

**THE MAN FROM THE LAND OF THE DOLLAR!**

Into the Thompson Valley arrives a stranger from over the border in a headlong pursuit of cash. The newcomer makes his presence felt to many, and to Frank Richards, of Cedar Creek, does he especially turn his attention. The moneychaser has weird ideas of honour and playing the game, and his introduction of these notions do not prove popular with the chums of the Lumber School!



**Another Roaring Long Complete Tale of the Chums of the Canadian Lumber School.**

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**

**Frank Richards is Wanted!**

**L**ITTLE White Chief—"Hallo, Injun Dick!"

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless were riding away from the Lawless Ranch in the fine, frosty morning, on their way to school, when Injun Dick loomed upon the trail.

The old Apache was on foot, tramping towards the ranch through the powdered snow, his tattered old blanket fluttering in the wind. He looked up at the sound of hoof-beats, and raised a bronzed hand as a signal for the two riders to halt.

Frank and Bob good-naturedly drew rein as they came alongside the old warrior. The chums of Cedar Creek were always kind to the old redskin, who had been a great chief in other days, before the enterprising white man had scattered his tribe from their broad hunting-grounds in far-off Arizona.

Ka-noon-ka, the Apache chief, was now "Injun Dick," the loafer of Thompson, and always glad to earn half-a-dollar by carrying messages. Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, he had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof.

"Top of the morning, old scout!" said Bob Lawless cheerily. "What brings you out so early?"

"Letter for Little White Chief."

Injun Dick groped under his tattered blanket, and produced a sealed envelope.

He handed it to Frank Richards.

"For me?" said Frank, in surprise.

Injun Dick nodded.

Letters did not often arrive for Frank Richards. He wondered a good deal who his correspondent might happen to be.

"Old Penrose, I guess," said Bob Lawless, "bucking you up with your copy for the 'Thompson Press,' Franky."

"It isn't Penrose's fist," said Frank, as he read the superscription on the envelope.

The letter was addressed:

"Mr. Frank Richards,  
Lawless Ranch."

"Mister!" grinned Bob, glancing at it. "I don't know the fist—it isn't Penrose's. Are you going to read it now? We've got to meet the Cherub on the trail."

"I'll read it presently," said Frank.

"Thank you, Injun Dick."

"Little White Chief read letter now," said the Apache stolidly. "Injun Dick take answer. Wah!"

"Oh!" said Frank. "Hold on a minute, Bob!"

"All serene!"

Frank Richards slit the envelope, and drew out the enclosure. The letter was written on the notepaper of the Occidental Hotel at Thompson. It was written in a strange hand to Frank, and the writing was somewhat angular and scrawling. It ran:

"Occidental Hotel,

Thompson.

"Dear Sir,—Kindly call here and see me at your earliest convenience. Room No. 10.

"CYRUS HULKETT."

Frank Richards stared at that letter, which was short if not very sweet, and passed it to his chum.

"Look at that, Bob! Any idea what it's about?" he asked.

"Nope! Who's Cyrus Hulkett?"

"Blessed if I know!" answered Frank Richards.

"Eh? You've got a letter from a man you don't know?"

"Looks like it! I think I've heard the name mentioned somewhere," said Frank thoughtfully. "But I don't know the man, I know that! Who the merry dickens can he be, and what does he want?"

"Some stranger in the town, I should think," said Bob. "I don't know the name—and he's putting up at the hotel, too. I guess it must be somebody who's been reading your yarns in the 'Thompson Press,' Franky, and he's come along here to give you his compliments."

"Fathead!"

"Well, that's all I can think of," said Bob, with a grin. "After all, it may be that. Mr. Penrose says his circulation has jumped no end since you began to write for his paper, and perhaps your fame is spreading all over the continent—"

"Ass!"

"From the Atlantic to the Pacific!" grinned Bob. "From the Yukon down to the Rio Grande! If—that's so—"

"Oh, don't be an ass, old chap!" said Frank. "Perhaps it's somebody wants to sell me something—"

"Might be a drummer—"

"A what?"

"What you call a commercial traveller in your little island," said Bob, laughing. "But what should he want to trade with you for? Blessed if I catch on! Injun Dick, what's the man like who sent this letter?"

"Big Nose Chief!" said the Apache.

"Oh, gum! Is he a stranger in Thompson?"

The Apache nodded.

"Where does he come from?"

"Injun no savvy!"

"Is he a Canadian, or an American?"

"Talk through big nose," said the Apache.

Bob Lawless chuckled.

"That means that he comes from over the border," said the rancher's son. "I didn't know you had any acquaintances in the States, Franky."

"I haven't," said Frank Richards, completely puzzled. "I don't know the man from Adam. I don't like the tone of his letter, either; and as I don't know him, I sha'n't go!"

"Injun take answer," said the Apache.

"Right! Tell Mr. Hulkett that I don't know him and I don't know what he wants and that if he wishes to see me he can come to the ranch," said Frank Richards.

"Injun tell!"

"That's all!"

Injun Dick held out his hand.

"You give Injun dollar!" he suggested.

"My dear chap, Mr. Hulckett can pay for the carrying of his own messages," said Frank. "Dollars don't grow on every bush."

"Big Nose Chief give Injun half-dollar. You give Injun half-dollar," said the Apache. "Injun thirsty!"

"Shell out a quarter, Franky," said Bob Lawless, laughing. "After all, Injun Dick has been a great chief once upon a time."

"Great chief—take many scalps!" said Injun Dick, with dignity. "White man take Injun Dick's hunting-grounds. Injun want half-dollar, you bet! Injun bully boy with a glass eye."

Frank and Bob sorted out a quarter each, and tossed them to the Indian. Then they rode on, leaving Injun Dick to tramp stolidly along the long trail to Thompson Town with Frank's reply to the unknown gentleman at the Occidental Hotel.

Frank Richards had put Mr. Cyrus Hulckett's letter in his pocket, and he soon forgot its existence. But he was to be reminded of the "Big Nose Chief" before long.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Chance for Chunky!

"CHUNKY—"

"Don't interrupt!"

"But—"

Chunky Todgers waved a fat hand impatiently at Frank Richards & Co.

Morning lessons had ended at Cedar Creek School. Chunky Todgers, instead of going out with the other fellows, had settled down at the desk nearest the log-fire, with a wedge of paper before him, and a pen in his hand. Frank Richards & Co. were intending to take out their skates; the ice was thick on the creek. But they stopped to speak to Chunky.

"What's up?" asked Bob Lawless. "Detention job?"

"Hard lines!" said Vere Beauclerc sympathetically.

"Can't you come out on the ice, Chunky?" asked Frank Richards.

Chunky Todgers gave an impatient sniff.

"It isn't detention," he said. "You fellows buzz off. I've got some writing to do. You ain't the only fellow at Cedar Creek who can write, Frank Richards!"

"Oh!" said Bob. "Literary business again—eh?"

"I guess so!" answered Chunky loftily.

The chums of Cedar Creek chuckled. Ever since Frank Richards had begun to write for the local paper, Chunky Todgers had been keen on literary distinctions. Why Mr. Penrose, the editor of the "Thompson Press," should prefer Frank Richards' work to his; was a deep mystery to Chunky. He could only put it down to Mr. Penrose's want of taste. But rebuffs had no effect on Master Todgers; he was a stickler.

"By gum!" said Bob Lawless. "I should have reckoned you'd had enough of Mr. Penrose, Chunky! He spoke quite plainly last time."

Another sniff from Chunky.

"I guess this novel isn't for old Penrose," he said. "On second thoughts, I don't care to write for a measly local paper like the 'Thompson Press.' I guess I'm willing to leave that to Richards. It's about his mark."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," said Chunky Todgers disdainfully. "You wait till you see 'The Mystery of the Missing Marquis' in print. That's the title. Not

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school stuff, like your stories, Richards. Nothing of that kind. This is a novel—the real thing, you know. And I guess Mr. Hulckett will jump at it."

"Mr. Which?" ejaculated Frank.

"Cyrus Hulckett. Didn't you know he was in Thompson?" said Chunky. "I guess this is for him. He's a business man, real cute, and he will know what is what."

"Who on earth is he?" asked Vere Beauclerc.

"Haven't you heard of him? You galoots never hear anything. He runs newspapers and things at Kamloops and New Westminster and over the Line!" said Chunky. "He's the head of the Hulckett Syndicate. He's come up the valley to start a new paper here, and wipe out the 'Thompson Press.' That's his stunt. Savvy?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Frank.

"He's putting up at the Occidental," said Chunky. "He's a real American business man, you bet! I guess poor old Penrose's paper won't last long when the 'Thompson Eagle' moseys along."

"The 'Thompson Eagle'?"

"That's it! There's bills up all over Thompson," said Chunky. "He's got it advertised everywhere up and down the valley. It ain't out yet; but everybody's heard of it already, excepting you chaps, who never hear of anything. Poor old Penrose won't have a look-in. Hulckett is going to hand out a paper twice as big at the same figure. Latest style, with all the modern improvements. Printed at the railway town, you know; not set up on a pesky hand-press, like old Penrose's. I guess old Penrose is tearing his hair by this time."

"I guess that's rather hard lines on poor old Penrose," said Bob Lawless. "I don't see what that pesky hustler wants here. He ought to keep on his own ground."

"Oh, he's a business man!" said Chunky. "I don't suppose it will take him a week to mop up Penrose. Nobody will give twenty-five cents for the 'Press' when the 'Eagle' comes out. It's really Penrose's fault. I've offered to write for him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now I'm going to let the 'Eagle' have my stuff!" said Chunky Todgers. "Penrose is a back number now, and it's all his own fault! Now, you galoots, mosey off; I've got a lot to do."

Frank Richards & Co. left the school-room, leaving Chunky to pursue the intricacies of the mystery of the missing marquis. Bob and Beauclerc were smiling, but Frank Richards looked rather serious.

"I remember that man Hulckett's name now," he said, as they left the lumber school. "Mr. Penrose mentioned it to me. I wonder what he wanted to see me for, though."

Bob Lawless chuckled.

"I guess he wants to bag Penrose's author, Franky."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Can't be anything else," chuckled Bob. "You don't know how valuable you are, Franky. I always told you your stuff was good, when you used to read it out to me—"

"And you used to fall asleep!" said Frank. "Come on, let's get on the ice."

And the chums donned their skates, and joined the crowd of boys and girls on the frozen creek. While they enjoyed themselves on the ice, Chunky Todgers was busy in the school-room; and sheet after sheet was covered by his facile pen. Chunky Todgers found it very easy to write—he was never at a loss. It was possible that his literary work was not so easy to read. Mr. Penrose had turned up his nose at it emphatically;

but that did not matter to Chunky now. In his mind's eye, he could see Mr. Penrose weeping and wailing and gnashing his teeth when Chunky's copy began to appear in the rival paper, "boosting" up the circulation to tremendous figures. In his mind's eye, Chunky could see Mr. Penrose begging him, with tears in his eyes, to come to the rescue of the "Press." And, in his mind's eye, Chunky could see himself spurning the unhappy Mr. Penrose. It was probably only in his mind's eye that Chunky was likely to see it.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### A Business Interview!

"WHO'S that galoot, I wonder?" It was the following day—Saturday; and Frank Richards and Bob Lawless

were at home at the ranch. Frank was in the room he shared with his Canadian cousin. The ancient typewriter which Mr. Penrose had lent to the schoolboy author was on the table by the window, and Frank was seated before it, his hands on the keys. Bob Lawless was lounging by the window. He had looked in to see how Frank Richards was getting on before going out on a ride with the cowboys.

Saturday, being a free day from school, was Frank Richards' best time for work. Every Saturday the typewriter clicked away merrily in his room at the ranch. Frank found unending pleasure in his work, and the more he did, the better he liked it. He had been surprised—quite as much surprised as pleased—by the success of his stories in the local paper. "St. Kit's Fellows!" had been running for weeks now, and Mr. Penrose candidly made no secret of the fact that his circulation had trebled. He had taken Frank's measure quite accurately, and was aware that generous appreciation was not likely to "puff up" the schoolboy author. Writing stories at such an early age, seemed to Frank Richards rather a "lark"; it had not even occurred to him, at that time, that some day he would be an author of world-wide renown.

"St. Kit's Fellows!" was based on Frank's recollections of his old school life in England; and the series was widely popular in the Thompson Valley, especially among the youthful inhabitants. The "Thompson Press" circulated now not only among the ranchers and the farmers of the valley, and the citizens of Thompson; it had eager readers of all ages, from nine upwards. Mr. Penrose's new "stunt" was a greater success than he had anticipated, and it was still growing.

"Look at that galoot, Franky!" went on Bob Lawless, whose eyes were on the trail outside.

"Bother!" said Frank.

"Hallo! Am I interrupting you?"

"Of course you are, you duffer!"

"Never mind; look at that galoot! A chap with a face like that ought to be put in a story!" said Bob.

Frank Richards rose from his typewriter, and glanced from the window. A gentleman with an exceedingly sharp face, and a very prominent nose, was riding up to the ranch from the direction of Thompson. He was a stranger to the chums of Cedar Creek.

"Somebody to see your father, Bob, I suppose," said Frank, and he went back to his machine.

Bob Lawless chuckled.

"Somebody to see you, I guess," he answered. "Look at his handsome boko! It's the Big Nose Chief Injun Dick told us about, I'll bet you my hat!"

"Oh!" said Frank. "I can't see him if it is! I'm busy!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha! I guess I'll go down and tell him that he mustn't interrupt literary geniuses at their work."



**GETTING RID OF THE UNPLEASANT BUSINESS MAN!** Hulkett was whirled upon his horse, with his face to the tail. He clung there gasping. Bob Lawless gave the horse a smart tap, and it started. The Chums of Cedar Creek burst into a breathless laugh as the animal careered away up the trail with Cyrus Hulkett clinging to its back. (See Chapter 4.)

"Ass!"  
 Bob Lawless quitted the room—rather to Frank's relief. Writing with Bob's cheery conversation going on at the same time was rather a strain. Frank Richards settled down to work, and the typewriter clicked away. Frank's old friends at St. Kit's—Dig Valence, and Fatty Babbage, and Bullivant of the Fifth—figured in the story as large as life, though, of course, the schoolboy author had to draw upon his imagination a little.

Click, click, click!  
 Frank had already forgotten the Big Nose Chief, when there came a tap at the door, and it opened.

The schoolboy author started.  
 "Look here, Bob, you ass— Oh!"  
 It was not Bob.

The keen-faced gentleman stood in the doorway, and Bob Lawless was behind him, with a grin on his face.

"Editorial gentleman to see you, Franky," said Bob. "Not my fault. Mr. Hulkett wouldn't take nope for an answer."

Frank Richards rose reluctantly from the table. The interview was quite exasperating, in the full flood of invention; but he felt constrained to show some civility to a visitor, however unwelcome. Mr. Cyrus Hulkett advanced into the room, fixing the schoolboy author with a pair of very sharp and penetrating eyes of uncertain colour.

"Frank Richards?" he asked.  
 His lean jaws seemed to snap like a vice over the name.

"Yes," answered Frank. "Will you sit down, Mr. Hulkett?"

He handed the visitor a chair.  
 Mr. Hulkett deposited his hat on the bed, and sat down on the chair. His fixed, penetrating gaze made Frank feel a little uncomfortable. He felt that he was being read through and through; Mr. Hulkett's eyes had gimlet-like qualities.

"So you are Frank Richards?"  
 "Yes."  
 "You are the person advertised in the 'Thompson Press' as the Schoolboy Author?"  
 "Yes."

"Author of a series of stories appearing under the general title of 'St. Kit's Fellows'?"  
 "Yes."

"You have started remarkably young," said Mr. Hulkett.

"Yes."  
 "I have read some of your stuff."  
 "I hope you liked it," said Frank politely.

"I did! Very remarkable work indeed for a boy of your age."  
 "Thank you."

"It is all that is worth reading in the paper."  
 "You are very good."

"Not at all! I guess I'm a business man, and I deal in facts," said the American gentleman. "You may know who I am—Cyrus Hulkett, of the Hulkett Syndicate. We run papers in a dozen towns—unlimited resources. We never give up anything when we've once put our hand to it. That's our maxim."

"Yes," said Frank, not very interested, as a matter of fact, in the Hulkett Syndicate or its maxims.

"I asked you to call on me."  
 "Sorry—"  
 "As you did not call on me I've called on you."

"Like your cheek!" was what Frank was tempted to say; but he fortunately suppressed that remark.

Mr. Hulkett looked at his watch.  
 "I'm here to talk business," he said. "I've had reports that there's room for a circulation in this section. We are starting a paper here—the 'Thompson Eagle.' It is going to kill its rival."

"I hope not," said Frank.  
 "You need not lose by it. I am here to offer you an engagement with the 'Eagle.'"

"Declined with thanks!"

"Listen to me, Master Richards. I guess I've looked into this thing. The 'Press' has got to go. There's no room for two papers in this section. Even if there were, it would make no difference. We want all the circulation. I find that the 'Press' has one good man—only a boy as it happens, but that makes no difference to me—and I am out to bag that man."

"Oh!"  
 "I don't know what the 'Press' pays you for your stuff, but the 'Eagle' is open to pay you double."

"Oh!"  
 "Name your figure!" said Mr. Hulkett, in the same snappy tone. "Business is business. Your stuff's popular. I admit I don't quite see it myself, but the fact is enough for me. It sells the  
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paper. I want it to sell my paper. See?"

Frank Richards admitted that he saw. "You transfer the whole thing to my paper," explained Mr. Hulkett. "You begin in the first number, and run on till the public get tired of it. I guess I shall make it the prominent feature."

Frank Richards blinked at him. "But I couldn't!" he ejaculated. "Mr. Penrose has paid me for the stuff, and it's his, not mine."

"Sold the copyright?"

"I—don't know. I signed a paper," said Frank.

"What was on the paper?"

"I didn't read it all."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" exclaimed Mr. Hulkett, jumping. "You signed a paper without reading it? Is that what you call business?"

"I—suppose it was careless. I'll read it next time."

"It comes to the same thing," said Mr. Hulkett. "I guess Penrose has taken care of himself. But you're master of the situation, as you do the stuff. You write about a school and certain characters. It isn't that that goes down; it's your writing. Well, you give the school a new name, and you give the characters new names—see? It comes to the same thing. People will want to read it just the same. Little difference there. See? Penrose couldn't touch you on that."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Frank Richards.

He stared blankly at this very business-like gentleman. Business of that exceedingly sharp kind had certainly never entered Frank Richards' mind before. He was living and learning.

"I've read some of the stuff. You've got a very comic character—Fatty Babbage, you call him. I've seen people at my hotel reading it, and chortling over it," said Mr. Hulkett. "That's good enough for me. Well, you call your Fatty Babbage something else—call him Roly-Poly or Chubby Chinkins, or anything you like. You keep to the same character and the same funny business. See?"

"Oh!"

"And name your own figure—anything in reason," said Mr. Hulkett. "Now, can I depend on you for copy next week?"

Frank Richards gasped.

"You can't!" he stuttered. "Nothing of the sort! What you're calling business seems to me jolly like a swindle!"

"Quite legal!" said Mr. Hulkett, as if that settled the matter.

"Possibly," said Frank. "But what about Mr. Penrose?"

"Ask him to double your figure, and see what he says," answered the American gentleman dryly.

"I dare say he would if I asked him; but I'm certainly not going to."

"If he doubles it, I guess I'll treble it," said Cyrus Hulkett calmly. "I want your goods. I'm open to pay. See?"

Mr. Hulkett pointed these remarks with a bony forefinger.

"Waal?" he said.

"Good-morning!" said Frank Richards.

"Hey?"

"You know your way downstairs," said Frank. "Good-morning!"

Mr. Hulkett blinked at him.

"Does that mean nope?" he asked.

"It means no, at any rate," said Frank. "Do you mind if I get on with my typing?"

Without waiting for an answer to that question, Frank Richards sat down to the typewriter.

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"Waal, this gets my goat!" said the astonished Cyrus.

Click! Click! Click!

"Look hyer, Master Richards—"

Click! Click! Click!

"Name your own figure—"

Click! Click! Click!

Mr. Hulkett turned to the door. In a state of great astonishment he returned to his horse, and rode away from the Lawless Ranch—still overcome with astonishment. And Frank Richards clicked away cheerily on the typewriter, and soon forgot the existence of Mr. Cyrus Hulkett.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### The Order of the Boot!

"JERUSALEM!" ejaculated Bob Lawless. "What a nerve!"

It was a couple of weeks since Cyrus Hulkett's visit to the ranch; and during that time Frank Richards had not heard from the enterprising gentleman with the prominent nose. Frank had not given him much thought, if any. Mr. Penrose had been insatiable in his demands for "copy," and Frank found his leisure time pretty well filled.

"St. Kit's Fellows" now filled more than half of Mr. Penrose's paper, and its popularity was growing. At Cedar Creek Frank Richards was an object of great admiration. Even Chunky Todgers wondered whether there was anything in his "stuff" after all.

Chunky's opinion of Mr. Hulkett was now on a par with his opinion of Mr. Penrose. For the great Cyrus had turned up his prominent nose emphatically at "The Mystery of the Missing Marquis," and had bidden the ambitious Chunky to go and chop chips.

When the first number of "The Thompson Eagle" appeared Chunky Todgers did not figure in it. It was the first number that Bob Lawless now held in his hands, and it was that which had provoked his surprised exclamation.

For the most prominent feature in the "Eagle" was the first of a series of stories, under the title of "St. Olave's Fellows!" And in it there was a comic character called Chubby Chinkins, and there was Oliphant of the Fifth, and, in fact, it was a spurious imitation of the great feature in the "Thompson Press."

The Big Nose Chief had evidently carried out his idea; and as Frank Richards was not available, he had found some less scrupulous author for his purpose.

"Why, it's a regular swindle, Franky," said Bob Lawless indignantly.

"Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery!" said Frank Richards, laughing.

"Let him rip!"

"He ought to be ridden on a rail out of town!" said Bob warmly. "This isn't fair on Penrose, either. The pesky galoot has taken your stuff for a model, and got some hard-up hack in the town to write it up!"

"Can't be helped!" said Frank. "I don't see that anything can be done. I believe it's legal to do those things."

Frank Richards rode into Thompson that day with his "copy" for Mr. Penrose. He found that gentleman setting type for the current number of his paper, with a rather lugubrious expression on his face. A copy of the "Eagle" lay on his bench.

"Seen that?" he asked.

Frank Richards nodded.

"Pretty sharp practice, I guess," said Mr. Penrose. "Of course, it isn't your work, Richards?"

"Of course not!" said Frank warmly. "No; I reckoned you wouldn't play it low down like that," said Mr. Penrose. "Never mind, we'll beat them

yet. You stick to the old firm, my boy."

"You bet!" said Frank, with a smile. "I guess Cyrus H. has miscalculated for once," said Mr. Penrose. "Tain't everything to bag an idea. It's got to be carried out. And Frank Richardses don't grow on every bush, I reckon."

"I hope not," said Frank.

All the Thompson Valley was keenly interested in the contest between Mr. Penrose's paper and the "Eagle." But for the popular feature the enterprising Mr. Penrose had secured for his paper, there was no doubt how the contest would have ended.

But "St. Kit's Fellows" held its ground.

In fact, Frank Richards' series was growing more popular every week, and Mr. Penrose soon ceased to look lugubrious on the subject.

Cyrus Hulkett had, in fact, miscalculated—exceedingly sharp business man as he was.

However near the unknown author of "St. Olave's Fellows" might keep to his model, it did not come to the same thing. As the poet said of old:

"The builder was with want of genius  
curst;  
The second building was not like the  
first."

And so it turned out.

Much to Mr. Hulkett's surprise and wrath, as he directed affairs in his far-off town, the "Eagle" did not make its way in the Thompson Valley.

From a thousand copies of the first number Cyrus had expected the circulation to jump to ten thousand for the second.

Instead of which it dropped to one hundred.

And the third week there were buyers of a miserable dozen copies in all the Thompson Valley.

In the fourth week three copies were sold.

In the fifth one was the total; and when that handsome circulation was reached, Mr. Cyrus Hulkett came up the valley in person.

It was evident to the Big Nose Chief that he had made a bad break, and that the public were not, as he had supposed, indifferent whether they paid for a spurious imitation or the genuine article.

It was extremely annoying to the great Cyrus, who had "wiped out" so many rival papers in his successful and unmerciful career as head of an unscrupulous syndicate, to be defeated by the obstinacy of a schoolboy scribbler who refused to hear reason.

He was, consequently, in a sharp temper when he arrived at the Lawless Ranch to see Frank Richards.

Frank and Bob had ridden home from school, and Vere Beauclere had come home to supper with them, and the chums of Cedar Creek arrived to find a visitor waiting for Frank.

It was the great Cyrus.

Mr. Lawless met them at the door with a smile on his bronzed face.

"Mr. Hulkett has called to see you, Frank," he said. "He's in the dining-room now; you'd better go in."

Frank uttered an exclamation.

"Bless the man! I say, uncle, do you mind if—if—"

"If what?" asked the rancher.

"If I kick him out. Bob will help."

Mr. Lawless laughed.

"I can't give you permission to do anything of the sort, Frank. But I'm just going down the range; I sha'n't be back for an hour, I guess. Your aunt

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"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Bai Jove! They don't seem to have done much bettah than we did!" grinned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It was very kind of the Gwammah cads to give you a wide home, Kangy!"

"Are you going to let us out, you cackling idiots?" demanded Redfern.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cut these blessed cords!" shrieked Figgins.

Tom Merry shook his head, laughing. "No fear! We're not going to waste the cord. Besides, it's our cord, and we're not going to destroy our own property. Waste not, want not, you know, Figgy—your own words."

"Yaas, watah! It would be a wicked waste to cut the cords, wouldn't it, Kerr?"

"Fathhead!" growled Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, it will be awf'ly good practice untyn' the knots!" chuckled Arthur Augustus gleefully. "Figgay said so himself!"

"And there's no hurry," said Monty Lowther. "No hurry at all. Untie the knots, dear boys, and don't waste the cord!"

Tom Merry & Co., shaking with laughter, fumbled with the cords, untyn' the knots, as Figgins & Co. had done on the previous occasion. They had not the slightest intention of using their knives. "What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander," as Blake smilingly remarked.

Half St. Jim's gathered round to watch the operation. Giles stood stolidly by his horse while it was going on. One by one the unfortunate scouts were released and rolled out of the cart, with wisps of hay sticking all over them.

As fast as they were released they scudded away through the gateway and disappeared, anxious to escape the circle of grinning faces. Yells of laughter followed them as they fled.

Figgins was the last. Red and flustered and furious, Figgins slipped out of the cart. He glared at the crowd of howling juniors. The defeat of Tom Merry & Co. had struck Figgins as funny earlier in the afternoon, but his sense of humour seemed to be somewhat wanting now.

"You cackling asses!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was, all through Gay imitating our signals—"

"He wouldn't take us in by imitating our signals," chuckled Jack Blake. "We're up to snuff, you bet!"

"Yaas, watah! You were caught nappin', Figgay, old man. I watah think the laugh is up against you now. They wouldn't have taken the Curlews in that way. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins crossly. And he bolted after the rest, leaving the crowd screaming with merriment.

Giles drove away in the haycart, and the St. Jim's fellows streamed back into the quad shaking with mirth. The Kangaroos and the Wolves did not appear in the quadrangle again that afternoon. They preferred to hide their blushes from the public eye.

"It's funny," Tom Merry gasped, as the chums walked back to the School House to tea, "but it's a defeat for St. Jim's. We've got to down the Grammar School bouncers somehow after this, and it's up to us to do it!"

THE END.

(More adventures of the Curlew Patrol of St. Jim's next week. Tell all your chums about these tip-top tales!)

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(Continued from page 10.)

has just gone over to Silver Creek in the buggy; you'll have to entertain your visitor by yourself."

The rancher rode away, and his nephew entered the house with his two chums. Frank Richards & Co. were quite prepared to entertain the visitor—in their own way.

They came into the dining-room together, and found Mr. Cyrus Hulkett there, sitting by the stove.

"Oh, hyer you are, Richards!" he said.

"Here I am," said Frank grimly.

"I guess I've come up from town to see you on business, Richards. You're giving me a lot of trouble."

"I don't mind."

Mr. Hulkett grunted.

"I guess you know that the 'Eagle' hasn't caught on any," he remarked.

"I'm glad of it."

"I guess my syndicate don't score a failure," said Mr. Hulkett emphatically. "What we put our hand to, sirc, we never turn back on. You know what I've done—I've put my best man on to reproducing your stuff—and, as far as I can see, he beats it. But the public don't seem to think so. No accounting for tastes! What the public want your stuff for I don't know—but they want it, and I'm going to give it to 'em, in chunks. See?"

"Not quite!" said Frank.

"That's why I'm hyer, I calculate. I made you an offer last time I moseyed along—"

"And I refused it."

"I guess your're going to think again. I offered you double. Now," said Mr. Hulkett impressively, "I offer you double that!"

"Rats!"

"Name your own figure, then!" said Cyrus savagely. "You've got the hold on me. Name your figure!"

"Suppose I say a hundred dollars a column!" said Frank, with a grin.

"Done!" said Cyrus.

"What?"

"I guess it won't pay me, but I'm bound to get there, once I start. I can't afford to throw up!" said Mr. Hulkett.

"Turn in your stuff at a hundred dollars a column."

"Phew!"

"It's a cinch!" said Cyrus.

"Not at all. You can make it a thousand dollars if you like, and I'm not taking any!" answered Frank Richards.

"Now, look here—"

"I don't expect you to understand. Mr. Hulkett," said Frank. "But what you're asking me is to play a dirty trick, and that wouldn't quite suit me, if you offered me the post-wagon full of dollars! Is that plain enough?"

"I guess you've got the cinch on me, but don't presume too far on it!" said Mr. Hulkett. "There's a limit. You're trying to squeeze me—"

"What?"

"Now, come to business, and tell me how much you're trying to squeeze me for?"

"Do you see that door?" asked Frank.

"Yep!"

"Will you get on the other side of it?"

"Nope!" answered Cyrus calmly.

Frank Richards made a sign to his

chums, and three pairs of hands suddenly closed on the Big Nose Chief.

"Hyer, let up!" roared the surprised Mr. Hulkett. "What the thunder—"

The Big Nose Chief was whirled towards the door.

There he began to struggle in a state of fury, but the chums of Cedar Creek were too many for him.

In a whirling crowd the four of them rolled out of the ranch-house, where Mr. Hulkett's horse was waiting.

The astounded business gentleman was whirled up on his horse, with his face to the tail. He clung there gasping.

"Oh! Ow! Why, you—you—you—"

Bob Lawless gave the horse a smart tap, and it started. The chums of Cedar Creek burst into a breathless laugh as the animal careered away up the trail, with Mr. Cyrus Hulkett clinging frantically to its back.

The clatter of hoofs and the yells of the Big Nose Chief died away in the dusk of the prairie.

"Now, I hope we've finished with Cyrus!" gasped Frank Richards.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards' hope was well-founded. Even the pertinacious Big Nose Chief was satisfied at last. In spite of the maxims of the syndicate he had to abandon his "stunt" in the Thompson valley. The "Eagle" disappeared from existence, and the "Thompson Press" continued on its successful way. "St. Kit's Fellows" continued to draw readers from far and near, and nothing more was heard in the Thompson Valley of the Hulkett Syndicate or the Big Nose Chief.

THE END.

(Look out for "In the Nick of Time!" next Tuesday's gripping long complete tale of Frank Richards & Co., the chums of the Backwoods Lumber School.)

## THE RIVAL AUTHORS!

(Continued from page 18.)

at Greyfriars. His heart throbbed a little as he slipped the envelope into the box. He had worked it out to his own satisfaction, with Skinner's assistance, that he was quite justified in what he was doing, but somehow his conscience was not quite easy. But the die was cast now.

Billy Bunter rolled hastily away from the letter-box. Wun Lung passed him in the Close, going towards the gates. But Bunter had no eyes for the little Chinese. He rejoined Skinner in the study.

"Done it?" asked Skinner.

"Yes."

Skinner rubbed his hands. "Good egg! I shouldn't wonder if it bags the prize—and it's halves!"

"Is it?" said Bunter warmly. "If I get the five guineas for my story—"

"Linley's story, you mean," chuckled Skinner.

"It's mine now, and if I get the prize, I'll stand you ten bob out of it," said Bunter.

"You'll stand me halves," said Skinner coolly, "unless you want me to tell Linley that you've bagged his manuscript."

"Why, you—you rotter! You made me—"

"Oh, tell that to the Marines!" said Skinner. "You'll keep to the agreement, or I shall give you away, my fat tulip. Halves, you know!"

Skinner strolled away whistling, leaving Bunter in an unenviable frame of mind.

In the meantime Mark Linley played cricket, blissfully unconscious of the plot hatched by his rival.

Bunter waited as patiently as he could for the five-guinea prize!

THE END.

(You must not miss reading next Tuesday's splendid long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, entitled: "BUNTER'S SPECIAL PRIZE!" by Frank Richards. It's full of humorous situations.)

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