

SPECIAL THIS WEEK! GRAND NEW ROMANCE OF CLAUDE DUVAL—HIGHWAYMAN!

Week
Ending
Dec.
22nd,
1923.
New
Series.
No. 257

THE POPULAR 2^D

EVERY
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A Bumper Programme
of TALES FOR ALL.

Four Long Complete School Stories
of

GREYFRIARS, HIGHCLIFFE,
ST. JIM'S & CEDAR CREEK,
WONDERFUL HIGHWAYMAN STORY,
and other features
IN THIS ISSUE.



THE NIGHT RIDER

A WONDERFUL NEW
ROMANCE OF
CLAUDE DUVAL
HIGHWAYMAN

The Christmas Gift Book for You is The "Holiday Annual" Now On Sale!

ANOTHER ROARING BACKWOODS TALE!

It is seldom that Chunky Todgers, the fat junior of Cedar Creek school, has an idea that is worth anything, but this time he strikes a wheeze which does make a stir. Chunky becomes the hero of Cedar Creek!



CHUNKY'S GREAT IDEA!

Another Topping Story of
FRANK RICHARDS & CO.
the famous chums of
the Canadian Lumber School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Chance for Chunky!

A GALOOT had a chance in those days. Chunky Todgers made that remark.

He made it to Frank Richards & Co., who were leaning on the trunk of a big tree near the gates of Cedar Creek School, chatting as they waited for the bell to ring for afternoon lessons.

The fat and chubby Chunky was lying in the grass, his elbows resting on the earth, his fat hands supporting his podgy chin, and his eyes glued upon a book.

The book was one of the volumes from the Thompson Circulating Library, to which Chunky was an unflinching subscriber. Chunky would not miss paying his fee at the circulating library, even to buy maple sugar.

He looked up from the volume, and spoke to the three cheery schoolboys, who looked down at him, smiling. They knew Chunky's taste in books. Chunky was keen on romances of all sorts, and he loved to picture himself in the characters of the novels—when he did not want to be a pirate, he yearned to be the long-lost son of a missing marquis.

"I tell you, a galoot had a chance then!" he repeated. "We live in rotten, commonplace times, you chaps. This book is about the Crusades. Sir Reginald Fitzpippin was a regular tin terror! The way he hewed down the Saracens was a caution. I jolly well wish I'd lived in the reign of Richard the First. A galoot had a chance in those days!"

"My hat!" murmured Frank Richards. "Fancy Chunky hewing down Saracens!"

"Clad in complete armour!" pursued Chunky Todgers, his eyes glistening. "Clad in complete armour, from top to toe, Sir Reginald rushed into the fray—"

"I guess I don't think much of that galoot," said Bob Lawless decidedly. "Must have been a bit of a funk, to wrap himself up like that before he went into a scrap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you're a silly ass, Bob Lawless," said Chunky disdainfully. "You haven't any of the spirit of romance. You've got pluck, I dare say, in your fat-headed way, but you'd never have made a knight of chivalry. Now, that's just where I live. I can just imagine myself rushing on the Saracens—"

"Rushing the other way, you mean?"

"No, I don't!" roared Chunky Todgers. "Rushing on the Saracens and cleaving them to the chine with my trusty blade."

"But what had the Saracens done?"

"Eh? I don't know that they'd done anything, if you come to that. But I'd have cleaved 'em to the chine, anyhow," said Chunky Todgers, with a bloodthirsty look. "Waving, my trusty sword, streaming with blood—"

"Grooogh!"

"I'd have called on my gallant esquires—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And charged the dastardly enemy home," said Chunky, in a thrilling tone. "I'd have rushed into the Soldan, and as my dripping blade gleamed over his head—"

"Phew!"

"I'd have spared his life, when his beautiful daughter threw herself at my feet," said Chunky. "Raising her from the ground with knightly chivalry, I should have kissed her—"

"That's jolly familiar, isn't it, if you hadn't even been introduced?"

"I'd have kissed her—"

"I'm shocked at you, Chunky!"

"Hand!" roared Chunky. "I'd have kissed her hand, you silly ass!"

"And you'd have made it jolly sticky, if you'd just been scoffing maple sugar, as usual," remarked Frank Richards.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky Todgers gave the chuckling trio a withering look.

"Oh, don't be a silly jay, Frank Richards. Look at me!" said Chunky. "Why, I was simply born to be a crusading knight. But suppose a galoot went crusading in these days? Folks would think he'd just got out of a circus—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if he started slaying dastards and traitors, he would get strung up," said Chunky warmly. "And there ain't any dragons to kill—"

"There are still some grizzly bears!" suggested Bob Lawless.

"We don't get even any bears here," said Chunky disconsolately. "I jolly well wish a grizzly would show up here—suppose he got into the school, you know—"

"I know you'd jolly soon get out of it." "I wouldn't! Suppose he collared Miss Meadows or Molly Lawrence?" said Chunky breathlessly. "Suppose his fearful paw was on her neck, and she was shrieking for help, you know, in heartrending accents—same as the Lady Gloriana de Popcorn, when the Saracen grasped her flaxen locks in his red, right hand! I can just see myself—"

"Scouting!"

"No, you jay!—rushing on the grizzly, axe in hand!" roared Chunky Todgers. "With one terrible blow splitting his head to the chine—"

"That would be rather hefty," grinned Bob Lawless.

Chunky Todgers sighed deeply. The picture of himself as a conquering hero was delightful and attractive, but it was, alas, impossible. No grizzly bear was likely to wander down from the Rocky Mountains and seize Miss Meadows in his terrible claws simply for the sake of allowing Chunky to cleave him to the chine.

Frank Richards & Co. chortled. Chunky Todger's vision of himself as a knight of chivalry tickled them. Certainly, he would have required a suit of chain mail of unusual circumference.

"But there ain't any Saracens, and there ain't even a grizzly bear," said Chunky sorrowfully. "I—I say, what are you looking at, Bob?"

Bob Lawless had suddenly detached himself from the tree, and was looking into the shadows of the timber, with a set, scared expression on his face.

He raised a trembling hand to point into the deep shadows.

"Look!" he gasped.

"What the—"

"Bear!" shrieked Bob. "Run for it! Bear! Bear!"

Frank Richards and Vere Beaulere stared blankly for a moment. Then they shouted, too.

"Bear! Bear!"

Chunky Todgers was on his feet in a twinkling. He had a good deal of weight to lift; but he was up like lightning.

His fat, ruddy face had become suddenly pale.

"Run!" roared Bob. "Chunky will keep him off while we get away! Run!"

The three chums started for the school gates at top speed.

But Chunky Todgers did not stop to cover the retreat.

He did not even look into the timber to see the bear.

He pounded after Frank Richards & Co. with a burst of speed that was really astonishing, and passed them in the race for the lumber school.

"Hold on, Chunky!" shouted Bob Lawless. "Drop behind and keep him off."

Chunky did not heed.

He bolted in at the gates like a deer, and crossed the playground without a stop, gasping great gasps, and scuttled into the porch of the schoolhouse. There he slammed the big door, jammed a bar into position, and sank down on a bench, spluttering:

"Ow, ow! Grough! Help! Yoop! Oh, dear! Oh, oh, oh!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

And what came of it!

HA, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. sauntered cheerily in at the gates, having stopped their desperate rush as soon as Chunky Todgers was well ahead.

The gallant Chunky was prepared to face any number of imaginary dragons, but a real

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Look Out for Next Week's Roaring Wild West Yarn!

bear was quite a different proposition. Though if Chunky had only known it, the bear in this instance was as imaginary as the dragons.

"What's the row, you chaps?" asked Tom Lawrence, as the Co. came smilingly in. "Has Chunky gone off his roof? He's just bolted across to the house and vamoosed in, as if a panther were after him."

"I guess he thinks there's a bear around," answered Bob.

"But why—"

"Because I called 'Bear,' I guess," answered Bob Lawless cheerfully. "I didn't say there was a bear, of course; but Chunky seems to have concluded there was. And he vamoosed the ranch like thunder."

"Where is he now?" asked Beauclere, laughing.

"In the house—and I guess I heard him sticking up the bars," said Lawrence.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. walked on to the lumber schoolhouse, some of the other Cedar Creek fellows joining them—all chuckling. The big door was closed fast, and Bob Lawless knocked on it with his knuckles.

"There was a howl from within.

"Get away, you beast! Oh dear! Help!"

"Let us in, Chunky!"

"I c-c-can't—"

"Do you want the bear to gobble us?" roared Bob.

"Ca-a-a-can't you get in at a window?" quavered Chunky.

"My word! Ain't you coming out with an axe to cleave him to the chine?"

"I—I haven't got any axe!"

"Ask Miss Meadows for one."

"Oh dear!"

Knock, knock, knock.

Miss Meadows, the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek, came out of her sitting-room as she heard the knocking.

"Dear me! Why is the door barred?" she exclaimed. "Have you done this, Todgers?"

"D-d-don't unbar it, Miss Meadows!" shrieked Chunky, in alarm.

"Why not?" demanded the schoolmistress severely.

"There's a bub-bub-bub—"

"What?"

"Bub-bub-bear!" stuttered Chunky.

"Let us in, Chunky!" roared Bob Lawless, outside. "Do you want us to be chewed up, you fat villain?"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Is it possible, Todgers, that you have shut your schoolfellows out because you think there is danger?"

"Oh! Nunno! Nunno! B-b-b-but—"

Miss Meadows hastily removed the bar and threw open the door. There was a roar of laughter outside; but it died away suddenly as Miss Meadows was seen.

"What is all this?" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Have you been frightening Todgers for nothing?"

"Oh, ma'am!"

"There is no bear, of course—"

"Nunno, Miss Meadows!"

"I wasn't fuf-fuf-frightened!" gasped Chunky Todgers. "N-n-nothing of the kik-kik-kind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You were simply thinking of your supposed danger, to such an extent that you forgot your schoolfellows," said Miss Meadows. "I am ashamed of you, Todgers!"

And Miss Meadows went back to her room.

Chunky Todgers stared at the crowd of schoolboys in the porch, and his fat face grew redder and redder.

He had had his chance of proving that he was, at heart, as gallant a knight as any of the "galoots" of ancient times, who went into battle clad in complete armour, and clove Saracens to their unfortunate chins—he had had his chance, and this was what he had made of it!

He wished devoutly that he had stayed to cover the retreat of Frank Richards & Co.—especially as there was no bear.

But it was rather too late to wish for that.

After his high words, running away from a real bear would have been bad enough; but running away from a non-existent bear was the limit!

"I—I say, you chaps," stuttered Chunky, "I—I—I really—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"You needn't think I was frightened—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I knew—I mean I—I simply came in to protect Miss Meadows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roar of laughter drowned poor Chunky's voice. He gave it up, and beat an ignominious retreat, leaving the Cedar Creek fellows yelling.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Chunky has an idea.

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. smiled when they came into class that afternoon, and found Chunky Todgers there. For once, Chunky had been early—he wanted to elude the merciless chipping he had been receiving on the subject of the bear.

Chunky gave them a dolorous and reproachful look.

He was not feeling happy.

Having recovered from his fright, he was once again the valiant Chunky, ready to face Saracens or dragons, or whole battalions of dastards and traitors. But such romantic toes were not likely to come along to the school in the backwoods—the utmost Chunky could possibly hope for was a bear—and he was quite tired of the subject of bears.

But there were many smiles in the class that afternoon; and, to the unhappiness

looking "pilgrim" was coming along the trail, and he stopped and dragged off his rag of a hat in salute to Frank Richards & Co. It was Mr. William Bowers, generally known as Dry Billy Bowers—a gentleman who was reputed to possess the greatest thirst in the Thompson Valley.

Dry Billy was supposed to be looking for work, but he generally looked for it with his back resting against the post outside the Red Dog Saloon in Thompson Town—which was, perhaps, the reason why he did not find any.

"Evening, young gents!" said Mr. Bowers, in an oily tongue. "Long way from yer to Thompson, Mister Bob."

"I guess so," assented Bob Lawless. "I hope the exercise will do you good."

Dry Billy made a grimace.

"I wouldn't ask you young gents to help a pilgrim on his way," he said. "That ain't my kind."

"Besides, it wouldn't be any good, would it?" remarked Bob Lawless affably.

And his chums grinned, and even Chunky Todgers emitted a fat chuckle. The Cedar Creek fellows had no money for Mr. Bowers to expend upon "fire-water" at the Red Dog.

Mr. Bowers looked pathetic.

"I've had hard luck to-day," he said. "I've been down to Grimm's fruit farm on a job, and coming back I've lost the money!"

"Poker or euchre?" asked Bob sympathetically.

Dry Billy grinned faintly. He had a sense of humour.

"You've got me!" he answered. "Gents, I'll tell the truth—"

"Not too suddenly—think of your health!"

"I was going to spin you a yarn," said Mr. Bowers. "But I own up—I lost the money at poker." Mr. Bowers looked still more pathetic.

"Gents, I've got a powerful thirst on me—"

Bob Lawless pointed to the creek with his riding-whip.

"Free drinks there!" he remarked.

Mr. Bowers shuddered. He did not care for water taken internally; and, to judge by appearance, he did not care for it very much externally, either.

"Gents, it ain't my kind to ask a galoot for a dollar," he said. "But if you handed me twenty-five cents—"

"It would be time for the skies to fall," answered Bob cheerily. "Good-night, old scout!"

And Frank Richards & Co. rode away by the timber trail, leaving Mr. Bowers blinking after them disconsolately. He turned to Chunky Todgers, who was astride his fat pony now.

"Mister Todgers—"

"Scat!" was Chunky's reply. "You got a dollar out of me once, when you were a stranger here. I guess that's the last dollar you'll ever raise out of me."

Dry Billy sighed.

"It's a hard world," he said. "I'd have expected more than this, Mr. Todgers, from a young gentleman like you—a distinguished young gentleman—"

"Come off!" said Todgers.

And he started up the trail to Thompson, Dry Billy trudging after him with downcast face, troubled with a gargantuan thirst, which, owing to lack of funds, was not likely to be assuaged at the Red Dog as usual.

Chunky Todgers slackened rein after a time, and glanced back at the loafer plodding on his track.

Chunky's face wore a thoughtful expression, and there was a peculiar gleam in his eyes. Great thoughts were working in Chunky's brain, apparently in connection with Mr. William Bowers.

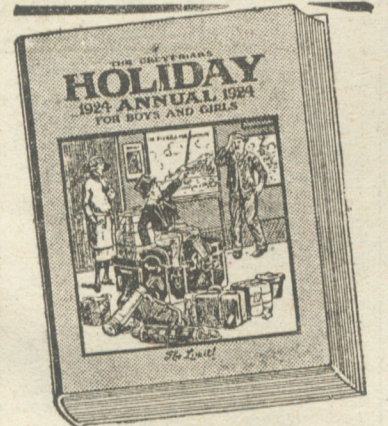
He beckoned to the loafer, who hurried to overtake him, moved by a faint hope of "touching" the fat schoolboy for a "quarter."

"You're looking for work, I believe?" said Todgers.

"For years," said Mr. Bowers impressively, "I've been looking for work. Years and years, young gent. But Fate is agin me. If I find a job, I lose it again the next day, or the day after—"

"I know," assented Chunky. "Well, suppose I could offer you a job—"

"Farm work?" said Mr. Bowers. "don't agree with my health. Otherwise, I should be a prosperous man at this hyer moment."



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of Chunky, among all the girls as well as the boys. It was the unkindest cut of all when Chunky saw Molly Lawrence smiling. Above all, Chunky would have liked to shine as a hero in Molly's pretty eyes. And now Molly's merry smile showed how heroic she thought the fat Chunky was.

Todgers' face, which was usually beaming with fat cheerfulness, was quite gloomy when Cedar Creek School was dismissed after lessons.

Frank Richards & Co. led their horses out, and Chunky came out with his fat little pony.

Bob Lawless called out a warning: "Look out for bears in the wood, Chunky!"

"You pesky chump!" roared Chunky Todgers. "Do you think I'm afraid of bears?"

"Ha, ha! I rather guess so, old scout—just a few!"

"I jolly well wish a bear would come moseying along, and I'd show you!" said poor Chunky; who, to do him justice, was really ashamed of the lamentable display he had made that afternoon.

"What would you show us?" asked Bob.

"A clean pair of heels?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky snorted, and turned his fat pony. He was getting tired of the chipping, but it was not likely to cease yet. A dusty-

Chunky grinned.
 "My poppa wouldn't have you on his farm at any price," he answered. "I don't mean that. I mean an easy job that wouldn't take an hour, and I'd give you a dollar for it!"
 Mr. William Bowers looked very curiously at Chunky Todgers.

"I guess I'm your antelope," he said.
 "S'pose you tell me what the job is, Mister Todgers."
 "I'll tell you as we get along," said Chunky.

He made his fat pony proceed at a walk, and Mr. Bowers kept pace with him, listening, as Chunky Todgers explained the nature of the "job."

And as he listened Mr. Bowers first stared blankly. Then he grinned, and then he chuckled. Finally he said:

"Two dollars."
 "One!" answered Chunky. "I ain't rolling in dollars!"

"Two and it's a cinch!" insisted Mr. Bowers.

"I've only got one and a half."
 "Then I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mr. Bowers generously. "Dollar and a half, and I'm your mutton, with the wool on."

And after some warm argument Chunky Todgers assented, as the town of Thompson came in sight. And Mr. Bowers, securing half a dollar in advance of the payment for the "job," whatever it was, made a bee-line for the Red Dog saloon to quench his thirst in so far as it could be quenched for the moderate sum of two quarters.



THE HERO OF CEDAR CREEK! The schoolboys from Cedar Creek came out on the bank in an excited crowd. On the ground lay Mr. Bowers, apparently insensible, running with water. Beside him was kneeling Chunky Todgers, also dripping. "Safe now!" Chunky was saying. "You're all right now, my man!" (See Chapter 4.)

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
A Chance at Last!

THE next day Cedar Creek School found Chunky Todgers looking his old cheery and satisfied self.

The bear story had by no means been forgotten, and Chunky was chipped without mercy; but he did not seem to mind. In fact, he only smiled.

"You fellows can chew the rag," he told the Cedar Creek schoolboys. "Chew it as much as you like! You'll see some day—perhaps soon! Wait till I have a chance of showing what I'm made of! You'll watch out, I guess, then!"

"You had a jolly good chance yesterday!" grinned Bob Lawless. "Are we to wait till Canada is invaded by the Saracens?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You watch out!" was Chunky's reply. "I guess I'll make some of you sing small when I get my chance!"

After morning lessons he strolled away towards the creek, which was glimmering and rippling by the timber in the spring sunshine. Chunky disappeared into the timber, and Frank Richards & Co. soon forgot all about him, being busy upon the task of cutting down a sapling near the school.

It was about a quarter of an hour later that a sudden yell from the direction of the creek startled the schoolboy woodsmen.

"Help! Help!"
 Bob Lawless dropped his axe.
 "Hallo! What's that?" he exclaimed.
 "Help! Help! I'm drowning! Help!"
 "Come on!" shouted Frank Richards.
 "Somebody in the creek!"

The chums dashed through the trees, and a dozen other fellows, who had heard the stentorian shout, dashed after them.

They came out on the bank of the creek in an excited crowd. Then there was a yell of astonishment.

On the bank lay Mr. William Bowers, of Thompson, apparently insensible, running with water. Beside him was kneeling Chunky Todgers, also dripping.

"Safe now!" Chunky was saying, as the Cedar Creek fellows came breathlessly up. "You're all right now, my man!"

There was a deep groan from Mr. Bowers, and his eyes remained closed. Frank Richards & Co. gathered round in amazement.

Bob tapped Chunky Todgers on the shoulder.

"What's happened, Chunky?"
 Chunky looked up impatiently.

"Can't you see?" he snapped. "Don't bother. I'm trying to restore him. He was nearly gone when I went for him!"
 "Great gophers!"

"Jerusalem crickets!" roared Eben Hacke. "You went in for him!"

Mr. Bowers groaned again, and sat up dizzily. He passed his hand over his eyes, and blinked at the breathless circle of schoolboys.

"Help!" he moaned. "I'm drowning! Ow! Help!"

"You're all right now," said Bob Lawless. "You're safe ashore!"

"Brandy!" moaned Mr. Bowers.
 Bob looked at his chums. Mr. Bowers' taste for brandy was pretty well known, as well as for other powerful liquors; but it was possible that this was a time for stimulants.

"Brandy!" groaned the loafer. "I'm sinking fast!"

"Cut off and ask Miss Meadows, Cherub!" said Bob. "She'll know. I'll look after the scallywag."

Vere Beauclerc nodded, and ran off to the school.

Bob Lawless supported Mr. Bowers with his strong arm, as the loafer seemed about to sink back to the earth. He seemed very weak.

"Thank you, Mister Lawless!" murmured Dry Billy. "I—I say, young gent, what's happened? I remember falling into the creek—"

"Tippy, I'll bet a dollar!" remarked Hacke.

"I may have had a little refreshment this morning," said Mr. Bowers. "Don't be hard on a pilgrim what was born with a big thirst. I fell into the creek. I was drowning! What happened next I don't know! I seemed to feel something catch me—"

"It was me," said Chunky Todgers.
 "You jumped in for me?" exclaimed Mr. Bowers. "Bless you, young sir—bless you for saving my life! My life ain't worth much, p'r'aps," said Dry Billy pathetically, "but it's the only one I've got! This young gent has saved it! Bless you, sir—bless you!"

Mr. Bowers' gratitude was really touching to witness. But he passed on quickly from gratitude to thirst.

"Brandy!" he gasped.
 "Miss Meadows is coming—"

"Brandy!"
 "This way, Miss Meadows."

Vere Beauclerc was hurrying back with the schoolmistress. Miss Meadows had come at once on hearing of the accident. She arrived on the scene, and the schoolboys respectfully made way for her.

There was a flask in Miss Meadows' hand, and Dry Billy's eager eyes glistened at the sight of it. Wet as he was outside, he seemed as dry as ever internally.

"Bless you, ma'am!" he said faintly.
 "Quick—quick!"

"Take a sip from the flask, my poor fellow!" said the kind-hearted schoolmistress.

Dry Billy took a sip—a big sip! To the surprise and horror of Miss Meadows, the whole contents of the flask gurgled down his throat.

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Miss Meadows.

She fully expected Mr. Bowers to roll over in the grass, senseless, after that gargantuan sip, but Mr. Bowers did not. His inside was accustomed to the potent fire-water, and he only smiled.

"I feel better now!" he murmured.
 "Bless you, ma'am! After this young gent, I guess you saved my life!"

"Chunky pulled him out of the creek, Miss Meadows," explained Bob.
 "Good gracious! Todgers—"

"It—it wasn't much, ma'am!" stammered Chunky modestly. "I—I couldn't see a man drown under my eyes, could I?"

"Wasn't much!" exclaimed Mr. Bowers.
 "Sir, you risked your life—your precious young life—plunging into the creek to save a man who was sinking, at the last gasp! Suppose I'd dragged you under! I shudder to think of it! Sir, I shall never forget

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this—never—never! The bravest lad I've ever struck—the very bravest—the king-pin of them all! Don't say it wasn't much, sir—don't!"

"Oh—oh, really—" gasped Chunky. "Todgers, you appear to have performed a very brave and generous action," said Miss Meadows.

"Oh, ma'am!" stammered Chunky. "A very brave action indeed!" said the schoolmistress. "You might have been swept down to the rapids—"

"I—I never thought of that, ma'am!" "Run to the school at once, Todgers, and dry your clothes! You will catch cold if you are not careful!"

"We'll take care of him, ma'am!" said Frank Richards. "Come on, Chunky!" "Shoulder high!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

"Yes, rather!" "Hurrah!" "Oh, I—I—I say!" gasped Chunky. "Up with him!" "Bravo, Chunky!"

Up went Chunky Todgers to the shoulders of Beauclerc, Frank Richards, and Bob Lawless—the three of them were needed to support Chunky's very considerable weight. Amid a cheering crowd of Cedar Creek fellows, Chunky was rushed away to the school.

Nobody gave a thought now to the bear story; there was no thought of chipping Todgers any more. The gallant rescue of Billy Bowers atoned for all, even if Billy Bowers was not really worth the trouble of rescuing, as some of the fellows declared. Chunky Todgers had proved his quality, and that was enough.

And Dry Billy took his homeward path to Thompson town, with a grin on his stubby face and a dollar in his pocket. And Dry Billy grinned more than ever as he clinked that dollar upon the bar counter at the Red Dog. He had had an unaccustomed wash, but, excepting for that, he had certainly earned the dollar very easily. And Dry Billy was of opinion that there were more dollars to follow.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Price of Heroism!

CHUNKY TODGERS was great that afternoon.

He was stripped and dried before Black Sam's fire in the stables, his clothes were dried while he sat wrapped in blankets, and when he was clad once more, and emerged, he was surrounded by an admiring crowd.

He bore his blushing honours thick upon him with becoming modesty.

He did not spoil his new glory by swanking. Indeed, he seemed loath to give the details of the gallant rescue. He told the fellows that it was nothing—that any fellow would have done it—which naturally increased the admiration.

There was no doubt that any fellow who plunged into the creek to rescue a drowning man took his life in his hands—and especially Chunky Todgers, who was not by any means a first-class swimmer. Indeed, the fellows wondered how on earth he had got the ignominious Mr. Bowers ashore. He must have displayed a strength and dexterity they had never supposed him to possess.

In every way the feat was amazingly creditable to Chunky, and fellows who had been chipping him were sorry for it, and Bob Lawless even asked his pardon for the bear episode.

On that occasion Chunky had certainly not shown up well, but he had more than redeemed his reputation now. The gallant rescue of Mr. William Bowers of Thompson wiped out everything else.

After lessons Chunky Todgers came out of the schoolhouse as if he were walking on air.

Tom Lawrence called to him. "Ride home with us, Chunky?"

"Yes, rather, I guess," answered Chunky, with a beatific grin.

He was not always privileged to ride home with Molly Lawrence.

He was in high feather as he led out his fat pony, with half a dozen other fellows.

The happy smile faded off his fat face, however, as his eyes fell upon a dusty, disreputable figure lounging by the school gates.

It was Mr. William Bowers. Chunky blinked at him as Dry Billy dragged off his rag of a hat in very respectful salute.

"I guess I couldn't help coming to see how you was, sir, arter wot you did for me," said Mr. Bowers. "'Skuse the liberty, sir!"

"Oh," gasped Chunky, "all right! I—I—I'm all serene!"

"Not catching cold, or nothing, sir?" "Oh, no! Nunno!"

"I guess I'm glad of that," said Mr. Bowers feelingly. "I couldn't rest, sir, for thinking that you might have suffered, sir, for your noble action, sir."

Frank Richards & Co. looked rather curiously at Mr. Bowers. They had hardly expected so much gratitude and good feeling from the dusty loafer. As for Chunky Todgers, he seemed almost overcome. His fat face was very red, and he gasped for breath.

"I ain't a 'andsome man, p'r'aps, young gent," said Mr. Bowers, looking round; "but I've got a heart, and that heart, gent, is touched, sirs. I ain't forgetting wot this gent has done for me—his uncommon bravery, sirs, and his generosity, too. It isn't every gent who'd help a man to get some nobby clothes, gentleman, arter saving his life; but Mister Todgers has undertook to do it."

Chunky started violently. "I—I—I—" he stammered.

"He's giving me two dollars to help me through," said Mr. Bowers. "My duds, such as they are, are spoiled, and that generous young gent is giving me two dollars to help me through. Ain't that noble and generous of him?"

"More generous than I'd be, I know that," said Bob Lawless. "I can guess where the two dollars will go! You're an ass, Chunky!"

"But I—I—I—" gasped Chunky helplessly.

Mr. Bowers gave him a significant look. "Two dollars, I think you said, sir?" he remarked.

"I—I paid—I mean, I gave you a dollar!" gasped Chunky Todgers.

"I'm speaking of the other two dollars, sir," explained Mr. Bowers, in a tone of kind patience, but considerable significance. Chunky Todgers breathed hard.

There had been no mention of any other two dollars; but he understood that if they were not forthcoming there would be mention of several little things on the spot—things he was extremely desirous should not be mentioned before the Cedar Creek crowd. The unfortunate Chunky was in the toils.

He turned an almost haggard look on Frank Richards. His own pockets were empty. Mr. Bowers had already coralled his last dollar.

FOREWARNED FOREARMD!



Captain: "Do you know enough about football to referee for us?" Spectator: "I know enough about it not to!"

"I—I say, Franky, e-c-can you—" Frank Richards nodded. "You're an ass to give the man money, Chunky!" he said. "But if you've promised, you'd better keep your word, I suppose."

"I—I—I guess that's just it," said Chunky, in an expiring voice. "I—I—I'd be obliged! I—"

"Well, I can stand one," said Frank. "What about you, Bob?" "Here's the other!" granted Bob. "Next time you offer galoots dollars, Chunky, count up how many you've got in your pockets first!"

"I—I will!" groaned Chunky. Frank and his Canadian cousin handed over the dollar each, and Chunky Todgers passed them to Mr. Bowers. That dusty gentleman received them with a profusion of thanks.

"Ain't he got a kind heart, gents?" he asked. "Ain't he the king-pin of them all, that brave and generous young gent? It's grit he's got, gents—real grit; and when it comes to real grit, I put my money on Mister Todgers! He's the real white article, he is—brave as a lion, gentlemen, and generous, too—werry generous!"

And with that fulsome tribute, Mr. Bowers pulled off his ragged hat again and faded away up the trail.

Chunky Todgers stood rooted to the ground, the colour coming and going in his fat face. The interview seemed to have dismayed him utterly. Tom Lawrence tapped him on the shoulder.

"We're off!" he said. "Oh, all right!" gasped Todgers.

He rolled towards his fat pony, and clambered into the saddle.

But somehow, all the pleasure of a ride home with Molly Lawrence seemed to have vanished.

Frank Richards & Co. waved their hands cordially to the hero of Cedar Creek, and rode away on the homeward trail, discussing with a surprise that was not wholly complimentary to Chunky, his gallant deed of the afternoon.

But the hero of the lumber school was not thinking of them. What he was thinking of, Tom and Molly Lawrence did not know; but they saw that his fat face was deeply clouded as they trotted along on the Thompson trail.

They passed Mr. William Bowers on the trail as he trudged along, and Dry Billy swept off his ragged hat in salute, smiling in the most genial way at his rescuer.

The look Chunky Todgers gave him in return was anything but genial. It expressed dread and wrath and fury more than anything else.

After he had passed with his companions, Mr. Bowers winked at the trees, and indulged in a soft chuckle.

"Two dollars!" he murmured. "Tain't much—bust me, I guess it ain't much! But I kinder calculate there's more to come—leetle by leetle—leetle by leetle!"

And Dry Billy chuckled again.

Perhaps Chunky Todgers had some inkling of the unscrupulous loafer's thoughts as he trotted along on his fat pony. Molly and her brother spoke to him in vain. They drew only monosyllabic replies from Chunky Todgers, whose thoughts seemed far away.

When they parted from him, Chunky rode on to the Todgers' homestead in a very unenviable frame of mind.

The thought of Mr. William Bowers, and the loafer's leering face, haunted him. He had a strong suspicion that he would see Mr. Bowers the next day, and the next, and the next.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Chunky. "I—I—I wish I hadn't— Oh, dear!"

Chunky's people found him rather low-spirited that evening. He was still down in doleful dumps when he started for school on the following morning—which really was very surprising in such a distinguished person as the hero of Cedar Creek.

THE END.

(Chunky Todgers finds himself in a very awkward position next week. Don't miss reading "Chunky, the Spoofers," the fine Backwoods story in next Tuesday's Special Number.)