

**TOPPING STORIES TO READ—30 MOTOR-CYCLES
AND 800 OTHER GRAND PRIZES TO WIN!**

The **BOYS' FRIEND** 2c

EVERY MONDAY.

SIXTEEN BIG PAGES!

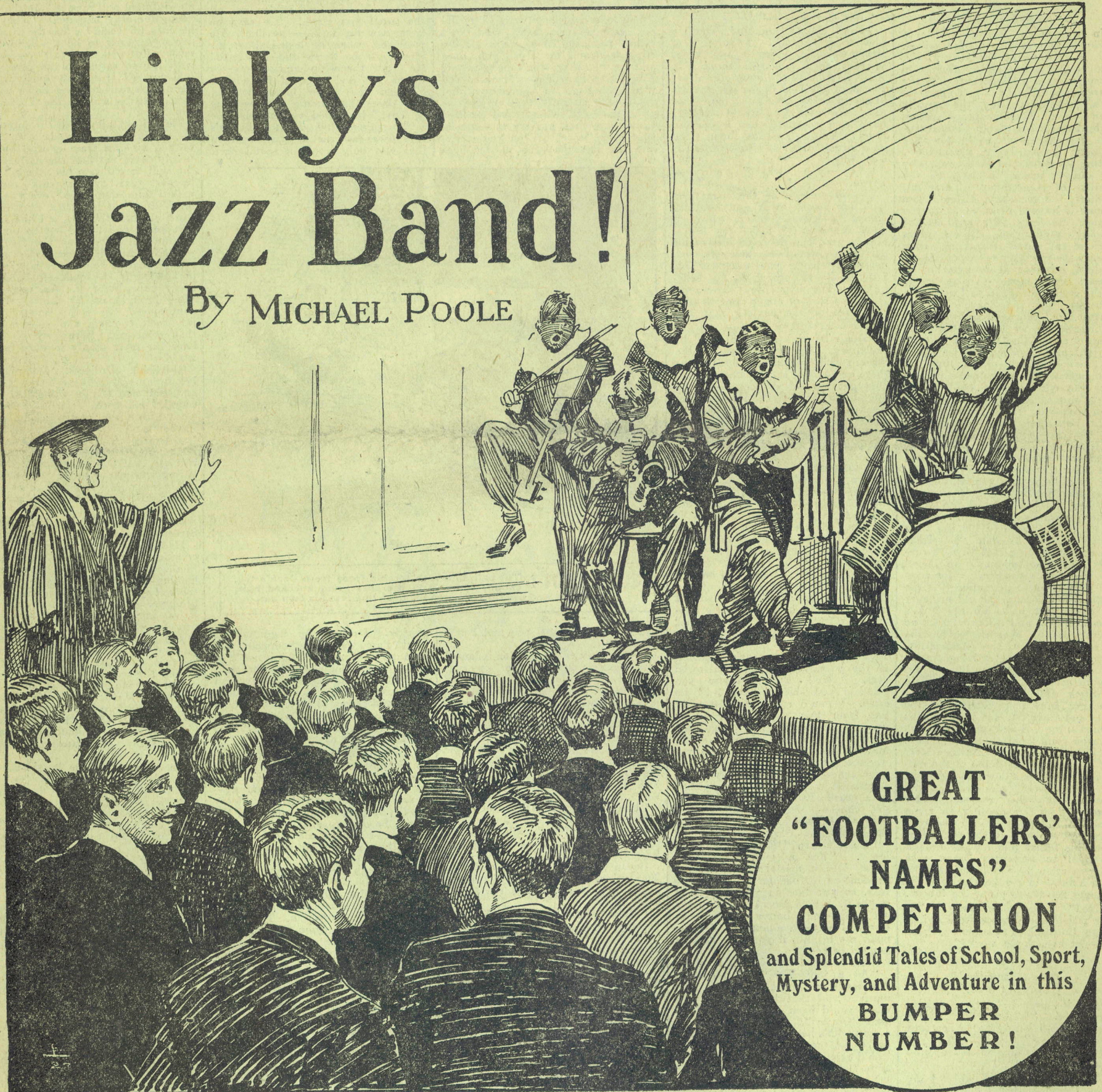
No. 1,173. Vol. XXIV.—New Series.]

THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending December 1st, 1923.]

Linky's Jazz Band!

By MICHAEL POOLE



**GREAT
"FOOTBALLERS'
NAMES"
COMPETITION**

and Splendid Tales of School, Sport,
Mystery, and Adventure in this
**BUMPER
NUMBER!**

THE GREAT JAZZ BAND PERFORMANCE AT ST. KATIE'S!

(An amusing incident from Michael Poole's magnificent school story in this issue.)

ANOTHER FINE STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS OUT WEST!



Tricked by the Cowpunchers!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

The advertisement which appears in the "Kicking Mule Times" in Baldy Bubbin's name causes the fat cook a deal of worry!

The 1st Chapter. Boots for Baldy!

"I guess I'm fed-up!" Baldy, the cook, made that announcement in the doorway of the cookhouse at Windy River.

Baldy's fat face was wrathful, and his little round eyes gleamed. Even the bald spot on the top of Mr. Bubbin's head, from which he derived his nickname, glowed with wrath.

"Fed-up!" he repeated. "Fed right up to the pesky chin, young Silver, and don't you forget it."

Jimmy Silver smiled. "What's the trouble now, Baldy?" he asked.

"Trouble!" repeated the ranch cook. "Heaps of trouble. That there Pete Peters—"

"What's our jolly old foreman done?" asked Lovell.

"Booted me!" roared Baldy.

Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled; they could not help it. Baldy, the cook, had been booted before, not once, but many times. And undoubtedly Baldy, the cook, generally asked for it. Baldy would forget his bounden duty of having meals ready to time, while he sprawled in the cookhouse reading a "dime" novel or a newspaper serial. And when the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed, so to speak—that is, when the cowpunchers came in to dinner and dinner was not ready—Baldy, the cook, was liable to be slanged in the most emphatic manner, and to feel the weight of a cowhide boot.

Nevertheless, Baldy, the cook, did not like it.

Often had Baldy threatened to turn his plump back on the Windy River Ranch for ever, and to seek fresh fields and pastures new.

But he never did.

Wages were good at Windy River, and jobs were a little uncertain, and, upon the whole, Baldy, the cook, realised clearly upon which side his bread was buttered.

But the patience of Baldy Bubbin was sometimes strained nearly to breaking-point; and on the present occasion it seemed that breaking point was reached.

Baldy was boiling with indignation, and the chuckles of the Rookwood juniors did not tend to placate him.

"Booted me!" repeated Baldy.

"And if you reckon that's a laughing matter, young Silver, you're making a mistake!"

"Well, Pete's got a hefty boot," admitted Jimmy Silver. "But what did Pete land out for this time?"

"He said the bacon was burnt."

"And was it?" asked Raby.

"Pr'aps it was!" snorted Baldy.

"S'pose it was? Well, a galoot ain't going to be booted, I guess! I'm not standing it. And I've told Hudson Smedley so."

"You've told the boss?" grinned Newcome.

"Yep!"

"And what did the boss say?"

"Said I could go and chop chips!" howled the indignant Baldy.

"Said he was glad to hear that Pete Peters had booted me, and that if I said any more about it, he'd boot me, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver & Co.

Baldy spluttered with wrath. It was evident that he failed to see anything of a comic nature in the circumstances.

"I guess this hyer is a serious matter!" he howled. "I'm going to clear out of Windy River Ranch, I tell you. The outfit's going to lose the best cook in Alberta!"

"Think it over again!" said Jimmy Silver soothingly. "It isn't a bad job here, you know. And you needn't let the bacon burn any more."

Snort from Baldy Bubbin. Apparently it had not occurred to him to avoid trouble by the simple expedient of not letting the bacon burn.

"Who's Pete Peters to boot me?" he demanded.

"Well, he's foreman!" said Lovell.

"Foremen don't kick the outfit," said Baldy.

"Does he ever boot Skitter Dick or Spike Thompson?"

"They do their duty," suggested Jimmy Silver.

Another snort from Baldy.

"He wouldn't kick them if they didn't! They'd be fired. Well, Pete Peters can fire me, if he likes to lose the best cook in Western Canada. But he ain't going to boot me. You wait till that long-legged galoot boots me agin!" said Baldy darkly.

Jimmy Silver & Co. tried not to grin. It was a serious matter to Baldy, the cook, at all events.

"What will you do?" asked Raby.

Baldy held up a frying-pan.

"See that?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's for his cabeza," said Baldy.

"His what? Oh, his head! My dear chap—"

"You watch out!" said Baldy ferociously. "You wait till Pete Peters lets out a hoof at me again, and see me brain him with this hyer frying-pan!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, it's close on dinner-time!" remarked Lovell. "There'll be a row if you wag your chin instead of getting dinner ready, Baldy."

"Blow dinner!"

"But Pete—"

"Blow Pete!"

There was a clatter of hoofs on the prairie trail, and Pete Peters and half a dozen cowpunchers rode up. They halted outside the cookhouse, and jumped down from the saddle.

"Dinner ready, Baldy?" called out Skitter Dick.

"No, it ain't!"

"What's that?" roared Pete Peters.

"It ain't!"

"By Jehoshaphat!" exclaimed the foreman of Windy River. "If it ain't ready by the time I've put up my hoss, Baldy Bubbin, look out. I'll tan them greasy trousers of yours with my boot!"

"Yah!"

Pete Peters led his horse into the corral. Baldy Bubbin took a business-like grip on the handle of the frying-pan. The expression on his fat face was truculent and ferocious.

"Buck up, Baldy, old man!" urged Jimmy Silver.

"I ain't stirring!"

"But—"

"I'm a pesky independent galoot, ain't I?" demanded Baldy. "Who's Pete Peters to order me about? I guess I'll show him!"

Pete Peters came striding back from the corral. He was hungry after a long morning in the saddle, and he wanted his dinner. He did not want any trouble with Baldy Bubbin, and certainly he did not want any cheek from him; he just wanted his dinner. And dinner, unfortunately, was what he couldn't have just then.

"Here he comes, Baldy!" murmured Lovell.

"I don't care!"

"Now, where's the grub?" roared Pete Peters, as he strode up to the cookhouse.

"Find out!" "What!"

"I don't give a cent for you, Pete Peters!" said Baldy, the cook, defiantly. "Not a continental red cent. Got that?"

"I've got it!" said Pete. "And now you're going to get something."

He strode at the fat cook. Now was the time for Baldy to brandish his frying-pan and brain the foreman of Windy River, according to



OUTSIDE! Pete Peters suddenly grasped the stranger by the back of his neck and the seat of his trousers and ran him out of the cookhouse.

programme. But he didn't! Instead of braining the burly foreman, Baldy backed into the cookhouse, his courage oozing out at the tips of his fat fingers.

Pete Peters followed him in.

There was a clang as the frying-pan went to the floor, and then there was a terrific yell from Baldy.

"Yarooooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the cowpunchers.

"Leggo!"

Thud, thud, thud!

Pete Peters' heavy boot was getting to work. Wild yells from Baldy rang through the cookhouse.

"Where's that grub?" roared Pete.

"Whoooooop!"

Thud, thud!

"Yaroooh! I'm going to get it!" yelled Baldy. "Ain't I getting it as fast as I can? Let up! Ow! Wow! Yooooop! Let up! I'll have it ready in two shakes of a beaver's tail. Yow-ow-ow!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. walked away, chuckling. In the cookhouse Baldy Bubbin was busy, extremely busy, working against time, as it were. And at intervals, to keep him going, Pete Peters launched out a heavy cowhide boot, and Baldy did not even think of picking up the frying-pan and braining the foreman of Windy River.

The 2nd Chapter. Baldy Means Business.

"Mr. Smedley!"

"Hallo!"

"I'm going."

Hudson Smedley was smoking a cigar on the veranda of the ranch-house when Baldy Bubbin came up. Baldy's fat face was glowing crimson, partly with indignation, partly with his hurried exertions over a late dinner.

"Going?" repeated the rancher.

"Yep."

"All right! Good-bye!"

"You're going to lose the best cook in Alberta, Mr. Smedley."

"I guess I'll try to stand it. Carry on!"

Baldy snorted.

"I ain't going to-day," he said, with the air of a man making a considerable concession.

"You can if you like."

"I'm going on Saturday."

"Make it Saturday!" assented Hudson Smedley, unmoved.

"I ain't staying here to be booted by low cowpunchers, Mr. Smedley."

"I wouldn't!" agreed the rancher.

"You'll miss me when I'm gone—at least, the outfit will."

"That's their look-out if they boot you, isn't it?" asked the rancher, with a smile. "Carry on!"

Baldy gave another snort and walked back to the cookhouse, and Hudson Smedley resumed his cigar quite unmoved. Baldy had apparently expected his notice to quit to produce the effect of a bombshell upon the boss of Windy River Ranch. But the rancher had never turned a hair.

"You jest look over it, and tell me if the spelling is all O.K.," said Baldy.

Jimmy, with some interest, read the advertisement that was to appear in the columns of the "Kicking Mule Times." It really was a rather interesting document. It ran:

"First-class cook dezzires engagement on a ranch. Excellent testimonials. Good celery rekwired. Rite or corl, James Fortescue Bubbin, Windy River Ranch, near Mosquito, Alberta."

"That O.K.?" asked Baldy.

"Well, some of the words want touching up a little," said Jimmy Silver diplomatically.

"You touch them up for me, young Silver."

"Certainly! I suppose 'celery' means 'salary'?"

"Celery," assented Baldy. "Wages, you know."

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy Silver put in a few orthographical touches. Baldy took back his document and peered at it critically.

"You've put an 's' in celery," he remarked doubtfully.

"That's the usual style," said Jimmy.

"Sure?"

"Quite! But, I say, Baldy, you're not really going, are you?"

"I am," said Baldy, the cook.

"I'm fed-up with Windy River! I guess I'm going to light out as soon as I get another job. And there'll be plenty of jobs for a cook like me. 'Tain't as if I was a cowpuncher like Pete Peters or Skitter Dick."

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy.

"Cooks is different," explained Baldy loftily. "I guess I'll have a dozen letters when this hyer advertisement shows up in the 'Kicking Mule Times.'"

"I—I hope so," said Jimmy. "But, I say, Baldy, if you get a new job you'll have to get the grub to time, you know, or the cowpunchers will rag you."

"Don't you give me any cheek, young Silver."

"What?"

"I ain't larning my dooties from a schoolboy kid," said Baldy. "I'm too good for this hyer show, and that's what's the matter with Hanner. It's a low lot here."

"You fat duffer!" said Jimmy.

"I don't think much of the boss, neither."

"Look here—"

"Nor of you, young Silver! You hook it out of my cookhouse!"

"Why, you cheeky dummy!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver wrathfully.

Baldy pointed a fat and greasy finger to the door.

"So long as I honours this hyer ranch with my presence I'm master in this hyer cookhouse," he said. "You git!"

"I've a jolly good mind to punch your silly nose before I go!" said Jimmy, in great wrath.

"Oh, git, do!" said the cook derisively.

Skitter Dick looked in at the doorway. He was booted and spurred for a ride.

"Hand it out, Baldy!" he said. "I'm getting off to Kicking Mule now. You said you wanted me to take suthin' there for you. Hand it out!"

"Hyer it is," said the cook. "You know the office of the 'Kicking Mule Times,' Dick Lee?"

"Sure!"

"You drop in with this hyer advertisement, and ask them to put it in the paper this week for me. It's a dollar, and I guess the dollar's hyer ready."

Skitter Dick took the advertisement and stared at it. Then he stared at Baldy.

"Getting out of Windy River, what?" he asked.

"Yep."

"Good man," said Skitter Dick. "You can cook, Baldy, but I guess you're a lazy jay, and not worth your keep! I hope you'll get another job quick, and that you'll get booted if you don't do your work."

"None of your lip!" roared Baldy.

"You take that there advertisement and git!"

"Hand over the dollar!"

"Hyer you are!"

Baldy, the cook, parted with a dollar, and Skitter Dick walked away from the cookhouse. Baldy turned to his washing-up, and he paused to frown at Jimmy Silver and point the washing-mop to the doorway.

"You vamoose!" he snapped.

"Fathead!" said Jimmy.

(Continued overleaf.)



(Continued from previous page.)

And he strolled out, leaving Baldy, the cook, to his clinking pots and pans. Over his washing-up the fat cook hummed a tune, apparently in cheery spirits. Perhaps he looked forward to getting a better job in reply to his advertisement in the "Kicking Mule Times," a job where the pay would be long and the work short. The longer the pay and the shorter the work the better the job would suit Mr. Bubbin. But such jobs were not to be picked up every day.

In Alberta, as in all other provinces of Canada, a man was expected to work and work hard; and if he didn't he was liable to be "fired" short and sharp. As a matter of fact, Baldy, the cook, would have been "fired" from most of the Alberta ranches, for, good cook as he was, his laziness was his chief characteristic, and with a little more wisdom Baldy would have held on very tightly to his job at Windy River.

But Baldy was not wholly without wisdom.

He was advertising for a new job, but he was not going to leave the old one until he had secured the new one. It is said that it is best to be off with the old love before you are on with the new. But that maxim certainly does not apply to jobs. If a better thing turned up Baldy was going to rope it in, and shake the dust of Hudson Smedley's ranch from his feet. But if a better thing didn't turn up Baldy was prepared to hang on, taking advantage once more of the rancher's kindness of heart. In any case he would be able to spread himself a little by proclaiming his intention of going, and announcing his lofty independence. While he awaited the result of the advertisement Baldy was going to make himself generally disagreeable, short of earning another booting from Pete Peters' hefty cow-hide boots.

The prospect seemed pleasant enough to Mr. Bubbin, and he hummed a cheery tune over his washing-up, to an accompaniment of clinking pots and pans.

The 3rd Chapter.

Skitter Dick's Little Joke.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Ho, ho, ho!" "Hallo, that sounds as if somebody's merry and bright!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were trotting on the prairie in the golden autumn afternoon when they heard that sound of merry chortling under a clump of trees by the Kicking Mule trail. The Rookwood juniors glanced round and spotted Skitter Dick and Pike Potter sitting on a grassy bank under the trees, their horses grazing near them.

Skitter Dick had a grubby, greasy paper in his hand, evidently Baldy's advertisement for the "Kicking Mule Times." It was that document over which the two cowpunchers were chuckling. Jimmy drew rein.

"Hallo! What's the giddy jest?" he called out.

The Skitter looked up, grinning. "It's one on old Baldy," he answered. "Light down and look at this hyer dockyment, if you can keep a secret."

"No secret about Baldy advertising for a new job," said Raby. "He's told everybody at the ranch, from the boss to the chore-boy."

"I guess I'm going to put you wise if you'll keep it dark," answered Dick Lee mysteriously.

Somewhat curious, the chums of Rookwood dismounted and joined the cowpunchers under the firs.

The Skitter and Pike were on their way to Kicking Mule, on cattle business for the boss. It was natural enough for the Skitter to take Baldy's document to the newspaper office. Little errands of this kind were always performed by members of the outfit for one another, for it was half a day's ride to Kicking Mule. A

man on the ranch who was out of tobacco or anything else only had to mention the fact to any man who was riding to town. Skitter Dick and Pike Potter had a dozen errands to perform at Kicking Mule for their comrades. Taking Baldy's advertisement to the "Times" office was only one of them. Baldy Bubbin, therefore, had handed his document to Skitter Dick as a matter of course. It had not even occurred to his fat mind that anything might happen to it in transit. He had reckoned without the Skitter's sense of humour.

Skitter Dick had spread the grubby paper on his knee, and made certain alterations in it with a stump of pencil. It was over these alterations that the cowpunchers were chuckling. "What's the game?" asked Newcome.

The Skitter smiled broadly. "You see, we're pulling the galoot's old leg," he explained. "Hyers' Baldy, the best cook in Alberta, and the laziest mugwump between the

back. Owner must apply personally to Baldy Bubbin, cookhouse, Windy River Ranch, and pay cost of this advertisement."

"Oh, my hat!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell. "Why, that will bring half the town riding over to the ranch."

"I guess so!" assented Skitter Dick. "Every tramp and hobo and sneaking half-breed in the county will hump it for Windy River as soon as he hears of this hyer. Baldy figures it out that the ranchers are going to compete for his services. I guess he will be surprised some when they drop in."

"I reckon," remarked Pike Potter, "that there's twenty or thirty galoots in Kicking Mule alone who will saddle up to ride after that five-hundred-dollar bill, and call themselves Robinson when they get to Windy River."

"And the paper's read all along the ranches," said the Skitter. "There'll be visitors from Mosquito and Cedar Bend, and very likely as fur off as Red Deer. In a few days this hyer will be the talk of the ranges, and Baldy will get more visitors than he can count on his fingers and toes."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Skitter Dick rose from the grassy bank.

"Now that's done I reckon we'll get on," he said. "We've got to raise Kicking Mule before dark."

HEALTH AND SPORT!

Conducted by PERCY LONGHURST.

If you are in need of any information concerning health, sport, or general fitness, write to Mr. Percy Longhurst, c/o The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for a reply. All queries are a confidence between Mr. Longhurst and the sender, and are always answered by a personal letter and never in these columns. The information is entirely free, and is the best obtainable.

Your Proper Height.

There are mighty few fellows who want to be shorter than Nature intended, but there are a whole lot who wish to add an inch or two to their actual stature. That this is to be accomplished with the aid of certain exercises is true enough, though I would like to make it quite clear that there is no system of exercising which will infallibly give inches increase of height to everybody. At the same time, there are many fellows who are worried because they think themselves shorter than they ought to be. Some of them worry themselves with insufficient cause.

It is a queer fact, but it's true none the less, that girls stop growing at an earlier age than boys. At sixteen years of age the average girl is about as tall as ever she will be. At sixteen years of age the average boy has certainly not stopped growing. In some cases, especially when regular exercises are practised, growing will continue up to the twenty-fifth year.

The following table will give a fairly correct idea—complete accuracy is not possible—as to the height at different ages.

AGE.	HEIGHT.	
	Years.	ft. ins.
12	...	4 6½
13	...	4 8½
14	...	4 10½
15	...	5 2
16	...	5 4
17	...	5 5
18	...	5 5
19	...	5 6
20	...	5 7
21	...	5 7

And while we're on the subject of figures it may not be out of place to suggest what should be a fair average weight for a healthy, well-developed lad. At the age of fourteen he should weigh 6 st. 6 lbs.; for each year above this until he is twenty he may be expected to add an average of 10 lbs.

But a chap needn't jump to the conclusion that he is unhealthy or badly developed just because he doesn't reach this average weight. For myself, at twenty-five I weighed only two pounds more than at seventeen, but this didn't prevent my never having a day's illness, or hinder me from taking part in the roughest and most vigorous of sports and exercises. When all is said and done, quality ranks higher than quantity; and when it comes to the matter of

Atlantic and the Pacific, advertising for a new job after Hudson Smedley's kept him on for years when any other boss would have booted him off the ranch. Waal, Baldy is a fust-chop cook, and we don't want to lose him. He doesn't like work, but he'll work if he's kicked hard enough—see?"

The juniors grinned. "And that ain't all," went on the Skitter. "Baldy won't get as good a job anywhere else. He'll find it out and stick on. But for a week or two we're going to hear him swanking about chucking it up, and makin' hisself a general nuisance. When he finds out that he's best off where he is, he'll give the boss some soft sawder and stay on."

"That's about the size of it," said Pike Potter.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Just what I expect," he answered. "But you're going to put the advertisement in for him, I suppose."

"Sure! But Baldy's going to have a lesson, I guess. I've wrote it out fresh. Look at it!"

Skitter handed over the paper, and the Fistical Four of Rookwood read it curiously.

Then they roared.

The advertisement read very differently now. Under Skitter Dick's improving hand, it ran as follows:

"Picked up in Main Street, Kicking Mule, a five-hundred-dollar bill, name of J. Robinson written on the

and the chuckling cowpunchers rode on their way.

"My hat!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "I fancy Baldy will get more than he bargains for."

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Lovell. "He's a fat tick, and he wants a lesson. It's a jolly jape."

The chums of Rookwood rode away laughing. It was at dusk that they returned to the ranch, and the light was gleaming cheerily from the windows of the cookhouse. Baldy was there, preparing supper and talking to two or three cowboys who were lounging in the doorway.

The juniors caught his voice as they passed.

"I guess you 'uns won't often see a stew like this hyer agin. Arter next Saturday you'll know what you've lost!"

"I guess we'll have lost the fattest, laziest loafer in the Windy River section!" remarked Red Alf.

To which Baldy responded with a contemptuous snort.

The outfit were turning in that night when Skitter Dick and Pike Potter rode in from Kicking Mule, tired and dusty. Baldy hailed them from the door of the cookhouse.

"Hallo, you—Skitter!"

"Hallo!" answered Dick Lee.

"You've put in that advertisement for me?"

"I guess I went to the 'Times' office fust thing, and handed over the

goods," answered Skitter Dick.

"And there's your dollar, Baldy."

"What?" Baldy caught the dollar.

"Ain't you paid for it?"

"Me and Pike have put up half a dollar each," explained the Skitter. "We're treating you to it, Baldy."

Baldy pocketed his dollar.

"Good man!" he said. "So you ought, after the way I've cooked for you and stood you all this time!"

"Waal, we ought—and we did," grinned Pike Potter.

"And that there advertisement comes out in this week's paper?" asked Baldy.

"Yep! Wednesday."

"That's all right."

The cowpunchers rode on to the corral, and Baldy Bubbin turned back into the cookhouse satisfied. Skitter Dick and Pike Potter were satisfied, too. In the bunkhouse that night there was a good deal of chuckling after the outfit had turned in. Skitter Dick's little joke was confided to most of the cowpunchers, with the warning to keep it strictly dark from Baldy. The results of the advertisement were to come as a surprise to the cook of Windy River.

The 4th Chapter.

Mr. Robinson Looks In.

Pete Peters' boot was not required in the cookhouse during the next few days.

Baldy, the cook—rather against his principles—was on good behaviour,

endurance, then the small, but healthy, person is more likely to prove a good stayer than the big chap.

Headache.

The averagely healthy fellow isn't troubled much by headaches—unless he gets a bad fall or a blow—but this distressing complaint is not uncommon amongst those who do not enjoy good health. The causes may be very various. A headache now and again isn't much to worry about, but when the pains occur regularly or periodically, then it is time to see about it, to discover the cause, and take steps to relieve it.

Eye-strain is a frequent cause, and in this case the pain is generally felt immediately below the eyebrows—not in the eyes—sometimes just above the ears or at the back of the head, low down. Too much study, reading in a bad light, while walking along, or when riding in a vehicle, will bring on this kind of pain. And the remedy will be obvious.

When the pain is at the top of the head, congestion of or lack of blood in the brain is often the cause, and this may be relieved by a few minutes of neck exercises, which will set the blood circulating, and promote the carrying of fresh blood to the brain.

Pain in the middle of the forehead comes usually as a result of stomach trouble, impurities in the blood due to constipation, brought about by lack of exercise, fresh air, wrong food, or eating too much. The liver is not acting properly.

An "all over" pain denotes too little or unrefreshing sleep. Too much smoking is also frequently responsible. (Continued on page 349.)

so far as attending to his duties went. He was tired of Pete's hefty boot.

But in other respects Baldy was on bad behaviour. He seemed to be expecting a flood of replies to his advertisement in the "Kicking Mule Times." Ranchers and storekeepers were to fall over one another, as it were, in competing for Baldy's valuable services. It was not likely to happen, but Baldy seemed to think it likely. From Windy River, if all went well, Baldy was to pass into surroundings where he would be more appreciated, where obstreperous cowpunchers would not boot him if dinner happened to be late, or hurl objectionable epithets at his head if the bacon was burnt. Feeling secure, apparently, that the coming change was to be a change for the better, Baldy put on airs and graces that made the outfit laugh, and sometimes exasperated them. Baldy on the high horse was both amusing and irritating.

"Jest you 'uns wait till you get a low-down half-breed cooking for you," Baldy would say, "or some durned Chink, or a pesky Pole! You'll see the difference, then. I guess you'll come arter me begging me to come back. And I'll jest laugh at you!"

It was evident that Baldy considered a cook to be the most important member of a ranch outfit. Nobody else agreed with Baldy on that point.

Baldy's airs and graces might have earned him some more bootings, but for the fact that the cowpunchers were aware that his advertisement had never appeared in the paper at all, and consequently that Baldy was building air-castles on a foundation of sand. The advertisement that had appeared, owing to Skitter Dick, was certainly not likely to bring the result Baldy anticipated.

The Windy River outfit chuckled among themselves when Baldy was blowing off steam.

The fat cook was not likely to discover the trick. The Kicking Mule newspaper never found its way to Windy River, unless a man rode over to the town and brought a copy back with him.

Certainly a copy of the "Kicking Mule Times" was brought to the ranch, with the advertisement in it; but it was carefully kept away from Baldy's knowledge. The outfit roared over it, and the Rookwood juniors chuckled over it; but Baldy, the cook, remained in cheerful ignorance of it. It was a case when ignorance was bliss.

It was on Thursday afternoon, when most of the boys were out on the range, that a visitor arrived at Windy River. Baldy, the cook, as it happened, was the first to spot him.

He was an exceedingly dusty and dirty and shabby gentleman, dressed in garments that seemed to have been borrowed from a variety of scarecrows. His face was stubbly, and red patched from the excessive use of the cup that cheers and also inebriates. He came down the trail with a slinking gait, blinking round him suspiciously, in the manner of a man who was accustomed to being kicked out wherever he appeared.

Baldy waved a fat hand at him and shouted:

"Hyer, you hobo, you git!"

The man looked round.

"This hyer Windy River Ranch?" he asked.

"Sure!"

"Where's the cookhouse?"

"Right hyer," answered Baldy.

"What the thump do you want? This ain't a free lunch counter for hoboes."

"Mebbe you're Baldy Bubbin?"

"Mebbe I'm Mister Bubbin," answered the fat cook disdainfully.

"My name's Robinson."

"Go back to Mrs. Robinson and tell her that her husband wants washing," answered Baldy sarcastically.

"If you're Baldy Bubbin, I'm the man you want to see," explained Mr. Robinson.

"I guess I don't want to see any hobo around hyer, whether his name's Robinson or Robinson Crusoe!" said Baldy. "Git!"

"I'm after the dust."

"What?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Mad!" said Baldy.

"I dropped that there bank bill in Main Street, Kicking Mule," said Mr. Robinson eagerly. "I own up I'd been on a bender, and I jest dropped it and lost it. You're an honest man, Mr. Bubbin, to keep it for me. I'm ready to pay for the advertisement—out of the five hundred, of course."

"Eh?"

"Got it about you, I s'pose."

"Got what?"

"The five-hundred-dollar bill."

Baldy, the cook, gazed at him in hopeless perplexity. The tramp was evidently accustomed to the use of potent liquor, but he did not appear intoxicated at the present moment. But if he was not wildly intoxicated there was no accounting for the way he talked—to Baldy, at least.

"Waal, where is it?" asked Mr. Robinson, approaching the fat cook, who stood glaring at him from the doorway.

"Where's what?" howled the amazed Baldy.

"The bill!"

Baldy gasped.

"Look hyer, you, Robinson!" he said. "See that gate over thar?"

"Eh—yes," said Mr. Robinson, looking round. "What about it?"

"Git on the other side of it—sharp!"

"But I want—"

"I don't know what you want," said Baldy, "but I know what you're going to git if you don't hop it lively! See?"

"Them dollars—"

"I ain't any dollars for a god-darned hobo!"

"Five hundred—"

"Oh, can it!" roared Baldy, exasperated. "I've warned you to git! If you don't travel, look out for trouble!" And Baldy went back into the cookhouse to pick up a frying-pan.

The tramp peered in at the doorway after him.

Another surprise! "Homeward Bound!" next Monday's great story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School. Don't miss it!

"I say—it's mine, Mr. Bubbin!" he said breathlessly. Baldy gripped the frying-pan. "Going?" he demanded. "Look hyer, that five-hundred-dollar bill's mine!" exclaimed Mr. Robinson angrily. "Don't I keep on telling you that I dropped it in Main Street, Kicking Mule? If you've changed your mind since you let out about it, that's your funeral! I'm arter the stuff. You jest hand it over. Savvy?" "Hand over what?" shrieked Baldy. "My dollars!" "You durned hobo, do you figure it out that I've got any dollars of yourn?" howled the cook. "Course you have, like you've admitted. Look hyer, I'll stand you a hundred out of the bill." "What bill?" yelled Baldy. "My bank bill, what you found." "I never found any bank bill—" "Look hyer, that won't wash now, arter you've admitted it. You ain't arter to rob me!" exclaimed Mr. Robinson indignantly. "My name's wrote on the bill, like you said, and I'm arter it!" "Rob you!" said Baldy. "Oh, holy smoke! I'll give you rob you, you unwashed hobo!" And the wrathful Baldy charged at the tramp with the frying-pan brandished in his fat hand. Mr. Robinson dodged out of the doorway with marvellous celerity. "Look hyer—" "Bang!" There was a terrific yell from Mr. Robinson as the frying-pan caught him on the side of the head. "Now!" gasped Baldy. "Ow! Wow!" The hobo, at that point, probably relinquished any hope of annexing the five-hundred-dollar bill. But he had tramped many a long mile that day in the hope of annexing it, and he was naturally disappointed and angry. He turned on Baldy Bubbin, and hit out with a bony set of knuckles. Baldy caught those bony knuckles with his fat little nose, and sat down in a breathless heap. The tramp seized the frying-pan as he dropped it. Whack! Whack! Clang! Clang! "Oh! Ow-wow! Yoop! Help!" roared Baldy. "That's for you!" gasped Mr. Robinson. "Robbing a man whose bank bills you've picked up! Take that, and that, and that!" "Bang! Bang! Whack!" "Yoop! Help! Yaroooooh! Help! Murder!" roared Baldy, as he squirmed frantically to dodge the whacks from the frying-pan, heftily wielded by the indignant Mr. Robinson. Jimmy Silver came running breathlessly from the ranch-house.

The 5th Chapter.
Another Mr. Robinson!

"Help!" "Bang! Whack!" Jimmy Silver came up panting, riding-whip in hand. He did not stop to ask questions; he started on the tramp with the riding-whip. Mr. Robinson roared in his turn, and fled. Baldy sat up and yelled. "Ow, ow, ow! Arter him! Smash the guy! Lam him! Ow, ow, ow!" Jimmy Silver followed Mr. Robinson up. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were speeding on the scene, and Pike Potter ran across from the corral, and Pete Peters from his cabin. Mr. Robinson realised that it was time to go, and he went—hurriedly. Jimmy Silver, close behind, laid the riding-whip round his legs as he went, and Mr. Robinson emitted a wild howl at every bound. He reached the gate on the trail, but he had no time to open it or climb over it. He took it at a flying leap, and landed on the other side on his hands and knees, roaring. Then he picked himself up and ran, and vanished down the trail in a cloud of dust. Jimmy Silver walked back rather breathlessly to the cookhouse. Lovell had helped Baldy up, and the fat cook stood leaning against the wall, crimson and panting. "Well, what was the trouble, Baldy?" asked Jimmy Silver. "That pesky guy was mad, I reckon!" gasped Baldy. "Made out that I'd got a five-hundred-dollar bill belonging to him!" "What!" yelled Jimmy. "That's jest what he said, and he didn't seem drunk, either!" gasped Baldy. "Mad as a hatter, I guess!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "This hyer ain't a larfing matter!" roared Baldy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "After a five-hundred-dollar bill, hay!" roared Pete Peters. "Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!" "Oh, go and chop chips, the lot of you!" snarled Baldy, and he stamped back into the cookhouse. There was a roar of laughter outside. The advertisement in the "Kicking Mule Times" was evidently beginning to produce its effect. Mr. Robinson was the first claimant! That there would be more claimants, and that they would all give the name of Robinson, was pretty certain—as the advertisement stated that "J. Robinson" was written on the back of the mythical five-hundred-dollar bill. But Baldy was not aware of that as yet; and he was both puzzled and annoyed by the roars of laughter outside the cookhouse. As the afternoon waned the cowboys came in from the plains; and among the horsemen who rode in came a thin, lantern-jawed man with a little goatee beard and a knife-blade nose, who was a stranger at Windy River. He was mounted on a bony horse, and did not look as if he were in a prosperous way of business. He drew rein before the ranch buildings, and looked round with keen and shifty eyes. "I guess this hyer is Windy River!" he called out.

"Oh, git!" said Baldy impatiently, and he turned to his stove again. A pot was boiling over. Mr. Robinson kindly waited till Baldy had attended to the pot. Then he resumed: "I guess I'm ready to pay for the advertisement. And I'll tell you what, Mr. Bubbin; I'm goin' to stand you twenty dollars over and above for handing me that bill! Now cough it up!" "If this hyer is a joke, I don't see it," said Baldy. "You git out of my cookhouse!" "Where's the bank bill?" "There ain't any bank bill!" shrieked Baldy, in great exasperation. Mr. Robinson shook his head. "It's a bit too late for you to try that game," he said. "I'm waiting for that bill to be handed over. Now then—sharp!" "Git!" howled Baldy. "Are you going to pony up five hundred dollars?" "No, I ain't!" "I guess I'll make you!" "Gol-darn my boots!" gasped Baldy. "I do believe everybody in the Windy River Valley's gone mad this arternoon! Hyer, you 'uns! Come and boot this man out!" Pete Peters put a grinning face into the doorway.

riding wildly down the trail from Windy River, heading at frantic speed for parts unknown. At supper that night the Windy River outfit were in a state of uproarious merriment that amazed and puzzled Baldy, the cook. Where the joke came in was a mystery to Baldy. And he was to be still more puzzled on the morrow, when he was to discover what a surprising number of persons in that part of Alberta bore the name of J. Robinson.

The 6th Chapter.
Raining Robinsons!

Jimmy Silver & Co. turned out quite early the following morning. They were keen to see the further outcome of Skitter Dick's little joke on Baldy, the cook, and they wondered whether any more strangers would drop in to answer to the name of J. Robinson, and claim the five-hundred-dollar bill that Baldy had not found in Main Street at Kicking Mule. Early as they were, they were none too early. The gate on the trail was not yet opened, so early was the hour; but a tired-looking man was leaning on the other side of it, evidently a man who had tramped from a distance. He waved a dirty hand to the Rookwood juniors.

glared round, seized a billet of wood from the stove, and rushed out at Mr. Robinson. The third owner of that good old name jumped back in alarm. "Hyer, I say, is the man mad?" he stammered. "Ha, ha, ha!" "I'll give you Robinson!" roared Baldy. "I'll give you five-hundred-dollar bills, and some over!" "Yarcoop!" Mr. Robinson the Third turned and fairly bolted. Baldy, with a crimson face and blazing eyes, and a heavy billet brandished in his fat hand, looked quite dangerous. Down the path to the gate went Mr. Robinson the Third, with Baldy Bubbin after him. "Go it, Baldy!" shouted Newcome. "Go it, Robinson!" shrieked Lovell. "Ha, ha, ha!" Fortunately for Mr. Robinson the Third, he won the footrace. He went over the gate like a deer, and sped on up the trail, evidently convinced that he had a dangerous maniac to deal with. Baldy trotted back to the cookhouse, panting. He glared at Jimmy Silver & Co. "This hyer ain't a larfing matter!" he snorted. "This hyer is some pesky practical joke! Calling hisself Robinson! I wonder how many pesky Robinsons there are in Windy River County? I'll give 'em five hundred dollars! By gum! I'll have a gun ready if another galoot comes along calling hisself Robinson!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Yah! Go and chop chips!" Baldy stamped into the cookhouse, and grunted with wrath as he proceeded to light up the stove. Jimmy Silver & Co. walked back to the ranch-house to breakfast, laughing. The fun for Baldy was beginning quite early in the day, though Baldy did not seem to be enjoying the fun. The cowpunchers turned out of the bunkhouse, and Baldy was soon busy with breakfast. Breakfast at the ranch was not over when a horseman came up the trail at a gallop. He took the gate at a jump, and clattered on to the ranch. Hudson Smedley looked out from the veranda, and the horseman shouted to him: "You got a man hyer named Baldy Bubbin?" "He's cook here," answered the rancher, with a stare. "Call at the cookhouse yonder." "Right!" The horseman—a dusky half-breed, with shifty eyes—whirled round his horse and rode over to the cookhouse. There was a roar from a dozen throats: "You're wanted, Baldy!" "Hyer's another galoot named Robinson." "Ha, ha, ha!" The swarthy horseman, who certainly did not look as if he bore the British name of Robinson, stared at the grinning punchers. "Peste! How did you know my name was Robinson?" he demanded. "Jest guessed it!" chuckled Pete Peters; and there was another roar. "As it happens, my name is Robinson—" "You look it!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "All of 'em" roared Lovell. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Why, I've seen that breed around Kicking Mule!" yelled Spike Thompson. "His name's Laroche!" "Ha, ha, ha!" The half-breed flushed. "I've been called Laroche, but my real name is Robinson!" he explained. "Where's that man Bubbin?" Baldy stepped out, scowling. "You Baldy Bubbin?" "Yep! Now—" "I guess I'm J. Robinson. I've called for the five-hundred-dollar bill." "Hand it over, Baldy!" shrieked Skitter Dick. Baldy glared at Mr. Robinson the Fourth. He was aware now that he must be the victim of some extraordinary practical joke, though he could not understand it. He had a big wooden ladle in his hand, and he jumped at the horseman and smote without wasting words. There was a yell from the breed as he caught the ladle with the side of his head. The attack was so unexpected that it rolled him from his saddle, and he dropped almost at Baldy's feet. Baldy did not lose a chance like that. He smote again, and the breed howled with anguish.



A BOMBARDMENT! Crash! Crash! Crash! The excited claimants for the five-hundred-dollar note began to heave stones at the cookhouse door. There was a yell of terror from Baldy Bubbin within. "Drive 'em off! Oh dear! Help! I ain't got no five-hundred-dollar note!"

"You guess right, stranger!" called back Skitter Dick. "Where's the cookhouse?" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Skitter. The lantern-jawed man stared at him. He seemed surprised by the Skitter's involuntary outbreak of merriment. "What's the joke?" he demanded. "You are, stranger, if your name's Robinson," answered Skitter Dick. "I guess that is my name—J. Robinson, of Noo Yark," answered the bony gentleman. "You've got a guy around hyer answering to the name of Baldy Bubbin." "Sure! There's the cookhouse, and there's Baldy Bubbin," said the Skitter, and he pointed. "Thanks!" Mr. Robinson the Second rode on to the cookhouse and dismounted. He rapped on the door with a bony set of knuckles. "Nope! It ain't ready yet!" called out Baldy, without looking round. "Supper in half an hour, and don't you worry a galoot!" "I guess I ain't arter any old supper," said the second Mr. Robinson. "I'm arter the five hundred dollars!" Baldy spun round from the cooking-stove. "What's that?" "You Baldy Bubbin? You're the man what found my five-hundred-dollar bill in Main Street, Kicking Mule?" "I guess I ain't!" "My name's wrote on the back, I guess—J. Robinson. Look hyer, are you Baldy Bubbin, or ain't you Baldy Bubbin?"

"Time for you to travel, Robinson!" he said. "I'm arter—" "I know what you're arter! Hyer's your hoss! Git on it!" "I guess I ain't going without my five hundred dollars!" "Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the cowpunchers. "Shove him out!" shouted Baldy. "The man's mad!" "He's a pesky thief, at least!" said Pete Peters. "Now, then, Robinson, it's you for the trail!" "I ain't—" "You are! Come agin to-morrow, but we ain't letting you delay old Baldy jest before supper!" explained the foreman of Windy River. "Now, then, travel!" "Not without the dust!" Pete Peters stepped in. Mr. Robinson groped in a hip-pocket and produced a revolver. There was a howl of terror from Baldy, and he dodged behind the stove. Pete Peters' quirt twirled in the air, jerking the revolver out of Mr. Robinson's hand. Then the burly foreman grasped the claimant by the back of his neck and the seat of his trousers, and ran him out of the cookhouse. Yelling wildly, Mr. Robinson was heaped on the ground beside his bony horse. "Now, you can git or you can stay there!" said Pete. "But all the time you stay there I'm going to boot you!" And he started. "Whoooooop!" roared Mr. Robinson. In record time Mr. Robinson, of "Noo Yark," was on his horse and

"Hi!" he yelled. "Hallo!" returned Jimmy Silver. "You Baldy Bubbin?" "Oh, my hat! No!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell. "Not quite!" "Waal, I'm arter that galoot, and I reckon I've tramped all night from Kicking Mule," said the stranger. "Name of Robinson." "Ha, ha, ha!" "Let me in at this hyer gate, will you? I'm in rather a hurry to see Mister Bubbin." "I can't open the gate," answered Jimmy. "You can climb over if you've got business here so early." "I guess I will." Mr. Robinson the Third climbed the gate and dropped inside. Raby kindly pointed out the cookhouse, and Mr. Robinson the Third started for it. Baldy, the cook, had just turned out of his bunk in his room adjoining the cookhouse. He was not in a good temper. Early hours did not suit Baldy, the cook. Indeed, he was hoping by means of his advertisement to secure a job where the hours would be late in the morning and early only at night. Baldy grunted angrily as there was a loud knocking at the cookhouse door. He opened that door, in half-hitched trousers, with a frowning face. "Waal, what mought you want?" snapped Baldy. "I'm J. Robinson—" "What?" roared Baldy. "My name's wrote on the back of the five-hundred-dollar bill—" That was enough for Baldy. He

glared round, seized a billet of wood from the stove, and rushed out at Mr. Robinson. The third owner of that good old name jumped back in alarm. "Hyer, I say, is the man mad?" he stammered. "Ha, ha, ha!" "I'll give you Robinson!" roared Baldy. "I'll give you five-hundred-dollar bills, and some over!" "Yarcoop!" Mr. Robinson the Third turned and fairly bolted. Baldy, with a crimson face and blazing eyes, and a heavy billet brandished in his fat hand, looked quite dangerous. Down the path to the gate went Mr. Robinson the Third, with Baldy Bubbin after him. "Go it, Baldy!" shouted Newcome. "Go it, Robinson!" shrieked Lovell. "Ha, ha, ha!" Fortunately for Mr. Robinson the Third, he won the footrace. He went over the gate like a deer, and sped on up the trail, evidently convinced that he had a dangerous maniac to deal with. Baldy trotted back to the cookhouse, panting. He glared at Jimmy Silver & Co. "This hyer ain't a larfing matter!" he snorted. "This hyer is some pesky practical joke! Calling hisself Robinson! I wonder how many pesky Robinsons there are in Windy River County? I'll give 'em five hundred dollars! By gum! I'll have a gun ready if another galoot comes along calling hisself Robinson!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Yah! Go and chop chips!" Baldy stamped into the cookhouse, and grunted with wrath as he proceeded to light up the stove. Jimmy Silver & Co. walked back to the ranch-house to breakfast, laughing. The fun for Baldy was beginning quite early in the day, though Baldy did not seem to be enjoying the fun. The cowpunchers turned out of the bunkhouse, and Baldy was soon busy with breakfast. Breakfast at the ranch was not over when a horseman came up the trail at a gallop. He took the gate at a jump, and clattered on to the ranch. Hudson Smedley looked out from the veranda, and the horseman shouted to him: "You got a man hyer named Baldy Bubbin?" "He's cook here," answered the rancher, with a stare. "Call at the cookhouse yonder." "Right!" The horseman—a dusky half-breed, with shifty eyes—whirled round his horse and rode over to the cookhouse. There was a roar from a dozen throats: "You're wanted, Baldy!" "Hyer's another galoot named Robinson." "Ha, ha, ha!" The swarthy horseman, who certainly did not look as if he bore the British name of Robinson, stared at the grinning punchers. "Peste! How did you know my name was Robinson?" he demanded. "Jest guessed it!" chuckled Pete Peters; and there was another roar. "As it happens, my name is Robinson—" "You look it!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "All of 'em" roared Lovell. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Why, I've seen that breed around Kicking Mule!" yelled Spike Thompson. "His name's Laroche!" "Ha, ha, ha!" The half-breed flushed. "I've been called Laroche, but my real name is Robinson!" he explained. "Where's that man Bubbin?" Baldy stepped out, scowling. "You Baldy Bubbin?" "Yep! Now—" "I guess I'm J. Robinson. I've called for the five-hundred-dollar bill." "Hand it over, Baldy!" shrieked Skitter Dick. Baldy glared at Mr. Robinson the Fourth. He was aware now that he must be the victim of some extraordinary practical joke, though he could not understand it. He had a big wooden ladle in his hand, and he jumped at the horseman and smote without wasting words. There was a yell from the breed as he caught the ladle with the side of his head. The attack was so unexpected that it rolled him from his saddle, and he dropped almost at Baldy's feet. Baldy did not lose a chance like that. He smote again, and the breed howled with anguish.

TRICKED BY THE COWPUNCHERS!

(Continued from previous page.)

Mr. Robinson the Fourth was on his feet in a flash, and a knife gleamed in his dusky hand. Pete Peters' grasp was on him at once. The knife went whirling in one direction, and Robinson the Fourth in another.

"Boot that breed out!" shouted the foreman.

And half a dozen cowpunchers rushed to help. The hapless claimant clambered on his horse and rode for his life. Cowhide whips rang and cracked behind him as he went, and by the time he escaped the half-breed had really earned the five hundred dollars—though he was not likely to receive them.

Baldy stood in the cookhouse doorway and mopped a perspiring brow.

"Wot does it mean?" he gasped. "Is it a pesky joke, or have they all gone raving mad, or what? I believe you 'uns know something about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver strolled down to the gate on the trail. The disappointed breed had scarcely vanished when three horsemen rode up, giving one another suspicious looks. All three inquired for Mr. Bubbin, and Jimmy blandly directed them to the cookhouse. A few minutes later two dragged hoboos arrived on foot, and they were followed by another horseman, and then by a man in a buggy.

Then four more horsemen rode up. Every one was cheerfully directed to the cookhouse; and Jimmy, looking from the gateway, could see the trail towards Kicking Mule dotted with approaching heads.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy.

"This is richer than I expected. We shall be swamped with Robinsons at this rate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The cowpunchers were standing about the cookhouse, roaring with laughter. The cookhouse was surrounded by the newcomers, who banged on the door and rattled the window and shouted to Baldy Bubbin. Baldy, in amazement and rage and terror, had slammed the cookhouse door and bolted it. All the callers looked rough fellows, and there were already a dozen on the scene—and more coming. And every one of them was shouting to Baldy that his name was Robinson—J. Robinson—and that he had called for the five-hundred-dollar note.

"Go away!" yelled Baldy from the cookhouse. "Go away! Git! Yamoose the ranch! Absquatulate! I ain't got any five-hundred-dollar note! Go away! Boys, turn 'em off the ranch! Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me in, Baldy Bubbin! I'm J. Robinson—"

"You ain't! I'm Robinson—"

"It's my five-hundred-dollar note, you guy—"

"I guess I'll have this door down if you don't let a galoot in!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it!" roared Lovell. "It's raining Robinsons today!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash! Crash! Crash! Three or four of the excited claimants were heaving "rocks" at the cookhouse door. There was a yell of terror from Baldy.

"Drive 'em off! Oh dear! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hyer, that won't do!" exclaimed

Pete Peters, wiping his eyes. "They ain't going to damage the cookhouse! Take your quirts to 'em, boys, and clear the place!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The joke on Baldy had reached its climax, and was looking like developing into a riot. But the cowpunchers "waded in" now, and with yells of protest and loud threats the claimants were driven off. They departed unwillingly; but there was no arguing with heavy cattle-whips wielded by sinewy hands. Nearly every rogue in Kicking Mule had turned up by this time to lay claim to the mythical five-hundred-dollar bill—and more were coming up the trail. The yelling crowd, driven off by the cowpunchers, surged out of the gate and met the newcomers on their way. Pete Peters closed the gate and locked it.

"Enough's as good as a feast!" grinned the foreman of Windy River. "If any more galoots come along and give the name of Robinson, hand out a quirt instanter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And so at last the wicked ceased from troubling, and Baldy, the cook, was at rest.

Baldy was long puzzled by the strange occurrences of that day when it had almost rained Robinsons at Windy River. Later on he saw a copy of the "Kicking Mule Times," and understood at last. The wrath of Baldy was great, and he threatened loudly to wipe up the ranch with Skitter Dick and Pike Potter—a threat which, however, Baldy did not carry out, for good reasons.

The following week Baldy rode over to Kicking Mule himself, to place his advertisement in the paper. After that he was no more troubled by a swarm of applicants. Crowds had answered the advertisement for a five-hundred-dollar bill. Not a single person answered the advertisement offering the services of the Windy River cook.

In the days that followed, Baldy's airs and graces gradually left him, and he was a subdued Baldy.

"Hallo! You still here, Baldy?" Jimmy Silver asked, looking into the cookhouse one morning.

"Yep!"

"Staying on, after all?"

Baldy coughed.

"I guess I've thought it over," he said. "I ain't going to desert Hudson Smedley! Where'd he find a cook like me?"

"Oh!"

"This place ain't good enough for me," said Baldy. "But I'm a good-natured galoot, I am. I'm sticking on."

"But Mr. Smedley—"

"He seems to have forgot that I gave him notice to quit," said Baldy, "and—and—you needn't remind him, young Silver."

And Jimmy Silver chuckled and promised that he wouldn't.

THE END.

"Homeward Bound!" is the title of next week's magnificent story of Jimmy Silver & Co. Make certain of reading it by ordering your BOYS' FRIEND in advance!

A MAGNIFICENT BOXING YARN INTRODUCING DON DARREL & CO.!



CHAMPION OF THE FLEET!
by Victor Nelson.

Don Darrel nips in the bud the underhand schemes of Steve Milson, a rascally boxing promoter!

The 1st Chapter.

The Sailor Who Wasn't Shanghaied.

"The question is, where are we?" Jimmy Vasey, tutor to Don Darrel, the Boy with Fifty Millions, gazed up and down the dark, slum-like street, which was made to look even more wretched than usual by the drizzling rain that was falling.

He addressed Don Darrel, who, with his Redskin friend and servant, Chuta, and the Irish terrier, Snap, had halted by his side.

"I know, Jimmy," said Don, as if in sudden inspiration.

"Where, then, old chap?"

"In Portsmouth, Jimmy," Don assured him solemnly.

"You silly, mush-faced owl, I know that!" Jimmy Vasey retorted impatiently. "I also know we are in Portsmouth's waterside slums. What I mean is, which way ought we to turn to reach our hotel?"

"Why, the way the hotel lies, you big loony!"

"Well, which way is that?"

"I guess I don't know, Jimmy."

"He's hopeless, Chuta!" Jimmy declared, sighing. "He has led us into this maze with the idea of seeing the 'night life of Portsmouth,' as the idiot puts it, and now he has hopelessly lost us."

"Me tinks you are right, Jimmy," Chuta grinned, as he lit his redstone pipe. "Donnie don't know where him are and more don't me."

It was a Wednesday evening, and it had been football that had brought Don and his comrades south.

Their footer club—the Red Crusaders—were now top of the Northern Section of the League's Third Division, whilst Portsmouth Argyle headed the Southern Section, and a charity match had been arranged between the two teams, the proceeds of which had by this time found their way to the Portsmouth Seamen's Hospital.

This is not intended to be a football story, so it will suffice to say that the Red Crusaders had won by an odd goal after a very strenuous and sensational match. As was becoming his custom when playing away, Don had arranged to stop for a day or so to "do the town," as he termed it.

"Hallo, here comes someone!" Don suddenly exclaimed. "We'll ask to be put on the right track."

The chums were standing in the deep gloom of a high factory wall. Footsteps of someone approaching were echoing on the opposite pavement, and now, as their owner loomed out of the darkness, and came within the radius of a street lamp, Don, Jimmy, and Chuta saw that he was a young, lissomely-built sailor of H.M. Navy.

Don was about to stride out of the shadow of the wall and hail him when there happened a startling thing.

The door of one of the tall, dark, tumbledown houses opposite was thrown open, and three or four men sprang out and flung themselves upon the youthful A.B.

Ere he could protect himself, before any interference could come from the comrades, whose presence had apparently not been suspected, the sailor had been dragged into the forbidding-looking house, and the door had slammed upon him and his assailants.

"Waal, I'm jiggered!" Don gasped. "What's the idea, I wonder?" And he went noiselessly on tiptoe across the road, Chuta and Jimmy following him.

As they came to closer quarters they saw that a faded, weather-beaten notice-board hung over the door of the unlighted abode. On it was painted:

"MIKE KEARNS, LODGINGS FOR MEN."

And now, as they stood listening, the friends could hear the sounds of a desperate scuffle going on on the other side of the front door.

It was at that moment that fresh footfalls sounded along the street, and from out of the drizzling rain some dozen stalwart bluejackets came with the swaying walk peculiar to men who follow the sea.

"Say, boys, there's something fishy just happened here," Don Darrel said, addressing the leaders of the party. "One of your chaps was coming along the street when the door of this house opened, and three or four tough-looking guys jumped out on him and yanked him in."

The bluejackets, who had been on shore-leave, pulled up and thoughtfully regarded the building, which was apparently a low-down lodging-house. One of them, a pleasant-faced, red-headed young giant, whistled softly.

"Mike Kearns' place. I've often heard of it, and there's been whispers of queer things happening there—chaps getting robbed of their pay after being given drugged drink or food, others waking up to find themselves at sea in some ship that was short of hands, and that kind of thing," he said. "I vote we make a raid on the blessed place and get our fellow out."

"Good for you, old top!" Don Darrel exclaimed. "We are with you. Say, wait a moment! You chaps stand back in the shadows. It's all quiet inside now. I'll knock and ask for lodgings, then you rush whoever comes to the door."

"Right-hoo, matey!" agreed the big sailor. "If our chap's been hurt someone will pay for it!"

The sailors, Jimmy, and Chuta drew back into the darkness, the tutor calling Snap to his heels. Don mounted the two steps before the front door and drummed upon the panels with his knuckles.

There was a considerable delay, but at length the door was opened a few inches and kept upon a chain. The evil, yellow face of a Chinese, in a dirty blue blouse and baggy trousers, peered out. Don could just glimpse him round the edge of the door.

"Whatee you want?" he lisped, his slit-like eyes fixed upon the lad suspiciously.

"Lodgings, John," Don Darrel replied. But the Chinese evidently suspected the millionaire's well-dressed appearance, and he attempted to slam the door.

Quick as a flash Don thrust his foot in it, and—

"Come on, boys!" he yelled.

The sailors and Jimmy and Chuta "came on" with a vengeance. The chain snapped as they hurled themselves against the door. There was a crash and the door went back upon its hinges, and before the Chinese could use the wicked-looking knife that he had whipped from his baggy sleeves, he was flung flat on his back from a blow under the chin.

Over him sprang the naval men, Don and his friends, with Snap barking in excitement among them. A light showed from a room on the left of the passage in which they found themselves, and, headed by Don Darrel and the powerful carrot-haired sailor, the invaders dashed into it.

It was a dramatic scene that met their gaze.

Lying on the floor, bound hand and foot and with a gag in his mouth, was the young sailor whom Don Darrel and his chums had seen dragged into the house. Over him

were standing some half-dozen ruffian-looking men, who swung round on their heels with startled cries as the rescuers made their entry.

"By jingo, it's young Jack Leng, the chap who's just won the middle-weight boxing championship of the fleet!" cried one of the sailors. "At 'em, boys, paste the blighters!"

Two of the boxer's kidnapers had whipped life-preservers from their pockets, another was swinging a formidable sandbag, whilst a fourth had snatched up a chair, and a fifth had unbuckled his belt. But neither their evil appearance nor their weapons intimidated Don and his companions. They went at the scoundrels like a whirlwind.

The fight that followed was one to be remembered. Don Darrel knocked the burliest of the miscreants into the fireplace by jumping in and planting his fist under the rascal's chin. Jimmy landed with his left over the heart of another, and deposited him on top of the first. A sailor went down from a blow from a life-preserver, but his comrades speedily avenged him, knocking the weapons from the hands of those of the gang who remained standing, and fairly fighting them across the room.

In rather less than a couple of minutes all six were floored, with the sailors, Don, Jimmy, and Chuta standing over them, and waiting to see if they required any further attentions.

But they did not. They were more inclined to whine for mercy, and as one of the gang, who had been lying flat on his face, raised himself dazedly to his knees, and Snap flew at him and bit him in the rear, the sailors roared with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Quick, Jimmy! Keep the beggar in that position!" Don cried. "That's the ticket!"—as the tutor and one of the sailors leapt forward and forced the ruffian to retain his crouching posture.

"Now, old top, listen to me!"

"Woo-hoo! I'm bitten! Lemme get up, confound yer!" hooted the ill-fated miscreant. "He'll bite me ag'in if yer hold me like this 'ere an' tempt him!" For Snap was still snarling and growling ominously.

"He sure will—especially if I tell him to!" Don assured him. "And I shall if you don't make a clean breast of matters! Why did you make this young sailor—who, I understand, is a boxer—a prisoner? I suppose you don't know why they did it, old chap?"—turning to Seaman Leng, who had been released and helped to his feet by a couple of his comrades.

"I haven't the least idea," he said, shaking his head. "Unless, of course, they wanted to prevent me turning up at the drill-hall to-morrow night for my fight with Dan Johnson, the professional black light-heavy-weight."

"Ah, that's it, is it?" Don exclaimed. "Snap, I want you to bite this man if— No, not now, silly! Only if I tell you to! Never mind! You're a bite to the good!"

"Ow! I'll have hydrophobia! Lemme get up, you mad idjuts!"

"Not until you tell me who paid you to 'get at' this lad, my poor old guy!" the millionaire retorted firmly. "For I'll bet that's what happened! Someone wanted to keep Jack Leng out of the way so that he couldn't meet the black! Now, who was it? Out with it, or I'll say 'bite' again!"

"It was a man named Steve Milson, a feller who promotes boxing bouts an' who is a big local book-maker!" the ruffian gasped hurriedly. "There's a closed car comin' 'ere in a minute or two, an'

STORIES OF SPORT, SCHOOL AND ADVENTURE

The Finest Selection of Winter Reading for Boys on the Market!

THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY

- No. 689.—**PAUPERS OF THE LEAGUE.**
A Stirring Yarn of First Division Footer. By John W. Whoway.
- No. 690.—**FIRST PAST THE POST.**
A Breezy Story of Bacing and Adventure on the Turf. By John Gabriel.
- No. 691.—**GAN WAGA'S ISLAND.**
A Tophole Tale of Ferrers Lord & Co. By Sidney Drew.
- No. 692.—**JIMMY MACK'S DOUBLE.**
Fun, Frolic, and Mystery at Haygarth School. By Jack North.

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY

- No. 307.—**THE CRIMSON BELT.**
A Story of Intrigue and Mystery in England and Australia, Introducing Sexton Blake, Tinker, Dr. Huxton Rymer, Wu Lung, and The Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle.
- No. 308.—**THE CASE OF THE MASTER ORGANISER.**
A Fascinating Tale of Clever Detective Work and Thrilling Adventure, Introducing BOSS WALTER STONE—an Entirely New Character.
- No. 309.—**THE DESERT TRAIL.**
A Wonderful Story of Detective Adventure in England and Abroad, By the Author of "The Secret of the Lagoon," "In Savage Hayti," etc., etc.
- No. 310.—**THE PATH OF FEAR.**
A Wonderful Tale of the Underworld and the Shady Side of London's World of Wealth and Society. By the Author of "The Shield of the Law," "The Case of the Adopted Daughter," etc., etc.

Now On Sale!

Price Fourpence Each!

Thousands of pounds in prizes must be won!—See our "Footballers' Names" Competition on page 341 right away!