

**STUPENDOUS SUCCESS! OUR SENSATIONAL STORY OF DICK TURPIN!
IN THIS ISSUE!**

Week Ending -
March 10th,
1923.

New
Series.

No.
216.

Twenty-eight
Pages.

The POPULAR 2^D

The Story Book for Boys.

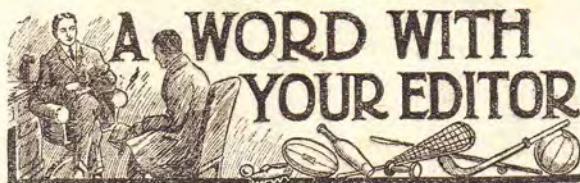
Money Prizes
Every
Week!



HARRY WHARTON'S DESPERATE LEAP TO CATCH THE BOUNDER!

(A Dramatic Episode from the Long Complete Greyfriars Tale Inside.)

Say, you Fellows, isn't this Programme a Bumper One?



"LOOKING AFTER WINGATE."

There's no more popular fellow at Greyfriars than George Wingate, the captain of the school, and it stands to reason that when the shadow of trouble hangs over the senior, the juniors rally round him. Harry Wharton & Co. generally contrive to make the sparks fly. The cheery champions of the Remove weigh in as allies of the skipper, and stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of what they know to be the right cause. This cause and Wingate's well-earned position are one and the same on this occasion. It is a spirited yarn, and sheds fresh light on Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and their comrades. It is a tight corner, not a doubt of it, and at one time things look jolly black for Wingate. Look out next Tuesday for the story which shows how the juniors assist very materially to pull the captain out of a mess.

IN THE BACKWOODS.

Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauchere are seen following up their quest for gold in next week's uncommonly smart and live tale of the great North-West. Most people are keen as mustard after what they are pleased to call the auriferous metal. Naturally the plucky travellers in the backwoods take an intelligent interest in the matter, but they don't make the huge mistake of staking all on gold. They know it is not worth it. This series is improving every week. Non poss. you will say as you recall the bright happenings at Cedar Creek. Still, read next week's splendid tale and judge for yourselves.

"THE HERO OF THE HOUR."

After a merry fling as a giddy hero, what else could Tubby Muffin look for but the reckoning. The latter is almost as certain to follow on as the dust cart which is seen dragging its weary self in the wake of the Lord Mayor's Show. Next Tuesday's Rookwood yarn calls for some painful reflections. These reflections are entirely the property of Mr. Muffin.

"THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR."

St. Jim's is in fine form next week, but Baggy Trimble is not. There's the trouble. Baggy bit off a lot more than was necessary in his recent millionaire stunt, and Nemesis is on his track as a consequence. There is a good laugh in the coming narrative which shows how Baggy comes into money—and goes out of it quickly, so to speak. There has been a mystery about Trimble's large supply of the spondulicks, and when the curtain rises on the deplorable secret, Baggy realises—even his dull brain tells him that much!—that the only thing for him to do is to fly. So, as he would put it, he "does a bunk," to escape retribution.

FREE SPLENDID PHOTOGRAPHS.

The Popular series of Famous Sportsmen goes on its triumphant way. Next Tuesday's Free Real Glossy Photograph is extra fine.

"STAND AND DELIVER!"

Last, but not least! It is hardly needful for me to dilate on the tremendous sensation David Goodwin's highwayman serial has produced. It is the biggest thing out, and the interest and excitement are piled up in the coming instalment. Turpin and Dick Neville are in the very thick of it this time.

The "BOYS' FRIEND" and "GEM."

All readers of the POPULAR ought to see the really magnificent Hand Coloured Photographs of Famous Footballers being given away each week with the "Boys' Friend." The old Green 'Un has scored its biggest triumph with this magnificent coloured portrait gallery.

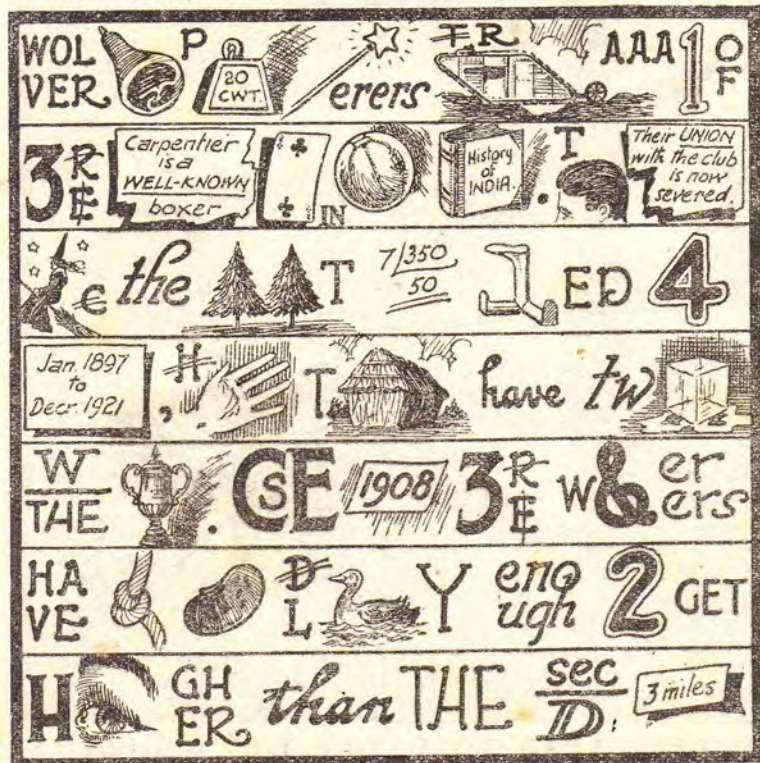
The "Gem" has a superb treat, too, with its splendid Glossy, Real Action Autographed Photos of celebrated footballers. Don't miss these.

Your Editor.

BIG CASH PRIZES MUST BE WON AGAIN!

What is the Solution of the Simple Picture-Puzzle Below. Send in Yours To-Day!

FIRST PRIZE £5 0 0: Second Prize £2 10 0:
TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH.



What You Have To Do.

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Wolverhampton Wanderers," Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, March 15th, 1923.

The **FIRST PRIZE** of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Boys' Friend," "Magnet," and "Gem," and readers of these journals are invited to compete.

I enter "Wolverhampton Wanderers" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

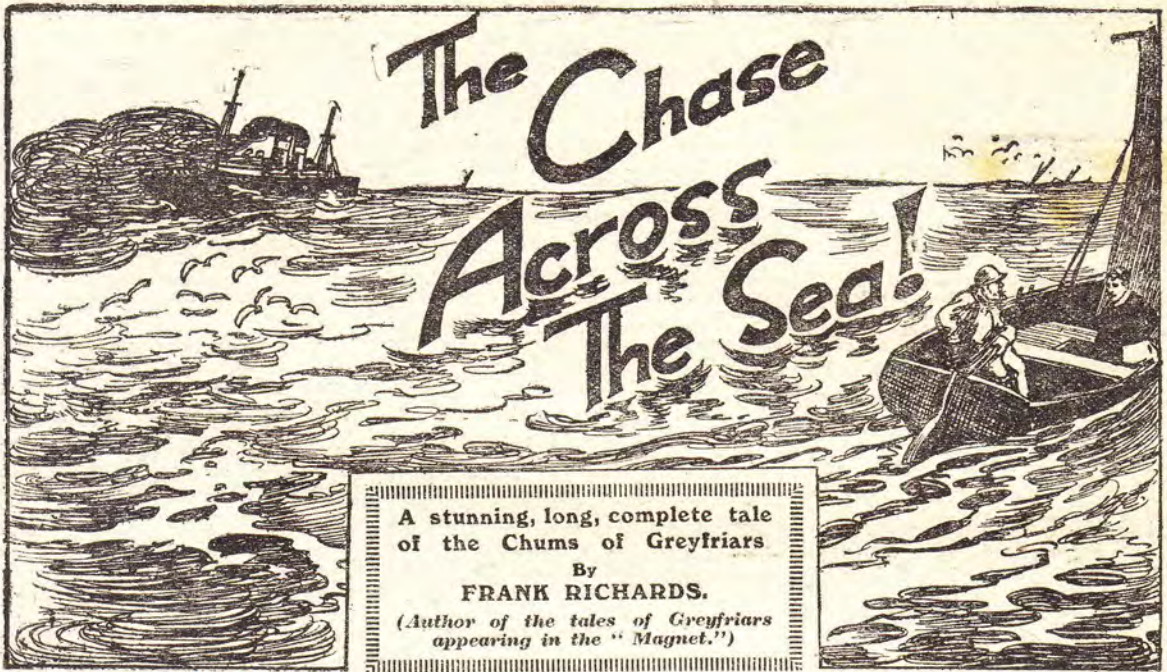
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THE BOUNDER'S MAD FLIGHT!

Vernon-Smith makes a wild bolt to escape from the consequences of a rash act, with the Chums of Greyfriars hot on his heels!

SENSATIONAL GREYFRIARS TALE!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Baffled!

"YOU silly asses! You'll get sacked!" Bulstrode, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, made that remark with just as much emphasis as he possibly could.

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry.

Four of the juniors were dressing, although the lights in their dormitory had only been turned out a few minutes. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Ilurree Singh, and Bob Cherry were very grim and silent.

"Let the Bounder stop away!" added Bulstrode, with a sneer.

"Let him go and eat coke!" supplemented Skinner, the sneak of the Remove.

The chums did not answer.

The Bounder of Greyfriars, otherwise Herbert Vernon-Smith, had for some time shown distinct signs of giving up his caddish ways, and in that Harry Wharton & Co. were willing to back him up. There were good points about the Bounder, as well as bad.

But now the Bounder had gone—disappeared!

Everybody knew why. Vernon-Smith had been punished severely by Loder of the Sixth, and when that punishment showed no signs of coming to an end, the Bounder hit back.

Unfortunately, he chose a cricket-bat with which to hit back, and Loder had been stunned—in fact, he had been left for dead by the Bounder. The Bounder knew what would follow—a reformatory, perhaps prison—and he had run away.

But Loder had only been stunned. It was too late to catch the Bounder and tell him that. He had gone away, and now Harry Wharton & Co. meant to go and find the Bounder before he got too far away.

"We'll catch him, sooner or later!" said Bob Cherry, as they wheeled out their bicycles.

"Hope so!" grunted Wharton. "The silly ass! What's he want to use a bat for?"

"Expect Loder & Co. did not like losing their richest pal!" said Nugent, with a chuckle. "He was parting from the flock, you know, and I expect they meant to make things hot for him!"

Nugent was far nearer the truth than he thought.

It was an hour later when the four juniors rode into Courtfield, where they were to make their first inquiries. It was just midnight then, and few people were about; but

they learned that the Bounder had left for Lantham by the night express.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another when this information was given them.

"Come on!" said Wharton, at last. "We'll get him at Lantham. There's no train from there until after six."

The others nodded, and the chums turned their faces towards Lantham.

They did not enjoy their ride. It was too dark, and punctures were numerous and spills frequent. Dawn was lightening the east when they at last entered the town and dismounted outside the Station Hotel, which was the only one in the little town.

Harry Wharton entered the hotel, which had just opened. The sleepy boots came to see what he wanted. Wharton extracted a half-crown from his waistcoat pocket.

"I think there's a friend of mine staying here," he said. "Did a chap—a schoolboy—put up here last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"What was his name?"

"Master Jones, sir."

Wharton smiled. He did not suppose that Vernon-Smith would have given his right name, if he gave a name at all.

"Very well; a chap about my age and size, with dark eyes, and a cap like mine?"

Boots looked at the Greyfriars cap and nodded.

"Just the same, sir."

That settled it. No schoolboy with a Greyfriars cap could have come to Lantham the night before excepting Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Wharton slipped the half-crown into the greasy hand of the lad.

"Thank you! He's the chap I want. When did he come—by the express from Courtfield, I suppose?"

"He came in jest after the express, sir."

"Good! He's here now?"

"I called him at 'arf-past five, sir; them was his orders."

"When does the train leave for Dover?"

"'Arf-past six, sir."

Wharton looked at his watch. It was ten minutes past six.

"Did he intend to go by it, do you know?"

"I s'pose so, sir, as he was called so early."

"Is he down yet?"

"Not yet, sir. His breakfast's ready for him in the coffee-room, but he ain't come down yet."

"Show me to his room," said Harry. He

reflected a moment. "By the way, is there any other way out for him?"

The boots stared.

"Only the winder, sir, and that's fifty feet 'igh. But didn't you say as he was a friend of yours? What has the young gent been doin'?"

"He's run away from school, and we're his friends come to take him back, and to prevent him getting into trouble," Wharton explained. "He'll be glad to see us when he knows what we've got to tell him, so that's all right. Is your employer down?"

"He don't come down till eight, sir, he don't!"

"Well, show me the room, and then show me the window of the room outside," said Harry. "The young ass may try to bolt again. It's all right, kid. We're his friends, and we're here to keep him out of trouble."

Wharton's tone and look, and perhaps the half-crown, inspired confidence, and the boots, who had hesitated, nodded his shock head.

"All right, sir."

The juniors followed the boy upstairs. The boots pointed out the door of Vernon-Smith's room.

"You fellows stay here," said Harry.

"Nail him if he comes out. Tell him it's all right about Loder at the start, and then he'll see reason."

"Right-ho!"

"I'll keep an eye on the window outside. If he should dodge you he might try the window. You never know what the Bounder might do."

"Good egg!"

Harry Wharton followed the boots out of the building. The window was pointed out to him, and he noted the rainpipe, and was glad that he had thought of watching the window.

The boots went back into the hotel, and Wharton waited.

Boots had stated that Vernon-Smith had not come down, and Wharton did not doubt for an instant that the Bounder was still in his room. Not for a second did it occur to him that the Bounder had spotted the four dusty cyclists riding into Lantham.

Wharton's heart was lighter now. They had found the Bounder. He could not get away from the three juniors waiting for him outside his room, and when he knew the truth about Loder he would not want to get away.

The chums of the Remove would take him back to Greyfriars with them, and the fact

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

that they had succeeded in bringing him back would make their peace with the Head. All was plane-sailing now. A few minutes more and all would be well, for it was evidently the Bounder's intention to catch that early train, and he could not do so, of course, without coming out of his room.

A summons at his door would probably only send him scurrying to the window, in a frantic endeavour to escape, before any explanation could be made that there was no need for flight. He would be caught then, certainly, but after asking his neck. It was better to wait quietly till he came out of his room. That he was no longer in his room was the one unfortunate circumstance that made Wharton's arrangements useless.

The minutes crept by. Bob Cherry and Nugent and Hurree Singh, in the passage outside Vernon-Smith's door, waited with growing impatience.

For the door did not open.

It was close now upon the time for the train, and the Bounder showed no sign of coming out. Bob crept to the door and listened. There was no sound in the room.

He tiptoed back and rejoined Nugent and Hurree Singh.

"He must have gone to sleep again," he murmured. "There isn't any sound of his moving. Bet you he's still in bed!"

"Then we won't wake him up till the express is gone," said Nugent, suppressing a chuckle. "It will be a good time before the next train, and we shall have lots of time to talk to him."

"We'll talk to him like a whole family of giddy Dutch uncles!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "I don't suppose he'll want to skip when he hears that Loder's all right; but, in any case, we nail him."

"The nailfulness will be terrific, my worthy chum."

The juniors waited.

Half-past six rang out from somewhere, and still there was no sound from the room. Five more minutes! The juniors heard the clattering of the express in the station, the scream of the whistle, and the rush of the train as it left.

The six-thirty was gone!

Harry Wharton came up the stairs, a smile on his face.

"He's missed the train," he said.

"Looks like it!" said Bob, with a chuckle.

"It's gone, now," said Wharton. "I suppose he's gone to sleep again. We may as well wake him up."

"Right you are!"

The juniors moved along to the door, and Wharton tried it. It was locked on the inside, as he expected. He knocked.

There was no reply—no movement.

"Smithy!" called out Harry, through the keyhole.

No reply.

"I'll cut round to the window again in case of accidents," said Harry. "You fellows make him open the door. Call the hotel-keeper, if necessary."

He hurried out of the building.

Bob Cherry pounded on the door with his heavy fist. He made noise enough to wake the Bounder, if his slumber rivalled that of Rip Van Winkle, to say nothing of the other guests in the hotel. But Bob did not think of them just then.

"Smithy!" he shouted. "Wake up, you duffer! The train's gone, and we're here to see you. It's all right about Loder. He's coming up smiling!"

Silence!

"Smithy! Wake up, you ass!"

Bang, bang, bang!

But there was no reply from within, and the juniors began to look and to feel uneasy. The boots came hurrying along the passage.

"You mustn't make all that there row, young gents!" he exclaimed. "You'll wake up the 'ole blooming 'ouse!"

"Can't make our friend hear," said Bob. "Did he answer you when you called him?"

"Yes, sir. He was awake then. He's missed the train, and his blooming breakfast is stone cold now."

"Never mind his brekker," said Bob. "We want to get at him. Can you get that wised door open?"

"The guv'nor can, sir," said Boots doubtfully. "But—"

"I'll give him one more call," said Bob.

He thumped on the door, and shouted again through the keyhole.

"Smithy! Let us in, you ass! I tell you

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

it's all right about Loder, and you can come back to Greyfriars!"

But the stillness in the room was unbroken. There was no sound of scurrying feet towards the window—no sound at all.

"Blessed if I don't think something must have happened to him," muttered Bob uneasily. "The ass thinks he's done for Loder. He can't have—!" He did not finish, but his ruddy face went very pale. What was it possible that the Bounder, in his fear of pursuit and arrest, might have done?

"We've got to get in!" muttered Nugent.

Harry Wharton joined them again.

"Hasn't he come out?"

"Can't make him answer," said Bob. "Either he isn't there, or something's happened to him."

"My hat, if he's dodged us!" Wharton turned quickly to the boots. "Get me a chisel, or something, and I'll get that giddy door open. We'll pay for the damage. Buck up!"

Boots disappeared, and returned with a chisel and also a fat and very surprised hotel-keeper. To the latter Wharton hastily explained, and then the lock was forced. The juniors ran into the room.

"Smithy!"

The room was empty!

Harry Wharton & Co. looked round the deserted room in dismay. The bird was flown—the quarry they had run down had vanished.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip!"

"Skipped!"

"The skipfulness is terrific!"

The hotel-proprietor rubbed his sleepy eyes.

"He has gone," he said. "He must have come down. It is very odd."

"He got out of the window, more likely, and bunked before I was watching it," said Harry. "He must have spotted us somehow. What rotten luck! And, my only sainted aunt, he's taken the train, after all!"

The juniors gazed at one another in dismay. Vernon-Smith had slipped through their fingers, after all. The express had been gone a quarter of an hour—had carried away the elusive Bounder? It seemed only too probable.

"Come on!" panted Wharton.

"What about this damage, young gentleman?"

Wharton thrust one of Lord Mauleverer's pound notes into the landlord's fat hand, and the juniors ran out of the hotel. They rushed into the station. A sleepy-looking booking-clerk came in a leisurely manner as Wharton rapped sharply at the little opening.

"The six-thirty express!" panted Wharton.

"Gone, sir."

"Yes, yes; but did someone take a ticket for Dover—a kid?"

The booking-clerk looked him over carelessly. Evidently he did not relish being catechised in this way by a schoolboy.

"Really—" he began.

"It's a chap run away from school, and we're looking for him," Wharton explained hastily. "Tell me whether he's been here?"

"A boy about your age took a ticket for Dover!" drawled the man. "He came in just before the express started. He seemed in a hurry."

"Did he wear a cap like this?"

"Yes."

"And he got the train?"

"I suppose so."

"Thanks!"

The juniors hurried to the platform. Wharton collared the first porter he saw.

"We're looking for a chap. Did you see a kid get into the Dover express at the last minute?"

"Yes, sir; just when the train was on the move."

The porter trundled on a trolley. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another with blank faces. There was a long silence.

"He must have spotted us somehow," said Nugent at last.

"And bolted before we got to the hotel," said Bob, with a snort. "We watched a giddy empty room, while Smithy—"

"Caught the express!" groaned Wharton.

"Well, we couldn't foresee all that. We've done our best, only—Smithy's gone!"

"He's as slippery as a blessed eel!"

"Well, we're going after him," said Harry Wharton resolutely.

Bob Cherry whistled.

"We can't bike it in the time, Harry, and the jiggers are awfully groggy after that spill. And that train catches the boat."

"We'll leave the jiggers here, to be sent back, and take the next train."

"But the boat will be gone."

"There's another boat!"

"My hat, but—but—"

"We're after Smithy," said Wharton quietly. "We'll have him, if we have to cross the Channel for him. In for a penny, in for a pound. We shall get into pretty bad trouble at Greyfriars, anyway, if we don't take Smithy back with us. We're going to take him. I'll find out the time of the next train, and then we'll see about the bikes."

There were three hours to wait for the next train. The juniors booked the no longer needed bicycles for Friardale, and then breakfasted at the hotel. And when the second train started, Harry Wharton & Co. were passengers in it—still on the track of the Bounder!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Across the Channel!

THE Bounder of Greyfriars leaned back in his comfortable corner seat, and grinned. The express was tearing along through the countryside in the glowing light of the sun.

His heart was throbbing in unison with the leap and throb of the train.

He was free!

His device had succeeded perfectly.

He had emerged from his hiding-place at the last moment. He had scurried into the station, taken his ticket, and boarded the express, while the chums of Greyfriars were vainly keeping watch and ward over his deserted room.

Now he was speeding as fast as the express could carry him towards Dover—towards the sea, towards the sheltering coast of France.

Black care hung over the Bounder. He could not forget Loder; he could not forget his ruined career, his dashed hopes, all he had lost, all he was resigning by his flight; but the love of excitement, of daredevil venturing, was stronger within him than any other feeling. He had baffled his pursuers; he had escaped recapture by the skin of his teeth. And he grinned with triumph and satisfaction as the express tore swiftly onwards through fields and meadows and quiet towns.

Would Harry Wharton & Co. follow him further? He did not know, and he did not care very much. At all events, they would not catch him. The express was timed to catch the morning boat for Calais. If they followed they would only be in time for the afternoon boat. Before they could reach Dover he would be safe on French soil. There he would disappear. In Calais he would have time to look about him and obtain a change of clothes. He could speak French like a native. Once on French soil, he would baffle all attempts to find him. From some place of concealment there he would communicate with his father when it was safe to do so.

Then a sudden thought struck him with a chill, and the smile of satisfaction died away from his face. The telegraph!

That the Head of Greyfriars had used the telegraph to cause the Courtfield express to be watched when it arrived in London, he was sure. The Head did not suspect his real line of flight.

But Harry Wharton knew.

A wire from Lantham, or from any station along the line, giving his description and the facts of the case to the stationmaster at Dover, and he would step from the train simply to fall into the arms of a policeman.

Had Wharton telegraphed?

Perhaps it would not occur to him to do so at Lantham, but during the train journey south the thought was certain to come into his mind, as a sure means of stopping the fugitive from taking the Channel boat.

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

Just as liberty seemed opening before him, he realised that he was not yet safe—that he was rushing on at the full speed of the express to arrest.

There was the Folkestone boat to Boulogne. He could get to Folkestone as easily as to Dover. But he dismissed the thought as it rose in his mind. If Wharton telegraphed to one place, he would telegraph to the other also, to make sure. Both

"Looking After Wingate!" is the Greyfriars Tale You Must Not Miss Next Week!

the boats would be watched for a runaway schoolboy attempting to cross to France.

The Bounder's brows contracted, and his eyes grew almost haggard.

His old enemy had him upon the hip, after all. The escape at Lantham was only a postponement of the inevitable.

For he still looked upon Wharton as an enemy. He had no suspicion of the good news the juniors were trying to bring to him. They were after him to take him back to arrest and punishment—that was his belief. Ignorant of the fact that Loder was not, after all, seriously hurt, the Bounder could not possibly guess with what intentions the juniors were following him.

He glanced from the train window, and looked at his watch. The last stop before Dover had been passed. He had to go on to the terminus now, unless he jumped from the rushing express.

And the station—or, if not the station, certainly the entrance to the Channel boat—would be watched for him. He was certain now that Wharton would have telegraphed. He was waited for in Dover—he knew that!

He ground his teeth in helpless rage. His scheme of crossing to France had to be abandoned now. He would never reach the channel boat.

But the Bounder was not at the end of his resources yet. The train would stop in the town before it went on to the boat station. He could slip from it there, and escape into the town. Somewhere on the shore he would find a boatman to take him across the Channel—some fishing-craft would take him. He had plenty of money to pay for that. His heart lightened again at the thought.

The train stopped at last in Dover Town.

Vernon-Smith looked out along the platform. Perhaps both stations were watched for him, but it was not likely. No, there was no sign of a policeman in sight.

He stepped from the train, gave up his ticket, and hurried away.

At every step he dreaded to hear a sharp voice calling, to hear the heavy footfalls of a constable, to feel a detaining hand upon his shoulder.

But it did not come.

He left the station and plunged into the town. He mingled in the crowd in the streets, and drew a deep breath with a sense of renewed freedom. Let them watch for him at the boat station and on the boat. He would never come there, and they would watch in vain.

He did not delay in the town. There was no time to lose. With swift strides he made his way out of the town and along the cliffs.

He was free once more.

And now to find a craft to take him across the Channel. That was not difficult. There were plenty of craft to be had for a run on the Channel that fine spring morning, and the boatman he accosted was not surprised that the young gent, down there on a holiday, as Vernon-Smith explained to him, had a curiosity to run across and see the coast of France before he returned to London. The boatman named a high price, and Vernon-Smith did not demur. He was only too anxious to get away.

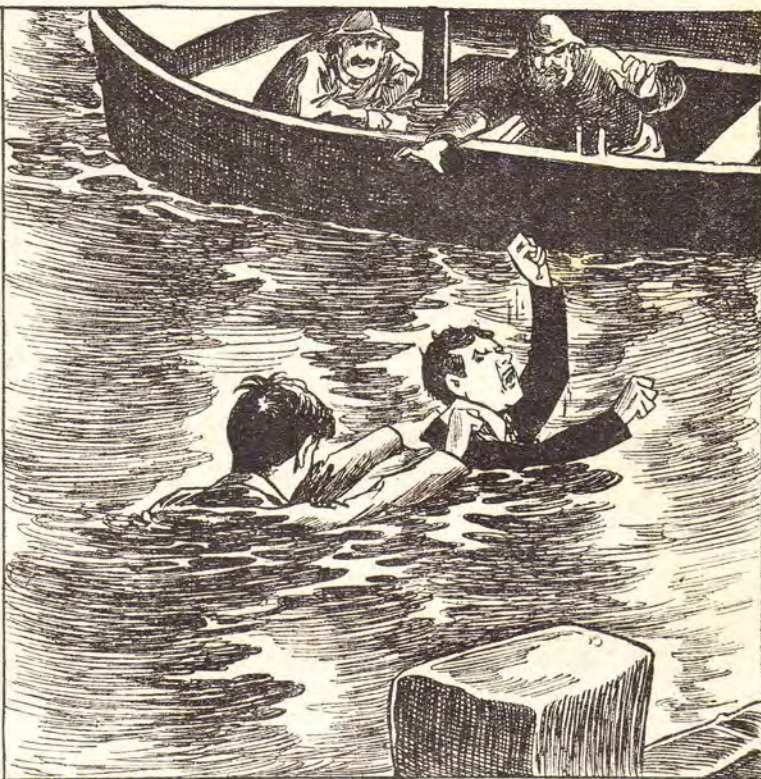
His heart beat with exultation as he stepped upon the little sailing-craft. Main-sail and jib were shaken out, and the boat danced on the blue waters of the Channel. Vernon-Smith, with a grim smile, watched the great Channel steamer forging by in the distance. There was the steamer he should have taken, but he was crossing the narrow seas just as surely.

He laughed aloud as he watched it disappear in the distance, and the boatman looked at him curiously.

The wind was variable, and long after the steamer had disappeared the little sailing-craft was tacking its way across the Channel, covering many times the distance in long loops to east and west.

The keen wind blew through the Bounder's thin clothing—he was by no means clad for a sea voyage—but he did not heed it. The fresh air invigorated him. He ate with a keen appetite a bundle of stale sandwiches he had purchased on the train. Freedom lay before him—on the cliffs that rose to view in the southern distance, white over the blue of the sea.

But the time was passing, and the passage was slow. Again the light died out of the Bounder's face as he heard the throb of the engines in the distance, and saw a great steamer bearing down from the north. For noon had long passed, while the sailing-



LIGHT AT LAST FOR THE BOUNDER! "Smithy!" panted Wharton, as he grasped the Bounder and struggled to keep him afloat. "Smithy, you're mistaken!" His mouth was close to Vernon-Smith's ear as he panted out the words. "Loder's alive—he's all right! Don't you hear?"

(See Chapter 3.)

craft was tacking for the wind, and the afternoon Channel steamer was passing the little speck that danced on the waters.

Vernon-Smith watched the steamer as it passed. Were the Greyfriars juniors there? he wondered.

The steamer passed close—so close that the smaller craft danced and spun on the heavy wash she made.

Vernon-Smith watched the faces over the rail, and his brows came blackly together as he saw a well-known face looking over the sea.

It was the face of Harry Wharton!

The junior was gazing idly at the little craft, and he gave a sudden start. Vernon-Smith crouched down—too late.

He had been seen!

He peered over the gunwale. Harry Wharton was staring hard at the boat. And now the faces of Bob Cherry and Nugent and Hurree Singh could be seen at the rail beside him. He had been seen.

The wind was freshening. The little craft was fairly flying over the waters now, in the wake of the great steamer as it plunged on.

Vernon-Smith set his teeth, and called to the boatman.

"Get back to Dover! I've changed my mind! I don't want to go to Calais! Get back to Dover!"

But luck was against him. The boatman stared at him and shook his head, and the two other seamen in the boat grinned at the landsman's ignorance.

"Can't get back in this wind, sir! We have got to run right on to Calais now! Can't get back till the evening now!"

Vernon-Smith's teeth came together again with a savage click.

"You must! I tell you I don't want to go to Calais!"

"Can't be done, sir!" said the boatman gruffly. "Ain't you got any eyes, sir? Look at them seas—and look at the wind! If this 'ere wasn't the best-found craft on the Channel, sir, we'd be lucky even to get into Calais at all!"

Vernon-Smith realised the truth, and he flung himself down into a seat in silence.

The game was up! The steamer would reach Calais first, and the chums of Greyfriars would be waiting for him there. The game was up!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Close Finish!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stepped from the steamer on the pier at Calais.

Harry Wharton had not telegraphed to Dover. His intentions were, of course, quite different from those the Bounder supposed. It was as a friend, not as an enemy, that he was following the fugitive. From Dover he had telegraphed to the Head of Greyfriars, in explanation, and then the four juniors had taken the boat. They landed in Calais knowing, from what they had seen in the passage of the Channel, that the Bounder had not yet arrived.

He would not be long after them, and they would be ready for him.

"We've got him at last!" Bob Cherry remarked, as they sauntered on the quay in the windy, sunshiny spring afternoon. "The duffer! If he knew what we've got to tell him, he'd be as glad to see us as we shall be to see him!"

"The gladfulness would be terrific!" Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked. "But I wonderfully reflect what the esteemed Dr. Locke is thinking of our honourable escapade at this blessed minute."

"Picking out his thickest cane, very likely!" said Frank Nugent, with a grimace. "Six each for us, and a dozen for the Bounder! Groogh!"

"Well, he's bound to be pleased if we take Smithy back," said Bob Cherry. "And even if we get licked, it was a giddy adventure! We don't get across the Channel every day, do we?"

"Beats grinding Latia in the Form-room hollow!" said Harry Wharton. "And here we are in France—quite a giddy adventure!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

George Wingate is in Trouble, But There Are Friends to Help Him!

"Parley voo Frongsay?" grinned Bob. "Wee, wee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Co. were in high spirits. They had run down the fugitive, and they were certain of success now. All they had to do was to watch for the incoming sailing-craft, and nail the Bounder when he came ashore. That was not difficult.

"You look wiz glass, isn't it?" wheezed a voice close beside them.

It was one of the cheery merchants who hire out binoculars for half a franc a time to the visitors. Wharton nodded, and took the glasses. He swept the harbour with them, and spotted the fishing-craft as it came dancing in.

"There she is!"

He kept the glasses till the craft was closing up to the quay.

Then he handed them back to the binocular merchant, with a few shillings, and the juniors hurried along the quay to the spot where the boat was making fast.

"Smithy!"

Vernon-Smith looked at them from the boat.

The four juniors stood on the quayside, looking down at him, standing between him and the freedom he had hoped for.

The Bounder's face was black with rage and hatred.

Caught at the finish—after his long flight! The thought of a struggle was in his mind; his eyes wandered to a boat-stretcher close at hand.

But there was a gendarme only a few yards away. That was hopeless.

A bitter, desperate look came over the Bounder's face. In his present mood, he was fit for anything.

"You rotters!" he said, between his teeth. "You couldn't let me alone! You had to come after me!"

"You don't understand," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We came after you as friends, Smithy, to do you a good turn."

The Bounder sneered.

"To take me back to Greyfriars?"

"Yes. But—"

"Well, you shall never take me back!" The Bounder spoke slowly and deliberately. "I'll never go back, least of all with you!"

"I tell you—"

"Loder—" began Bob Cherry.

But the Bounder did not listen. He was running along the boat.

It flashed upon Wharton's mind what was his purpose, and his face went white.

He made one desperate leap into the boat, far down below the level of the quay, and landed in it and rolled over.

He was up again in a second.

"Smithy!"

Vernon-Smith was at the stern of the boat now, leaping!

Splash! There was a shout from the boatmen, a cry of horror from the juniors on the quay. They understood now what the desperate Bounder had meant when he said that he would not be taken back.

Wharton ran furiously along the boat. A head dotted the water. He leaped in, and grasped the Bounder as he was sinking.

"Smithy!" The water bubbled in his mouth as the Bounder struggled, and choked his utterance. But his grasp was like iron, and he kept the infuriated boy afloat.

"Smithy, you're mistaken!" His mouth was close to Vernon-Smith's ear as he panted out the words. "Loder's alive! He's all right! Don't you hear?"

The Bounder's fierce struggle suddenly ceased.

"What?"

"Loder's alive! He wasn't badly hurt, after all! It's all right!"

The Bounder was treading water now. He understood. His white face looked wildly into Wharton's.

"Loder alive!" He stammered the words. "Then—then—"

"And recovering!" said Harry. "Oh! I—I thought— Then you—you came—"

"We came to tell you so!"

"Oh! I thought—I believed—"

"You were mistaken!" said Harry. "Thank goodness I stopped you in time, you awful ass! It's quite safe for you to come back to Greyfriars—and if you come at once you mayn't even get sacked! Don't you understand?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

"I understand now!" muttered the Bounder.

"Help, here!" called out Wharton.

They were dragged into the boat.

"It's all right—only a little lark!" Vernon-Smith explained airily to the astounded and alarmed boatmen. "I was giving my friends a little surprise, that was all!"

"Blessed if I didn't think it was a bloomin' suicide!" gasped the boatman.

"Well, it wasn't," said Vernon-Smith calmly. "Only a lark. It's all right. We'd better go ashore and get some dry clothes, Wharton. I'm going back in the next steamer, my man—but I'll settle with you now."

And Vernon-Smith paid the boatman, and went ashore with Wharton. Bob Cherry gave him a thump on the back.

"You silly ass!" he said.

"The sillyassfulness is terrific!"

"If Wharton hadn't been so quick—" said Nugent, with a shiver.

The Bounder shivered, too, for a moment. "I suppose I was a bit off my rocker just then," he said apologetically. "But it's all right—Wharton was quick, you see. 'But—'

it's all square about Loder?"

"Yes! You couldn't crack his coconut so easily as you thought!" said Bob Cherry. "He's safe and sound, and getting well."

"Thank goodness for that!"

"And, after that experience, I fancy he'll let you alone in the future!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

The Bounder laughed, too. He could laugh now heartily.

"But it means the sack—"

"I hope not. The Head knows that it was Loder's fault in the first place, and we shall let him know how the brute was down on you, too. We'll get some dry clothes, and then telegraph to the Head, and take the next steamer home," said Harry.

And they did.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Home Again!

THERE had been great excitement at Greyfriars that day, while the Bounder was feeling to a foreign soil and the chums of the Remove were hot on his track.

When the rising-bell clanged out in the morning, four beds were empty in the Remove dormitory, as well as that of the Bounder.

Bulstrode had an unpleasant task before him. He had to take Harry Wharton's message to Mr. Quelch, explaining that the four were absent. He could imagine what effect that information would have upon the Remove master.

It was with reluctant steps that Bulstrode sought Mr. Quelch. The Form master's keen eyes looked over him, noting his hesitation.

"What is the matter, Bulstrode?" he asked.

"I—I've got a message for you, sir," the junior faltered.

"Well, what is it?"

"It's from Wharton, sir!"

"From Wharton!" Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows. "Indeed! Why cannot Wharton come to me himself if he has anything to say to me?"

"He—he isn't here, sir."

"I fail to understand you, Bulstrode," said Mr. Quelch, with asperity. "You do not mean to state that Wharton has left the school?"

"Yes, sir; and Nugent and Cherry and Inky—I mean, Hurree Singh."

"They have left the school?" said Mr. Quelch, his eyes opening very wide.

"They've gone to look for the Bounder—for for Smithy, sir."

"What!" Mr. Quelch's voice resembled the rumble of distant thunder. "Do you mean to tell me, Bulstrode, that four juniors have left the school in the night, without permission, to look for Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, sir. Wharton thinks he can find him, and he thought he ought to go."

"Did he?" Mr. Quelch's jaw set grimly. "Wharton has very peculiar ideas of the

duty of a junior in the Lower Fourth Form, then! I shall see that his ideas on this subject are corrected! You may go, Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode went. Mr. Quelch repaired to the Head to inform him of the absence of the four enterprising members of the Remove. Dr. Locke was both astonished and angry.

"It is extraordinary!" he said. "Unexampled! They will, of course, be severely punished when they return! I have no doubt they will come in soon, Mr. Quelch. When they come in, pray send them to me!"

And the doctor's eye wandered to his cane. But the Head was mistaken in thinking that the errant juniors would come in soon. They did not come. And the telegraph informed the Head that nothing had been seen or heard of the missing Bounder at the London terminus.

Five places were empty in the Remove Form-room that morning, and the rest of the class were in a state of suppressed excitement, which rendered it difficult for them to absorb the valuable instruction emanating from Mr. Quelch.

Meanwhile, Loder of the Sixth was progressing well.

Dr. Pillbury, after many solemn shakings of the head at first, had announced finally that Loder was not suffering from anything worse than shock, and a terrific bump on his head, and it was only a question of days before he mended entirely.

Dr. Locke was much exercised in his mind on that subject.

For such an attack on a prefect there was only one possible punishment, according to ordinary rules—flogging and expulsion from the school.

But there were other circumstances in the case. Dr. Locke went into the matter thoroughly. He questioned the Remove fellows, and the juniors, anxious to make things as easy as possible for the Bounder, told him all they knew about the matter. And what he learned from them modified the Head's views considerably. As soon as it was possible to interview the injured Sixth-Former, he had a talk with Loder, too.

There was no doubt that the prefect had been "down" upon the unlucky junior. He had been about to thrash him for a trick that had been played by Peter Todd, and which Vernon-Smith had known nothing about. Peter's confession made that quite clear.

Nothing, of course, could justify the Bounder's action. The results might have been so terribly serious that it was impossible to find excuse for him. But—there was a "but"—the junior had been stung to fury by unjustified punishment. He had been acting in self-defence, and certainly he had not meant to hurt Loder so much.

Dr. Locke discussed the matter earnestly with Mr. Quelch, and he came to the conclusion that a flogging would meet the case, but for the circumstance that the Bounder had run away. If he came back at once he might be given another chance; but if he stayed away, if the aid of the police had to be invoked to find him, if the matter crept into the newspapers and a scandal came of it, then it would be impossible to forgive him.

The Head, in his mind's eye, could see the startling headlines, the racy paragraphs—"Outrage in a Public School!" "Bullied Schoolboy Stuns the Bully!" and so forth—and he shuddered at the thought. For the boy who should bring such publicity and disgrace upon the old school there could be no pardon.

If it came to that— And the Head realised that it must come to that unless—he smiled at the thought—unless Harry Wharton succeeded in finding the fugitive and bringing him back. That was not likely to happen; the juniors must be punished themselves for their reckless escapade. And the Head was thinking that when a telegram was brought to him. It was dated from Dover:

"Seen Vernon-Smith. Hope to catch him to-day. Please excuse us.—Wharton."

The Head stared at the telegram.

Then they were really on the track of the fugitive—in a direction he had never thought of! The Head found himself feeling glad that they had gone, after all. And if they succeeded in their quest, certainly he would

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not punish them. He was more likely to thank them instead.

He waited for more news, and it came, late in the afternoon, in the form of a telegram from Calais. The Head and Mr. Quelch read the telegram together, and then they looked at one another and smiled. For the telegram ran:

"Vernon-Smith found. Coming back with us. Arrive Greyfriars to-night.—Wharton."

That was the message.
"Bless my soul!" said the Head, after a long silence.

"They have found him and they are bringing him back!" said Mr. Quelch. "Really, really, sir, this is—really very good news! There will be no occasion for the police to interfere in the matter!"

"There will be no scandal—no publicity!" said the Head, with a deep breath.

Mr. Quelch nodded.
"I was very angry when their escapade was reported to me," said the Remove master. "But I must say, sir, that I am glad now that they followed him. They have performed a really important service."

"Undoubtedly!"
"Under the circumstances, sir, perhaps they could be pardoned for their reckless conduct."

The Head smiled.
"I was just thinking so, Mr. Quelch."

"And Vernon-Smith—"
"I shall flog him and pass the matter over," said the Head.

"I am glad to hear you say so, sir."

All Greyfriars knew soon that the Co. had succeeded, and that they were bringing the Bouncer back to the school. But it was late at night, and all the fellows were in bed when the party arrived. Harry Wharton & Co. came in tired from a long journey, and Mr. Quelch brought them at once to the Head's study.

The juniors entered that dreaded apartment with very dubious looks. Mr. Quelch's expression had reassured them somewhat, but they were very doubtful of their reception. The Head's severe eyes regarded them as they came in.

"So you have returned," he said.
"Yes, sir," said Wharton; "and we are sorry—ahem—"

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, honoured sir!"

"And—if you're going to lick us, sir, we don't mind!" said Bob Cherry heroically. The Bouncer stood silent.

"I shall not punish you four juniors," said the Head quietly. "I thank you instead for having done the school and myself a service."

"Oh, good!" murmured Nugent.

"As for you, Vernon-Smith," said the doctor, and his eyes fixed upon the Bouncer, "what have you to say?"

"Only—only that I'm sorry, sir!" faltered the Bouncer. "I cleared off because I—thought that Loder was—"

"I understand," said the Head. "I can excuse your running away, considering what you believed you had done. But that act—"

"I don't excuse it, sir," said Vernon-Smith, humbly enough. "Only Loder was down on me for nothing, and I hadn't done what he was going to lick me for, and I'd just had an awful licking. I've got the marks still, and—"

"Would you act in the same manner again?" demanded the Head sternly.

"No, sir. I'd take the licking if it happened again, of course. I shouldn't be likely to forget what I've been through in the last twenty-four hours," said the Bouncer, with a shudder. "If you knew how it haunted me—"

His voice trailed off.

The Head's stern face softened a little.
"I think I understand, Vernon-Smith. I have inquired into the matter carefully, and I find that there are circumstances in your favour. To-morrow morning I shall flog you before all the school, and there the matter will end. You may go!"

The Bouncer drew a deep breath.

"I deserve that!" he said. "I suppose I deserve more; but I'll try to prove that your kindness isn't wasted, sir. That's all I can say."

"That is enough," said the Head kindly. "I believe you. Good-night, my boys!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And the heroes of the Remove went to the dormitory in a state of great satisfaction. They did not get to sleep soon, however. They found all the Remove wide awake, waiting to see them, and they had to give a full account of their doings; and it was at a very late hour that night that slumber came to the Remove dormitory.

Vernon-Smith was flogged the next morning, and the flogging was a severe one. But he bore it with his usual hardihood. He knew that he had escaped cheaply.

And when Loder reappeared in the school he was very careful to leave the Bouncer severely alone. He, as well as Vernon-Smith, had had his lesson. And there was an unusual cordiality between Vernon-Smith and the Famous Five in the days following the exciting episode of the flight of the Bouncer.

THE END.

(Another splendid long complete tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Tuesday, entitled, "Looking After Wingate!" by Frank Richards. Order early.)

THE RESULT OF THE "ARSENAL" COMPETITION.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided between the two following competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

MISS M. O. AITKEN, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan.

E. WHITEHEAD, 63, Nugget Street, Oldham.

So many competitors qualified for the third grade of prizes that division among them of the prizes offered was impracticable. The second prize of £2 10s. and the ten prizes of 5s. each have therefore been added together and divided among the following forty competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

W. Boyd Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; Charles H. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Howarth Street, Sunderland; Ida Ogden, 41, Nugget Street, Oldham; Mrs. A. F. Climie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; N. Whitehead, 63, Nugget Street, Oldham; Stanley Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; Frances Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Sunderland; A. W. Carter, 208, Stow Hill, Newport, Mon; G. H. Saville, 3, Smith Street, Mansfield, Notts; R. S. Pitt-Kethley, Wayside, Amersham, Bucks; Miss F. J. Phillips, 28, Stapleton Hall Road, Stroud Green, N.; C. E. Drew, 1, Park View, Albany Road, Cheltenham; Richard Wimberley, 15, Wheatfield Street, Edinburgh; Harry Collett, 34, Trafalgar Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth; C. Cook, 36, Seymour Place, S.W. 10; John Butcher, 69, High Road, Chadwell, Essex; Harold Jones, 9, Wansford Street, Moss Side, Manchester; Tommy Loynd, 17, Clementina Terrace, Carlisle; J. D. Marsden, 14, Belgrave Avenue, Victoria Park, Manchester; N. Nadin, Fernlea House, The Lawn, Dawlish, South Devon; Robert S. Wylie, 27, Spring Place, Horton, Bradford, Yorks; Leonard Jupp, 46, Holly Park Road, Friars Barnet, N. 11; J. B. Inglis, Northfield, Weensland Road, Hawick; John Stoddart, T. East 9, Gretna, Scotland; Mary A. Cutchin, 17, Low Albion Street, South Bank, Yorks; W. de Gruchy, Woodstock, Oxfordshire; Raymond W. Kernick, 62, Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; George Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge; E. Nelson, 29, Ley Street, Ilford, Essex; Miss D. Stephenson, 68, Keppel Road, East Ham; N. Willis, Whelford, Leekhampton, Cheltenham Spa; J. M. Godfrey, 2, Guy Street, Leamington Spa; J. A. Harrison, 29, Normanton Road, Derby; S. Moorhouse, 41, Nugget Street, Oldham; Alfred Carr, 70, Bargate, Boston, Lincs; James Hodkin, 141, Moorkey Street, Oldham; Thomas Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Stourbridge; L. Bachelor, 19, Kettering Road, Levenshulme, Manchester; Mrs. A. Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; Arthur Butters, 245, Roberts Street, Grimsby.

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If you have not won a prize this week—you may next—turn to page 2 and have a shot.

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

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Next Week.

Dramatic Developments in Next Week's Story of Greyfriars I

OLD RIVALS MEET AGAIN!

Frank Richards & Co. save the lives of Kern Gunten and Keller, but the two rascals' gratitude takes a very unusual form!



Stranded!

Further adventures of
Frank Richards & Co.,
The Chums of Cedar
Creek School, on their
journey into the Great
North-West of Canada.

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Roped In!

"I GUESS those galoots are looking for trouble!"
Bob Lawless knitted his brows as he spoke.

The chums of Cedar Creek School were camped by the bank of a rushing stream high up in the rocky Cascade Mountains. Yen Chin, the Chinese, was tending the campfire, and Chunky Todgers was busily engaged in cooking antelope-steaks.

Frank Richards and Bob and Vere Beauclerc were standing by the bank, watching the swift rush of the waters that rippled and glistened in the sunshine.

On their left, at a distance of two hundred yards, there was an abrupt fall in the stream where the waters dashed over rugged rocks to a lower level.

The roar of the falling waters awoke incessant echoes in the pine-forests that clothed the hills.

On the right of the three chums the stream ran broad and smooth towards the falls, but the current was swift and strong, and driftwood whirled past them at a rapid rate.

Bob Lawless, looking up the stream, fixed his eyes upon a birch-bark canoe that had come into sight.

There were two paddlers in the canoe, and little could be seen of them so far but their broad Stetson hats.

The chums of Cedar Creek were rather surprised to see the canoe in that lonely recess of the North-Western mountains.

The canoe came on, and apparently the occupants were unaware of the falls that lay so near ahead.

"The silly jays!" said Bob Lawless. "They must be tenderfeet, and no mistake. They'll be over the falls if they don't look spry!"

"Better call out to them," said Vere Beauclerc.

"They won't hear at this distance."

Frank Richards watched the canoe and its occupants as it came nearer and became clearer to the view.

He expected to see men in it—trappers or miners belonging to the locality; but he soon discerned that the pair were boys.

"Two blessed kids!" said Bob. "What on earth are they doing up here in the mountains?"

Frank smiled.

"Same as us, perhaps—on holiday," he remarked.

"Tain't safe for kids to come to this section on holiday," said Bob. "We can look after ourselves, but those two jays can't. They'll be over the falls, and that's sudden death. Can't they hear the water, the jays?"

Bob put his hands to his mouth, and shouted with all the force of his lungs.

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

"Hallo, there! Look out!"

Frank Richards and Beauclerc added their voices.

For some moments they did not seem to be heard.

Then one of the canoers looked up and stared towards them.

As he raised his head the three chums caught sight of his face under the broad hat, and they recognised him.

"Guten!" exclaimed Frank.

"By gum! And the other galoot's Keller!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

There was no mistake about it. The two canoers were Gunten and Keller, their schoolfellows at Cedar Creek.

Frank Richards & Co. were on the worst of terms with the two Swiss at Cedar Creek School; but they did not think of that now.

They thought only of the danger of the canoe.

"Guten!" shouted Bob, in stentorian tones. "You duffer! Look out! Can't you see you're heading for the falls?"

Bob's powerful voice sounded through the roar of the waterfall.

Kern Gunten started up.

A cigarette dropped from his lips.

The cad of Cedar Creek had been smoking and talking to his companion as he idly paddled on the mountain stream, oblivious of the danger ahead.

It now burst on him suddenly.

Standing in the canoe, he stared ahead to where the line of dancing foam marked the rocks over which the stream poured and thundered.

His sallow face became white.

Keller, observing the peril at the same time, sat like one stunned, the paddle idle in his hand.

A skilful canoer, with a nerve of iron, might have shot the fall with success, though the attempt would have been fraught with terrible peril. But neither Gunten nor Keller was of that sort.

Both of them were utterly unnerved by the sudden and fearful danger that had suddenly burst on them.

"Help!"

That was Gunten's reply to Bob Lawless' shout of warning.

The canoe was moving faster now, coming on rapidly towards the spot where the three chums stood; but it was too far out in the stream for them to think of reaching it when it came abreast.

To venture into the water was madness, for the current would have whirled away the strongest swimmer in a second.

Frank Richards & Co. stood in dismay.

They could not help the unfortunate canoers, and the latter evidently could not help themselves.

The canoe rushed on.

"The rope!" panted Bob at last. "There's

a chance! Get my lasso, Franky; and for goodness' sake buck up!"

Without stopping to speak, Frank Richards ran back to the camp, where Chunky Todgers was still cooking in placid contentment.

Bob Lawless shouted again to the canoers.

"Guten!"

"Help!" came the reply.

"Look out, Guten! I'm going to heave my lasso when you come abreast. Catch it, and make it fast, to the canoe, and we'll try to pull you in! Savvy?"

"Help!"

Gunten was so terrified by the danger he had recklessly run into that it was doubtful if he understood.

But it was the only chance of saving the canoers.

The two Swiss began paddling again, making a desperate attempt to reach the bank where Bob and Beauclerc stood.

But they struggled with the rapid current in vain.

The canoe whirled on.

The paddle slipped from Keller's hand, torn away by the fierce water from his nerveless grasp.

"Oh, the jay!" muttered Bob. "Franky, do—"

"Here you are, Bob!"

Frank Richards dashed up breathlessly with the lasso.

The rancher's son grasped it.

The canoe was almost abreast of the schoolboys now, but a good twenty yards out on the turbid stream.

"Watch out, Guten!" shouted Bob.

The Swiss made a sign that he understood.

With a steady hand, though his face was pale, Bob Lawless made the cast, and the rope uncoiled through the air towards the canoe.

Bob was a master of the lasso, and the cast was unerring.

The looped rope dropped fairly into the whirling canoe.

Gunten made a clutch at it, and Keller at the same moment, and both of them obtained a grasp on the rope.

If they had been quick and active, and cool, they could have secured the rope to the canoe, and the fellows ashore could have pulled them in.

But they were not cool.

They held frantically on to the rope, the only link between them and safety, and the canoe whirled on from under their feet.

Frank and Bob and Beauclerc were holding on to the lasso with both hands, and it tautened.

As the canoe was swept onward Gunten and Keller crashed into the water.

For a moment they disappeared from sight.

But the pull on the rope told that they

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were still holding on; and in a moment their heads appeared on the surface.

"Hold on!" muttered Bob. The three chums held fast, and drew on the rope.

The lives of the two Swiss depended now on their keeping hold of the rope, and they were clinging to it like cats.

The rushing current drove them on towards the falls, but the rope held, with the result that they swung in towards the bank lower down the stream.

Frank Richards & Co., still pulling in the rope, moved along the bank, and in a few minutes more Gunten and Keller were dragged out of the water, drenched, dripping, and almost fainting.

As they rolled, exhausted, on the rocky bank, the canoe disappeared over the falls lower down, to be dashed into a hundred pieces on the rocks far below.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Unpleasant Guests.

"HAT was a close call, I guess!" gasped Bob Lawless.

Kern Gunten sat up dazedly.

"Safe now, Gunten!" said

Frank.

"Oh!" gasped the Swiss, shuddering.

Keller groaned. He was dazed, and still quivering with terror.

"All O.K. now!" said Bob Lawless. "You've had a jolly narrow escape, I guess!"

"Where's the canoe?" panted Gunten, as he staggered to his feet.

"Over the falls!"

Gunten shivered.

But for Bob Lawless and his rope the two Swiss would have been over the falls with the canoe, and lying lifeless under the foam on the cruel rocks.

"All's well that ends well!" said Frank Richards comfortably. "You chaps had better peel. This sun will dry your clobber pretty soon. We'll get you some blankets."

"Thanks!" muttered Gunten.

"You've dropped in just in time for dinner!" grinned Bob.

Gunten and Keller accompanied the three chums from the bank to the camp.

"I—I say, I believe you fellows have saved our lives!" muttered Keller.

Bob laughed.

"Not much doubt about that, I guess!" he said. "You're welcome! Get your duds off and get into some blankets before you catch cold."

That advice was too good not to be taken.

Gunten and Keller stripped, and rubbed themselves dry, and then sat down, wrapped in blankets, while their clothes dried.

"Dinner's ready!" announced Chunky Todgers.

"You'll join us, of course, you two?" said Bob.

"You bet!" answered Gunten. "We've lost all our truck in the canoe. I guess there'll be no getting any of it back."

"I guess not, unless you dive under the waterfall for it!"

"Then we're stranded!"

"Looks like it," agreed Bob. "We can stand you grub-stakes, though, till you get fixed."

Gunten looked at him very curiously. Bob Lawless seemed to have forgotten entirely that the Swiss was his enemy at school, and to be thinking only of good-natured hospitality.

That was not Gunten's way at all, and he could not understand it—if he had cared to understand it.

The schoolboy explorers sat down to an ample dinner round the camp-fire, and the two Swiss joined them.

Both of them looked glum.

All their "truck" had gone over the falls, and they were left in the mountains with nothing but their clothes.

It was not a pleasant situation, and the fact that they were dependent on the hospitality of Frank Richards & Co. did not make it any more pleasant.

"What are you fellows doing up here?" asked Bob Lawless, while the meal was going on. "I never expected to see you in the Cascade Mountains."

"We came up North-West for our holiday, same as you did," answered Gunten. "We were doing it in a canoe, though."

"Good idea—if you knew how to handle a canoe!" said Bob, with a smile. "A bit risky otherwise."

"I've done a lot of canoeing," growled Gunten. "This country is new to me, of course. I guess we're stumped now. Grub and clothes and tent and rifles—all gone over the falls. It's rotten luck!"

"I guess you were lucky not to go over with them!"

"I know that; but that doesn't make it any better," grunted the Swiss. "I wondered whether we should fall in with your crowd up here. I never reckoned it would be like this, hang it!"

"Well, you can get to Last Chance Camp, and home from there," said Bob. "Or, if you've got the dust, you can get a new canoe there and buy fresh truck."

"I'm not short of money," said Gunten arrogantly.

"Then you're fixed all right. It only means a tramp to Last Chance. You can buy anything you want there if you've got the dust."

"How far is it?"

"About twenty miles, following this valley and the lower trail."

"Twenty miles on foot in this kind of country! Oh, gum!"

"I wish we had hosses to lend you," said Bob. "But we've only got our own gees and the pack-mule. But we'll fix you up with grub, anyhow, and give you your bearings. Stay here till to-morrow, and start at dawn, and you'll land in Last Chance by dark."

"Twenty miles in a day in this country!" said Gunten. "That's rather too big an order for me!"

"Blest if I see what you'll do, then, unless you roll down the mountain!"

Gunten grunted, and was silent.

Dinner finished, Chunky Todgers rolled himself under a tree to take a nap, as was his custom.

Gunten and Keller changed from the blankets into their clothes, which had dried now between the sun and the fire.

Gunten turned a cigarette-case out of his pocket, and muttered a curse as he found the contents soaked with water.

"You galoots got anything to smoke?" he asked.

"No!" answered Frank Richards curtly. Gunten sneered.

"Still keeping up the high-faluting game in the mountains?" he asked. "What for? Miss Meadows can't spot you here, I guess!"

"Oh, rats!"

"If you'd been looking after your canoe instead of smoking, your truck mightn't have gone over the fall!" said Bob Lawless.

"Thanks! When I want a sermon I'll ask for one, Lawless!"

Bob's eyes gleamed, but he made no rejoinder.

The Swiss was a guest in the camp, and Bob resolved to bear with him as patiently as he could till he took his departure.

"You fellows staying in this spot long?" Gunten asked, after a long pause.

"We were going on to-day," answered Bob; "but if you're staying over the night, we'll stay."

"Look here," said Gunten, "we'll join you in your trip if you like."

"Oh!" said Bob.

"We can get horses from somewhere," said Gunten. "In fact, you could lend me a mount to ride down to Last Chance and buy a couple of gees. I've got the money. I could sell them again in the Thompson Valley when I get home. I guess I've had enough of canoeing. What do you say?"

Frank Richards & Co. looked rather uncomfortable.

They did not want the company of Gunten and Keller, whom they did not like, and who, they knew, disliked them intensely.

They were sorry for Gunten's disaster, but that was really no reason why the two Swiss should plant themselves on the party in this way.

"Well?" said Gunten.

"I guess we'll ask you to excuse us, Gunten," said Bob candidly. "We don't pull together, you know, and it would only end in a row sooner or later. We'll help you all we can, but we can't travel together."

"Dash it all, Gunten, we're always rowing at school!" said Frank Richards. "You don't want our company?"

"Any port in a storm," said Gunten, with a sneer.

"Well, if you put it on that footing, you can hardly expect us to agree!" said Bob Lawless tartly.

"No wantee Guntee!" murmured Yen Chin. "Gunttee baddee fellow! We good fellow! Oh, Yes!"

"You've got a dashed heathen with you," said Gunten, "and that fat pig Todgers—"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers, who was apparently sleeping with one ear open. "What's that, Gunten?"

"Oh, you're awake, are you? I called you a fat pig!"

"Well, I'd rather be a fat pig than foreign trash!" said Chunky. "And if you don't mend your manners, Gunten, I'll give you a black eye to carry away with you!"

"Get a move on, then!" said Gunten contemptuously.

Chunky sat up.

"I guess I will if you want it!" he exclaimed.

"Well, why don't you?" sneered the Swiss. Chunky Todgers jumped up in great wrath.

"Chuck it, Chunky!" said Bob. "You're not going to fight Gunten! There's not going to be any fighting here!"

"Look here, Bob—"

"Go to sleep, old chap! If Gunten fights anybody, it's going to be me!" said Bob.

"Oh, all right!" yawned Chunky Todgers. "Give him one in the eye for me, Bob! I don't mind!"

And Chunky curled up on a bearskin again. Bob Lawless turned to the Swiss.

"Now, you'd better draw in your horns, Gunten," said Bob very quietly. "I don't want to row with you, as you're a guest here, in a way; but if you're spoiling for a fight, I'm ready to oblige you."

Gunten shrugged his shoulders. Evidently he was not spoiling for a fight with Bob Lawless.

Gunten and Keller moved away again, scowling together.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Stranded!

THE holiday-party from Cedar Creek remained camped in the upland valley that afternoon, on account of the two unexpected guests.

It had been Frank Richards & Co.'s intention to move on westward, but it was left now till the morning to "pull up stakes."

When the night fell on the valley the party gathered round the camp-fire, fed with branches and pine-logs, and glowing merrily.

At supper Gunten and Keller seemed to throw off their resentful mood, and they became a good deal more agreeable.

Kern Gunten chatted away quite pleasantly, and gave the schoolboy explorers the impression that he was not so ill-tempered and thankless a fellow as he had appeared.

Night lay dark on the mountains, and through the gloom came the sound of the falling waters from the cascade near at hand.

Close by the camp the horses and the pack-mule were tethered on the trail-ropes, and lying at rest.

Bob Lawless rose from his seat on a log at last.

"Time to turn in," he remarked.

"My watch first," said Frank Richards. Kern Gunten gave them a sharp look.

"You keep watch at night?" he asked.

"You bet!" answered Bob.

"But surely there's no danger here?"

"Can't be too careful in the hills. There are a good many horse-thieves in this section. This isn't the Thompson Valley, you know. We're in the North-West now."

Gunten's brows clouded for a moment.

"Well, I guess it's just as well to be careful," he agreed. "You take it in turns, I suppose?"

"Correct!"

"We'll take our turns, then, while we're with you."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bob good-naturedly. "You fellows get a good sleep. You've a long walk before you to-morrow. We can keep watch."

"But we'd rather stand our share," said Keller anxiously. "We don't want to sleep while you fellows are staying awake. It's not fair."

Bob Lawless hesitated.

"I suppose you can trust us to keep awake?" said Gunten rather disagreeably.

"Look here, Keller and I will keep one watch together if you like. Dash it all, we're simply not going to snooze all the time while you chaps do sentry-go!"

THE POPULAR—No. 216.

"Well, if you like, of course," said Bob.
 "It's only fair," said Gunten.
 "Right you are, then!"
 "Which watch will you take, then?" asked Frank Richards.
 "Well, suppose you call us at midnight," said Gunten. "Then we'll take a couple of hours."

"You'd really do better to get a good rest before your tramp to-morrow," said Vere Beauclerc.

"What rot! You're going on the trail to-morrow. I suppose we don't need any more rest than you do."

Beauclerc smiled without replying.
 In point of fact, the two Swiss were not by any means so fit as the Canadian school-boys, and were not equal to roughing it as they did.

But Gunten was allowed to have his way. Yen Chin eyed him rather curiously while he was speaking, with a peculiar gleam in his almond eyes.

Neither Yen Chin nor Chunky Todgers shared in keeping watch, as a rule.

The three chums preferred to rely upon themselves; and Chunky, at least, could never be depended on to keep awake.

Frank Richards took first watch, and the rest of the party rolled themselves in their blankets and stretched themselves on the ground, with their feet to the fire.

They were asleep in a very few minutes. Frank, sitting on a boulder close by the camp, with his rifle on his knees, remained on the watch. At the approach of midnight, however, he rose, and shook Gunten by the shoulder.

The Swiss started up.
 "Your turn," said Frank. "But if you'd rather stick to your blankets, Gunten, I'll call Bob."

"I guess not!" said Gunten, rising and stretching himself, with a yawn. "Fair's fair, you know! Come on, Keller!"

He shook his companion, and Keller rose. Frank Richards was glad enough to roll himself in his blanket and sleep, and in a few minutes his eyes were soundly sealed.

Gunten and Keller sat on a log near at hand, wide awake, and certainly watchful; but their watchfulness, curiously enough, was directed towards the sleeping schoolboys.

They spoke occasionally in low whispers.

Kern Gunten rose to his feet at last.
 "All O.K., Keller!" he whispered almost inaudibly. "We want to get a good start before they wake! Come on!"

Keller and Gunten rose to the log.

With noiseless footsteps the two Swiss backed away from the fire in the direction of the staked-out horses.

The fire died down and all was gloom.

Then Yen Chin, the Chinese, moved, and his almond eyes opened very wide indeed. His head was slightly raised, and he peered through the darkness.

Dark as it was now round the camp, he could see that Gunten and Keller were no longer seated on the log.

His eyes glittered, and he sat up quietly.

From the direction of the horses there came a sound of movement and the snort of a horse.

Yen Chin placed a finger on his mouth quietly towards Frank Richards, and shook him gently by the shoulder.

"Flanky!" he whispered.

Frank Richards' eyes opened.

Yen Chin placed a finger on his mouth before he could speak, and Frank gazed up at him in the gloom, amazed.

"No takee!" murmured Yen Chin.

"Baddee foleign flash steal hossee! Me no trustee foleign flash! Keepee watchee! Guntee and Kellee go takee way hossee! Oh, yee!"

Frank Richards started violently.

He threw off the Celestial's hand and sat up, throwing aside his blanket.

Such treachery seemed incredible, even on the part of Gunten and Keller, rogues as he knew them to be.

"Flanky, listen!" muttered the Chinese.

Frank listened.

The fire had died down more darkly, and he could see little but the vague shapes of the pine-trees and the great rocks.

But from the direction of the tethered horses sounds came faintly.

The horses were being loosened from the tether.

Frank Richards sprang to his feet, his eyes gleaming with anger and indignation.

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

As he did so, Keller came back towards the camp.

He was heading for the saddles and bridles, which were heaped near the fire.

His intention was plain enough.

The trail-ropes had been unfastened, and Gunten had the horses in hand; but bridles and a couple of saddles were wanted by the young rascals.

Frank Richards kicked the fire, and a gust of flame shot up from the embers, lighting up the camp.

Keller started back with a cry.

"You rascal!" shouted Frank. "What are you doing?"

He ran angrily towards the Swiss.

Keller, with a gasping cry, ran back into the darkness, calling:

"Look out, Gunten!"

In the blaze of the revived fire Gunten was visible for a moment, holding the trail-ropes in a bunch, with the five horses attached.

But the flame died down, and the darkness swallowed him again.

Frank ran on in the gloom, close behind Keller.

He overtook the gasping Swiss, and seized him by the shoulder.

"You rotten cad!" he panted.

Keller turned on him desperately, his hand clutching up a loose rock.

Crash!

Frank Richards gave a cry as the rock crashed on his chest, sending him spinning backwards.

He fell heavily to the earth.

Bob and Beauclerc, and even Chunky Todgers, were wide awake now, and on their feet, calling out to know what was the matter.

As Frank Richards fell Keller ran on and joined his comrade.

"Vamoose!" he panted.

Gunten was already running, leading the five horses after him; and Keller ran with him.

There was no time then to think of saddles or bridles.

Bob Lawless uttered a shout as he heard the trampling of hoofs from the darkness.

"The hosses! They're loose!"

"Where's Frank?"

"Flanky hee!" called out Yen Chin. The little Chinese was on his knees by Frank Richards' side. "Flanky hurt!"

"What?"

Bob and Beauclerc rushed to the spot, almost stumbling over them in the gloom.

Frank staggered to his feet, panting.

"They've taken the horses!" he gasped.

"Gunten and Keller! Keller knocked me over with a rock!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Down the valley, hidden from sight, the ringing hoofs could be heard, receding farther every moment.

Bob Lawless gave a yell of wrath.

"Halt, you coyotes!" he roared. "Gunten, bring those hosses back, or I'll fire after you!"

He had his rifle in his hand, and he threw it to his shoulder as he called.

There was no reply save the jingling of hoofs on the rocks.

Crack!

Bob Lawless was as good as his word.

He fired high, however, though it was the thought of the horses, rather than the two rascally Swiss, that made him do so.

The report of the rifle rang among the rocks with a thousand echoes.

"Come on!" muttered Bob.

He rushed in pursuit, guided by the sound of the hoofs, with Beauclerc and Chunky Todgers at his heels, breathing wrath and vengeance.

Frank Richards followed more slowly.

He was aching and breathless from the heavy blow he had received.

But the tramping hoofs receded farther and farther.

The chums could guess that Keller and Gunten were mounted now, and on foot they had no chance against the horses.

It was risky enough to ride unbridled horses in the darkness, but the way down the valley lay clear for some miles, as Gunten had observed during the day.

Farther on there was a rocky descent, where it would be necessary to dismount.

But there the Swiss would be far out of reach.

Bob Lawless halted at last.

"No go!" he said abruptly. "We can't overtake them on foot. Let's get back to camp!"

And the chums of Cedar Creek, in a furious mood, returned to the camp-fire.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Neck or Nothing!

HERE was no more sleep for Frank Richards & Co. that night.

They replenished the fire, and sat down by it to discuss the situation.

Gunten and Keller had taken away the horses of the whole party, leaving only the pack-mule, a useful animal enough, but useless for pursuing the amateur horse-thieves.

"The sneaking coyotes!" said Bob Lawless between his teeth. "I guess Gunten had this in his mind all the time when he was proposing to take his turn at keeping watch."

"We oughtn't to have trusted him," said Beauclerc.

"Well, who'd have thought of a treacherous trick like this?"

Yen Chin grinned.

"Me tinkee," he said. "No trustee Guntee. Me watchee, wakkee Flanky. Oh, yee, Chinese velle clevee olo lascal!"

Bob grinned.

"We're stranded," he went on. "Of course, those galoots don't mean to steal the hosses. Even Gunten would draw a line at that, I reckon. They've borrowed them, and left us stranded. They didn't want to walk to Last Chance to-morrow; and they did want to play us a rotten trick. I guess they'll leave the critters at Last Chance for us—if they get there! Like a silly jay, I told Gunten all about the trails, and how to get there, bother him!"

Bob gritted his teeth. "Fancy playing a trick like this on us, after we yanked them out of the river, and saved their worthless skins!"

"Guntee velly bad fellee!" said Yen Chin. "And me no tinkee gettee back hossee."

"You young ass, Gunten wouldn't dare to steal them!" said Beauclerc.

"No gettee back, allee samee. When Guntee done with hossee, turnee loose, me tinkee. Oh, yee!"

"My hat!" murmured Frank Richards.

Bob Lawless nodded.

That Gunten would attempt to sell the horses, like a professional horse-thief, was not probable. He was none too honest, but he had the consequences to fear.

But it was only too probable that he would turn the animals loose to wander, perhaps intending to explain later that they had got loose by accident.

In that case, he would only have to answer for a practical joke; but the effect would be the same for the chums, who would be stranded in the mountains without their horses—to say nothing of their value.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Beauclerc at last. "Gunten's rotten enough for anything. I'm afraid he don't mean us to see the horses again."

Bob Lawless was thinking hard.

He did not speak for some time, and his chums were silent.

"I guess it's so," said Bob, at length.

"We've got to get the hosses back, or make up our minds to it. We can't run them down, and there's no trail on the rocks. We've got to head them off."

"Head them off!" repeated Frank.

"Sure! They're bound to make for Last Chance. It's the only settlement in this part of the mountains, and they're lost otherwise. They've got no grub, and only the clothes they stand up in. When they get to the end of this valley they'll have to go slow in the dark. It's a dangerous trail. Last Chance Camp is five hundred feet lower down than this valley. I guess we can head them off, but we shall have to wait for morning."

"But—"

"The camp's twenty miles," said Bob.

"That's by the trails. But in a straight line three miles would take us into the trail a bit out of the camp. Only it means climbing down through rough mountain, through the pine forest, with your neck to pay for it if you make a slip. You fellows game?"

"Phew!" said Frank.

"It's that or lose the hosses," said Bob.

“We’re game,” said Beaulerc quietly, and Frank Richards nodded.

The three chums were grave enough as they made their preparations for the adventure.

But they did not hesitate.

As soon as the first rays of dawn gleamed down on the mountains they started.

Bob Lawless was the guide. His unerring instinct in woodcraft was the only guide they had.

Gunten and Keller, with the horses, were certain to follow the path Bob had explained to them, to get to the camp.

Horses could not have gone down the steep hillside directly. It was dangerous enough on foot. But it was possible.

From the high uplands where the schoolboys had camped, the descent, in a direct line, was rough and precipitous, by sloping cliffs and yawning crevices, shadowed by scrubby pine.

The three chums plunged into the pine-wood, and the descent commenced, Bob Lawless leading the way.

In places the descent was so steep that they had to cling to rocks and to thickets, to avoid rolling down; and in other places they forced their way through tangled thickets, with scratched hands and torn clothes.

But they kept on steadily as the sun rose higher in the sky.

They were able to look down into the lower valley at last, where the trail lay to the camp, worn by countless hoofs.

By that trail Gunten was bound to pass if he was heading for Last Chance.

“I guess we’re well ahead of the thieves,” said Bob breathlessly. “With the horses they had fifteen miles to cover, to get as far as the trail yonder. And I calculate they wouldn’t ride fast in the dark and not knowing the country. More likely they waited for daylight once they were safe out of our reach.”

“More likely,” agreed Frank.

The three chums clambered on, and forced their way through the last thicket of spruce, and reached the open trail through the valley.

There they sat down to rest.

They were very nearly exhausted by the rough clamber down the mountain-side, and glad of a chance of getting their breath.

The sun rose higher on the hills as they sat and watched the trail.

It was two hours before they heard a jingling of horses’ hoofs.

As Bob had surmised, the amateur horse-thieves had deferred their ride till daylight, after once putting a good distance between themselves and Frank Richards & Co.

Bob Lawless rose and drew his comrades into the cover of a clump of pines.

“I guess it’s our galoots!” he said.

The chums of Cedar Creek watched the trail between the trees. The jingling hoofs came nearer, and they recognised Gunten and Keller.

As the two riders came abreast of the trees Frank Richards & Co. rushed out into the trail.

Before Gunten and Keller even knew what was happening they were seized and dragged from the ponies’ backs.

Bump, bump!

With loud yells the two Swiss landed on the ground.

They sat up dazedly, hardly believing their eyes as they saw the three chums standing over them.

“You!” stuttered Keller.

“You!” gasped Gunten. “How did you get here?”

“I guess we got ahead of you, you pesky coyote!” roared Bob Lawless. “Take the ponies, Cherub. Where are the other hosses, Gunten?”

“They—they got loose—”

“You turned them loose, you mean,” said Bob. “I guess we shall have a hunt for them. But you’re going through it first.”

He took one of the trail-ropes, and coiled it grimly.

Gunten and Keller watched him appre-



ON THE EDGE OF THE FALLS! Gunten and Keller clutched at the rope as it dropped into the canoe and held it. Frank Richards & Co., on the bank, were holding on to the lasso with both hands. The rope tautened, as the canoe was swept onward, and Gunten and Keller crashed into the water. (See Chapter 1.)

hensively, and as Bob stepped towards them they made a sudden rush to escape. Frank and Beaulerc collared them promptly.

“Stick ‘em on the trail!” said Bob.

The two Swiss, quivering with apprehension, were flung face down on the trail, and held there. Then Bob Lawless got to work with the trail-rope.

Gunten and Keller yelled wildly as the coiled rope descended upon them in turns.

Bob Lawless was impartial. He gave them equal punishment, and he laid it on till his stout arm was aching.

By that time, however, Gunten and Keller were aching a good deal more than Bob’s arm, and their wild yells had died away into gasping and groaning.

“I guess that will do!” panted Bob at last. “You’d better think twice before you start hoss-stealing again, you pesky coyotes! Now light out, before I give you some more!”

Gunten and Keller staggered to their feet.

As Bob made a threatening gesture with the trail-rope they started, and went limping away down the trail, still groaning.

With all their cunning the two young rascals had not escaped the walk to the camp, after all.

“Now I guess we’ve got to round up the other hosses!” said Bob Lawless. “I reckon we shall find them on the trail somewhere. You’ll have to ride double with the Cherub, Franky. I’m the heaviest.”

The three schoolboys mounted the two ponies, and started in the direction whence Gunten and Keller had come.

Yen Chin’s pony and Chunky’s little fat steed were sighted a short distance up the trail, and soon rounded in.

Gunten had brought them a good distance from the camp in the hills before letting

them loose. But in that he had unconsciously played into the hands of the Cedar Creek fellows.

But Beaulerc’s black horse, Demon, was not to be seen.

Till noon the three chums hunted for him, but without success, and at last they took their way up the mountain paths to the camp.

“I guess we’ll find the critter later, Cherub!” said Bob comfortingly.

Chunky Todgers came to meet them as they drew near the camp at last.

“Got the other critters?” asked Chunky.

“Oh, good! Demon’s come back!”

“Come back!” exclaimed Beaulerc.

“Yes; he trotted in on his own,” grinned Chunky. “Got a lot of sense, that hoss. There he is, Cherub.”

There was a whinny, and the black horse came trotting up to greet his master.

Beaulerc’s face was very bright as he fondled his horse.

“Good old gee!” said Bob Lawless. “No wonder we couldn’t find him on the trails when he’d come home on his own accord. You ought to have thought of that, Cherub.”

“I ought!” agreed Beaulerc, with a laugh.

“Dinner’s ready,” said Chunky. “I thought I’d get it ready. I’ve had mine, but I’ll have another with you chaps, just to keep you company, you know.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Frank Richards & Co. enjoyed that dinner. They felt that they had earned it. And two young rascals, limping wearily on the trail to Last Chance, still smarting from Bob’s trail-rope, were very far from enjoying themselves.

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Challenge to the School!

"SIR JEFFERY MANNING'S a brick!" Baggy Trimble made that pronouncement. Anybody who stood the fat junior a free feed was a Jeffery Manning's mansion.

Baggy was on his way back to St. Jim's, after having been royally entertained at Sir Jeffery Manning's mansion.

Why should the wealthy baronet go out of his way to entertain a worthless fellow like Trimble? Thereby hung a tale.

Sir Jeffery was under the impression that Baggy Trimble had saved his life, and he, therefore, felt a deep sense of gratitude towards the fat junior. Not content with handing over a cash reward of fifty pounds to Baggy, the baronet had invited him to dinner. And it was from this function that Trimble was now returning.

Dusk was beginning to fall, and Baggy quickened his pace. He had a long way to go, and he wanted to get back to the school before it was really dark. For Baggy, though he had posed as a gallant hero, and had been regarded as such by Sir Jeffery Manning, was, in reality, the biggest coward, both morally and physically, at St. Jim's. Even Mellish of the Fourth, who on one memorable occasion had run away and left a schoolfellow to drown, had more pluck in his composition than Trimble.

Footsteps sounded along the darkening road.

Baggy Trimble stopped short, his heart beating fast.

A group of shadowy figures was approaching. Possibly they were labourers returning from work—ploughmen homeward—plodding their weary way. In which case, there was no call for alarm. Yet Baggy Trimble was in a state of blue funk.

The figures drew nearer. A sound of hob-nailed boots rang on the frosty road. Suddenly there was a shout.

"Ere's that fat guy Trimble! Collar 'im, mates!"

Baggy gave a gasp of alarm. He recognised the voice as that of Harry Huggins, a sturdy young blacksmith of Wayland.

There were four other louts with Huggins, and Trimble, peering nervously through the gloom, identified them as the brothers Brewer—Bill Brewer, Henry Brewer, Ted Brewer, and Ben Brewer.

Quite recently, Baggy Trimble had engaged these roughs to play football against Tom Merry's eleven. The match had been abandoned owing to foul play, and Baggy had promptly sacked the hired footballers. In so doing he had incurred their enmity, and they had been looking for a chance of getting even with Baggy. They had their

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

chance now, and they meant to make the most of it.

"Collar 'im!" repeated Harry Huggins. "Shall we roll 'im in the ditch, 'Arry?" asked big Bill Brewer.

"Oh, ah!" Baggy Trimble backed away in alarm.

"Hands off, you rotters!" he exclaimed. "If you lay so much as a finger on me, I'll lick the lot of you!"

"Haw, haw, haw!" said Harry Huggins.

"Ark at 'im, mates!" said Harry Huggins. "He talks warlike, but he couldn't lick a lame grasshopper! Into the ditch with 'im!"

Baggy gave a wild yell as the five roughs closed in upon him.

"Help! Rescue, St. Jim's!"

It was a forlorn cry, and Baggy scarcely dared to hope that it might be heard. But it was.

There was a swift patter of feet, and a party of seven fellows, clad in running garb and wearing rubber-soled shoes, came up at a canter.

The newcomers did not stand on ceremony. They rushed at Baggy Trimble's assailants, hitting out right and left.

"Wot the thump—" began Harry Huggins, in astonishment.

Then he gave a bull-like roar as a clenched fist took him on the point of the chin, knocking him backwards.

Baggy Trimble slunk to the side of the road and watched the proceedings.

The fight was fast and furious, but of brief duration. The seven young athletes who had come on the scene were fine fighting-men; and the five hooligans, hefty though they were, had to bite the dust. Huggins had been felled by that blow to the chin, and the next moment he was joined in the roadway by Bill Brewer, who crashed across him like an uprooted oak-tree.

A short, sharp scuffle, and then Ben Brewer was down. Another brief skirmish, and then Ted and Henry Brewer were down also.

"Bravo, you fellows!" exclaimed Baggy Trimble. "I knew you'd be able to knock 'em out all right! That's why I didn't trouble to give you a hand. Who are you? Dashed if I can recognise you in this light. Is Tom Merry here?"

"No," replied a sturdy youth.

"But you're St. Jim's fellows, surely?"

"No, we're not!"

"Then who—what—"

"My name's Jack Raymond," said the sturdy youth. "We're from the school of physical training, just outside Wayland."

"My hat!"

"What were these louts going to do to you?"

"Duck me in the ditch," said Trimble. "The rotters! Let 'em get up, and I'll fight the lot of them!"

It was easy for Trimble to talk like that,

when Harry Huggins & Co. hadn't an ounce of fight left in them.

Jack Raymond laughed breathlessly.

"I think they've had enough," he said. "Is that so?" he added, addressing Harry Huggins, as that young gentleman lurched to his feet.

"Oh, ah!" muttered Huggins. "We didn't bargain for you kids chippin' in. Lumme, but you can't 'alf 'it'!"

"You'd better clear off before we feel like giving you another dose!" said one of Jack Raymond's chums.

Harry Huggins & Co. went on their way willingly enough. Hefty giants though they were, they were no match for the tough young athletes from the school of physical training.

Baggy Trimble turned to Jack Raymond.

"I'm awfully obliged to you, Raymond—" he began.

"Don't mention it."

"Are you fellows out for a cross-country run?"

"Yes. We go for a run every evening. It's part of our training programme."

"Well, I wish you'd walk with me as far as St. Jim's," said Baggy. "Not that I'm frightened of the dark, or anything like that; but I want to talk to you."

"Go ahead!" said Jack Raymond cheerfully. "Matter of fact, we don't feel much like running after that scrap. We'll walk and talk with you, with pleasure."

The seven athletes proceeded with Baggy Trimble in the direction of St. Jim's.

A brilliant brain-wave had just occurred to Baggy. If only he could enlist the services of these seven fellows, who appeared to be highly-trained sportsmen, he would be able to challenge St. Jim's to a series of sporting contests. His efforts to raise a football team to defeat Tom Merry & Co. had failed lamentably; but there was no reason why this new scheme should fail. Baggy thanked his lucky stars that he had had the good fortune to meet Jack Raymond and the other six fellows from the school of physical training. With their aid, he would be able to work wonders.

Baggy outlined his scheme as the party tramped along the frosty road.

"The fellows at St. Jim's have served me shabbily," he said. "They won't give me a place in the footer team, and they won't admit that I'm a nailing good sportsman. So I want to take them down several pegs. I mean to challenge Tom Merry & Co. to a sports meeting. We'll have running races, and a boxing contest, and all the rest of it. You seven fellows and myself will be pitted against eight of the best junior sportsmen at St. Jim's. And the side that scores the biggest number of wins will walk off with the honours. Do you follow?"

Jack Raymond nodded.

"Of course, I don't expect you fellows to

Will the Honours go to St. Jim's or to Baggy Trimble's Team of Champions?

give your services for nothing," Trimble went on. "The labourer is worthy of his hire, you know."

"We're not labourers," granted Jack Raymond.

"No; but you know what I mean. I'm a fellow of substance—"

"You look it!" said Raymond, gazing at Baggy's ample form.

"Oh, really, Raymond, this isn't a joking matter. I'm in deadly earnest. As I was saying, I'm a fellow of substance, and I shall be pleased to pay you fellows handsomely for your services."

Jack Raymond frowned.

"You can cut that out," he said. "We're willing to give our services free. Sport for sport's sake—that's our motto. When you start to commercialise sport, it's no longer sport in the true sense of the term."

"Then you'll come as amateurs—not as pros?" said Baggy.

"Most decidedly."

Baggy's face fairly beamed. This was almost too good to be true. He was getting the services of seven trained athletes for nothing!

"That's simply ripping of you!" he said. "I'll challenge the school when I get back, and try to arrange the sports meeting for Saturday. How will that suit you?"

"First-rate," said Jack Raymond. "We shall be awfully keen on competing against St. Jim's. By the way, we've been jawing all this time, but you haven't told us your name."

"I'm Trimble—Bagley Trimble—only son of Sir Timothy Trimble, baronet. Simply rolling in money, you know!" added Baggy, jingling the contents of his trouser-pockets.

Jack Raymond smiled and introduced the six fellows who were with him. Conway and Carr were his two bosom pals, and these were introduced first. Then came a red-headed boy named Riley; then a couple of twins, Jimmy and Johnny Brown, who were as alike as two peas, and, lastly, Teddy Clifton, who was described by Raymond as being the finest fighting-man of the seven.

Baggy Trimble was more and more struck with the athletic appearance of the fellows he had so luckily fallen in with. He felt confident that they would be able to beat the cream of St. Jim's sportsmen.

"Are you on the telephone at your place, Raymond?" inquired Baggy.

"Yes."

"Then I'll issue my challenge to the school, and ring up and let you know when to come over. I expect it will be Saturday morning."

"All serene!" said Jack Raymond. "But you must clearly understand that we don't want any payment for our services."

The party had reached the gates of St. Jim's by this time, and Baggy Trimble bade good-night to the seven, who sprinted off in the direction of Wayland.

In a state of great excitement Trimble hurried across the quad. A moment later he fairly bounded into the junior common-room, where the majority of the St. Jim's juniors were assembled.

Breathless, and flushed of face, Baggy Trimble gazed upon the throng.

"I challenge the lot of you!" he panted dramatically.

The juniors looked up from their books and chessboards.

"Hallo! Another merry challenge from Trimble!" said Monty Lowther. "What do you challenge us to this time, porpoise—an eating contest, or a game of snakes and ladders?"

"Sport!" said Baggy. "Sport of every kind! Is Tom Merry here?"

The captain of the Shell rose to his feet and made a mocking bow.

"Choose your eight best sportsmen," said Baggy Trimble. "I've got a special team of eight to tackle yours, and beat you to a frazzle!"

"My hat!"

"I've got together a fine, fit lot of fellows," Trimble went on. "Under my leadership they'll simply wipe up the ground with you!"

Tom Merry looked grim.

"If you're bringing Harry Huggins & Co. to the school again—" he began.

"I'm not. I've got an entirely fresh set of fellows."

"Hefty giants of eighteen?" asked Manners. "Not at all. Fellows of your own size and weight. They'll come over on Saturday and pulverise you—if you'll accept my challenge, that is."

"How did you get hold of these wonderful athletes, Baggy?" asked Jack Blake.

"That's no concern of yours. Of course, they're professionals, and I'm paying 'em two guineas apiece."

"What!"

"That's the best of being wealthy," said Baggy Trimble. "Wealth commands everything, you know. Two guineas per head—that's what these fellows will get for their services."

"You—you're paying fourteen guineas to get together a team of sportsmen?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yes. Money's no object with me, you know. I've got tons of it to chuck about. Are you accepting this challenge, Merry, or turning it down?"

"I'll put it to the fellows," said Tom.

And he did, with the result that it was decided to accept Baggy Trimble's amazing challenge, and to oppose Jack Raymond & Co. on the following Saturday.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Surprising St. Jim's!

TO Tom Merry fell the task of selecting the eight best sportsmen in the junior section of St. Jim's. Tom was to skipper them, of course.

It was a delicate task, but Tom Merry made his selection without fear or favour. And when he had done so, he posted the following announcement on the notice-board:

"GREAT SPORTS MEETING!" TRIMBLE'S TEAM versus ST. JIM'S!

Baggy Trimble having had the awful nerve to challenge the school to a series of sporting contests, the following have been chosen to represent St. Jim's:

Tom Merry (capt.), R. Tailbot, G. Figgins, R. H. Redfern, Jack Blake, R. R. Cardew, H. Noble, and A. A. D'Arcy.

A list of events has been drawn up, and the sports will commence at 9 a.m. on

Saturday. Kildare of the Sixth has kindly consented to officiate.

(Signed) TOM MERRY."

The St. Jim's sportsmen did not go into serious training for the forthcoming tournament. They imagined that Baggy Trimble had got hold of a number of country yokels, who would be absolute duffers at sport.

But when Saturday came, bringing with it Jack Raymond and his comrades from the school of physical training, Tom Merry & Co. had a big surprise.

Instead of a gang of rustics, as they had expected, their visitors were splendid young athletes.

Tom Merry shook hands with Jack Raymond in the quad.

"Pleased to meet you!" he said. "Where have you fellows sprung from, if it's not rude to ask? You see, Baggy Trimble has told us very little about you."

"We're from the school of physical training, over at Wayland," said Jack Raymond.

"And how did Baggy get hold of you?" asked Jack Blake.

"We happened to rescue him the other evening, from the hands of a gang of roughs," explained Raymond. "He got into conversation with us, and told us he intended to challenge the school. We're awfully keen on sport, so we agreed to come in with him."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy screwed his monocle into his eye, and regarded Jack Raymond with a very stern glance.

"I consider it is vewy w'ong of you fellows to play games for money," he said.

"Eh?"

"You are acceptin' two guineas apiece f'rom Trimble—"

"What!" shouted Raymond.

"An' I don't think it's at all sportin' of you!" concluded the swell of St. Jim's severely.

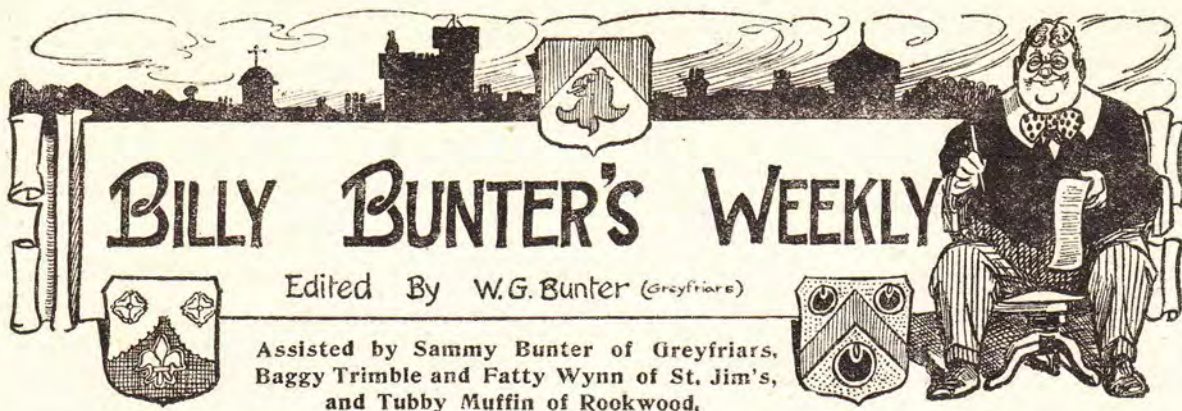
"Great Scott!" gasped Conway. "Did Trimble tell you he was paying us for our services?"

D'Arcy nodded.

(Continued on page 17.)



FIGGINS' GREAT EFFORT FOR ST. JIM'S! The school came in sight at last. Figgins was by no means out of the running. He had plenty of energy in reserve, and he put in a tremendous spurt as he neared the gates. "Go it, Figgy!" "St. Jim's wins!" (See Chapter 2.)



Assisted by Sammy Bunter of Greyfriars,
Baggy Trimble and Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's,
and Tubby Muffin of Rookwood.

Supplement No. 113.

Week Ending March 10th, 1923.

EDITORIAL!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My Dear Readers,—A man who writes plays is called a playwright. A man who makes and mends wheels is called a wheelwright. Then why isn't a man who writes verse called a versewright?

Ours is a funny langwidge, and no mistake! One of these days I shall revise the dickshunary, and bring it bang up to date. I have already started on a list of words and their meanings. Note the following:

"Hunter.—A man who hunts
Grunter.—A man who grunts.
Shunter.—A man who shunts.
Bunter.—A man who bunts."

But there is no such thing as "bunting," you will say. What about the stuff they decorate the streets with, on a grate occasion? That's bunting.

But I am wandering from the point, as the duellist said when he dodged away from his adversary's sword. This is our Spring Poets' Number, and it is like a tuck hamper—packed with good things!

I have no breef for spring poets. They are a thumping nuisance. They bring a poor editor's gray hare in sorrow to the grave. But I think it only right that I should give the spring poet a chance to shew what he can do. And he has got this number practically to himself.

Everybody seems to be bursting into poetry at this time of the year. It's as infectious as the flue. Even Mr. Quelch started talking in rime the other day. He said to me, when I was about to take forty winks, "Bunter, you are asleep, or nearly! I'll have to punish you severely! Bey, you will take an imposition; and let there be no repetition!"

There is quite a lot of verse in this issue. Some of it is a pleazzure to read. Some of it is sheer torcher. But I know that this number will get a grate reseption, for is it not edited by

Your plump pal,
BILLY BUNTER.

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.



Spring Poets
and Others!

By

Mr. Victor Railton, M.A.

Spring poets are not so plentiful as many people seem to think.

Shakespeare wrote one or two pleasing poems about spring; but the other seasons had their admirers, too.

One of the finest poems ever written is the "Ode to Autumn," by John Keats. It commences,

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,"

and its last verse expresses something like contempt for the season of spring:

"Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music, too."

Then there is the famous "Ode to the West Wind," which also treats of autumn:

"O Wild West Wind, thou breath of autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves, dead,
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing!"

Autumn, in fact, seems to be the favourite season of the great poets. Except for Wordsworth, who wrote constantly of daffodils and primroses, very few poets seemed to trouble much about the spring-time.

Shakespeare, in "Love's Labour Lost," wrote an amusing poem about winter. It is not only amusing, but it presents a very vivid picture of an English winter in Shakespeare's time:

"When all around the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit!
Tu-whit, tu-who!—a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot."

I expect Wynn and Trimble, the champion trenchermen of St. Jim's bitterly bemoan the fact that roasted crabs are no longer in the fashion!

If Shakespeare were alive at the present time, he would probably rewrite that verse as follows:

"When whistling Winter winds doth blow,
And schoolboys snuffle, sneeze, and snort;
When youngsters scramble in the snow,
Bombarding every rival fort;
When frozen Taggles grunts and growls,
Then nightly sing the staring owls,
Tu-whit!
Tu-whit, tu-who!—a merry sound,
While boys are grovelling on the ground!"

Spring is a very fine season. We welcome it after the dark, dreary days of winter. But I question whether spring is a more enjoyable season than summer, from a school-boy's point of view. It is too cold to bathe in spring. Football is on its last legs, yet it is too early to play cricket. Moreover, summer brings the long vacation, whereas spring only gives us a brief Easter holiday.

As for the spring poet, he has a very sorry time of it nowadays. The majority of editors have no use for odes to daffodils or sonnets to spring-uncions. They want something more lively and rousing, and we cannot blame them.

Which reminds me of a little anecdote concerning a spring poet. He had submitted some of his verses to a well-known editor, and weeks passed by without any sign of the poem being published. At last the poet called on the editor to find out what was wrong.

"Do you think my verses would be better for a little more fire?" he asked.

"Yes, I do," replied the editor blandly.

"That's why I burnt them!"

It is the Christmas-cracker poet who makes most money nowadays. There are men who are constantly employed in writing verses for the big Christmas-cracker manufacturers. They turn them out by the hundred, and are well paid for their labours. But if these poets were to devote their energies to writing poems on spring, they would soon be in the workhouse.

Bunter, the plump editor of this "Weekly," is giving the spring poet a chance to shine in this issue. But I am afraid I cannot guarantee that he will pay all his contributors. Some of them will have to be satisfied with seeing their names in print!

(Oh, really, Mr. Railton, you've no right to say that! I pay all my contributors a jolly sight better than Wharton does! Why, I am paying you a bob for this article—and if that isn't jenerosity, I should like to know what is!—Ed.)

[Supplement I.

Another Batch of Contributions from the Four Famous Schools Next Week!

ESSAY ON SPRING!

By Sammy Bunter.

SPRING is the first of the six seasons of the year, the other five being summer, autumn, winter, Christmas, and Mickle-mass.

Spring is supposed to arrive on February 21st, but it jenerally postpones its arrival for two or three months.

Spring follows on the heels of winter, and it is the 4-runner of summer.

Spring is noted for its spring onions and spring mattresses—also for its spring poets.

Spring, of course, is the most dangerous season of the year, be-kawse at this time the trees are shooting, and the plants are "springing up."

In the spring a young fag's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of grub.

The flowers that bloom in the spring (tra la la!) are daffodils, croakuses, primroses, wood anemones, colliflowers, and cabbages.

The cry of the "cockoo" is heard in spring. Also the lilt of the lark, the squeek of the sparrow, and the chirp of the chaffinch.

Spring is a terrible time for a fag at Greyfriars, be-kawse spring-cleaning starts, and he has to beat his master's carpets, scrub the study floor, turn everything inside-out and upside-down and make himself jenerally useful.

I have got to spring-clean for Loder of the Sixth this year. When I see him coming, I expect I shall "spring clean" out of his way. (Joak!)

Spring is also a terrible time for an editor, be-kawse the spring poets invade his sanctum, and give him no piece from the rising up of the sun unto the going down thereof.

Spring is the time when football is on its last legs, and cricketers are beginning to find their feet. Indoor games are given up in favour of outdoor pursuits, such as hockey, croaky, boles, fives, sixes, and sevens.

Easter comes in spring and we have a brief holiday. I am hoping one of my kind uncles will send me an Easter egg the size of a Rugby football!

All Fools' Day also comes in spring, and many Greyfriars fellows will be the victims of a hoke. I shall shout to young Nugent, "I say, Dicky, your boot-lace is undone!" And when he stoops to do it up, only to find it tightly tied up, I shall yell, "Yah! April Fool!" I shall also pull the leg of my brother Billy. I simply love pulling Billy's leg. (Don't you dare, you young rascal!—Ed.)

On the whole, I like summer better than spring. You see, spring is neither one thing nor the other. One day it's as cold as the Equator, and the next day it's as hot as the Arctic regions. The climate is very treacherous, and you never know whether to wear a grate-coat or a suit of flannels!

But I must buck up and bring this essay to its determination. I've got to go and start spring-cleaning Loder's study. I think I'll start by sweeping the chimney. Will sum-boddy lend me a long-haired broom?



By **FATTY WYNN**
(New House, St. Jim's.)

If you're waking, call me early, call me early, Figgy dear,
For to-morrow will be the gladdest day of all the glad New Year.
St. Jim's are playing Greyfriars, it will be ripping sport,
For I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

With Merry at centre-forward, and Talbot inside-right,
And Blake and Gussy on the wing, we'll make a gallant fight.
But some will scoff and sneer, Figgy, and some will snarl and snort,
For I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

Some say that Harry Hammond is a better man than me,
But he hasn't been selected, so they are wild, you see.
Yet the skipper knows his business, he's quite a decent sort,
And I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

The 'Friars will take some whacking, their backs are strong and grim,
They've a lively line of forwards who shoot with dash and vim.
But they will find a stumbling-block; it's little me, in short—
For I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

Of twisting shots and twirling shots I'm sure to get my share,
The clever shots, the curling shots, will always find me there!
With topping shots and dropping shots our forwards will retort,
And I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

Oh, sweet and strange it seems to me that in a little while
I'll dance and prance between the posts, and smile my sweetest smile.
I mean to do my best to win an excellent report,
And I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

With you and Kerr in front of me, to keep our foes at bay,
I may not have a strenuous time, but quite a holiday.
But I swear by all the Bunters that dwell at Bunter Court
That Greyfriars will not score, Figgy, for I am to hold the fort!

The crowd around the touchline will cheer with might and main,
I have no doubt they'll yell and shout till the welkin rings again!
You'll hear a roar of "Saved, sir!" and "Jolly good, old sport!"
For I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

The grass will gleam and glisten beneath the shining sun,
For winter now is over, and springtime has begun.
And there will be sensations, and thrills of every sort,
For I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

No muddy pools of water upon the ground to-morrow,
Nor shall we rush through mud and slush, to our opponents' sorrow.
The ground's in good condition, the grass is clean and short,
And I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

I'd like to have a little snack before the match begins,
For after eating twenty tarts I'm steeper on my pins.
I hope this bright suggestion receives your strong support,
For I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

If you're waking, call me early, call me early, Figgy dear,
For to-morrow will be the gladdest day of all the glad New Year.
St. Jim's will prove victorious by several goals to nought,
For I am to hold the fort, Figgy, I am to hold the fort!

A SONG OF SPRING!

By Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Springfulness is here again,
A time of blissful joyfulness;
The greenful trees, the freshening breeze,
Delight each British boyfulness.
The winter days, so dark and drear,
We recollect remindfully;
No matter, chums! If winter comes
Can spring be far behindfully?

The cuckoo comes from overseas
To raid the rival nestfulness;
The skylark springs on nimble wings
And seems to know no restfulness.
The sparrows see us in the close,
And nod their little craniums;
And, come and look! the reckless rook
Swoops on the Head's geraniums!

The buttercups are coming out.
Spring onions start the sproutfulness;
The violets blue are coming, too,
Of that there's not a doubtfulness.
On the Sark's bank the daisies grow,
And near the Thames at Twickenham;
While girls and boys with merry noise,
Are now engaged in pickin' em!

Then let us sing, Long live the Spring!
Best season of the yearfulness;
No need to cry, no need to sigh,
Or shed the briny tearfulness.
The sun is shining warm and bright,
The bird is on the wingfulness;
So join with me, and sing with glee
A merry song of Springfulness!

THE POPULAR,—No. 216.

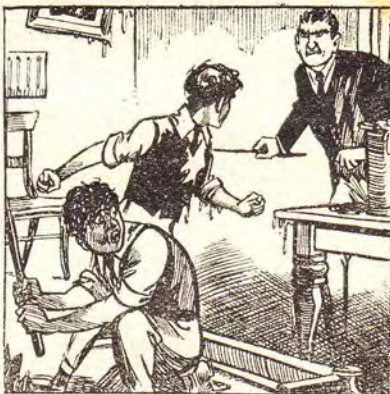


Spring Cleaning at Rookwood!

BY
ALGY SILVER.

Mark Carthew was a prefect;
He fixed me with a frown;
"Just clean my study out," said he,
"I'll give you half-a-crown."
"I want the carpets beaten,
I want the chimney swept;
The ceilings must be whitewashed, too!"
Ye gods! I could have wept!
I said to Lovell minor,
"This job's too much for one.
Give me a helping hand, old sport,
And then we'll have some fun!"
We fetched the merry carpets,
And hung them on a line;
We thumped and clumped with all our
might—
The exercise was fine!
We used a pair of broomsticks
With vigour and with vim;
Like hammering at the punching-ball
Suspended in the gym!
Old Mack, the porter, passed us
And viewed us with disgust;
He spluttered, gasped, and nearly
choked,
Caught in a cloud of dust!
We banged and biffed those carpets
Till there was no trace
Of dust or dirt; we then returned
Each carpet to its place.
We fetched a pail of whitewash;
I stood on Carthew's table,
And slap-dashed at the ceiling
As well as I was able.
Young Lovell gave a sudden howl,
He cried, "Hold on, old sport!
That whitewash, on my noble nut,
You're spilling by the quart!"
The furniture was smothered,
The chairs and tables, too;
The whitewash, on the carpets lay
Like early morning dew.
"If Carthew comes," said Lovell,
"He'll have a purple fit!"
But still I slapdashed merrily,
And didn't care a bit!
My clothes were swamped with white-
wash,
And Lovell's were the same;
We looked like umpires in their coats,
About to start a game!

"And now we'll do the chimney,"
I murmured, in my glee;
Young Lovell fetched a lengthy broom,
And a merry laugh laughed he.
The soot came down in showers
Upon the study floor;
The more we prodded, poked, and
pushed,
The faster did it pour!
The soot and whitewash mingled
In one great ghastly mess;
"Oh, Algy! What will Carthew say?"
Gasped Lovell in distress.
And then the door burst open,
The prefect staggered in;
I blinked at him with sooty eyes,
And grinned a sickly grin.
"You careless brats!" roared Carthew,
"Just look at what you've done!"
"Oh, be not angry," I implored,
"It's just a bit of fun!"



Then Carthew grabbed an ashplant,
And pinned us to the table;
He lammed us, and the row we made
Was ten times worse than Babel!
A dozen strokes descended
Upon our tough young hides;
The ashplant fell upon our backs,
Our shoulders, and our sides!
And when I asked for payment
For cleaning Carthew's study,
He gave a roar, and kicked me forth
With hefty boots and muddy!

WHEN THE STORMY WINDS DO BLOW!

By Teddy Grace.

The winds of March came sweeping
down

Upon the Rookwood quad;
Silver and Erroll were both in peril,
And so was Tommy Dodd.

It seemed that all the winds of heaven
Were buffeting and blustering;
That every gale, with roar and wail,
In Rookwood's quad was mustering!

The chimney-pots came crashing down,
And so did tiles and slates;
By great good luck, they never struck
Our unprotected plates.

The window-panes were torn clean out,
The glass came down in showers;
"Well, I should smole," said Tommy
Doyle,

"This storm will last for hours!"

The great trees groaned; their branches
cracked

And crashed upon the ground;
Dodd tried to speak; Peele gave a
shriek:

The gale their voices drowned.

The Head came panting through the
storm,

Umbrella raised on high;
Then from his grip it seemed to slip,
And soared into the sky!

The window of the porter's lodge

Was just a yawning hole;
The Head espied the scene, and cried,
"Good gracious! Bless my soul!"

And still the chimney-pots crashed down,
The glass, the slates, and tiles;
And everyone enjoyed the fun
And smiled their sweetest smiles!

We staggered here, we staggered there,
With comrades we collided;
We didn't beat a gay retreat
Until the storm subsided.

When stormy winds sweep down again
In wild and wanton glee,
And slates and tiles are blown for miles,
May I be there to see!

ANSWERS TO KORRESPONDENTS!

By Billy Bunter.

"Slim Jim" (Salisbury).—"Why are you
always down on thin people?" I'm not. If I
was, they'd all be sufferkated!

"Merry and Bright" (Bayswater).—"Your
Special Pessimists Number quite cheered me
up." It was intended to do just the
opposite!

R. A. H. (Nottingham).—"I have been a
staunch reader of your 'Weekly' for fifteen
years." Draw it mild! We've only been in
existence a couple of years!

"Scarecrow" (Staffs).—"How can I get
stout?" By going round to the Bottle and
Jug Department. But I trusted you will do
nothing of the sort!

"Elsie" (Homerton).—"How do we know
that the 'Popular' has a big staff of
servants? Why, because Billy Bunter has
four 'pages' in it!" Tut, tut! You make
me lark so harshly that I shall burst my
"buttons!"

"Indignant" (Barnsley).—"Why do you say
that Wharton is always cribbing your ideas?"
Bekawse it's the plane, unvarnished truth!
B. M. K. (Brighton).—"Does your pater
have to pay extra term-fees for you, because
of your enormous appetite?" I refuse to
answer your rood query.

"Admirer" (Swanage).—"I wish the
"Weekly" came out every day, with a special
evening edition as well. Could this be
arranged, Billy?" Yes; if I were excused
lessens, and had a hundred sub-editors!

"Sarcastic" (Manchester).—"When Shakes-
peare said, 'Let me have men about me that
are fat,' he wasn't thinking of you." But
when he said, "A fool there was," he was
thinking of you!

Madge W. (Northampton).—"I rather like
you, Billy, in spite of your piggishness."
What you might call a mixed compliment!

Jack B. (Windsor).—"Is your circumference
greater than the circumference of the earth?"
Not yet!

(A large number of replies have shared the
fate of the punching-ball in Study No. 7.
In other words, they have been suspended!)

Supplement III.

Next Week—"Special Historical Number"! You'll Scream Over It!



THE SPORTING SEVEN!

(Continued from page 13.)



"The fat cad!" exclaimed Carr. "We distinctly told him that we'd give our services free, gratis, and for nothing."

"Bai Jove!"

"Trimble's a toad, to tell whoppers like that!" said Jack Raymond indignantly. "He's branding us as part professionals, and we're nothing of the sort."

"Here's Trimble himself," said Jack Blake, as Baggy rolled into view.

The seven sportsmen from the school of physical training confronted Baggy with very grim expressions on their faces.

"Did you tell these fellows you were paying us two guineas apiece for our services?" demanded Raymond.

"Ahem!"

"Did you, or did you not? Out with it!"

Baggy Trimble was fairly cornered.

"I—I was merely pulling their legs, Raymond, old fellow," he said feebly.

"Well, we object to that sort of leg-pulling. And, with your schoolfellows' permission, we're going to bump you!"

"Our permission is readily granted!" said Tom Merry, with a grin.

The members of Baggy Trimble's team then fell upon their plump leader, and bumped him with great vigour and heartiness.

Three times in succession Baggy Trimble was dumped down violently on the flagstones; and his yells of anguish fairly awakened the echoes.

"Yaroooooh! Hold on—I mean, leggo!" yelled Baggy. "This is mutiny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I distinctly told you our motto was sport for sport's sake," said Jack Raymond. "And you go and tell these fellows that we're paid pros. If you tell any more fibs of that sort we'll bump you again—and we'll put more ginger into it next time!"

"Wow!"

Baggy Trimble scrambled to his feet. His shorts and vest, which had been spotlessly white a few minutes before, were now stained with mud.

At this juncture Kildare of the Sixth made his appearance.

"You kids ready?" he asked.

"Yaas, whatah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What's the first event, deah boy?"

"A long-distance run over a course of five miles," said Kildare. "I'll describe the route to you in detail before you start."

The captain of St. Jim's furnished the necessary details, and the runners lined up in the school gateway.

Baggy Trimble, who lined up with his men, started giving them instructions in the art of long-distance running.

"There's no need to start that," said Jack Raymond curtly. "We don't want you to tutor us!"

"Oh, really, Raymond—"

"Just listen to me a moment!" said Kildare. "First man home will be awarded sixteen points. Second home will get fifteen, and so on. The team that has the highest aggregate at the finish will be adjudged the winners. Is that clear?"

"Quite!" said Cardew. "Fire the merry pistol!"

Kildare did so, and the runners were off in a flash, with one exception.

The exception was Baggy Trimble. Baggy was no runner, long-distance or short. He carried too much overweight, so to speak. It was safe to surmise that Baggy would come in sixteenth, if he came in at all.

The rest of the runners left Baggy panting and puffing in the rear. They were like modern express trains compared with the first steam locomotive ever invented. And the distance between them and Baggy Trimble widened rapidly.

St. Jim's had some splendid runners, but they were sorely tested by their opponents.

Jack Raymond & Co. were in fine trim. They had the advantage of being in training, and they sped along in an apparently effortless manner. Yet they were travelling so swiftly that the St. Jim's runners found it difficult to keep pace with them.

At the end of the first mile, Figgins, of the

New House, enjoyed a narrow lead. Jimmy and Johnny Brown were hard on his heels.

This order was maintained for two more miles, and then Piggy was robbed of his lead, the twins forging ahead of him.

But Piggy was by no means out of the running. He had plenty of energy in reserve, and he put on a tremendous spurt when he came to the last lap, winning a glorious race by a matter of inches from Jimmy Brown.

An enthusiastic crowd of St. Jim's fellows, perched on the school wall to see the finish, cheered Piggy to the echo.

"Bravo, St. Jim's!"

"The first man home is ours, anyway," said Manners.

"But the second and third aren't," said Monty Lowther. "Our fellows will have to put a jerk in it, if they want to bag the honours."

The final placings were as follows:

1st, G. Figgins; 2nd, Jimmy Brown; 3rd, Johnny Brown; 4th, Tom Merry; 5th, Jack Raymond; 6th, Carr; 7th, Dick Redfern; 8th, Conway; 9th, Talbot; 10th, Jack Blake; 11th, D'Arcy; 12th, Noble; 13th, Cardew; 14th, Clifton; 15th, Riley; 16th, Trimble.

Baggy Trimble actually managed to complete the course, though he came in a good half-hour after the fellow who finished fifteenth.

Kildare reckoned up the points amid a breathless silence.

"St. Jim's take the honours," he said at length. "They've scored sixty-nine points against sixty-seven."

"Hurrah!"

"We've just scraped home by two points!" said Tom Merry. "A jolly close thing!"

Baggy Trimble had not yet arrived home when the result was announced. When he did arrive, dusty, and panting, and perspiring, and dragging one leg wearily after the other, Jack Raymond informed him that St. Jim's had won.

"What!" shouted Baggy. "Tom Merry's team have beaten us? Oh, my hat! What a sorry start! You fellows can't run for toffee!"

"Well, I like that!" said Jack Raymond, bursting out laughing. "Coming from a fellow who finishes last, half an hour behind all the rest, it's what you might call sublime impudence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble blinked wrathfully at Raymond.

"You know jolly well I should have finished first," he said, "if it wasn't for the fact that I—"

"Can't run!" said Monty Lowther, finishing Baggy's sentence for him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dry up, Lowther, you beast! If I hadn't ricked my ankle coming down Barton Hill, I should have romped away with the race!"

"Perhaps," said Teddy Clifton, "and perhaps not. Anyway, we've lost the first event. And St. Jim's won on their merits: no question about that. But we'll see if we can turn the tables in the second event."

"Yes, rather!" said Jack Raymond heartily.

After the runners had rested, they adjourned to the playing-fields.

Taggles, the porter, appeared on the scene with a long rope and a pail of whitewash.

"Tug-of-war!" said Tom Merry. "Line up, you fellows!"

Taggles did some slap-dashing with the brush, and made a whitewashed line on the grass. Then the two teams took up their positions on the rope.

"There will be three separate pulls," said Kildare. "Are you ready?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then—heave!"

The St. Jim's fellows threw their united weight into the tussle. They dug their heels into the turf, and lay back, heaving with might and main.

"Go it!" cried Monty Lowther excitedly.

"A long pull, a strong pull, and pull all together!"

Tom Merry's team won the first pull—rather easily, too. But Baggy Trimble's men hung on stubbornly the second time. Baggy himself was at the extreme end of the rope—a solid mountain of flesh that took a deal of shifting.

With a strong, concerted effort, Trimble's team hauled their opponents over the whitewashed line. And now came the third and deciding pull.

"Come along, St. Jim's!" shouted the spectators, dashing to and fro and waving their arms about like windmills.

That third pull lasted nearly five minutes. First one team, and then the other, claimed a slight advantage, only to lose it again.

Baggy Trimble played a really great part in the grim tussle. He made the utmost use of his fourteen stone, and his powers of endurance surprised St. Jim's, who expected to see him "cave in" long since.

Jack Raymond and the others were beginning to waver. But Baggy rallied them with a rousing cry.

"Stick it out, you fellows! We're winning! Hang on just a minute longer!"

Baggy's men responded gallantly to his appeal, and inch by inch Tom Merry & Co. gave ground, until at last they came sprawling over the line—baffled, exhausted, and beaten!

There were loud cheers for Baggy Trimble. Poor sportsman though he had proved himself, up to this stage, he had certainly carried his team to victory now. Baggy's face was flushed and radiant.

"That's one win to us," he shouted. "We're level now. What's the next event, Kildare?"

"Lunch!" said the captain of St. Jim's. "The running races will take place this afternoon."

"Good!"

Puffing out his chest with pride, Baggy Trimble led his men away in the direction of the dining hall.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Thrills—and Spills!

JACK RAYMOND & Co. leapt into popularity at a bound. The St. Jim's fellows were not slow to appreciate their sportsmanlike qualities.

The seven fellows who had enlisted under Baggy Trimble's banner were proving themselves foemen worthy of their steel. Monty Lowther christened them the Sporting Seven, and the name stuck.

Lunch was a merry meal, but the only fellow who did full justice to it was Baggy Trimble.

"I shall never win the mile unless I train on apple dumplings," explained Baggy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you finish anywhere but last in the mile, the age of miracles will have come back," said Jack Blake.

"Oh, really, Blake. You're only annoyed to think you're going to be beaten!"

After lunch, the rival teams returned to the playing-fields.

The first event was the hundred yards. Conway, the champion sprinter of the Sporting Seven, ought to have won this event. But he didn't.

When the pistol was fired, Baggy Trimble bounded forward, and, instead of keeping a straight course, he lurched from side to side, like a round tub in a rough sea. Jack Raymond crashed into him, and went sprawling; and Conway found his path blocked by a solid wall of flesh. He had to dodge round Baggy Trimble, and thus lost valuable time. In the meantime, the St. Jim's runners were well away, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy won a capital race by a yard.

The Sporting Seven told Baggy Trimble what they thought of him. And they did not mince their words.

"Conway would have won that event hands down, if you hadn't obstructed the course," said Jack Raymond.

"Why not see the stewards about it, and lodge an objection against Baggy for bumping and boring?" suggested Monty Lowther.

(Continued on page 22.)

THE POPULAR—No. 216.

"Rivals of the Ring!"—a St. Jim's Tale with a Punch in Every Line!

TUBBY—THE HERO!

Tubby Muffin takes the credit of having saved George Bulkeley from drowning, and basks once again in the limelight!

WHO SAVED BULKELEY?

answered Jimmy Silver, lunging with the bat. "There's one—and there's another—and there—"

BORROWED GLORY!

A Fine Story of the Famous Chums of Rookwood School,

BY

OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Stories of Rookwood appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Putty is Wanted!

"SILVER!" Bulkeley of the Sixth rapped out Jimmy Silver's name sharply. Jimmy was going out with his bat under his arm, but he stopped at once and turned back. Rookwood juniors were always ready to oblige old Bulkeley; and, moreover, Bulkeley's tone indicated that delay might be dangerous. So Jimmy Silver came along promptly.

"Yes, Bulkeley?" Bulkeley was frowning. "Has Grace, of your Form, gone out, do you know, Silver?"

"The new kid? I don't know." The voice of Arthur Edward Lovell came through the open doorway in loud and impatient tones.

"Are you coming, Jimmy? We're waiting."

"Wait a bit, then, old scout!" called back Jimmy.

Lovell's impatient face looked in at the doorway. "You must stop to talk to some silly ass when a chap's waiting for you!" he said. "You— Oh, Bulkeley! I—I—ahem!"

Lovell promptly disappeared again.

"Do you want me to find Grace, Bulkeley?" asked Jimmy Silver hastily.

"Yes. Not if you're playing cricket, though," said Bulkeley, who was always considerate, even to fags. "Somebody else will do."

"Oh, that's all right—only practice," answered Jimmy Silver cheerily. "I'll look for him at once!"

"Send him to my study," said Bulkeley.

"Right—ho!"

Bulkeley went back to his study, still frowning. It was easy to guess that the vials of wrath were ready to be poured out on the devoted head of Teddy Grace, the new junior in the Fourth Form.

Jimmy Silver looked out on the steps, where Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for him.

"Seen Putty?" he asked.

"In his study, I think," said Raby.

"Right! You fellows run along; I'll come after you. Putty is in a row again."

"Bless him!" grunted Lovell.

The three juniors started for Little Side, while Jimmy Silver went up to the Fourth Form passage in search of Teddy Grace. It was a sunny spring afternoon and a half-holiday, and most of the fellows were naturally out of doors; but Putty of the Fourth was discovered in Study No. 2.

The new junior seemed busy.

Teddy Grace dabbled in water-colours, and he was now occupied in giving some touches to a sketch.

"You're wanted, Putty!" grunted Jimmy Silver at the door.

"Can't come!"

"Bulkeley wants you!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

"Bother Bulkeley!" answered Teddy Grace, without looking up.

"Fathead! You're to go at once. Is that a picture?" added Jimmy Silver, glancing at Putty's sketch.

"It's going to be," said Putty cheerfully.

"Don't you recognise the scene?"

Jimmy Silver gazed at it attentively. Putty's art was rather of the impressionist order, and so it was not really easy to guess what the picture was intended to represent.

"Battle scene?" asked Jimmy.

"Ass!" answered Putty impolitely.

"Well, I suppose that's cannon smoke, isn't it?"

"Don't you know clouds when you see them?"

"H'm! Not when I see them looking like that!" said Jimmy, with a grin. "Isn't that a big gun in the middle of the picture?"

"Don't you know a bridge when you see it?" snorted Putty.

"Oh, my hat!"

"It's the little bridge over the Croft Brook," explained Putty. "Of course, it's not finished yet. I'm going there again this afternoon."

"Better go and see Bulkeley first."

"Bother Bulkeley! What does he want?" asked Teddy Grace crossly.

"He wants you, and I fancy it's a case for the asphalt!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"Some more of your monkey-tricks, I suppose."

"Well, he'll have to wait a bit."

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"You're a new kid here, Putty," he remarked; "but you must have learned by this time that the captain of the school can't be kept waiting. You're going at once."

"Rats!"

"Otherwise I shall help you along. I've got a bat here, and I'll help you—"

"Look here—"

"Like that!" continued Jimmy, bringing the bat into play.

"Ow!" roared Putty. "You silly ass—"

"And like that—and that—"

Putty of the Fourth dodged frantically as Jimmy Silver lunged with the bat. He had to dodge out of the study, and Jimmy cheerily drove him along to the stairs, still lunging.

"You silly chump!" roared Putty, turning on the staircase landing. "You howling idiot, I tell you— Yaroooh!"

"Have some more?"

"I'll—I'll—"

"You'll trot along," agreed Silver. "I'm wasting too much time on you now. There's another!"

"Yooop!"

Putty of the Fourth fled down the stairs. Jimmy Silver followed him, with his bat ready for action. The captain of the school was not to be kept waiting, even by the cheekiest junior at Rookwood.

Teddy Grace turned on the next landing, with a red and wrathful face.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, you silly chump—!"

"I'll keep it up as long as you do," answered Jimmy, lunging with the bat.

"There's one—and there's another—and there—"

But the new junior had had enough; the bat was not to be argued with. He jumped back and fled down the lower staircase.

It was unfortunate for Tubby Muffin, the fattest junior on the Classical side of Rookwood, that he happened to be coming upstairs just then.

Putty came round the curve of the staircase at full speed, and met Tubby in full career. The collision was terrific.

Tubby Muffin sat down, clutching at the banisters and roaring. Putty reeled back from the shock and sprawled.

"Yaroooh!" roared Tubby. "What—what the thump— Oh! Ow!"

"Oh!" gasped Putty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—your thumping ass!" spluttered Tubby Muffin, scrambling up in great wrath.

"You dangerous lunatic! You're always playing tricks. I'll jolly well teach you to biff me over on the stairs!"

Tubby Muffin was not usually a fighting-man, but he was roused to great wrath by the shock he had received. He fairly hurled himself upon the sprawling Putty, punching right and left.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Go it, Tubby!"

"Ow-ow-ow! Gerroff!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"There, you silly ass—there, you chump—biffing a fellow over on the staircase! Take that—and that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Putty of the Fourth struggled wildly under the weight of the fat Classical. He was at a disadvantage, sprawling on his back on the stairs, with the fat Tubby scrambling over him. The yells of the unfortunate Putty woke the echoes of Rookwood.

Townsend of the Fourth looked up from below.

"You'd better chuck that!" he called out. "Bulkeley's coming!"

Thump, thump!

"Yooop! Help! Dragimoff!"

Jimmy Silver ran down and collared Tubby Muffin, jerking him away from his victim, as Bulkeley appeared on the scene.

"What's the thundering row about?" exclaimed the captain of Rookwood angrily.

"Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Putty, sitting up dazedly. "Oh dear—oh!"

"Biffed me over!" roared Tubby Muffin indignantly. "He's always playing tricks. Just like a monkey! Biffed me over! I'll biff him!"

"More of your pranks, I suppose, you young rascal!" growled Bulkeley, helping Putty to his feet by the collar.

"Ow! It was an accident—"

"Yes! I know your accidents, you young sweep! Come along!"

And the hapless Putty was marched off to

Bulkeley's study, with the Rookwood captain's grasp upon his collar.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. The Straight Tip!

TEDDY GRACE gasped for breath as he put his collar straight in George Bulkeley's study. The captain of Rookwood regarded him with a frowning brow.

Since he had been at Rookwood the new junior had been in hot water more times than he could count. His predilection for practical jokes of all sorts and sizes had become too well known for his comfort.

It was quite useless for him to plead not guilty. Any other fellow could have an accident, and it was an accident; but an accident in Putty's case was put down at once to his "monkey-tricks."

So he did not even attempt to explain the disaster on the staircase. He waited meekly for Bulkeley to begin.

"Well, you young rascal?" said the prefect at last.

"Oh, Bulkeley!" murmured Putty.

"You've been trespassing!"

"Eh?"

"As you're a new kid you mayn't know that Sir Leicester Stuckey objects to fellows going over his ground," said Bulkeley. "You ought to know, however, that Stuckey Croft is out of bounds."

"Stuckey Croft!" repeated Putty. "I haven't been there—really, Bulkeley! I heard that some fellows went there the other day, and there was some trouble; but I wasn't one of them, really."

Bulkeley gave him a sharp look.

"Some fellows were asked there to tea, over the phone," he said. "It came out that Sir Leicester hadn't asked them, as they thought. It was somebody playing a trick."

"Was it, really?"

"It hasn't come out who did it. I've got my suspicions. Things like that didn't happen before you came to Rookwood."

"Oh, Bulkeley!"

"Sir Leicester Stuckey was very angry, and he's made no end of complaints," continued the captain of Rookwood. "Now he's complaining again about Rookwood fellows going about his grounds without permission. You've been seen there—along the Croft Brook."

"Oh!" said Putty. "That's all right, Bulkeley. There's a footpath across, you know. Anybody can use the plank bridge."

"So long as they don't leave the footpath," said Bulkeley. "But you do—or you did. And Sir Leicester has complained."

"Well, I may have gone along the stream to sketch—"

"You had better go along some other stream to sketch, then!" answered Bulkeley. "But I've got to finish my picture!" urged Putty.

"I'm painting a really good water-colour of the brook and the plank bridge, and—"

Bulkeley picked up his cane.

"I believe you knew the place was out of bounds," he said. "Anyway, you know it now. You're not to use that footpath again, and you're not to go anywhere near the Croft Brook. The Head's waxy with old Stuckey ringing him up to complain."

"But my picture—"

"What?"

"My picture isn't finished—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Bulkeley. Swish!

"Ow!"

"That's a tip!" said Bulkeley grimly. "Now, whether you go to Croft Brook to sketch or to play monkey-tricks I don't know. But I know that if you go there again, under any circumstances whatever, I shall take you to the Head for a flogging!"

"Oh dear!"

"Keep that in mind!" said Bulkeley sternly. "If you're ever found near the place again you'll be flogged! That footpath is out of bounds for Rookwood fellows, owing to the trouble it's caused. Do you think you can remember that, or shall I give you another lick to impress it on your mind?"

"I—I think I can remember Bulkeley!" gasped Putty.

"Mind you do! You're giving altogether too much trouble for a new kid!" growled Bulkeley. "I think you'll have sense enough to keep clear of the place now, though. I hope so, for your own sake. You can cut!"

Putty of the Fourth was glad enough to "cut."

He left Bulkeley's study, rubbing his palm dolorously. As it happened, his intentions in visiting Sir Leicester Stuckey's property were quite harmless; but he was becoming a dog with a bad name, so to speak. He returned to his study in a thoughtful mood.

Putty was a determined youth, not to say an optimistic one, and he was very keen on finishing his impressionist picture of the Croft Brook. He was conscious of good intentions, though he was not given the credit for them. And it really was selfish and inconsiderate of Sir Leicester Stuckey to wish to bar off a promising young artist from the scene of his artistic labours.

"I'm jolly well going, all the same!" murmured Putty, as he packed up his sketching materials. "Bulkeley's an ass—and old Stuckey is a beast! I'm going, all the same—"

"I say, Putty—"

The fat face of his study-mate, Tubby Muffin, looked in at the door. His eyes lingered on Putty's satchel.

"Cut!" snapped Putty.

"Where are you going, all the same?" grinned the fat Classical.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Bulkeley's just gone out," said Tubby Muffin. "He's gone over to Abbeywood. I think. He's got a relation in hospital there. I—I say, wharrr you going to do with that stump, Putty?"

"I'm going to give a fat boulder a thumping good licking!"

Tubby backed into the passage.

"I say, Putty, old chap, don't bear malice, you know!" he urged, from outside the doorway. "You biffed me over, and I thumped you, so it's fair and square. You shouldn't play tricks, you know!"

"It was an accident, you fat duffer!"

"Oh, yes, I know! You're always having accidents!" grinned Tubby. "But, I say, don't be waxy, you know! I—I was jolly glad when you became my study-mate, Putty, old chap! I never went for you as Higgs did, did I?"

"You couldn't!"

"Well, I wouldn't, anyway. The fact is, I never liked a chap so much as I did you, Putty!"

"Bosh!"

"And I'll tell you what," continued Tubby confidentially, but keeping a wary eye upon his study-mate. "Now you've had a remittance, Putty—"

"How do you know I've had a remittance?"

"I happened to see you open the letter. What do you say to a real good spread in the study?" asked Tubby eagerly. "I'll do the shopping for you. I'll do the cooking. In fact, I'll do everything. All you've got to do is to stand the tin," said the fat Classical generously. "What do you say, Putty?"

"Rats!"

"What have you got in that satchel, Putty?"

"Sketching things, fathead!"

"I think it's jolly selfish of a fellow to take his tuck away and feed by himself!" said Tubby Muffin loftily. "There isn't any fun in a picnic all by yourself, Putty!"

"I'm not going on a picnic, you fat corn-morant!" growled Putty.

Tubby Muffin winked.

"I'll come with you, old chap!" he said.

"Do—and I'll roll you in the brook!" answered Putty.

"If you don't want my company, Teddy Grace—"

said Putty in a very lofty tone.

"Well, I don't!"

"Ahem! He, he, he! I can take a joke with anybody," said Tubby Muffin. "He, he, he! Shall we start now, Putty?"

"I'm going to start," answered Putty. "and if I see you around I'll scalp you! It's not a picnic, and you can go and eat coke!"

Putty came out of the study, and Tubby Muffin dodged away. The new junior went downstairs, and Tubby followed him—at a cautious distance—into the quad. As Teddy Grace neared the gates he looked back, and found the fat Classical on his track.

As Putty of the Fourth was going out of bounds, with a flogging hanging over his head in case of discovery, he naturally had a strong objection to Tubby's company. Anything that happened within the knowledge of Tubby was pretty certain to become known far and wide.

Putty turned back, and charged towards

the fat Classical with his satchel swinging in the air.

Tubby Muffin gave him one alarmed blink and fled.

"Stop!" roared Putty. "I'm going to scalp you! Come back, Muffin!"

Instead of coming back Tubby Muffin put on speed, his fat little legs going like clock-work, in the direction of the cricket-field.

Putty of the Fourth chuckled, and went cheerily out of gates, satisfied that he was rid of the inquisitive Tubby for the afternoon. But that was a little mistake on his part.

Tubby gave him five minutes' start, and then rolled after him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. In Deadly Peril!

PUTTY of the Fourth was at work. For once, he was busy without being engaged upon practical jokes or "monkey-tricks" of any kind.

About a hundred yards from the plank bridge he was ensconced under the trees, busily daubing.

The greatest of impressionist pictures ever exhibited was not quite so thoroughly impressionist as Putty's work. Even the artist himself was a little puzzled at times to distinguish between his trees, his bridges, and his clouds. But he was enjoying the pursuit of his art, and, after all, that was the chief concern.

Putty had forgotten all about Sir Leicester Stuckey and Bulkeley and everybody else, like a true artist, in the midst of creative effort. He did not see or hear Tubby Muffin approaching.

He gave a jump, and dabbed a daub that was more impressionist than ever as the fat Classical suddenly tapped him on the shoulder.

"Oh! You ass!" gasped Putty.

"He, he, he!"

"You—you fat chump! What are you doing here?"

Tubby Muffin grinned.

"You're out of bounds, Putty!" he said, wagging an admonitory fat forefinger at Teddy Grace.

"So are you!" growled Putty.

"That doesn't matter so much—I'm not a tricky monkey, always getting into hot water!" grinned Tubby. "You're going to have a flogging if you're caught here. I heard Bulkeley say so."

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Where's the grub?"

"Eh? What grub?"

"The picnic?"

"There isn't any picnic, you fat duffer!" shouted Putty, in great exasperation. "I've come here to paint."

Tubby Muffin knitted his brows sternly.

"Now, look here, Putty," he said. "I'm willing to be friendly. I'm willing to join you in the picnic. I'm willing to go halves with you. I can't say fairer than that, can I?"

"Fathead!"

"It's no good trying to pull my leg," continued Tubby. "I'm pretty sharp. You have to get up very early in the morning to pull the wool over my eyes. I can tell you! It's no good telling me that you've come here to daub that silly rot—"

"That what?"

"Silly rot!" said the cheerful Tubby. "You've come here to have the feed all to yourself, and I think it's greedy—selfish, in fact. I hate selfishness. You wouldn't go out of bounds simply to play the goat with that silly daubing—Yarsooh!"

The exasperated artist lost patience. Tubby Muffin suddenly found himself sitting on the grass, without any clear idea as to how he had got there.

"Wow, wow, wow!" gasped Putty. "Why, you rotter, I've a jolly good mind to tell Bulkeley. I believe he's coming home this way, and I'll go and meet him, and—"

"Shut up!"

Tubby sat in the grass and blinked at Teddy Grace in great wrath. He had come there for a feed, not a bumping.

"Yow-ow! You rotter! If you haven't got a feed here, you're playing some trick on old Stuckey, and bring him howling along to Rookwood again. I'm not going to let you! I'll jolly well go and meet Bulkeley—"

"Better not go over the plank bridge,"

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

Next Week's Rookwood Story is Stunning! It's Entitled: "The Hero of the Hour!"

grinned Putty. "It's not safe. I've looked at it."

"I'm going—"

"If you do we shall lose the fattest idiot at Rookwood, and some home for idiots will be deprived of a future inmate!"

"You cheeky ass!" roared Tubby.

He scrambled to his feet and started along the brook. There was evidently no prospect of joining in the feed—if feed there were.

Putty called after him, really anxious:

"Don't go on the plank, Tubby! I tell you it's not safe!"

"You can't spoof me!"

"I've looked at it, you fat idiot!" howled Putty. "I was going to the other side myself, only it wouldn't do. The wood's rotted."

"Rats!"

Tubby Muffin kept on without looking back. But he stopped all of a sudden. On the other side of the brook, coming through the trees, a stalwart figure appeared in sight. It was Bulkeley of the Sixth.

Teddy Grace, farther along the stream, was not in view, but Tubby Muffin's fat figure was fairly under Bulkeley's eyes as the captain of Rookwood came towards the brook.

Bulkeley knitted his brows as he saw him, and hurried his steps towards the plank bridge.

"Muffin!" he exclaimed.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Tubby. "I—I—I'm not here, Bulkeley—I—I mean, I've only just come—I mean, I was just going. I say, that bridge isn't safe!"

Bulkeley came striding across the plank.

The plank bridge, which was seldom used, had long been out of repair, but it might have been crossed successfully with caution. But the rapid and heavy strides of the big Sixth-Former were too much for the rotted plank. There was a loud crack as Bulkeley reached the middle.

Tubby Muffin stared at him blankly, in horror.

As the plank gave way Bulkeley staggered back, the water swishing over his boots. Then he fell headlong.

The brook was not deep; but as Bulkeley crashed backwards his head struck the broken plank, and he rolled helplessly into the water and plunged under.

Tubby Muffin stood rooted in the grass of the bank, frozen with horror.

Bulkeley's head came up.

His face was white and his eyes were closed. He was unconscious.

"Grace!" shrieked Tubby. "Teddy Grace! Putty!"

"Oh, shut up!"

Putty of the Fourth was at some distance, and he was busy. He had seen and heard nothing of Bulkeley so far.

Tubby Muffin ran frantically back along the bank.

"Putty—Bulkeley—in the water—drowning!" he gasped.

"What?"

"He'll be drowned!" shrieked Tubby.

Putty jumped up, forgetful even of his picture. He ran out from under the trees to the water's edge. A white face glimmered on the water as the unconscious captain of Rookwood was swept by into the deeper water below the bridge.

"Good heavens!" panted Teddy.

He pitched off his cap and jacket and plunged in, without stopping a second to think.

It was fortunate that Putty of the Fourth was a good swimmer. With powerful strokes he reached the unconscious Sixth-Former and grasped him, bringing Bulkeley's head well above the water.

Tubby Muffin watched him from the bank in gasping terror.

Bulkeley was quite unconscious. But for Putty's prompt aid he would have drifted into the deep water and disappeared. But a strong grasp was on him now, and Putty, swimming stoutly, made for the bank, keeping the unconscious prefect's head well up.

It was a hard struggle for the junior, good swimmer as he was, for he was in deep water now, and the current was strong. He was white from his exertions as he struggled to the rushes.

"Help me, Muffin, you fool!" he panted.

Tubby Muffin woke from a trance, as it were, and plunged into the shallow by the bank up to his knees and lent his aid.

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

Bulkeley was dragged ashore into the grass. Tubby Muffin was splashed from head to foot with water and mud, and he sank down gasping in the grass beside Bulkeley.

"Ow, ow, ow!" he spluttered. "I—I'm wet! Wow! I'm muddy! Ow!"

Putty dragged himself from the stream. He was gasping for breath, and almost at the end of his tether. And for some moments he remained in the grass, breathing spasmodically, while his strength returned.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Keeping It Dark!

"O H dear!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "I—I'm wet!"

Putty rose with an effort. He was streaming with water, and was a good deal wetter than Tubby Muffin. Bulkeley lay in the grass, his face white and set; but there was a trace of colour creeping into his cheeks, and he was stirring slightly.

The Rookwood captain was coming to himself.

"Oh, my hat! What a go!" gasped Teddy Grace.

"I'm wet, Putty—wet all over—"

"Bother you!"

"Why, you unfeeling rotter!" howled Tubby indignantly. "Suppose I catch cold—and influenza—and pneumonia!"

"Bulkeley seems all right," remarked Putty, utterly regardless of those terrible risks that fat Classical was running. "He's coming to. He'll be all right in a minute. Oh crumbs—and that means a flogging for me!"

Putty, as the precise situation dawned upon him.

"Serve you right!" retorted Tubby Muffin.

"I'm as wet as anything, and you don't care if I catch—"

"Oh, dry up a minute! What the dickens am I going to do? I'm jolly well not going to be flogged, and Bulkeley's bound to report me—he always keeps his word—"

"Ow, ow! I'm soaked—"

Putty made up his mind swiftly. Bulkeley was fast coming to himself, and as soon as his eyes opened they would rest on Putty—with direful results to that disobedient youth. Bulkeley, in regard to Putty, had been acting under the Head's instructions—and even the fact that Putty had dragged him out of the water would not excuse him for leaving his duty undone.

It was possible that the prefect's gratitude might save Putty from the promised flogging—but it was not by any means certain—and the junior was naturally not disposed to take the risk.

Bulkeley did not need his care, and though Putty would not have left him alone, Tubby Muffin was there, and he could remain.

Putty decided at once. He clapped the grumbling Tubby on the shoulder.

"I'm going to cut off," he said hurriedly.

"You stay with Bulkeley, Muffin—you're not booked for a flogging—"

"I'm wet!"

"Don't mention my name," went on Putty.

"Bulkeley saw you, didn't he?"

"Yes—I say, I'm awfully wet—"

"Well, then, you can stay; and if you don't mention that I've been here, Tubby, I'll stand you a feed in the study this evening."

Tubby Muffin looked more attentive. He even forgot for a moment that he was wet.

"What sort of a feed?" he asked cautiously.

"Anything you like!" said Putty desperately, as the prefect stirred again. "If Bulkeley knows I've been here, I'm done for. It's a flogging from the Head."

"I know that. Will there be a cake?"

"Yes, yes!"

Putty grabbed up his sketching things in hot haste.

"And tarts?" called out Tubby.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"All right, then! I say, what about one of the sergeant's pies—"

But Putty of the Fourth was gone. He disappeared through the trees, with his belongings under his arms and in his hands; and did not stop to pack them till he had sprinted across a field, and escaped into a lane. After that, he took the road to Rookwood.

He was not feeling very cheerful now. He was soaked to the skin, and his impressionist picture was indefinitely postponed. He left a track of water behind him in the dusk as he trotted along for some distance.

Near Rookwood he stopped to make himself as presentable as he could before entering the school; he did not want his state to attract attention.

Fortunately, most of the fellows were still on the cricket-ground, and Putty was able to dodge into the House unnoticed.

He pitched his satchel into his study, and hurried up to the Fourth Form dormitory to change his clothes and dry himself.

His damp clothes were tucked away safely out of sight; and in a very short time Putty of the Fourth descended from the dormitory looking as bright and clean as a new pin.

He sauntered cheerfully out of the School House, feeling none the worse for his adventure, but conscious that it behoved him to keep that adventure very carefully secret.

"Hallo! Where have you been this afternoon?" asked Higgs, meeting him in the quadrangle.

"Sketching, dear boy!"

"What rot!" said Higgs.

Putty smiled and walked on to the cricket-ground. Jimmy Silver greeted him with a frown.

"Hallo, slacker! Not much more light for practice!"

"Better late than never!" answered Putty cheerfully.

"Well, get your bat, and let us see what you can do," said the captain of the Fourth. Teddy Grace complied. He was very willing to be occupied at cricket when Bulkeley arrived, in case there should be any lingering suspicion in the prefect's mind that he had been on Sir Leicester Stuckey's land that afternoon.

Jimmy Silver took the ball, and Putty stood up cheerfully to the bowling of the Fourth Form's champion bowler, and it was some time before his sticks went down. Jimmy Silver condescended to give the new junior an approving look.

"Not bad!" he said.

"Not at all," agreed Putty. "Will you be wanting me for the junior eleven?"

Jimmy sniffed.

"I'm at your service if you do, you know," said Putty.

"The eleven isn't at your service, though," answered Jimmy. "You've got too much nerve for a new kid, Putty. I suppose you've been up to some of your tricks this afternoon."

"Tricks!" repeated Putty.

"If I find pepper in my teapot, or mustard in my cake, I shall come along to your study and bring a stump!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Hallo, Algy! What's the row?"

Jimmy's cousin, Algy of the Third, had just arrived, at full speed, breathless with excitement.

"Guess!" he gasped.

"No time—get it off your chest!"

"What about him?" asked Teddy Grace quickly. "Has the silly ass been chattering—I mean—"

"Oh, it's true!" said Algy. "I wouldn't have believed it, but Bulkeley said so himself. Come on—they're just going in! I came to tell you, Jimmy! Fancy—Tubby Muffin—that fat chump! Come on!"

And Algy cut off again.

"But what's happened?" roared Jimmy Silver, in surprise.

But the fog was gone—evidently bursting with the surprising news, whatever it was. And Jimmy Silver, in great wonder, followed him—and so did Teddy Grace.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Borrowed Glory!

GEORGE BULKELEY opened his eyes, with a gasping breath.

He gazed round him dazedly, and started as he saw Tubby Muffin squeezing the water out of his clothes.

"What—what's happened?" muttered Bulkeley faintly.

"I'm wet!"

"What?"

"Wet all over!" growled Tubby.

Bulkeley sat up in the grass, still dazed, and put his hand to his head. There was a bump, where he had struck the plank, and he was feeling sick and dizzy.

"I—I remember now!" he muttered. "I—I must have been stunned, I think. Oh, my head! But—but I fell in the water. My hat! Did you pull me out, Muffin?"

Bulkeley was looking round him; there was no one in sight but the fat Classical, Tubby, who was squeezing the water out of his jacket, blinked at him.

Only One Fellow at Rookwood Disbelieves Tubby's Deed! That is Putty! Does He Tell?

"I yanked you out by the collar," he answered.

"Well, my hat!"

Tubby Muffin's statement was quite correct; he had dragged Bulkeley out by the collar after Teddy Grace had brought him into the rushes.

But as there was no one else on the spot, George Bulkeley naturally supposed that Tubby had done more than that. He knew he must have floated downstream after falling into the water.

"Where did you get me out, Tubby?" he asked.

"Just here."

"The water's deep here," said Bulkeley, with a look of blank wonder at the fat Classical.

"And jolly wet, too!" grunted Tubby.

"I never knew you were such a swimmer, Muffin."

"Such a—a—a what?" exclaimed Tubby, staring at the captain of Rookwood in his turn. "Oh, I—I see! Just so—quite so! Oh, I'm simply a splendid swimmer, Bulkeley—first-rate, in fact!"

Tubby was under strict injunctions not to mention that Teddy Grace had been there, and the feed in the study depended on it, so Tubby had to be very careful to keep his compact. But it dawned upon him that Bulkeley must be aware that someone had gone into the stream for him, at a very great risk. A glimmer came into Tubby's round eyes. For the first time it came into his mind that here was glory to be reaped—cheap.

Glory did not often come Tubby's way. He was distinguished for his gargantuan appetite, for his marvellous scent for a feed, and for his uncommon powers as a borrower of cash. But these distinctions could not exactly be called glorious. And here was glory—going cheap, as it were—to be had for the asking.

Almost unconsciously Tubby began to swell. His fat conscience was satisfied with the plea that he was bound to keep Putty's secret, after promising to do so. His promise suddenly assumed an unaccustomed sacredness in Tubby's eyes.

He simply couldn't go back on Putty, who trusted him! And if the alternative was to let Bulkeley believe that he—Reginald Muffin—had performed an action of great valour, what was Tubby to do?

After all, he would have done it if Putty hadn't—or, at least, he would have if he could have—so it came to the same thing, really—or, at least, Tubby tried to believe that it did.

George Bulkeley was silent for some minutes, getting his breath and rubbing his head. He was not much hurt, and he was recovering fast. More than anything else, he felt utter amazement that it was Tubby Muffin who was his rescuer.

For he knew that only a hefty swimmer, and a plucky one to boot, could have got him out of the water; and Tubby certainly was not famous for either quality.

Tubby, growing more important in his looks every moment, finished squeezing his jacket, and put it on. He was already reflecting how much Bulkeley's gratitude would be worth to him.

When this got out it would make some fellows feel small, Tubby reflected—fellows who called him a fat grampus, and a fat frog, and things like that, and never believed he could do anything but demolish great quantities of tuck.

Bulkeley's voice interrupted these pleasant reflections. The prefect had risen to his feet, and was regarding the fat junior thoughtfully.

"I'm very much obliged to you, Muffin!"

"Not at all, Bulkeley! Don't menchi!" said the fat Classical, in quite an airy way. "Jolly glad I happened to be on the spot, that's all. Right chap in the right place—what?"

"You must have had some trouble with me in the water," said Bulkeley. "I was quite unconscious, till I came to just now."

"Well, it was a bit of trouble," confessed Tubby Muffin. "You're rather heavy, you know."

"It beats me!" said the captain of Rookwood. "I—I mean, I'm deeply obliged to you. I should never have thought—ahem! You ran a great deal of risk coming into deep water for me."

"Never stopped to think of it!" said the cheerful Tubby. "Just tackled the job, you know, and put it through. Efficiency, you know. That's me all over."

Bulkeley smiled.

"It was plucky!" he said.

"Well, as you make a point of it, Bulkeley, I admit it was plucky," said Tubby Muffin modestly. "I'm not the chap to brag, I hope. Still, it was plucky. The Muffins are a plucky family. As for me, personally, I don't mind mentioning to you, Bulkeley, that I'm as brave as a lion."

And Tubby Muffin swelled, till he really seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

"Better get in and get these wet things off," said Bulkeley. "We may catch cold. Better run."

"Right you are, Bulkeley! I say, you're not going to report me for being out of bounds, are you?" asked the fat Classical anxiously.

"Under the circumstances, I think I can undertake to let you off for that," said

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "But Muffin—"

"I'm awfully wet, sir!" put in Tubby importantly. "Soaked to the skin, sir! But I don't mind. I've saved Bulkeley's life—haven't I, Bulkeley?"

"It's true, sir," said the Rookwood captain, as Mr. Bootles blinked at the fat Classical over his glasses in great astonishment, and several fellows gathered round curiously. "I knocked my head on the plank, I think, and lost my senses. Muffin must have gone into deep water for me, and how he got me out goodness only knows. He's much heavier than anybody ever thought!"

"Bless my soul!" said the amazed Mr. Bootles. "Muffin, I am very pleased with you! I should never have dreamed—ahem!"

"It was my pluck, sir," said Tubby cheerfully.



A LEAP TO SAVE HIS CAPTAIN! Tubby Muffin ran up, panting. "Bulkeley—he's in the water! He'll be drowned!" he cried. Putty jumped up. A white face glimmered on the water as the captain of Rookwood was swept by. "Good heavens!" panted Grace. He pitched off his jacket and plunged into the whirling torrent without stopping a second to think. (See Chapter 4.)

Bulkeley, with a smile. "But you mustn't do it again."

"Tisn't as if I was a boulder always playing tricks, like Putty, for instance, is it?" said Tubby, with a grin.

"No," said Bulkeley, with a nod. "Quite different. But what did you come here for, Muffin?"

"I—I thought there was a picnic, and there wasn't," said Tubby.

Bulkeley laughed. Tubby's presence by the Croft Brook was fully explained. The captain of Rookwood was crossing the field with long, rapid strides, and Tubby Muffin kept at a trot to keep pace with him. He was soon gasping for breath, but Bulkeley would not let him slacken down. It was necessary to keep warm till the wet clothes could be changed.

They arrived at Rookwood in quite a warm glow.

Mr. Bootles met them as they came in at the gates, and he stopped and looked at Bulkeley quickly.

"What has happened?" he exclaimed. "You look—"

"An accident, sir," said Bulkeley. "The plank on the Croft Brook went, and I tumbled in."

"What?"

"Pluck, sir! I've got no end of pluck. Ask Bulkeley. He knows."

Bulkeley strode on, and Tubby Muffin trotted after him, leaving the Fourth Form master blinking. If it had been Jimmy Silver, or Lovell, or Tommy Dodd, Mr. Bootles would not have been surprised; but the idea of Tubby Muffin as a hero needed getting used to.

There was a buzz of surprise among the Rookwood fellows who had heard what was said. The news spread on all sides. Bulkeley and Tubby Muffin had disappeared into the House when Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived from the cricket-field.

But they soon learned the news. And the brief and emphatic comment of Jimmy Silver was:

"Rats!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Official!

TUBBY MUFFIN!
"He's saved Bulkeley's life!"
"Rats!"
"Bulkeley says so!"
"Then he's dreaming!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

Tubby Muffin Enjoys Himself—But How Long Does His Borrowed Glory Last?

"If Bulkeley thinks so, it's time he woke up!" said Arthur Edward Lovell emphatically. "What do you think, Putty?"

Putty of the Fourth had quite a dazed look. The news that there had been an heroic rescue, and that Tubby Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, was the heroic rescuer, simply flabbergasted Teddy Grace. As for the credit that might have been reaped from his exploit, the scamp of Rookwood had not given that a thought; but still less had he surmised that Tubby Muffin would lay claim to that same credit.

"I think it's rot!" gasped Putty. "I'm jolly sure Tubby never went into the water for Bulkeley."

"I'll believe it if I hear Bulkeley say so," said Jimmy Silver.

"He's in the dorm, changing. He's wet, right enough," said Mornington. "Wet and muddy. So was Bulkeley. The fat bouncer says he rescued Bulkeley at the risk of his life—owing to his tremendous pluck—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's modest about it!" grinned Lovell. "Well, that's what he says," said Mornington, laughing. "Gammon, of course."

"Spoon!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "Let's ask Bulkeley."

"Yes, rather!"

Quite a crowd of fellows went along to Bulkeley's room. Jimmy Silver knocked.

"You at home, Bulkeley?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"You've been in the water?"

"Yes."

"There's a yarn that Tubby Muffin fetched you out," said Jimmy, through the door. "Nothing in it, of course?"

"It's true, Silver."

"Eh?"

"Quite true."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Muffin fetched me out of deep water, risking his life to do it," said Bulkeley, from within. "Never mind his swank—he did it! Now cut off!"

Jimmy Silver almost tottered away from Bulkeley's door. The news was nearly too much for him.

"It—it—it's true!" babbled Jimmy.

"Tubby—Tubby Muffin did it! My only hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"The fat bouncer—he didn't!" exclaimed Putty indignantly.

"Bosh! If Bulkeley says so, it is so," said Jimmy Silver; "and that settles it. You fellows, we haven't done Tubby justice. There's more in Tubby than meets the eye."

"And there's plenty of him that meets the eye, too!" remarked Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tubby Muffin!" said Jimmy. "Tubby—a giddy hero! Who'd have thought it? Let's go and see him, and hear all about it. Tubby Muffin—my hat!"

And nearly all the Fourth Form marched up to the dormitory to interview Tubby Muffin—Rookwood's Hero!

THE END.

(You will enjoy next week's tale of Rookwood. It's grand!)

"THE SPORTING SEVEN!"

(Continued from page 17.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The next event was the quarter-mile, and Jack Raymond & Co. were very careful to keep out of Baggy Trimble's way at the start.

This was a glorious race. Talbot of St. Jim's took the lead, only to have it wrested from him by Carr. Then Carr, in turn, was overhauled by Tom Merry, who travelled at top speed. In the last lap, Jack Raymond seemed to spring up suddenly from nowhere. He caught Tom Merry when Tom was half a dozen yards from the tape, and there was a sensational finish, Raymond winning by what Monty Lowther described as the width of an eyelash.

Each team had now won a couple of events.

The mile proved a great attraction. Baggy Trimble, having laid a solid foundation by eating four apple dumplings, felt confident of winning. But Baggy was left at the post.

A thrilling neck-and-neck race between Talbot and Jimmy Brown ended in a victory for the St. Jim's fellow.

Talbot collapsed at the finish, for he had made a desperate fight for victory, sparing neither speed nor stamina.

"We're losing ground," said Baggy Trimble, wagging an admonishing forefinger at his men.

"Then, why don't you win something?" said Teddy Clifton.

"I'm just going to," said Baggy. "It's the obstacle race next."

"And what are you—the obstacle?" asked Johnny Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It took a long time to arrange the course for the obstacle race. There were ladders which had to be crawled through, hurdles which had to be cleared, and large tubs of water to be jumped over, or the competitors would come to grief. Finally, there was a level stretch of fifty yards to be run.

There were yells of mirth when the race began, and Baggy Trimble got jammed between two of the rungs of the ladder. Kildare, his lips twitching with merriment, extricated the fat junior, and Baggy promptly crawled under the ladder instead of going through it.

"Hold on!" said Kildare. "I must disqualify you for that!"

But Baggy went on, blind and deaf to all other considerations save that of winning the race. He knocked down a couple of hurdles—this being simpler than jumping over them—then he ran on, until he came to one of the large, round tubs, brimming over with cold water.

Baggy hesitated for a brief space; then

he made up his mind to jump. He did—not over the tub, but into it!

Splash!

"Yarooo! Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Baggy, floundering like a porpoise in the icy water.

"Baggy seems to think it's a swimming contest!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"First bath he's had this term!" said Manners. "I say, we're going to lose this event. Look at that fellow Raymond!"

Jack Raymond had successfully cleared all the obstacles, and he was now in the straight for home. George Figgins was hot on his track, but Raymond warded off his attentions, and won cleverly by a couple of yards.

Jack Raymond & Co. were now on terms again, having won three events to their opponents three.

Baggy Trimble crawled out of the tub. He evidently found it less comfortable than the tub in which Diogenes of old had his habitation. Baggy was soaked to the skin, and his appearance sent the fellows into shrieks of laughter.

Baggy squelched his way into the school building to get a change of attire. The high jump and the long jump were started without him. Figgins won the former for St. Jim's; and Riley won the latter for the Sporting Seven.

Kildare then called the athletes together, and addressed them.

"The two teams are level on points, at the moment," he said. "The boxing contests will decide the issue. In view of the fact that most of you are fagged out, I think we will postpone the boxing till Wednesday afternoon."

This course having been agreed to, Tom Merry invited the Sporting Seven to a feed in his study. That celebrated apartment was crowded out shortly afterwards, the St. Jim's fellows sitting on the window-sill, and giving up the chairs to their guests. But it was a very jolly spread. And the boxing tournament was the main topic of conversation.

What was to happen on Wednesday? Would one of Baggy Trimble's men triumph or would the honours go to St. Jim's?

Whatever happened at the finish, there were bound to be some thrilling tussles between the St. Jim's boxers and their friendly rivals, the Sporting Seven.

THE END.

(There will be another gripping tale of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, entitled: "Rivals of the Ring!" by Martin Clifford, in next week's bumper issue.)

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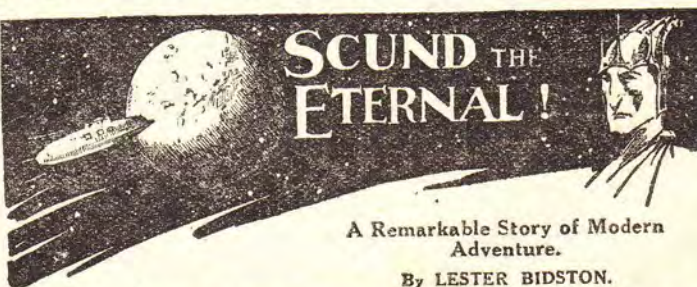
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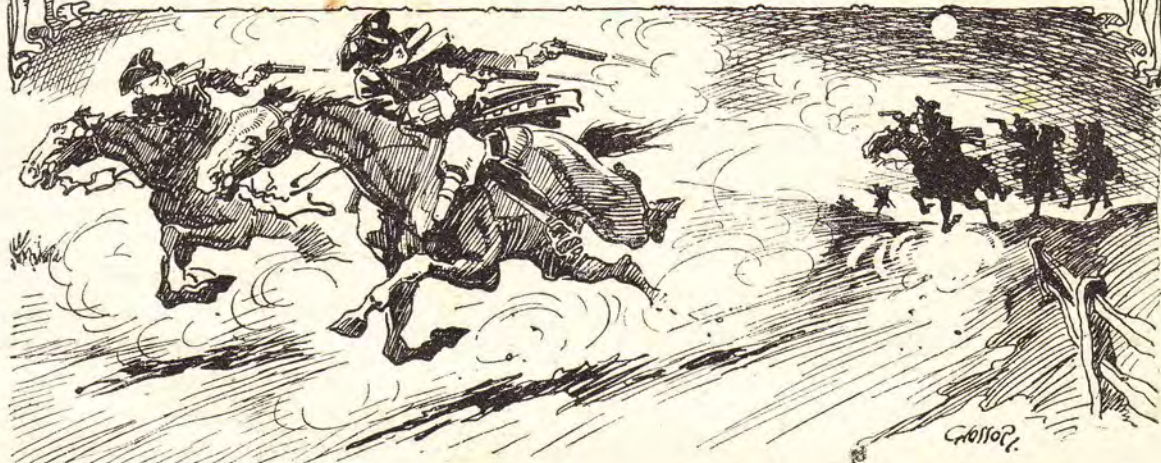
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BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Dick Neville, the young squire of Faulkbourne, is turned out of his rightful inheritance by the low-down treachery and deceit of an adventurer who calls himself Hector Neville, Dick's cousin. Hector is helped in his vile plotting by reason of the fact that Dick has fallen into disgrace with the Government, owing to the assistance he has rendered the famous highwayman, Dick Turpin. The young squire has also another deadly enemy in Captain Sweeney,

a notorious footpad. Hector Neville is determined to obtain possession of the lordly mansion wherein Dick has taken up his abode. The rogue has been foiled the first time, but he returns to the charge armed with legal warrants. Dick first of all resists Hector, but when news comes through that he has been outlawed, and that the King's Riders are after him, he leaves Faulkbourne with Dick Turpin. Turpin is called away suddenly on a secret

mission, and whilst he is gone Dick Neville falls into the hands of Sweeney & Co. But a sudden flood saves him from them, and later he is rescued from the water by two rascally keepers of a secret spirit distillery and taken to a large cave. When Dick is asleep, the two plot to sell the young highwayman to Captain Sweeney for a large sum, and one of the keepers leaves the cave to fetch the footpad.

(Now Read On.)

THE STREAM OF FIRE!

THE man did not go by the path he had entered, but up the sloping floor of the cavern and through a dark passage at its upper end.

His back being turned, he did not see a bright, wakeful eye that watched him from under a half-closed lid as Dick lay snoring on the floor. The young highwayman looked as soundly asleep as any man might who had been swept a mile on the breast of a moorland torrent.

Nor did the still-keeper, who was busying himself about the cave, observe the same eye fixed on him and following his every movement.

Dick's fingers that grasped the butt of his pistol in a sleepy clutch moved gently along to the water-soaked pan of the weapon.

Very gently those fingers raised the hammer to full cock, saving the click by keeping the trigger pressed till the hammer was well back.

The still-keeper, who was piling the loose tubs and gear against the walls, out of the way, noticed nothing.

The nimble fingers gently cleared away the wetted, useless powder from the striking-pan, where Jack had poured the water over it.

An end of Dick's lace neckcloth, undone, was hanging down over his wrist, and with this his fingers quietly and thoroughly wiped the pan. The lace had dried in the heat of the cave, and served well.

The operation took some little time, and while it lasted Dick lay still as death, still snoring busily, not a muscle of him moving, save his agile fingers.

Once or twice the still-keeper glanced at him, and they became motionless till he went on with his work once more.

At last the pan was dry, and Dick's hand stole very quickly to his side pocket, where the little powder-horn lay, and, pressing the spring that closed it, brought out a pinch of powder, which was cautiously placed on the pan where the flint strikes. The pistol was now primed and cocked.

To make sure, the fingers stole to the powder-horn again for another pinch. The spring creaked slightly, and the still-keeper jumped round as if he had been stung.

In a moment he saw what was happening, and, with a savage oath, he whipped a long knife from his boot and sprang at Dick.

Bang!

The still-keeper plunged forward on to his face with a cry, and Dick leaped to his feet, the little pistol smoking in his hand.

In a moment he had the fallen still-keeper by the neckcloth, and pulled him to the upper part of the cave.

The man was unconscious. The ball had passed through his shoulder, and the shock had knocked the senses out of him.

Dick kicked the knife across the floor, and began to reload his pistol with lightning speed.

"I am still too weak for a rough-and-tumble," he said, with a grim laugh, "and the little barker has served me well. I think I am better here than on the moor for the present, till I have checked yonder ruffians. Ah, here they come! I hope they didn't hear the shot!"

Hardly was the pistol loaded before Dick heard the man Jack's voice, in low tones, at the lower entrance. The bare walls carried the sound well.

"Tha'll find him on the floor, captain. Tak'

thy men in wi' thee, an' I'll go in by the other way. Steve's there wi' him."

"Not so much noise, you fool!" came Sweeney's voice, in a whisper. "The cub's best asleep, for he has always a sting in his tail. Now, lads, forward!"

"Ay, forward!" shouted Dick. "On, my bold chicken-thieves—on!"

"He's awake!" cried Sweeney, with a curse. "What's that fool Steve about? All together, lads, and rush him!"

With a spring, Dick snatched a long-handled axe that was hanging on the wall. The time had come to act, and his life hung on the swiftly planned scheme he had thought out wholly whilst lying on the floor.

With three crushing blows of the axe he broke in the side of the great whisky-vat, and an avalanche of raw spirit burst forth and rushed knee-deep down the sloping floor to the narrow tunnel of the entrance.

Dick sprang to the coal-oil lamp that stood in a niche of the wall, and, standing above the vat, dashed it into the flowing spirit.

In an instant there was a hiss, a roar, & sheet of flame, and a wild yell of terror.

The torrent of liquid fire, sweeping all before it, rushed full upon Sweeney and his men.

Such a bellowing and roaring echoed through the cave that the pistol-shot which Sweeney discharged at Dick when the fiery flood first came down was hardly heard above it.

"Here's the liquor broached for you, you knaves!" cried Dick. "Come and take your fill!"

The pistol-ball grazed Dick's cheek, and Sweeney had no time for another shot. He was driven back pell-mell by the great rush of flaming spirit, and he and his men, the

THE POPULAE.—No. 216.

Next Week's Instalment of Our Powerful Serial Will Thrill You!

burning liquor washing about their knees, fled back through the tunnel, bellowing and shouting, jamming each other against the wall in their hurry to escape.

"Make way for me! Let me out!" shrieked Sweeney.

"We're boiled! We're roasted!" roared one of the footpads, who was more frightened than hurt.

"No worse than you served me, you thieves of the night!" cried Dick.

And, with a fierce laugh, he wielded his axe again and crashed it through two of the upright hogsheds, sending their contents rushing down with the rest.

By that time most of the footpads had reached the outer mouth of the tunnel again, and the heat of the cave was unbearable.

The flaming spirits licked and devoured everything, catching the woodwork, burning the distilling apparatus, and turning the whole place into a furnace.

"So much for that trade of the wolds!" cried Dick. "And may every still in Yorkshire go the same way!"

OLD FRIENDS MEET!

DICK dragged the unconscious form of the still-keeper above the reach of the flames, which was what few in his case would have troubled to do, and, gripping his little pistol, sprang for the upper exit.

He had no doubt of finding it, for while he had lain on the cave floor his watchful eye had noted that the man Jack went out that way.

Nor did he forget that the same man, by the plan he had overheard was to enter that way, while the footpads came in by the lower tunnel. His finger on the pistol's trigger, Dick ran swiftly up the narrow passage, and there, sure enough, he met the excellent Jack coming down, a pistol in his hand likewise.

"You whelp, this is your work!" he cried, with a curse.

And his weapon was raised in the wink of an eye; but Dick fired first, and the man toppled forward heavily, blocking the passage. Dick pulled him out of the way hastily, and scrambled up through the passage.

It was like the bolt-hole of a rabbit-burrow, little wider than a man's body, and Dick, pulling himself through, felt the fresh air on his face, and found himself among the heather.

Fifty yards below, down the slope, the blue-green flare of the spirits which had run out through the lower entrance lit up the scene, and the footpads, too busy with their own troubles to give a thought to any other matter, were rolling themselves in the wet heather to put out the burning spirits that scorched their legs, and were roaring lustily.

Dick did not stay to admire his handiwork, but doubled himself up and ran for it across the open.

Where he was he had no notion, but the boulder-strewn moor lay before him, and he ran straight ahead, making for a rise of ground that would hide him from the enemy.

As he ran he saw a man scrambling down into the hole he had just left, and a moment later he heard Sweeney's voice screaming furiously:

"Up with you, runagates, and don't lie squalling there all night! The hanged whelp isn't here. He's shot Jack and Steve, and he's out somewhere upon the moor. Scatter and find him!"

The moment he heard Sweeney's first words Dick threw himself down flat among the heather, lest the glare from the fire should discover him. Once seen, his life would not be worth a goat's purchase, for he was poorly armed, and too exhausted and worn out to escape by running.

The footpads had extinguished the flames about their legs, and, though greedy for vengeance, they went very gingerly.

Running here and there, jumping on to boulders to get a view of the moor, each one hoping to give the view-halloa that would mean the death of their quarry, they searched the whole neighbourhood.

Dick crawled along like a snake, the deep heather covering him, and made as fast as he

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

could towards the crest of the valley, which he could see before him.

Once he could dip below the slope of it he would be out of the glare of the fire, which, good friend as it had been, now bade fair to be his ruin.

Twice Dick stopped and crouched flat, as a man ran past within a few feet of him.

Presently, when he was almost within reach of the valley, one of the footpads nearly trod on Dick, running past, and, catching a glimpse of him, turned sharply round.

Before the shout could leave the knave's lips, Dick had him by the ankle and brought him down.

The fellow's head struck so violently upon a flat stone in falling that the senses were knocked right out of him, and Dick gained the friendly shelter of the valley, and after one quick glance behind, ran swiftly down the slope. Dodging and turning among the boulders, using every device to put himself out of sight of his searchers, Dick pushed onwards.

It was only by a great effort of will that he could keep on his legs at all, so sick and weary was he; but the returning hope of saving himself after all he had been through buoyed him up, and he went forward mechanically, halting now and then behind a rock to glance back and make sure the enemy were not upon his trail.

"I've shaken them off at last," he muttered. "Now it remains only to go straight ahead, for this moor seems to me a fine place to be leaving."

He followed the course of the valley, and, striking out across the lower moor, pushed on wearily.

"I have met a misfortune or two upon the road, but never the like of this! What's to do? I am but weaponless. But a plague o' that! I have my wits still! 'Tis the loss of Black Satan that troubles me. Where can he have gone when the flood came down the valley? By my faith, if Satan's lost to me I think I shall have little heart to ride the roads again!"

He stumbled along, sick at heart at the thought that he might well have seen the last of Satan.

How he journeyed that night Dick never knew, but the exhaustion, cold, and want of food took all the strength from his body. The chill of the mountain torrent in which he had been so nearly drowned seemed to have bitten into his very bones. The fever burned in his blood, and he became light-headed.

His legs still carried him forward, and he blundered on through the night, talking and singing deliriously.

He no longer feared to draw Sweeney's men upon him by the noise, for he did not know what he was about. At times he thought he was back in the hut, tied to the stake, the fire mounting round him; at others he was riding the highways by Turpin's side. Again, he was back at Faulkbourne, lord of ten thousand acres, and finding life too slow.

It was fast enough now. Whether friend or foe followed him on the moor he neither knew nor cared.

At last, as the dawn broke, he sank down in the heather, worn out, and his senses left him. Motionless he lay, his face to the sky, his eyelids closed, oblivious to everything.

A dark, sinister form came creeping over the crest of the hill, showing black against the setting sun. It saw Dick, helpless and inert, and the man's face lit up with triumph. He drew a long knife from his belt, and crept quietly towards the prostrate young highwayman.

When Dick opened his eyes his head was singing like a kettle, and he felt pain in every inch of his body, but his wits were clear again. He blinked upwards for a moment, and then gave a cry of joy.

"Satan!" he exclaimed. "Oh, Satan, boy, this is too good to be true! Is it truly you?"

A delightful whinny answered him, and a cold, velvety nose was thrust into Dick's hand. The splendid black horse, mud-spattered and covered with sweat, but sound as a bell, and with saddle and irons intact, was standing over him.

Dick felt as if the heart was back in his body once more. Hardly able to believe his eyes, he raised himself, and a groan escaped him. The hardships he had been through, which would have killed a weaker man, had

left their mark on him; the fever was in his brain, and he ached violently all over.

Satan muzzled him anxiously, and whinnied sympathetically. He understood that all was not well with his young master.

Suddenly Dick's eyes lit on something that made him stare and rub his eyes. A few feet away lay a prostrate figure—the lifeless body of a man. Dick recognised it as one of Sweeney's men.

"Od's mercy!" exclaimed Dick. "What's this?"

Black Satan looked towards the inert thing. His eye gleamed wickedly; he tossed his mane, and snorted. Then he turned to caress his master again. A naked knife lay beside the body. Dick understood.

"You killed him, Satan! Od's blood, you found him about to murder me, and your hoofs and teeth made an end of him! 'Tis one of Sweeney's footpads, and once again you've saved my life!"

He staggered up, and threw an arm over Satan's glossy neck, his heart too full for words. Never did horse and man understand each other like Dick and his steed—not even Turpin and Black Bess.

How the splendid beast had found him upon the moors Dick did not know, but one thing he understood—Satan had saved him once again.

"Ay, Heaven help any man who dares face your hoofs! Come, old boy, this moor is a weary place, and we shall both be the better for food and rest, if we can find it. I feel as though I were sick of an ague."

Painfully he mounted into the saddle, and rode away. The mosses and heather made soft riding, and, feeling he could stand it, Dick put Satan to a canter, and did not check him till they had placed seven or eight miles between them and the place of meeting, and had reached the borders of the moor.

"I can ride no longer," muttered Dick, swaying like a drunken man in the saddle. "I shall be on the ground again ere long. We must have shelter, at any cost. Is not that a house among the trees?"

A rambling, prosperous-looking old farmhouse lay before him, nestling in a pleasant grove. Whether the people were friendly or hostile, Dick did not know. At least, they would probably not know him, and he still had some gold in his saddle-pouch. He drew the silver-mounted pistols from the holsters and put them in his pockets, and rode up to the farmhouse. A good-looking, grey-haired old farmer answered his knock.

"Can you shelter me for a night, good man?" said Dick. "I and my beast are worn out, and have lost our way. You shall not lose by it."

"Come in, sir," said the farmer, staring rather hard at Black Satan. "You look travel-worn. Say nothing of loss or profit. My house has always a meal or bed for a traveller, and I take no man's silver."

Dick replied gratefully, and, sick as he was, he looked to Satan's wants and groomed him down before he did anything else. Then he entered the house.

The farmer's wife, a cleanly, comfortable old dame, rose and curtsied; and then a cry escaped her.

"Gramercy! The young highwayman—the companion of Turpin!" she exclaimed.

"Highwayman!" cried the farmer, staring. Dick flushed, and looked downcast.

"I am known, it seems," he said. "No matter, good people, I will go elsewhere. Let me depart!"

"Depart!" cried the dame. "Nay, not while we have a roof over us! Sir, do you not recognise me?"

Dick looked at her unsteadily, but was none the wiser.

"Your pardon," he said. "I have fever upon me, and do not see very well. My eyes swim somewhat."

"Ay, so I see," said the dame pityingly. "Will, do you have the best bed set in order without delay. I am thankful for this. Why, sir, do you not remember Janet Bullford, in the old market-cart, whom you saved last year from the ruffing robber who would have shot my old horse in sport? Gramercy, you and kindly Master Turpin took his pistols and bound him under the girths of his own horse for a lesson, and I prayed you always to count on my gratitude!"

"Faith, is it he?" exclaimed the farmer.

"You are a hundred times welcome, sir!" In a moment the memory came back to Dick—it was the dame he had saved from this ruffianly highwayman, soon after Vesey

Neville first outlawed him. Even now he had the man's pistols in his pocket. The old couple covered him with gratitude.

"I am blithe to have fallen into such kindly hands," said Dick. "The service I did was nothing. But I had not thought I was so near the scene of that affair—twere better I should journey to some inn, lest I bring trouble on you."

"Nay, you shall not stir an inch till you are sound and strong again," said the farmer heartily. "And be sure, sir, no treachery can reach you under our roof. They should burn the house over us before we would give you up, though it were the lord-lieutenant himself who came to seek you!"

Dick gave in at this—indeed, he was so weak he could not do otherwise. The farmer and his wife let him lack for nothing; they tended him as their own son. He soon found himself between lavender-scented sheets in a large bed-room, with a blazing fire of beech-logs. He was in sorry condition, but broths and soups were served him, and the good dame, who was famed for her skill in herbs and doctoring, tended him with some wonderful cures for the fever.

THE SHERIFF'S VISIT.

DICK slept well, and the next day was much better. Every kindness was showered on him. By the morning after he felt himself near as sound as ever, and he rose and dressed himself, thanking his stars for having guided him into such good hands.

"A service done for kindness is never lost," he said to himself, buckling on his sword, which had been cleansed of its rust and wet. "'Twas a good day's work when I tackled yonder bullying robber and saved the good dame from him. But what is this fracas below?"

Loud voices reached him from the big living-room downstairs.

"I tell you once more, sir, I have no news to give you!" said the farmer's voice stoutly.

"Od's blood, man!" said a fierce, commanding reply. "If you do not tell me all you know, and instantly, you will find yourself in sorry case! I have certain news that this rogue stopped at your house a night, and passed on. You must know where he went, and I command you, in the King's name, to inform me! Refuse at your peril!"

"Od's bodikins!" muttered Dick. "Here's a pretty to-do!"

He strode to the window. On the drive were three horsemen, one of them a young officer of the Courts. The other two were sheriff's men, and one held the bridle of a handsome thoroughbred bay.

"I do not know where the rogue, as you called him, journeyed to, your honour," cried the farmer's voice again. "Nor would I tell you if I knew!"

"Plague take it!" said Dick to himself. "Tis the sheriff of the district, and he has tracked me here with his men!"

A bright-looking lad of ten, the farmer's son, came hurrying into the room.

"The sheriff is here to take you, sir! My father begs you to ride for your life, and he will hold the men in talk till you are well away. You have only to slip out by the back window here, which is not guarded, take your horse from the stable, and gallop through the wood, where they will not see you."

"Ay, that's true," muttered Dick. "I have but to throw my leg over Satan, which is easily done, and kiss my knuckle-bones to all the sheriffs in Yorkshire. But this will mean ruin to these good folk who have sheltered me. What's to be done?"

He turned to the boy. Down the stairs he went to the room where the angry voices were mingling, and strode in.

"Good-morrow, Master Sheriff!" he cried. "Are you seeking Dick Neville, the highwayman? I know where he is, and you have but to ride with me and I will show you!"

Farmer Bullford turned white, and the sheriff, a tall, handsome man of about thirty, with a fierce expression, stared at Dick.

"Ah!" he said. "Is this hearsay, or do you truly know where the knave is? Mark you, lead me on no wild-goose chase!"

"On my honour," said Dick, bringing his fist down on the table, "I will show him to you! I guarantee it in the sum of a hundred guineas, so that you may know I speak the

truth. But whether you can take him when I show him you, is your own affair."

"I go bail for that!" said the sheriff fiercely. "Now, sir, what news?"

"Mount and ride with all speed!" cried Dick. "We must not delay, for he is a slippery rogue, I promise you. Come, and I will bring you to know him!"

Together they made for the door. Dick, throwing a glance of warning and farewell back at the amazed Farmer Bullford, laid his fingers on his lips, and followed the sheriff out. A few moments later he was on the back of Black Satan, galloping away with the sheriff and his men.

"That is a fine beast of yours!" said the sheriff, as they rode, staring at Black Satan.

"Ay!" laughed Dick. "Dick Neville himself has not a better. And they say he rides a pretty piece of horseflesh, too."

"How long shall we ride to find him? Is he far off?"

"Faith, no great distance," returned Dick. "Yet we must ride half a dozen miles or so before you can deal with him."

"You are no friend of his, it seems," said the sheriff, looking askance at the young highwayman.

"You have hit it—I am his worst enemy!" said Dick.

"Let us press on," returned the sheriff. And they let their horses out, and laid the miles behind them. Dick led them forth across the moor.

"Od's-pitkins!" he thought. "This sheriff is the father of all fools! 'Tis well he did not recognise me by the posted description."

He took a shorter hold of Black Satan.

"Turn to the right here, Master Sheriff."

"Od's!" said his worship. "'Tis a lonely piece of country you are leading us over!"

"A highwayman loves loneliness," said Dick, "especially when the sheriff's posse is after him!"

"Now, how to make sure that Farmer Bullford does not suffer by what he has done," thought Dick. "To escape myself is easy, but that is not all. I must do my utmost."

DICK NEVILLE'S AMAZING BLUFF!



"Good-morrow, Master Sheriff!" cried Dick, strolling into the room. "Are you seeking Dick Neville, the highwayman? I know where he is, and you have but to ride with me and I will show you!" Farmer Bullford turned white, and the sheriff, with a fierce expression, stared at Dick. "Show me where he is!" he said. (See this page.)

AMBUSHED ON THE LONELY MOOR!



There was a shot from the woods, a bullet snicked his ear, and six or seven forms sprang out upon Dick. "Hough the horse! Cut him down!" cried a voice the young highwayman recognised instantly. In a flash Dick's hands flew to his pistol-butt, and he wheeled his horse. (See page 27.)

on to Neatsfold Hamlet, straight over Black Down, with all speed!"

The lieutenant shouted back, and Dick wheeled Satan and galloped away with the sheriff across the rolling moor, soon losing view of the others, and unmercifully did the young highwayman make the sheriff gallop. Dick shook with mirth.

"What the pest makes you laugh so?" said the sheriff testily.

"Ho, ho! I beg your worship's pardon!" gawgawed Dick, his sides shaking and the tears running down his cheeks. "A jest which was told me yesterday has just come home to me, and I now see the point. Ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

His worship looked at him sourly. They were now a couple of miles or more from the scene of the lieutenant's fall, and the sheriff was alone with Dick.

There was a pistol at his worship's belt and another in his saddle-holster. Still laughing, Dick bent suddenly forward, plucked the pistol from the sheriff's belt with a quick movement, fired it in the air, and, flinging it away, cried:

"Halt!"

"Od's death!" roared the sheriff furiously, reining his horse back on its haunches and snatching at the pistol in his holster.

But before he could pull it out Dick dealt him a buffet that knocked him out of the saddle.

The sheriff landed on his back in a moss-hog, and Dick, springing down from Satan's back, gave his worship's horse a smack that sent it flying at a hand-gallop over the moor just as the sorrel had done, with the pistol still in the holster.

Then Dick turned and faced the sheriff, who, black in the face with rage, scrambled up out of the moss-hog.

"You villain!" roared the sheriff. "You leave and traitor, you have played me false!"

"I beg your pardon!" said Dick, standing coolly by Satan's side. "I have fulfilled my engagement to the letter. I promised to bring you to deal with Dick Neville, and here he is."

THE POPULAR.—No. 216.

"What do you mean, rascal?" cried the sheriff. "Where is he? Who are you?"

"Richard Neville, at your service!" said Dick, bowing.

His worship gasped in amazement.

"Otherwise called Dick o' the Roads," added the young highwayman blandly.

"Ah, you scoundrel! Then I have you at last!"

"Is it so?" said Dick innocently. "Faith, perhaps you are right. I had thought it was the other way about."

The sheriff looked up, and the sheriff looked down, and his gaze fell on his horse, cantering over the moor, a mere speck in the distance. The pistol from his belt was gone, and the other was being carried away by the vanishing horse. And the lieutenant and lusty troopers, where were they? His worship began to think Dick was right, but it did not improve his temper.

"So you have played me this trick—shaken off my men, and brought me here alone, thinking to go free!" cried the sheriff furiously, advancing upon Dick.

"Not altogether," replied the highwayman.

"I have dealt with sheriffs and their men before, and I do not think my neck has been in danger this day, save only when I first entered the room at the farm. You might have had me then. But the reason I brought this about was that I feared for the safety of some friends of mine."

"Friends of yours?" bawled the sheriff.

"Who are they?"

"Even a highwayman may have friends," said Dick coolly. "Possibly, if you were suddenly stripped of your riches and position, you would find you had less than I. But I refer now to the worthy Bullfords, who I feared might suffer from their kindness to me."

"Ay, I'll see to that!" cried the sheriff, stamping his foot. "They sheltered an outlaw from the King's justice, and dear shall they pay for it!"

"I am waiting for you there," said Dick.

"There is a matter to settle between us. Two minutes ago it was my painful necessity to knock you off your horse. It was more to my taste than shooting you, which was the only other way. But I am here to give you

full satisfaction for the blow. Draw, Master Sheriff, and on guard!"

Their blades crossed.

"Blood and hounds!" raved his worship, foaming at the mouth. "You scum of the roads! Be you gentleman or tinker, I'll lay you on the heather and cheat the galleys of their due!"

"If your sword is as doughty as your tongue, I have made a bad bargain," replied Dick coolly, parrying with the slightest turn of his wrist a ferocious thrust the sheriff made at him. "It would be poor fun had I brought you here with so much trouble, to be pinked through the ribs by you at the end of it."

"'Twill be your fate, whether or no!" cried the sheriff. "My only grief is that, having killed you with a clean sword, I cannot, for my own honour, hang your body in a gibbet afterwards!"

"I will endeavour to keep your sword clean, since you so admire it!" murmured Dick.

SWEENEY AGAIN!

IT was not courage that the sheriff lacked, and he had some good measure of skill with his weapon. If his temper drove him to rough words, it must be owned he had been sorely set back by the cool wit and resource of the young highwayman, and his pride was galled to the quick.

He made a furious onslaught on Dick, and was surprised to find how near he came to killing his man, yet failing somehow to do it. Dick made an attack in return, and again took the defensive, and then it was that the sheriff perceived that his cool young adversary was playing with him.

Good swordsman as he was, his worship found himself no more than a mouse in the hands of a cat before Dick's lightning rapier. The sheriff showed no fear, but his set face told that he saw his fate before him. He expected to hear sneers and taunts from the young highwayman, but Dick said no word.

One last desperate attack the sheriff made. There was a twist, a flash, and his worship's sword flew into the air and fell tinkling upon the stones a dozen yards away.

The two men stood stock-still, looking into each other's eyes. Neither made a sound. The sheriff's face was pale, but he did not speak, and Dick's point was at his breast. His worship's lips moved silently, as if in prayer. Dick spoke first.

"You are a gentleman," he said, "after all."

"Do not mock me!" said his worship hoarsely. "Make an end quickly!"

"I was about to remark," said Dick, still keeping his point at the sheriff's breast, "that I knew it upon our first meeting. Had I not, I should not have arranged this affair. Your life is mine. I give it you on one condition."

"What do you mean?" muttered the sheriff.

"If you agree," continued Dick, "you are at liberty to hang me whenever you may take me. It is your duty. But I require a safeguard for my good friends, the Bullfords, of Ryestack. Give me your word of honour that you will bring no harm upon them for the part they have taken in this matter, and I put up my sword."

The sheriff stared at him in amazement.

"No harm shall come to the Bullfords," he said at last, his voice low and hoarse.

"I give my word."

"And touching your men—the lieutenant and the two troopers?"

"I answer for them, too."

Dick lowered his point, bowed, and stood back, then held out his hand, which the sheriff grasped.

"I will now take my leave of you," said Dick, "for yonder come the lieutenant and his two troopers over the hill, and they have met and caught your runaway horse."

"If I catch you I must hang you yet," said his worship.

"It is your plain duty," replied Dick, smiling wickedly. "But, so far, you have but ridden alongside Black Satan. You have yet to see him in front of you. I beg of you, observe."

And as the troopers and the lieutenant came up, Dick swung himself on to Black Satan's back, and, with a wave of his hat, shot away like an arrow across the moor.

The Sheriff's Posse Rides Close on Dick's Heels! Can He Escape?

Dick pulled up at a hostelry in the woods, and made good cheer for himself and Satan, incidentally buying a strong carthorse from the landlord, and presenting it to an old cottager who was grieving for the loss of his own, which had been his sole livelihood. Dick rode on, leaving blessings and wonderments behind him.

"With all the guineas of the highways dropping from the muzzle of my pistol," said Dick to himself, "it were strange if I could not spare half of them to those in need. And now for a search through the forest for Turpin!"

Long and wide did Dick ride, but it was a fruitless search indeed, for he could get no news of his comrade, nor did he find any of the Romany folk the whole of the day. When dusk began to fall he was six miles beyond Ulchester, and, feeling disheartened, he came out from the broad high road that leads through the woods to Hensleydale.

"If I do not get news of him soon I shall ride south again and take a purse from Hector Neville at Faulkbourne itself," said Dick, "and— But what is that behind the trees?"

His hand flew to his pistol butt in a moment, for Dick was no longer to be caught napping, and what he saw aroused his suspicions. An instant later there was a shot from the wood, a bullet snicked his ear, and six or seven dark forms rushed out upon him.

"Hough the horse! Cut him down!" cried a voice that Dick knew too well.

Sweeney's men had laid an ambush for him, and the arch-scomdrel himself gave the order. Dick fired in the direction of the voice, and a yell of rage answered him. Swiftly he emptied the second barrel into one of the others, and wheeled smart round.

"Ay hough him, any who dare come near his heels!" cried Dick. "Let out at 'em, Satan! Take that, you unclean runagates!"

His second pistol flashed twice as the men rushed at him, and two of them bit the dust, to rise no more.

Whipping out his sword, Dick plied it like a madman, keeping the rascals at bay for some seconds. One big, fat rascal made a determined rush, but the young highwayman pinked him in such a manner that he ran away down the road, howling like a gored bull-pup.

"The bridle! Get hold of the bridle!" shouted Sweeney's voice from the background. "Rouse yourselves, ye sluggards! Hang it, if I were not crippled, I would have had the whelp down before this!"

The check was only momentary. The assailants were so many that Dick had all he could do to keep them off, between Satan's hoofs and teeth, and his own good sword. To charge through them was impossible at such close quarters—one or other would have got hold of the bridle, which Dick could barely defend as it was. The fight was terribly hot, and the man who had the pistol was reloading it with all the speed he might.

"Here come the others!" cried Sweeney. "Now, lads, are you going to let one cub defy a dozen of you? At him, and take him!"

A shrill whistle sounded through the wood, and up came five or six more of Sweeney's men, and joined in the fray. So completely was Dick cornered that he could not hold out against so many, and, despite his swift rapier and Satan's hoofs and teeth, he saw he had little chance.

"They shan't take me alive!" he muttered. "On, on, you knaves! I'll cost you dear before you kill me!"

At that moment a cry of warning arose, and the sound of many hoofs rang down the road. Round the corner came a tall man on horseback, with a dozen mounted serving-men behind him, and no sooner had he set eyes on the affray than he set spurs to his horse and dashed forward.

"What—one against a mob!" he cried, in ringing tones. "Forward, boys and scatter the villains! Forward—a Durisdeer!"

A medley of yells arose as the stalwart horsemen charged into Sweeney's men, laying about them lustily with swords, whips, staves, and anything they had to hand. Dick, freed

from his assailants, joined them with a cheer, and soon the footpad gang was scattered in all directions, and flying for their lives.

The tall man rallied his servitors behind him again, and turned to Dick.

"I trust you are unhurt, sir," he said pleasantly.

"Thanks to you," said Dick, "for the knaves were pressing me mighty close when you came to the rescue. I am eternally your debtor, sir!"

"Good!" said the tall man, who was of some fifty years of age, richly dressed, and of handsome features and bearing. "Could we do otherwise, seeing a single youth make so gallant a stand against so many? But who may the knaves be?" he added, looking down at one of Sweeney's men who lay lifeless on the road. "I took them for a sheriff's posse, but they seem strangely ill-clad for that."

Dick began to wonder who this stately-looking stranger was who had no scruple about charging through what he supposed to be a sheriff's posse. So, for the moment, he said nothing concerning Sweeney, but waited.

"I see you have shot three of them," said the stranger, with a keen glance at Dick, after he had looked at the men carefully; "my felicitations to you, sir—a good riddance. You, I perceive, have been daring enough for the good cause to be marked out as dangerous. I will say no more—twere indiscreet to wag the tongue too freely, here on the high road—but you may count on these men as on myself. I am honoured to meet you."

"Od's pitikins!" thought Dick. "Whom have I fallen in with? Is this some man of fashion who recognises me, and has a taste for highwaymen's society? If not, what does he mean?"

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Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription
rates: Inland, 13s. per annum; 6s. 6d. for six months. Abroad, 11s. per annum; 5s. 6d. for six months. Sole agents for South Africa: The Central
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