

SPARKLING SCHOOL TALES—FREE REAL PHOTO IN THIS ISSUE!

Week Ending—
April 7th,
1923.

New
Series

No
220.

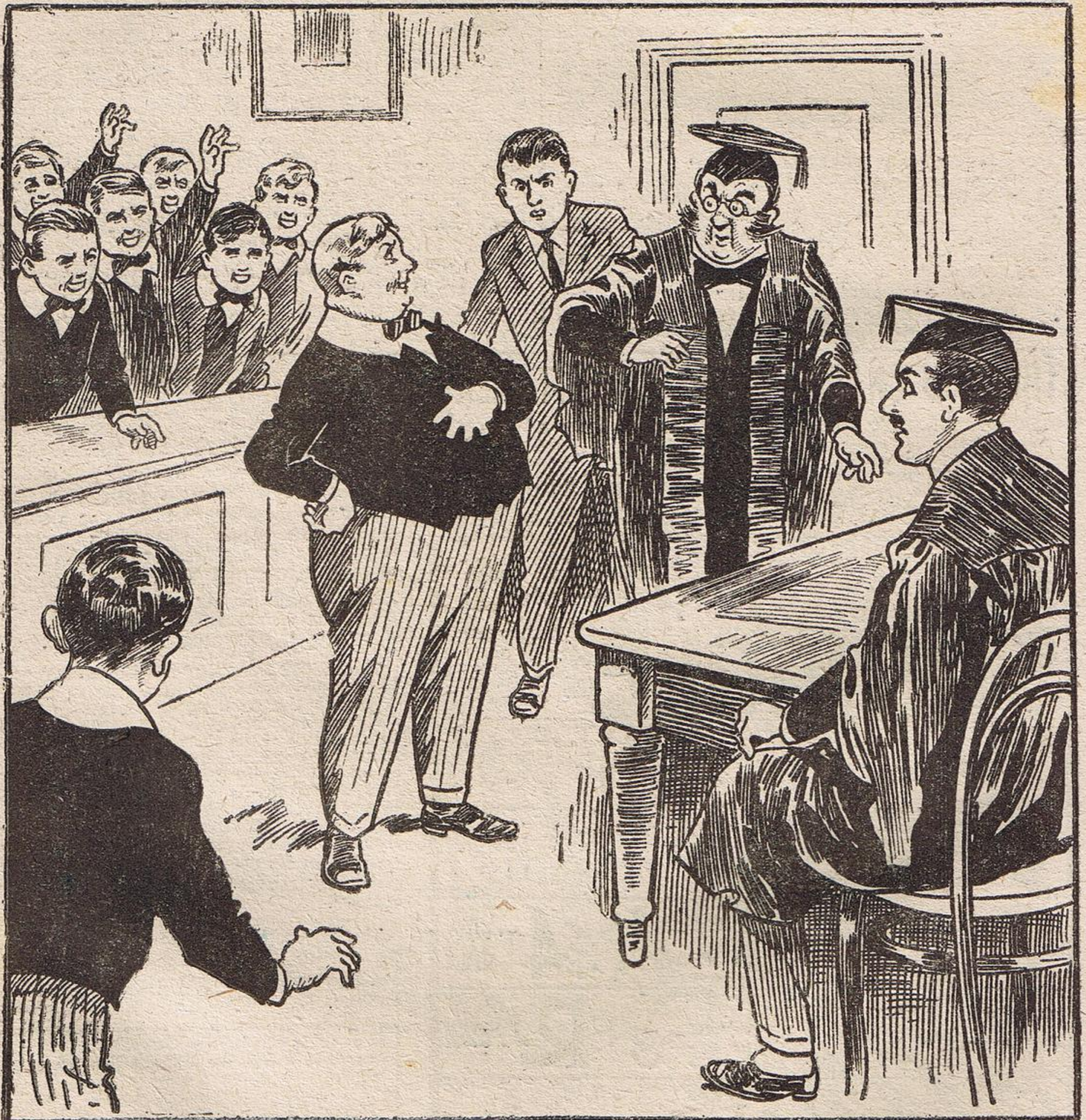
The POPULAR

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Money Prizes
Every
Week!

Twenty-eight
Pages.

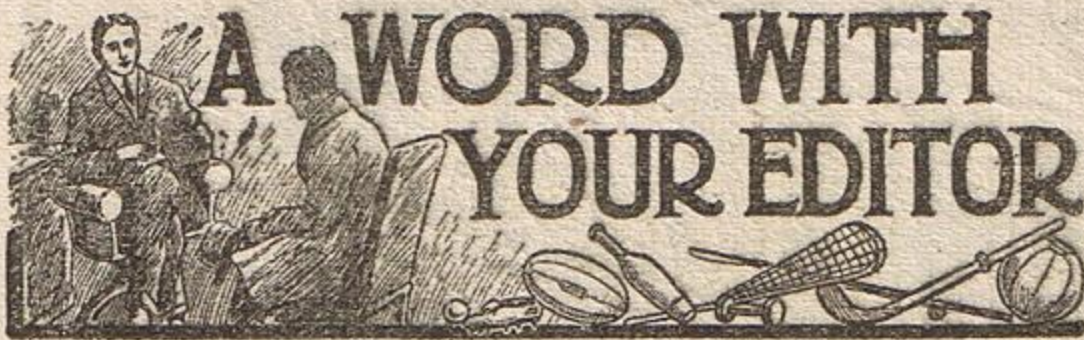
The Story Book for Boys.



TUBBY MUFFIN STANDS FOR THE CAPTAINCY OF ROOKWOOD!

(An Amazing episode from our rousing tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., inside.)

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



"THE FIGHTING MASTER!"

Greyfriars is not likely to forget the day when Mr. Larry Lascelles, B.Sc., first arrived. Larry Lascelles, as the popular master is known, has been through some chequered times. That's why he figured in the Ring. A first class fighting man, Larry Lascelles was engaged to appear on his honour, at a certain boxing match, after he had taken up his appointment at Greyfriars. You will read next week's story about this incident with real pleasure. It shows what a grand sportsman Lascelles is—true blue.

"CEDAR CREEK ON STRIKE!"

And no wonder! You remember the critical position of affairs at Miss Meadows' School in the backwoods. Miss Meadows has been dethroned, thanks to the shady activities of Mr. Gunten. In next week's yarn you will see how a new master is put in the stead of the much-liked schoolmistress. Frank Richards & Co. are not putting up with a rank injustice of this sort. The result is a strike, and the subsequent proceedings are piquant and fascinating.

"TUBBY TAKES COMMAND!"

There is an old saying about the cow not making a monk. There is another ancient story concerning a cheery ass who crept into a lion's skin, and tried to make people believe he was the king of beasts. There was nothing doing. There is not much doing now that Tubby Muffin poses as captain of Rookwood, but Mr. Owen Conquest has written a screaming yarn on this fetching business. See it next Tuesday.

"ALONE IN LONDON!"

Dick Redfern's bolt from St. Jim's is described in graphic style in the coming number of the POPULAR. Redfern is passing

through a time of real crisis. He is a fellow who always acts under a stern sense of duty. So here. His motive seems to him to be sound, and he becomes a fugitive from the old school, and finds himself adrift in the big world-city of London, friendless, and very much on his own. It is a tale that will touch the heart.

GRAND DETENTION NUMBER.

Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage, but a detention room is crammed full of obstacles to liberty none the less. Poets have a way of exaggerating a bit, as we all know. Billy Bunter's detention stunt—the porpoise understands what the word means; he has had some!—makes a fine number of the Supplement. The big men of the staff have been wiring in. Impressions of prison life have a thrill of their own. Fail not to get the POPULAR (and the Supplement) next Tuesday.

"STAND AND DELIVER!"

David Goodwin's magnificent serial is enjoying the success of the season. Turpin and his followers give and take gruellings. I have heard from chums all over the country about the splendour and excitement of this story. It is a breathless business and with the grip of history, and splendid colour in it. Next week's instalment is the most dramatic and poignant yet.

"THE OUTLAW KING!"

Now just give me your close attention. "Stand and Deliver!" is nearing the end. I have a big treat coming in the new serial. This is a brilliant story of Robin Hood, and the Merry Men of Sherwood Forest. The title is, as above, "The Outlaw King!" Nobody will grudge Robin Hood, the hero of the greenwood, the style and dignity of a king, for the chieftain was a real king among men. In the coming romance we hear of the famous leader and his doughty followers—Friar Tuck, Little John, Will Scarlett, and the others, not forgetting dainty Maid Marian, whose beauty and charm have been depicted in many a stirring song. Everybody will be eager to extend a hearty welcome to Robin Hood. He was an outlaw, true enough, but he stood for all the best in England, as the treacherous King John knew to his cost.

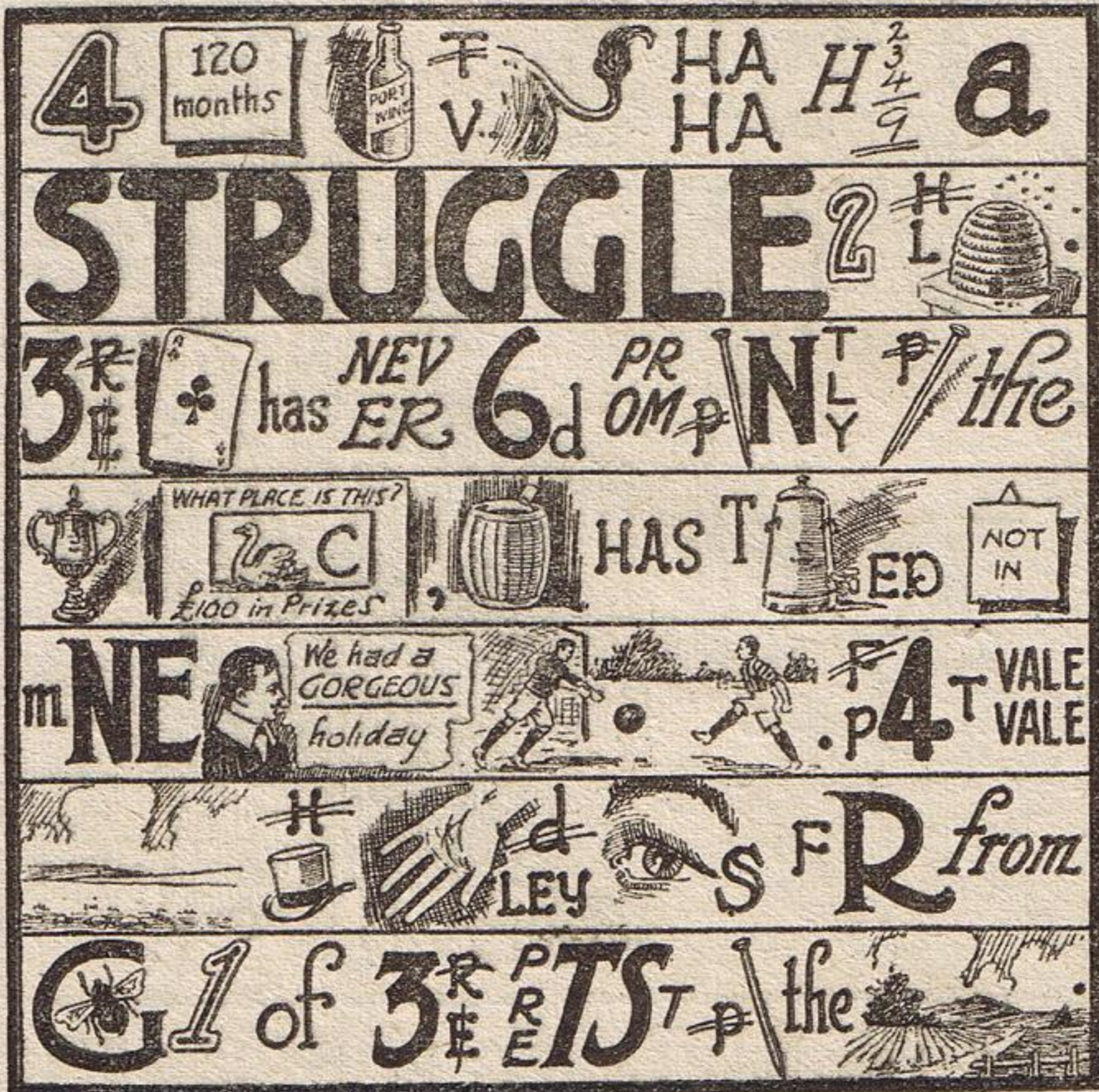
OUR COMPETITION.

This infallible feature remains a standing draw. The coming test is full of interest.

Your Editor.

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Solve the Picture Puzzle below and Win a Topping Prize.

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What You Have To Do.

Here is a splendid Footer competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Port Vale 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 Port Vale Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C.4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, APRIL 12th, 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 events 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 the "Gem," "Magnet," and "Boys' Friend," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter Port Vale Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

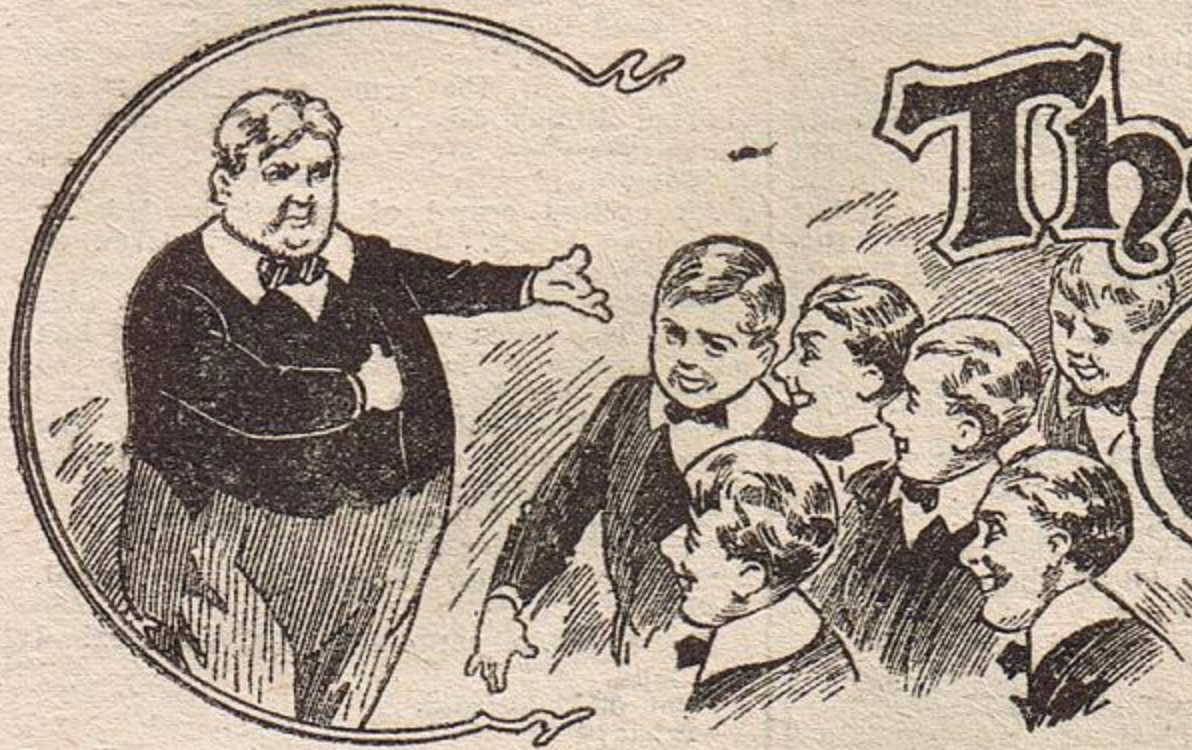
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AN AMAZING ELECTION!

Mark Carthew imagined that it would be a walk-over for him in the great election—but he receives an unpleasant surprise!

CAPTAIN TUBBY!



The New Captain!

By Owen Conquest.

This is the yarn you have been longing for, boys! A Top-hole Tale, dealing with the great prefects' strike at Rookwood, and the remarkable election which follows!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Carthew's Little Game!

"SILVER, my boy!" Carthew of the Sixth looked into the end study in the Fourth Form passage with an agreeable smile on his face—as agreeable a smile as his hard features were capable of.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at home. The four juniors had been deep in discussion on the subject of the captain's election, which was fixed for that afternoon. The discussion ceased suddenly as Mark Carthew appeared in the doorway.

The Co. fixed rather grim looks on him, and Jimmy Silver's hand strayed towards a cricket-bat that lay on the table. Carthew, as a prefect of the Sixth Form, was a person to be treated with respect by juniors; but Carthew did not always get the respect his position entitled him to. He was too much given to bullying the fags to be popular among them.

So Carthew's agreeable smile found no reflection in the end study. No smiles were visible on the faces of the Fistical Four.

"I've looked in to see you kids," went on Carthew pleasantly.

"Oh!" said Jimmy, puzzled.

"Just a little chat, you know," explained Carthew.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Arthur Edward Lovell.

Raby and Newcome simply stared. What this sudden affability on the part of their old enemy might portend they could not even guess. But they concluded that the bully of the Sixth meant mischief, somehow.

Carthew came in, and sat on a corner of the table. The Fistical Four eyed him, and Jimmy Silver rested his hand in a careless sort of way on the cane handle of the bat. In dealing with Carthew there was no telling whether a cricket-bat might be needed or not.

Carthew did not notice it—or affected not to notice it. He grinned agreeably at the surprised juniors, with a grin of the utmost affability.

"You chaps are not busy just now?" he asked.

"Nunno!" stammered Jimmy. "We were just talking about the election, that's all."

"What a coincidence!" remarked Carthew. "I've come here to speak to you about that!"

"Have you?" murmured Lovell.

"Just so. The fact is, I really want to consult you," explained the Sixth-Former.

"Kik-kik—consult us?" stuttered Lovell.

"That's it."

"Oh crumbs!"

The chums of the Fourth almost wondered if they were dreaming. Even a good-natured prefect like Bulkeley or Neville never carried his affability to the extent of consulting Fourth Form fellows. And for the bully of the Sixth to do so—it was no wonder that the Fistical Four were astounded.

They blinked at Carthew.

"The fact is," said Carthew, with a beaming smile, "I think a lot of your judgment."

"Oh!"

"You fellows are the leaders of the Fourth Form, and you have a lot of influence in the Lower School generally," said Carthew. "Now, rightly used, that influence may be a very good thing for the school—and, of course, the good of Rookwood is what we all have at heart."

"Well?" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Well? I—I say, Carthew, are you pulling our leg?"

"Certainly not. I am quite serious!" said the Sixth-Former. "As matters stand at present, Rookwood is in rather a bad way. Bulkeley has offended the Head, and has been removed from the captaincy, and is no longer a prefect. All the other prefects have resigned, as a protest. I had some doubts about it, but I stood in with the rest. But you fellows, being rather sharp and sensible kids, can see that this isn't a good thing for the school."

"It certainly isn't!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "I wish the Head would come round, and give Bulkeley his old place back."

"He won't do that," said Carthew, shaking his head; "he's too firm. Once he's made up his mind, the thing's done. Bulkeley's had his day, and it's over. But this sort of thing can't go on—no prefects in the school, and Rookwood without a captain. You can see that?"

"Well, there's a new election for captain to-day," said Lovell, with a grin.

Carthew gave him a look. He did not quite understand what that grin implied.

"Yes, that's so," he went on. "Now, as all the Sixth—even the Moderns—are standing by Bulkeley, it's rather a question where the new captain will come from. Nobody wants a Fifth-Former as captain. It's quite unheard of, and it wouldn't do!"

"No fear!" said the Fistical Four, with one voice.

"It comes to this, then," continued Carthew—"that for the good of the school some member of the Sixth will have to come forward. I've decided to do so."

"You?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Exactly!"

"Oh!" said Jimmy Silver; and he looked at his chums.

Carthew's excessive affability was explained now.

The most unpopular senior of Rookwood was standing as a candidate for the captaincy; and it was a time to be affable.

Under ordinary circumstances, Mark Carthew would not have stood the slightest chance of election.

But with Bulkeley down and out, and the Sixth Form standing by him to a man, there was a chance for him—at least, he hoped there was. It involved the desertion of Bulkeley's cause; it involved turning against the general movement in his own Form, and taking advantage of the peculiar state of affairs for his own benefit. But Carthew was not overburdened with scruples at any time.

Jimmy Silver & Co. gazed at Carthew, hardly taking the trouble to conceal the contempt they felt. Carthew was fishing in troubled water, but he was not likely to catch the Fistical Four.

Carthew rattled on cheerily, apparently not observing the expression on the faces of the Co.

"I'm doing this from a sense of duty, of course. Rookwood simply can't go on as at present. I've seen the Head, and he approves. I've had my name put up as a candidate simply because it wouldn't do for a Fifth Form chap to get in as captain. The fact is, I expect the election to be merely a matter of form—a walk-over—as there will be no rival candidate. Still, Hansom of the Fifth might think of trying his luck. Some other chap in the Sixth might come forward at the last minute. Now, can I count on you chaps for support?"

Jimmy Silver smiled sarcastically.

"Chaps!" he repeated.

"Yes; you chaps."

"Have we been promoted?" asked Jimmy.

"Promoted?" repeated Carthew. "I don't catch on."

"Last time you spoke to us we were young sweeps, and fags, and cheeky little blighters!" explained Jimmy. "Now we're chaps! I suppose that may be looked on as promotion?"

There was a chuckle in the end study; and for a moment Carthew's affable smile faded away.

His eyes glittered, but only for a second. Then he smiled again.

"My dear kid, I don't mind your little joke," he said pleasantly. "Now, to come to business. I want your support. Every vote counts in an election. Are you standing by me?"

"Not quite."

"If I become captain of Rookwood I shall remember fellows who backed me up," remarked Carthew. "I shall also remember fellows who refused to do so!"

"My dear man, that's all right; you won't become captain of Rookwood!" answered Jimmy Silver. "There's one captain of Rookwood—one and only—and that's old Bulkeley. We're backing him up!"

"Bulkeley is not standing for election this—"

"He's going to be elected, all the same!" said Jimmy. "It's all cut and dried, my dear man! The Head's pushed him out of the captaincy, but all Rookwood is going to plump for him at the election, and the Head can put that in his pipe and smoke it! See?"

Carthew's lips tightened.

His affability had gone again—for good. It was pretty clear that the sweetest of smiles would extract nothing from Jimmy Silver & Co.—excepting plain English.

"You can't re-elect Bulkeley!" he said savagely. "The Head would take it as disrespect—"

"I hope he'll take it as a tip."

Carthew slid from the table.
 "Then you're not backing me up?"
 "No fear!"
 "You cheeky young scoundrel!" roared Carthew.

"Aren't we 'chaps' any longer?" asked Jimmy Silver innocently. "Have we become cheeky young scoundrels already?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Carthew clenched his hands. Jimmy Silver took a businesslike grip on the bat. It was needed, after all.

"None of your little games, old nut!" he remarked. "We're ready for you, you know."

"If you dare touch a prefect—"
 Jimmy chuckled.
 "You're not a prefect now," he said coolly. "There aren't any prefects at Rookwood now, you know. The prefects are on strike!"

Carthew's reply to that argument was a rush. He had resigned in concert with the rest of the august body of prefects; but apparently he considered that he still retained his authority.

The Fistical Four did not see it, however. Carthew's rush was met by Jimmy Silver's cricket-bat, which jammed on his chest with what a novelist would describe as a sickening thud.

"Oh!" roared Carthew, staggering back. "Ow! I—I—I—I— You young demon, I'll—"

"You'll travel!" grinned Jimmy Silver, lunging again with the bat. "Kick him out, you fellows—he's not a prefect now, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 As one man the Fistical Four rushed on Carthew. The Sixth-Former went spinning down the passage.

Crash!
 Carthew measured his length on the cold and unsympathetic linoleum.

"Jump on him!" roared Lovell. "Now, then, all together!"

Carthew did not wait.
 He leaped up and ran for it, and from the Fourth Form passage a roar of laughter followed him, which was not a good augury for Carthew's prospects in the captain's election.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

By Order of the Head!

"JIMMY!"
 Tubby Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, came rolling up to the Fistical Four in the quadrangle about an hour later.

Tubby's fat face was excited. Evidently he had news.

The Fistical Four were in discussion with Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern Side. For once, Classics and Moderns at Rookwood were in complete agreement.

Nearly everybody was determined to stand by "Old Bulkeley," not only in the Sixth, but in the other Forms, senior and junior.

Half a dozen of the Fourth, and as many of the Shell, intended to vote for Carthew—fellows like Lattrey & Co., and Leggett; but it was probable than even the black sheep of Rookwood would not venture to do so when it came to the pinch. Public opinion was too strong against them.

But in any case their votes would be of no value to the ambitious bully of the Sixth. They would be swamped by a couple of hundred votes for George Bulkeley.

True, Bulkeley was not officially standing for election. His chum, Neville, had urged him to do so, but he had declined. It made no difference, however; for Neville had arranged to propose him in his absence. Lonsdale was to second the proposal, and a show of hands was to be called for. And it was absolutely certain that there would be a forest of hands up for "old Bulkeley."

That would be, as Morny of the Fourth remarked in his slangy way, "one in the eye" for the Head.

The high-and-mighty Sixth, of course, could not confess that they were planning "one in the eye" for their headmaster. Their view was that Bulkeley's re-election would show the trend of public opinion in the school, and influence Dr. Chisholm into reconsidering his decision. It was a more sedate way of putting it; but it really came to the same thing.

"Vote for Bulkeley?" Tommy Dodd was saying, as the fat Classical rolled up. "I should jolly well say so. Every junior on

our side is going to vote for Bulkeley. Leggett doesn't seem keen—so he's going in with me, and I'm going to keep hold of his arm. If he puts up his paw for Carthew, something is going to happen to Leggett; he will think it's an earthquake!"

"I say, Jimmy—"
 "It will make the Head think, when Bulkeley is re-elected by practically the whole school," said Jimmy Silver. "Besides, it will give him a graceful way of climbing down. No need for him to keep up this game, after he's had proof that the whole school has confidence in Bulkeley."

"After all, the Head means well," remarked Raby.

"Only he's so jolly obstinate!" grunted Lovell.

"Jimmy—" roared Tubby Muffin.

"Oh, run away and play, fatty!" said the captain of the Fourth.

"But there's a notice on the board—"
 "Oh, we all know about that—election at six!" said Jimmy Silver.

"A new notice—" howled Tubby Muffin.
 "Never mind—"
 "In the Head's fist!" shrieked Tubby.

"Oh! Something about the election?" asked Jimmy Silver, showing a little interest at last. "Not postponed, is it?"

"Nunno! But Bulkeley can't be elected!" gasped the fat Classical.

"Rats!"
 "The Head's forbidden it!"
 "What!" shouted all the juniors together.

"That's it!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "Bulkeley's forbidden to stand for re-election, and everybody's forbidden to vote for him in his absence—by order of the Head!"

"Great Scott!"
 "Cheek!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.
 "Awful cheek!"

Dr. Chisholm, the reverend Head of Rookwood School, would probably have been petrified if he had heard his action described as "cheek" by the Fourth-Formers. Fortunately, he did not hear.

"Let's go and see it!" exclaimed Newcome. "That fat duffer may have got it all wrong!"

"Come on!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. There was a rush of the juniors to the School House.

They found a crowd already collected round the notice-board.

Teddy Grace, the new boy in the Classical Fourth, called to Jimmy Silver as he came breathlessly up:

"Seen this, Silver? The Head says—"
 "Let's see it!"

Putty of the Fourth made room for Jimmy. Jimmy read the notice, with knitted brows and deep indignation.

It was official enough.

Evidently the intention of Bulkeley's supporters had become known to the Head. There it was, in the Head's own classic hand. Briefly, the notice announced that Bulkeley of the Sixth, formerly captain of the school, was forbidden to offer himself for re-election; and that no member of any Form was permitted to propose, second, or vote for Bulkeley in the election.

"By gad! The Head's dished us, and no mistake!" said Mornington. "What do you think of that, Jimmy Silver?"

"Thumping cheek!" said Jimmy.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Head's no right to forbid us—"
 "Headmasters assume these rights!" grinned Mornington. "The game's up, old infant; we can't re-elect Bulkeley."

"Let's go ahead with it just the same!" suggested Putty of the Fourth.

"Fathead!" was Morny's reply. "An election held against the order of the Head would be null and void."

Jimmy Silver nodded.
 "That's so," he said. "Besides, we—we can't very well directly disobey an order from the Head."

"It's cheek, all the same!" said Lovell hotly.

Jimmy compressed his lips.
 "Carthew's been to the Head," he remarked. "He's put the old boy up to this, of course, to dish us. And it jolly well looks as if we're dished, anyway! I sha'n't vote at all."

"We sha'n't vote for Carthew, anyway!"
 "No fear!"

"But if there's no rival candidate, Carthew will get a walk-over," said Teddy Grace.

"Let him, the cad!"
 "The Sixth ought to interfere," said Lovell hotly. "Carthew is going back on

his own Form, and trying to squeeze in as captain by trickery. The Sixth ought to stop him somehow!"

"Bulkeley could chip in and give him a jolly good biding," suggested Raby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Dash it all, that's not a bad idea!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Let's go and see Bulkeley—"

"Come on!"
 An excited crowd of juniors headed for Bulkeley's study. Jimmy Silver knocked on the door and opened it.

Bulkeley was there at work at his table. The fallen captain of Rookwood had not appeared in the public eye so much as usual since his fall. He was spending this half-holiday at Greek. He looked up, with a surprised frown, as his doorway was blocked with excited juniors.

"Bulkeley—" began Jimmy Silver.

"What do you want?"

"There's a new notice on the board, Bulkeley!"

The erstwhile captain of Rookwood raised his hand.

"Cut off!" he said.
 "What?"
 "Leave my study, please, all of you!"

"But—"
 "Shut the door after you."

Bulkeley dropped his eyes to his work again. The juniors looked at one another rather sheepishly. Jimmy Silver, with pink cheeks, drew the door shut. Evidently the loyal—and somewhat noisy—support of the Lower School was not, somehow, gratifying to him. There was nothing to be expected from "old Bulkeley."

But not for a moment did the juniors' loyalty to him waver.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Carthew Means Business!

NEVILLE of the Sixth tapped at Carthew's door, and opened it.

The prefect looked at him sourly, and more sourly still as the faces that appeared behind Neville, as he stood in the doorway.

Six members of the Sixth Form had arrived, and their serious looks showed that they had serious business with the new prefect.

They were Neville, Lonsdale, and Jones major, of the Classical side, and Knowles, Frampton, and Catesby, of the Modern Sixth.

"You needn't come in!" was Carthew's polite greeting.

"We've got something to say to you," answered Neville.

"I don't think I care to hear it."
 "You've got to hear it, Carthew!" broke out Cecil Knowles angrily.

Carthew shrugged his shoulders. The six seniors closed the door. Carthew leaned back in his chair, and regarded them with a mocking smile.

He could guess the purport of the visit, but it was not likely to influence him in any way. He was never likely to have another opportunity of realising his ambition.

"We'll come straight to business, Carthew," said Neville. "It seems you're a prefect again now."

"That's so."
 "You've gone back on the Sixth!" exclaimed Lonsdale.

"I felt it my duty—"
 "Oh, give us a rest!"

"My duty," pursued Carthew calmly, "to give the Head my support. Discipline must be maintained in the school. The juniors are getting out of hand already. There must be prefects. On second thoughts I think a strike was a rotten idea—utterly rotten. Having come to that conclusion, I was bound to go to the Head and withdraw my resignation."

"You mean you backed up the Sixth till we were fairly committed, and then sold us out for your own purposes," said Knowles.

"That's a rotten way of putting it, Knowles. I felt it my duty—"

"We didn't come here to listen to that rot. The question is, are you going to stand by the other prefects, and support Bulkeley, or desert them?"

"You haven't always been so keen on supporting Bulkeley, Knowles," sneered the bully of the Sixth.

"That's neither here nor there. In the present case, it's a question of the whole

body of prefects defending their rights, and we all ought to stand together—if only for our own sakes."

"That's how it stands, Carthew," said Neville, more mildly. "You can't say it's playing the game to creep in like this and make a bid for the captaincy."

Carthew sneered.

"I dare say other fellows here had the same idea in their heads," he answered. "I dare say I was a few hours in front of somebody else."

Knowles coloured.

"That's rot," said Neville. "Knowles has second claim to the captaincy, but he hasn't tried to take Bulkeley's place."

"If I were rotter enough," said Knowles. "I should know that all the Sixth would be down on me, and I shouldn't think it good enough."

"That's why you haven't chipped in, then?" grinned Carthew.

"Knowles wouldn't!" said Catesby.

Another shrug from Carthew. He was quite convinced that Knowles would have played his game, if he could have, and that he had simply been first in the field.

"To come down to plain talk," said Jones major, "you've got to chuck it, Carthew. We want you to resign again."

"Can't be done."

"And withdraw your candidature for the captaincy!" said Knowles savagely.

"Sorry!" said Carthew. "Can't be done."

"You're simply selling us out by taking this line."

"I don't see it."

"You don't choose to, you mean!" exclaimed Neville. "All the prefects are on strike till Bulkeley is reinstated. You're acting the part of a blackleg!"

"My duty—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Knowles. "Duty from you is a bit too funny!"

"If that's all you've got to say to me, you may as well clear!" remarked Carthew.

Neville glanced at his companions. The Sixth-Formers were looking very grim. There was deep anger in their hearts at this betrayal of their cause by a member of their Form for the purpose of fishing in troubled waters. Even Knowles, who was not a scrupulous fellow, would have hesitated to take the course Carthew had taken.

"You intend keeping on as you've begun, then—currying favour with the Head, and setting up as captain of Rookwood?" asked Neville.

"That's simply abuse. I sha'n't answer it."

"In a word, then, will you line up with the rest of the Sixth and stand by Bulkeley, as we agreed at first?"

"Can't be done."

"Very well. Go to your election, then. It will be boycotted by the Sixth," said Neville.

"No member of the Sixth will be present, or will vote, or will recognise you as captain of Rookwood if you are elected."

"I shall be captain, all the same," answered Carthew coolly.

"So long as you keep up this game you'll have all the Sixth down on you."

"I'll chance that."

"You won't find it easy to face."

"I'll try," smiled Carthew.

"As captain and as a prefect you won't get any support from the Sixth. You've seen already how the juniors look on you."

"I dare say a few floggings will get them into a state of subordination," said Carthew coolly. "I hope so, at all events."

"You'll be sent to Coventry by the Sixth."

"I'll risk it."

"You mean that you're keeping on with this cad's game, and nothing we can say will make any difference?" exclaimed Neville.

Carthew nodded coolly.

"You've hit it!" he answered.

"We may as well go," said Jones major, in disgust. "I sha'n't speak to the cad again, I know that."

"Same here!"

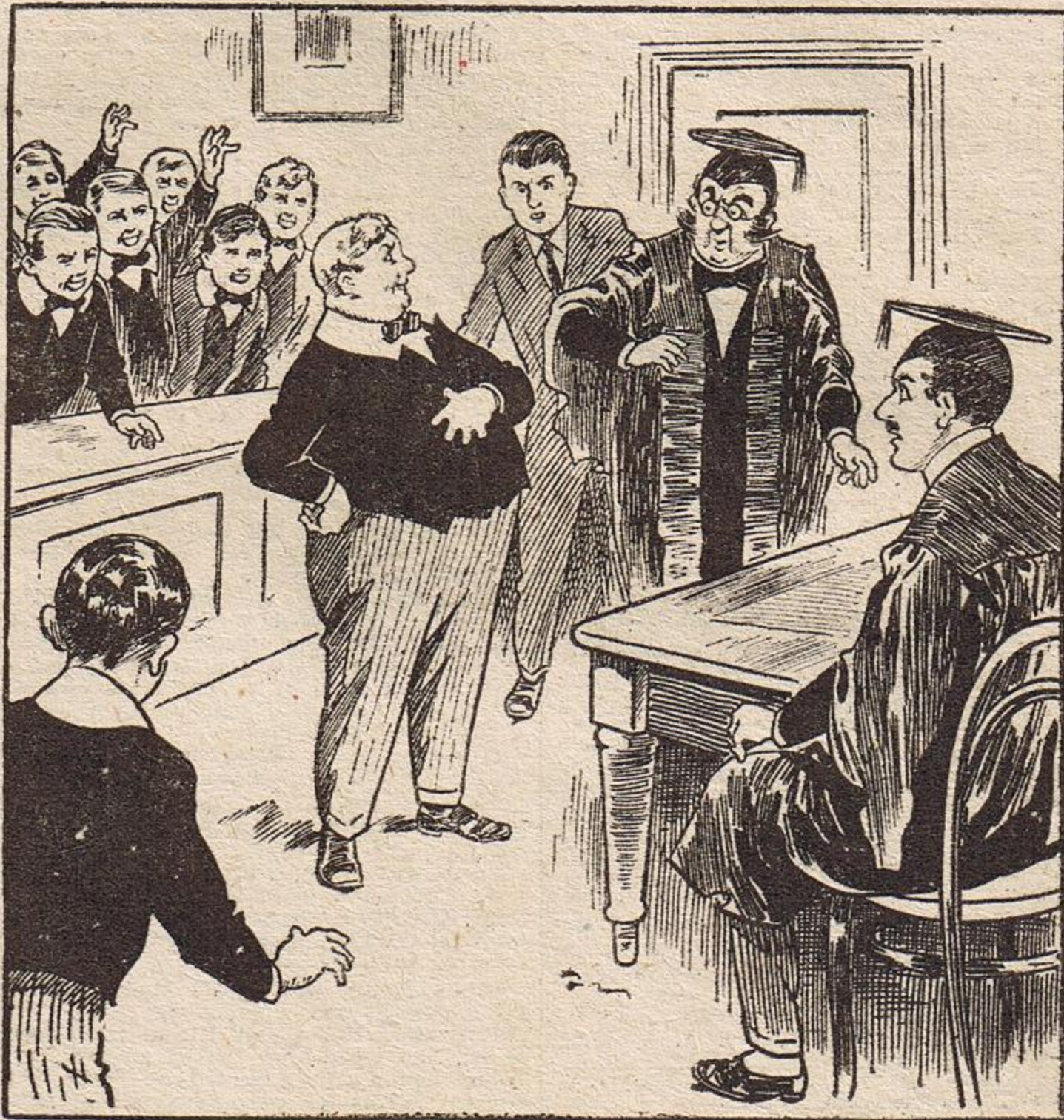
"It's a dirty trick!" said Frampton.

"So sorry you think so!" smiled Carthew. "Shut the door after you, will you?"

The angry prefects retired from the study. Knowles shut the door—with a slam. Carthew knitted his brows when they were gone.

He had kept up a smiling face while they were present, but he was not so confident as he affected to be.

The game he was playing was a treacherous one, and it was pretty certain that the Sixth-Formers would not forgive such a trick. He had entered into the plan



THE RIVAL CANDIDATE! Tubby Muffin rolled forward, his fat little nose high in the air. "Bless my soul! What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "At the request of the school, sir," said Tubby loftily, "I am standing for the election. Let the best man win!" (See Chapter 5.)

of going on "strike," and he had deserted to the enemy, as it were, as soon as his fellow-prefects were too deeply committed for retreat to be possible.

It was not a game of which even Carthew could be proud, and he knew how deeply it must exasperate the other prefects, especially Knowles, who was suspected of having an eye on the captaincy himself.

But he did not falter.

With the Sixth Form in opposition, his tenure of the captaincy was not likely to be a bed of roses; but, at all events, he would be captain of the school, with the Head's support, and the fellows might come round in time. He could hope for the best, anyway.

"It's worth it," muttered Carthew. "There'll be trouble—there's sure to be trouble—but it's worth it. Captain of Rookwood! It's worth something! Let them stick to Bulkeley, if they like—hang Bulkeley! Captain of Rookwood! That's a prize worth bagging."

And Carthew lighted a cigarette, and smiled through the curling smoke. In his mind's eye he already saw himself captain of Rookwood.

But there is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, as Carthew was destined to discover. He had reckoned without his host—in the shape of Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Something Like a Stunt!

PUTTY of the Fourth strolled into the end study, where Jimmy Silver & Co. had sat down to an early—and disconsolate—tea. The Fistical Four were not cheerful.

The captain's election was coming off at six, and it was to be a walk-over for Mark Carthew. That seemed inevitable. A rival candidate might have beaten Carthew at the poll; but no other Sixth-Former would set up as a candidate for Bulkeley's place. And in that they had the support of the Fifth Form. Hansom, the captain of the Fifth, had thought it over, and decided that it

would not be "cricket." And his Form-fellows agreed. And if any less particular Fifth-Former had thought of it, he did not venture to make a bid for the honour. Hansom & Co. would certainly have put the "stopper" on any such ambitious candidate from their Form.

Jimmy Silver & Co. would have welcomed even a Fifth-Former as a rival to Carthew; they would have welcomed even Knowles of the Modern side. And over tea Jimmy Silver & Co. debated whether it was possible for a junior to stand. Certainly such a candidature was unheard of; but if it would lead to the defeat of Mark Carthew it was worth thinking of.

But the difficulties in the way were great. Supposing even that a junior could enter the field as a candidate, there would be an immediate split between Classics and Moderns, Fourth and Shell, and one candidate from the Lower School might be followed by a dozen. And it was pretty certain that if a junior was elected, the Head would not allow such an election to stand.

Putty smiled cheerfully at the glum four. Teddy Grace's chubby face was always cheerful. The Co. gave him grim looks. Putty's cheerfulness seemed to them out of place at a time when, as Lovell expressed it, Rookwood School was going to the giddy bow-wows.

"You fellows look down," remarked Putty. "We're feeling down," growled Arthur Edward Lovell; "and we don't feel any better for being grinned at by a silly ass!"

"What I like about this study," remarked Teddy Grace, "is that a fellow can always depend on a civil reception here!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Teddy Grace smiled—and did not go. "The election's coming off pretty soon," he observed. "I came along here to make a suggestion for dishing Carthew."

Jimmy Silver looked up eagerly.

"If you can think of a way of doing that—" he began.

"I've thought of one!"

"Go ahead!"

Tubby Muffin, Junior—Captain of Rookwood! See Next Week's Amazing Yarn!

"Another candidate is wanted—"
 "Rot!" said Lovell. "No senior in the school will put up for Bulkeley's place. Even Knowles isn't cad enough—or he's afraid of public opinion!"
 "What about a junior?"
 "We've thought of that," said Jimmy. "N.G. The Head wouldn't allow the election to stand, for one thing. And the Moderns would want a Modern—"
 "And the Classicals a Classical, of course!" said Raby.
 "And the Shell would want a Shell chap—and, of course, the Fourth would want a Fourth-Former!" said Newcome. "It would simply mean all the juniors at loggerheads, and the vote split into a dozen sections. And most likely a lot of seniors would vote for Carthew then, to keep a junior out. He would get in on a big vote instead of a little one!"
 Putty nodded.
 "But all the Lower School might unite if a suitable chap was found," he answered. "This is my idea: The Head won't let us vote for Bulkeley. We don't want to vote for anybody else."
 "So we're not going to vote at all!" said Raby.
 "That's playing into Carthew's hands!"
 "Can't be helped. Even if another senior put up, we don't want him as captain any more than Carthew!"
 "Let me expound!" said Putty. "Bulkeley's down and out. We don't want any other candidate, and it seems that we're going to be landed with Carthew. But suppose we turned the whole bizney into ridicule by electing a candidate who made the election ridiculous—"
 "Oh!"
 "It would keep Carthew out all right, and it would be a lesson to the Head not to dictate to the chaps whom they were to vote for."
 "But who—"
 "Tubby Muffin!" said Putty.
 "Who?" yelled the Fistical Four.
 "Tubby!" said Teddy Grace calmly.
 "You howling ass!"
 "You thumping chump!"
 "Lend me your ears, my infants!" said Putty appealingly. "Don't you see what a really corking idea it is?"
 "No, I don't!" said Jimmy Silver gruffly. "One of your idiotic practical jokes, I suppose. Go and eat coke!"
 "But listen to me—"
 "Rats!"
 "Listen to a chap, for goodness' sake!" shouted Putty. "Tubby Muffin, if he's elected, turns the whole thing into ridicule. Can't you see what a facer that would be for the Head? He won't let us have Bulkeley. We'll hand him Tubby, then, as a captain of the school! That's Rookwood's reply—see?"
 Lovell snorted; but Jimmy Silver rubbed his nose in a rather thoughtful way.
 The possibilities of Putty's extraordinary suggestion began to dawn upon him.
 Certainly it would be a thunderclap for the Head. The Rookwooders were free to elect their captain; but the Head dictated that Bulkeley should not be elected. It would certainly be a crushing rejoinder if the fat and absurd Tubby was elected captain of the school, in response. The whole affair would become farcical, and it was not impossible that the Head might take warning from it.
 "But," said Jimmy slowly, "the Head wouldn't let it stand; he would cancel the election—"
 "And another would be held," said Lovell.
 "Exactly!" smiled Putty. "And we'd elect Tubby again!"
 "Oh!"
 "And keep on electing Tubby every time till he lets us have Bulkeley back!" said Putty, with a chuckle. "We could keep it up as long as the Head. It would be a game. And the longer it lasted, the more ridiculous it would grow—and it might dawn upon his nibs at last that it would be better to allow Bulkeley to be re-elected."
 "By Jove!" said Jimmy.
 "It would be funny, anyway," said Newcome, laughing.
 "You see, all the Lower School could unite on this," said Putty eagerly. "If Jimmy Silver put up, Tommy Dodd would put up, too, for the Moderns; and Smythe would put up for the Shell, and Wegg for the Third, and very likely young 'Erbert for the Second—a crowd, in fact. And the seniors would

rally round Carthew, most likely, to keep a junior out. They'll beat us, with our vote split. But all the fellows would back up for a jape on the Head like this. It's like stating our terms to the Head. We offer him Tubby Muffin till he offers us Bulkeley."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "It's a corker!" said Putty. "Depend on it, the fags will rally round as one man. The only chap who'll take the election seriously will be Tubby himself. He may!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Jimmy Silver jumped up.
 "It's a go!" he exclaimed. "It's really a bright idea of yours, Putty!"
 "Quite a brain-wave!" grinned Raby.
 Jimmy looked at his watch.
 "Election in an hour!" he said. "No time to lose. We've got to do a lot of electioneering—"
 "For Tubby Muffin?" gasped Lovell.
 "Yes. Come on!"
 "Oh, all right!"
 The Fistical Four left their tea unfinished. They hurried from the end study with Putty to begin the good work.
 Word was quickly passed for a meeting of the Lower School in the Common-room, and Putty's amazing scheme was propounded by the captain of the Fourth—to be met at first with a howl of astonishment and derision, and then with roars of laughter.
 "By gad!" exclaimed Mornington. "It's corkin'—the best thing this term! And it's the only way of dishin' the Head!"
 "Dishing the Head" seemed a popular idea just then in the Lower School of Rookwood.
 There was great enthusiasm on the subject. With not more than a dozen exceptions, the juniors agreed to vote "en bloc" for Tubby Muffin, Modern and Classical alike entering into the joke.
 Tubby Muffin was in his study finishing his tea while the meeting was held. His study-mates, Putty and Higgs and Jones minor, had gone down to the meeting, and Tubby had remained behind—to finish their tea as well as his own. Tea was of more importance in the plump Classical's eyes than any meetings.
 Tubby started as his study door was thrown open, and a crowd of the Fourth appeared.
 He jumped up from the table in alarm.
 "I haven't!" he roared.
 "Hallo! You haven't what?" demanded Putty.
 "I haven't touched the cake."
 "The cake!" repeated Jimmy Silver.
 "What cake?"
 "If Jones' cake isn't in the cupboard," said Tubby, "don't blame me. I don't know what's become of it. Higgs may have scooped it."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You fat duffer!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Never mind the cake. We want you."
 "Oh!" said Tubby Muffin. "Is it a feed?"
 "Ha, ha! No! It's an election—the captain's election."
 "Come on, Tubby!"
 "You're the candidate!"
 "Eh?"
 "You're the junior candidate."
 "Wha-a-at?"
 "Don't you understand?" said Jimmy Silver. "We want you to stand as candidate for the captaincy."
 "Oh-h-h-h!" stuttered Tubby, his round eyes growing quite saucer-like in his astonishment.
 "Cheers for Captain Muffin!" yelled Mornington.
 "Hurrah!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Look here, if you fellows are pulling my leg—"
 "Not a bit of it, my tulip. You're our candidate, and we've got over a hundred votes promised," grinned Jimmy Silver.
 Tubby drew a deep breath.
 That he was a person of considerable importance, and that he had never really enjoyed the limelight he was entitled to, Tubby was convinced, but he had never expected his importance and his uncommon

qualities to be publicly acknowledged in this way.
 It was, at last, a just tribute to his real merits—that was how the fat Tubby looked at it.
 He began to swell immediately.
 "Gentlemen—" he began.
 "Eh!"
 "What?"
 "Gentlemen," said Tubby Muffin, with dignity, "I am obliged to you for this mark of your confidence and esteem—"
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "And I shall have great pleasure in standing as the Lower School candidate at the captain's election—"
 "Hear, hear!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I shall do my best to deserve your confidence, and to merit your suffrages," said Tubby, in quite a Parliamentary manner. "Gentlemen, I am at your service."
 "Bravo, Tubby!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 And in the midst of an enthusiastic and chuckling crowd of supporters, Tubby Muffin, the juniors' candidate, was marched away to Hall.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
The Election!

SIX o'clock found Big Hall crowded. Carthew was there early—with no supporters. Not a single senior was to be found in the school to give him support. The few who would have done so were deterred by the attitude of the majority. Sixth and Fifth sternly boycotted the election.
 Half a dozen juniors were all the supporters Carthew could gather—by the promise of favours to come—and they trickled in, not very enthusiastically, and found their candidate there, with Mr. Bootles and Mr. Mooney, who were to count the votes.
 The election was expected to be simply a walk-over, and Carthew was to be nominated, seconded, and elected as a matter of form.
 But as six o'clock approached, Hall began to fill.
 It was a surprise to Carthew. He did not see what that army of juniors wanted there.
 But they came in swarms. Tommy Dodd led in nearly all the Modern juniors, Third and Fourth and Shell. Jimmy Silver marched in with most of the Classical Fourth. The Classical Shell was well represented. Even the Second Form sent a contingent, led by 'Erbert and Jones minimus.
 Carthew bit his lip as he watched them. The rules of the Rookwood election allowed a candidate to be nominated right to the time fixed for polling; and Carthew wondered whether the Sixth had decided, after all, to put up Knowles or Neville against him. It was possible that they had abandoned their lofty and dignified course of ignoring the election, simply for the purpose of dishing him. Yet not a single senior was present. It could not, after all, be that. Yet what was the meaning of this grinning swarm of juniors?
 He felt uneasy, and showed it.
 Tubby Muffin, pushed forward by his enthusiastic supporters, was prominent, but Carthew did not understand the cause of the lofty and swelling looks of the fat Classical. Of all the swarm of juniors present, Tubby was the only fellow who took his candidature seriously; but he was taking it very seriously indeed.
 Mr. Bootles blinked over his glasses at the numerous assembly, and glanced at the clock, and then at Mr. Mooney. It was six o'clock.
 "H'm! H'm!" said Mr. Bootles. "We shall now—ahem!—proceed—hum! Carthew, I believe—hem!—is the only candidate—hum—"
 "Not at all, sir," interposed Jimmy Silver.
 Mr. Bootles blinked at him.
 "Indeed! I understand, Silver, that there is no other candidate."
 "Yes, sir, there is one more," said Jimmy. "Forward, Muffin!"
 And there was a delighted roar from the juniors:
 "Go it, Tubby!"
 "Hurrah for Muffin!"
 "Muffins and crumpets! Hurrah!"
 Tubby Muffin rolled forward, his fat waistcoat swelled almost to bursting; his fat little nose high in the air. At that

ANSWERS
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moment Reginald Muffin of the Fourth was sublime.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles, in perplexity. "What—what? Am I—hum!—to understand, Silver—ahem!—that Muffin is—bless my soul!—a candidate for the captaincy of the school?"

"Yes, sir."
"At the request of the school, sir," said Tubby Muffin loftily, "I am standing for election! Let the best man win!"

"Hurrah!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Carthew made a furious stride forward. He understood the cause of the grinning swarm in Hall now.

"I protest against this!" he exclaimed angrily. "This is turning the election into a farce! A junior cannot stand—"

"Boooh!"
"Shut up, Carthew!"
"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

"Really, Muffin—really, Silver—ahem—"
"I know it's unusual, sir," said Jimmy Silver firmly. "But there is no law at Rookwood against it. We claim the right to put our candidate forward and vote for him."

Mr. Bootles looked helplessly at Mr. Mooney, who smiled slightly.

"There is certainly no rule against it, that I am aware of," said Mr. Mooney. "It has never happened before, but—but there is no rule forbidding—"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles, taking off his spectacles and polishing them, and replacing them on his nose. "I—I really—"

"I protest against anything of the kind!" shouted Carthew furiously.

"Your protest is not in order, Carthew. There seems no reason against the candidature of Muffin of the Fourth, though the result of the election, of course, must be confirmed by the Head."

"The Head would never confirm—"
"That is for Dr. Chisholm to decide, Carthew, when the result comes before him. The election will proceed," said Mr. Bootles.

And, in spite of Carthew's almost speechless wrath, the election duly proceeded.

Smythe of the Shell had pleasure in proposing Carthew, and Lattrey of the Fourth had pleasure in seconding him—while Jimmy Silver and Putty had the same pleasure for their candidate. When the names were put to the meeting for a show of hands, there were six hands for Carthew and more than a hundred for Tubby Muffin.

Mr. Bootles blinked at Mr. Mooney, and Mr. Mooney smiled at Mr. Bootles. Mark Carthew bit his lip till the blood came.

This was the outcome of his trickery; instead of romping home, as it were, as captain of Rookwood, he was beaten at the poll with every circumstance of ridicule—his successful rival being the fat and fatuous Tubby Muffin of the Fourth,

celebrated as a raider of study-cupboards, and for possessing the most gargantuan appetite at Rookwood—and for nothing else!

It was a bitter pill for Carthew to swallow.

His face, as he watched the show of hands, was worth, as Arthur Edward Lovell remarked, a guinea a box.

Mr. Bootles blinked at him.

"Ahem! Muffin's supporters—ahem!—seem to be in the—ahem!—majority," murmured Mr. Bootles. "You may—ahem!—claim a count if you so desire, Carthew."

Carthew did not claim a count. It was not much use counting six hands against a hundred. Without even replying to Mr. Bootles, the disappointed and furious schemer turned and strode from the Hall.

Amid laughter and cheers, Mr. Bootles proceeded to pronounce Reginald Muffin, of the Fourth Form, duly elected captain of the school. And the proceedings terminated, so far as the masters were concerned.

But the juniors were not finished yet.

"Speech! Speech!" howled Mornington.

"Ha, ha! Go it, Tubby!"
Tubby Muffin struck a Napoleonic attitude. He was still taking the proceedings with owl-like seriousness.

"Gentlemen—" wheezed the fat Classical.

"Hear, hear!"
"Gentlemen, you have done me the honour to elect me captain of the school," said Tubby, quite eloquently. "You can rely upon me to fill this lofty position with ability—"

"Hear, hear!"
"And in a really distinguished way. I'm not saying anything against Bulkeley, whom we all esteem—"

"Bravo!"
"But I think it will be admitted that Rookwood has got the right man in the right place at last—"

"Oh crumbs!"
"Real merit has received recognition."
"Oh!"

"And now that Rookwood has got the captain it really wanted all the time, the school will fairly go ahead! Rely on me for that! Gentlemen, you have placed me in a very important position. All I can say is, I deserve it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Tubby's modest speech was the climax. The egregious Tubby was borne shoulder-high from Hall, and Rookwood School rang with cheers for its new captain.

But how long the new captain was to hold office was another matter!

THE END.

(You simply must not miss next week's amazing tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, entitled: "Tubby Takes Command!")

RESULT OF SUNDERLAND PICTURE-PUZZLE COMPETITION.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to the following competitor, whose solution contained one error:

W. BLACKHALL,
76, Pleasant Street,
West Bromwich.

The Second Prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following four competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

Chas. Jeffrey, 14, Park Street, Southend-on-Sea; J. W. Tarbotton, 37, Lyndhurst Street, Leeds Road, Bradford; Hector A. Hobbs, 23, Craddock Street, Riverside, Cardiff; George Downes, 45, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge.

Seventeen competitors, with three errors each, divide the Ten Prizes of 5s. each:

H. G. Jeffrey, 14, Park Street, Southend-on-Sea; Wille Budd, Gellygron Road, Pontardawe, Swansea; H. L. King, 42, Beecham Road, Buckland, Portsmouth; Joe Allison, 2, Forth Street, Chopwell, co. Durham; Alfred Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge; M. F. Brebner, 83, Mid Street, Fraserburgh, N.B.; H. H. Mattich, 177, Church Hill, Writhlington, near Bath; F. Bailey, 91, Taylor Street, Bradford, Manchester; Nora O'Halloran, Chapel Street, Ennis, co. Clare, Ireland; John James, Bull Hotel, Rochester, Kent; Kate Bland, 2, Walker Street, Heywood, Lancs; Mrs. Gunn, 15, Waverley Park, Edinburgh; J. B. Hughes, 6, Perth Street, Belfast; D. Kennedy, 4, Flishers Vennel, Perth; E. Kennedy, 4, Flishers Vennel, Perth; L. J. Swift, 167, Montgomery Street, Sparkbrook, Birmingham; Thomas Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge.

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Dick Redfern is accused of ridiculing his master in public. But he is innocent of the charge. Who was the guilty junior?

INNOCENT OR GUILTY?



HIS WORD OF HONOUR!

A Stunning Story of The Famous Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER, An Amazing Jape!

"THREE groans for Ratty!" said Figgins of the Fourth.

And a hundred fellows groaned in chorus. The mournful sound echoed through the lecture-hall at St. Jim's.

Mr. Horace Ratcliff, the tyrant who ruled the New House with a rod of iron, was a very unpopular personage that evening. He had never been liked; and on this particular evening he was cordially detested.

"Fancy making it compulsory for us to come and listen to his mouldy lantern-lecture!" growled Tom Merry.

"And fancy forcing School House fellows to attend!" said Manners. "Ratty's got no control over us!"

"He asked Railton's permission before he ordered us to turn up," said Jack Blake.

"Then I don't think much of Railton for giving it!" said Digby. "Who wants to listen to Ratty's rotten lecture?"

"What's it about, anyway?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"It's called 'A Cycling Tour in Cornwall,'" said Monty Lowther. "Nobody objects to Ratty going on a biking tour; but it's jolly thoughtless of him to come back again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The lecture-hall was packed with juniors. They were waiting Mr. Ratcliff's pleasure. The platform and screen were ready at one end of the big hall, and the magic-lantern stood on a tripod at the other end. But the lecturer had not yet turned up.

Nobody wanted to hear about Mr. Ratcliff's cycling tour in the West Country. It was a dry topic, and Mr. Ratcliff was a dry lecturer.

The fellows stamped their feet impatiently. They wanted the Housemaster to come in, and get the ordeal over as quickly as possible.

There was a fresh outburst of groaning, in which everybody joined except Chowle of the New House. Chowle was chuckling, as if the affair was a priceless joke.

Dick Redfern, who sat next to Chowle, spun round upon him irritably.

"What's the joke?" he demanded.

"He, he, he!" cackled Chowle.

"Do you think it funny?" asked Redfern.

"Because we don't!"

"You will presently!" said Chowle. "This lantern-lecture's going to be the funniest ever!"

Redfern was on the point of asking Chowle to explain, when the door of the lecture-hall opened, and Mr. Ratcliff swept in with rustling gown.

The groaning had not yet died away, and the Housemaster frowned as he heard it.

"Silence!" he rapped out.

Monty Lowther gave a final groan, which he converted into a cough as Mr. Ratcliff's eye lighted upon him.

"Take a hundred lines, Lowther, for impertinence and disobedience! I particularly enjoined silence!" said Mr. Ratcliff, in his rasping voice.

THE POPULAR.—No. 220.

Monty Lowther shut up like the proverbial oyster.

Mr. Ratcliff stalked down the gangway of the hall, and beckoned to Dick Redfern. Dick left his place, and went up to the Housemaster.

"Do you know how to operate a magic-lantern, Redfern?" asked Mr. Ratcliff.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. I require you to do so this evening. There are a hundred pictures to be shown in the course of my lecture. When I give two sharp raps with my pointer it will be the signal for you to show the next picture. Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir."

"The lantern-slides are in my study, in a box," continued Mr. Ratcliff. "Pray go and fetch them. And—One moment, Redfern! I want you to use the slides in the exact order in which you find them. This is most important. Each picture must appear at the right time, to correspond with my notes. When I say to my audience, 'This is a Cornish tin-mine,' I shall expect the right picture to appear—not a picture of some other scene. Do you clearly understand that, Redfern? You must give me your word of honour that you will use the slides in the order in which you find them!"

For a moment Redfern looked rebellious. He felt insulted by Mr. Ratcliff's manner. But he controlled himself with an effort, and said quietly:

"I give you my word of honour, sir, that I shall use each slide in strict rotation," he said.

Mr. Ratcliff nodded.

"Very well, Redfern," he said. "Kindly fetch me the slides."

Dick Redfern left the lecture-hall. He was back again in five minutes with the box of slides. Then he took up his position behind the tripod on which the lantern rested, and waited for Mr. Ratcliff to start the lecture.

Standing on the raised platform, the Housemaster cleared his throat, and began:

"I shall not keep you more than three hours, my boys." (Subdued groans!) "I propose to give you a brief description of my tour of that most interesting county, Cornwall. Now, the first picture I will show you is one of myself, entering a Cornish village."

Tap, tap! went the pointer. And Dick Redfern flashed on the first picture.

A perfect howl of merriment went up from the audience. For the picture was that of a donkey, grazing in a meadow!

"Oh, my hat!"

"That's Ratty to the life!" gurgled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For a moment the lecturer was nonplussed. He could not understand the reason for the outburst of hilarity. Then he spun round towards the screen, and beheld, not himself, but an animal to which he had often been compared!

Mr. Ratcliff had intended the picture of a donkey to be shown at a later stage of the lecture, as a specimen of the donkeys to be seen in Cornwall.

The Housemaster nearly choked.

It was obvious that the lantern-slides had been mixed-up. And who could have mixed them up but Redfern, who had fetched them from Mr. Ratcliff's study?

Mr. Ratcliff was fairly dancing with rage.

"Redfern!" he roared. "Remove that slide at once! How dare you? How dare you make a laughing-stock of me?"

Dick Redfern looked utterly bewildered. He had not intended the donkey to appear on the screen. He had used the first slide that came to hand, in accordance with Mr. Ratcliff's instructions.

"I—I—" he stuttered.

"Remove that slide!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "I will deal with you afterwards. Meanwhile, I will trouble you to use the slides in their correct order. If you transgress again, things will go hard with you!"

Dick Redfern removed the offending slide, and Mr. Ratcliff went on with his lecture.

It was a ghastly failure. The slides were hopelessly mixed and muddled. When Mr. Ratcliff said, "This is a picture of a Cornish tin-mine," a fishing-fleet appeared on the screen. When Mr. Ratcliff said, "Here we have a Cornish wrestling match," a picture of the Floral Dance was shown.

The audience was almost in hysterics. It soon became impossible for Mr. Ratcliff to proceed with his lecture. His voice was drowned by peal upon peal of laughter.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" sobbed Jack Blake. "This is the jape of the term!"

"What a nerve Reddy's got!" gasped Tom Merry.

"He'll get it in the neck, good and proper!" said Monty Lowther.

"I considah it was wewy w'ong of Dick Redfern to bwreak his word of honah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He pwomised Watty that he would show the slides in their pwopah ordah."

"Yes, it's a bit thick," agreed Tom Merry.

"Still, it's funny!" said Noble.

"Ratty doesn't seem to think so," said Manners. "Just look at him!"

Mr. Ratcliff's thin face was pale with anger. His eyes were glinting dangerously. Although not an athletic gentleman, he jumped down from behind the platform, and fairly ran up the gangway, with his gown flapping behind him. His objective was Dick Redfern.

The New House junior stood his ground as the Housemaster came careering towards him.

"You young rascal!" panted Mr. Ratcliff breathlessly. "You have utterly spoilt my lecture—you have made me an object of ridicule! More than that, you have deliberately broken your word of honour!"

"That's not true!" flashed Redfern indignantly.

"What! You dare to deny your base offence?" stormed Mr. Ratcliff. "You have mixed up the slides, in order to play a practical joke upon me!"

"Nothing of the sort, sir!"

Mr. Ratcliff was beside himself with rage. A mad bull confronted with a red flag could

What Will Happen to Dick Redfern Now? See Next Week!

not have been more aggressive. Dick Redfern's denial goaded him beyond endurance.

The furious Housemaster lashed out with his pointer, and struck the junior across the cheek.

In a sane moment he would not have dreamed of going so far. But Mr. Ratcliff had endured a great deal that evening, and he had lost his temper completely.

Dick Redfern staggered back from the cruel blow. His face went white, the livid mark showing up in sharp relief.

"Shame!" All the fellows were on their feet, shouting and gesticulating. The lecture-hall was in an uproar.

Mr. Ratcliff had raised his pointer with the intention of dealing another blow. But he thought better of it. He began to realise that he had exceeded his duty as a disciplinarian. He was entitled to cane boys in a legitimate manner, but not to slash them savagely across the cheek.

Feeling ran high among the audience. And even the sacred person of the Housemaster would not have been safe had he ventured to strike another such blow.

There was a dramatic pause. Fully half a minute elapsed before Mr. Ratcliff broke the tense silence which had followed the uproar.

"Redfern," he said, "you will accompany me at once to the headmaster."

"Very well, sir!" muttered Dick Redfern.

Mr. Ratcliff flounced out of the lecture-hall. And Reddy, his cheek smarting from the blow he had received, set off in his wake.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Stormy Scene!

"MR. RATCLIFF! That is hardly the way to enter my study!"

The Head's voice was very stern.

In his furious temper, Mr. Ratcliff had burst into Dr. Holmes' study without ceremony. He had not troubled to observe the formality of knocking at the door.

Before the Housemaster could reply to the Head's remark, Dick Redfern stepped into the study.

The livid mark on Dick's cheek at once attracted the Head's attention.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "How came that mark on your cheek, Redfern?"

"P'raps Mr. Ratcliff might like to explain, sir," said Redfern.

The Head glanced interrogatively at the Housemaster. Mr. Ratcliff flushed, and looked decidedly uncomfortable. In his hot haste, he had forgotten that rash blow in the lecture-hall.

"I—I must admit that is my handiwork, sir!" stammered Mr. Ratcliff.

"What?" The Head's tone was thunderous. "You struck this boy across the cheek, Mr. Ratcliff?"

"I was goaded beyond endurance, sir," said the Housemaster. "This young rascal has exposed me to public ridicule—he has made a laughing-stock of me, sir! When I tell you the nature of his outrageous conduct, you will be no less angry than I am."

The Head frowned.

"Whatever Redfern may have done, Mr. Ratcliff, you are not justified in inflicting such a blow. You appear to have lost your temper, which is regrettable. I cannot countenance cruelty, and this must not occur again!"

Mr. Ratcliff winced. To be taken to task like this, in the presence of a junior of his own House, was decidedly humiliating.

"And now," said the Head, "pray inform me in what way Redfern has transgressed."

Mr. Ratcliff plunged into his story. His anger made him almost incoherent.

"As you are aware, sir, I proposed to give a lantern lecture this evening, dealing with my tour of Cornwall. Redfern agreed to act as operator, and I exacted from him his solemn word of honour that he would not tamper with the slides. I naturally wished the pictures to appear in their proper sequence. And this wretched boy—this unmitigated young rascal—had the effrontery to mix up the slides, in spite of the fact that he had given me his word of honour not to do so."

"I didn't mix them up—" began Redfern.

"Silence, Redfern!" said the Head sternly.

"Go on, Mr. Ratcliff!"

"My lecture was utterly ruined, sir!" shouted the incensed Housemaster. "It became a sheer farce. I was the butt of the audience, and the boys laughed so

uproariously that I could not check them. They are doubtless laughing still!"

The Head looked very grave.

"This is a very serious matter, Redfern," he said. "It was bad enough to play a practical joke of this sort at the expense of your Housemaster. But that is not the most serious part of your conduct. You have broken your word of honour, and that is a most despicable offence!"

Dick Redfern stepped forward.

"It's all wrong, sir! I'd no intention of breaking my word!" he exclaimed. "I didn't mix up the slides—"

"Denial is useless, Redfern!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff. "You, and you alone, had access to the lantern-slides. I sent you to fetch them from my study. If you did not mix them up, then it would be interesting to know who did!"

Redfern gave a slight start. He recalled the amusement of Cyril Chowle in the lecture-hall.

Chowle had prophesied that the lecture would be a farce. He had been quite confident about it, and had chuckled knowingly to himself.

Dick Redfern quickly put two and two together. It must have been Chowle who had changed the slides. He had doubtless paid a stealthy visit to Mr. Ratcliff's study before the lecture started.

But Redfern could not tell the Head this. For one thing, it would be sneaking; and for another, he could not produce any definite proof against Chowle. He had not actually seen the cad of the New House tampering with the slides. He could only surmise that Chowle was the guilty party.

It angered Redfern to think that both Mr. Ratcliff and the Head disbelieved him.

"I tell you I didn't touch the slides!" he burst out.

"Be silent!" thundered the Head. "Do not add impertinence to your offences, Redfern! I am satisfied that you perpetrated this hoax on Mr. Ratcliff. You will apologise to him here and now."

Redfern set his lips obstinately. He had not the slightest intention of apologising for something he had never done.

"I am waiting, Redfern!" said Dr. Holmes sternly.

The junior stood silent.

"Do you hear me, boy? Apologise to Mr. Ratcliff at once!"

It needed lots of nerve to defy the Head. But Redfern was determined to stand his ground. He considered that if there was an apology due, it was due from Mr. Ratcliff to him!

The thunderclouds gathered on the Head's brow.

"This is sheer defiance!" he exclaimed. "It is utterly unheard-of, for a junior boy to ignore the commands of his headmaster. I will give you one more chance to make an apology to Mr. Ratcliff, and if you persist in this obstinacy, the consequences will be very serious!"

Still Redfern was silent. The Head gave him a full minute in which to make the apology, but no word left Reddy's lips.

"Very well," said the Head at length. "I have no option but to punish you with the utmost severity, Redfern. Kindly take this boy to the punishment-room Mr. Ratcliff. I will deal with him in the morning."

The Head did not say how he proposed to deal with Redfern. But the junior could guess that it meant a public flogging at the very least—perhaps expulsion.

"Come, Redfern!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

Master and junior quitted the Head's study.

Tom Merry & Co., having dismissed themselves from the lecture-hall, were waiting in the corridor. Mr. Ratcliff waved them away.

"What are you boys doing here?" he rapped out. "Begone!"

The juniors reluctantly moved away. They darted sympathetic glances at Dick Redfern. It was easy to see that he was in serious trouble.

Mr. Ratcliff piloted the junior to the punishment-room. He spoke no word to him on the way. He unlocked the door of the gloomy apartment, pushed Redfern inside, and then slammed the door to and locked it. This done, the Housemaster stalked away to his own quarters.

Dick Redfern flung himself down on the bed, which was bare save for a couple of blankets.

"This is my unlucky day, and no mistake!" he muttered. "I've done nothing wrong, and



REDFERN'S DARING ESCAPE! Redfern crossed to the window of the box-room and raised the lower sash. A gust of wind from the quad blew into his face. It was a wild night and the wind wailed and whistled around the turrets. The junior clambered through the window. (See Chapter 3.)

yet I'm in danger of the sack. Confound that worm Chowle! Why doesn't he own up?"

But Cyril Chowle had no intention of doing that. He acted on the principle that self-preservation was the first law of nature. So long as he saved his own precious skin, he didn't mind who suffered.

Dick Redfern sat alone with his thoughts. After a short interval, there was a tap on the door of the punishment-room.

"Come in!" said Dick.

"Sorry, old man; I wish I could!" came the voice of Edgar Lawrence, Reddy's chum. "I say, Reddy, what's happened?"

"I'm penned in here for the night, and the Head's coming down like a thousand of bricks in the morning."

"Well, you fairly asked for it, you know," said Lawrence. "Fancy mixing up those slides—"

"I didn't!" shouted Redfern.

"Eh?"

"It wasn't me at all. I used them in the order I found them."

"Then you didn't break your word to Ratty?"

"Of course not! You ought to know me better than that. I'm afraid lots of fellows think I broke my word of honour. Will you tell 'em that was not the case?"

"Certainly," said Lawrence.

"Neither the Head nor Ratty will believe me," said Redfern. "The Head ordered me to apologise, but I wouldn't. There was nothing to apologise for."

Lawrence gave a low whistle.

"You defied the Head?" he ejaculated.

"I couldn't do anything else."

"But—but you'll be sacked!" said Lawrence, in dismay.

"That remains to be seen."

The two chums remained chatting for some time, on opposite sides of the stout door. Then bed-time came, and Lawrence was obliged to depart.

"Keep your pecker up, Reddy!" was his parting remark. "I expect you feel jolly sore about this bizney; but don't go doing anything rash."

Dick Redfern, who had been speaking with his lips to the keyhole, resumed his position on the bed. And the footsteps of his best chum died away along the corridor.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Reddy's Resolve!

"A very well for Lawrence to tell me not to do anything rash," mused Dick Redfern, "but I don't feel like being penned up in this hole all night, waiting for the giddy Sword of Damocles to fall. The Head's pretty certain to sack me—if I wait."

But why wait?

A vague idea of making his escape had already occurred to the imprisoned junior. Gradually the idea became less vague. It took definite shape.

If he was to be expelled from St. Jim's, why not take time by the forelock and go to-night?

The more Reddy thought about it the more the idea appealed to him. He was not at all frightened as to the future. Some fellows who ran away from school would find themselves on their beam-end; but not Redfern. He would not have to hunt long for a job. Already he had gained experience in a newspaper office, and was fitted for the job of a journalist. He was clever in other directions as well. There was no fear of Dick Redfern tramping the country with the unemployed.

Now came the problem of how to make his escape.

The door of the punishment-room was locked and bolted on the outside. There was no exit that way. And the window was situated a long, long way from the ground.

"I could cut these blankets into strips and make a sort of rope," muttered Redfern; "but it would be awfully risky. I should stand a good chance of breaking my neck."

He began to pace up and down his prison. The floor-boards creaked ominously beneath his feet. A couple of the boards were very loose.

Redfern stopped short, staring down at the bare floor-boards. The punishment-room did not boast the luxury of linoleum.

"If only I could prise up a couple of those beggars!" he ruminated. "I believe it's been done before. The boards are awfully loose, anyway."

There was a poker lying in the firegrate.
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Redfern picked it up and set to work by candle-light. Using the poker as a lever, he hacked away at one of the boards.

He was surprised to find how easily the board yielded. It was a wide board, and Redfern raised it without much noise or trouble. He then lifted a second floor-board in the same manner, and peered through the aperture into the room below.

This was a lumber-room, which was rarely used. It contained a miscellaneous collection of broken chairs, faded old carpets, and so forth. On the floor was a heap of plaster, which had evidently fallen when the floor-boards of the punishment-room had first been lifted.

It was not a very big drop from the upper room into the lower. And there was a sufficiently wide aperture for Reddy to squeeze through.

"It won't improve my togs," he murmured, "but that can't be helped."

So saying, the junior squeezed himself through the cavity he had made. He went feet foremost, and dropped into the room below. He landed with a crash, but there were no occupied rooms near at hand, and the sound was unheard.

Reddy picked himself up, brushing dirt and whitewash from his Etons.

"So far, so good," he muttered. "What a sell if the door of this lumber-room happens to be locked."

But it was not locked. The path to freedom was now clear. But Redfern decided to wait until midnight before making the next move. He seated himself on a wicker chair which was rather shaky on its legs, and waited until the midnight chimes rang out. Then, deeming that everyone at St. Jim's would be asleep, he quitted the lumber-room and made his way to his study in the New House.

Reddy was not at all unhappy at the prospect of running away from the school. His only regret was that he would be leaving his chums. But he would be able to write to them, and doubtless they would all meet again in that vague and indefinite period known as "one of these days."

"I won't go and say good-bye to Lawrence and Owen," thought Reddy. "They'd only tell me it was madness to bunk, and urge me to stop. I'll just pack my traps and clear."

Packing was not a long job. Reddy only took those things that were requisite and necessary. Cumbersome articles, such as cricket-bats, were left behind.

Reddy was able to cram his most treasured possession into a large haversack. This he slung over his shoulder. Then, taking a final survey of the study, he switched off the electric-torch he had been using, and slipped it into his pocket.

"Now we're off!" he exclaimed, striving to keep his spirits up. "I must tread warily, though, in case there's anyone on the prowl."

Redfern groped his way cautiously along the dark corridors, until he came to the

box-room. Here he stumbled over a port-manteau, and went sprawling.

"Ow!" muttered Reddy, fumbling for his torch. "What a beastly dark place this is!"

With the aid of the torch he managed to sort himself out. Then he crossed to the window and raised the lower sash.

A gust of wind from the quad blew into the junior's face.

It was a wild night. The wind wailed and whistled around the turrets and terraces of St. Jim's.

Dick Redfern clambered through the window and dropped down on to the flagstones without.

He did not suppose that anyone would be abroad on such a gusty night, and at such a late hour.

There was someone, however.

Mr. Ratcliff, a martyr to indigestion, had found sleep impossible. Possibly the thought of his spoilt lecture also helped to drive sleep away. At all events, the Housemaster had been unable to get a wink of sleep, so he had decided to take a turn in the quad, in the hope that the fresh air would make him drowsy.

Mr. Ratcliff was hurrying along, with quick, jerky steps, when suddenly a human form cannoned into him with great violence in the darkness.

"Wow!"

"Yow!"

Mr. Ratcliff and Dick Redfern uttered simultaneous cries of anguish. And Reddy, as soon as he had recovered from the shock, promptly took to his heels. He dashed across the wind-swept quad, in the direction of the school wall.

The Housemaster had not recognised Redfern, but he knew it was a junior who had bumped into him. He concluded it was some misguided youngster about to break bounds.

Mr. Ratcliff, making a megaphone of his hands, shouted after the renegade:

"Come back! Do you hear me? Come back at once!"

Dick Redfern heard, but he did not heed. In spite of the cumbersome haversack he carried, he was over the school wall with the agility of a monkey.

Mr. Ratcliff was not sufficiently athletic to dash off in pursuit. He kept up his parrot-ery of "Come back!" until he was nearly hoarse. And at last, when the runaway's footsteps died away on the road, Mr. Ratcliff gave it up.

"The young rascal!" he snarled. "I wonder who he is? I will speedily ascertain. A tour of the dormitories in both Houses will supply the answer to my question."

The Housemaster promptly started on the tour. Strictly speaking, he had no right to invade the School House. But it would have given him great joy to find a School House junior missing. He would be able to say next day that Mr. Ralton was very slack, and had no control over his charges.

But Mr. Ratcliff was doomed to disappointment.

There were no absentees from the School House dormitories. And only one bed was empty in the New House.

"This is Redfern's bed, and he, of course, is in the punishment-room," said Mr. Ratcliff to himself. "Surely the boy cannot have escaped? And yet—well, he must have done so, because it was certainly a junior who collided with me in the quadrangle. I will go and investigate."

Mr. Ratcliff's feelings, when he entered the punishment-room and found two of the floor-boards lifted up, may be better imagined than described.

"Bless my soul! The young rascal has escaped by prising up the floor-boards!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "I should not have thought it possible. Still, he cannot have got very far, that is one consolation. I will at once send a party of prefects in pursuit!"

So saying, the Housemaster hurried away.

Meanwhile, Dick Redfern was out on the road, swinging along at a good pace, and whistling a merry tune in order to keep up his spirits. He had taken the plunge, for better or worse, and he must now see it through. Far better, he reflected, to take this course than to stay at the school and face the humiliation of expulsion.

Squaring his shoulders, and quickening his step, Dick Redfern strode on through the night.

THE END.

(Read all about the adventures of Dick Redfern in London, next week.)



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THE ORDER OF THE BOOT!

If Miss Meadows had chosen to submit to the dictation of Mr. Gunten, and taken back his rascally son into the school, the trouble would not have started. But her duty was clear!

BACKING UP MISS MEADOWS!



A Rank Injustice!

A Topping Tale of Frank Richards & Co., dealing with the amazing state of affairs at Cedar Creek.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Landed at Last!

RICHARDS!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

Frank Richards stopped, and raised his hat respectfully as Miss Meadows called to him from the porch of the Cedar Creek schoolhouse.

The Canadian schoolmistress' usually kind face was very severe and stern, and Frank wondered what was the matter.

So far as he was aware, he had not been guilty of any special delinquencies during the few days that had elapsed since Cedar Creek School had reassembled after the holidays.

But Miss Meadows' next words showed him that he was not the object of her anger.

"Do you know where Gunten is?"

"Gunten!" repeated Frank.

"Yes—Kern Gunten!" Miss Meadows' voice grew sharper in tone. "I see that you know, Richards! Answer me!"

Frank Richards did not answer in spite of that direct command.

His face grew troubled.

He knew well enough where was Kern Gunten, the Swiss schoolboy—the rogue of the lumber school.

He knew how the young rascal was occupied at that very moment in the old corral near the school.

He had passed that way only ten minutes before with Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc, and had seen the Swiss, with two or three companions, playing poker in the old corral.

It was evident that Miss Meadows had some suspicion of the same kind.

But it was not Frank's business to give away his schoolfellow, rascal as Gunten was, and much as he despised him.

His colour deepened as he faced the schoolmistress, silent and troubled.

"Do you hear me, Richards?" exclaimed Miss Meadows sharply.

"Ye-es!" stammered Frank.

"Tell me where Gunten is!"

No reply.

"I am sorry to see that you intend to be disrespectful, Richards," said Miss Meadows.

"Not at all, ma'am!" stammered Frank.

"But—but—but—"

"That is enough, Richards!"

Miss Meadows turned and walked away from the schoolhouse towards the gate of the school enclosure.

Frank Richards made a step after her, but stopped. There was nothing he could say.

If he told Miss Meadows where to find Gunten at that moment it was as much as betraying the Swiss to severe punishment; and that he could not do.

He was standing with a worried face when Bob and Beauclerc joined him.

Bob Lawless had an axe under his arm.

"Hallo, here you are!" said Bob, tapping Frank on the shoulder. "Ain't you coming to help split the logs for Mr. Slimmey?"

"Yes, I was coming; but—"

"What's up?"

Frank Richards explained, and his Canadian cousin gave a low whistle.

"I couldn't tell about Gunten, could I?" said Frank.

"Correct!"

"I don't think Miss Meadows needed telling much," remarked Beauclerc. "She's heading for the old corral now."

The schoolmistress looked neither to the right nor to the left as she headed through the trees for the old clearing.

Many of the Cedar Creek fellows, including Frank Richards & Co., followed at a respectful distance.

Miss Meadows passed into the old clearing, and entered the corral through one of the gaps in the old, tumbling stakes.

As she did so a voice was audible—the voice of Kern Gunten:

"Draw any, Keller?"

"Two!" was Keller's reply.

"Me draw three cardee!" came the soft, hisping tones of Yen Chin, the Chinese.

"One for me, Gunten." This was Dick Dawson's voice.

Kern Gunten dealt the cards.

The four schoolboys were seated round a log, which was serving as a card-table. A hat on the log was used as a pool for the stakes.

The quartette were so engrossed in their game that they did not see the schoolmistress approaching or hear her footsteps.

On the edge of the clearing a crowd of Cedar Creek fellows looked on, without coming any nearer.

The four players were putting in their stakes now.

Dick Dawson was looking moody and disturbed, and his expression was enough to tell that he was losing more than he could afford to lose.

"Boys!"

Miss Meadows' quiet voice broke in.

"Oh!" gasped Dawson.

Gunten sprang to his feet in dismay.

Keller half-rose, his face growing scared.

Dawson sat where he was, blinking up at the schoolmistress as if unable to move.

Yen Chin darted away like a rabbit, with a howl, and vanished round the hut at the corner of the corral.

"M-m-miss Meadows!" stammered Gunten.

The schoolmistress' eyes gleamed upon him.

"Gunten! This is not the first time I have caught you gambling, and inducing your schoolfellows to gamble!"

"I—I—" stammered the Swiss.

"Go to the house at once!"

Gunten, with a pale face, walked away, the "hand" of cards still held in his fingers.

At a gesture from Miss Meadows, Dawson and Keller followed him.

Yen Chin had vanished.

With hangdog looks, the three culprits walked to the lumber school, Miss Meadows following them.

The Cedar Creek crowd brought up the rear.

"That puts the lid on for Gunten!" said Bob Lawless, in a low voice. "I guess he knows it, too!"

Frank Richards nodded.

"He fairly asked for it," he said. "But—but one can't help feeling a bit sorry for the poor brute!"

"Oh, rot!" answered Bob. "Cedar Creek will be a bit better off without him. He got Dawson into his rotten game—and we all know Dawson is a decent chap when he's not led by the nose by a rogue like Gunten. The sooner that foreign rotter goes the better for the school and everybody in it!"

And Bob Lawless' opinion was a very general one.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
The Order of the Boot!

THERE was a good deal of suppressed excitement at Cedar Creek when the school reassembled for afternoon lessons.

Gunten & Co. came in with the rest.

That "something" was going to happen to the detected gamblers was certain; but so far it had not happened.

When Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd, the assistant-masters, came into the big school-room they were seen to be looking very grave.

All faces, in fact, were grave.

Gunten looked moody, apprehensive, and sullen; Keller was plainly scared and fearful.

Dick Dawson was red and ashamed. As for Yen Chin, he presented his usual smiling aspect, as if he had not a care in the world.

The little Chinese did not seem to realise the seriousness of the matter.

There was a sudden hush as Miss Meadows entered the school-room.

She stopped before her class, to which all four of the delinquents belonged.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the lumber school-room as Miss Meadows regarded her class with a stern brow.

She spoke quietly at last.

"Gunten! Keller! Dawson! Yen Chin! Stand out before the class!"

The four came out—three of them with burning faces, and Yen Chin with a calm and placid smile.

"I think the whole school knows your fault," said Miss Meadows, in a low, clear voice that was heard by all present.

"Gunten! This is not the first time, nor the second, that you have been found guilty of rascally conduct. On a previous occasion I sent you away from the school. I made a

Miss Meadows is Sacked from Cedar Creek—but the Chums Stand By Her!

mistake in pardoning you afterwards, and allowing you to return."

Silence.
"That you are chiefly to blame in this unhappy matter I am well aware," continued Miss Meadows. "I have been observing you for some time, Gunten. You have not profited by the chance I gave you; rather you have become worse and more unscrupulous. You have led better boys than yourself into your own degraded pursuits."

"This innocent Chinese boy and Dawson," resumed Miss Meadows. "They are to blame; but I regard them rather as your victims than your confederates. Keller, also, I believe to have acted under your influence."

Gunten did not speak.
Miss Meadows was too well aware of the facts for falsehoods to be of much use to him.

As the schoolmistress said, it was not the first or the second time that his reckless rascality had come to light.

"These three boys," said Miss Meadows, "will be punished. I shall write to their fathers, explaining the matter."

Yen Chin and Keller looked relieved, but Dawson's look of utter misery seemed to intensify.

But not one of them spoke.
"You, Gunten, must leave the school!" said Miss Meadows. "I shall not inflict punishment; but I will not allow you to remain here to exercise a corrupting influence upon other boys better than yourself. I am sorry, but my duty is clear. You will leave Cedar Creek this afternoon, Gunten, and I shall write to your father, informing him that you cannot be allowed to return under any circumstances whatever."

Gunten bit his lip hard.
"It's not fair," he muttered. "I—I won't—"

"You are worse than the others, Gunten, and you are the cause of their wrongdoing. You are a thoroughly bad boy, and I should fail in my duty if I allowed you to remain here as a corrupting influence. I hope that this will be a warning to you, and that you will do better elsewhere."

"I won't go!" muttered Gunten desperately. "You can't turn me out, Miss Meadows. You haven't the power to do it!"

"What!"
"My father won't stand it, either. He's got influence—"

"Leave this school-room at once, Gunten!" rapped out Miss Meadows.

Gunten stood where he was, with a savage look on his heavy face.

Mr. Shepherd came across to him, and dropped a hand on his shoulder.

"Come!" he said briefly.

The Swiss gave him a bitter look, and seemed, for a moment, to be thinking of resistance.

But his courage failed, or he realised that it was useless.

With Mr. Shepherd's hand on his shoulder he was marched out of the school-room, and disappeared from the view of Cedar Creek School.

Miss Meadows signed to the other three enprits to go back to their places, and the lesson commenced.

Mr. Shepherd returned quietly to the school-room, and as he came in the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard in the distance.

It was the sound of Kern Gunten departing. The Swiss was gone.

Well deserved as his expulsion from Cedar Creek was, some of the fellows felt a little compassion for the wretched young rascal.

But few considered that Miss Meadows could have acted in any other way.

It was not only that Gunten was a rascal himself, but that he led others into his own dark ways, and his presence was harmful to the school.

The excitement did not die down easily, and lessons that afternoon were rather desultory.

Most of the Cedar Creek fellows were in an expectant mood, fully looking for a speedy visit to the school from Mr. Gunten, the storekeeper of Thompson.

On the previous occasion when the rogue of Cedar Creek had been sent away, Mr. Gompers Gunten had visited the school in a lowering rage—though that had had no effect whatever on the schoolmistress.

It was for quite other reasons that she

had allowed Kern Gunten to return that time.

Mr. Gunten, the richest storekeeper in the Thompson Valley, was a personage of some importance, especially in his own eyes, and he was certain to be wrathful and indignant when his son came home in disgrace.

Somewhat to the disappointment of Cedar Creek, the podgy storekeeper did not come striding into the school-room during afternoon lessons.

The school was dismissed at the usual hour.

But as Cedar Creek came streaming out into the playground, a podgy figure came in sight, riding up from the Thompson trail to the gates.

It was Mr. Gunten.
The storekeeper's fat face was dark and angry.

He rode up to the schoolhouse porch, and jumped off his horse, throwing the reins over a post.

With heavy steps he strode into the house. "Old Man Gunten's on the war-path!" grinned Bob Lawless. "I reckon he won't get much change out of Miss Meadows, though."

"He'll jolly well get chucked out on his neck if he checks our schoolmistress!" exclaimed Tom Lawrence.

Mr. Gunten was shown in by Black Sally, and disappeared into Miss Meadows' private study.

What was said there was not known, but ten minutes later Mr. Gunten's loud and angry tones were heard, as he came away from the schoolmistress' room.

"I repeat, madam, that I will not allow my son to be sent away from this school! Mark my words, I will not allow it!"

"I am sorry that I cannot alter my decision, Mr. Gunten."

Miss Meadows' voice was calm and quiet. "You will be compelled to alter it, then, madam."

"I think you had better go, sir!"
Mr. Gunten glared at the slim, graceful figure of the Canadian schoolmistress framed in the doorway.

"Madam! Miss Meadows, I warn you to have done with this! My son shall not leave Cedar Creek."

"He shall not return while I am headmistress, Mr. Gunten."

"You mean that?"

"I have said so!"

"Very well!" The storekeeper spoke through his set teeth. "It remains to be seen, madam, how long you will remain headmistress of Cedar Creek School."

"That is a matter that does not concern you, Mr. Gunten. Good-evening!"

"You will find that it does concern me, madam!" roared the Swiss storekeeper. "You will learn, madam, that my influence counts for more than you suppose. I warn you that if my son does not return, you do not remain headmistress of this school!"

"Nonsense, sir!"

"You prefer to put it to the test?" sneered Mr. Gunten.

"I have nothing more to say to you, sir! Kindly go your way, and let this disturbance cease."

"Be it so, then?" gasped Mr. Gunten. "I give you a last chance, madam. Write to me during the next twenty-four hours to tell me that my son may return, and I will let bygones be bygones. Omit to do so, and you, madam, you yourself, shall be turned out of Cedar Creek School, and a new headmaster appointed."

With that, the storekeeper strode to his horse, dragged the animal round, and threw himself into the saddle.

With a clatter of hoofs he dashed out of the gateway, and disappeared on the Thompson trail.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

In Doubt!

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. rode homeward that evening discussing the affair of Kern Gunten and its possible outcome.

Gompers Gunten's threat to the schoolmistress had surprised them, and excited their contempt at first, but on reflection they wondered whether the storekeeper had the power to do as he threatened.

"The jay was talking out of the back of his neck!" Bob Lawless declared. "How could he edge Miss Meadows out of Cedar Creek? It isn't possible."

"He spoke as if he meant it" said Vere Beauclerc thoughtfully.

"Oh, he was as mad as a dago chock-full of pulque!" said Bob. "But he was only shooting off his mouth, I guess."

"Is old Gunten anything beside a storekeeper in Thompson, Bob?" asked Frank Richards. "Any sort of local official johnny?"

"He's on the board of school trustees," answered Bob.

"Could he make trouble for a school-teacher there?"

Bob looked thoughtful.

"Well, he might!" he admitted.

"That's what he means, then."

"But it wouldn't be easy," said Bob. "There are three trustees for the district, and my popper is one of them. Grimm, the farmer, is the other."

"Grimm, the fruit-farmer?" asked Frank. "He treated us rather decently once, but he is a crusty old card, Bob."

"I guess so. He's a Galician by descent, and very chummy with Gunten—Old Man Gunten, I mean. They stick together like foreigners," said Bob. "Of course, Old Man Gunten is a bit of a waster, and he had to do a lot of shoving to get on the board. I guess he thought it made him look a bit more respectable to be a school trustee, and helped to cover up his real character. Some galsots say that a faro game is run in his back parlour at times."

"Nice man to be a school trustee!"

"Well, he keeps it dark; that's the talk in Thompson, that's all. Anyhow, he's a close-fisted and overreaching storekeeper, that's a cert. A man has to keep his eyes peeled in doing business with Old Man Gunten. Kern is a chip of the old block; perhaps that's why Old Man Gunten is backing him up. I guess Kern Gunten wouldn't be happy at home if he was a nice, dear boy like us, you know," said Bob, with a grin.

"Suppose he wants to go for Miss Meadows, what could he do, then?" asked Frank. "You know, Bob—you were born here."

Bob wrinkled his brow in thought.

"Well, I suppose he would call a special meeting of the trustees, who pay the school salaries, and so on," he said. "I suppose they could ask Miss Meadows for her resignation if they liked. But my father would have to be there, and he would be against it. He's got a great respect for Miss Meadows, and we'd jolly well jaw him if he let her be fired!"

"Then it depends on whether Old Man Gunten could get Mr. Grimm to back him?"

"I guess so!"

"I believe they do a lot of business together," said Beauclerc. "Gunten senior buys no end of his stuff at Grimm's farm. I don't know whether Grimm could afford to quarrel with him—or would care to, for the sake of a school teacher he doesn't even know."

Bob Lawless looked rather troubled.

"Still, Grimm is an honest man," he said. "He's known to be hard-fisted, but he's honest enough. I can't think that he would let Old Man Gunten rush him into playing a dirty trick."

"Isn't there anything above the Board of Trustees?" asked Frank Richards thoughtfully.

"Lots: right up to the Minister of Education," said Bob. "But—but I don't think a dismissed teacher could carry the matter further up."

"Oh!" said Frank.

"You see, we're not a city district, or even a town district," said Bob. "We're what they call a rural district, in their lingo, but in plain Canadian we're a backwoods district, a bit off the main track, you know. The trustees are not paid, and they have to be solid citizens of the district, and things are left to them. Old Man Gunten is a bit of a queer bird to squeeze in; my popper and Old Man Grimm are fair specimens of the regular sort. If Old Man Gunten can twist Mr. Grimm round his finger, I'm afraid—"

Bob whistled.

"I'll jolly well speak to the dad when we get in," he said. "If Old Man Gunten is up to his tricks, the popper ought to be warned."

"Good egg!" said Frank. "We stand by Miss Meadows."

(Continued on page 16.)



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Week Ending April 7th, 1923.

HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS!

By Bob Cherry.

SIR WILLIAM PORPUSS BUNTER, Bart., and his brother Samuel, have not yet decided whether to spend the holidays in Bunter Court or Paradise Alley.

MR. PETER TODD, K.C., the eminent barrister, will spend the holiday at his country seat at Little Toddington, Toddshire. He will be accompanied by MR. ALONZO THEOPHILUS TODD, the well-known missionary.

BATTLING BOLSOVER, the welter-weight boxing champion of the world, will retire to Scrappingham Hall, to prepare for his forthcoming fight with Sam the Slogger.

MASTER GEORGE TUBB is going to Bath. (I don't believe it. Tubb's been going to bath for years, but he hasn't had one yet!—Ed.)

THE NABOB OF BHANIPUR (familarly known as Inky) will fly to India and back. The joyfulness of his esteemed and ludicrous subjects, when they behold his dusky chivvy, will be terrific!

MONSIEUR NAPOLEON DUPONT informs us that he is going to run over to France. First time we've heard of anybody running across the English Channel! We shall have Fisher T. Fish sprinting across to America next!

LORD MAULEVERER is going to—let me see, what is the name of the place? Oh, I know! He is going to—sleep!

MR. GEORGE ALFRED GATTY, the well-known angler, is going winkle-catching on the mud-flats of Pegg.

MR. RICHARD RAKE will devote the holiday to his favourite pastime, gardening. Hoe, hoe!

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My Dear Readers,—Easter Monday falls on a Monday this year. Also, Easter Sunday falls on a Sunday, and Good Friday on a Friday. So it all works out jolly nice and convenient, duzzent it?

Peter Todd, who is at my elbow while I write, says that Easter Monday always falls on a Monday. But, of corse, he's talking through his hat. You never find Christmas Day falling on the same day each year. It's a moveable feest. So is Easter Monday. Next year, Good Friday will come on a Saterdag, and Easter Monday on a Tewsdlay. If it duzzent, then I am no profit, and I shall humbly beg Peter Todd's pardon.

Of all the sezons of the year, Easter is the best and brightest. Christmas, Witsun, Micklemass, and the other sezons simply cannot compare with it.

Greyfriars breaks up at Easter. By this I don't mean to imply that it falls to pieces. It breaks up for the hollerday. And the scenes of Annie Mation and Jock Ularity—whoever these people might be—farely beggar description.

Good Friday is famus for its Hot X Buns, and Easter Day for its Easter Eggs. Easter Monday is a sort of fool-dress rehearsal of August Bank Hollerday.

You will find a feest of good things in this issew. No panes have been spared (as the fellow said when he broke a window) to make it a bright, breezy, and entertaining number. It is brimful of the hollerday spirit, and altogether it is as fine a budget of fun and fickshun as you could wish for.

Trusting you will all spend an enjoyable Easter in your country seats or at your town houses, and hoping you won't be guilty of over-feeding,

Yours sincerely,
BILLY BUNTER.

P.S.—Sammy says that as this is a humorous number, we shood have a serious issew next week. I quite agree. So next Tuesday there will be a speshul "Detention" Number. That's quite a serious subject—though some felloes don't treat detention very seriously.

THE HISTORY OF A HOT CROSS BUN!

ASTONISHING though it may seem, I was baked a year ago. On Good Friday, 1922, I was made by Sergeant Kettle, at the Rookwood tuckshop.

When tea-time came the gallant sergeant devoured all my companions, and I was the last on the dish. But the sergeant was feeling too full to tackle me. He stood me on a shelf in the tuckshop, and when the Easter holidays were over he actually had the cheek to sell me to Jimmy Silver as a new bun!

Jimmy took me along to his study, and tried to bite a piece out of me. But he hurt his teeth horribly, and he hurled me to the floor, where I fell with a sickening thud.

"That bun must have been baked at the time of the Flood!" growled Jimmy Silver.

Raby picked me up, and threw me into a recess at the bottom of the cupboard. And there I lay for a whole long year.

Oh, the long succession of dreary days and nights! Sometimes a mouse would come out of its hole and start nibbling at me. But even the mice gave me up at last, as being too stale for consumption.

It wasn't until breaking-up day this year that I was discovered.

Jimmy Silver was rummaging in the bottom of the cupboard, looking for a piece of string, when he came across me.

"My only aunt!" gasped Jimmy Silver, dragging me into the light of day. "What's this?"

"Why," said Raby, "it's the hot cross bun I chucked into the cupboard a year ago!"

"What shall we do with it?" asked Jimmy.

"Put it in a parcel, and send it to Tubby Muffin, so that he gets it on the morning of All Fools' Day!" chuckled Newcome.

So I was made up into a parcel, which was addressed to Tubby Muffin at his home. And I reached him on the morning of April the First.

When Tubby opened the parcel, he fully expected to find something good inside—not an ancient "beaver" of a bun.

The expression on Tubby's face, when he caught sight of me, was worth a guinea a box! He booted me with savage vigour through the window, and I am now rotting in the grounds of Muffin Mansion!

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Supplement 1.]

Next Week's Special Issue Will Send You Into Roars of Laughter!



A Soul-Stirring Story of School Life.

By TUBBY MUFFIN.

THE quadrangle of St. Rudolph's was alive with a hussling, jossling throng of schoolboys.

The Easter Vack had come!

Bags and portmanteaus, trunks, and satchels, were everywhere in evidence.

The Easter Vack had arrived!

Carridges and cabs and cars came and went, taking with them their cargo of happy passengers.

The Easter Vack had turned up!

Mouth-organs and tin whistles and fiddles were being played by all the fag tribe. And all was merry and bright.

The Easter Vack had made its appearance!

But there was one boy who stood aloof from all the others. No smile of happiness illuminated his pale, hansom face. Instead, the scalding tears splashed and streamed down his cheeks.

Harry Huggins had no home. He was an orphan boy; that is to say, he was without parents. He had come to St. Rudolph's on a scholarship, instead of on the station hack, like most fellows.

Had he a sister? Had he a brother? Had he a father? Had he a mother? Or was there a nearer one still, and a dearer one yet, than all others? No, there was nobody who cared for Harry Huggins. He often wished that he wasn't an orphan. But what was the use of wishing?

The gay scenes which were going on around him only added to Harry's cup of sorrow, which was already overflowing, and splashing down the sides.

Everybody was going home—except him! Swanker of the Sixth, whose father kept a fashionable coffee-stall in the West End of London, was homeward bound. So was Fleesem of the Fifth, whose father was a big male-order merchant.

Fipps of the Fourth waved his hand to Harry Huggins in a mocking manner, and said "A-dew!" Fipps was bound to have a good time, for his aunt, Miss Milly O'Nair, had pots and pots of munney.

And Harry Huggins was homeless. He had nowhere to go, and nothing to do when he got there!

"Oh, what an Easter!" he muttered. "It wouldn't be so bad if I had some cash. I'd put up at a no-tell, and have a jolly good time. But I'm broke—stranded on the cruel rock of bankruptcy! Boo-hoo!"

At last the gate guard through had departed, and Harry Huggins was left alone.

Lockyer, the gate-porter, shuffled up to him, with a fierce and menacing expression on his leering face.

"You go along out of it!" he said to Harry.

"But I've nowhere to go, Lockyer—"

"Can't 'elp your troubles," said the porter.

"You can't stay 'ere."

And he lifted a hobnail boot, and towed Harry Huggins through the gateway. Our hero picked himself up out of the mud, and staggered blindly away down the hard, frost-bitten road.

The shades of night were falling fast, and so were Harry's spirits. He had no overcoat to protect him from the bitter nor-Easter wind, which blew him along at a terrific rate.

Prezantly the pangs of hunger gnawed at his vituals. And the fierce, burning pangs of thirst got him by the throat.

"I—I can't go on!" he faltered.

But the cruel nor-Easter continued to blow him along like a stray leaf.

(Interval of five minutes for readers to weep.)

Prezantly he blew right into the arms of a big man in a fur coat.

The man had a jooled tie-pin, and he was puffing a fat cigar.

"Why can't you look where you're going?" thundered the big man. Then he broke off. His hard face softened, and he was overcome with commotion.

"My son! My son!" he cried.

Harry Huggins looked up, with wonder in his eyes.

"At last I have found my wandering boy!" eggsclaimed the man in the fur coat. "I have been serching for you high and low, for the last ten years! I knew I should rekkernise you when I saw you. The Huggins face is unmistakeable. Once seen, never forgotten!"

"Who—who are you?" panted Harry.

"I am Henry Huggins, senior partner in the well-known firm of Messrs. Huggins, Juggins & Muggins. My dear boy, I am your father!"

"Oh!"

"You seem cold and fammished," said Mr. Huggins. "Come with me to the nearest airodrome, and we will hire an airoplane to take us home."

With his hart bursting with joy, Harry Huggins followed in his father's footsteps, like a fellow in a dream.

Harry Huggins is homeless no longer. And when he next turns up at St. Rudolph's, it will be in a hansom Roles-Rice car!



By JOE FRAYNE.

Who was an Eye-Witness of the Great Event.

THE silver sunshine streamed down upon Mother Thames. The river-banks simply swarmed with people—supporters of Oxbridge and Camford.

For it was the day of the grate Adversity Boat Race from Chutney to Portlake.

Some men wore dark-blew rosetts, and others light-blew. Some fieldmales wore dark-blew blowses and others light-blew. Some motor-cars were adorned with dark-blew ribbons, and others with light-blew. There was such a riot of colour that the Chief Constable was obliged to read the Riot Act.

The eggitement was terrific. The photographs of the rival crews had appeared in all the morning papers, and for two hours before the race started the crews were busy signing ortographs.

At last they got into their boats, after the two kaptins had tossed up.

The Oxbridge skipper won the toss.

"I'll row with the stream!" he said.

"Same hear!" said the Camford skipper. So there wasn't much advantage in winning the toss.

The specked taters craned their necks to see the start, and some of them toppled into

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the river. But nobody trubbled to fish them out. All eyes were glood to the two crews, who were paddling in midstream.

After a period of breathless expense, the starter fired his pistle.

"Now we're off!" cried Billy Briggs, the Oxbridge skipper. "All hands on deck! Man the pumps! Hoist the merry rigging! Heave the mane deck overboard!"

The crew responded gallantly. Billy Briggs stroked them, and they purred loudly as they sped through the sparkling water.

There was a mighty shout from the banks.

"Now then, Oxbridge!"

"Come along, Camford!"

Billy Briggs threw himself hart and sole into the grim struggle. The mussels of his brawny arms stood out like notted cords. His face was crimson with eggsertion, but he did not falter.

The Oxbridge boat got its nose in front of the rival tub. Then it got its neck in front, and then its body. Slowly but surely it drew to the four, amid wild cheering.

When Barnes Bridge was reached, Billy Briggs rested on his oars.

"I say, you fellows," he said, "we're about half a mile in front now, so we can afford

to take things easy. Anybody got a cigarette?"

The coxun passed his silver cigarette-case, and Billy Briggs eggstracted a cigarette, and enjoyed a nice quiet smoke. He was just dozing off to sleep, when there was a shrill cry of warning from the coxun.

"Look out, Billy! They are on us! And they are gaining hand over fist!"

Inch by inch, foot by foot, yard by yard, ferlong by ferlong, mile by mile, the Camford boat crept up.

By this time the specked taters were nearly delirious with eggitement. Hats and caps went wirling in the air; people were leaping off the bridges into the water; and others were so carried away with eggitement that they were clapping their feet and stamping their hands.

"Camford are gaining!"

"Hurrah!"

"Buck up, Oxbridge!"

"Pull up your sox!"

Billy waited until the Camford boat drew level. Then he seized his oar, and, springing to his feet, brought it down with a mighty thump on to the scull of the Camford skipper.

It was fortunate that the latter possesst a hard scull, or it would have cracked like an eggshell beneath that blow. As it was, the blow merely put the Camford skipper out of action for a few minnits.

But those few minnits were quite enuff for Billy Briggs.

"Come on, you men!" he cried. "We've simply got to finish the corse, and the race is ours!"

The mishap to their skipper upset the Camford crew, and they went all to peaces.

Billy Briggs and his merry men were the first to sail past the winning-post, having beeten their deadly rivals by a duzen lengths.

"This is a pink-letter day for me!" said Billy Briggs, as he stepped ashore.

[Supplement II.]

"I Say, You Chaps—a 'Special Detention' Number Next Week!"—W. G. B.



Bunter's Easter Egg!

BY
TOM BROWN
of Greyfriars.

BILLY BUNTER sat up in bed, blinking at the bright sunlight which streamed in at the window. "Wonder if rising-bell's gone yet?" he murmured drowsily.

And then he remembered that he was not in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, but in his bed-room at Bunter Court. At least, we will call it by that flattering name. In reality, the home of the Bunters is quite a common or garden house. When Billy Bunter speaks of it, however, he invests it with all the grandeur of a mansion.

A new day had dawned—a very important day in the calendar. For it was not only Easter Monday, but All Fools' Day as well. Greyfriars would not celebrate All Fools' Day until after the holidays. But that was not to say that leg-pulling would not be indulged in during the vac.

Billy Bunter chuckled softly to himself as he rolled out of bed. He rapped sharply on the wall which separated his bed-room from Sammy's.

"Hallo!" came a sleepy response from next door.

"Sammy—quick!" shouted Billy Bunter, in tones of well-feigned excitement. "There's a burglar!"

"My hat! Where?"

"In my bed-room!"

"Is—is he a big brute?" faltered Sammy.

"No; only a skinny worm. I'm sitting on his chest at the moment."

Sammy became very brave. He wouldn't have budged from his bed-room had he thought there was a hefty burglar next door. He would have yelled the roof off.

As it was, Sammy made a heroic dash into his brother's bed-room.

"Coming, Billy!" he called. "We'll soon truss the rotter up between us!"

On gazing round the room, however, Sammy saw no sign of a burglar. Billy's grinning face was the only thing that greeted him.

"You April Fool!" chuckled Billy. "There isn't a burglar at all!"

Sammy gave a snort.

"Billy, you spoofing beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sammy shook his fist wrathfully at his major, and retired to his own room to dress, for the breakfast gong was sounding.

There was a scramble on the part of the Bunter Brothers to see who could get downstairs first. Billy beat his minor by a short head.

Mr. Bunter had already taken his place at the head of the breakfast-table. He nodded genially to his plump sons.

"Good-morning, my dear boys!"

"Good-morning, pater!" piped major and minor, in chorus. "What's for brekker?"

"Eggs and bacon, toast and marmalade, hot rolls, and coffee."

"Oh, good!"

There were other things on the breakfast-table besides food. There were a couple of letters for Billy and a couple for Sammy. They opened them eagerly, expecting either banknotes, Treasury-notes, or postal orders to fall out. But nothing fell, except the faces of the Bunters.

"A letter from Aunt Prue and one from Uncle Reuben!" growled Billy.

"Same here!" grumbled Sammy. "Any remittance in yours, Billy?"

"No."

"None in mine, either. I say, what's that parcel?"

There was a parcel on the table, addressed to "Master W. G. Bunter." Billy picked it up, and blinked at it eagerly through his

spectacles. He knew the handwriting on the label. It was that of his Uncle Jim.

Billy frowned. He ought to have been pleased at receiving a parcel; but he wasn't. He knew Uncle Jim of old. Uncle Jim was a young and lively gentleman, with a propensity for playing practical jokes.

Billy opened the parcel very slowly. There was an Easter egg inside. Billy eyed it with suspicion. It was a chocolate egg, the top half of which unscrewed.

But Billy didn't unscrew it. He remembered that it was All Fools' Day, and he had no doubt that Uncle Jim was seeking to make an April Fool of him.

Billy had heard of Easter eggs which, when unscrewed, gave the victim a shock. Something on springs, like a jack-in-the-box, shot out, and hit the unscrewed in the face. Billy had been caught napping by one of these eggs before. He wasn't going to be caught napping again.

"Aren't you going to open your egg, William?" inquired Mr. Bunter.

"No, pater."

"Why not, pray?"

"Ahem! The—the fact is, I'm not very keen on Easter eggs," said Billy.

"Chocolate doesn't agree with me."

Sammy Bunter's mouth watered as he surveyed the egg.

"If you don't want it, Billy," he said, "you can hand it over to me. I simply love Easter eggs!"

Billy grinned.

"You can have this with pleasure," he said.

"And anything that happens to be inside it?"

"Certainly!"

Billy rolled the Easter egg along the table to his minor.

Sammy had no scruples about unscrewing the egg. He started to unscrew it right away.

Billy looked on with a chuckle. He expected a goliwog of some sort to bob out and smite the infant Samuel under the chin.

But nothing bobbed and nothing popped. Something rattled, that was all.

An expression of alarm came over Billy's face. Supposing it didn't happen to be an April Fool jape, after all? Supposing the frivolous Uncle Jim was serious for once?

"W-w-what's inside?" faltered Billy.

Sammy's face beamed like unto a full moon as he replied:

"A half-sovereign!"



"Here, you gimme that half-quad!" cried Billy. "That's mine!" "Nonsense, William!" said Mr. Bunter. "You gave the egg to Samuel!"

The glittering coin rolled out on to the table. Half-sovereigns were very scarce, and Uncle Jim had evidently been saving that one for a suitable occasion.

The suitable occasion had arrived, and so had the half-sovereign. But Billy, for whom it was intended, had made it over to Sammy!

"Oh, what luck!" chortled the delighted Sammy.

"Here, you gimme that half-quad!" cried Billy, holding out his hand. "It's mine!"

"Nonsense, William!" interrupted Mr. Bunter. "You gave the egg to Samuel, and you told him he could have whatever happened to be inside."

"But—but I didn't know—" stammered Billy.

"You hardly expected a half-sovereign to be inside!" said Mr. Bunter, with a smile. "I could not help thinking, at the time, that it was foolish of you to part with the egg before you had opened it."

Billy almost wept!

THE END.

BUNTER COURT!

By Dick Penfold.

Talk not to me of Wharton Lodge,
That country house of good report.
I'd much prefer to sit and stodge
At Bunter Court.

The stateliest mansion in the land,
The noblest edifice, in short;
The goodliest pile, you understand,
Is Bunter Court.

Ten thousand acres roll around,
Where you can have all kinds of sport;
What fun and frolic can be found
At Bunter Court

Our William George is full of glee,
You never hear him snap or snort;
A plump and genial host is he
At Bunter Court

We gather round the festive board,
The kids drink "pop," their elders port,
Supplies of every sort are stored
At Bunter Court

At footer on the lawn we play,
While gallant Bulstrode holds the fort;
We romp and revel all the day
At Bunter Court.

Or on a cosy couch of bliss
Our languid persons we disport;
Surely no joy can equal this
At Bunter Court.

Bob Cherry, with a frowning face,
Has read these rhymes, and made retort;
"You duffer! There is no such place
As Bunter Court!"

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Supplement III.]

For the "Blues" the "Weekly" is a Certain Cure!



"A Rank Injustice!"

(Continued from page 12.)



"You bet!"
"And if she has to go——" said Beauclere.

Bob knitted his brows.
"If Miss Meadows has to go for turning that gambler and thief out of the school, there will be trouble at Cedar Creek, and don't you forget it!" he exclaimed emphatically. "I guess they won't plant a new master on us in Miss Meadows' place without some galoots kicking up a dickens of a shindy. We'll give the new master the time of his life, by gad; if we let him come into the school at all!"

"If!" said Frank. "My dear chap, you do——"

"I said if, and I mean if!" said Bob deliberately. "We're not in New Westminster or Vancouver, Franky, or even in Kamloops. We're in the backwoods, and in the backwoods a galoot can stand up and talk plain. And I tell you our schoolmistress isn't going to be edged out of Cedar Creek by Old Man Gunten."

"Hear, hear!" said Frank, with a smile. "If there's anything to be done, we're backing up for Miss Meadows, Bob!"

And Beauclere nodded assent.

As soon as the cousins arrived at the Lawless Ranch Bob sought his father, with the intention of explaining the matter to him to put Mr. Lawless on his guard.

Rancher Lawless was inspecting horses in the corral when his son and nephew joined him, and he listened to what they had to say with serious attention.

"I guess you did right to tell me of this, Bob," he commented. "I fancy Mr. Gunten was only blowing off steam; I hope so, anyhow. Young Gunten is the fellow who robbed you on your holiday in the North-West—eh?"

"The same scallywag, dad!"

"Miss Meadows did quite right to send him away. I'd heard talk about that lad in Thompson," said the rancher, frowning. "Mr. Gunten can send him to the new school across the valley, if he likes, and give him another chance, if they'll take him in there. I shall certainly uphold Miss Meadows in keeping him shut out of Cedar Creek."

Which was good news to the chums.

Frank and Bob were anxious for news on the morrow, and they found Vere Beauclere in the same mood when they joined him on the way to school.

They found Cedar Creek in a rather excited state.

Old Man Gunten's threat, uttered in the hearing of half the school, had not been forgotten, and boys and girls were curious to know whether anything would come of it.

The possibility of losing their popular schoolmistress made them all realise how much they liked Miss Meadows, and there was deep indignation at the mere suggestion that the schoolmistress might be "fired" for having done what the whole school knew it was her plain duty to do.

Lessons passed off as usual that day, but with that day passed the period of grace the angry storekeeper had allowed to Miss Meadows to change her mind.

It was certain that Miss Meadows had not changed her mind, and that Kern Gunten would not return to Cedar Creek so long as she was headmistress there.

Whether the Canadian girl was troubled by Mr. Gunten's threat was not to be discovered; her quiet, impassive face expressed nothing of her thoughts.

Even when Chunky Todgers, in an excess of devotion, induced a dozen fellows to give a loud cheer after lessons under Miss Meadows' window, there was no sign from the schoolmistress.

Perhaps she was not aware that all Cedar Creek had already taken sides in the expected dispute, and was blissfully ignorant of the devotion to her cause that burned in nearly every breast.

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There was news that night when Frank and Bob reached home.

They found Rancher Lawless with a letter in his hand and a frown upon his bronzed face.

"There's a special meeting of the school trustees to-morrow, my lads," he said. "It's called by Mr. Gunten."

"Oh!" said Bob. "Popper, you'll stand by Miss Meadows?"

"Rely upon me, my boy; and I think Mr. Grimm will be of my opinion, too."

The chums of Cedar Creek could only hope so. But, remembering the bitter anger and malice of the Swiss storekeeper, they could not help feeling uneasy.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Fired!

THE post-wagon stopped at Cedar Creek School on the following afternoon, and Black Sally took in a letter for Miss Meadows.

The schoolmistress was attending to her class in last lesson when the letter was brought to the school-room.

Miss Meadows went to her desk, and opened the letter there.

The eyes of the whole class were upon her.

Immediately the class jumped to the conclusion that the letter might have something to do with Old Man Gunten and the special meeting of the trustees.

As a matter of fact, they were right.

Miss Meadows' colour deepened as she read the brief but very expressive communication, which ran:

"Miss Ethel Meadows,

"Cedar Creek School.

"The Trustees of the Cedar Creek School District regret that they do not find themselves satisfied with the present management of Cedar Creek School. They therefore request the resignation by Miss E. Meadows of the post of headmistress. Instructions have been sent to Mr. Slimmey, assistant-master, to carry on temporarily until a new headmaster is appointed.

"Signed, for the Board,

"G. GUNTEN."

Miss Meadows looked at Black Sally inquiringly.

"Is there a letter also for Mr. Slimmey?" she asked.

"Yes, missy."

"Kindly take it to him."

Mr. Slimmey adjusted his gold-rimmed glasses, and read the letter as soon as it was handed to him.

His kind if somewhat weak face flushed deeply as he read, and, crushing the letter in his hand, he walked over to Miss Meadows' desk.

"Miss Meadows!" he exclaimed, in a tremulous voice. "You are aware——"

"I am informed here that you have been requested to take my place, Mr. Slimmey, until a new Head is appointed," said Miss Meadows quietly.

"Is it possible that you are dismissed, madam?"

"I am asked to resign."

"It is infamous!" said Mr. Slimmey, in agitated tones. "I shall, of course, refuse to do as is asked, and shall resign my post here if you leave!"

"I am not leaving yet, Mr. Slimmey. I shall refuse to resign," said Miss Meadows quietly. "I shall not go unless dismissed; and, in that case, shall carry an appeal to higher quarters."

"I am glad to hear that, Miss Meadows. Surely they will not dare——"

"I hope not. We shall see."

Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey spoke in low tones, and not a word was heard by the hushed school; but the excitement was growing intense.

Miss Meadows took up her pen and indited a brief reply to the letter she had received.

Brief as it was, it was very much to the point:

"Sir,—I refuse to resign.—Yours faithfully,
"E. MEADOWS."

Mr. Slimmey scribbled a rather longer letter, pointing out to the Board that under no circumstances whatever would he consent to supplant Miss Meadows, even for one hour.

The two letters were handed to Black Sally to take out to the post-wagon, which was awaiting to collect correspondence from the school.

Then lessons were resumed.

That the incident of the letters had something to do with Old Man Gunten and the meeting of the trustees all Cedar Creek felt assured, but they knew no more than that.

But when Frank Richards and Bob arrived at the Lawless Ranch that evening they learned more.

Rancher Lawless had been out-voted at the meeting, Mr. Grimm, for reasons of his own, supporting Old Man Gunten all along the line.

The angry storekeeper, therefore, had had his way.

Frank and Bob received the news with dismay and concern.

The refusal of her resignation by Miss Meadows only postponed matters.

It was in the power of the Board to dismiss her from her post, and there was no doubt that that was what Old Man Gunten intended.

His threat, after all, had not been an idle one.

"And we shall get a new headmaster or mistress, instead of Miss Meadows," said Bob gloomily. "You can bet that Old Man Gunten will have a finger in appointing him, and he will make it a condition that Gunten is taken back in the school."

Frank Richards' eyes gleamed.

"It's too rotten, Bob!" he said hotly. "Old Man Gunten has worked this with Mr. Grimm. It's not fair! And—and we're not going to stand it!"

Bob Lawless nodded.

"We're not!" he agreed. "We'll have a jolly good talk to the fellows to-morrow, and they'll find that they've got Cedar Creek to deal with, as well as Miss Meadows."

The chums were in a grim and angry mood when they rode to school the next day.

Any compassion they might have felt for Kern Gunten was quite forgotten now.

They were backing up Miss Meadows against the Gunten's, father and son, and all along the line.

Injun Dick, the tattered vagrant of Thompson, was entering the school gates when Frank Richards & Co. arrived.

He had a letter in his hand.

The chums saw him speak to Miss Meadows in the porch, and hand her the letter.

Miss Meadows opened it as the Redskin stalked away.

It was brief:

"Miss Ethel Meadows.

"Madam,—As you decline to tender your resignation, as requested, the Board have no option but to dismiss you from your present post. You will therefore consider your engagement at an end on Saturday, and will inform your assistants that a new headmaster will arrive on Monday to take charge of the school.

"For the Board,

"G. GUNTEN."

Miss Meadows set her lips.

It was a dismissal.

The schoolmistress glanced out over the playground, crowded with boys and girls waiting for the morning bell.

Then she went back into her room.

The bell rang at the usual time, and Cedar Creek crowded into the school-room. Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd were looking unusually grave and thoughtful.

Miss Meadows had her usual aspect, save that a bright spot of colour was burning in either cheek.

It was a bitter blow to the schoolmistress to be dismissed from her post so curtly and cruelly, and although she intended to appeal to authorities over the heads of the Board, she had no choice but to obey the order for the present, and leave Cedar Creek.

In her appeal against the decision of the Board, she was to have the support of one

member—Mr. Lawless. She knew that—but the result was a doubtful matter, as she was well aware.

Her heart was heavy that morning.

She was aware, too, that if she had chosen to submit to the dictation of the storekeeper of Thompson, and take his rascally son back into the school, the dismissal might have been rescinded yet.

That she had no intention of doing. Her duty was clear, and while she remained at Cedar Creek it would be done.

Whatever her thoughts and feelings might be, she had no thought of taking Cedar Creek into her confidence, and it would probably have surprised her to discover that the school had a pretty clear idea of what was happening, and had already decided to "back up" in her support.

Under such suppressed excitement, there was naturally some little inattention during lessons that day, and several fellows were called over the coals rather sharply by Miss Meadows—without in the least diminishing their loyal determination to stand by her.

After school there was a crowded meeting in the corner of the playground, headed by Frank Richards & Co.

From the distance Miss Meadows heard the sound of shouting and cheering, but she little guessed what it portended.

She was soon to learn, however.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Frank Richards & Co's Resolve!

THE next day was Friday, when the lumber school broke up for the week-end, Saturday being a holiday.

After last lesson on Friday the school was not immediately dismissed, as usual.

After that day Miss Meadows was not to see her pupils any more, and she could not leave them without a word of farewell.

She was a little pale as she stood before the class to say the last few words before they parted, little dreaming of what it was to be the signal.

"My dear boys and girls," said Miss Meadows, her voice faltering a little in spite of herself, "before you go I have something to tell you. I am leaving Cedar Creek to-morrow, and when you come back on Monday I shall not be here."

She paused, and there was a dead silence.

"I am very, very sorry to be leaving you," went on the schoolmistress, steadying her voice. "I have been very happy here, and have tried to do my duty by the school. I hope you will remember me with affection. That is all. Now we must say good-bye!"

Bob Lawless jumped up.

"Miss Meadows!"

The schoolmistress was turning away. She turned back in surprise.

Bob's rugged face was flushed, his eye sparkling.

"Miss Meadows! We're not going to stand it!"

"Lawless!"

"Hear, hear!" came from Frank Richards.

"We won't stand it, ma'am!" shouted Bob Lawless. "We know all about it, Miss Meadows! Old Man Gunten has got you fired because you turned out that thief and sharper, Kern Gunten!"

"Lawless!" gasped Miss Meadows.

"We won't let you go, ma'am! We won't have a new headmaster!"

"Never!" roared Frank Richards.

"I guess not!" hooted Eben Hacke. "We'll lynch him!"

"Hurrah!"

Miss Meadows stood dumb, petrified by that amazing outbreak from her class.

Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd looked on in sheer amazement, but not with disapproval in their looks.

Miss Meadows found her voice at last:

"Lawless! Richards! You must not say—"

"We won't have a new headmaster, Miss Meadows!" said Frank Richards resolutely.

"It's not fair play, and we won't stand it!"

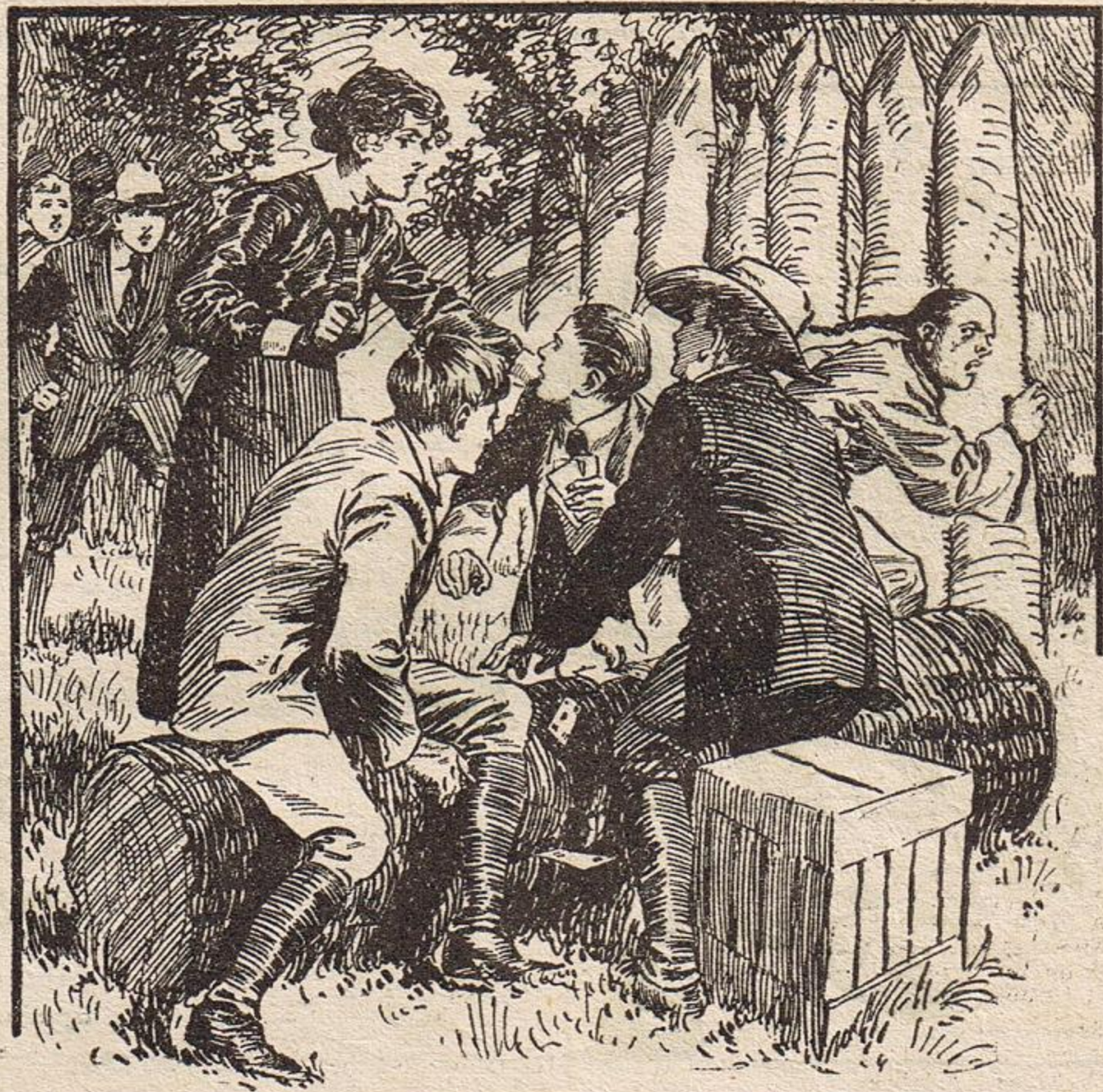
"Never!"

"We'll fire him out if he comes here!" roared Chunky Todgers.

"My boys," gasped Miss Meadows, "I—I suppose this extraordinary scene shows your attachment to me; but—but I must forbid you to show anything like disrespect to your new master when he arrives to take over the school."

"Never!"

"I am leaving to-morrow. You will find



CAUGHT OUT AT LAST! Gunten sprang to his feet in dismay as Miss Meadows came up to the group. "M-miss Meadows!" he stammered. The schoolmistress' eyes gleamed upon him. "Gunten! This is not the first time I have caught you gambling and inducing your schoolfellowe to gamble. Go into the house at once!" (See Chapter 1.)

your new master here on Monday. You will treat him with the same respect you have always shown me."

"No fear!"

"We won't have him!"

"We'll keep him out!" roared Chunky Todgers belligerently. "We'll hold Cedar Creek against him, and the Board of Trustees, too!"

"Hurrah!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows severely. "How dare you suggest anything of the kind!"

"Oh!"

"You must keep discipline for the good name of the school. Now please dismiss quietly."

Miss Meadows walked out of the school-room.

Then the school dismissed, but not quietly.

There was a buzz of excited voices as the boys and girls trooped out into the playground.

Bob Lawless jumped on a bench.

"Ladies and gentlemen—" he roared.

"Bravo!"

"Go it, Bob!"

"Our schoolmistress has been fired by a sneaking, foreign galoot and his dirty tricks—"

Groan!

"We're not going to have it!"

Cheers!

"New man hops in on Monday," continued Bob. "Well, we're going to be here early on Monday, and when that new man hops in we'll make him hop out pretty quick!"

"Hurrah!"

"If he tries to stick we'll tar and feather him, and ride him on a rail out of the school!"

"Bravo!"

"And then we'll bar the gate, and hold Cedar Creek against them all till they agree to send Miss Meadows back!" roared Bob.

"A barring-out!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "And no surrender till our schoolmistress comes back! Is it a go?"

The roar of cheering that followed showed that it was a "go."

Still shouting, the Cedar Creek fellows trooped out at the gates.

Frank Richards & Co. mounted their horses, and rode homeward with flushed faces, still a good deal excited.

They were the leaders, and nearly all Cedar Creek was backing them up.

Their determination did not falter.

Cedar Creek was in a state of revolt, and the new headmaster, whoever he was, was not to be allowed even to enter the school.

"If he's a decent man I'm sorry for him," said Frank. "But it can't be helped. We won't have him!"

"Don't worry about that!" growled Bob. "I'll bet you he's some friend of Old Man Gunten's. And, in that case, he won't be very decent. Some hard-fisted old hunks like Old Man Gunten himself, I guess!"

"Most likely!" agreed Vere Beaulere.

"Not a word at home about this," added Bob sagely. "I don't believe the popper would disapprove, as a matter of fact, but, of course, he couldn't countenance such proceedings. I've warned all the fellows not to talk. If Miss Meadows isn't there on Monday, and if the new Head comes, we go on strike. That's the game. And Cedar Creek won't be run as a school again till Miss Meadows comes back."

"That's the programme," said Frank Richards. "And we stick to it to the finish, whatever happens."

And that remained the fixed determination of the chums of Cedar Creek, though little more was said on the subject then.

But on Sunday there was a good deal of riding to and fro, and meetings and discussions and whisperings; and all Cedar Creek looked forward with keen excitement to Monday morning. That day was destined to be a remarkable one in the history of Cedar Creek.

THE END.

(There will be another roaring Backwoods yarn, entitled: "Cedar Creek on Strike!" next week.)

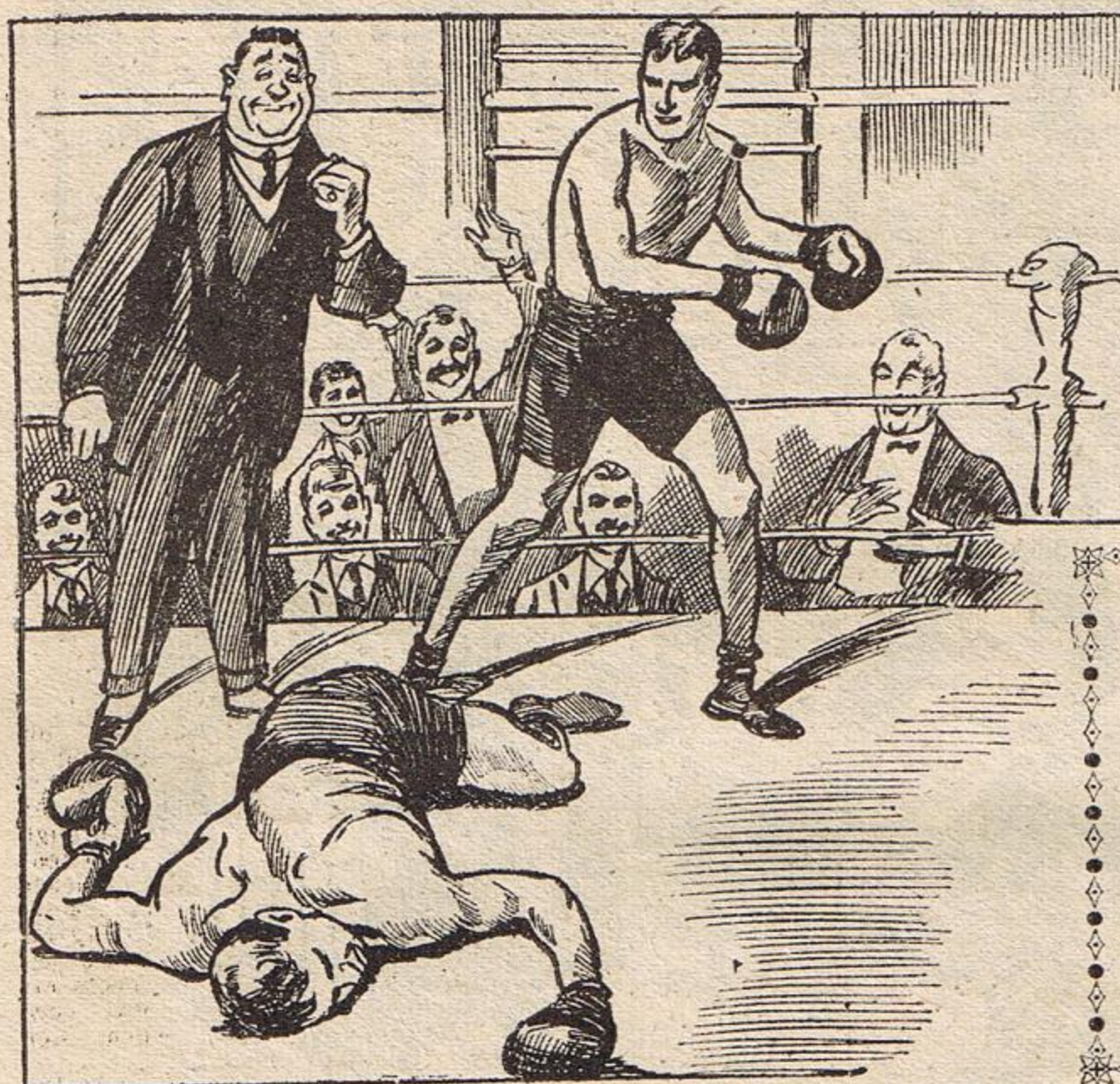
THE POPULAR.—No. 220.

BOXER OR MASTER?

Harry Wharton & Co. are amazed to see Mr. Larry Lascelles at Greyfriars, for he is the exact image of Larry Lynx, the boxer!

HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S SECRET!

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THE BOXER'S DOUBLE!

A Corking, Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, introducing Larry Lascelles, the Mysterious New Master.

BY

FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the Stories of Greyfriars appearing in the "Magnet" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Coker Doesn't Go!

COKER & Co. of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars were standing under the porch of the School House, looking out dismally into the rainy Close. Horace Coker was talking—he generally was! Potter and Greene listened to him heedlessly, while they said things about the rain.

"My cousin at Oxford knew him!" said Coker. "Very decent, so I hear—very decent indeed!"

Potter looked round.

"Decent!" he exclaimed, having caught only the end of Coker's remarks, all his attention having been given to the inexpressible weather. "Decent, did you say?"

"Very decent," said Coker.

"What utter rot!" said Potter.

"Eh?"

"You must be off your rocker—you must really, Coker!"

"I suppose I know what I'm talking about!" roared Coker.

"You don't!" said Potter. "Ain't it raining cats and dogs?"

"I can see that," said Coker.

"And you call it decent! If this is decent weather—" said Potter.

"You fathead! I wasn't talking about the weather!" growled Coker.

"Oh, weren't you? I was," said Potter.

"I was talking about the new mathematics master—Lascelles," said Coker.

"My cousin knew him at Oxford."

"Blow the new mathematics master!" snorted Potter.

"My cousin knew him—"

"Blow your cousin too! Don't jaw so much!" said Potter, who was very much out of temper. "Ain't the rain bad enough?"

"Seems to be a decent chap, from what my cousin says," went on Coker, addressing his remarks to Greene now.

Greene of the Fifth Form grunted.

"Some wretched little scrub, most likely," he said—"chap who's mugged up maths. Ugh! Little blighter with a bald head and goggles—bet my hat!"

"Nothing of the sort!" said Coker.

"He's mugged up maths, of course, or he couldn't be a mathematics master, I suppose. But he's not a swot, by any means. An awfully athletic chap. Plays cricket and polo and things, and boxes."

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"Boxes!" said Greene. "Rats! A mathematics master! Poof!"

"Well, my cousin says—"

"Bow-wow!" said Greene. "No sign of the rain stopping. Looks as if we're going to be giddy prisoners all the afternoon. No cricket, no walks, no cycling—no anything! I'm fed up. For goodness' sake, don't talk any more, Coker, old man. I'm fed up with your cousin at Oxford."

"You—you blithering ass!" said Coker sulphurously.

Tempers were growing strained among the Fifth-Formers. The weather was responsible. There had already been several fights in the Third Form-room. The fags were feeling it too.

Lord Mauleverer and the Famous Five came out of the School House just then. They were wrapped up in rain-coats, and had caps pulled down over their ears, and were armed with umbrellas. Coker & Co. stared at them. Billy Bunter, the fat junior of the Remove, followed them out of the House. His face was very angry, and his little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

"Hallo! Going for a swim?" asked Coker sarcastically.

"Lovely weather for ducks!" said Potter.

"So I suppose it's all right for geese!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" the Fifth-Formers cackled, rather dismally.

"I say, you fellows, I'm jolly well coming with you!" piped Billy Bunter. "I jolly well know it's a feed, and you can't spoof me. You wouldn't be going out in the rain for nothing! Look here—"

"It's not a feed!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Buzz off!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"My dear fellow, it isn't a feed!" said Lord Mauleverer. "And there wouldn't be room for you in the car. You're too wide, begad!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"The car!" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth, interested at once. "You fags have the blessed cheek to have a car out! Where are you going?"

"We're going to mind our own business," said Frank Nugent sweetly.

"The mindfulness of our own business will be terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Coker," murmured Hurree Singh.

"They're going to Chilford!" roared Billy Bunter. "I heard them saying so.

"And I know it's a feed, and I'm going to be in it. I tell you—"

"Chilford!" said Coker. "That's a jolly long way! Why, that's where the boxing match is—at the Ring, at Chilford. You kids going there?"

"Don't yell!" said Wharton. "We don't want all the school to know."

"My hat! What a ripping wheeze for a rainy day!" exclaimed Coker excitedly.

"We'll come with you, as you've got a car."

"Sorry!" said Lord Mauleverer politely, while his comrades glared far from politely. "We've only just room in the car."

"Oh, we don't mind squeezing!" said Coker generously.

"But we do, dear boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or some of those fags could stay behind," said Potter. "After all, the Ring at Chilford isn't exactly the place for Lower Fourth kids. We'll come."

"Certainly!" said Greene heartily.

"My dear fellows—"

"Not another word," said Coker. "We'll come. It's rather infra dig to go about with fags, but we'll overlook that under the circs. Wait a minute while we get our coats."

"I don't think!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Coker & Co. rushed in for their coats. Lord Mauleverer and his comrades rushed for the gates, to get into the car outside.

Billy Bunter panted after them, his fat face gleaming with the rain that swamped upon it.

"I say, you fellows—"

They did not heed him. There was no time to lose in getting off, otherwise there would certainly be trouble with Coker & Co. It did not take the Fifth-Formers a minute to get their coats. Then they came rushing out of the School House and down to the gates after the Removites.

The chauffeur touched his cap to Lord Mauleverer.

"Buzz off quick as you can, my dear chap," said his lordship.

"Yes, sir."

The juniors clambered into the car. It was a roomy four-seater, and there was plenty of room for six juniors, with a little crowding. But they pretty well filled it. Billy Bunter stood in the rain, blinking at them through wet spectacles and raving.

"Look here, you beasts—"

"Clear off!"

"I'm jolly well coming to the feed—"

"It isn't a feed!"

"Well, I'm coming all the same. If you

Who is Larry Lascelles, the Fighting Master?

don't take me in, I shall consider it my duty to go and tell Mr. Quelch that you are going to see a prize-fight!"

"It isn't a prize-fight, you fat duffer; it's a boxing-match!" growled Bob Cherry. "We wouldn't see a prize-fight!"

"I regard it as a prize-fight, and I shall consider it my duty to go to Mr. Quelch and say— Yow—ow—ow—yaroooooop! Ugh!"

Bunter did not really mean that he would consider it his duty to say that remarkable thing to Mr. Quelch. He said it quite involuntarily, as a sudden push from Bob Cherry's heavy hand caused him to sit down violently. He sat down in a puddle, and there was a mighty splash of muddy water.

"Now go and say that to Quelch, too!" growled Bob.

"Ow, ow! Groo-hoooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The car was in motion now. It glided away through the rain, and only just in time. Coker & Co. came running out of the gateway. They dashed right at the car as it started.

"Hi! Stop!" roared Coker.

"Hold on!" yelled Greene.

Bob Cherry waved his hand genially from the car.

"Good-bye, Coker!"

"You young villain——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop, I tell you! We're coming!" roared Coker, making a desperate rush after the car. "I'll skin you! I tell you— Yah, you young rascals! I'll scalp you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker grabbed the car behind, and held on frantically. He acted upon the impulse of the moment. If he had reflected, he could not possibly have expected to hold the car back. He was dragged off his feet in a twinkling, and landed face downwards in a puddle in the middle of the road. There was a loud splash and a muffled roar from Coker.

The car sped on, and vanished in the rain. Horace Coker staggered to his feet. His coat, his trousers, his boots were smothered with mud, and his face was quite unrecognisable. Potter and Greene stared at him blankly as he came back towards them, gasping, and then they burst into a yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! My hat!" yelled Potter.

"Oh crumbs! You're wet!" shrieked Greene. "You are very, very wet! And muddy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groooooohgh!" gasped Coker. "I—I tried to stop them! Ugh!"

"You must have been a giddy ass to try to stop a car by holding on to it!" chuckled Potter. "But you always were rather an ass! My aunt! You do look a sight. Ha, ha, ha! Ow! Wharrer you at, you fat-head? Yow!"

Biff! Horace Coker's temper had been too sorely tried, and he could not stand Potter's hilarity, in addition to his other trials. He hit out, and Potter sat down in a puddle, and ceased to laugh immediately. Coker strode in at the gates in a state of great wrath to get a change of clothes. He needed a change badly.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Boxing Match!

"CHILFORD!" said Bob Cherry, looking out of the rain-splashed window. In spite of dashing rain and muddy roads the run had been quickly made, and in little more than an hour the car entered the town of Chilford.

Chilford was a town of considerable size, with electric trams and an Empire, and other signs of advanced civilisation. Among its other attractions was the celebrated Ring, to which spectators came from far and near to see boxing matches. Quite well-known boxers appeared at the Chilford Ring, and the house was often crammed for the boxing entertainments.

The present show was one of more than usual interest. Tim Tutton was a professional pugilist, with a very well-known record. Larry Lynx was a younger man, but he had already made something of a reputation among the gentlemen of the "fancy." The Greyfriars juniors, as a matter of fact, had never heard of him; but, of course, they were not well up in pugilistic news. But Lord Mauleverer had a Chilford paper with him in the car, and from that the juniors had gleaned much information during the

drive. According to the reporter, who professed to give some information about the boxers, Larry Lynx was the son of a publican in the East End of London, and had boxed since he was old enough to have the mittens on.

Lord Mauleverer knew a great deal about boxing and boxing men. It was one of the few subjects the slacker of the Remove interested himself in.

"I'm rather curious to see Lynx!" he remarked. "I've seen Tutton; when I was away last vac. Lynx doesn't box very often. He seems to be an amateur, who does it more for the pleasure of the thing than the tin. They say he could have had a match on at the National Sporting Club, but he didn't care to. Somebody says that he does something else for a living as well as box, but I don't know."

The car stopped.

"Here we are!" said Harry Wharton. "Here's the Ring."

They alighted outside the big building. There was a crowd with umbrellas up. Evidently a large audience was collecting to see the glove-fight between Larry Lynx and Tim Tutton. Lord Mauleverer gave instructions to his chauffeur, and then the party from Greyfriars made their way into the building.

In spite of the crowd there was no difficulty in getting seats. When Lord Mauleverer did anything he did it well, and money was no object to the schoolboy millionaire. Having booked the best seats in the place, Lord Mauleverer walked in.

"Lots of time!" Bob Cherry remarked, as he glanced at his watch. "We're a good quarter of an hour early."

"All the better, my dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer. "Here we are!"

They took their seats.

The house was filling fast.

Outside, the heavy rain was pattering and spattering on roof and windows. Inside, there was an eager buzz of voices, a shuffling of feet, and an incessant coughing, as the large audience came into their places.

The chums of Greyfriars waited with keen interest. They were naturally interested in boxing matches, and this was one of unusual interest. It was not, of course, in the nature of a prize-fight, which they certainly would not have taken the trouble to see. It was a contest of ten rounds with the gloves on, and though some punishment was pretty certain to be given and received, it would not be of a serious nature.

The house was soon quite crowded.

"Plenty of people here—what?" Lord Mauleverer remarked, as he glanced lazily over the crowded audience. "Hallo, here they are!"

There was a round of hand-clapping as the boxers appeared.

From the cheers of the audience, it seemed pretty clear that Tim Tutton, the "pug," was the favourite. He was considerably older than his antagonist, and more thickly built, and seemed a much more powerful man.

The Greyfriars juniors looked with great interest at Larry Lynx.

He was a young man, and looked almost boyish. He had clear-cut features, steady dark eyes, and short, curly brown hair, and was decidedly good-looking. He moved with an easy, elastic step that told of perfect physical fitness.

"That's the dark horse," Lord Mauleverer pronounced.

"He doesn't look as if he'll stand very long against that bruiser," Johnny Bull remarked.

"Perhaps not, without the mittens on," said his lordship. "But this is a glove contest—science, and not brute force, you see. With the knuckles, Tutton would knock him out very likely. I've heard that Tutton does something in that line—on the strict Q.T., of course. His face looks like it!"

Indeed, there were many signs of punishment about the bruiser's face.

His short, thick nose seemed a little crooked, and he had two teeth missing. Those signs of conflict with the bare knuckles certainly did not add to his beauty. His expression was not amiable, either. Larry Lynx looked the picture of good temper and good humour. But the big bruiser gave him a lowering look as he stepped into the ring. It was pretty certain that there would be some hard hitting—as hard as the gloves allowed.

"That chap does look like a blessed prize-fighter," said Frank Nugent. "Still, at a

place like this they aren't allowed to do any harm. The police would chip in."

"Yaas, that's all right," assured his lordship. "It's simply a contest of science and skill, or I shouldn't have asked you fellows to come, of course, or have come myself. Prize-fights ain't good form, any more than cock-fights. I don't see why the Head himself should object to our comin' here, only headmasters can't be relied on to see things in the proper light, don't you know?"

"Exactly!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Of course, if questions are asked, we shall own up, right off the reel, dear boys. But when we turn up at Greyfriars with the new mathematics master I don't think any questions will be asked—what?"

"Probably not. I hope not, anyway," said Wharton. "Hallo, they're going!"

"Seconds out of the ring!"

The two boxers were facing one another.

They shook hands in a perfunctory manner on Tutton's part, but with a kind cordiality so far as Larry Lynx was concerned. Then the mill commenced.

"The bruiser thinks he's got it all his own way!" Lord Mauleverer remarked, watching the opening round with the keen eye of a connoisseur. "He's longer in the reach, and he's got a drive like a sledge-hammer. If he gets Lynx fairly on the mark——"

"Then it won't last to ten rounds," said Nugent.

"But he won't get him," chuckled his lordship. "Larry's like an eel. Blessed if he doesn't seem to be made of indiarubber!"

Tutton was doing all the attacking. Lynx contented himself with defence all through the round, and allowed his bulkier opponent to drive him round the ring. The audience looked on with keen interest. The general impression was that Tutton was sparing his opponent, in order to make the contest last for the ten rounds, which the spectators had paid their money to see. But Lord Mauleverer shook his head when Bob Cherry made that remark.

"Not he," said his lordship confidently. "Not he! He can't get at Lynx. And you'll see Larry wake up in the next round."

"Time!"

There was a buzz of voices in the crowded hall, but it died away again as the second round commenced.

As Lord Mauleverer had predicted, Larry Lynx woke up in that round. He began to attack, and now the big bruiser had to give ground. There were calls from Tutton's supporters to "buck up!" and the bruiser's face flushed with anger.

It was evident that he was taking the fight seriously enough. Towards the close of the round, he made a sudden fierce attack, and succeeded in getting at close quarters with his younger opponent. There was half a minute of in-fighting, and Larry Lynx went down heavily under a body blow from Tutton's heavy right.

Crash!

The young boxer lay in the ring, panting, and the timekeeper began to count.

"One—two—three—four——"

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He'll be counted out!"

"Rats!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Five—six—seven——"

Lynx was up again like a rocket.

The bruiser was waiting for him, however, watchful as a cat, and his heavy drives came crashing upon the young boxer's face and chest.

But Lynx took his punishment manfully, defending as well as he could, and keeping his feet until the call of time.

"Time!"

Larry Lynx went back to his corner, breathing heavily. Tutton sat down, grinning. He evidently considered the rest of the contest a mere walk-over.

"Close thing, that!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Begad, it was awfully close for Larry. But Tutton won't have another chance like that!"

"He's a plucky beggar, anyway!" said Harry Wharton. "He stood it out rippingly! My hat! This is worth seeing, and no mistake! He must be feeling pretty groggy now, I should say."

"But he'll come up smiling—you see!"

Again Lord Mauleverer was right. The younger boxer came up smiling, as cool as a cucumber, and apparently quite fresh after his rough experience. Tutton, who expected to have it all his own way in that round, found that he could not get near his opponent. He had no more chances of

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Larry's Last Fight! Read All About It Next Week, in "The Fighting Master!"

delivering those crashing body-blows that had nearly knocked out the younger man in the second round.

Larry Lynx kept him at arm's-length, stopping all his drives with easy skill, and countering very effectively.

"Time!"

Another and another round, and yet another. Six rounds of the ten had been fought out, and the big bruiser had not yet succeeded in knocking out the cool, handsome boxer. And by that time Tim Tutton was showing signs of wear and tear.

In spite of the gloves, there had been a good deal of punishment. Tutton's left eye was almost closed, and his nose looked a little crooked. But there was hardly a sign of damage upon Larry Lynx's handsome face.

"He takes mighty good care of his chivvy!" Bob Cherry remarked, as the seventh round began. "He doesn't want his beauty spoiled, I suppose. My hat! Look at that!"

"Bump!"

Tim Tutton was down this time.

Eight had been counted before he rose, and then it would have been easy for Lynx to deliver a finishing blow as he came up; but the young boxer stood back, with his hands down, smiling.

"There's a sportsman for you!" said Lord Mauleverer enthusiastically. "It may cost him the fight, too; but what a giddy sportsman!"

"Hurrah!"

Tutton looked groggy at the end of that round. But in the next he succeeded in punishing the younger man pretty severely. Lynx's handsome nose assumed a somewhat bulbous appearance, and it decidedly marred his good looks.

Another round—both the boxers going "all out" now, and the audience gazing with breathless keenness.

"Time!"

"One more round," said Lord Mauleverer, with a sigh. "Looks as if it won't be a fight to a finish, after all—unless Larry wakes up. I fancy he's got something up his sleeve, though. How fresh he looks!"

There was a breathless hush in the crowded hall as the boxers stepped up for the last round.

Tutton attacked fiercely, but he was decidedly groggy, and his attack was clumsy, and easily stopped. Then suddenly Larry Lynx seemed to "wake up." He was on the bruiser like a whirlwind, with right and left, his movements almost too rapid to be followed with the eye.

Rap, rap, rap! and then a crashing blow right on the mark, and the bruiser went down like a felled oak.

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine—out!"

There was a roar in the crowded hall.

Tutton had been knocked out in the last round, and it was a fight to a finish, after all. Lord Mauleverer clapped his hands wildly.

"Bravo! Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Sudden Surprise!

LARRY LYNX looked with a smiling face at the yelling, enthusiastic spectators. It had been a splendid fight, and the younger man had won it—the bruiser still lay where he had fallen, breathing heavily. Ten had been counted, but it might as well have been twenty or a hundred, for all the chance that Tutton had of coming up to the scratch again. The fight had been won, and well won.

Lynx turned to his fallen opponent, and dropped on one knee beside him, and spoke in a low voice. Tutton gave him a dazed and savage look.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched that little scene with interest. They could not hear what was said, but they knew that Lynx was speaking in a friendly way to his beaten antagonist, and that Tutton was savagely rejecting his friendly advances.

The young boxer shrugged his shoulders slightly, and rose to his feet. With a slight bow to the cheering audience he disappeared.

Tim Tutton was helped to his feet, but he walked out of the ring without assistance, and with a lowering brow. It was evident

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that there was not much of the sportsman about the big bruiser. He could not take a beating with good temper.

"Well, it's all over!" said Lord Mauleverer, rising. "This is where we clear. It's been a jolly good show—what?"

"Ripping!" said Harry Wharton. "It was really a brilliant idea of yours, Mauly. We couldn't have had a better afternoon. You were a friend in need, and we take back that bumping in the study this morning."

Lord Mauleverer grinned. He had got over the bumping.

"Let's clear!" he said.

And they cleared.

It was still raining when they came out of the building, but the motor-car was in waiting, and they were quickly inside it. The car glided away through the streets of Chilford, with the raindrops pattering on the windows.

"Lynx is going to appear again next week, I hear," Lord Mauleverer remarked. "It wouldn't be a bad idea to run over and see him again—what?"

"Good wheeze," said Harry Wharton, "if we can get away. We'll subscribe for the car next time, and stand Sam—as we're not all giddy millionaires. Or we could come by the common or garden train. And now for Courtfield. We've got time to get to the station there before six, and meet the new master."

The car glided on swiftly through the rain. They reached Courtfield as six was chiming out.

"Just in time!" said Bob Cherry.

The car stopped outside the station.

The express was in, but the passengers had not yet come out. The juniors alighted from the car. Passengers who had arrived by the express began to come out of the station, putting up umbrellas.

"How are we going to know the chap?" asked Johnny Bull. "We don't know him from Adam, you know. We can't ask every man who comes out of the station whether he's the new maths master for Greyfriars."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No; that wouldn't do. But he's bound to take some sort of a vehicle to the school—he can't walk in this rain—and we shall spot him then, and we'll speak to him. Just keep an eye on the cabs."

"Only one here," said Bob Cherry, looking round. "There's a dearth of cabs in Courtfield on rainy days. However, we'll keep an eye on it."

But the cab was taken by a portly tradesman of Courtfield, who evidently was not the man the Greyfriars juniors were waiting for.

It rolled away, and they resumed their watch upon the station entrance.

If Mr. Lascelles, the new mathematics master, came out of the station, he was certain to inquire for a vehicle to take him to Greyfriars, and they would know him then. There was no doubt about that. But he did not come.

The passengers from the express had gone their various ways, but there was no one among them who could be taken for the new master.

He had not appeared.

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer at last. "It begins to look as if the johnny has lost the train, and we've had our trouble for nothing."

"By Jove, it does!" said Wharton, frowning. "It's rotten, too, after all the trouble we've taken. Are you sure he was coming by that train, Mauly, you ass?"

"I heard Wingate say so."

"He may have taken the local for Friardale," suggested Nugent. "People often do when they're going to Greyfriars, you know."

"The local isn't in yet," said Wharton, looking at his watch. "It comes from Westwood, and passengers have to wait for it. If the johnny intends to take it, he must still be in the station. I vote we look for him."

"Good!"

The juniors entered the station, and scanned the local platform. But it was quite deserted. They inquired of a porter they knew, but there was no passenger waiting for the local train for Friardale.

There was only one conclusion to come to—either Wingate's information was incorrect or the new mathematics master had acted in a very unmathematical manner and lost his train.

"No good sticking here!" growled Johnny

Bull. "May as well be off. I'm more than ready for tea!"

"Same here!" said Bob Cherry feelingly.

"Two hours to wait for the next express," added Wharton. "I don't feel inclined to wait here all that time, especially as the duffer mayn't come till to-morrow after all, for all we know. Let's buzz!"

Lord Mauleverer nodded.

"May as well clear!" he agreed. "It's rotten! If we could have taken Lumper—I mean Lasker—back to Greyfriars with us—"

"But we can't, so let's clear off. I'm hungry!"

"Right you are, dear boy."

The juniors returned to the car, and started for Greyfriars. They were decidedly annoyed by their failure to meet Mr. Lascelles. With Mr. Lascelles in the car with them, they would have been pretty secure from awkward questions being asked; but now they did not feel so safe. However, there was no help for it, and they glided away towards Greyfriars in a dissatisfied frame of mind, making rude remarks about a mathematics master who was not sufficiently mathematical to catch a train.

Greyfriars was reached, and Lord Mauleverer dismissed the car outside the gates. The rain was still coming down, and they pulled up their rain-coats about their ears as they came into the Close. They arrived in the School House steaming.

Billy Bunter met them as they came in. He blinked at them reproachfully through his big spectacles.

"You rotters!" was his greeting. "Coker's going to scalp you! He was smothered with mud, and so was I, you beasts! I was going to stand you a feed out of my postal-order, but now I'll see you blowed first!"

"Do you mean to say your postal-order's come?" asked Bob Cherry in astonishment.

Bunter grunted.

"I'm expecting it by the next post."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, tea's the word," said Bob Cherry. "It's in my study this time. Come on!"

"Certainly!" said Bunter, with alacrity. "Fathead! I wasn't talking to you!" said Bob, who was blessed with a delightful directness of speech. "You clear off!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, of course, I'm coming! After leaving me out of that feed at Chilford—"

"It wasn't a feed, you fathead!"

"Well, if it was really a prize-fight—"

"It wasn't a prize-fight."

"I haven't acquainted Mr. Quelch with it yet!" said Bunter, with dignity. "Upon the whole, I decided to keep your disgraceful secret."

"Why, you—"

"And the least you can do is to ask me to tea. Otherwise, I shall go to Mr. Quelch at once when he's finished jawing with Lascelles!"

"With whom?" exclaimed all the juniors at once.

"Lascelles, the new maths master, you know. It seems that he knows Quelch, and they're jawing about Oxford, I think. I happened to pass the study."

Harry Wharton grasped the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder and shook him.

"Do you mean to say that Lascelles got here before us?" he demanded.

"Ow! Don't sh-shake me, you ass! You'll make my glasses fall off, and—"

"Is Lascelles really here, you fat chump?"

"And if they get broken you'll have to pay for them!"

Wharton glared at him.

"Are you being funny, or is Lascelles really here?" he demanded.

"Of course he is. I heard him telling Quelch. You see, I happened to tie up my bootlace as I was passing Quelch's study, and so I happened to hear—"

"Then how the deuce did he get here?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "He certainly didn't come by the six train at Courtfield, or by the local to Friardale."

The juniors looked at another in astonishment. It was not, of course, a matter of great interest how the new master had arrived at Greyfriars School; but it was very curious to discover that he had arrived there before them. Certainly he had not come by the London express to Courtfield, as had been expected. He had arrived at Greyfriars apparently, while they

had been waiting for him in Courtfield. It certainly looked rather mysterious.

"He did come to Courtfield," said Billy Bunter. "I heard him tell Quelch he took a cab from Courtfield. Besides, I saw the cab."

"He jolly well didn't come in the express!" growled Bob Cherry. "Must have come by an earlier train, after all, the duffer."

"But there isn't an earlier train from London," Nugent remarked, "only if he came two hours earlier. When did he come, Billy?"

"About half an hour ago."

"Then he must have left Courtfield only a few minutes before we got there," Harry Wharton remarked; "and how he got to Courtfield is a giddy mystery. There certainly wasn't a train to bring him."

"Here he is," said Billy Bunter, as the door of Mr. Quelch's study opened, and a handsome, well-built man, with clear-cut features, came out.

The juniors turned their gaze upon the new mathematics master.

Then they gasped.

"Great Scott!"

"Begad!"

"My hat!"

Billy Bunter blinked at them curiously. He did not understand the cause of their amazement. But their amazement was extreme.

They had supposed that they did not know Mr. Lascelles—that they had never seen him before. But now that they saw him, they found his face quite familiar. That short, curly brown hair; those keen, handsome, dark eyes, the clear-cut features; they had seen them before in the ring at Chilford!

For as they looked upon Mr. Lascelles, the new mathematics master of Greyfriars, the face they saw was the face of Larry Lynx, the boxer!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Simply Amazing!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stared blankly at the new master. It was not a polite thing to do; but they could not help it.

Mr. Lascelles could not help noticing their blank stare; and he paused in his passage, regarding them with a somewhat puzzled expression.

"Well, my boys?" he said, in a deep, pleasant voice.

"M-m-my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, again, helplessly. "Is—is it a lark?"

"Or a giddy dream?" muttered Nugent.

Mr. Lascelles' expression became still more perplexed.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked.

"Ma-a-atter!" stammered Harry Wharton.

"Yes. Surely it is not a custom at Greyfriars for junior boys to stare at a new master as if he were some strange animal?" said Mr. Lascelles severely.

"A—a new master!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, I am the new mathematics master, Mr. Lascelles."

"Mr. Lascelles?"

"Certainly. Why should that cause you astonishment, my lad? What is the matter with you? You puzzle me very much."

Mr. Lascelles' voice had grown severe. Perhaps he suspected that he was being made the victim of a schoolboy "rag."

The juniors were still staring at him blankly. It was somewhat dusky in the passage, and the light was not yet on. But they saw Mr. Lascelles' face closely enough, and it was the face they had seen in the ring at Chilford, or another face exactly like it. True, there were no signs of recent conflict about it, but there are ways and means of removing such signs. If Mr. Lascelles was not Larry Lynx, he must be his twin brother at least. What did it mean?

That Larry Lynx could be also Mr. Lascelles, an Oxford man and a master of mathematics, was wildly impossible. The juniors realised that as soon as they began to talk. But the resemblance—

And now they observed something else, which in the first shock of astonishment had escaped them. Mr. Lascelles wore a moustache—a short, curling, brown moustache, the same colour as his hair.

And they remembered that Larry Lynx had been quite clean-shaven.

Yet the features—and the same good-

humoured, boyish expression—it was astounding. And the build, too, was the same, although, of course, the difference in clothes made a good deal of difference in appearance.

"Begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "He's got a moustache, dear boys!"

"My hat! But—"

"Only a little one!" murmured Bob Cherry.

But it was evident that, little or big, a moustache could not have been grown in a couple of hours.

"What are you saying?" asked Mr. Lascelles sternly. "Is this some peculiar form of schoolboy humour, may I ask? I may tell you that I am not accustomed to being stared at in this manner."

"Sorry, sir," said Wharton, recovering himself a little. "But—but—"

"Well?"

Wharton had been about to blurt out that he had seen someone who resembled Mr. Lascelles very closely, but he stopped in time. He could not mention Larry Lynx without a confession that the Co. had spent the afternoon at Chilford Ring, and that was far out of bounds, as well as being a place the Head might possibly not approve of. It would not have been judicious to explain to a master where they had been. Nugent pressed Wharton's arm as a hint, but he had already taken thought of that.

"I—I—we—" stammered Wharton. "The—the fact is, sir, we're surprised to— to see you here, you know."

"I really do not see why you should be surprised!" said Mr. Lascelles icily. "By the way, what is your name?"

"Wharton, sir—Lower Fourth Form."

"And why are you surprised to see me here, Wharton?"

Wharton had recovered himself by this time. Besides the injudiciousness of a confession that they had been miles out of bounds, it was likely, too, that the mathematics master would be by no means pleased at being told that he closely resembled a professional boxer. It was better to say nothing about Chilford or Larry Lynx.

But there was another cause of surprise which the juniors were able to explain, and Wharton proceeded to explain it.

"We—we waited for you in Courtfield, sir," he said. "We heard you were coming, and we called at the station with a motor-car, sir, to give you a lift here. But you didn't come by the express."

Mr. Lascelles' brows contracted a little. "And why did you wait for me at the station in Courtfield?" he demanded, with a note of sternness in his voice.

"We wanted to give you a lift in the car to the school, sir," said Nugent.

"Yaas, sir. It was really my idea," chimed in Lord Mauleverer. "I hope you're not offended, sir. As it was raining, begad—"

Mr. Lascelles' face broke into a smile. "Certainly I am not offended," he said.

"It was very kind and thoughtful of you; but as I was not aware of your intention, I was unable to avail myself of your kindness. I did not come by the express."

"No, sir; and that's how we missed you."

"I had business in another town, and came by another train, after all," Mr. Lascelles explained. "As my train came in about ten minutes before the express, I was gone from Courtfield, probably, before you arrived there. I am sorry; and I thank you for your kind intention."

And Mr. Lascelles nodded pleasantly, and walked on.

The juniors looked after him as he disappeared in the direction of the Head's study. Then they looked at one another. They were still in a state of great astonishment.

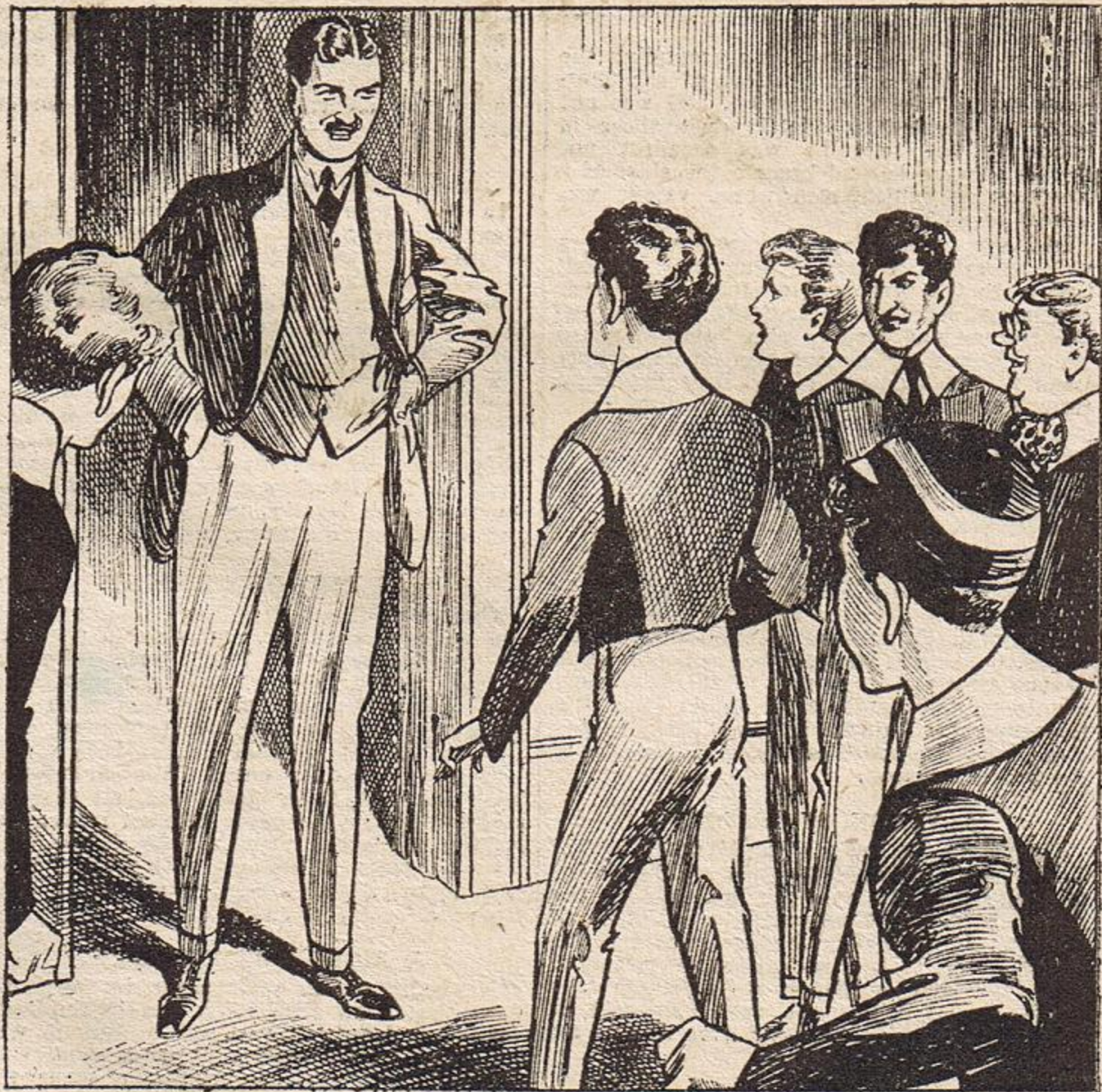
"Blessed if I ever saw such a likeness!" said Bob.

"It's amazin', begad!"

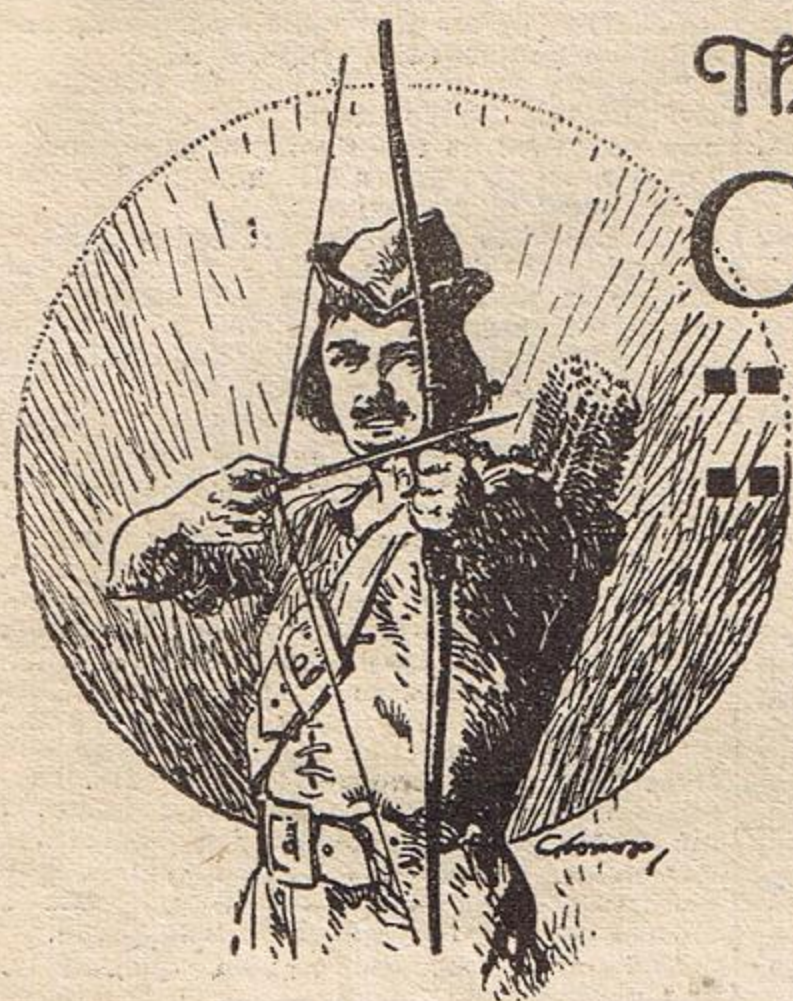
"Blessed if I shouldn't think it was the same man," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "Only, of course, it's impossible. That chap at Chilford—"

"Utterly impossible!" said Johnny Bull. "Besides, he's got a moustache. The other man hadn't a moustache!"

(Continued on col. 3, page 22.)



A SURPRISE FOR THE CO.! The door of the study opened, and a handsome, well-built man came out. Harry Wharton & Co. gasped and stared blankly at the newcomer. "Great Scott!" For as they looked upon Mr. Lascelles, the new master, the face they saw was the face of Larry Lynx, the boxer. (See Chapter 3.)



The OUTLAW KING!

The Wonderful Story of Robin Hood, the great Outlaw, and his merry men of Sherwood, and the famous knights who lived at the time of Richard Cœur de Lion.

ROBIN HOOD.

HERE is no portion in the history of this country quite as fascinating as that which deals with the famous outlaw, Robin Hood, the leader of the band of bold fellows who ranged the forests of the Midlands. They were the terror of wealthy tyrants, and the staunch friends of the oppressed.

Who and what was Robin Hood? His real name was FitzOoth; he came of right noble lineage; there are stories extant in Sherwood of a mysterious baby who was left in the care of an honest woodman and his wife who lived in the depths of Sherwood. We have all heard of the masked knight who left the infant in the care of strangers, together with a round sum in gold.

There was always mystery surrounding the personality of the brave leader of the Sherwood band. The boy grew up, and was not tardy in discovering that amidst those in power in the land he was dreaded, not merely because he had become the chief of a company of fighting-men whose valour was second to none.

In those times, Merry England was not so very merry. The country was in a turmoil, thanks to the treachery of John. John was brother of King Richard, Cœur de Lion, and the throne had been left to John to guard while his brother carried war into the Holy Land for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Saracens.

A ROYAL PRISONER.

Robin Hood, outlaw though he might be, was a King's man. He loved Richard of the Lion Heart, and heard with fury of the entrapping of the rightful King on his way back from the Holy Land. King Richard had enemies in Duke Leopold of Austria and the Emperor Henry VI. These two and King Philip II. of France were quite ready to intrigue with John, who had possession of the Crown of England. But there were countless thousands of men in the Old Country who wanted Richard back. Robin Hood was one of these loyal adherents of the brave monarch.

A VISION OF HISTORY.

Strange as it may seem, the history of Robin Hood is linked up with all the doings of those distant days—the misdeeds of the Old Man of the Mountains, the activities of Saladin, the retreat to Ascalon, and the war round Acre. It is a wonderful story, full of splendor and sunshine, as well as dark deeds, for men thought very earnestly in those times, and gave their lives readily for a cause.

TWO KINGS.

Just single out one section from the history of that epoch, and you can see the spectacle of two kings. We can rule John out, for he was a knave. Reference is made to King Richard, the dauntless Sovereign who at one time held all Europe in the palm

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of his hand; the man of matchless courage, and who commanded the love of all true men. And the second king is a king of poetry, so to speak, the uncrowned King of the Greenwood, Robin Hood, to wit.

FAITHFUL TO DEATH!

It was Robin Hood who helped to keep the real spirit of England alive and alert through the dark years. He stood for the real King, who was far away on the Crusades. You cannot beat the story of pluck and daring, and all in loyalty. We hear of "pep" and vim these days. Robin Hood had all that. He figures as a hero on the brilliant scene of tournament and joust, of martial ridings-off to the war; of beleaguered castles; old-time monks working away through the long days at rubricated manuscripts in their dim-lit cells; bouts at quarterstaff in castle courtyards; unchronicled tragedies on turret stairways.

THE LORD OF SHERWOOD.

In the green realms of Sherwood Robin Hood was supreme. He had his crowd of followers. Among his friends were Little John, Friar Tuck, a perfect mountain of a man, a sage, a splendid philosopher, a fellow who could see the truth of things, and his heart was light because he stood for what was good and of fine import. Then comes Will Scarlett, a doughty fighter; and also we catch a glimpse of the dainty, fay-like Maid Marian, the witching heroine of the leafy glade. It was not without good reason that Robin Hood was well served. He deserved such loyalty, for in days of rapine and treachery his word was his bond.

AN UNKNOWN KNIGHT.

There were times when Robin Hood assumed the guise of a knight, and rode in the lists at the pageantry at Kenilworth. He appeared amidst the gallant company, and won admiration for his address with the lance; but then he rode away unknown, only that all beholders realised that here was a real man, a soldier born. We shall never know all that Robin Hood did, all that he represented, for he never courted fame; but he was a learned man for those days, and all who came in contact with him revered his name as a knight sans peur, sans reproche.

A FIGURE OF ROMANCE.

Maybe it strikes a strange note when one finds that King Richard I. and Robin Hood were associated very closely. But it was so. For Richard came back to his country to find his renegade brother John eager for his life. And in the shelter of the old oaks of Sherwood, deep in the sanctuary of the greenwood, Richard and Robin Hood met. King Richard was a hunted man, but suddenly his pursuers, the hirelings of John, found themselves confronted with the fearless warriors of Robin Hood's men. You can

(Continued on page 28.)

THE BOXER'S DOUBLE!

(Continued from page 21.)

"That certainly settles it."
"And yet—" began Nugent very thoughtfully.

"Yet what?"

"That train that comes into Courtfield ten minutes before the London express—"

"Well?"

"It comes from Chilford," said Nugent.

"My hat, so it does! Then he was there. But the train comes from several other places, too," added Wharton. "It passes through Chilford, that's all."

"Yes; but—"

"I know it looks queer; but it's impossible. Besides, the moustache settles it. But I never felt so knocked over in my giddy natural, I must say! For one moment—"

"I say, you fellows!" burst out Billy Bunter, unable to contain his curiosity any longer. The juniors had forgotten that the Owl of the Remove was near. "I say, you know, what's it all about? you saw Lascelles in Chilford? You don't mean to say that he went to see the prize-fight, too?"

"It wasn't a prize-fight, you fat idiot!"

"I call it a prize-fight, anyway," said Bunter obstinately; "and I suppose you saw Lascelles there! Nice goings-on for a mathematics master, I must say—going to low places to see prize-fights!"

"We didn't see Lascelles there, fathead!" said Wharton.

"You were just saying—"

"We saw a man like him; but it wasn't Lascelles! Now shut up!"

"But, I say—"

"Clear off!"

"Who was the man who was like him? I want to know, you know. I—Ow!"

Billy Bunter wailed with anguish as Bob Cherry compressed a finger and thumb on his fat ear with a grip like a vice. He seemed almost to curl up.

"Yow-ow-ow-ooop!" he roared. "Leggo! Yaroooh!"

"Clear off, and shut up your silly head!" said Bob, releasing the fat Removeite, and raising his right boot. "Now, you chaps, all together, and see who can kick the hardest!"

"Hear, hear!"

Five boots were raised, but they did not reach Billy Bunter. The fat junior scudded away down the passage at a speed that was surprising, considering the weight he had to carry. He paused at the corner to yell "Beasts!" and vanished.

"Now for tea!" said Bob cheerily.

And they made their way to Study No. 13, the famous apartment which belonged to Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Hurree Singh, and Wun Lung, the Chinese.

The chums of the Remove were hungry after their afternoon's excursion, and they sat down to tea with keen appetites and great enjoyment, and for the present the strange resemblance between Mr. Lascelles and Larry Lynx was dismissed from their minds.

But afterwards they could not help thinking of it.

When they saw Mr. Lascelles again, in clearer light, the resemblance seemed to be still more startling, and Wharton thought he even detected a slightly bulbous look about the handsome nose, and remembered that Larry Lynx had been punched very hard there.

And yet that the two men could be the same was wildly improbable.

The moustache settled it, if anything could. The boxer might be able to get rid of the signs of conflict, but he would not be able to grow a moustache in one afternoon. That was an impossibility.

Yet it was very perplexing, and the Co. could not help thinking about it a great deal, and they gave Mr. Lascelles much more thought and attention than they would, under ordinary circumstances, have dreamed of bestowing upon a mere mathematics master.

THE END.

(Next week's topping tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled: "The Fighting Master!" by Frank Richards, and deals further with the mysterious new master of Greyfriars.)

Don't Forget—Next Week's Tale of the Greyfriars Chums Will Be Simply Great!

THE TRICK THAT FAILED!

Dick Turpin and his young comrade have fallen into merciless hands, and discover a plot to bring Richard Neville to the gallows. How do the two highwaymen escape from their enemies?

BETRAYED!

A Dashing, Thrilling, Full-of-action Yarn, dealing with the amazing adventures of DICK TURPIN, HIGHWAYMAN, and his merry young comrade RICHARD NEVILLE,

on the Broad Highway. Get to know Dick and his chum—they will take you through many wonderful experiences!

By DAVID GOODWIN.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

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 Sweeny, 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. Whilst he is away Dick falls into the hands of Captain Sweeny, but he escapes serious injury.

Having waited several days for the return of Turpin, Dick Neville decides to set out in quest of his comrade, fearing foul play. He meets Dick Turpin and his young brother Ralph, near the latter's old school, St. Austell's. Ralph decides to return to school until the great campaign against Hector Neville is commenced. Ralph parts with his brother, riding to St. Austell's, whilst the two highwaymen make for Basing Hall to visit Sir Henry Stanhope, a very old friend of theirs.

(Now read on.)

THE NEW MASTER OF BASING HALL!

THE two highwaymen dismounted and knocked on the big, iron-bound doors of Basing Hall. The doors opened after some delay. A red-nosed serving-man appeared.

"Is Sir Henry within?" said Dick.

"Sir Henry?" said the man, staring.

"Ay!" said Dick sharply. "Sir Henry Stanhope!"

"Sir Henry is dead a month since, sir," said the astonished servant. "He broke his neck in the hunting-field, sir. His nephew, Sir Cecil, is master here now."

"Worse luck!" said a muttered voice inside the hall.

"Bad news, Dick," said Turpin; "the county is the poorer by a fine old gentleman, who was not so full of narrow prejudices as some. We had better go on our way."

"Nay," said Dick, who was much grieved at the news, "we must at least offer our condolences to his nephew."

"Much condolences he needs, since he comes into an estate and a title," grunted Turpin, "and a fat rent-roll! Methinks this nephew will be worth meeting on the highway. My purse is getting low."

"Announce us to Sir Cecil," said Dick impatiently. "Mr. Richard Neville and Mr. Smith."

"I doubt you will need little announcing, sir," said the serving-man, with a bibulous grin, leading the way to the morning-room. "The house is open these days."

Wondering what the fellow meant, Turpin and Dick entered the great morning-room as the servant shouted their names, and a strange sight met them.

Although it was nearly midday, breakfast,

or the remains of it, served in rich plate and fine crockery, still lay on the tables. In the room were seven or eight seedy-looking bucks, who looked decidedly more knaves than fools, laughing, talking, eating, and drinking—the latter more especially. One of them, a dirty-faced but showily dressed man with a long sword at his side, and greasy black hair, stared intently at the two strangers.

The odour of stale wine was everywhere. The room was slatternly and unkempt. The company lolled or sat on the chairs and sofas, and from among them came a tall, pale youth of about twenty-one, with a foolish laugh and a weak chin, holding decidedly more wine than he could carry, early as it was.

"Come in gentlemen, come in!" he said thickly. "Gladseeyou! Washer namesh? Ne' mind, never could 'member namesh. Yes, I'm Sir Cecil Stanhope."

"I am deeply grieved to hear—" began Dick.

"Plague take th' grief, man! Bottler-wine's best cure for that! Have you breakfast yet? I never eat breakfast; bottler-wine's berrer."

"Both good things in their way," put in Turpin, who was hungry. "Since you are so hospitable, sir, breakfast would be very welcome."

"Here, you rogues!" roared Sir Cecil to the two servants at the door, "bring breakfast, quick! Clear away this rubbish!"

He made a clean sweep of the table with his hunting-crop, brushing all the china, plate, soiled dishes, and ewers on to the floor with a crash. The other men in the room laughed, and the servants quickly brought a sumptuous breakfast.

"Sorry can't shtop," said Sir Cecil. "Got to hunt. Back soon!"

He staggered out. The rest of the men followed, several of the seedy ones scowling suspiciously at the new-comers.

"Let us get on the road again," whispered Dick, in disgust. "This place makes me sick!"

"Nay, man, let us make the most of a good breakfast," said Turpin, seating himself, "and let others do as they like."

Dick made a wry face, but he followed Turpin's example, and in a few moments they were left to themselves.

"Open house with a vengeance," chuckled Turpin, eating away, "and mighty pretty guests!"

"It's plain enough," said Dick, "this young fool, Sir Cecil, is a weakling and a debauchee, and he has opened his house to that crew of seedy bucks and gamblers, who are making the most of their time."

"I warrant they pluck him well," said Turpin, cutting into a large ham. "However, he is rich enough, doubtless."

"Ah, sir, these are different times to when you were here before," said a funereal voice, and Dick saw beside him the old butler who had served Sir Henry in those days past, bringing more viands.

"There seems a difference," said Dick.

"It can't last much longer, sir. All these riff-raff is stripping Sir Cecil hand over fist, an' he lets 'em. The estate ain't rich. He's lost thousands a'ready, an' chucks it away right an' left. The bailiffs have been in twice. I wish there was a gentleman here to stop it, so I do. That there Captain Spott—which he's no more a captain than I am—is the worst. It'll be all up here soon."

Dick made no reply, for he could not well discuss his host's affairs with the butler; but he thought the more. The old servant departed gloomily.

"Pah!" said Dick. "I wish I could do something to save the young fool; but it's not my business, and he would resent it. Some flats enjoy being swindled and ruined, I verily believe. Who's this?"

The greasy man with the black hair came into the room, and, swaggering up to the table, leaned his elbows on it and leered menacingly into Dick's face.

"My name is Captain Spott!" he said.

"I'm Captain Spott!" repeated the man, rapping on the table with his knuckles.

"So you said before," replied Dick, helping himself to coffee.

"And," said the captain, rising to his full height, and twirling his greasy moustache, "I am not a man to be trifled with! Mark that!"

"I shall not trifle with you, sir," said Dick grimly; "quite the contrary."

"Whom have I the honour?" said the captain, suddenly becoming polite. Dick did likewise.

"Richard Neville of Faulkbourne," he said, bowing, "very much at your service. My friend, Mr. Smith," he added, indicating Turpin. "Mr. Smith, Captain Spott."

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, putting his hands into his breeches-pockets, and thrusting out his stomach, "since we all know each other, I hope our acquaintance will be brief. In the name of the other guests, I warn you to get out of Basing Hall as quickly as you please. Button your belts over your breakfasts, for it's all you'll get here, and then take the road again, and look for fresh game!"

"At your bidding?" said Dick.

"Yes, hang it, at my bidding! There are enough of us plucking the pigeon already, and we're not going to share out the plunder to any more. We found the game, my buck, and we'll cook it to our own liking. No others need apply."

"Ah!" said Dick. "You refer to our hospitable young host?"

"Enough talking!" said the captain, with an oath. "Are you going, or not?"

"I haven't thought about it yet," said Dick.

"Well, think about it quickly!" cried the captain. "Ten thousand demons! Am I to wait here all day?"

Dick went on with his breakfast, to which he did full justice, while the fellow stood and fumed.

"Have you decided yet?" he burst out at last.

"I am still thinking about it," said Dick. Captain Spott hit the table a violent blow with his dirty fist.

"There are two ways out of this house?" he said ferociously; "one by the door, and the other by the window! Choose which it shall be!"

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Further Breathless Adventures of DICK TURPIN, Highwayman, Next Week!

Dick leaped to his feet, flushing crimson, and his sword leaped from its sheath. Captain Spott turned as pale as his unwashed face would let him, and retreated hastily.

"Come draw!" cried Dick. "I suppose you put this affront on me to force a fight. Is it not so? Out with your iron, and we shall soon settle the matter!"

Captain Spott measured Dick with his eye, and looked uncomfortable. Then he gave what he meant to be a jovial laugh.

"I did not wish to ruffle you," he said, swaggering, "still less to fight you. My skill with the sword is so great that I dislike to draw. I always have the hanged ill-luck to kill my man, which is troublesome now that the law is strict against duelling. There is plenty for all, sir, so let us be friends."

"If we are to be friends," said Dick, "you must first wash your face. My friends all have clean faces. Come, I will add you to the number!"

He made a quick dart forward, and throwing one arm round the rascal's body, dragged him to the table.

Captain Spott bellowed and struggled lustily, but Dick held him tight, and emptied the coffee ewer into a bowl with his free hand.

"Now, Smith," he said, "that napkin!"

Dick dipped the napkin in the hot coffee, and began to scrub vigorously at the captain's face. The fellow kicked and spluttered frantically, but Dick only scrubbed the harder, hissing like a groom the while, and, after giving his victim a thorough good wash, flung him aside.

The captain sat down on the floor with a heavy bump. Purple with rage, he leaped to his feet, and shook his fist wildly at Dick.

"Death, Neville, why can't you let the man alone?" cried Turpin, in a snarling voice. "What a meddling knave you are!"

Dick turned on him as if he had been stung, then he suddenly checked himself.

"I hope he pinks you through the ribs for it, and I shall be well rid of you!" growled Turpin.

"Ay, he shall pay for it!" cried Captain Spott, trembling with rage. "With his heart's blood he shall pay for it!"

Dick took a couple of steps forward, and the valorous captain took to his heels and fled from the room. Turpin threw himself into a chair, and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"What a pestilent knave!" said Dick. "He was not even grateful to me for the trouble I took to wash him. Egad, Turpin, I had forgotten our agreement to quarrel. I was within an ace of pulling out my rapier at you!"

"It would not have been amiss if you had," said Turpin; "there's nothing like realism. However, I think things will do very well as they are. You had better not call me Turpin, though. This house is too full of eyes and ears."

"I think the sooner we are out of it the better," said Dick. "There is nothing to be gained by staying, and it sickens me to see a gentleman's house, and an old friend at that, turned into a thieves' kitchen."

"At least there's nothing to be feared here," said Turpin, "and the fare's good. You're too fastidious, Dick. We shall fare better here than at the inns; and you have to see Ralph to-night—isn't it so?"

"Yes; I must hear the news of St. Austell's," said Dick. "And the stabling is good here, 'tis true. For one night I might stay. But I shall ride out and learn what is to be learnt, until I meet Ralph. I cannot stay in this den all day! Faugh!"

"For myself, I've had a deal of riding lately," said Turpin, stretching himself out in the best armchair, "and I will take my case till you return!"

TURPIN DRUGS HIS COMRADE!



As Dick Neville turned to speak to his neighbour, Turpin deftly drew a little paper packet from his breast, and, with a quick movement, emptied the white powder into Dick's glass!

At four o'clock—being now on the best of terms with all the household—he ordered the best repast the house could afford, and fared very well indeed. The guests were all away, and Turpin had the place to himself.

After a sumptuous feast he retired to an alcove in the morning-room, partly shrouded by a curtain, where he had noticed a well-padded armchair. And there he composed himself for a quiet nap.

Turpin was ever the lightest of sleepers, and had a hand always ready to a weapon, as many who had tried to catch him napping knew to their cost. Had he been a heavy slumberer, however, he must have been awakened by the noisy return of the hunters and their entry into the dining-hall next door.

Turpin listened for a while to the sounds from the further room, then presently the noise ceased, the door of the morning-room opened, and in came the revellers.

"We shall be quieter here, and can discuss the matter," said the grating voice of Captain Spott. "Tis best your serving-men should hear nothing of it, Cecil, so do not speak too loud. Both the fellows are away, but we shall have our bird when he returns, as I have learned he will. 'Sdeath, but I'll wipe out the grudge to-night, besides earning a good store of guineas!"

"But who is he, Spott?" said a voice. "I tell you 'tis none other than Dick o' the Roads, the highwayman! Burn me, if I'd known it this morning I would have tackled him mighty differently."

"And then you might not have had your face washed—eh?" said another voice.

"Another word from that mighty long tongue of yours, and I call you out!" snarled Spott. "If Dick o' the Roads is too much for me, be assured I can fight you with the greatest ease, Shedlock!"

"Gently," said the first voice. "Go on, Spott, what's the plan? We didn't know we had such highfliers among us."

"I knew it 'is morning," said Sir Cecil thickly. "He tol' me he was Richard Neville. He was fren' my uncle's. Of course, he's a highwayman. What 'bout it?"

"What about it? Why, there's five hundred guineas reward for him, and we'll have it before to-morrow. I've got the stuff here that'll take him safe as a church. You fellows will have to help."

"Good!" said the rest. "He won't get away from us."

"No, hang m' if you shall!" said Sir Cecil incoherently. "That's too bad, Shpott! What harm's he done us?"

"Harm? What of that? It's the good he'll do us. Five hundred golden guineas! As for harm, I swore to have his life, and I mean it. The brute insulted me—laid hands on me! Don't be a fool, Cecil; you won't let this chance go?"

"Smy house!" said Sir Cecil obstinately. "Sjolly good fellow, too! My guest. Won't have him trapped."

"Nonsense, man! You're not going to give up five hundred guineas. You shall have it all. You want it badly enough. The bailiffs will be in to-morrow, and you're at the end of your tether. It'll be all U P here soon else. The money will just save you."

Captain Spott winked to the others. Sir Cecil swayed in his seat, and smiled foolishly.

"I dunno," he said thickly. "Musht get some ready money shomewhere. But he's good fellow. Shpose it's all ri'. Leave it t' you."

"That's right," said Spott. "Now then, here's the plan. You see this packet of powder? A pinch of it in the young fiend's wine will put him asleep as sound as a bell within two minutes, and it'll be twenty-four hours before he comes to again, at the earliest."

"He'll sup here to-night—he and his friend Smith, who is none too fond of him. I'll see he takes the stuff. You fellows will have to be extra civil, and not put him out, for he's none too fond of our company. When he's unconscious, I send for the Riders, and then the five hundred guineas are mine."

"Ours, you mean," said the others.

"Ay, ours, of course!" said Captain Spott, with his tongue in his cheek. "No trouble, no danger—certain success! It's better than violence, for I warn you, few folk meddle with Dick o' the Roads when he's awake. He would put at least six of us beyond need of anything but a coffin before we secured him. As it is, we shall take him with no more trouble than a slaughtered bullock!"

"True enough," said Shedlock. "Now to arrange the details, and we have him! The—'Sdeath! Did something move behind that curtain?"

The company started up, all save Sir Cecil, who was almost asleep. They gathered round the curtain, each man frowning suspiciously, and his hand seeking the hilt of sword or pistol-butt. Captain Spott threw the curtain back.

Before them, snoring gently, was the form of "Mr. Smith," apparently fast asleep.

For some seconds the guests stared at the sleeping highwayman as if spellbound, each man fingering the hilt of his sword. Turpin snored peacefully, his head fallen forward on his chest.

"'Sdeath!" muttered the man on Captain Spott's right. "He has heard all we said, for certain. We are undone!"

"Pish!" murmured another, drawing his rapier very gently from its sheath, so as to make no noise. "That is a matter, comrade, which is easily mended. He need never open his eyes again!"

"Nay! Hold!" whispered Captain Spott, catching the man's wrist, as he poised his rapier. "That will do us no good, and perhaps lead to the spoiling of the plan? What should we do with the body?"

"Ay, we are not in the woods now, but in Basing Hall!" muttered the first speaker. "It will be a ticklish matter to call in the Riders to take Dick Neville if we have already a corpse to answer for!"

"Dead men tell no tales!" grumbled he of the rapier. "This is the highwayman's comrade—belike also wanted for the gallows for all we know. We sought to arrest him. He resisted, and attacked us, and was slain in fair fight! What better tale need we have?"

"We do not even know he has heard anything," said Spott, looking intently at Turpin's face; "and if you want my opinion, this Mr. Smith is no friend of Dick Neville's—far from it. I heard him say only this morning that he wished himself well rid of him, when Neville and I were about to fight."

"The captain's right," returned the first speaker. "If he hasn't heard, there's no

CATCHING A WEASEL ASLEEP!

DICK left the house, and shortly afterwards passed out through the park gates on Black Satan. Turpin, on the other hand, made himself thoroughly comfortable. During the afternoon he explored the house and grounds, and learned a good deal about Sir Cecil's peculiar guests from the serving-men and the garrulous old butler. All of which matters he stored up in his mind.

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harm done. None of us are such lambs that we wish to be inquired after when the Riders come."

"But I say we cannot risk it; he may have heard the whole plot," growled the man with the drawn sword; "and we do not know that he will warn his comrade, for all—"

He broke off suddenly, for Turpin stirred slightly. The conversation had been carried on almost in whispers, and the seeming sleeper had snored luxuriously through it all. But now he moved, opened his eyes, yawned, and stretched, and then stared in sleepy surprise at the guests who stood around him.

There was a pause of indecision, and for a moment it seemed as though the bystanders were going to attack him, after all. But Captain Spott laughed awkwardly, and took out his snuff-box with a flourish.

"Well slept, comrade!" he said to Turpin. "We have been laying a small wager as to how long you would slumber if we started a fencing-match in front of you. I and this gentleman"—he waved his hand to the man with the naked sword, who certainly looked a suspicious object enough—"were about to essay it, when you awoke and baulked us. We heard the music of your slumberous nose as we sat at dinner, but you must forgive our intrusion. No offence was meant."

"I am very slow to take offence," said Turpin, blinking amiably at the company. "It seems I came here after dinner, and fell asleep behind the arras."

"Od-so!" laughed the captain. "And we did not even wake you? We were none too quiet over our wine, I fear."

"I was in the land of dreams," said Turpin, who had no scruples about these little matters, as Dick was wont to have. "I heard nothing."

"Nor even what we said?" put in one of the others.

"I thought myself alone," returned Turpin.

"Nay, it suits us to be more sure of that!" growled the man with the sword, gripping his hilt threateningly. "'Tis a matter we will prove for ourselves!"

Turpin glanced round, and saw that he was hemmed in. He had sword and double pistols, and had no fear for himself if it came to a fight with such poor fighters as these. Yet the quarters were close, and the odds long. He saw their suspicions were aroused, and an open fracas was the last thing he desired, for his brains had been busy with a plan that tickled his fancy mightily, and which he did not wish to spoil. He saw that in another moment the company would attack him.

"I had a curious dream," he said, fixing Spott with his eye.

"I dreamed," continued Turpin, "that a very pretty plan for making a round sum of guineas was in the air, by the capture of somebody or something, for whom a good reward would be paid."

"Ah!" exclaimed Spott; and the man with the sword leaned forward threateningly.

"And then," continued Turpin dreamily, fixing his eyes on the ceiling, "methought a small, still voice whispered in my ear, 'Tur—' H'm!" He cleared his throat.

"Whispered in my ear, 'Smith, my boy, you are very hard-up! There is but a beggary shilling or two in your purse. What will you do for more? And then, it seemed to me, in my dream, that somehow I had a hand in this most profitable affair, and was able to give some help towards it, and so a small share of the guineas in that reward came to me. A very small share, gentlemen, but enough to make it worth my while. And, in fact, a dream-personage very like the amiable Captain Spott here, with the same noble features and expansive smile, was paying those beautiful bright guineas into my hand, the affair having ended satisfactorily. So you see, gentlemen, you awoke me from a very pleasant dream indeed, for which you owe me some reparation!"

"Here, do you hear that, Barnard?" exclaimed Captain Spott, turning to the man with the sword. "Pink me! I knew I was right. This is far the better way. I understand you, sir," he added to Turpin. "You mean that our little plan was not lost on you, and that you would be glad to join in it?"

"It is the one thing I desire," said Turpin. And it was literally true.

"I knew it," said Spott. "I knew you

bore illwill towards this highwayman, and would be glad to see him hanged!"

"Do not let us lose sight of the desirable guineas," said Turpin. "What will my share come to?"

"Mr. Smith," said the captain to Turpin, bowing low, with the tips of his fingers pressed over his heart, "you shall have any share you like to name, up to one-half, for your help will indeed be invaluable. Septimus Spott's word is his bond!"

"Very good!" said Turpin. "I shall hold you to that. Now, as to the ways of capturing this ruffianly and altogether villainous fellow, Dick Neville. I may tell you he is a perilous knave—my word, yes! You had some scheme, I think, for drugging his wine?"

"You heard a plaugney deal in that dream of yours!" growled the man with the sword, who had reluctantly sheathed his weapon.

"Hold your tongue, Barnard!" said the captain, with an oath. "You are right, Mr. Smith," he continued to Turpin; "it is the only safe way of dealing with the rascal, and I have the stuff here." He tapped his side-pocket knowingly. "We shall press this Dick Neville to dine with us this evening, and while we are at table I shall slip this into his goblet, and call on him for a toast. The stuff is potent, as I dare say your dream told you, and within a couple of minutes the fellow will be helpless as a mummy, nor wake till he finds himself in gaol, with the irons on him."

"Very pretty, if you can arrange it," said Turpin; "but do you think you will get the chance? He has no great love for your company, as I have seen, nor for any of these excellent gentlemen around us. Dick o' the Roads has a hanged proud stomach, my masters, and may refuse to sit at meat with us all!"

"Why, that is true," said Spott gloomily. "What do you suggest? Can you not persuade him to dine with us, in your company?"

"I think I might," replied Turpin. "But you had best leave the drugging of the wine

to me, who will sit beside him. He will be too suspicious of you to give you the chance, believe me."

Captain Spott shot a glance at Turpin. "I am willing enough," he said, by no means sorry to be relieved of the job, which he guessed would mean his death if Dick detected it. "I will give you the paper of powder before we go in to dinner. You bring him with you, and see that he does not fight shy of us."

"I will," returned Turpin. "And, mark you, Mr. Smith," said the captain harshly, "the game was of my starting, and I am to deliver him up and take the reward, which I shall divide amongst us! See that you are loyal to the cause, and play no tricks with the booty!"

He dropped his hand fiercely on his sword-hilt as he spoke, and "Mr. Smith" gave a nervous start.

"Nay, nay, sir," he protested; "you may rely on me. I am a man of peace, and seek not to quarrel—let us have no hasty sword or pistol business. Pistols! I declare the very word makes me shudder. You shall have the credit of the business, Captain Spott. And now, when we have the fellow soundly drugged, what will you do with him?"

"I suppose there is nothing for it but to call in the King's Riders, and hand the highwayman over to them," said Spott gloomily.

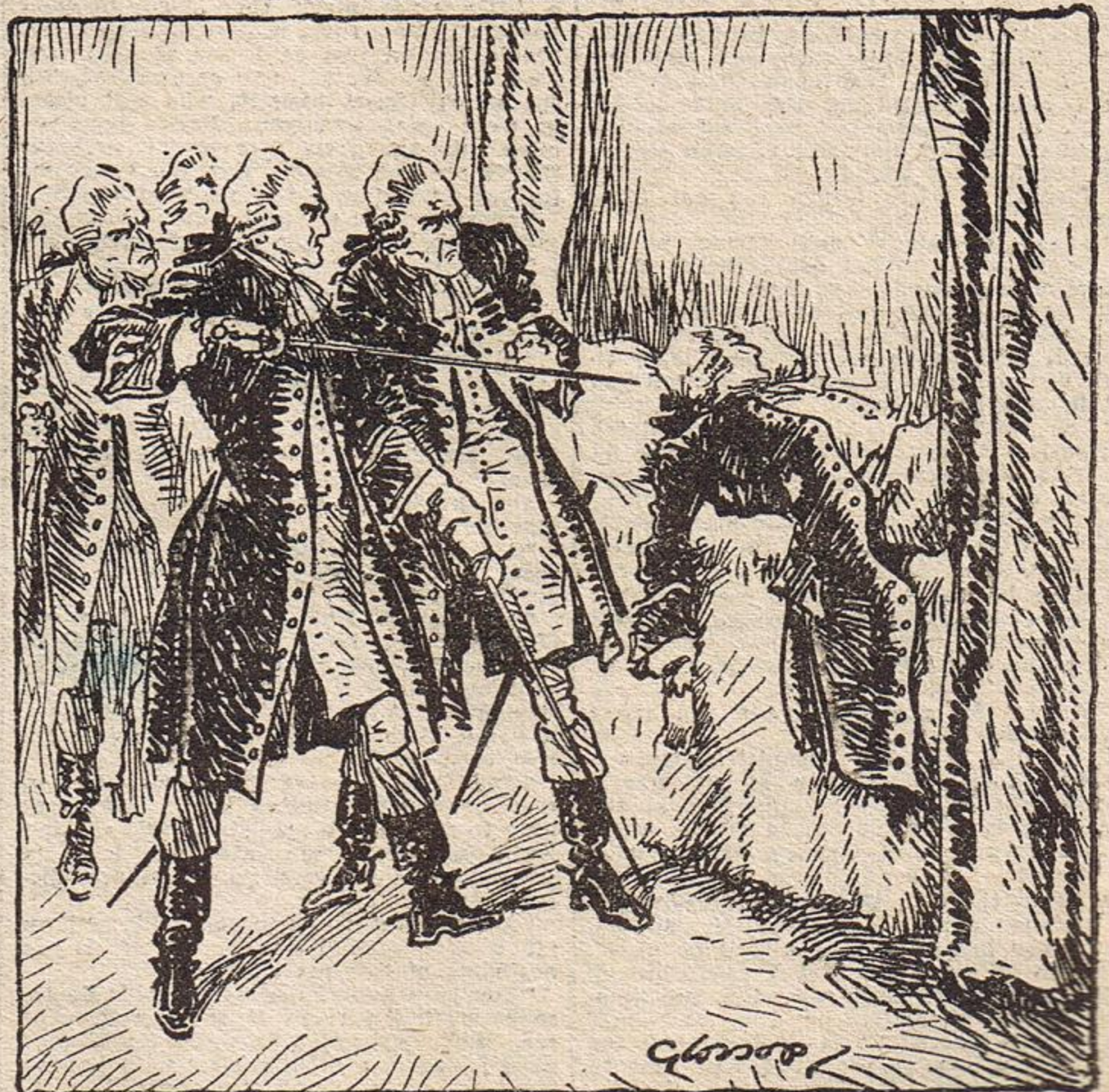
"Nay; I think that is a poor way," said Turpin. "They will want their finger in the pie, and perhaps try to chouse us out of the reward. Moreover, I take it, none of us are very anxious to meet with the King's Riders ourselves."

There was a unanimous chorus of approval of this sentiment.

"I propose, then, that we call in a magistrate of good standing. Sir Adam Vincent lives at Stourton Hall, close by. We can deliver this Dick Neville to him and his men, and he will certify us the reward. Thus our prisoner will go straight to the court."

"Agreed!" cried the guests, much

DICK TURPIN IS CAUGHT NAPPING!



Captain Spott threw the curtain aside. Before them, snoring gently, was the form of Dick Turpin, apparently sound asleep. "S'death!" muttered Spott. "He has heard all we said, for certain. We are undone!" "Nay," said the man with the rapier. "That is a matter which is easily mended. He need never open his eyes again!" (See page 24.)

pleased at "Mr. Smith's" advice—all save Barnard, who stood glowering in the background, whispering to one and another of the gang. "And when the guineas are fingered," added Captain Spott, with relish, "we will all go and see this knave dance on nothing at Hutton Heath!"

"Business first, pleasure afterwards!" said Turpin, with a wink at the company, as he left the room. "I go now to bring our quarry to bay. See that a goodly meal is prepared, and shortly you shall come to deal with Dick o' the Roads."



DICK NEVILLE'S PERIL!

WHEN Dick rode away from Basing Hall, after breakfast, he set Black Satan to a good, hard canter to Fensford, to take the taste of the place out of his mouth, for the company he had seen there rose on his stomach. A ruffian he did not object to so much, but this crew of unclean jackals, who fattened on such weaklings as Cecil Stanhope, roused him to loathing.

He remained at Fensford till the shades of night drew in, and then rode back to the plantation just outside St. Austell's, where he halted, and whistled softly for Ralph.

"How it brings the old days back!" he thought. "Yonder's the very tree where the village louts dropped the noose over me when the sneak Dirkley betrayed me to them. Ah, yonder comes Ralph!"

"Hallo, Dick!" said the boy. "How goes it at Basing?"

"Ill enough," returned his brother, and told him how he had found the old house.

"One of the new fellows came to-day, and I don't like the look of him much. A sleek, oily-looking customer, and rather like Hector in appearance. The Housemaster chummed him on to me."

"H'm!" said Dick. "I don't like that. Keep an eye on him, Ralph."

"I think I could make hay of him if it came to that," said Ralph.

"It's treachery you have to fear," said Dick. "I'll see Trelawney, and find out who it is. Hallo! Who comes here?"

His hand dropped on the butt of his pistol, as the sound of an approaching horseman reached him; but he soon saw it was not foe, but friend.

"Turpin! What brings you out here, comrade?"

"A vast of things," said Turpin, reining up beside him. "What news, Dick? Well, young cock o' the bushes, how goes it with you? Your brother will have to leave you, and ride back with me. There's work toward, Dick, such as we both love, so turn your horse to Basing, and I'll tell you all about it as we go."

"You two have all the fun," said Ralph enviously. "I say, Turpin, couldn't you let me ride the highways with Dick? I can handle a barker with the best of you!" And he drew one of Dick's large double pistols from the holster as he spoke. "Look here—"

Before he could finish he was knocked off his feet by one of three dark figures that suddenly rushed out from the wood, and as he rolled over among the brambles he heard a harsh voice cry:

"Stand! Move a finger, and you are a dead man!"

Even Dick saw how completely he was trapped, for he had been off his guard, and two pistol-muzzles stared him in the face, held by a couple of the rascals whom he recognised—as of Captain Spott's gang at Basing.

A third—the man Barnard, who had been so anxious to put an end to "Mr. Smith" when they found him asleep—had no pistol, but held his sword-point at Turpin's breast.

For a moment neither of the two comrades spoke or stirred. They saw that their lives depended on a touch of the finger or a turn of the wrist, and that to draw a weapon would mean their instant death. So they paused and waited, for neither of them ever despaired.

"Disarm Neville!" cried Barnard, who was plainly the leader of the three. "One of you pluck the pistols from his holster and pull him from his horse, while the other covers him. As for you, Mr. Smith, you

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have but to stir an eyelid, and my steel goes through you!"

Ralph, lying where he had fallen, listened with all his ears. Amazed at the sudden onslaught, he still kept his wits about him, and remembered that he had Dick's pistol in his hand. He determined to save his brother at any risk. The enemy had not even noticed him.

As one of the rascals stepped to Dick's saddle and felt in the holster, Ralph rose noiselessly. He was directly behind the man who was covering Dick, and, with a quick dart, he knocked the fellow's pistol up.

It exploded, sending its bullet skywards, and at the same moment Ralph clapped his weapon to the neck of the man who was searching Dick's holster, and dared him to move.

It was all done in a moment. Dick, seeing his chance, and, being no longer covered, seized the searcher by the pistol-arm and wrenched his weapon from him, presenting it in the face of the first man, who had dropped his empty pistol and sprang forward with drawn sword.

The unexpected attack had drawn Barnard's eyes from his prisoner for one single instant, but that instant was enough for the watchful Turpin, who snatched at the sword, twisting it aside, and clapped his own pistol to Barnard's head.

The plucky lad's diversion had turned the tables completely. With such old hands as Turpin and Dick, it needed nothing more.

"I think," said Turpin blandly, "you have entered on a contract that is too much for you, gentlemen. The cutpurse and loaded dice industry does not afford enough experience for three such as you to capture two gentlemen of the road."

Barnard swore furiously, but Turpin's black pistol-muzzle warned him not to move. The others had already surrendered hopelessly.

"And so," said Turpin, "you thought to steal a march on your comrades, Master Barnard, and ensure the reward for yourself? There is mighty little honour among thieves of your kidney; yet I grant you have a little more pluck than your precious Captain Spott. Dick, it is curious that this should happen just as I was about to explain to you. We will now go and deal with the worthy Spott himself, who will afford us more sport than you. Ralph, boy, you came into the game very neatly, and our thanks are due to you. Can you oblige me further by finding a few yards of rope?"

"There is some in the woodshed near by," said Ralph. "Hold him there, Turpin, while I fetch it!"

"Turpin!" cried the three rascals, in chorus, turning white as paper. "Are you, Turpin?"

"Otherwise Mr. Smith, at your service!" said the highwayman, with a grim smile. "Hurry with the rope, Ralph!"

"Od-so, Turpin! What's all this?" cried Dick, laughing. "Are you going to hang them?"

The prisoners' knees began to knock together.

"Ay, by the heels," grinned Turpin, "so that they may see how the world looks upside down!"

"Ay, that will drain the treachery out of them!" said Dick, with a chuckle, as he saw the horrified fears of the captives, he knowing well that Turpin was jesting. "I thought 'twas always a good rule of yours, however, that a bullet in the head is the best cure for a knave."

"And that's true enough," said his comrade. "I don't withdraw that. But as we have to deal with a magistrate this evening, 'twill suit us to be gentle, and leave no corpses about the country, lest it prejudice our case!"

"A magistrate!" exclaimed Dick. "I am all in the dark, comrade. What is the beginning of this little affair?"

"You have missed much by leaving Basing so early, but perhaps it is as well. You see, Dick, my purse is sadly light, so I have joined in a little scheme with Captain Spott and his excellent companions to make a little money by drugging your wine this evening at supper, and handing you over to Sir Adam Vincent, the Justice of the Peace. The five hundred guineas reward will pay us for the trouble, and—"

"Oho! It's so the winds sits, eh?" said Dick, laughing. "I had not thought yonder rascals were so enterprising. Well, comrade,

you and I must go to that supper. 'Twould never do to disappoint them!"

"Just what I came to point out to you," cried Turpin. "And now here comes Ralph with the rope. Stand over those two scoundrels, Dick, while I tie Master Barnard to the trunk of this tree. I fear there is not time to hang them by the heels, but we will come back and do that after supper."

He bound Barnard to a small oak-tree; nor did the ruffian dare resist. Turpin's name had cowed him effectually. Then the two other rascals were tied up in the same way, within a few yards of each other, and effectually gagged.

"I say," said Ralph, gazing at the prisoners with a broad grin, "they look uncommon pretty like that. Shall I fetch the school out to have a look at 'em?"

"Do nothing of the sort, Ralph, but keep your teeth tight shut about everything you've seen," said Dick. "Good-night now, old boy, and remember what I've told you—keep an eye on that new fellow."

Turpin and Dick rode off, leaving the three conspirators to enjoy the night air.

"I fear, Dick, you will have to drink a mighty unpalatable goblet of wine to-night," said Turpin, "for I am commissioned to drug you."

"Why, you don't suppose I shall swallow the stuff?" returned Dick. "If that's part of your plan, we shall have to alter it."

"Nay, not quite that. But you'll have to drink the wine when I've doctored it. Spott is to give me a paper of powder, and they'll all watch to see I spill it into your glass. I have a paper of salt in my pocket ready made up, which I shall put in instead."

"Oh, I'll manage the salt!" laughed Dick. "But make no mistake. I don't want to be drugged by accident."

"When you are going off, under the baneful effects of the drug," continued Turpin, "you may amuse yourself with a little side-play, which will make Captain Spott squirm in his shoes. However, you must go off quite peacefully at last, if nothing happens, after which Sir Adam Vincent will be brought in to claim you. They will send to his house for him, but by my advice they will not tell him who you are."

"And right glad I shall be to see the old boy again," said Dick. "He did me and Ralph the best of terms in Vesey's time, and I don't doubt he'll be glad to see me."

"Then you will be taken by him to Stourton Hall, where you will come to life, and we will concoct a little scheme of punishment for the worthy Spott and his men."

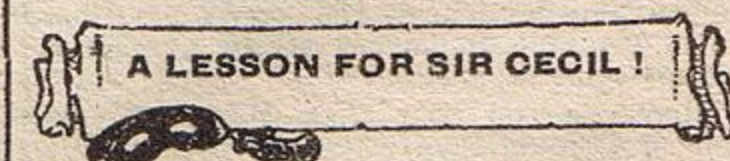
"Not so. We'll give it them on the spot," said Dick, "before Sir Adam, when he comes to take me. I'm mighty pleased at this, Turpin. It will give me the chance I hoped for. I'll clear Basing Hall of its company, and give the young fool Cecil a lesson he needs. I'll hold the whole crew of them just when they think they've got me."

"Or lose your own neck," said Turpin. "That seems to me much the likeliest by such a plan. However, I know nothing will budge you when you've got a notion in your head, so we'll do our best. It will be a narrow margin if we win, I tell you."

"Yonder's the park gate," said Dick, "and by the lights in the dining-hall they are all ready for us."

"Don't forget that you and I are on bad terms," said Turpin, "though I am outwardly civil to you now in order to decoy you to this affair. We'll have our horses in the back stables, where we can get at them easily."

They soon entered the dining-hall, where all the motley crowd were gathered together, and the table was laid with what remained of the best plate and linen Basing Hall could show. Sir Cecil, in his usual state, was reclining limply in an armchair.



A LESSON FOR SIR CECIL!

"WELCOME, travellers!" cried Captain Spott, with a great show of heartiness. "Have you seen anything of Barnard? There are three of us still away."

"We saw nothing of them," replied Turpin; "but I gathered that they are not going to join us at supper."

"Come 'long, gentlemen!" murmured Sir Cecil vaguely, opening one eye. "Ring for servants; somebody! We'll have some dinner—whash?"

"Ay; I'll be with you," said Spott. "I trust your appetite is good sir?" he added to Dick. "No ill-feeling, I beg, over the flowing bowl. Sink all disputes, and let's be merry!"

"Ay; keep a place for me," replied Dick, noting the ugly look that lurked in the captain's eye, despite his efforts to look genial.

Dick grinned inwardly. "Yonder's your place, Neville," said Turpin. "I'll sit beside you, and see you want for nothing."

He made a hideous face behind Dick's back as that worthy went to his seat, indicative of deadly hatred, and winked villainously at the company.

Captain Spott slipped a little packet into his hand as he passed. "Empty it all in!" he whispered.

Turpin replied with a leer, and seated himself by Dick's side.

Both Dick and Turpin, who were hungry after their ride, did all justice to the viands, which were of the best.

The talk round the table ran high, and everyone was very jovial. Dick drank a goblet of claret.

When he had filled the second, and was turning away to help himself to a dish, Turpin deftly drew a little paper packet from his breast, and, with a quick movement, emptied it into Dick's glass. Captain Spott gave him a quick nod.

A few minutes later the captain sprang to his feet.

"Your health, sir!" he cried to Dick, raising his glass.

"Yours," replied Dick curtly, and drained his goblet to the dregs.

He made a slightly wry face, and sat down. There was a moment's pause, and then the conversation began again, nosier than ever. The man nearest the door slipped away out of the room, and did not return.

Dick's head dropped slowly on to his chest. He roused himself with a start, and looked round him. Dull and heavy-eyed, he blinked stupidly. Sir Cecil had gone to sleep.

Dick rubbed his eyes, and the guests, though still talking busily, watched him narrowly. Soon his eyes seemed to close altogether, and his head dropped.

"At last!" muttered Spott, rising from his place, a look of hatred in his red-rimmed eyes. "The score's nearly paid. We've got him!"

Dick's hand, with the motion like that of a man who turns in his sleep, fumbled to his pocket, and drew from it a double pistol. He snored loudly; but the pistol, waving like a reed in the wind, pointed itself slowly at Captain Spott, who had jumped as if a lash had struck him.

"Ah, he often does that when he's asleep," said Turpin coolly; "force of habit, I suppose—he dreams he is on the highway! Don't be afraid, captain, it is not likely he will be able to hit you."

"The fiend!" cried Spott anxiously, hurrying across the room, the pistol's point following him accurately. "He'll have a bullet into me!" he shouted, dodging behind one of his comrades. "I know he will!"

"Don't get behind me, hang you!" cried the man he used as a shield; for Dick's pistol now pointed straight at him, and the two played at Jack-in-the-box for some seconds, each trying to dodge behind the other.

"Take the thing away from him, can't you!" cried Spott, making a dash for the wall. "Take it away!"

One or two of them started to get behind Dick and disarm him, but Turpin was there first, and took the pistol from Dick's grasp. The young highwayman snored on, as though he would not wake for a week.

"What a plaguey trick!" said Spott, "The knave is still dangerous when he's asleep! No matter, he's off now, and the magistrate will be here in a minute, for I have sent for him. The three hundred guineas are ours, and Dick o' the Roads is as good as hanged!"

"I shall shortly trouble you for my share of the guineas," said Turpin.

A dispute all round the room immediately followed as to the share which each was

entitled to, until at last a peal was heard on the great hall bell, and footsteps were heard outside.

"'Tis Sir Adam!" cried Spott. "Let him in, boys! The game's ours at last!"

"Cheer for the three hundred guineas!" said a loud, clear voice.

Captain Spott turned with a start and an oath, and his red face blanched to the colour of slaked lime. A gasp of dismay went round the room.

Dick was sitting easily in his chair very wide awake, a pistol in each hand, the muzzles of which were directed on the company.

"I held two lives in each hand," said Dick blandly, "the first who moves will be shot down."

"And I," said Turpin, who was sitting on the table behind him, "have a pistol in each pocket which, though I do not choose to show him, I will produce for the benefit of the first man whose hand seeks a weapon."

"We are betrayed," shrieked Spott furiously, "he is not drugged at all! 'Tis that scoundrel Smith—he has fooled us!"

"You have fooled yourselves, my gay rufflers," replied Turpin unbendingly, "and 'twas no hard task either. But let me beg you to hear my warning in mind."

The door was flung open, and in strode a big, well-formed man of fifty, with much dignity of bearing. He was dressed in riding-clothes, and carried a hunting-crop in his hand. It was Sir Adam Vincent, and he stared in astonishment at the scene around him. Then his gaze fell on Dick, and his face brightened.

"Arrest him, Sir Adam," cried Captain Spott eagerly; "it is the highwayman, Dick Neville, whom we have captured! Taken in the very act—see his pistols! I appeal to you as a justice of the peace. You must know him!"

"Know him!" said Sir Adam curtly, to Spott. "I know you, you scoundrel! The constables have wanted you this long time past!" He strode up to Dick, who put one of his pistols down with a smile. "By the road! I'm glad to see you, Dick! And there's my hand on it!"

The justice and the highwayman shook hands warmly.

"Now," said Dick fiercely, "out of this, you scoundrels, and never show your face at Basing Hall again! The man who is here after I have counted ten will receive a bullet through his coat-tails—all save Captain Spott, who will remain at my pleasure! Away with you!"

The cutpurses did not wait for the counting. By window and door they scuttled out as fast as they could go, and hurried away from the house of Basing at top speed. Captain Spott, covered by Dick's pistol, alone remained.

"Sir Adam," said Dick, "I find this house in sorry case since I was last a guest in it. I find it in the hands of a youth whom I still think more fool than knave, and since he has tried to entrap me, I will repay him by doing him a service. If the method of it is rough, he has but himself to thank for that."

"Ay, and right sorry I am to see the pass things have come to since my good friend Sir Henry died," said Vincent. "Dick, you have a happy knack of coming always at the right time. I hope some good may come of it, and now these rascals have gone— He glanced scornfully at the young baronet, but said no more.

Sir Cecil, who had been awakened and almost sobered by what had occurred, came across to Dick, his face working piteously.

"'Twas not my wish!" he said hoarsely. "I swear I would have had no hand in it. I—I don't know how it is—"

"Nay, the scheme was no fault of the young fool's," said Turpin; "be not too hard on him, Dick. He refused to listen to it or allow it, but they tricked him as usual, and you see what he is."

"Nay, that I know," said Dick. "Either way, it would count not a straw with me. But look you, Sir Cecil," he said sternly, "you see to what a pass your folly has brought you. You, an English gentleman, herd with rogues and cutpurses, and allow them to fleece you, till it reaches the point of betraying a guest under your own roof. See you that you have brought this goodly estate near to ruin, and made your name a byword in the country?"

"Ay, well said," muttered Sir Adam.

"You owe your downfall to this cowering

knave here, the leader and head of them all!" said Dick, pointing to the scowling Spott. "So now to reckon with him, and even the score against us both. I crave the loan of your hunting-whip, Sir Adam."

Vincent gave it readily, and Dick, throwing down his pistol, laid into the versatile Captain Spott with a zeal that made the rogue caper and roar for mercy. Up and down the room he whipped him, till at last, black and blue, the scoundrel burst through the window and rushed away through the park, bellowing like a bull-calf, and Basing Hall never saw him again.

"Sir Cecil," said Dick, handing back the whip to Vincent, "you are rid of the leeches who have lived on you so long. The estates, I think, are not yet beyond hope, so pull yourself together and start afresh. Leave wine alone, it does not agree with a head like yours, and face your duties like a man. Doubtless you will help him to play a man's part, Sir Adam."

"Ay, with all my heart," said Vincent earnestly, "for my old friend Henry's sake. Come, Cecil, what do you say?"

"I will, I will," cried the young baronet passionately, "for the sake of the old name! I thank you, sir, for what you have done, and I will face the world as a Stanhope should."

"And now, Dick," said Vincent, "where are you bound? Are you long from Faulkbourne?"

"Faulkbourne!" said Dick. "I am but a knight of the road, with two pistols for my fortune, Sir Adam, Faulkbourne is no longer mine—by law. The knaves yonder sought me for the three hundred guineas on my head."

Sir Adam stared dumbly, and then threw himself into a chair and laughed till his sides ached.

"Forgive me for making merry at your misfortune, Dick," he cried, wiping his eyes, "but, on my soul, it is too comic. Those rogues called on me to arrest you, as I was in duty bound to do, and I flouted them, and helped you to rout them. Ho, ho! I am glad I did not know it before—it would have been very awkward for me. But I'll forget it again, believe me. We are all friends here."

"I thought you knew," said Dick.

"Nay, I supposed you were in possession, and a peaceful subject, since Vesey's death and your pardon from the State. And you are outlawed afresh? Your cousin Hector in possession? Pink me, this is not to be borne! Let us go and hound the villain out!"

"Nay, that would scarce become a magistrate," laughed Dick. "I hope soon to bring it about with my own hand, nevertheless. But it grows late, and I think Sir Cecil would best be alone—he has much to think over. Do you help him, Sir Adam, when he has hit on a course. Nay, we will not stop the night—our company will bring neither of you any good reputation. Good-night, and fortune attend you!"

And, refusing all pressure to stay, the two outlaws sought their horses and rode away into the night.

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(Continued from page 22.)

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