

"IT WAS THE FIRST DECENT THING THAT EVER CAME INTO MY MIND TO DO. BETTER MAKE AN END OF IT NOW THAN TO LIVE TO BE A BURDEN AND DISGRACE TO YOU!"

# Saved from Himself!



A Splendid Long Complete Tale, dealing with the Schooldays in the Backwoods of Canada of

## FRANK RICHARDS

(Author of the Famous School Tales of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.)

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### The Last Day at School.

"**C**HEER-HO, Franky!" Bob Lawless clapped Frank Richards on the shoulder as he spoke, riding close to him on the trail through the timber, and Frank nearly pitched on to his horse's mane.

The chums of Cedar Creek were on their way to school, in the bright, sunny morning, and Frank Richards had sunk into a deep reverie.

That hearty clap on the shoulder effectually roused him from it.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

Bob laughed.

"Twenty-five cents for them, old chap!" he said.

"Eh? For what?"

"Your thoughts, of course. They must be worth it, to judge by the way you've been scowling for the last ten minutes."

"Have I been scowling?" asked Frank mildly.

"Well, perhaps you'd call it a thoughtful frown," grinned Bob. "I know you've been staring at your geegee's ears, with a face tied up in a knot. You don't seem to notice what a gorgeous morning it is. Can't you smell the scent from the pine-woods?"

"Ye-es. But I was thinking of old Beau," said Frank.

Bob's cheery face became grave at once.

"Well, I've been thinking about him, too," he said. "It's pretty rotten, old Beau clearing off, and leaving us in the lurch, Franky. I guess I shall miss the Cherub. We began our acquaintance by punching each other's noses, but—"

"I suppose it's better for him to go, Bob," said Frank, with a sigh. "His father's right, I suppose. But we shall miss him. He will miss us, too."

"I guess so. Can't be helped," said Bob. "There's a few days yet."

"I—I wish—"

Bob Lawless gave his English cousin a quick look.

"You wish you were going back to the Old Country with him?" he asked.

"I wasn't thinking of that. I wish he could stay here."

"But it was a change for you, coming out

here, Frank. You were at a public school in England before you came to Canada. I should think it was ripping!"

"So it was," said Frank. "But I should not like to leave Cedar Creek now. Beau doesn't want to leave, either, though he's going to what would be called a much finer sort of life."

"Fancy the Cherub being the nephew of an English earl!" said Bob. "Some fellows would swank on that. It doesn't count for anything out here, but I suppose in the Old Country it means an awful lot. The Cherub will grow into a terrific dude, and he will wonder that he ever managed to put up with Cedar Creek and the backwoods."

Frank Richards shook his head.

"You don't think that, Bob. Hallo! Here he is!"

Vere Beauclerc, on his handsome black horse, was waiting at the fork of the trail. He smiled faintly as his chums joined him, and they rode on together.

Beauclerc's handsome face was very grave.

It was evident that the coming departure did not make him happy, though he was little accustomed to betraying his feelings.

Wealth and distinction awaited him in England, but it meant a break with all he had known, and, above all, with his two loyal chums, and with his father, the remittance-man of Cedar Creek.

Lascalles Beauclerc, the waster of the family, was not wanted at home.

His brother was willing to provide for Vere, but it was upon the understanding that the waster remained where he was.

Vere felt the slight to his father, and he had passionately refused to accept his uncle's offer; but Mr. Beauclerc had accepted it for him.

The die was cast now, and in a couple of days more Vere Beauclerc was to take the post-wagon to Kamloops, the nearest railroad town, to start on his long journey.

"Looking forward to it, Cherub?" asked Bob Lawless, breaking a long and grim silence, only broken hitherto by the tattoo of hoofs on the hard trail.

Beauclerc started.

"To what? Going home, do you mean? No."

"Not to the baronial halls?" asked Bob, with a smile.

Beauclerc smiled, too, but very faintly. "I'd rather stay here," he said. "I was brought up here—this is my home. And—and I don't want to leave my father. I—I can't help thinking—"

He broke off.

"Your pater's all right?" asked Frank.

"Oh, yes; better in health, I think, than he has been for a long time," said Vere. "But—but there's something I don't quite understand about him. I know it will be a blow to him when I go, but he thinks it his duty to send me. But—but he will miss me; he will be all alone at the shack, and—and—"

He broke off again, his brow clouding.

His chums were silent.

All three of them felt keenly the shadow of the coming change.

Bob and Frank, too, could not help wondering that the remittance-man, the hopeless waster, had found firmness enough to do his duty in that respect, for they could guess what a loss his son's departure would be to him.

Vere was all he had.

Of late, the waster had seemed to change his ways.

He had not been seen at the camp saloons or in the poker-parties at Gunten's store in Thompson.

It was as if the unfortunate waster wished his son to take away with him the best recollection possible of his father.

But after Vere was gone, would the change last?

The boy would have been glad to think so, but—There was a "but."

He could not think so.

When Lascalles Beauclerc was left quite alone, was it not only too likely that he would sink deeper than ever into the mire he had lately emerged from?

That thought haunted Vere, and embittered the parting, shadowing whatever anticipations he might have had of his new life.

With a clatter of hoofs, the three chums rode up to the lumber-school.

They were early for lessons, and a good many of the Cedar Creek fellows gathered round them in the playground.

The news about Beauclerc was known at

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the lumber-school, and it excited a great deal of interest there.

At one time Beauclerc had not been popular in the school.

The cheery, hearty young Canadians hardly understood his quiet reserve, and were inclined to attribute it to snobbishness, on account of his great connections at home.

They understood him better now, and Beauclerc was very well liked.

"So you're going home, Beauclerc?" said Chunky Todgers. "Gunten says you've got a place in the post-wagon for Wednesday."

Beauclerc nodded.

"Yes, Chunky."

"I say, is your uncle really a nobleman?" asked Chunky inquisitively.

"Yes."

"Does he wear a crown?" inquired Chunky.

"A what?" ejaculated Beauclerc.

"Don't they wear crowns?" asked Chunky innocently.

"Coronets," said Eben Hacke, with an air of superior wisdom. "Coronets, you young jay! How much did your uncle give for his coronet, Beauclerc?"

"Ha, ha! I don't know!"

"Ever seen the old sport?"

"Yes, when I was a little kid," said Beauclerc.

"Was he wearing his coronet then?" asked Chunky.

"Coronet!" yelled Hacke. "Not a coronet—a coronet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No; he was wearing a bowler-hat when I saw him last," said Beauclerc, laughing.

"Oh, my!" said Chunky, evidently disappointed. A nobleman in a bowler-hat did not fit in with Chunky's previous ideas of peers of the realm.

"What's his title?" asked Hacke.

"Lord St. Austell."

"My! That sounds tiptop!" said Hacke admiringly. "I suppose you're feeling simply glorious at going?"

"Not at all," said Beauclerc quietly. "I'd rather stay here, if I had my choice."

"Well, carry me home to die!" ejaculated Eben Hacke. "Look here, I guess I'll do a trade with you, if you like. Let me go instead of you. I dare say your uncle will be just as pleased—more, very likely."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're all sorry you're going, Beauclerc," said Tom Lawrence.

"Me sooly, too!" said little Yen Chin. "Me miss nicey o.e. Chetub. Pool ill' Chinese cly."

"We'll come and see you off in the wagon, if Miss Meadows will let us off," said Dick Dawson.

"And I've got a box of maple-sugar for you to take with you," said Chunky Todgers. "I don't believe you can get it in England."

"You've got it, Chunky?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Yep."

"Then I'll bet you ten to one that it doesn't last till Cherub goes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bell rang, and Cedar Creek went in to lessons.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Father and Son.

IT was Beauclerc's last day at Cedar Creek.

The next day was to be spent in the final preparations for his journey.

After lessons he walked about the school grounds with his chums, taking his last look at Cedar Creek.

His face was clouded.

He was surprised himself to find how attached he had grown to the school in the backwoods.

When the chums left at last Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey bade a kind farewell to Beauclerc, and gave him their good wishes.

In the setting sun the three chums rode on the homeward trail.

All three were silent.

At the fork of the trail they halted.

"We shall see you to-morrow, Beau," said Frank.

"For the last time," said Beauclerc, his lips trembling a little.

"No fear!" said Bob. "We're going to see you off on Wednesday morning when the wagon goes. I believe some of the fellows are coming, too!"

"It's jolly good of them!" said Beauclerc.

"I—I never thought anybody at the school

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would care if I went, excepting you fellows, of course."

Frank and Bob trotted onwards towards the ranch, and Beauclerc followed the branch trail towards Cedar Camp.

The black horse proceeded at a walk in the gathering dusk, the rider remaining plunged in thought.

He came in sight of the shack, and saw his father at work in the field close by the little home.

Lascalles Beauclerc was delving industriously, and Vere watched him curiously as he rode up.

In former days he had not often seen his father work.

Lascalles Beauclerc looked up, and stood leaning on his spade as he heard the clatter of hoofs.

Vere jumped down.

His father gave him a kind word of greeting, and then, leaving the spade jammed in the earth, went into the shack.

Vere put up his horse in the shed and followed him in.

Since the decision that Vere was to go he had received nothing out of kindness from his father, and it went strangely to the boy's heart.

They sat down to the evening meal.

Vere could eat little.

His heart was heavy, and his attempt to keep up a cheerful appearance was not very successful.

After the meal Lascalles Beauclerc lighted his pipe.

Father and son sat silent for a long time.

It was Vere who broke the silence.

"Father!"

"Yes, lad?"

"I—I don't want to oppose your wishes," faltered Vere; "but—but if you would let me stay—"

"That is all settled, Vere."

"I—I know. But—"

"I suppose you feel it a little parting from what you have been accustomed to, my boy," said Mr. Beauclerc. "But you can trust your father's judgment that it is for the best."

"I do, father. Put—"

"You will miss Richards and Lawless at first, but you will make other friends in England, Vere."

"I wasn't thinking of that just then."

"But what?"

"You'll miss me, dad?"

"Naturally."

"But—but do you want to be left alone, father?"

A strange smile flickered over the remittance-man's face for a moment.

Vere hardly knew why, but it gave him a vague alarm.

Mr. Beauclerc smoked in silence for some minutes.

He spoke at last.

"Now that you are going to leave me, Vere, I will speak plainly. Your uncle is quite right in thinking that you will be better away from me. What am I? A waster, a loafer, a man at whom the finger of scorn is pointed even in this rough country?"

"Father!" murmured the boy.

"You are going to a new life—a life suitable for one of your name and family," went on the remittance-man. "You will feel a wrench at first, but that will pass. You will have every chance, and you will make more of life than I can make of mine. You are differently built. I was doomed from the beginning—a bad training, early self-indulgence. So long as my father lived I was denied nothing, and I denied myself nothing, and the end of it you see."

He made a restless movement.

"I've been a waster all my life, Vere. I've fought against it sometimes—never for long, and never effectually. I have to drag it out to the end. Drink and gambling have been my bane, but I cannot give them up."

"But—"

"As I have lived, I must live. I am too old to change. Vere, if you remained with me you would see me sinking lower and lower."

"Don't!" muttered the boy miserably.

"This is the truth, Vere. You are young now, and you do not fully understand. And you are an affectionate son, and you make allowances that others will not make. But as you grow older you will grow to despise your father."

"Never!"

"Even now, Vere, you have felt the stigma of my reputation," said the remittance-man

coldly. "You have never told me so, but I am well aware that, even at the backwoods school, you have had to listen to sneers and hints on the subject of the remittance-man, the loafer—"

Vere Beauclerc crimsoned.

"All that must end," said Mr. Beauclerc.

"Now it is ending, Vere."

"But—but, father, since the flood you—you have been different!" faltered Vere timidly. "Why not—"

"The leopard cannot change his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin," said the remittance-man moodily. "I have made an effort, for your sake, Vere, but that effort will not last."

"Then—then, after I am gone—"

"There is no need to speak of that, my boy. The best thing you can do, when you get to the Old Country, is to forget that you ever had a father."

"You know that couldn't be, father! But—but I will not go!" exclaimed Vere.

"If it is as you say, you need me, and I shall stay."

The remittance-man rose to his feet.

"No more of that, Vere. You must go; that is settled and irrevocable! And I have my own plans, after you are gone, and your presence here would seriously interfere with them."

Vere compressed his lips, bitterly wounded.

"Then you do not want me, father?"

"No," said the remittance-man steadily. "My plans could not be carried out if you remained, and, therefore, you must go."

"I shall not speak of it again, father!" said the boy bitterly.

He went to his room, with a leaden heart.

His father did not want him; that was the beginning and the end of it.

What plans were they which could not be carried out in his presence at the shack?

Well he knew that once his father's shady associates had nearly succeeded in drawing him into crime.

Was it that—that was it that when his son was gone, Lascalles Beauclerc would throw aside the last restraint that had hitherto held him in check?

Vere Beauclerc slept little that night.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### The Parting.

"HALLO, Cherub!"

There was a clatter of hoofs outside the shack in the sunny morning, and Bob Lawless

shouted cheerily as he rode up.

Beauclerc came out to meet his chums.

The remittance-man was not to be seen.

"We've come to help you, Beau," said Frank Richards.

"My packing's done," said Beauclerc.

"There wasn't much of it—only a bag." He smiled faintly. "If you fellows like, I'd rather have a ride round to-day—a last look round the valley."

"Jolly good idea!" said Bob Lawless.

"We'll make a day of it, and have a ripping ride for the last time."

Beauclerc brought out his horse, and the three schoolboys rode away together.

Frank and Bob had leave from school for that day.

"My father's gone out," Vere explained, perhaps feeling that some explanation was required why his father did not want him at home, on the last day in the section.

"He will be out all day on business."

"Business" with the remittance-man generally meant poker or euchre at the Red Dog or Gunten's store, but the chums learned later in the day that this time Mr. Beauclerc's business was of a very different sort.

The chums enjoyed their last ride in the valley, though their hearts were not light.

The sun was sinking when they turned their horses homeward at last.

Frank Richards and Bob left Beauclerc at the shack, promising to be there again in time to meet the post-wagon in the morning, and rode away to the ranch.

On the dusty trail they fell in with Billy Cook, the foreman, jogging home from Cedar Camp, with purchases slung on both sides of his horse.

The ranchman glanced round as the schoolboys trotted up and joined him on the trail.

"Any news from the camp, Billy?" Bob Lawless inquired.

Billy Cook grinned.

"Yep! Old Man Beauclerc has been opening their eyes."

"Not painting the town red again, surely?" exclaimed Bob.

"Nix! He's been paying his debts."

"Oh!"

"Honest Injun!" said the ranchman. "The boys are all talking about it. You bet your sweet life! Old Man Beauclerc has been round the town paying his bills! Must have used up his last remittance to the last Continental red cent, if you ask me! Not only in Cedar Camp—over in Thompson, too!" The ranchman chuckled. "I calculate he must have taken a hull grip sack full of receipts home with him to the shack."

"Oh!" said Frank Richards, quite taken aback by that odd information.

"The boys say Old Man Beauclerc is a reformed character!" grinned Billy Cook. "He passed Poker Pete in the street without speaking to him, and declined to take a hand in a game at the Red Dog. He stood out when it was drinks all round at the Continental. I guess it's time the skies were falling, arter that!"

"That's all good news!" said Bob.

"Too good!" said the ranchman sagely. "I've seed these hyer tremenjus reforms before—they break out worse arter. Slow and sure is the thing, my sonnies! You don't go the whole hog at one jump. Next week I reckon Old Man Beauclerc will be keeping it up with the boys from Oshkosh, I reckon!"

Frank Richards could not help feeling that the ranchman was probably right, though he hoped for the best.

The next morning the chums mounted their ponies early to ride to the shack.

The post-wagon from Thompson passed on the trail at an early hour, and Vere Beauclerc was to board it near his home.

The post-trail ran a quarter of a mile from the shack, and at the nearest point Vere Beauclerc was waiting with his father when the chums rode up.

Mr. Beauclerc looked unusually trim and well dressed.

Vere was pale and quiet.

His bag lay at his feet in the grass.

Bob and Frank dismounted, and hitched their horses to a tree.

Mr. Beauclerc was going with his son on the post-wagon to Kamloops, but here the boy was to say farewell to his friends.

The remittance-man nodded civilly to the boys.

Beauclerc smiled at them a little tremulously.

"You're early!" he said.

"The early bird catches the worm!" said Bob dismally. "I don't feel very spry this morning, somehow."

"You'll write when you get home, Beau?" said Frank.

"I shall write from Quebec," said Beauclerc. "I'm staying one day there, it seems. And—and I'll write as soon as I land in England. I—I wish you fellows were coming with me!"

"Don't I, just!" said Frank.

"Pr'aps we'll run over and see you in the summer holidays, Cherub," said Bob. "I guess I'll try to work it with the popper."

Beauclerc's face brightened.

"You right!" he said.

"That is, if you want to see a Canadian backwoods chap in the stately halls of the Beauclercs!" grinned Bob.

"Bob!"

"Excuse me, old chap! I'm only chewing the rag because—because I feel down in the dumps," said Bob. "I guess it won't feel the same place without you, Cherub. Just to think that we'll never meet you again at the fork of the trail, going to school!"

Bob's hearty voice trembled a little, and he broke off abruptly.

"I was t'inking of that," said Beauclerc in a low voice.

"The post-wagon is coming," said Mr. Beauclerc.

There was a clatter of hoofs, and a rumble of wheels in the rough trail.

The post-wagon from Thompson, drawn by three horses, clattered up, and stopped as the driver spotted the passengers standing beside the trail.

But behind the wagon there was a loud clatter of more hoofs and a bunch of boyish riders came in sight.

Chunky Todgers, Eben Hacke, Tom Lawrence, Dick Dawson, and Harold Hopkins, and two or three more Cedar Creek fellows dashed up, and jumped from their saddles.

"I guess we were bound to see you off, Cherub!" grinned Eben. "Perhaps in England, too!"

"Thank you—thank you all!" said Beauclerc in a deeply moved voice.

He was strangely touched by that last act of attention from his schoolfellows.

"Sorry you're goin', and 'ope you'll 'ave a good time," said Hopkins. "And, I tell you what, Cherub, if you ever find yourself down

Old Kent Road way, you give my uncle a look-in. He keeps a fried-fish shop—"

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Eben Hacke.

"Look 'ere, 'Acke—" began the Cockney schoolboy w:mily

"I'll remember, Hopkins," said Beauclerc, with a smile. "Hallo, Chunky!"

Chunky Todgers was nudging his arm.

Chunky's fat face wore a woebegone expression.

"I—I say, Beauclerc—" he murmured.

"Yes, kid?"

"You remember I—I was bringing you a bag of maple-sugar to take home."

Beauclerc had, as a matter of fact, forgotten that important circumstance, but he nodded with a smile.

"It was awfully kind of you, Chunky!"

"I—I put it on my moss when I started this morning—"

"Yes."

"I—I tasted it as I came along," said Chunky. "The—the air's so fresh in the morning, it makes you awfully hungry. It was jolly good! And—and—"

Beauclerc laughed; he could guess what was coming.

"And—and somehow it all went!" said Chunky dolorously. "There—there isn't any left."

"Never mind, old chap. I'll take the will for the deed," said Beauclerc.

"But—but, I say, you know, I'm going to send you some by post," said Chunky.

"I guess you'd better get some other galoot to take it to the post-office, then," said Bob Lawless.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All aboard, gents!" sang out the driver, cracking his whip.

Mr. Beauclerc and the bag were already in the wagon.

Vere stepped in, and then there was a last handshaking all round, the Cedar Creek fellows crowding round.

Frank Richards and Bob gripped their chum's hand in turn at last, and the wagon started.

"Good-bye, Beau, old chap!"

"Good-bye, Cherub!"

The wagon rumbled down the trail.

The Cedar Creek fellows waved their hats after it, and Beauclerc waved his hand back till it was cut of sight in a dip of the prairie.

The waving group disappeared from the sight of the boy in the wagon.

He sat down with a pale and clouded face. His father did not speak.



OFF TO THE OLD COUNTRY!—"Good-bye, Beau, old chap!" Frank Richards and Bob gripped their chum's hand in turn, and the wagon started. The Cedar Creek fellows waved their hats after it, as the wagon rumbled down the trail and out of sight. (See Chapter 3.)

NEXT TUESDAY!

"THE NEW MASTER!"

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A MAGNIFICENT TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO.  
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The horses clattered on, to the accompaniment of a cracking whip.

Vere Beauclerc sat in silence, looking back from the rolling wagon, back at the scene he was leaving for ever.

But he did not see clearly now; the wide plain, the distant pine woods, the soaring mountain-top, were all in a blur.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Shadow of Fear.

**"KAMLOOPS!"**  
Little had been said during the long drive.

The post-wagon drove at last into the railway town, and Mr. Beauclerc and his son descended.

There were two hours to wait at the station and a meal was taken, and then father and son waited for the train.

They paced the station for some time in silence.

Vere glanced occasionally at his father's grave face.

There was a deep unrest in his heart. He could not understand his father now. For days past there had been something in the remittance-man's manner that perplexed and alarmed him.

What was his father's intention after he was gone?

What were the "plans" he had spoken of? In his new life of sobriety and self-restraint during the last few weeks Lascelles Beauclerc was undoubtedly looking upon things in a different light. A change had taken place in him which Vere could not comprehend.

He had shown that he felt the shame of his degradation, yet in the same breath he had said that he could not mend his ways, that the effort was beyond him.

Was he content to sink back into what he had been—and worse?

The boy could not think so.

And yet what else did his father's words mean?

Vere was hopelessly perplexed and desolate. The train came at last.

Mr. Beauclerc placed his son in the train, and placed his rug round him with an almost womanly tenderness.

"Good-bye my boy!" he said in a faltering voice. "Think as kindly of your father as you can in the years to come. I have not been a good man, and I've not been a good father to you, but I've always cared for you, my boy. Good-bye—good-bye!"

"Oh, father!" said Vere, his voice choking.

"Even now it's not too late. Let me come home with you in the wagon."

Mr. Beauclerc smiled.

"Good-bye, Vere!"

He stepped from the train.

His tall figure stood motionless, watching, as the great train moved out; and Vere waved his hand, and his father waved back.

Then he vanished in the dark.

Beauclerc sank back in his seat.

The train thundered on.

Vere's mind was full of troubled thoughts.

When would he see his father again?

What did his strange looks and words mean?

Was it possible—his very heart seemed to chill at the thought—possible that death might prevent a meeting?

His father was not old, but his life had told upon him. Late hours and drink and unhealthy excitement would undermine the strongest constitution in the long run, and his father had never been strong.

Was it possible that Lascelles Beauclerc had felt a forewarning of such an end, and so had sent his son away to a new home and a new protector?

Vere started up in his seat, hardly able to repress a cry of fear and misery, as that black thought came to him.

Was it possible?

Was he leaving his father, not only to solitude, but to die in solitude?

In his excited, feverish state of mind the terrible thought grew upon him, till it seemed to the boy that it was clear—that it was so clear that it was a marvel he had not guessed it before.

That, and that alone, could account for all his father had said, and for what Vere had read in his face that had so puzzled him.

The train was roaring down an incline with a crash of brakes.

There was a buzz of talk in the boy's ears.

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"THE NEW MASTER!"

but he hardly realised that he was not alone. The train was speeding on. Ere long it would be climbing the slopes of the Rocky Mountains; that giant barrier would rise between him and his father—his father whom he would never see again with his living eyes!

It was too much!

Beauclerc started to his feet.

The conductor was passing along the aisle, and Beauclerc caught him by the arm.

"When's the next stop?"

"Ten minutes, sonny," said the big Canadian, glancing curiously at the boy's white face. "No time to get down, though—only a stop for water."

"Thank you!"

Beauclerc gathered up his bag and his rug mechanically.

His mind was made up.

He had not thought it out; he was incapable at that moment of consecutive thought.

He was acting upon instinct—an instinct there was no denying.

His father might be angry at his return—he would be angry.

But he was going back—he must go back.

The great train thundered to a stop.

Without giving himself time for hesitation, Vere Beauclerc jumped out.

Lights twinkled in the darkness about him. He stumbled on.

"All aboard!" he heard a call in the distance.

Then the thunder of the moving train.

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THE  
GREYFRIARS  
PARLIAMENT?  
If Not, Turn to Page 27 and  
find out all about the  
"Magnet's" Wonderful  
New Feature.**

He stood with beating heart, and watched the lights disappear along the line.

The train was gone!

It was too late for repentance now, if he had repented.

But there was no change in his thoughts; his only thought was to get to his father.

He stumbled along in the darkness.

"Hallo! Lost yourself, sonny?"

A big man in a Stetson hat, with an oil-can in his hand, looked down on him.

Vere stopped.

"Can I get a horse here?" he asked.

"I guess you can, if you've got the durocks," said the big man, staring at him.

"Lost you—train?"

"I left the train. I've got to get back home," stammered Beauclerc.

"And where may your home happen to be, sonny?"

"Up the Thompson River."

"I guess you can't get there to-night, then. Perhaps I could manage a shakedown for you in the station-house."

"I must get home. If you will let me leave my bag and rug here till I can send for them, and tell me where I can get a horse—"

"I guess—"

"I'm afraid my father's ill—very ill!" muttered Beauclerc. "I've got to go."

"Oh, that alters the case!" said the stationmaster kindly. "You sashay along with me and I'll see you through."

No time was lost.

Mr. Beauclerc had given his son ample money for the journey, and there was no difficulty in hiring a horse in the straggling village round the railway-sheds.

In a quarter of an hour, Vere Beauclerc

was in the saddle, riding away into the darkness, and the lights of the railway vanished behind him.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Saved From Himself.

**C**LATTER, clatter!  
Instantly the hoofs beat and beat in the silence of the night.

The moon came up over the Rockies at last, and found Vere Beauclerc still riding tirelessly.

Through the long, dark night he rode, unconscious of fatigue.

He did not know how many miles he covered.

But the horse showed fatigue at last, and his pace slackened.

Where was his father now?

The post-wagon home from Kamloops would be all night on the trail, jogging along with its sleepy driver.

It would be long past midnight when it drove into Thompson—perhaps near to dawn.

Mr. Beauclerc would be dropped at the shack—perhaps at three in the morning.

It was barely three now. He could tell that by the stars.

He would reach home, perhaps, an hour later than his father—not more than that.

What would the remittance-man say when he knocked at the cabin in the dead of night?

He would be angry. What did it matter?

A terrible fear was growing in the boy's heart—a fear that he dared not put into words.

The fearful suspicion that had forced itself into his mind was too black and bitter to think upon clearly.

But he longed, with a wild longing, to be at the cabin, to see that his father was safe—safe!

Over the pine forests sailed the full, round moon.

He rode on and on as fast as the slackening horse could stride.

Would he never reach the shack?

He was in familiar surroundings at last.

He caught a glimpse in the far distance of the Lawless Ranch, where his chums were sleeping peacefully, all unconscious of his wild night-ride.

He glanced at it for a moment as the thought of Frank and Bob crossed his mind, and rode on.

His horse was showing signs of distress now, though the boy himself felt no fatigue.

Long, long hours had passed since he had ridden away from the railroad.

Even at that feverish moment it went to his heart to over-drive the animal he rode, but he could not spare it.

His father. He could only think of his father, and the terrible dread that was gnawing at his breast.

His steed stumbled at last, and whinnied piteously.

Beauclerc slid from the saddle.

He patted the horse's neck gently, kindly, and threw the rein over a low branch.

On foot, he ran on—along the creek till the trail left it, and then on to the shack.

In the glimmering moonlight his old home came into sight—the backwoods home he had thought never to see again.

Breathlessly, beginning to feel at last the weariness of his long effort, the boy ran up to the shack.

It was dark within, but the door opened to his touch.

Panting, he stepped into the shack.

"Father!"

He called softly.

"Father!"

There was no reply.

He threw open the door wide, and the moonlight streamed in.

The bunk in the corner was empty; the door of the inner room was open, and that room was empty also.

The shack was untenanted.

Where was his father?

In Cedar Camp, perhaps, at the Red Dog, or playing poker with the sports at Thompson.

The hour was too late even for that.

It wanted but half an hour to dawn.

Where was his father?

"Father!"

There was a note of terror in the boy's voice as he called again.

It was no longer a fear that oppressed him; it was a terrible certainty.

(Continued on page 26.)

**SAVED FROM HIMSELF!**

(Continued from page 10.)

He ran blindly from the shack, and looked towards the creek.

Silver in the moonlight, black under the trees, the creek ran murmuring through the night.

The bark canoe was gone from its place.

His father had taken the canoe—at that hour! Why?

"Father! Father!"

The words were strangled in his throat. He stood panting on the bank, searching the creek with his eyes.

A shadow moved under the overhanging trees.

Splash!

It came faintly to his ears across the water.

From the shadows a canoe floated into sight—empty!

"Father!" shrieked Beauclerc.

He plunged madly into the water.

His face was like marble, his eyes wild; but he swam with strong strokes towards the circling bubbles in the shadows.

His groping hand caught at something that floated. With feverish, almost mad energy he dragged his burden shoreward, and Lascelles Beauclerc, white and almost unconscious, was laid in the long grass, the moon glimmering on his face, his son kneeling by his side, shaken with sobs.

"Father! Father!"

The remittance-man's eyes opened, fixing strangely upon his son.

It was his son's hand that had dragged him back from the valley of the shadow of death—from the last crime of a misspent life.

"Vere!" The man's voice was hoarse and broken. "I am dreaming! Have I gone mad? My son!"

"Father!"

The remittance-man dragged himself into a sitting posture, leaning weakly against a gnarled trunk.

Vere was sobbing without restraint.

Understanding came to the man at last.

"Vere! What are you doing here?" he muttered huskily.

"I—I came back—"

"How did you know?"

"I did not know—unless it was Providence that warned me. I only feared—" His voice broke. "Oh, father how could you?"

"It was the only way," he muttered—"the only way! It was the first decent thing I ever came into my mind to do. Better make an end of it, once and for all, than live to be a burden and disgrace to you!"

"And that—that was what you meant when you sent me away? Father! I shall not leave you again!"

"You don't understand, boy!" muttered the remittance-man. "I tell you, you don't know me. I tell you I shall live to disgrace you, till you grow to hate me!"

"Never that! Only—only promise me that you will never—never think of that again!" He made a shuddering gesture towards the creek. "I can bear anything else—anything but that!"

"And you came back!" said the remittance-man, in a tone of wonder. "A few minutes more, and— You must have ridden all night!"

"Promise me, father!"

The remittance-man made a weary gesture.

"Well, it shall be as you like; I promise. Do you know you are throwing your life away, Vere, for a man who is not worth a single thought?"

"You have promised!" said Beauclerc, unheeding. "I know you will keep your promise. Thank Heaven, I came in time!"

When the dawn came it found Vere Beauclerc sleepless and worn; but it found him calm, almost happy.

His father was saved to him, and whatever wild ways Lascelles Beauclerc's feet might tread in future days, his promise was sacred, and the most dreaded blow of all would never fall upon the remittance-man's son.

THE END.

(Another grand long complete story of the Backwoods next Tuesday, entitled "The New Master!" Order early.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 192.

NEXT TUESDAY!

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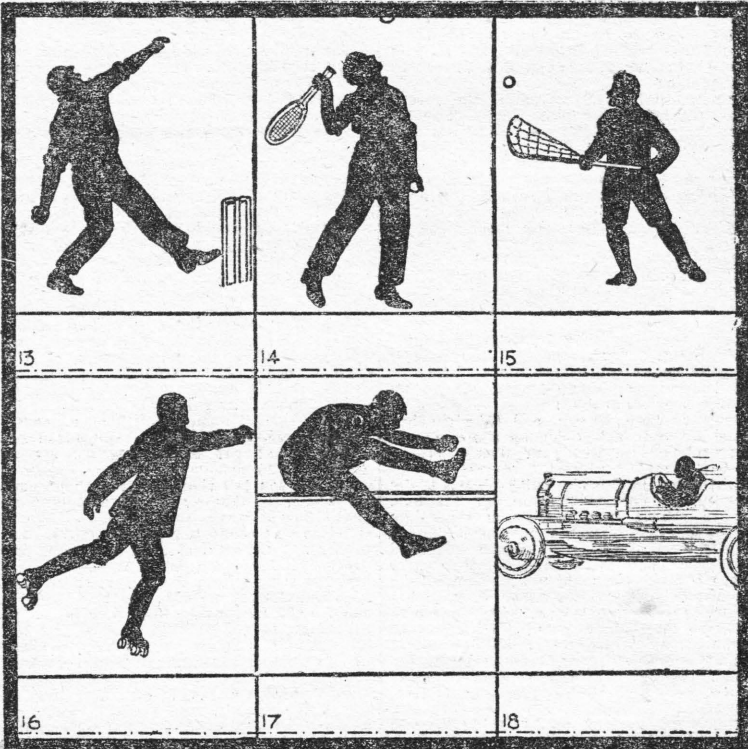
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