

Coming Shortly! **THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER!**

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d}₂

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE "PENNY POPULAR."

No. 916. Vol. XVIII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending December 28th, 1918.]

"THE CHRISTMAS CAPTIVES!"

A Magnificent New Long Complete
Story of JIMMY SILVER & CO., the
Chums of Rookwood.

By OWEN CONQUEST.



JIMMY SILVER & CO.'S METHOD OF DEALING WITH THE DANDIES!

The 1st Chapter. Off for the Holidays.

"I say, Jimmy—" began Tubby Muffin.
"Shut up, fathead! I'm busy!" growled Jimmy Silver, as he packed various articles of clothing into an already overpacked bag.
"But you've forgotten something, Jimmy," said Tubby Muffin earnestly.
"No, I haven't."
"But you—" "Oh, go and eat coke, you fat duffer!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "I'm doing this job. If you think you can do it better, you'd better take it on."
"I don't, but—" "Well, be quiet, then!" snapped Jimmy Silver somewhat irritably.
Perhaps Jimmy Silver had some cause to be irritable.
It was the last day of the term, and the fellows were just getting ready to break up for the Christmas vacation. Jimmy Silver had left the packing of his bag to the last minute.
Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for him downstairs, they having attended to the important job of packing the previous evening.
Jimmy Silver executed very little care in packing his bag. His main object seemed to be to get the various articles in the least possible time.
He certainly was succeeding, but the way he rammed in one article after another was in no way good for the articles.

He was getting quite red in the face from exertion, and Tubby Muffin's interruptions did not improve matters in the least.
"Look here, Jimmy—" began Tubby once more.
"I shan't tell you again to be quiet," said Jimmy Silver wrathfully. "You might show your gratitude to me for offering to take you home to my place for Christmas."
"I am grateful, Jimmy—jolly grateful," declared Muffin. "I should have had to remain here for the vac. if you hadn't asked me to come to your place. You see, my people not being at home—" "I don't want to hear that over again!" snapped Jimmy Silver irritably. "I've heard it about a thousand times already. You—" "I say, Jimmy, if you don't want me to come with you—" "I don't!" "But—but you wouldn't like me to stay at the school all on my own, now, would you?" "That's why I've asked you to come to my place," said Jimmy Silver, closing his bag with a snap. "Thank goodness that's done."
Jimmy Silver kicked his bag away from him, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.
"But—but you've forgotten something, Jimmy," said Tubby Muffin.
"Forgotten something?" gasped Jimmy. "Why the dickens didn't you tell me before?" "I—I did, but—"

"Well, what is it?" "A pair of my shoes," said Tubby Muffin, holding them before Jimmy Silver.
"You fat duffer!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Your shoes aren't coming in my bag. Shove them in your own."
"But—but my bag is full."
"Then you'd better leave the shoes behind."
"I can't. I—" "Oh, buzz off!" snapped Jimmy Silver, picking up his bag. "We shall lose that train if you aren't careful."
"But, I say, Jimmy, I'll carry your bag if you let me put my shoes in," said Tubby Muffin.
"Nothing doing," growled Jimmy Silver. "This bag is fastened up, and I'm jolly well not going to open it for a pair of your old shoes."
"They're not old."
"Well, new shoes, then," said Jimmy Silver. "I don't care whether they're new or old, you'll have to carry them yourself if you want them. Now get out of the way, fathead, unless you want me to knock you over."
"Ow! Yow-ow-ow-ow!" shrieked Tubby Muffin, as Jimmy Silver's bag collided with his legs, almost bowling him over.
"Serves you right for getting in the way," said Jimmy Silver unsympathetically.
"Ow! Grooooooogh!" "Shut up that row!" said Jimmy Silver, pulling open the door of the dormitory. "You'd better buck up and

come downstairs; we sha'n't wait for you."
"But, Jimmy, there's my bag, you know," said Tubby Muffin. "It's in my study, and—" "Well, you'd better hurry up and fetch it, then."
"But you've hurt my leg, and—" "Oh, rats!" growled Jimmy Silver, darting into the passage.
Tubby Muffin gave him a savage look, and then followed him out of the dormitory.
The fat junior did not want to carry his own bag, but, all the same, he did not want to be left behind.
Tubby's father had gone across to Ireland on business, and had written to inform his young hopeful that he would have to remain at Rookwood for the vacation in consequence.
Jimmy Silver, however, had taken compassion on the fat junior, and asked him to his place for Christmas.
Lovell and Raby and Newcome were also going, and, incidentally, they were not at all pleased with the idea of having Tubby Muffin's company thrust upon them.
But Lovell & Co. did not voice their objections in Jimmy Silver's presence.
Being guests of Jimmy Silver's, they considered they had no right to raise objections to any other guests.
Tubby Muffin was naturally delighted at the thought of spending Christmas at the Priory.
But the prospect of having to carry

his own bag was not quite so delightful to the fat junior.
Nevertheless, as nobody else would carry it for him, Tubby realised that if his bag was to reach the Priory safely he would have to carry it himself.
He hurried down to his study, and then, slipping on his hat and coat, he made his way to the quadrangle, now covered with a heavy mantle of snow.
Tubby Muffin's shoes were reclining in the capacious pockets of his overcoat.
The fat junior had not yet given up hope of getting somebody to carry them for him.
Jimmy Silver & Co. were waiting for him outside the School House door.
"You've come, then, you fat idiot?" said Lovell disdainfully.
"I say, Lovell—" "D'you think we've got all the day to catch the train?" "You needn't be so beastly disagreeable, Lovell," said Tubby reproachfully. "If it hadn't been for me you wouldn't have known that you'd forgotten something."
"Forgotten something?" said Lovell. "But—" "You've left a pair of shoes behind," said Tubby Muffin, and he turned his gaze in the direction of Jimmy Silver, who was saying good-bye to Bulkeley, the captain of the school.
Lovell frowned portentously.
"I don't think I have," he said,

(Continued on next page.)

BARKER, THE BOUNDER!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"You—you— Oh, why don't you leave me alone?" muttered Jack Jackson. "What ever pleasure do you find in taunting me like this? Why don't you go your way, and let me go mine?"

"My dear chap," said the bouncer, "I'm too fond of your company for that. I've taken a real liking to you, you know!"

"Don't tell such lies!" cried Jack Jackson hotly.

"But I have, honest Injun!" said Barker.

"Then why don't you treat me decently?" demanded Jack Jackson. "What do you want to threaten to write to your father and get my pater sacked for?"

"Just for a bit of fun!" said the bouncer, with a careless air. "But I shouldn't have to threaten you if you did all I asked you to. You've got a

nasty habit of kicking against the traces, you know!"

"What else do you expect when you try to make me act like an utter blackguard?" said Jack Jackson. "I—I—I'm not aware that I've done anything of the kind," said Barker.

"You made me go into that rotten inn," said Jack Jackson. "I reckon it's an act of blackguardism for a chap to enter a disreputable public-house!"

"Matter of opinion," drawled the bouncer. "I don't think it is, and that being the case, I must ask you to conform to my ways. If I hadn't taken such a fancy to you, I shouldn't dream of threatening to get your gov'nor the push if you didn't do as I tell you."

"Oh!"

Jack Jackson groaned miserably.

"You're making a fuss over nothing," said Barker. "Let's go for a stroll. A

walk will— Hallo, here comes that ass Bunny!"

The duffer of the Fourth came strolling towards the old elms.

There was a very thoughtful look on his face as he approached.

"I hope you'll excuse me," he said quietly. "But—"

"What the dickens do you want?" demanded the bouncer curtly.

"I wish to have a few words with Jackson," said Bunny simply.

"Jackson's in Coventry," said Barker. "Surely you know you aren't allowed to speak to him?"

"I am quite aware of that," said the duffer. "I am afraid, however, that I must act against the order of the Form."

"You'll be sent to Coventry, too."

"I shall have to risk that," said Bunny. "I feel that it is absolutely necessary for me to say a few words to Jackson to prevent him from descending into the depths of blackguardism."

"What's that?" exclaimed Jack Jackson hotly, giving the duffer a grim look.

"Please be good enough to calm yourself, Jackson," said Bunny. "Even

though your bad habits may be numerous, there is no reason why you should add an uncontrollable temper to them."

"By gad!" exclaimed the bouncer. "That's sauce, if you like! Dot him one on the nose, Jackson!"

"Jackson would do far better to listen to what I have to say to him," said the duffer calmly. "I feel it is my duty to urge upon Jackson to give up the bad ways he has adopted. Whisky-drinking is one of the—"

"Knock off, ass!" exclaimed Barker.

"I refuse to do anything of the kind!" declared the duffer. "You must be aware, Jackson, of the results of whisky-drinking. A drunkard—"

"By gad," cried the bouncer, "I wouldn't stand that, Jackson, if I were you! Give him one on the nose!"

Jack Jackson's fists were clenched tight, and it looked as though he were about to adopt the suggestion.

"Whilst I do not think for one moment that you are an inveterate drinker, Jackson," went on Bunny fervently, "there is no doubt that in time—"

"Go for him, Jackson!" urged the

bouncer, and at the same time he gave Jack Jackson a push from behind.

Jackson's clenched fist was held out in front of him, and as he staggered towards the duffer, it seemed as though he was aiming a blow at Bunny's stomach.

At the same moment there came a shout from the quadrangle, and next instant Dicky Turner came dashing up.

"You rotter!" he cried hotly. "I'll teach you to hit a fellow in the stomach! Take that, and that!"

Twice in quick succession Dicky drove his fist in Jack Jackson's face.

The latter landed with a thud on the snowy ground, and Dicky Turner leaned over him, his fist held forward in a threatening manner.

"Get up, you cad!" he exclaimed angrily. "And I'll give you the biggest hiding of your life!"

(Another magnificent long instalment of this splendid new serial in next Monday's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. I should be glad if readers would write and let me know what they think of this new story.)

UP AGAINST IT!

A Splendid Long Complete
Story of
FRANK RICHARDS & CO.,
the Chums of the School in
the Backwoods.
By **MARTIN CLIFFORD**

The 1st Chapter. Black Ingratitude!

"Peckover, by gum!"

There had been a heavy fall of snow in the Thompson Valley, and the Cedar Creek trail was thick with the white flakes.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless were trudging through the snow towards Cedar Creek School, when Bob suddenly halted.

Ahead of the two schoolboys on the trail a fur-clad figure had come in sight. It was Mr. Peckover, the headmaster of Hillcrest School, with his fur-coat turned up round his chin, the flaps of his cap drawn down over his ears, and little more of his face showing than his long, thin, red nose.

But the chums of Cedar Creek knew that nose.

Mr. Peckover's head was bent against the keen wind that blew from the snowy slopes of the Rocky Mountains in the far distance.

He was coming towards the Cedar Creek fellows, but he had not seen them.

"Dear old Peckover!" said Bob Lawless, with a grin. "And there's plenty of snow handy, Franky."

Frank Richards laughed and shook his head.

"Not good enough, Bob," he answered. "He will come along to Cedar Creek and complain if we snowball him."

"But it's too good a chance to be lost!" urged Bob. "The old bird hasn't seen us, and we can take cover, and snowball him as he moseys by."

"But—"

"He can't come yarning to Miss Meadows if he doesn't see us," argued Bob. "And he's asked for it, hasn't he? Isn't he down on us, nice as we are?"

"Yes; but—"

"Don't but, old chap; get into cover, and get some snowballs ready."

Bob Lawless was evidently determined. The chums of Cedar Creek had had many rubs with Mr. Peckover, and they had no love for the headmaster of Hillcrest.

And really it did seem too good a chance to be lost.

"Oh, all right!" said Frank. "But—"

"Hallo!" ejaculated Bob suddenly.

Mr. Peckover was about a dozen yards away now, but with his head still bent and his eyes on the trail he had not seen the chums of Cedar Creek, so far.

But all of a sudden, as he came abreast of a thick patch of spruce beside the trail, Mr. Peckover gave a wild jump.

From the spruce thicket a snowball had whizzed with deadly aim, and it landed fairly on the sharp red nose of the schoolmaster.

There was a sudden howl from Mr. Peckover as he jumped.

"My hat!" exclaimed Frank Richards in astonishment. "Who was that? There's somebody in the timber!"

Whiz, whiz!

Crash!

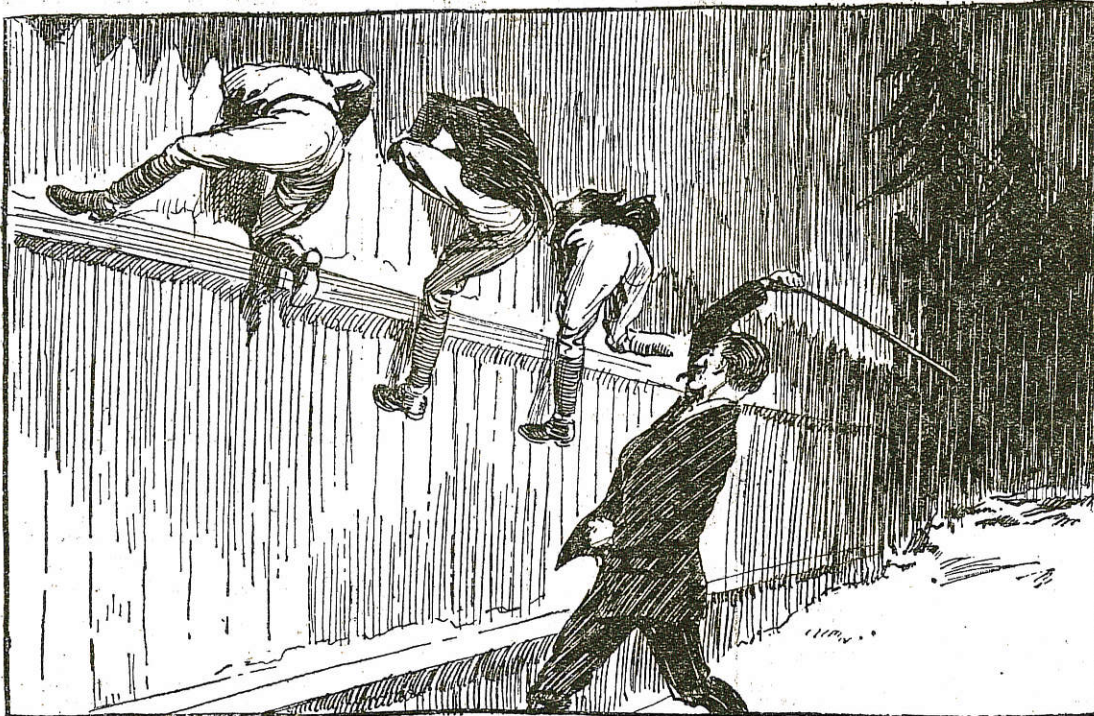
From the spruce whizzing snowballs came thick and fast.

It was evident that there was an ambush beside the trail, and Mr. Peckover had walked into it.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless stared on at the scene.

Their snowballs were not wanted.

Mr. Peckover was fairly dancing as the shower of missiles came pelting from the thicket, smiting him hip and thigh.



WELL-PLACED FOR PUNISHMENT!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Yaroooo!"

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

The snowballs were still invisible; the thick spruce hid them from sight. But their aim was deadly.

Snowballs smashed all over Mr. Peckover as he yelled and jumped and dodged. He lost his footing suddenly in the snow and rolled over.

Then there was a sound of crashing in the thicket as the unseen snowballers fled through the timber—still unseen.

"Who the dickens are they?" exclaimed Frank Richards. "Not Cedar Creek chaps, I think."

"I guess not!" chuckled Bob Lawless. "Look there!"

He pointed through an opening in the timber.

From where they stood the chums could see three figures darting among the leafless trees in full flight.

"Dicky Bird!" exclaimed Frank. "And Blumpy and Fisher!" grinned Bob. "Hillcrest chaps—pelted their own merry headmaster, too! Peckover doesn't seem popular with his pupils."

In a moment or two Dicky Bird and his comrades vanished into the forest.

On the trail, Mr. Peckover was still rolling in the snow, gasping and snorting.

"Let's give the old bird a hand up!" said Bob Lawless good-naturedly.

Mr. Peckover was really in need of assistance.

He had rolled into a drift beside the trail, and nearly disappeared from sight. Frank Richards and Bob Lawless ran towards him.

From the snowdrift a capped head and a red nose emerged.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" came from the half-buried schoolmaster.

Bob Lawless grasped Mr. Peckover by the shoulder, and Frank Richards seized his arm.

They dragged together, and the angular gentleman was pulled out of the drift. He landed gasping in the trail.

"Owl Oooooop!"

"All right now, sir!" said Bob Lawless, suppressing his merriment. "Set him on his tootsie, Franky!"

"Up with you, sir!" said Frank Richards cheerily.

The chums of Cedar Creek had quite forgotten their original intention of snowballing Mr. Peckover themselves.

Certainly he looked as if he was not in need of any more snowballing.

He was smothered with snow from head to foot, and looked a good deal like Father Christmas as the chums set him on his feet.

He gasped and spluttered breathlessly. "You young scoundrels!"

"What?" ejaculated Frank. "You young rascals!"

"Well, I like that!" said Bob Lawless. "Is that what you call thanks for helping you out of the drift, Mr. Peckover?"

"I—I—I— You young villains!"

Mr. Peckover glared round wildly for his stick, which he had dropped when he rolled over.

Frank Richards picked it up and handed it to him.

The moment the angular gentleman grasped it he brought it across Frank's shoulders with a sounding whack.

Frank gave a yell.

"Why—what—you—"

"You young rascals!" shouted Mr. Peckover furiously. "I will thrash you within an inch of your lives! You—you dare to snowball me—"

The two schoolboys dodged.

"But we didn't!" yelled Bob. "We ran up to help you! It was somebody in the timber who snowballed you."

"Don't tell me falsehoods!"

"You silly old duffer!" shouted Frank. "Keep off, you fathead! I tell you it was— Oh, my hat!"

Instead of keeping off Mr. Peckover rushed on, with his stick flourishing in the air.

He was under the impression that it was the Cedar Creek chums who had snowballed him, and their denials were of no use. Mr. Ephraim Peckover was not of a trustful disposition.

Frank and Bob dodged the stick, with some difficulty. But Mr. Peckover was not to be denied.

He pressed on, the stick lashing out; and he would certainly have done some damage with it had not Bob rushed in and butted.

Bob's head smote the schoolmaster on the centre of his fur-coat, and fairly bowled him over.

He staggered back, and sat down in the snowdrift from which the chums had rescued him a few minutes before.

"Yooooop!"

Mr. Peckover's head and feet showed above the drift; the rest of him was out of sight.

"My hat! I've a jolly good mind to give him some of his own stick!" exclaimed Frank Richards wrathfully. "Leave him there, anyway."

"You bet!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!" yelled Mr. Peckover.

But the chums were not disposed to render further help.

They tramped on down the trail, leaving Mr. Peckover to sort himself out at his leisure.

**The 2nd Chapter.
Called Over the Coals.**

Miss Meadows frowned.

Cedar Creek was at afternoon lessons, when there came a loud knock at the door of the big school-room.

The door was flung open, and Mr. Peckover strode in.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless exchanged a quick look.

"After us, you bet!" murmured Bob. "You fellows been ragging Peckover?" asked Beaulieu, in a whisper.

"No; but he thinks we have."

"By gum! He looks wrathful!" murmured Chunky Rodgers.

Mr. Peckover looked exceedingly wrathful as he strode down the school-room towards Miss Meadows.

"Miss Meadows—" spluttered the unexpected visitor.

"Really, Mr. Peckover—"

"I have come to lay a complaint before you, madam!" snorted Mr. Peckover.

"This is neither the time nor the place, sir. You are interrupting my work," said Miss Meadows coldly.

"Two boys in this class, madam, have assaulted me!" shouted Mr. Peckover.

He stared round the class, and pointed a bony forefinger at Frank Richards and Bob Lawless.

"Those two young scoundrels, Richards and Lawless!" he exclaimed.

Miss Meadows set her lips.

"Pray calm yourself, sir! Richards and Lawless, step out before the class!"

Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin stepped out obediently.

The eyes of all Cedar Creek were upon them.

The two schoolboys were quite cool.

Mr. Peckover was very far from cool.

"Richards! Lawless! You have—" began the schoolmistress.

"Not at all, Miss Meadows!" said Frank quietly.

"You do not deny Mr. Peckover's statement?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"The boy is lying!" thundered Mr. Peckover. "These two young rascals threw snowballs at me on the trail, between this school and Hillcrest, and caused me to fall into a drift."

"This is very serious, Richards," said Miss Meadows, frowning. "If you have done this—"

"But we haven't, Miss Meadows," said Frank Richards earnestly.

"Did you meet Mr. Peckover on the trail?"

"Yes; but—"

"Kindly tell me what happened, then."

"I have told you what happened, Miss Meadows!" thundered Mr. Peckover. "And I demand the instant and severe punishment of these two young rascals."

"If they are guilty of assailing you, sir, they will be punished; but, naturally, I shall hear their account first," said Miss Meadows tartly.

"They will utter falsehoods—"

"We shall do nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Frank Richards indignantly. "And only a cad would say so."

"Wha-a-at!" spluttered Mr. Peckover. "You hear him, madam?"

"Silence, Richards!"

"He has no right to call us liars, ma'am," said Frank.

"Tell me what occurred," said Miss Meadows, with a worried look.

"I repeat that I have told you, madam, that—"

"Allow Richards to speak, please, Mr. Peckover."

Mr. Peckover snorted, but he gave Frank a chance to speak.

Frank explained what had taken place on the trail, Mr. Peckover punctuating his remarks with a series of scornful sniffs.

Miss Meadows' brow cleared as she listened.

"Did you see the persons who snowballed Mr. Peckover, Richards?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Who were they?"

"I—I-I-I rather not mention their names, ma'am," stammered Frank. "Mr. Peckover has no right to come here for information."

"The boy is lying!" thundered Mr. Peckover. "It was he and his companion who threw the snowballs at me!"

"I do not believe Richards is capable of lying," said Miss Meadows quietly. "It appears that you did not see who threw the snowballs."

"I saw these boys throw them!" shouted Mr. Peckover.

"Oh! You are sure?"

"I am positive, madam."

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Frank. He was quite taken aback.

If Mr. Peckover had seen who threw the snowballs, he would certainly have been aware that Dicky Bird & Co. were the culprits, and he would not have come to Cedar Creek to look for them.

Mr. Peckover was, in fact, not speaking the truth.

Miss Meadows looked very troubled.

Mr. Peckover's statement was positive on one side, and that of Frank Richards and Bob equally positive on the other.

The class looked on breathlessly, wondering what the schoolmistress' decision would be.

"You—you are sure that you actually saw these boys throw the snowballs, Mr. Peckover?" asked Miss Meadows slowly.

"I have said so, madam," answered the master of Hillcrest.

"And you, Richards and Lawless—"

"We deny it, ma'am," said Frank Richards steadily. "Mr. Peckover is not telling the truth."

"He is telling lies!" said Bob Lawless bluntly.

The Hillcrest master trembled with rage.

"You hear them, madam?" he stammered. "This is the language your boys use towards me!"

Miss Meadows made a gesture.

"Allow me to speak, Mr. Peckover. Richards, I should be very sorry to doubt your word, but Mr. Peckover says positively—"

"He is not speaking the truth, ma'am."

"You say that you saw who threw the snowballs?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then you must give me their names, Richards."

Frank and Bob exchanged a troubled look.

It did not occur to Miss Meadows that the Hillcrest master had been snowballed by his own pupils, upon whom terrific punishment was certain to fall if Mr. Peckover learned the facts.

The chums of Cedar Creek did not intend to betray Dicky Bird & Co. That was impossible.

But it was impossible, too, to explain their motive for withholding the names.

Miss Meadows' brow grew sterner as they hesitated to speak.

"They cannot give the names," said Mr. Peckover, with a sneer. "There are no names to be given, as they are guilty!"

"I am waiting, Richards!" said Miss Meadows ominously.

"I—I—" stammered Frank.

"I infer, Richards, from what you say, that Mr. Peckover was snowballed by some of the town boys," said Miss Meadows. "There is no reason whatever why you should not give their names and clear yourself."

"There is a reason—"

"What is it?"

"I—I—"

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Meadows impatiently.



UP AGAINST IT!

(Continued from the previous page.)

leaves it was us; but that's no excuse for telling thumping lies!"

Yen Chin came gliding out of the house with a grin on his yellow face.

"Ole Flanky!" he began.

"Oh, don't worry!"

"Miss Meadows wantee speakee to Flanky and ugly ole Bob."

"Is that a message, you blessed heathen?" exclaimed Bob.

"Oh, yes! Miss Meadows tellee me tellee you."

"More trouble!" growled Bob. "Come on, Frank! We're up against it to-day, and no mistake!"

The chums kicked off their snowshoes, and went into the house.

The door of Miss Meadows' sitting-room was open, and they presented themselves there with glum faces.

Miss Meadows, somewhat to their surprise gave them a kindly glance as she beckoned them to enter.

"I have just been told something," the schoolmistress began.

"Yes, ma'am!" said Bob Lawless resignedly. "We're ready."

Miss Meadows smiled.

"I have not sent for you to punish you, Lawless."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.

"It appears," said Miss Meadows gravely, "that, contrary to my belief, you were speaking the truth this afternoon when Mr. Peckover called here."

"We were, Miss Meadows," said Frank.

"It did not occur to me then that you might have some boyish chivalrous motive for concealing the names of the persons concerned in attacking Mr. Peckover. Is it the case, Lawless, that the persons referred to belonged to Mr. Peckover's school?"

Silence.

"You need not hesitate to speak frankly," said Miss Meadows. "Mr. Peckover is not here now, and I have no intention of acquainting him with what you tell me."

"Oh!" said Bob. "In that case, Miss Meadows, we'll give you the facts fast enough. It was some Hillcrest chaps who snowballed him. We couldn't give 'em away to their headmaster, ma'am."

"Their names?" said Miss Meadows.

"In confidence, of course," she added quickly.

"Bird, Fisher, and Blumpy," said Bob, without hesitation.

Miss Meadows pursed her lips.

"I understand now," she said.

"I hope you believe us now, Miss Meadows," said Frank Richards. "I know it looked suspicious our not giving their names; but now you know the reason—"

"I fully believe you, Richards, and I am sorry you have been punished; but at the time you left me no alternative."

"Oh, that doesn't matter, ma'am!" said Bob. "We're not made of putty—I mean, we don't mind a bit. But we didn't want you to think we were liars."

"I do not think so, Lawless, and I am very glad that you have been set right in my eyes. Mr. Peckover was—ahem!—mistaken. No doubt, in the excitement of the moment, he fancied that he had seen you throw the snowballs."

The schoolboys had their own opinion about that, but they did not utter it.

They had a suspicion, too, that Miss Meadows shared their opinion.

"You may go," said Miss Meadows.

"Good-bye, my boys!"

"Good-bye, Miss Meadows!"

The chums walked out in great spirits.

"But how the dickens did Miss Meadows know?" exclaimed Bob, as he sat down in the porch to put on his snowshoes once more.

Frank shook his head.

"Blessed if I know, Bob! She said she had been told something."

"Allee light, oh yes!" Yen Chin grinned into the porch.

"Yes, it's all right, heathen," grinned Bob Lawless, laughing.

"What me tellee you?" grinned Yen Chin. "Me makee all light, what you tinker?"

"Yen Chin good ole lascal—oh, yes!"

Frank Richards uttered an exclamation.

"You told Miss Meadows, Yen Chin?"

The Chinese nodded.

"Me tellee," he answered. "Settee ole Flanky light, you bet! Chinese velly good boy."

"You young ass!" exclaimed Bob. "As it happens, Miss Meadows isn't going to tell Peckover; but she might have—"

"Nevve mindee; allee samee."

"You blessed heathen, you might have got Dicky Bird lagged by old Peckover! I've a jolly good mind—"

"All's well that ends well," interposed Vere Beauclerc, with a laugh. "It's turned out all right, Bob."

"Well, that's so," admitted Bob. "All the same—"

"Bob Lawless ugly ole lascal!" exclaimed Yen Chin indignantly. "Velly unglateful. Go and choppee-chippe!"

"Well, I guess I'm obliged to you, as it turns out," said Bob. "But if it had led to Dicky Bird being lagged I'd have roped you, heathen, and that's a cert!"

"Bob Lawless velly ugly!" was Yen Chin's reply as he walked away.

Bob laughed.

"I guess I'm glad we're all O.K. with Miss Meadows again," he said. "But all the same, we're going to make Peckover sorry for telling lies and getting us into hot water."

"We are!" said Frank Richards emphatically.

And Vere Beauclerc nodded assent.

The three chums were of one opinion in that matter, and as they glided homeward through the dusk and the snow they

were thinking of ways and means for making Mr. Peckover of Hillcrest duly sorry.

The 4th Chapter.

Looking for Trouble.

Frank Richards & Co. did some thinking on the following day, and their thinking was by no means on the subject of their lessons.

They were thinking of Mr. Peckover.

Their rivalry with Dicky Bird and the other fellows at Hillcrest was quite of a good-natured kind, but they did not feel good-natured towards the Hillcrest headmaster.

But how to "go for" Ephraim Peckover was rather a perplexing problem.

They decided that it had to be done, but the "how" remained a problem, and it was not quite settled when lessons were over for the day.

The snow was still thick on the trails, and the chums had come to school on their snowshoes.

After lessons the trio glided out at the gates together, cheerily enough in the keen, frosty air.

"This way!" called out Bob, as they started.

He slid off into the Thompson trail, which led in the direction of Hillcrest School, for some distance.

His chums followed him.

"Not going to Thompson?" asked Frank.

"Nope; Hillcrest!" answered Bob briefly.

"The Hillcrest fellows will be gone home."

"All the better; the coast will be clear," said Bob. "I guess it's Peckover we're going to see."

"But—" began Frank.

"We're going to make the rotter sit up for telling lies about us!" said Bob.

"It's got to be did."

"But how?"

"We shan't find out how by going home. Let's get to Hillcrest, and then we'll see."

"Oh, all right!"

The three chums moved rapidly along the thickly-snowed trail, and turned off into the path to Hillcrest.

They were not long in coming in sight of the new school.

The snow was falling in light flakes, and the high fence of the school enclosure was tipped with white, as well as the roofs of the buildings.

Dusk was deepening over the woods.

From the roofs of Hillcrest a column of smoke rose from a chimney, and was lost in the dusk of the evening.

The gates were closed and locked.

Frank and Beauclerc looked rather humouredly at their determined chum.

So far as they could see, there was "nothing doing."

"We're going in," said Bob.

"But—"

"Peckover lives there in the school-house, and there's only the man-of-all-work, and his wife as well," said Bob.

"Nothing to be afraid of."

"Yes; but—"

"Chuck off your snowshoes and follow your leader, old scout, and not so much chinwag!" said Bob, who had evidently made up his mind.

"Oh, all right!"

The boys took off their snowshoes outside the fence, and, with Bob leading the way, they climbed the high fence and dropped down inside.

It was easy enough to approach the house unseen in the gathering dusk, and with the thick snow deadening the sound of their boots.

As they moved on towards the house they were unaware of the fact that four faces rose over the fence from the outside and looked after them.

Dicky Bird, Fisher, Blumpy, and Watson, the chums of Hillcrest, were the four, and they were grinning.

"Dear little innocent kids!" murmured Dicky Bird. "They don't know they've been spotted. They've a lot to learn at Cedar Creek."

His comrades chuckled.

"But what the thunder are they doing here?" asked Watson.

Dicky shook his head.

"I give that one up!" he said. "I guess they're after us, but they ought to know that school's closed before this time. We shouldn't have known they were here, even if we hadn't happened to spot them coming up the trail. I wonder if it's a stunt on Peckover, though. They don't like our headmaster."

"Any more than we do!" grunted Blumpy.

"We don't, Blumpy, old chap; but we don't allow Cedar Creek kids to rag our headmaster, all the same."

"No fear!" said Fisher.

"Cedar Creek's got to be kept in its place. We're the top-notch school of this section, and the rest are nowhere."

They were talking thus when they were thinking of ways and means for making Mr. Peckover of Hillcrest duly sorry.

The 5th Chapter.

Awful Luck!

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Gruuug!"

"I guess we've got you!" chuckled Dicky Bird, as he planted his knee on Frank Richards' chest, driving him deeper into the snow.

"Let up!" grunted Fisher.

"Let up!" panted Bob Lawless. "How the thump did you come here, you galoots? I reckoned you were gone home."

"We were going, when we spotted you on the trail," grinned Dicky Bird; "and we came back to see what your game was."

"Let up!"

"No fear! We're going to give you a lesson about showing your noses in our quarters," said Dicky Bird. "You've been snowballing poor old Peckover in his own."

"Leggo!"

"Nobody is allowed to snowball Peckover but our noble selves," said Dicky Bird. "We can give him all he wants—and a little over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hullo! That's somebody coming out!" exclaimed Fisher, as a door was heard to open violently.

"Peckover, I guess!" said Blumpy.

"You jays!" panted Bob Lawless. "Let

up! The old jay will be after us in two ticks!"

Dicky Bird looked dumb in the gloom. There was a sound of hurried footsteps tramping in the snow.

Dicky Bird's first thought had been to collar the invaders, and rag them for their temerity in venturing into Hillcrest on the war-path, but at the sound of Mr. Peckover's furious footsteps he changed his mind.

"By gum! We'd better bunk!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

It was too late to "bunk."

Mr. Peckover, in a towering rage, was rushing on the scene. He had heard the sound of voices, and it guided him in the dusk.

Even as the Hillcrest fellows jumped up from their prisoners the master was upon them.

Mr. Peckover rushed at top speed into the group, laying about him with his stick.

Frank Richards & Co. were still gasping breathlessly in the snow; but Dicky Bird and his friends had jumped up, and they came in for the furious lashes of the stick.

In the deep gloom Mr. Peckover could not see who the boys were; but he could see them well enough to lay on with the stick.

There were wild yells on all sides.

Dicky Bird & Co., yelling wildly, scattered, and ran for the fence.

"You young rascals!" panted Mr. Peckover. "You—you—"

He broke off, with a howl, as his ankle was seized, and he was jerked over.

The Hillcrest master plumped into the snow.

"Hook it!" panted Bob.

Frank Richards & Co. scrambled away, and fled for the fence.

But Mr. Peckover was up in a second, and, stick in hand, rushing in hot pursuit.

Dicky Bird & Co. had reached the fence, and scrambled over hurriedly, falling on hands and knees in the snow without.

They did not stop there, but leaped up and vanished into the gloom.

The chums of Cedar Creek were not so lucky.

They reached the fence, with the Hillcrest master raging only a few yards behind them.

They jumped desperately, and caught the top of the fence, and dragged themselves up.

Before they could reach the top, however, Mr. Peckover was below them, and his stick came into active service.

Whack, whack, whack!

The unfortunate chums were remarkably well-placed for punishment as they hung on the fence; and Mr. Peckover did not spare the rod.

In fact, he showed unexpected powers as an athlete as he lashed at the three yelling schoolboys.

They were close together on the fence, and Mr. Peckover, standing below, lashed at one and then another, distributing his favours with great impartiality.

Far in the distance the fleeing Hillcrest fellows paused under the frosty trees, and listened.

From the direction of Hillcrest they heard a sort of horrid chorus of woe:

"Yaroooooh!"

"Stop it! Yooooop!"

"Oh, my hat! They're catching it!" murmured Dicky Bird, rubbing his shoulders. "We've caught some; but they—My word, listen to them!"

"Yaroooooh! Oh, dear! Yah! Oooooop!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Frank Richards & Co. struggled desperately to pull themselves over the fence.

They succeeded at last, and the final lashes of the schoolmaster's stick landed on the palms.

Frank and Bob and the Cherub rolled over, and landed in the snow outside, gasping and groaning.

They had been through it with a vengeance.

They rolled in the snow, and groaned, too breathless and smarting to do anything else for a minute or two.

But the sound of bars being removed from the gate aroused them. Mr. Peckover, apparently, was not satisfied yet.

He was coming out to get to close-quarters again, stick in hand.

Frank Richards staggered to his feet.

"Bolt!" he gasped. "The beast is coming out! Oh, dear!"

The three schoolboys snatched up their snowshoes, and, without staying to put them on, fled for the trail.

They put on a good burst of speed, and Hillcrest and its master were soon a good distance behind. Then they slackened down, breathlessly.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Frank. "You ass, Bob!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" groaned Bob. "It would have been all O.K. but for those Hillcrest rotters turning up! Ow, ow!"

"Hullo, here they are!"

Four grinning faces loomed up for a moment in the gloom.

"Enjoyed your visit?" chuckled Dicky Bird.

Then the Hillcrest fellows vanished, chuckling. Frank Richards & Co. were not feeling inclined for pursuit.

They put on their snowshoes, and travelled. They had had enough for one evening.

"Bob, you ass—" groaned Frank.

"Bob, you duffer—" mumbled the Cherub.

To which Bob Lawless' only reply was:

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY

MR. PECKOVER'S PARTY!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!