Miss Meadows glanced at Bob. The dispute between Chunky Todgers and Yen Chin was a peculiar one, and it worried the Cedar Creek mistress a little.

Some person unknown, presumably a Cedar Creek boy, had saved Mr. Peckover, the headmaster of Hillcrest School, from the attack of a footpad, and Mr. Peckover had offered a reward of fifty dollars to the unknown hero.

Whether it was Chunky Todgers or Yen Chin who had done the gallant

deed was a puzzle. Both claimed the distinction, and certainly both could not have performed the deed. The general opinion at Cedar Creek was that neither had performed it, and that the brave rescuer was still unknown.

"Lawless!" rapped out Miss Meadows. "Do you know anything about this affair?"

Bob Lawless coloured. "If you do, it is your duty to tell me," said Miss Meadows. "One of these boys is telling a falsehood. Only one of them can have rendered assistance to Mr. Peckover, and both claim to have done so. Do you know which of them it was, Lawless, or whether it was either of them?"

"I-I—" stammered Bob, fervently wishing that he had not made the remark which had drawn the school-mistress' attention to him.

For Bob Lawless certainly knew the facts, being quite well aware that the rescuer in question was his chum, Frank Richards, who was keeping the matter dark for good reasons.

"Well, Lawless?" "I-I—" mumbled Bob. "Lawless was detained at the time, Miss Meadows," said Vere Beauclerc, coming to the rescue of the rancher's son. "You remember—"

Miss Meadows nodded. "Yes, that is so, Beauclerc. I remember that you and Lawless and Richards were detained in the school-room at the time the affair happened at Hillcrest. You cannot know anything about the matter, Lawless."

"I-I guess—" stammered Bob. His voice trailed off.

Certainly he could not tell Miss Meadows that his chum had left the school-room by the window on that occasion; it was very necessary to keep from her knowledge the fact that Frank Richards had broken detention.

"You have no right to speak as you did, Lawless," said Miss Meadows severely. "One of these two boys is making a just claim."

"I-I guess not—they're both lying, I guess!" mumbled Bob.

"You should not express such an

me ill to hear those two young rogues rolling out whoppers at that rate."

Bob Lawless shook his head. "Can't be done, old scout!" he said. "If Miss Meadows found out that you vamoosed during detention, there would be scalp-raising! Can't be helped! Let 'em rip!"

"Anyway, so long as there are two claimants, they can't bag the fifty dollars' reward," said Vere Beauclerc, laughing. "If either of them did, it would be more serious."

"I think I should have to speak then," said Frank. "I don't want to. It would be rotten to tell Miss Meadows that I went over to Hillcrest to see Dicky Bird, after she'd forbidden us to go there. I wish I hadn't gone now. But it's rather too late to think about that. But if I hear Chunky bragging much more about what he hasn't done, I shall kick him!"

Perhaps it was as well for Chunky that he remained out of reach of Frank Richards' boot till the bell rang for lessons.

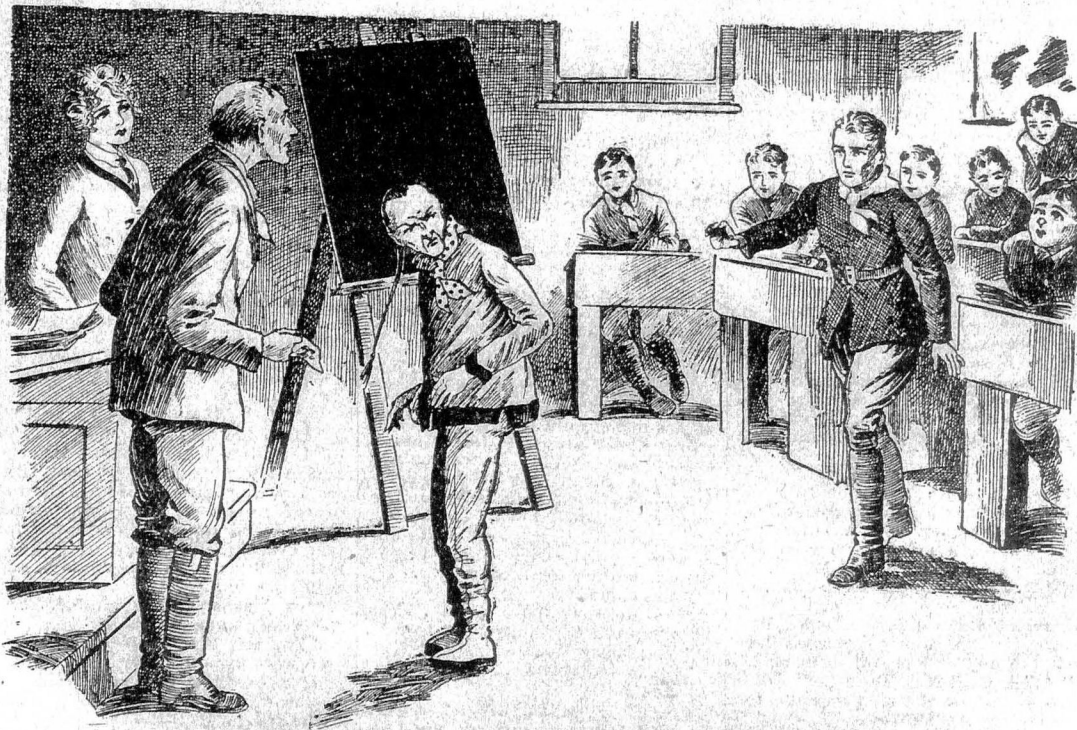
The 2nd Chapter. Witnesses Wanted!

Chunky Todgers wore a thoughtful expression at dinner, at the lumber school that day.

The fat youth of Cedar Creek was doing some deep thinking.

His reflections did not interfere with his gastronomic performances; he was as redoubtable a trencherman as ever. But his fat mind was working almost as actively as his plump jaws.

The real identity of Mr. Peckover's rescuer being unknown, Chunky had cheerfully made his claim to the distinction; but the rival claim of Yen Chin had quite thrown his little scheme out of gear. He did not believe for a moment that Yen Chin



A DISPUTED CLAIM! "Ahem! I have great pleasure, Yen Chin, in presenting you with this fifty dollar bill, as a reward for your courage," said Mr. Peckover. "Yen Chin's yellow fingers were extended to take the bill, but there came a sudden interruption. 'Stop!' exclaimed Frank Richards, starting from his seat. 'Yen Chin is not entitled to it!'"

opinion without proof! I am surprised at you, Lawless!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob. And he was silent.

He had proof enough, but he could not produce it, and there was nothing to do but to hold his peace.

Miss Meadows' glance turned back to the two rival claimants.

"Todgers! Yen Chin! I forbid you to quarrel again about this matter," she said sternly. "I shall ascertain the truth later, and then the boy who is making a false claim will be punished. If you quarrel again, I shall cane again."

Miss Meadows turned back into the house.

"You pesky heathen!" growled Chunky Todgers, when the Canadian school-mistress was gone. "If Miss Meadows hadn't showed up, I'd have made shavings of you."

"Me lickee fattee Chunkee, if Miss Meadee no come!" retorted Yen Chin.

Chunky Todgers bestowed a glare of scorn upon his rival, and rolled away. The crowd broke up, chuckling. Frank Richards & Co. walked away together. Frank's brow knitted in a thoughtful frown.

"I've a jolly good mind to let the secret out!" he growled. "It makes

was the real rescuer; any more than Yen Chin believed that Chunky was. Who the unknown person might be was a mystery; Todgers did not care very much, so long as the person did not turn up to claim the reward.

But the reward and the glory could not be bagged by either claimant as the matter stood, and it was necessary for something to be done to prove Chunky's claim; and that was the important matter the fat youth was now reflecting upon. He required proof of his gallant deed; and it really was a knotty problem, considering that he had not performed the deed at all. But Chunky was a youth blessed with a fertile imagination, and by that time he almost believed in his own story.

He was still looking thoughtful when the Cedar Creek fellows came out into the playground after dinner; but there was an expression of satisfaction on his fat visage, which seemed to indicate that he had come to a useful decision.

He joined Frank Richards & Co. in the playground, heedless of the rather grim looks they gave him.

"Hold on a minute, you fellows," said Chunky. "I guess I've got something to say to you."

"Oh, get!" snapped Bob Lawless.

"Look here, Bob—" "Don't roll out your crammers to us!" said Frank Richards crossly.

"We know what they are." "If you doubt my word, Richards, I—" "Cheese it!"

"I suppose this is jealousy—" "Jealousy!" ejaculated Frank.

"Yep! You don't like another fellow to get any credit," said Chunky Todgers, shaking his head. "I'm rather surprised to see this in you, Richards. I'm rather shocked!"

"Oh, my hat!" "I don't brag of what I've done. I just did it—just as any really plucky fellow would have done. I couldn't stand by and see old Peckover knocked on the head by a rustler, could I?"

"You—you—" "I rushed to his help!" said Todgers. "Any fellow would have done it—any fellow with my pluck, I mean."

"You didn't!" roared Frank Richards wrathfully. "You weren't within a mile of the place!"

"How do you know?" demanded Chunky. "You were detained here at the time."

"Well, I do know, you fat rascal!" "You don't! The fact is, every word I've said is the frozen truth," said Todgers impressively. "Perhaps I've rather understated it, being a modest chap. But to come to business; that awful lying heathen, Yen Chin, claims that he worked the raffle—"

He's as big an Ananias as you are!" said Beauclerc.

"He's lying," said Chunky. "But you see, his rotten whoppers are keeping me out of my rights!"

"Your rights!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Oh gum!"

"Yep, my rights," said Chunky Todgers firmly. "Miss Meadows and Mr. Peckover can't make up their minds which of us is the galoot. Of course, they ought to see that that yellow heathen is lying; and Miss Meadows ought to know what an honourable chap I am. But she doesn't."

"No; I guess she doesn't!" stammered Bob.

"So what I want is, some proof," continued Chunky. "I'm asking you fellows, as my old friends, to help me out."

"Help you out?" repeated Frank. "Sure! You see, suppose I'd told you fellows about the affair immediately after it happened—"

"Eh?" "Suppose I met you as you left Cedar Creek that evening, after being detained—"

"But you didn't!" "Never mind that; suppose I did!" said Chunky Todgers, blinking at the astounded trio. "Suppose I met you, and told you how I'd rescued old Peckover, just after it happened. Then you could bear witness, couldn't you?"

"What?" "Well, I didn't exactly meet you and tell you, I know; but that's only a trifle. You can say I did."

"S-s-s-say you did?" "That's it! You see, it will be a slight variation of the truth—but only for the sake of getting the real truth established. I guess that would be justifiable."

"My hat!" "Will you do it?" asked Chunky. "Miss Meadows would believe you at once, and Peckover would hand over the reward to me. I'm prepared to hand you fellows five dollars each out of it. I guess that's a good offer."

"Five dollars each, for telling lies for you?" stammered Frank. Todgers gave a cough.

"Not exactly lies," he said. "Your evidence will establish the truth. And what more do you want?"

"The truth!" said Frank. "The truth that you rescued Mr. Peckover from the footpad?"

"Correct!" "But you didn't do anything of the kind!" shrieked Frank.

"Oh, yes, I did! You don't know anything about what happened at Hillcrest, as you were detained in school here at the time."

"You fat idiot!" Frank Richards grasped Todgers by the shoulder, and shook him. "Listen to me—"

"Ow!" "I was at Hillcrest that time, and know that you weren't there," said Frank angrily. "I cleared by the school-room window, to go over to Hillcrest and see Bird. See? It was I who helped Mr. Peckover. Understand?"

Chunky Todgers' jaw dropped. He blinked quite dazedly at Frank Richards for some moments.

"You!" he ejaculated at last. "Yes."

"You got out of the school-room!

Oh crumbs! It—it was you all the time!" howled Chunky. "Why didn't you own up then, and bag the fifty dollars?"

"I don't want Peckover's dollars!"

"Gammon!"

"And I don't want Miss Meadows to know I was at Hillcrest, as she had ordered us not to go there, on account of the rows with the fellows."

"Oh," said Chunky, "I—I see! That's why you kept it dark. I'd have chanced a licking to bag fifty dollars."

"Rats!"

"So—so it was you!" said Todgers. "You rotter, you knew all the time it wasn't me, then! But I say, Richards, old fellow, it doesn't make any difference."

"What?"

"You can't claim the reward, as you don't want Miss Meadows to find out that you went to Hillcrest that night. Well, I'll claim it for you," said Chunky Todgers eagerly. "I'll go halves! See! You three fellows bear witness that it was I who rescued old Peckover, and I'll stand you half the reward—Yarooooop!"

Chunky Todgers was not able to proceed further with his generous offer.

The exasperated chums collared him, and the next moment the fat youth was being rolled in the snow.

"Yow-ow-woooooop!" roared Chunky, as he rolled.

He sat up in the snow as Frank Richards & Co. walked away at last, gasping.

"Ow! Yah! You pesky galoots! You gol-darned mugwumps! Ooop!"

It was a good five minutes before Chunky Todgers recovered breath sufficiently to crawl away. And when he had recovered, Chunky did some more thinking. Now that he knew the facts of the case, it might have been supposed that Chunky would discreetly drop his claim. But nothing was further from his thoughts.

Frank Richards & Co. were bound to silence, by the circumstances of the case; if Frank had not spoken to claim the reward, it was certain to Chunky that he would not speak for any other reason. So the fat youth felt safe in sticking to his claim. And his old friends having failed him, in the role of witnesses to the truth, another little scheme came into Chunky's fat mind—which promised better success. And that little scheme he proceeded to carry out without loss of time.

The 3rd Chapter.
Two of a Kind!

"Yen Chin, old chap!"

Yen Chin jumped.

The little Chinese had looked very weary as he found Chunky Todgers bearing down upon him in the playground; he expected hostilities. But Chunky's friendly and affectionate mode of address showed that hostilities were not intended.

"Fat lascal!" was Yen Chin's reply.

"Nothing for us to quarrel about, old man," said Chunky Todgers amicably. "Look here, you're claiming old Peckover's fifty-dollar bill—"

"Me claimee."

"You didn't help old Peckover, though," said Chunky. "Look here, I've found out who did!"

Yen Chin's almond eyes opened wide.

"Me!" he said.

"Rot! It was another chap—never mind who. But he isn't going to say. He's afraid of being licked for going over to Hillcrest after Miss Meadows ordered him to keep away. See?"

"No savvy!"

"My idea is, to make a trade," said Chunky Todgers. "Never mind who the real chap is—he's going to hold his tongue, so that's all right. Now, I want you to own up to the truth."

"Lill' Chinese always tellee thuth," said Yen Chin blandly. "Me lesceue ole Peckovee—oh, yes!"

Chunky Todgers breathed hard.

"You didn't, you pesky heathen!"

"Oh, yes, all collect!"

"You lying Chin!"

"Chunkee fattee lascal!"

Chunky Todgers controlled his wrath.

"Look here, Yen Chin, make it a trade. You own up that you weren't there, and I bag the fifty dollars. I'll go halves with you—honest Injun! See?"

"No see!"

"If we both keep on, neither of us will get old Peckover's reward," urged Chunky. "Better have halves. Besides, he's a mean old galoot, and he may change his mind. I was surprised at his offering a reward at all. When he's had time to think it over, he may decide to keep the

dollars in his own trousers pocket. Better strike the iron while it's hot. You see that?"

Yen Chin nodded.

"Me see!" he admitted.

"Well, you go to Miss Meadows, and own up that I was the party, and I'll whack out the reward with you, fair and square!"

Yen Chin reflected.

He shook his head at last, however.

"Perhaps Missy Meadee whackee pool lill' Chinese," he said. "No goey to Missy Meadee. Chunkee goey!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Chunkee goey Missy Meadee, ownee up to thuth," said Yen Chin blandly. "You tellee Missy that me lesceue ole Peckovee, and me baggee fitee dollee. Me goey halves, allee samee Chunkee. What you tinkee?"

Chunky Todgers expostulated in vain.

Yen Chin evidently believed that what was sauce for the goose might be sauce for the gander. He was prepared to carry out Chunky's precious scheme the other way round.

Todgers' expostulations did not move him; he listened with a bland smile and an occasional shake of the head, till Chunky was tired.

"You pesky heathen!" said Chunky, at last. "It was my stunt, and you ought to play up."

"Chunkee playee up."

"Mind, if you bag the dollars, it's halves," said Chunky.

"Collect!"

"Then it's a cinch!" said Todgers at last.

Yen Chin's almond eyes glimmered. "You goey Missy Meadee, tellee thuth," he said.

"Yes."

Chunky Todgers started for the lumber school.

As Yen Chin was not to be persuaded, Chunky had to take the burden of the confession upon himself or abandon his scheme—which was not to be thought of. It was only too probable that, if there was much more delay in claiming the reward, there would be no reward to claim. Mr. Peckover had offered that reward in the first flush of gratitude for services rendered; but he was a very stingy gentleman as a rule, and it was only too likely that he would think better of it if given too much time.

Chunky Todgers felt that he could not afford to run risks; and undoubtedly twenty-five dollars was better than nothing.

He rolled into the School House, and tapped at the door of Miss Meadows' sitting-room.

"Come in!"

Chunky rolled in.

Miss Meadows was not alone. A thin and angular gentleman was present, in conversation with the Canadian school-mistress. It was Mr. Ephraim Peckover, the headmaster of Hillcrest.

Mr. Peckover had called to learn whether anything definite had yet been ascertained with regard to his unknown rescuer. It was possible that Chunky's misgivings were not without grounds, and that Mr. Peckover was already a little repentant of his generous offer of a reward. Certainly he did not look disappointed when Miss Meadows informed him that the matter was still in dispute.

"Well, what is it, Todgers?" asked Miss Meadows. "Pray excuse me for a moment, Mr. Peckover."

Chunky hesitated; he had not expected to see the Hillcrest master there. But the reflection that Mr. Peckover had the fifty-dollar bill in his pocket, encouraged him.

"I—I have something to tell you, Miss Meadows," he stammered, "and—and Mr. Peckover, too!"

Miss Meadows gave him a sharp look.

"Well?" she said.

"I—I feel bound to confess—" stammered Chunky.

"Oh! You have come to me to confess that your claim was a false one!" exclaimed the mistress of Cedar Creek.

"Ye-e-es!" gasped Chunky.

Mr. Peckover gave a slight grunt.

"I—I guess I'm awfully sorry ma'am!" stammered Chunky Todgers.

"I—I don't know what made me do it, really. It wasn't the money, of course. I—I wouldn't really have touched the money. I—I really did it for a lark, Miss Meadows. I—I feel bound to own up! It—it's been weighing on my mind."

"You unscrupulous boy!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Then you were aware all the time that Yen Chin was justly entitled to Mr. Peckover's thanks?"

"Yes!" gasped Chunky.

Miss Meadows picked up her cane. Chunky eyed it with alarm. He had hoped that a frank, open, manly confession would touch Miss Meadows' heart, and cause her to dis-

miss him with kind words and commendations. It did not look as if the matter was going to end so happily, however.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Peckover. "The young rascal ought to be severely punished, Miss Meadows."

"I shall certainly punish him severely, Mr. Peckover, and without losing time. Hold out your hand, Todgers!"

"I—I say—" stammered Chunky, in dismay.

"Obey me!"

"Oh lor!"

Chunky's fat hand came reluctantly out.

"Swish!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"The other hand, Todgers!"

"Oh dear!"

"Swish!"

"Yooooop!"

"I am ashamed of you!" said Miss Meadows severely. "You have acted very wickedly, Todgers!"

"Wow!"

"If I did not think that you were too stupid to realise how wickedly you have acted, I should punish you more severely."

"Wooooop!"

"Silence! Go!"

Chunky Todgers went.

In the passage without, he rubbed his fat hands together in anguish. But as the smart wore off, he felt comforted. Yen Chin was assured of the fifty dollars reward now; and half of it was to be Chunky's. Twenty-five dollars was worth a caning; and when Chunky Todgers took his place in class that afternoon, he was feeling quite cheerful. But he was destined to learn that there was still a slip 'twixt cup and lip.

The 4th Chapter.
The Genuine Article.

"Peckover, by gum!" murmured Bob Lawless, as the Cedar Creek fellows came into the school-room.

Frank Richards glanced at the angular figure, which stood by Miss Meadows' desk.

"What the thump does he want here again?" he murmured. "Chunky can't have let out what I told him and—"

"Phew!" murmured Bob.

The Cedar Creek boys and girls went to their places, all of them wondering what Mr. Peckover's presence portended.

Mr. Peckover was not looking quite so genial as on the occasion of his last visit to Cedar Creek, in search of his unknown gallant rescuer. Doubtless the effervescence of his gratitude had subsided, and he was more keenly aware of the value of his fifty-dollar bill he had so generously—and unexpectedly—offered as a reward. But even if Mr. Peckover had wished to back out, he could scarcely do so now—now that the identity of the heroic rescuer was established. And he was looking as benevolent as he could.

Evidently something was going to happen before classes commenced, and all Cedar Creek looked at Miss Meadows and Mr. Peckover in silence, waiting for it to happen.

"Yen Chin!"

Miss Meadows spoke quietly. Yen Chin grinned cheerfully.

"Yes, Missy Meadee!"

"Stand out, please!"

"Yes, missy."

Yen Chin walked out before the class with an expressive grin upon his little yellow face.

Frank Richards & Co. exchanged a glance.

They wondered whether the false claimant had been found out and was called up for punishment. But it did not look like it.

"My boys," said Miss Meadows. "The truth has been discovered at last, and the name is known of the brave lad who rendered assistance to Mr. Peckover. The boy who made a false claim has admitted the truth, and has been punished."

Chunky Todgers gave his fat hands a surreptitious rub.

"Todgers has confessed the truth and withdrawn his claim," said Miss Meadows. "Yen Chin, I congratulate you! You acted very bravely, and I am very glad that the truth is known."

"Me tankee Missy Meadee!" murmured Yen Chin.

Frank Richards set his lips.

He began to understand now. He glanced at Chunky Todgers, and read aright the sly grin on Chunky's face.

"It's a put-up job between the two, I guess," murmured Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards nodded.

Mr. Peckover was speaking now. He had taken the fifty-dollar bill from his pocket-book with a flourish. Possibly it gave him a pain to part with it, but he was prepared to carry it off well.

"My-boy," said Mr. Peckover, in

a deep voice, "I am glad that I have learned who it was that came so bravely to my help. I was saved from a heavy loss and from severe injury. I thank you!"

"Pool lill' Chinese velly glad helpee Mr. Peckovee," murmured the Celestial. "Mr. Peckovee velly nicey ole man!"

"Ahem! I have great pleasure, Yen Chin, in presenting you with this fifty-dollar bill as a reward for your courage and a token of my gratitude!"

Mr. Peckover extended his hand. Yen Chin's little yellow fingers were extended to take the bill. But there came a sudden interruption.

"Stop!"

It was the voice of Frank Richards. Frank could stand it no longer. So long as it was merely a matter of "brag," he was content to let both the claimants keep up their claims to the deed of gallantry, but when it came to handing over money, he felt that he could not keep silent. To conceal the facts any longer was to become a party to a swindle, and that was impossible.

Frank Richards started forward from his place as he called out "Stop!"

Mr. Peckover stared at him.

"Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

Frank's face was crimson. All eyes were upon him as he came breathlessly up to the group.

"Stop!" he exclaimed. "Keep your bill, Mr. Peckover! Yen Chin is not entitled to it!"

"Really—?" began Mr. Peckover.

Yen Chin blinked at Frank Richards, but did not speak.

"What do you know about the matter, Richards?" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Do you dispute Yen Chin's claim?"

"Yes, ma'am, I do!"

"On what grounds?"

"Because I know that he was nowhere near Hillcrest at the time Mr. Peckover was attacked, and that he did not help him," answered Frank.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Peckover.

"Flanky tellee whoppee!" murmured Yen Chin. "Me, Yen Chin, good boy; always tellee thuth!"

Miss Meadows' face was very stern.

"Do you claim to know who it was that helped Mr. Peckover on that occasion, then, Richards?"

"Yes."

"How can you know, as you were detained in the school-room here at the time of the occurrence?"

Frank's colour deepened.

The whole truth had to come out now, and there was no help for it.

"I was not here, Miss Meadows," he faltered. "I was at Hillcrest."

"What? You were kept in!"

"I left by the window, ma'am!"

"Bless my soul!"

"I'm sorry," said Frank. "You—you had told us not to go near Hillcrest again, Miss Meadows, because of our rows with the fellows there. But we had promised to meet Bird that evening. I—I went over to explain to him; but I was too late, and didn't see him."

Miss Meadows' eyes glinted. She was really angry now.

"You left the school-room, where you were detained, without permission, and you went over to Hillcrest in defiance of my strict orders!" she exclaimed.

"I—I'm sorry—yes," faltered Frank.

"I will speak of that later," said Miss Meadows, compressing her lips ominously. "For the present we will deal with the matter in hand. You say you were near Hillcrest School at the time that Mr. Peckover was attacked by a footpad?"

"Yes."

"You saw what happened?"

Frank smiled slightly.

"I was there," he said. "It was I who helped Mr. Peckover, ma'am!"

"Oh!"

"And we knew it, Miss Meadows," exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Frank got back in time, before you came in to turn us out, and he told us about what he had done."

"We've known all the time, ma'am!" said Beauclerc.

There was a buzz in the school-room.

Yen Chin began to back away towards the class, making himself look as small as possible. But he was not to escape.

"Yen Chin!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Do you still maintain that it was you who aided Mr. Peckover that night?"

"Pool lill' Chinese solly—"

"Tell me the truth at once!"

"Pool lill' Chinese makee mistakee," murmured Yen Chin. "Now me tinkee, me tellee thuth. Lill' mistakee. Allee light!"

"It is not all right," said Miss Meadows sternly. "You have made a false claim, and told wicked untruths!"

Yen Chin wriggled.

"Allee samee fattee Chunkee," he murmured. "Todgee tellee whoppee, and me tinkee tellee whoppee, too. Oh, yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Todgers has been punished for his untruthfulness, Yen Chin, and you will be punished also."

"Pool lill' Chinese velly solly!"

"Hold out your hand!"

Whack! Whack!

Yen Chin was almost doubled up as he crawled back to his place. Like his partner in rascality, he had made the painful discovery that the way of the transgressor is hard.

"As for you, Frank Richards," said Miss Meadows, "I hardly know what to say to you. I do not doubt your statement. I know that you are truthful. But at the same time you confess to a direct disobedience of my commands."

"I—I am sorry, Miss Meadows—"

"In the circumstances, as you ran a great risk in helping Mr. Peckover, I can scarcely punish you as I should have done otherwise," said Miss Meadows. "I have to bear in mind the risk you ran, and also that it was very fortunate that you were on the spot at the time. But I am very grieved, Richards, to find that you regard my commands so lightly."

Frank's colour deepened painfully. He would have preferred a severe caning to this.

"I—I never thought you'd know, Miss Meadows," he stammered, "and—and I don't mind being punished. What I did for Mr. Peckover doesn't make any difference. I—I wasn't going to say anything, but I couldn't see that young rascal take money from Mr. Peckover!"

"Quite so!" said Miss Meadows, her expression softening. "I believe you are sorry, Richards, and I hope you did not intend to treat your schoolmistress with disrespect!"

"Oh, no, no, no!" exclaimed Frank hurriedly.

"I shall let the matter pass, then," said Miss Meadows. "Mr. Peckover, if you are satisfied as to Richards' claim—"

"Certainly," said Mr. Peckover, with rather a wry face. "Richards, I have very much pleasure in presenting—"

Frank stepped back.

"If you don't mind, sir, I'd rather not take the reward," he said. "I am very glad I was there to help you when you needed it, and I don't want any reward, sir, if you don't mind!"

Mr. Peckover's face became quite genial.

He slipped the fifty-dollar bill out of sight at once.

"My dear boy, spoken like a true hero!" he exclaimed. "I approve—I approve most highly of your attitude in the matter. Give me your hand, my lad, and accept my sincerest thanks for your brave service!"

And Mr. Peckover shook hands with Frank Richards—a much more agreeable process than handing him a fifty-dollar bill!

Frank went back to his place with flushed cheeks.

"Lucky galoot!" murmured Bob, digging him in the ribs. "It's not going to be a row after all. Miss Meadows is a brick, and Peckover isn't such a holy mugwump as we've always reckoned."

Mr. Peckover retired from the school-room in a genial and satisfied mood, and lessons began again at Cedar Creek. Frank Richards was feeling greatly relieved, but there were two dissatisfied faces in Miss Meadows' class. Chunky Todgers and Yen Chin had bagged a caning apiece instead of "whacking out" a fifty-dollar bill, and they mourned, and would not be comforted. But nobody had any sympathy to waste upon them, and least of all the genuine hero of Cedar Creek.

THE END.

Next Monday's
"BOYS' FRIEND"
will contain another
long complete story of
Frank Richards & Co.
entitled
"THE CEDAR
CREEK POET!"
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.