

# KING NADUR'S DIAMONDS!

(Just Starting! A Magnificent New Series, introducing Dick and Frank Polruan, and Old Joe Tremorne.)

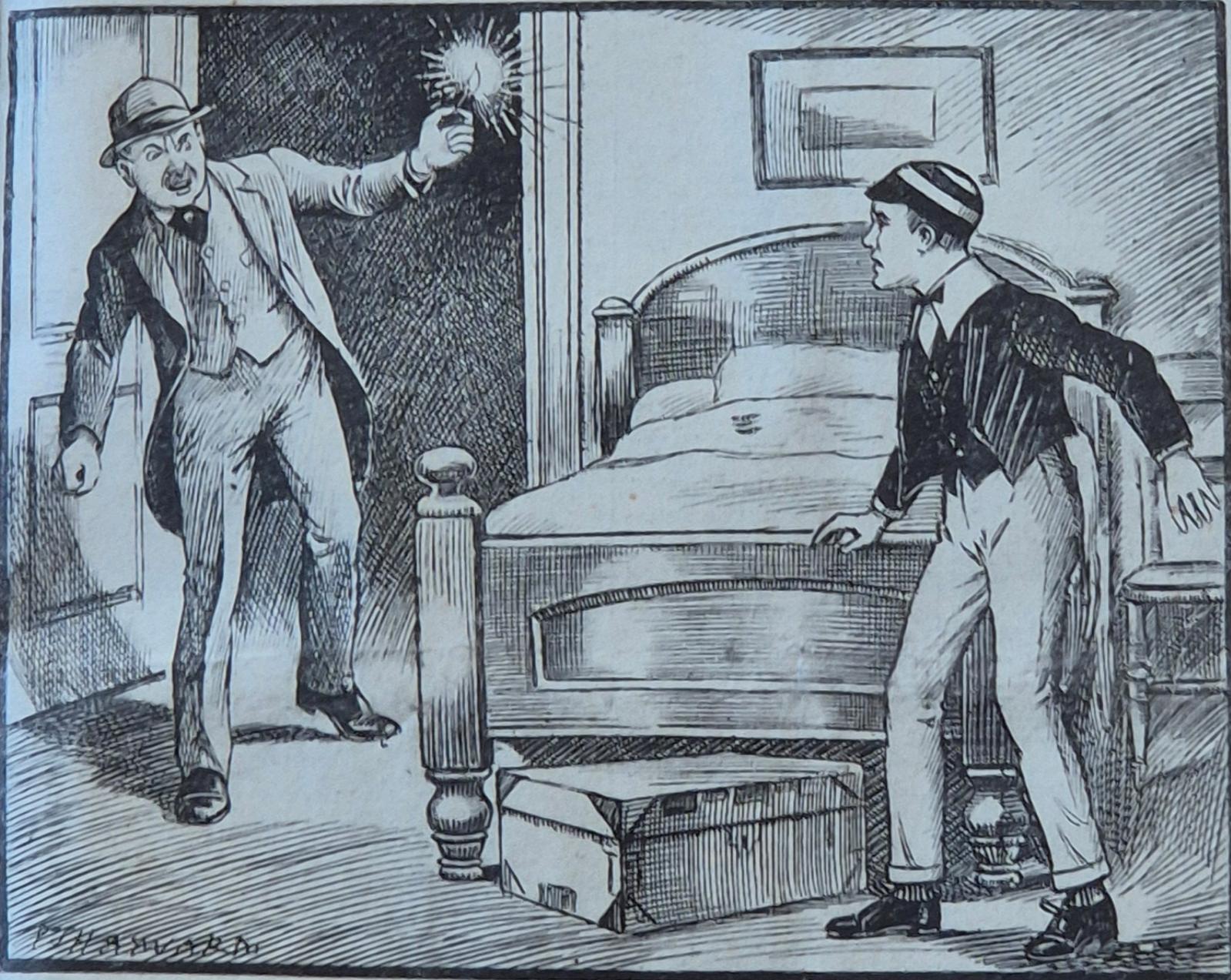
# The BOYS' FRIEND 1<sup>st</sup>

See inside for "Frank Richards' Schooldays!" By Martin Clifford.

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending November 10th, 1917.



## Interrupted in the Midst of His Treacherous Search!

# GENTLEMAN JIM'S SECRET!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

### The 1st Chapter.

#### Erroll's Enemy.

"Penny for 'em!" said Jimmy Silver humorously.

Kit Erroll, of the Classical Fourth, started a little, and looked up.

Erroll was alone in his study when the captain of the Fourth looked in. He was standing by the window, his eyes on the quadrangle without, and a deep shade of thought upon his brow. He had not heard Jimmy's tap at the opening of the door.

"Well, what's the subject?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Thinking out something awfully deep in maths, or whether we're going to beat Grey Friars at Easter—what?"

Erroll smiled.

"No, I was thinking about something else," he said.

"Well, chuck it now, and come down to footer," said Jimmy. "We're getting fine weather for once, and we mustn't waste it. Nothing wrong, I hope?" he added.

"N-no! Not exactly. I've had some news—" Erroll paused. "It's not exactly bad news; it doesn't concern me, really. But—"

"Well, keep smiling!" said Jimmy Silver encouragingly. "If it doesn't concern you, why worry?"

"I wasn't worrying exactly. I was wondering—" He paused again, and coloured. "You remember that rotten fellow, Gentleman Jim?"

Jimmy Silver became very grave.

"I remember, Erroll. You haven't heard anything from him. He's gone to choko, hasn't he?"

"I thought so. But it appears that he got away somehow after the trial. It was mentioned in the paper to-day. He's been at liberty quite a long time now, but I never know. I—I suppose I shall never hear anything more of it. But—but I was wondering."

Erroll was evidently troubled. He remembered "Gentleman Jim" well enough—the rascally crackman who had been supposed to be Erroll's father, until he was found and claimed by Captain Erroll.

Jimmy knew something of Erroll's strange and troubled earlier days, and of the struggle he had had to keep to the path of honour, against the in-

fluence and under the threats of his supposed father.

But the truth had come out at last, and Gentleman Jim had passed out of Kit Erroll's life—into the hands of the police.

Jimmy Silver had almost forgotten the matter, but, naturally, it lingered in Erroll's mind. And the discovery that the crackman was not, as he had supposed, a prisoner of the law, had been a shock to the Rookwood junior.

"Well, the rotter will keep pretty clear of Rookwood, I should say," remarked Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "I suppose the bobbies are looking for him. If you came across him, Erroll, you'd only have to give the word to the police, and he would be nailed. You'd do it?"

Erroll nodded. "I certainly would. That man made my childhood a misery, and I owe him nothing. He wronged and injured my father. I would have no mercy upon him. But I hope he will never cross my path."

Mornington of the Fourth came into the study as Erroll was speaking.

"You're wanted, Erroll," he said. "Yes, Mornny; what is it?"

"Somebody's rung you up on the telephone," said Mornington, with a grin. "Old Bootles is rather waxy, but he says you're to answer it. Buzzer off to his study. The man's holding the line, whoever he is."

"Thanks."

Kit Erroll quitted the study, and hurried towards the stairs. Jimmy Silver was about to follow, when he paused and glanced at Mornington.

"Coming down to the footer, Mornny?" he asked.

"Can't."

"James?" asked Jimmy.

"No, swotting."

Mornington grunted. "I'm workin' for a dashed scholarship, you know—workin' like thunder. It's a bit of a change for me, an' I don't like it. But I've got to stick it!"

Jimmy Silver smiled.

The dandy and shaker of the Fourth in the role of a "swot" struck him as rather comic.

"Yes, funny, ain't it?" said Mornington. "Erroll's makin' me stick to it—helpin' me no end. I wonder sometimes whether I shall see it through, though. Hard work ain't in my line—not at all. I wasn't brought up to work. But beggars ain't choosers." Mornny smiled cardinally.

"Since my beloved Cousin Cecil turned up, I'm a merry beggar, an' I've got to work."

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," suggested Jimmy Silver.

"You want to keep fit, too. Footer's the thing for that."

"No time, old scout! I'm grindin' Greek."

"You grinding Greek?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes—I'm goin' great guns on the merry Anabasis, at present. Here it is."

Mornington held up Xenophon's masterpiece with a mocking grin.

"Like to hear me construe? Darius and his cheery queen had two blessed sons, the elder Artaxerxes, the younger what's his name—"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Well, good luck," he said. "I hope you'll get through."

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were shouting to Jimmy Silver from the passage, and he joined them, leaving Mornington to his "swotting."

Meanwhile, Kit Erroll had gone down to Mr. Bootles' study. He found the master of the Fourth frowning a little.

Mr. Bootles blinked at Erroll over his glasses. The receiver was off the telephone.

"Ah, Erroll!" said Mr. Bootles.

"Somebody has rung up to speak to you! This is—is somewhat disconcerting, Erroll! It is not usual for Fourth-Form boys to be rung up on their Form-master's telephone—what, what?"

"I'm sorry you've been troubled, sir."

"Yes, yes. As the—the Parson states that he is an old friend, and the matter is important, I have sent for you, Erroll. Kindly convey to your friend that his proceeding is—is somewhat disconcerting, Erroll."

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Bootles, evidently disturbed, whisked out of the study, leaving the junior to take the call.

Erroll picked up the receiver, wondering who could be at the other end of the wire. His father was not it.

(Continued on the next page.)



(Continued from the previous page.)

England, and he had no other relations that he knew, and he could not think of any acquaintance who would be likely to ring him up.

"Hallo!" he said, into the transmitter.

"Hallo!" came back. "Are you there?"

Erroll started. The voice was familiar to his ears.

"I am Erroll," he said quietly. "Who is speaking?"

"An old friend, Kit."

The receiver almost dropped from Kit Erroll's hand.

He knew the voice.

It was the voice of Gentleman Jim, the crackman, the man whose villainy had shadowed all his young life, and who had striven to lead him into the ways of crime—the man who was wanted by the police!

### The 2nd Chapter.

#### The Crackman's Farewell.

"Hallo, hallo! Are you there, Kit?"

The voice came impatiently along the wires.

Erroll stood rooted to the floor.

Only that day he had learned that his old enemy was at large. And now here was the man speaking to him on the telephone.

The junior's face flushed, and his eyes glittered with anger.

Did Gentleman Jim suppose that he had still a hold upon him? If he did, he would find out his mistake fast enough.

"Kit, are you there?"

"I am here!" said Erroll at last.

"I have surprised you—what?"

"Yes."

"You hadn't forgotten me, Kit?"

"I had not forgotten you, Gentleman Jim! How dare you speak to me?" asked Erroll, his voice trembling with anger. "Do you think there is anything in common between us now?"

"Why not, Kit?"

"You scoundrel! Do you know what you have to expect from me? I shall ring up the police-station immediately, and tell them—"

"You cannot tell them where I am, dear boy; you don't know!" came the crackman's chuckling voice. "But don't be too hasty, Kit! I have something to say to you! Don't ring off! It's important!"

"I have nothing to say to you, Gentleman Jim."

"Does that mean that we are enemies, Kit?"

"Did you expect anything else?" asked Erroll scornfully.

"No. But I am sorry! Kit, I've had my lesson. There are five years' penal servitude hanging over my head, if I fall into the hands of the police. The old game is finished for me. I've made a fresh start, Kit. I wanted to tell you something—that is, that I'm sorry for the past, and that you will never be troubled by me again."

"Erroll started.

He had wondered what the crackman could have to say to him. But certainly he had not expected this.

"You'll never see me again, Kit," went on the crackman's voice. "I'm leaving England to-morrow."

"Leaving England?" repeated Erroll.

"Yes."

"That will not be easy, in wartime," said Erroll. "You will never be able to get a passport. What do you mean?"

"There is one way of leaving England without a passport, Kit."

"I do not know of it."

"In khaki," said the crackman.

"You—in khaki!" exclaimed Erroll blankly.

"Does that surprise you?"

"It does."

"Why? I am over the compulsory age, but young enough to serve, if I choose. That's what I've done, Kit. Even a crackman, you know, has a country. Kit, my boy, you've had no word from me since I was taken away by the police; but I've thought of you sometimes. I should have liked to see you, to say good-bye, before I went. That's impossible. I don't expect you to think kindly of me, Kit. But I'm going in the draft to-morrow. You know what may happen to me over there—you know, Kit. I'm asking nothing of you. I should like you to say that the past

is forgotten and forgiven, before I go. That's not much to ask."

Kit stood with the receiver in his hand, his brain in a whirl.

Was it true?

Certainly, Gentleman Jim's career was a proof that rascality did not pay in the long run.

But Gentleman Jim, in khaki—Gentleman Jim going out to face the enemy—Erroll could scarcely believe it.

Yet what motive could the crackman have for deceiving him?

He asked nothing.

"Kit, do you hear me?"

"I hear you."

"What do you say, then? Don't you believe me? I—I suppose I can't expect you to trust me, after all the past? But—but you'll think of me sometimes, Kit, out there among the shells, and remember that I wasn't all bad. So far as it's possible to atone for the past, I shall do it. You've nothing to say? Well, good-bye, Kit; I'm done!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed the junior.

"If this is true—" He paused. "I believe you, Gentleman Jim. I can't see why you should lie to me. If you have joined up—if you are going out—"

"I'm in the draft for to-morrow—Private Jones, of the Leamshire Rifles, Kit. Won't you wish me good luck? There's nobody in this country to care whether I'm knocked over or not. I suppose that's why I've been thinking of you. A lot of things seem different to me now. But it's too late to think of that. Good-bye!"

"I do wish you luck!" said Erroll, in a moved voice. "I believe you, and I wish you the best of luck! I owe no grudge for the past; it's forgotten and forgiven, so far as I'm concerned."

"That's what I wanted you to say, Kit. That's all I wanted. You'll never hear of me again, Kit; you'll never know whether I live or die. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, and good luck!"

Erroll put up the receiver.

He left Mr. Bootles' study, his face very thoughtful, and returned to his own quarters.

Mornington was in the study, his handsome face bent over Xenophon, with grim and determined attention. But he looked up as his study-mate came in, glad of the interruption.

"Swotting?" asked Erroll, with a smile.

"Yes," groaned Mornington. "I hate it! I've a good mind to chuck it for a bit, and get some footer."

"I've had a message from Gentleman Jim," said Erroll.

Mornington started.

"By gad! What has he to say?"

Erroll explained.

"By gad!" repeated Mornington. "Well, he couldn't do better, the rascal! If he's managed to squeeze into khaki under a false name, he's safer there than anywhere else."

"I hope his motive was not only that," said Kit. "He says he's in the draft for Flanders; and it's terrible out there now, Morny. He may be going to his death."

"You're sure it's true?"

"Why should he lie to me? He's asked nothing. He doesn't want me to see him. He simply wanted to say good-bye."

"Yes, I suppose it's all serene. Queer fish," said Mornington. "I suppose every blackguard has a good spot in him. I wish him luck, by gad! And you're well rid of him, Kit. I thought a good many times that he owed you a bitter grudge, and would try to get even."

"I don't owe him any grudge now," said Kit. "If he's going out to fight the Germans, that wipes out everything. I suppose I shall never hear of him again. I don't want to. But I hope he'll come through all right."

He paused.

After all, though he wished well to Gentleman Jim in his new life, it was a relief to know that he was gone; that the borders of the same country no longer held the man who had shadowed his life.

"What about the footer?" he asked.

"Give Xenophon a rest, Morny; we'll have a go at it together after tea."

"Right-ho!" Mornington jumped

up, and pitched the "Ten Thousand" across the study, with a crash. "Come on, old scout! Blow Xenophon, and bother the scholarship!"

And the chums left Study No. 4 together, and joined Jimmy Silver & Co. on the football-ground.

### The 3rd Chapter.

#### Not a Success!

"Jimmy, old chap—"

Tubby Muffin met the chums of the Fourth, as they came back to the School House after footer.

There was an expression of almost owl-like seriousness on the fat face of Tubby Muffin. Jimmy Silver waved him off.

"Nothing doing, Tubby! Stony!"

"It isn't that," said Tubby warmly. "I've got an idea, Jimmy, and I want you to help me carry it out, as captain of the Fourth, you know. It's up to you."

"Buzz off, fatty!" interjected Lovell. "We're going in to tea."

"Hold on a minute; it concerns the lot of you," said Tubby. "It's about old Mack, you know."

"Old Mack?" repeated Jimmy Silver. "Has he been reporting you?"

"No, no! He's going."

"That's no news."

"Well, old Mack's been porter here for a jolly long time," said Tubby Muffin. "Longer than the memory of the oldest inhabitant, in fact. Now he's got lumbago or something bad, and the Head's given him a long holiday. He's going, and he may not come back any more."

"Well, there will be dry eyes when he goes," remarked Raby. "Mack was rather too fond of reporting a chap."

"Still, he's an old and faithful servant!" urged Tubby Muffin. "He's been here dozens of years. It's up to us."

"What's up to us, you duffer?" asked Jimmy Silver, puzzled. "Do you want us to stand round and cheer when Mack goes? Or weep over him?"

"I was thinking of a testimonial."

"A which?"

"A testimonial," said Tubby Muffin firmly. "A testimonial in the form of cash, you know. It would be very acceptable to old Mack. I dare say lumbago comes expensive—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it would be only grateful, considering that Mack has been porter here for nearly a hundred years—"

"Not quite that!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Still, it's a good idea. Get up the testimonial by all means, Tubby."

"You'll help?" asked Muffin eagerly.

"Certainly! You raise the cash, and I'll present it to Mack with a neat little speech. That will be an equal division of labour."

"Look here, Jimmy Silver—"

"You fat duffer!" roared Lovell. "Don't we know you? Do you think we're going to shell out tin to help you break the grub rules? Buzz off!"

"But I say—"

Tubby was pushed aside, and the Fistical Four walked on. Tubby planted himself at once in the way of Erroll and Mornington.

"You fellows will back up?" he asked persuasively. "Old Mack is a very deserving case, you know. We're going to have the new porter here to-morrow, and there's no time to be lost. How much shall I put you down for, Morny?"

"Nixes."

"Oh, you're hard up, I suppose," said Tubby, with a sniff. "How much are you going to stand, Erroll?"

"Same amount."

"Oh, don't be mean, you know! Think of the years and years that old Mack has opened the gates, and closed them, and—"

"And reported Rookwood chaps for being a minute or two late!" said Mornington.

"Well, that was his duty, in a way, you know."

"You never seemed to see that before," grinned Mornington. "I've heard you calling him a Hun and a beast and a Prussian."

"I—I was rather hasty. Look here, I rely on you fellows to back me up. I've asked Lattrey, but you know what a mean beast he is. And Smythe of the Shell actually said he believed I only wanted to raise the wind to get tuck for myself, you know—suspicious beast!"

"Smythe seems rather an intelligent chap," said Mornington. "Right on the wicket, in my opinion. Would you mind getting out of the way, Podgy?"

"But, I say—"

Mornington took Tubby by one fat ear, and slewed him round, and the

chums of the Fourth walked on and left him.

"Mean boasts!" grunted Tubby Muffin disconsolately.

The fat Classical rolled after the footballers, in a peevish temper. Tubby was very full of his new idea.

Tubby felt the food regulations severely, especially as his allowance was not large. His schemes for raising the wind were many and various, and his Form-fellows did not need telling that this "testimonial" to old Mack was another of them.

But Tubby did not give up hope.

He rolled into his study, and found his study-mates—Higgs and Jones minor—at tea there.

"Just in time!" said Tubby, more cheerfully.

Higgs gave him a glare.

"That depends," he said. "Are you standing your wack?"

"I—I happen to be short of money at the present moment—"

"Then you'll happen to be short of tea, too!" grunted Higgs. "You can go and have tea in Hall!"

"I've had tea in Hall—I mean—"

"Then you don't want another! Don't you know it's war-time?" demanded Higgs indignantly. "Scat!"

"Look here, I wanted to see you fellows about—"

"Lattrey's told us," grinned Jones minor. "We know all about the giddy testimonial."

"Well, what are you going to give me towards it?" asked Muffin.

Higgs jumped up.

"I'm going to give you my boot!" he said.

And he did; and Tubby Muffin departed from Study No. 2 in a hurry, and with a loud howl.

Higgs slammed the door after him, and Tubby Muffin did not reopen it.

A few minutes later Tubby Muffin looked into the end study, where the Fistical Four were preparing their frugal war-tea.

Lovell made a jump at the poker and another jump at Tubby, brandishing the poker, and the fat junior fled, without uttering a word of the important things he had come there to say. And the Fistical Four chuckled, and sat down to tea, un-interrupted by Tubby Muffin.

And the next day old Mack departed from Rookwood, minus a testimonial—never even knowing Tubby's benevolent intentions towards him. And Tubby, feeling that his luck was sadly out, had no choice about observing the "grub rules."

### The 4th Chapter.

#### The New Porter.

Lattrey of the Fourth drove his hands deep into his pockets, his brows deeply knitted, as he left the School House on Wednesday afternoon.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had gone down to the playing-fields, but Lattrey's steps did not lead him in that direction. Football was not much in the line of the black sheep of Rookwood.

He moved slowly down to the gates with a moody face.

His eyes glittered as they fell upon Erroll and Mornington, who were going out together on their bicycles.

Mornington glanced at him for a moment, and a sarcastic smile flickered on his lips.

"Lattrey looks down on his luck, Kit," Mornington remarked, as he wheeled his machine out with his chum.

"No wonder!" said Erroll drily. "He was lucky, though, not to be sacked from the school. He would be if the Head knew what happened last week."

"No doubt about that!" Mornington paused, with his foot on the pedal, as the cad of the Fourth came out at the gates. "Cheero, Lattrey! You look rather down in the mouth, dear boy."

Lattrey gave him a bitter look.

"Take a little trot down to the Bird-in-Hand" went on Mornington, with a laugh. "They'll cheer you up there!"

"How long is it since you stopped going there?" sneered Lattrey.

"Not long," said Mornington calmly. "I should still be goin', probably, but for the ennoblin' influence of Erroll. Why don't you follow my example, Lattrey, an' turn over a new leaf?"

"I'll believe you've turned over a new leaf when I see it!" said Lattrey sourly. "If you've chucked racin' an' banker and playin' the goat, it's because you're right hard up, an' can't afford it!"

"Right on the wicket!"

"Come on Morny!" said Erroll.

"Still, it's a mug's game," said Mornington reflectively. "I never made it pay, and you're not makin' it pay, Lattrey. You've actually descended to stealin'; and that's serious, you know!"

Lattrey's cheeks burned.

"Perhaps that was under the ennobling influence of your new chum,

too!" he said savagely. "Erroll was a thief before he came to Rookwood."

"You lyn' rotter!" exclaimed Mornington, his cool, mocking manner leaving him at once. "Hold my bike a minute, Erroll!"

Lattrey laughed. He had succeeded in penetrating Morny's armour of cool nonchalance, at all events.

"Isn't it true?" he sneered. "It was before I came; but I've heard all about Gentleman Jim!"

Mornington let his bike run, and strode towards the cad of the Fourth, his hands clenched, and his eyes gleaming.

"If you've heard all about it, you know that what you've just said of Erroll is a rotten lie," he said. "And I'm goin' to lick you for it!"

Erroll caught him by the arm.

"Come on, Morny; the cad isn't worth it! Come on, I say!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, do come!" said Erroll impatiently.

Mornington yielded, and the chums mounted their machines, and pedalled away towards Coombe. Lattrey stood in the gateway, looking after them with a bitter expression.

The cad of the Fourth was feeling that afternoon that the way of the transgressor was hard.

Since he had been at Rookwood, Lattrey had earned more contempt than anything else among his school fellows.

True, there were other "blades" and "giddy goats" among the Rookwood fellows. Smythe & Co. of the Shell prided themselves upon being "dogs" of the first water. Townsend and Topham of the Fourth were very "goey," and Peele and Gower were still more goey, and decidedly shady in some ways.

But Lattrey was easily the blackest sheep of the whole flock.

He was careful enough to keep his shady character a secret from the school authorities, or he would not have remained at Rookwood long. But he could not help most of the juniors knowing him as he was.

The "nuts" of Rookwood associated with him, but in a somewhat lofty way, and hardly concealed their scorn for him. Fellows like Jimmy Silver & Co. seldom gave him even a word or a look.

And since his latest escapade even Peele and Gower had taken to avoiding him.

His hatred of Mornington, his former friend, had carried him too far, added to the state of "hard-up" caused by losses on "gee-gees."

All the Classical Fourth knew that he had taken banknotes from the pocket-book of Mornington II., of the Second Form, and "planted" one of them on Valentine Mornington of the Fourth.

His trick had been detected, and he had been remorselessly exposed. He attempted a feeble pretence that the whole affair had been a "lark," but, naturally, nobody was inclined to credit that explanation.

He had been sent to Coventry at first, and, though that was wearing off, he was very generally avoided.

Even Peele and Gower, who were far from particular, did not care to be seen in his company till the affair had had time to blow over a little.

Lattrey had his time on his hands that afternoon.

His bitterness was almost all turned upon Erroll. But for Erroll he felt he would still be friends with Mornington. It was Erroll's influence that had drawn Morny away from evil associates.

But for his break with Morny he would never have made that last false step, which would have caused his expulsion from the school if it had been made known.

It was Erroll—Erroll all the time; and Erroll, though known now to be the son of an Army captain, had been brought up from early boyhood by Gentleman Jim, the crackman.

That he had been "straight," in spite of temptations and threats, Lattrey did not believe. He was not the kind of fellow to place faith in anybody.

And this fellow—trained by a crackman, probably a thief himself—was the cause of his downfall.

"Hang him!" muttered Lattrey, unconscious that he was speaking aloud, in his savage bitterness. "Have him! If ever I get a chance at Erroll—"

"Ahem!"

Lattrey spun round angrily as he realised that someone was near him.

It was John Brown, the new porter.

Lattrey flushed as he realised that the man must have heard his incautious words.

The porter had been standing near him, a little back, looking down the road after the two cyclists as they departed.

"Excuse me, sir; is that young gentleman Master Mornington?"

"What are you hanging about behind a chap for?" snapped Lattrey. "Sorry, sir, I'm sure," said the new porter apologetically. Lattrey grunted. "That young gentleman with Erroll is Master Mornington, isn't it, sir?" "Yes," snapped Lattrey. "A very wealthy young gentleman, isn't he, sir?" "No; he's a dashed beggar!" growled Lattrey, finding some solace in making that remark, even to the school porter. "He lost all his money when his cousin turned up." Lattrey looked more sharply at the porter. "Brown—your name's Brown, I think—"

"Yes, sir."

"Haven't I seen you before somewhere?"

Lattrey scanned the man's face. John Brown was middle-aged in appearance, with a stolid-looking face, and somewhat dark and heavy brows and moustache. He smiled as Lattrey asked the question, and it was not a pleasant smile.

"I think so, sir," he said. "Of course, you won't mention it here."

"By gad!" said Lattrey, under his breath. "It was yesterday I saw you, in Coombe. You were—"

He broke off.

"You passed me in the garden of the Bird-in-Hand public-house, sir," said John Brown quietly. "I had gone in there for some refreshment, not knowing the reputation of the place, being a stranger in the district."

"You needn't give me that," said Lattrey. "You were jawing with Joey Hook, and pretty deep in it, too."

"Ahem!"

"You saw me there," said Lattrey savagely. "Why haven't you reported me, then?"

"I shouldn't like to cause trouble to a young gentleman like you, sir," said the porter, with a cough. "I am afraid, sir, that neither of us ought to have been there. But I'm sure you won't mention having seen me in the place, and I should not think of causing you any inconvenience on the subject. I like to be obliging, sir."

Lattrey looked at him very curiously.

This was a very different kind of porter from old Mack, and decidedly an accommodating man—so accommodating, in fact, that he would certainly have been discharged if Dr. Chisholm had known how accommodating he was. Lattrey thought he understood the man's object, and he groped in his pocket for a shilling.

Brown made a gesture.

"Thank you, no, sir!" he said, as the shilling glimmered in Lattrey's fingers. "I did not mean that at all, sir. Perhaps you would care to step into my lodge, if you would do me the honour of chatting for a few minutes." He lowered his voice. "If you would care to try my cigarettes, they are quite at your service, sir—under the rose, of course."

Lattrey wondered whether he was dreaming for a moment.

How a man of this kind had succeeded in obtaining a post at Rookwood School was beyond his comprehension.

But the cad of the Fourth was very quick to realise how useful such a man might be to him.

He nodded quite cordially, and followed the porter into his lodge for a "chat." A few minutes later he was smoking cigarettes in the safe seclusion of the porter's parlour.

The "chat," as it turned out, was all on the subject of Mornington of the Fourth. John Brown appeared to possess an inexhaustible curiosity on that subject.

Lattrey told him the story of the finding of Cecil Mornington, and the consequent fall from wealth and importance of Mornington of the Fourth. He had smoked a good many expensive cigarettes by the time the chat came to an end.

"Any time I can be of service to you, sir, you have only to mention it," said John Brown, when Lattrey rose to leave.

Lattrey left the lodge in a state of great astonishment. He chuckled as he wondered what Mr. Bootles would think if he could have known how the new porter had been entertaining a junior of the Fourth Form.

He wondered, too, what John Brown's object was. Whatever it was, there was no doubt that John Brown might be very useful to him, and it did not occur to Lattrey just then that he might be very useful to John Brown.

They had been on a long spin that afternoon, and had put on speed on their return; but the gates of the school were closed and locked when they arrived there and jumped off their bicycles.

"Too bad!" said Erroll. "That means a report and lines."

"May only mean a bob or two to the porter," said Mornington carelessly. "It isn't old Mack now, you know. The new man may be a bit more accommodatin'. We'll see. You'll have to hand out the bob."

Erroll laughed as he rang the bell. The porter came down to the gate, and looked at the two juniors through the bars.

"Let us in," said Erroll. "We're a few minutes late."

"Yes, sir," said the porter respectfully.

The gate was unlocked and opened. Morny and Erroll wheeled their machines in, and Brown reclosed the gates.

"I suppose this means a report," said Mornington. "Is a bob any use to you, Brown?"

John Brown shook his head.

"Thank you, sir, no! I am quite satisfied with my wages."

"Isn't that rather unusual?" asked Mornington sarcastically.

"I hope not, sir."

"That means that you're going to report us. Well, report, and be hanged! Come on, Erroll!"

"Not at all, sir," said Brown smoothly. "I'm sure, sir, I shouldn't care to cause a young gen-

"Oh, no!" said Erroll. "Come up to the study, Morny. I'm as hungry as a hunter."

"Right-ho!"

Erroll had said that he was hungry, but when the chums sat down to tea in Study No. 4 he hardly touched the meal. Morny regarded him very curiously across the table.

"Out with it!" he said abruptly.

Erroll coloured.

"It's nothing, Morny. But—"

"But what?"

"It's absurd," said Erroll, smiling. "But—something about that man Brown—"

"The porter?" exclaimed Mornington in amazement.

"Yes."

"I noticed you were blinking at him. What about him?"

"It's nonsense, of course. But something in the tone of his voice struck me. It reminded me—"

Erroll smiled. "He reminded me, somehow, of a man I'd like to forget the existence of—Gentleman Jim!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's rot, of course!" said Erroll. "I suppose I'm haunted by that man, since I saw that he was free again. But, of course, he's on his way to Flanders before this, or there already."

"My dear chap, get Gentleman Jim out of your mind," said Mornington. "You've done with the rotter for good. That man Brown seems a very civil-spoken fellow. Not much likely to be a relation of Gentleman

humour to be bothered by the greedy Classical.

"Keep your wool on, Lattrey," said Tubby. "If you touch me with that stump I'll go to Bulkeley and tell him about you smoking in the lodge this afternoon!"

Lattrey dropped the stump.

"What?" he ejaculated.

Tubby Muffin gave a fat chuckle.

"You didn't know that I saw you. He, he, he!"

"You spying cad!" exclaimed Lattrey furiously.

"Well, I saw you chumming up with the porter," grinned Tubby. "I wondered what the game was, and I peeped in at the side window. I'm shocked at you, Lattrey—and at Brown, too! Smoking! I'm really surprised at you!"

Lattrey gritted his teeth. The Peeping Tom of Rookwood always seemed to know everything that went on. He was not particular in his methods of gaining information. His knowledge in this case was rather awkward for Lattrey.

"All serene. I'm not going to tell," grinned Tubby. "I'm awfully discreet, you know, if a chap treats me as a pal. But that man Brown is shockin', ain't he? Fancy letting a Rookwood chap smoke in his lodge! No wonder Erroll thinks he looks like a burglar!"

Lattrey jumped.

"What?" he exclaimed. "What are you babbling about?"

"He said so," said Tubby. "I happened to hear him. He said that

fool. But—but Erroll doesn't know what I know—that Brown is a pal of Joey Hook, the sharper, and that he's shady—jolly shady! He wouldn't have given me cigarettes in his lodge if he hadn't been pretty shady. And—and what did he want to know all about Mornington's affairs for? What does Morny matter to an ordinary school porter? He isn't an ordinary school porter, that's a cert! By gad!" Lattrey's eyes fairly burned.

"By gad! If—if there should be anything in it, and if I could find out, then—then I should have that hound Erroll in the hollow of my hand!"

And Lattrey laughed, a soft, low laugh, that was not pleasant to hear.

**The 6th Chapter.**  
**A Spy in the Night.**

The departure of old Mack, the porter, and the arrival of the new man to take his place, were events of the smallest possible moment to the Rookwood fellows.

Nobody took any special notice of John Brown, naturally.

It was noticed that he was much more civil and obliging than old Mack had been, and that was all. Old Mack was a good-hearted man in his way, but he had a crusty temper, and when it was his duty to report a fellow for being late, he never failed to perform that duty with great exactitude.

John Brown was much less exact in the performance of his duties.

So the fellows sometimes had a kind nod or word for the porter. Otherwise, they hardly noted his existence. They had little or nothing to do with him.

Erroll, it is true, for a day or two gave the porter keen glances when he came across him. But the quiet, sedate porter never seemed to notice it, and his manner to Erroll was the same as his manner to the others—quiet and civil and respectful.

Erroll smiled himself at the odd thought that had come into his mind; that something about the man had reminded him of Gentleman Jim the crackman.

He soon dismissed the incident from his mind. If he thought of Gentleman Jim at all, it was to wonder how he was getting on at the Front, for there was no doubt in his mind of the truth of the statement the crackman had made to him on the telephone.

Had he been able to assign a motive for deception, certainly he would not have taken Gentleman Jim's word. But he could think of no motive, and so he accepted the crackman's statement at its face value.

But there was one fellow in the Fourth Form who was giving a great deal of thought to the new porter, and to Gentleman Jim.

Lattrey had pondered again and again over what Tubby Muffin had told him.

The matter had drifted out of Tubby's volatile mind. He forgot things as fast as he chattered them. But Lattrey had not forgotten.

The bare suggestion seemed wildly impossible, and yet—

It was probably because Lattrey nourished a bitter grudge towards Erroll that he was disposed to attach some importance to the idea.

If it should be so? It was impossible. But if it should be so? Lattrey knew that Gentleman Jim had once attempted to rob the school. Was it not possible that he meditated a second attempt under more-favourable auspices?

And if the crackman was there, in Rookwood School itself, in a new guise and under a false name, did not Erroll know it? Was he not the confederate of the man who had once been supposed to be his father?

From what Tubby had overheard, it would not have appeared so; but Tubby had heard only a few words, and perhaps reported them inaccurately.

If the crackman was there, and if he was there with Erroll's knowledge, what a revenge upon Kit Erroll, when he had the proofs in his hands!

Lattrey felt his heart beat more quickly at the thought.

One thing was certain. He meant to know.

When he knew the truth, if it was the truth, he would use his own judgment as to the use he would make of his knowledge. But, at all events, he would know.

Lattrey was a good deal about the porter's lodge for the next two or three days.

The cad of the Fourth was such an outcast at present among the juniors that his new occupation was hardly noticed, if noticed at all. Peole remarked sneeringly that Lattrey had taken to talking to the porter because nobody in the Fourth wanted to talk to him, and that was all.

But Lattrey did not drop into the porter's lodge simply to talk.



"Keep your wool on, Lattrey," said Tubby Muffin. "If you touch me with that stump I'll go to Bulkeley and tell him about you smoking in the lodge this afternoon!"

tleman trouble for a matter of a few minutes."

"Oh, good!" said Mornington in surprise. "You're a jolly, good-natured chap, Mr. Brown!"

"Thank you, Master Mornington!"

"Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

"Come on, Erroll! What's the matter?"

Erroll was staring at the new porter in the dusk, with a strange expression on his face.

Morny caught his arm.

"Come on! What are you dreaming about?" he asked. "We've got time to cut in for calling-over."

"Yes, I'm coming," said Erroll, his eyes still on the porter.

Brown seemed unconscious of his strange, fixed scrutiny. He touched his hat to the juniors, and went back into his lodge.

"That—that's the new porter, Morny!" said Erroll at last in a low voice.

"Yes; man named Brown, I heard somebody say. What about him?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Erroll did not speak again as he wheeled his machine after his chum. They hurried into the Hall for calling-over, and were just in time to answer to their names.

"Nearly missed it, you bounders!" remarked Jimmy Silver, as the Fourth came out of Hall. "Had a good spin?"

"Oh, rippin'!" said Mornington.

"You don't look specially cheerful, Erroll. Overdone it?" asked Jimmy, glancing at the grave, troubled face of the Fourth-Former.

Jim the crackman— What do you want, you fat idiot?"

Tubby Muffin's fat face glimmered in at the door.

"It's all right. I haven't heard what you were saying!" said Tubby in a great hurry. "I wasn't listening, you know. Can you fellows lend me a tin of sardines for tea?"

"I'll lend you a thick ear!" growled Mornington.

"Don't be a touchy beast, Morny. If you're not needing all your allowance of sugar, I'll borrow a few lumps. That beast Higgs uses all his own allowance himself, and Jones is just as bad. I—"

Tubby Muffin did not stay to finish. Morny had grabbed up a cushion, evidently as a missile. Tubby backed out hastily and closed the door.

"Yah! Rotter!" he howled through the keyhole.

Then he departed hurriedly.

Tubby Muffin had had tea in the Hall, but he was hungry—he always was hungry. Supplies in his own study were out off till he could stand his "whack," a matter of difficulty to the impetuous Tubby.

After some thought he started for Lattrey's study, with a very determined expression on his fat face.

Lattrey was having his tea alone there. Peole and Gower were honouring Smythe of the Shell with their company. Lattrey had not been included in the invitation. He sat at his solitary board in a black mood, and as Tubby came in he started up with an angry exclamation. The outcast of Rookwood was in no

man Brown reminded him somehow of Gentleman Jim. You've heard of Gentleman Jim. It was before you came here—"

Lattrey's eyes glittered.

"Did Erroll say that, Tubby, old chap?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tubby, greatly pleased by Lattrey's change of tone, which was a testimony to the interesting nature of his yarn.

"Morny laughed. Erroll said Gentleman Jim was free now, and going to Flanders. Blessed if I know what he should be going to Flanders for! They don't enlist convicts, do they? He said something about Brown reminding him of that fellow. Rot, of course! Erroll said it was rot himself. Can you lend me a tin of sardines, Lattrey?"

"But Erroll doesn't think—he can't think—"

"Oh, no! It was just that the man reminded him of the fellow, that's all. Can I have that tin—"

"Take it, and go!" granted Lattrey.

"Thanks, old chap! I sha'n't mention a word about your smoking— All right, I'm going!"

And Tubby Muffin went.

When he was gone Lattrey closed the door. He did not return to his lonely tea. He lighted a cigarette, and smoked in silence, pacing to and fro in the study. Strange thoughts were working in his brain.

"It's impossible!" he muttered. "Sheer lunacy! But why should that man remind Erroll of Gentleman Jim? It's rot, of course! Erroll thinks it rot, according to that fat

**The 5th Chapter.**  
**A Startling Suspicion!**

"Late!" said Mornington.

Erroll and his chum came whizzing up to the gates of Rookwood in the deep autumn dusk.



GENTLEMAN JIM'S SECRET!

(Continued from the previous page.)

He was there to watch and observe. The fact that John Brown allowed him to smoke there was proof enough that the porter was not what Dr. Chisholm supposed him to be.

Lattrey, of course, was not likely to betray him. The porter knew too much of Lattrey's own proceedings. But the fact that he made no public mention of his knowledge of Lattrey's shady habits was another proof that he was not exactly what he appeared to be.

But for the rest, if the man was playing a part he played it well. Lattrey had found a photograph of Gentleman Jim in a newspaper, but it bore little or no resemblance to John Brown.

But the crackman was clean-shaven, while John Brown wore a heavy moustache, and that would account for the difference.

And Lattrey, observing the man closely, knew that the hirsute adornment was genuine enough. That proved nothing, for Gentleman Jim had been long enough out of prison to grow as much hair as he liked on his face.

Lattrey made no progress, but the suspicion remained sharp in his mind, and he meant to know. If he could not make the discovery from the man himself, he might make it in another way, and ere long he had laid his plans for making a search in the lodge during the porter's absence.

After a few days, too, Lattrey learned a new fact from his estimable friends at the Bird-in-Hand. Sometimes when John Brown was supposed to be asleep in his lodge, when all Rookwood was plunged in slumber, the porter was in reality engaged in card-playing in the back parlour of the village public-house, sitting under the rose, with Joey Hook and a few select sporting gentlemen.

If he was indeed Gentleman Jim, it was easy enough to imagine that he was "fed up" with the stolid life of a school porter, and was eager for a little relaxation even at some risk.

And that discovery gave Lattrey the cue he wanted. During one of those nocturnal absences of John Brown there would come his opportunity of making a search in the lodge.

And a few nights later Jimmy Silver woke up in the dormitory of the Classical Fourth at the sound of someone quietly dressing in the dark.

Jimmy sat up in bed, and blinked at the dim figure in the gloom.

"Who's that?" he ejaculated. "Do you want to wake the House, you dummy?" came Lattrey's snarling whisper.

"So you're breaking bounds again, you cad?" growled Jimmy Silver. "Find out!"

Jimmy Silver grunted. He was greatly inclined to get out of bed and "mop up" the cad of the Fourth on the spot. Fortunately for Lattrey, Jimmy decided that it was too much fog, and turned over and went to sleep again.

Lattrey finished dressing, and slipped quietly out of the dormitory. Five minutes later he was in the cool, keen air of the quadrangle.

The hour was late. Not a single light glimmered from the great array of windows. Like a ghost in the gloom, Lattrey glided away towards the porter's lodge.

He knew that John Brown would be absent that night. He had learned that much from Mr. Hook in Coombe. It was his opportunity at last, and he meant to make the most of it.

The porter's lodge was closed, and there was no light. Anyone passing it would have supposed that John Brown was fast asleep in bed, and he certainly ought to have been at that hour.

Lattrey knew better. In the shade of the big beech near the lodge, Lattrey worked at the catch of the little parlour window with his pocket-knife. His face was a little pale. He knew well enough the risk of his proceeding. But he did not falter.

The catch yielded at last. Lattrey slid up the lower sash and drew himself into the dark room. With a beating heart, he closed the window behind him, and drew the blind carefully across it. He was fairly committed to his rascally adventure now.

The 7th Chapter. Gentleman Jim.

"By gad!" muttered Lattrey. The junior had not been idle. He had been in the lodge a whole hour, and it had been a very busy hour.

But if there was any evidence in the building to connect John Brown with Gentleman Jim it had escaped him.

He was standing now in the bedroom, unoccupied save by Lattrey. His eyes were bent upon a small wicker chest, fastened by a patent lock, which he had dragged from under the bed, where he had discovered it.

The chest was well made of tough oak, and the lock was far beyond Lattrey's powers. It was so strongly made that he doubted whether he could have burst it with a hammer, and certainly he did not dare to use such drastic measures.

The chest was bound at the corners with brass, and was evidently an expensive article, and it was strange enough that it should be in the possession of a school-porter.

What did John Brown want with such an article unless he had something in his possession which it was absolutely necessary to conceal from prying eyes?

Lattrey would have given a great deal to pry into the contents of the brass-bound chest. Its mere existence there was a confirmation of his strange and dark suspicions.

But without opening it there was no proof, and he could not venture to attempt to smash it open. He dared make no noise, and he did not care to leave traces there of his intrusion.

He was still regarding the chest

with a baffled look, in the dim light of a candle-end, when a sound below made him start and draw a panting breath.

In the silence of the night he heard the faint but unmistakable sound of a door unlocking and opening.

The porter had returned! Lattrey, with a thumping heart, instantly blew out the candle, and thrust it into his pocket.

He had intended to be gone without leaving a trace before John Brown returned to his quarters. He had stayed too long.

His heart beat almost to suffocation as he listened to the soft foot-falls on the old stair.

The man was coming up in the dark.

He was very quiet in his movements. It would not have suited John Brown, whatever he was, to allow Rookwood to learn of his nocturnal excursions.

Lattrey was white now.

There was no escape for him. The man was coming up to the bedroom, and there was no escape by the door, and no time to escape by the window. He would be found there. And if the man was the man he suspected, what might not the crackman do?

That thought came into Lattrey's mind now for the first time, and it was a terrible thought.

For he knew that Gentleman Jim was a desperate man, with a sentence of penal servitude hanging over his

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head in case of discovery. And if he found that he was suspected!

Lattrey trembled. And if the man was, after all, only John Brown, the porter, how was he likely to take this treacherous search of his quarters?

The footsteps sounded at the bedroom door, and the door opened. Lattrey stood rooted to the floor.

He heard a snuff and a sharp exclamation. The odour of the hastily-extinguished candle had been detected at once.

"By thunder! Who is there?"

The voice rang out sharply and threateningly, quite unlike the usual silky and civil tones of John Brown, porter.

Lattrey did not speak.

"I know you're here! Who are you?" The voice was savage and threatening. "By thunder!"

A match scratched in the darkness. As the flame flickered up, the porter held up the match, and the wavering light gleamed on Lattrey's white face.

Lattrey's heart gave a great throb. The man held the match in his left hand. In his right was grasped something that shone and glittered in the flickering light. Lattrey knew that it was a revolver, and his heart almost ceased to beat.

For a moment there was tense silence.

In the wavering gleam of the match the man and the boy looked at each other, their glances meeting.

The match went out.

Lattrey heard a sound. It was the sound of the weapon sliding back into a pocket. But the sight of it had been enough for Lattrey. It was more than enough.

He knew now what he had come there to find out, and he knew instinctively that Gentleman Jim, finding someone in his room in the dark, had suspected that it was some rascal of his own fraternity, there for purposes of robbery. He certainly would not have revealed his weapon otherwise.

The crackman made a movement, and Lattrey stopped back hastily. There was a muttered curse as Gentleman Jim's feet came into collision with the brass-bound chest on the floor.

Another match glimmered out, and the man turned on the gas and lit it. Keeping between the junior and the door, he scanned Lattrey's face grimly.

"So it is you, Master Lattrey?"

"Yes!" muttered Lattrey huskily.

The man was the smooth, suave porter again now. Had not Lattrey seen the weapon he had betrayed in the light, he would never have guessed that this quiet, suave man had so deadly a thing about him.

But he knew it now, and there was a deep and gnawing fear in his breast. He would have given worlds to be safe out of the lodge—safe back in the Fourth-Form dormitory.

He made a movement, but the man waved him back.

"You don't go yet!" he said.

"I—I—"

"What are you doing here?"

No answer.

John Brown stooped, and slid the brass-bound chest back under the bed. Then his eyes gleamed at Lattrey again.

"Tell me why you came here, boy."

"I—I came to—to—"

"To steal?"

"No."

"Then why?"

Lattrey was silent.

"I suppose you know," said John Brown quietly, "that I shall report this to your headmaster in the morning, Master Lattrey?"

Lattrey almost smiled, in spite of his fear. The man's eyes were scanning him anxiously, furtively, as he spoke. He was trying to divine how much Lattrey knew, how much he suspected, at the same time careful not to give himself away in case the junior suspected nothing.

"You will be expelled from the school for this!" said Brown, his eyes still on Lattrey's face. "Tell me! Why did you come here? If you have any explanation to make, I might be disposed to go easy with you!"

But for his fear of the man, Lattrey would have spoken out then. He held the whip-hand, if only he had been safe! But the thought of the hidden weapon was like ice to his heart.

He was alone, helpless, in the presence of a man who would stop at little, and even his life might be the forfeit if Gentleman Jim knew that he knew what he was now certain of.

"I—I came to—to—"

"Well?"

Lattrey was recovering himself a little.

"I—I am sorry, I—I came—I'm hard up. I've had bad luck with the cards, and—and—"

"You came here to commit a theft?"

"Yes," whispered Lattrey.

He saw, and noted, the relief that flashed into the man's eyes. And Lattrey's own relief, as he saw that his lie was believed, was as great as Gentleman Jim's.

"You were very foolish." The man spoke more calmly now. "Did you think, then, that there was money in that chest?"

"I—I thought perhaps—"

"How did you know I was not here?"

"I—I found it out at the Bird-in-Hand—"

The man compressed his lips hard.

"You know, then, that—"

"That you go there—yes." Lattrey was recovering his confidence now. "You won't say anything about this, Mr. Brown. You keep my secrets, and I'll keep yours."

"You are a precious young rascal," said John Brown, after a pause. "But you are right! Don't try this game on again, that's all! You can get out!"

He gripped Lattrey's arm, and a moment the junior's heart failed him and a cry trembled on his lips. But he did not utter it. The man led him down the stairs, and let him out of the lodge.

Without another word, he closed the door after Lattrey.

Lattrey hurried away. In the cool, keen air of the quadrangle he paused under the beeches to think. There was a mocking, triumphant smile on his face now. He had learned all, and he was safe!

He no longer regretted that Gentleman Jim had returned to the lodge so inopportunistically. Lattrey was still smiling, in a feline way, as he came back softly into the dormitory of the Classical Fourth.

"Hallo!" Morny sat up in bed and yawned. "What's that? Some merry roysterer cotin' home just before the milk in the mornin'—what?"

"Exactly!" said Lattrey coolly.

"Oh, you! What luck with the wicked pasteboards, Lattrey?"

Lattrey laughed softly. "The best of luck to-night, Morny, old scout!" he said. "The best—the very best! I've got a trump card in my fist, old pal, and I've got a fellow I hate in the hollow of my hand! What do you think of that?"

"By gad! I think you've been samplin' the ginger-beer at the Bird-in-Hand!" yawned Morny. "What do you mean—if you mean anything?"

"Wait and see!" smiled Lattrey.

The dandy of the Fourth yawned again, and laid his head on the pillow. Lattrey turned in, but it was long before he slept. He was thinking of his coming triumph—with Kit Erroll at his mercy!

Gentleman Jim, the crackman, was at Rookwood in the guise of a school porter, and Erroll must know it, and in that fact—which he did not doubt for a moment—Lattrey saw endless triumph over his enemy. He held the whip-hand now that he knew Gentleman Jim's secret!

THE END.

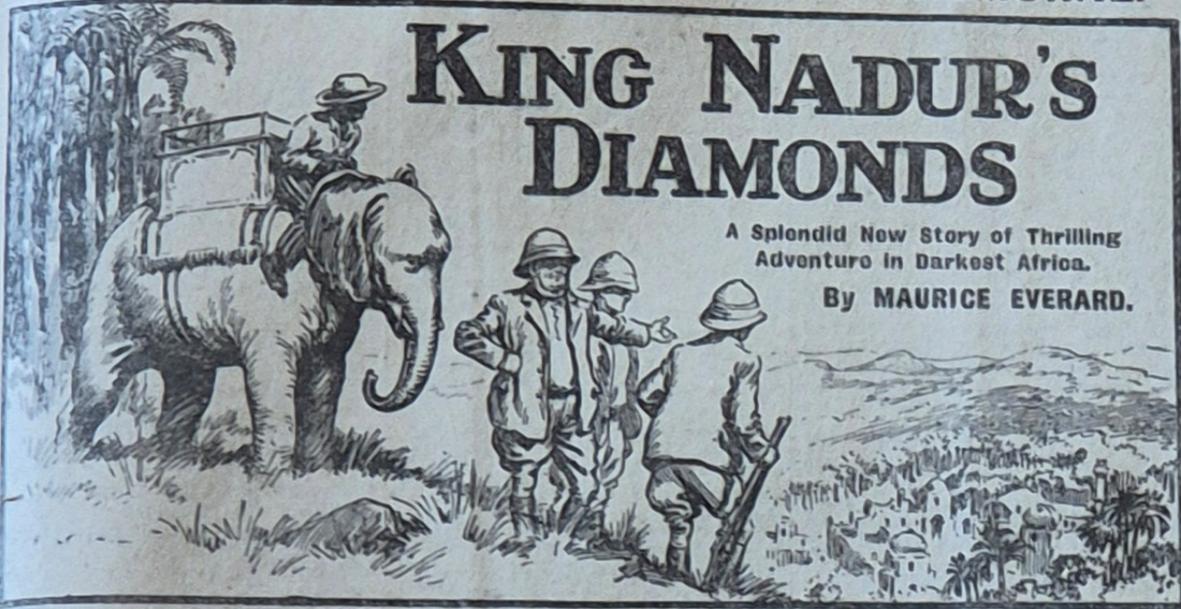
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## The 1st Chapter.

### The Man with the Hawk's Eyes.

"It's no use your argufying the point, Pieface! Yew might jest as well talk to that hemp fender as talk to me!"

The black boy took up a position on the sun-deck of the great Orient liner, slowly but majestically ploughing her way between the high banks enclosing the narrow waterway of the Suez Canal, and came to rest dead in front of Joe Tremorne, with his black fingers extended fanwise from the tip of his stubby nose.

"About as many whiskers on it, and as much sense it has as you hab got, old monkey-face!" Pie returned cheekily. "For why not you don't gib dis chile der permissims to take dat liklum bunjik ashore at Port Said?"

"For why not?" asked Joe, removing a half-crown cigar from his mouth, and looking down with a proud eye on his spotless drill suit. "Cos, young feller-me-lad, old Joe, being homeward-bound, is respecker-table at last. More'n a year he's had on a heathenish South Sea island, a-laying of the law down to brown-skinned niggers what's got no more sense than black ones. Waocher take me for, Pie? Think I'm a walking menagerie's showman to allow the likes of you to be seen in Port Said, leading round a hefferlunt on a string?"

But Pie was not to be moved by any of Joe Tremorne's arguments.

"Better to hab a hefferlunt than a monkey, and youm getting too old-uns to be led about on top ob a barrel-organ!" he retorted. "Sides, de sez-lion, bunjik been very good feller to you down on that island, yes, what? Sabed your silly old life, he did, and now you want to do him out ob a liklum walkee-walk in der streets ob Poty Said, I tell you, dis chile ara gwine to form a percession."

"Yes, you dare!" growled Joe, doubling his fist and half rising from his deck-chair. "What sorter guy will I be taken for to have you marching with a hefferlunt all over the shop?"

"With Pie's tin pot on my head, and your rotten old lamp slung round your neck!" jeered Frank Polruan, watching the anger mount in the old salt's red face. "Dick dressed as a Likiri Islander, and me togged up as a devil-dancer! My hat! There'll be some talk in the newspapers about the return of the Polruan expedition to civilisation!"

"And I won't have no talk!" cried Joe. "I tell you, I'm getting old, and I wants to settle down in my little fishing-cottage in Cornwall, and mend my nets, and catch pollock and flat-fish, and dig for lug under the Shag Rock. We've had enough of excitement, we have, and Pie's jolly well not going to be allowed to take that four-footed mountain of hefferlunt hide on shore with him, so there!"

So final was Joe's manner that the black boy turned disconsolately away, his dark eyes searching the long stretch of golden African sand, which rolled away in wavy undulations to the turquoise blue skyline.

"Good mind to leave this ship, and go home to my fader," said the youth; and Dick Polruan, who was standing at his side, saw two big tears gather under the black lashes, and course slowly down his shining cheeks. "Dat bunjik, me lub him better dan my life. Him velly good feller to Pie, and pore liklum chap,

him hab bin shut up in dat dere hold eber since we left Colombo."

Dick linked his arm through his black friend's.

"Don't worry! Old Joe's only pulling your leg, jest to get your rag out. I saw him wink across to Frank while he was talking to you. He'll let you give the bunjik exercise on shore all right, though what in the name of fortune you'll do with the frolicsome little beggar when we reach England, I don't know!"

"Start um circus wid um," said Pie, brightening. "Got enough out of dem pearls to buy a tent and horses and what you callum—carry-bans. Oh, yes, dat is what dis chile do onless he find his way home to his fader!"

"Where is your father, Pie?" asked Frank, just joining the group, and overhearing the last remark.

The black leaned over the deck-rail, and tilted his pot hat back from his shining forehead, down which the moisture poured from the heat of the African sun.

"Right away, across that desert, in the heart ob Central Africa. Great man, Massa Frankums, dat King Lobobo, of dem fuzzy-wuzzy tribe. But awful bad fellers dose Arab slabe-raiders. Go to my fader's village, and carry off de pore women and picaninnies, and bring dem down to der shores of der Red Sea, and sell them to Arab men."

Frank Polruan smiled.

"My dear old lump of coal dust, those days are all over. There aren't such things as slave-raiders now. Hallo! We're drawing into Port Said, and in half an hour we'll all be ashore. Pie, go and get a sailor's palm well greased so that you can take your bunjik ashore. And here comes the company's messenger with a shoal of letters. Not likely there are any for us, although the news that we're coming home has been jolly well advertised in advance."

The great liner was slowly warped alongside the landing-stage, and as a gangway was put out, a host of officials, Arab curio-dealers, Egyptian bead and cigarette sellers, and a crowd of boys with newspapers struggled to get on board.

Several hundreds of passengers were going on shore—a good many of them leaving for good, to enjoy a few restful weeks in Cairo, about four hours' distant by rail across the desert.

With so much bustle and excitement going on, it was impossible to learn whether there were any letters for either Dick, Frank, or Joe, without going to the purser's office.

Dick took upon himself the task, and, after a good half-hour's frantic pushing and shoving, he disentangled himself from the struggling throng, and came racing back with an un-stamped envelope in his hands.

"This is rummy!" he said, holding out the letter. "Hasn't been posted, doesn't bear a stamp, and yet is addressed to Messrs. Polruan and Tremorne. Wonder what it means?"

Frank snatched it.

"As you can't read, my lad, let your elders and betters spell the words out for you. Now, list, all ye children, including you, Joe. Addressed from Room 72, the Hotel Splendide, Port Said, the day before yesterday."

"Gentlemen,—I beg of you, immediately on receipt of this note, to visit me at the above hotel. I am dying of a disease for which there is

no cure—the terrible African sleeping sickness. Despite this, however, I have managed to work my way across the heart of the continent, and at length arrived at Port Said, where, had not my strength given out, I had intended taking ship for England.

"I have been charged, as a sacred duty, if ever I reached the old country, to publish broadcast in England a message from the chief of an African tribe, calling himself King Lobobo. He is anxious that this message should be brought to the notice of his son, whom he under-



"After him!" shrieked Joe, as the Arab dropped from the balcony.  
"He's got the paper!"

stands arrived in Plymouth a little more than a year ago.

"A week ago I came here, and among the first news of the outer world to reach my hands was an account cabled from Colombo to a Cairo newspaper of the travels of you three gentlemen and your black servant in the South Seas. It occurred to me that perhaps you would be good enough, when reaching England, not only to make efforts to find King Lobobo's son, but also to place in hands capable of appreciating its importance, the information I possess."

"What this information is I cannot possibly transcribe to paper, but should you do me the honour of acceding to my request, I shall be happy to place all particulars before you. I beg of you, however, to lose no time, as, apart from the danger which has continually dogged me right across the African continent, I am also a dying man. That you will

reach me in time is the earnest wish of

"PAUL BARTON (Missionary)."

Frank Polruan was breathing fast by the time he came to the end.

"Great Caesar's candlesticks! What do you make of it?" he gasped in astonishment.

"Some boulder pulling our leg," said Dick.

"Must be a joke," said Joe. "Fancy a message turning up from old Pie's father! Well, what do you say? Shall we bite on it?"

"No harm in having a squint at the Hotel Splendide."

"Anyway, the poor chap who wrote the screed is a missionary, and if he's dying we can't ignore his request."

"Must know summat about us, 'cos he's got hold of all the facts we told the newspaper reporters in Colombo," said Joe. "I vote we go ashore without a minute's delay."

"Here comes Pie, smiling all over his face! Say, Pie, old sport, we've got a message for you. Some poor old missionary-fellow is lying sick in a Port Said hotel, and he says he wants to tell you something about your dad."

The black screwed up his nose suspiciously.

"Dis am one of dat old sinner's tricks!" he cried, pointing an accusing finger at Joe.

Frank shook his head.

"No, it's all straight and above-board, and a very urgent and important matter, unless the gentleman who wrote the note is telling lies. Anyway, we've decided to go ashore, and you can either wait to bring your bunjik along, or come right now with us."

"Better come wid you, if it's my fader wants me," replied the black boy. "But dat King Lobobo—him right away thousands and thousands ob

said, spreading the palma of his dirty hands upwards. "Day-ees an Englees heah of the name of Barton, but he ees much sick. I will have the honour to take you to heess room."

"Keep your hands on your pop-guns, and loose off at the first sign of treachery," warned the sailor, who had had experience of Port Said ways before. "You go first—you in the tarboosh. We'll follow all right."

Up flight after flight of creaking, rotten stairs they went, and passed at length along a balcony looking down on a quaint old-world courtyard of Moorish design. In the centre was a fountain, long since dry, and the sun-baked ground was littered with refuse.

A few yards along, the man stopped by a crazy door, upon which he knocked twice.

A feeble voice answered him, and he signed to the Englishmen to approach.

Joe was the first to enter a small, airless room, upon which the shadows of approaching night were already beginning to fall.

There was a slatted blind to the window, with a mosquito net across it, and behind the blind, as Joe entered, something stirred in the shadows. Joe moved towards the stretched-out figure on the bed.

One glance was enough for the sailor's practised eye.

"Come in, boys, and close the door quietly," he said, dropping his voice almost to a whisper. "We've a pretty bad case here."

Dick and Frank looked about them. In all conscience the place was dirty and depressing enough for a sick man.

The distempered, pink walls were crumbling away, revealing lath and plaster in patches.

The bed on which the man lay was a cheap affair of bamboo, calculated to collapse beneath a more robust person, and the air was stiflingly hot, despite the air which blew across the desert and wafted the tufts of the palms in the distance.

Silently they gathered round all that remained of Paul Barton—a shrunken frame and a shadowed face, upon every haggard line of which death had set its seal.

"You are from the ship. I am glad you have come," he muttered, in faint, hollow tones, and held out a hand so frail and wasted that they almost hesitated to touch it.

"We got a message from you, sir, delivered on the Oranna this afternoon," explained the sailor. "As there was a chance of helping an Englishman in difficulties, we thought we'd better come along."

The missionary weakly inclined his head.

"That is good of you. I did not know who else to write to. But the names of Tremorne and Polruan by this time are not only familiar, but respected wherever our tongue is spoken, and as the papers just to hand spoke of your touching at Port Said on your way home, I thought it best to send for you. I trust you will pardon the liberty."

"It's no liberty, sir," replied Joe, "seeing that the son of King Lobobo forms one of our party. Pie, my lad, come forward and show yourself!"

A little nervously, the black boy came to the bedside.

"Ah, yes, he is like his aged father," the missionary agreed.

"There was a paragraph in the 'Times of India,' telegraphed from Colombo, that the son of King Lobobo was reputed to be with the Polruan expedition, but I did not care to trust too much to it until I could satisfy myself on the point."

"Well, what would you like us to do for you, sir—send for a doctor and have you properly cared for, or taken back to England?" interrupted Joe.

"I hope you'll pardon an old man's bluntness, but this room ain't no place for a gentleman like you."

A sweet smile of gratitude flickered over the missionary's shadowed face.

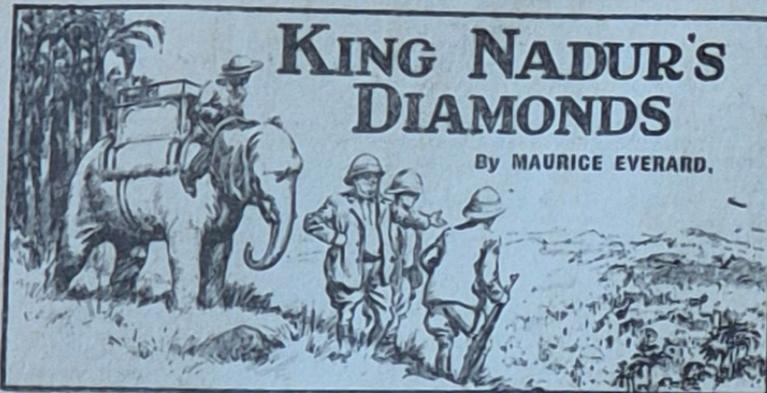
"It matters little where I close my eyes for the last time, Tremorne," he said, taking the sailor's hand.

"Now, if you will be so good, listen carefully to all I have to say. My name is Barton. Three and a half years ago I started on a missionary tour across the heart of Africa, and eventually reached the village of King Lobobo, where, unfortunately, I was stricken down with this mortal illness."

"You hab not said how my pore old dad is," said Pie, fearful lest any moment the man on the bed might die without delivering a message from his father.

"Patience, dear lad," said Barton, raising his hand. "I shall come to that presently. Your father is well, and for the moment that must suffice. Now, Mr. Tremorne, I wish you to understand exactly in what part of

dead, mos' nobel gennelmen," he



## KING NADUR'S DIAMONDS

By MAURICE EVERARD.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Central Africa King Lobobo's country is situated."

Joe and the boys felt that something interesting was coming, as the sick man drew from under his pillow a faded sheet of parchment, on which were numberless lines and names.

"If that's a map, you can trust me to make it out all right," said Joe.

"It is a map," said Barton, "which clearly shows the route I took in my three and a half years' wandering from civilisation and back again. I tell you this because of the importance of my news, not only to you and to that boy there, but to the whole British Empire."

Here, indeed, was something to make them hold their breath, and to hang on every word uttered by the dying man.

"You will see," he went on, "that I started out from Zanzibar, striking almost due west into the heart of Central Africa. King Lobobo's country is marked in red, and occupies a considerable tract of river, forest, and mountainous country, bounded on the north by the desert fringes, and on the west by the Congo Free State, on the south by the Upper Rhodesia and parts like the Kalahari, and on the east by Portuguese East Africa."

Frank turned admiringly to Pie. "My dear old chap, your dad's king of one of the biggest stretches in the world, and all the time you've been acting as batman for us!"

The black's only answer was to touch his forehead with the tips of both hands, and in turn to touch the foreheads of Dick, Frank, and Joe.

"Even a king's son can be a servant," he answered simply.

Joe swung round.

"But time you kids shut up, or we shan't get through with this business. This poor gentleman is dying."

They relapsed into silence, and Paul Barton's failing mind took up the threads of his narrative.

"One day, when I was lying sick in the king's kraal, we heard shrieks and cries in the forest around the village, and all the women and children came rushing in. It appears that Arab slave-raiders had penetrated far inland, and were bent on making prisoners, not only of all the women and children, but of that lad's father."

"Of my father?" gasped Pie, rolling his eyes in terror. "Oh, what has become of him?"

"Both he and I were carried off by this bloodthirsty Arab raider, whose name is El Hajar, still further into the interior," came the tremulous reply. "It was not until some time after that your father, who shared the captivity of his hut-prison with me, told me why the Arab had been so anxious to get possession of him."

The man turned over on his side, and for a long minute closed his eyes wearily.

"Will you let me fetch you some brandy?" the sailor asked. But the missionary shook his head.

"I shall last all right, perhaps for days yet; only the effort to speak is almost more than I can stand."

"Then write down all you have to say."

"No; I dare not trust to paper. I have said, for the sake of our great and mighty Empire, my story must never be known to anyone else until you have accomplished what I am about to ask of you."

"You can rely on us doing any thing," said Joe. "We've heaps of money to burn, and lots of time on our hands."

"That is good. It is such men as you who help to keep the home flag flying in remote corners of the globe. Well, you will have a magnificent chance to render undying service to Britain by replenishing her coffers, almost drained by the expenses of this great and terrible war."

"Sounds almost like a treasure hunt," muttered Joe.

"In a way it is—a search for the vastest treasure in the world. But be patient, and I will reveal every-

thing. King Lobobo had been kidnapped by this El Hajar, and carried off into the heart of the Dark Continent, because he alone of all living men possessed the secret of King Nadur's diamonds."

"Never heard of 'em!" gasped Joe. "What are they?"

The missionary smiled.

"King Nadur was one of the mightiest monarchs of the East at the time Darius was King of Persia. His cities were more famous than Babylon and Nineveh, and his wealth greater than that of all the monarchs of the earth. After the fall of Babylon, Darius turned his attention to Nadur, and marched immense armies against him. After many pitched battles, Nadur the King was at last defeated, and sought safety in flight. He crossed into Arabia, where, however, the hosts of Darius still pursued him. In desperation Nadur crossed the Red Sea, hoping to find safety in the wilds of mighty Africa. But still Darius pursued."

"But why, sir, was Darius so anxious to hunt Nadur down?" Dick asked.

"Because, my boy, the Persian king knew that Nadur was still the possessor of a vast treasure. He carried with him in his flight, not only pearls from Ophir, and gems from sacked cities of China and the East, but the greatest hoard of diamonds known. These diamonds he took with him into Central Africa, and hid them in a temple of the City of the Sun God."

The chums drew in their breath and exchanged glances. Here was a romance before which all their previous experiences faded in insignificance.

The missionary's weak voice broke in on their thoughts.

"But as the years went on gradually the race of Nadur died out. The pursuit of King Darius had to be abandoned, and what remained of a once proud and mighty nation were gradually killed by the black men from the forests and the hills. But the secret of Nadur's diamonds did not die with him. He made a record on a rock-face somewhere in the heart

of Africa, and the whereabouts of this inscription is known to-day only to King Lobobo."

"Then where is the king?" Barton's shaking finger pointed to the chart.

"At the spot marked with a red cross on this plan. The dotted line indicates the route by which I returned. The best way to rescue King Lobobo will be by crossing the desert and striking into the mountainous regions of the centre."

"Of course you have proof of all you say!" said Joe practically.

The dying man inclined his head.

"The king once looked upon these diamonds, and brought a number away with him. One of these he gave to me. I bequeath it to you all, as a legacy from one who wishes you well in your great undertaking, to carry out King Lobobo's wishes, and to secure these diamonds for the Empire which for long has given peace and protection to his people."

The hand holding the chart moved again under the pillow, and was slowly withdrawn.

A cry of astonishment broke from the chums, for in the thin, wasted fingers was the largest diamond they had ever seen.

A tiny shaft of fading light stole through the broken shutters, and, catching the stone, threw back darting rays of coloured brilliance.

The man moved slowly towards Joe, whose fingers were outstretched, when a blinding report rang out, and a lurid flash of flame leapt up from behind the swaying curtains.

At the same time the folds parted, and a lean brown arm holding a pistol leapt into view, covering the astonished four, while a bronzed face, with hawklike eyes, glared at them malevolently.

Barton rose weakly and pointed a shaking finger.

"El Hajar, the Arab slave raider!" he cried. But before he could utter another word the villain fired again, and snatching at the diamond, which dropped to the quilt, dashed for the window.

"After him! After him!" shrieked Joe. "He has got the paper, too!"

There was a splintering of rotten woodwork as the Arab leapt as actively as a cat for the balcony, dropped lightly on to it, and vaulting over, thudded to the mud floor of the courtyard.

Dick looked down, and saw him vanish in the darkness of a doorway.

When he re-entered the room Joe was holding up his hand.

"Be quiet. The poor fellow is dead," he said in a husky whisper. "It's a pity El Hajar got away with the paper."

"But he didn't!" said Pie. "Dischilo was too quick for him. Pieface, the king's son, has got der secret of King Nadur's diamonds!"

### The 2nd Chapter.

A New Expedition Is Planned.

Paul Barton had not died as a re-

sult of either of El Hajar's cowardly pistol-shots.

Both had missed him by a fraction of an inch, but the shock had proved too much, and in the tense excitement his tired spirit had fled.

This was fortunate for Joe and the boys, as the pistol reports—of frequent occurrence in that part of the town—had apparently attracted no attention, and the fact of the deceased missionary having passed away from natural causes avoided the need for a public enquiry.

"Which would have been the very worst thing possible for the likes of us," explained Joe, when the funeral was over and the last remains of the gallant gentleman who had risked his life a thousand times to bring back his precious secret to civilisation were laid to rest in the little European cemetery outside the town. "As it is, no one except us four and that villain Hajar knows anything about King Nadur's diamonds. Now, young feller-me-lads, what's the best thing to be done? The ship clears the canal to-morrow. Are we to go home with her or not?"

"Of course not!" exclaimed Frank, who had secretly discussed the matter with the other two. "Those diamonds must be found and secured for Great Britain. Pie's father must be discovered, and restored to his kingdom, from which El Hajar took him; and if ever the chance comes our way the Arab must be caught and brought to justice."

They were sitting on the balcony of the Hotel Continental, looking towards the lighthouse.

The strange occurrence at the Hotel Splendide had opened up a new and entrancing vista, a call into the very heart of the Dark Continent. And there was every reason why they should obey it—none why they should not.

More than a year in the South Seas had not daunted their restless enthusiasm.

"Well, it rests with you two and Pie entirely," replied the sailor. "Of course, I'm not so young as I used to be, seeing I've sailed the seas and walked the land, man and boy, this ninety-seven year odd; but if you're willing to take me, I don't mind leading this little excursion across Africa, just for the fun of shovelling up handfuls of diamonds!"

"Of course, Pie's as keen as mustard," interjected Dick. "Naturally enough, he wants to see his dad again, but he swears he won't go, Joe, unless you let the bunjik come, too."

"The bunjik!" Joe scratched his head. "Wal, that's not too bad an idea. I've heard a hefferlunt can be very useful in a Nafican forest, rooting up trees and drinking up rivers, and if ever perwisions give out we should be able to kill him, and fry the tasty bits for hefferlunt steak."

"I kill you, ole jack-boot face, if ever you touch dat dere bunjik,"

uttered the black youth fiercely. "You remember what dat tinklum feller can do for us, and you jest letum come!"

Joe pretended to submit with very ill grace.

"All right, grate polish, we'll take him. Then it's decided, we shift on for Cairo in the morning."

"Why Cairo, Joe?" Frank asked.

The sailor pointed to the west. "Because that's the only place this side of Europe we can fix up proper equipment. You see, we shall need camels and guides, and all the paraphernalias for a long trek across the Saham."

"But why go that way? Why not cut down the Nile Basin, and strike into Central Africa from the north?"

"Because we should only succeed in losing our sweet selves. Africa is so immense—hundreds of times bigger than England—and away from the big towns we should find no one to guide us. You see, the difficulty is we can't go touting and asking all the ju-ju men we meet to tell us the way to the City of the Sun God, because they'd promptly smell a rat, and do us down for the papers. No, my young two-year-old, the only safe way is to go by the way the rev-gent came."

"And that is?"

"First of all, across the desert to Morocco. See, here's his map. His route cuts right across the Atlas mountains, turns south into Nigeria, touches the Cameroons, then east to the Congo, and so on until it breaks off in the land of the fuzzy-wuzzies. Once among them rapscallions—what is relatives of young Pie there—we strike north again, and after a journey of several hundreds of miles, come to a place marked with a cross."

"And that is where we shall find the diamonds."

"No, it ain't," said Joe. "Mr. Barton said we should find the rock-inscription first of all, and when we've deciphered that, we should locate the City of the Sun God."

"But supposing we either can't decipher it, or don't find Pie's dad—what then?"

"Then, my little tiny dears, we've just had several thousand miles of tramp for nowt; so it's up to you to decide what you're going to do."

"We've decided," said Frank Pol-ruan crisply, glancing towards his chum, who nodded agreement.

"And you, blackymoort?" Joe asked.

"Where you three go dis chile goes—with bunjik!" replied Pie simply.

"Right!" said Joe. "That settles it. Well, my ebony-faced friend," he added, as a Nubian boy, dressed in a red uniform plentifully edged with thick bands of gold lace, came towards them, "what do you want?"

"Pleese, mos' honnerabel sar, a letter for you," said the little fellow, holding out a brass Moorish tray.

"For me?" inquired Joe, bending over the envelope. "It's got no moniker on. I mean, it's not addressed to me."

"The sheik, him said it was for the big white man," persisted the dwarf.

"What sheik?" questioned the sailor suspiciously.

"Great much big Arab man, in white djellab with blue moon on, so." And, bending down, he traced with his finger a crude design of a crescent on the dust of the balcony steps.

"Right!" said Joe. "Then I'll read it!"

He tore off the covering, and a thin slip of yellow, native-made paper fluttered in the breeze. And on it, in curious Arabesque characters, were these words:

"Take warning, oh, enemies of Islam! By the beard of the Prophet I swear that if you attempt to reach the sacred City of the Sun God, I, even I, and my followers will take vengeance on you. And this is my oath as the eldest born of my father and by the Prophet and the Koran. Take heed, therefore, while there is yet time.—Signed, El Hajar."

"Right!" snapped Joe, rising suddenly and tearing the message into tiny scraps, which he flung upon the ground and set his foot upon. "There is my answer to El Hajar. We'll find King Nadur's diamonds, or perish in the attempt."

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

WOLVES OF THE DESERT!

By MAURICE EVERARD.  
DON'T MISS IT!

## IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of the BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4."

### ANOTHER GREAT NEW SERIES!

No. 1 Next Monday.

Our next issue of the BOYS' FRIEND will contain the first story in a splendid new series of short, complete tales under the title of "Tales of the Dormitory." These stories will be told by juniors at Rookwood School.

Each night, after lights out, Jimmy Silver and his chums resolve to tell a yarn, and I can assure you that the tales will be well worth reading. The first story in the series will be entitled

**"THE MAKING OF MORLEY!"**  
By Jimmy Silver.

It is a splendid story—one that will hold you from start to finish. Don't forget! No. 1 will appear next Monday.

The long, complete story of the Rookwood chums due to appear next Monday is entitled

**"THE IMPOSTOR'S DOWNFALL!"**  
By Owen Conquest.

The impostor, who, of course, is Gentleman Jim, receives his just deserts in this fine tale. Young Erbert, the heir to Mornington, is missing, and his whereabouts are a complete mystery. Lattrey suggests that Mornington has got the youngster out of the way, in order

that he—Mornington—can claim the Mornington estates. But that is just like Lattrey.

I will not, however, tell you exactly what happens to young Erbert, as your interest in the story might be spoiled. However, I will say that Gentleman Jim has something to do with the youngster's disappearance, and that Kit Erroll is instrumental in bringing about the villain's downfall.

Our next story in the great new series of stories under the title of "King Nadur's Diamonds," is entitled

**"WOLVES OF THE DESERT!"**  
By Maurice Everard.

In this story, Dick, Frank, and Joe have the misfortune to fall foul of a band of rascally Arabs—regular wolves of the desert. El Hajar, at whose instigation the adventurers are kidnapped, endeavours to obtain the secret of King Nadur's diamonds from them. Whether he is successful or not, you will learn when you read this splendid story. You may be glad to learn, however, that Pieface and his elephant are very prominent in this tale.

Next Monday's magnificent, long,

complete story dealing with Frank Richards' schooldays is entitled

**"LAID BY THE HEELS!"**  
By Martin Clifford.

Rufus Slimmoy, the fugitive from justice, takes his place at the school in the backwoods in the guise of his brother. He manages to deceive the police, but Frank Richards has dark suspicions. He has great cause to doubt the man, and he confides in his chums. Then there are some amazing happenings, as you will see when you read this story.

Although I have left till last the discussion of our splendid serial,

**"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"**  
By Duncan Storm,

that is not because the instalment is not quite up to the usual standard. Candidly, it is a ripping instalment, full of laughable and thrilling incidents from beginning to end.

The boys have some rare excitement with the apes in the orchard, and later they are attacked by bulls, and have a most thrilling time. The concluding incident in this instalment is something quite new—something that will strongly appeal to all of you.

YOUR EDITOR.

THE STORY THAT IS OUT OF THE ORDINARY!



# THE BOYS OF THE "BOMBAY CASTLE"

A Magnificent New Serial, dealing with the School Afloat, and introducing Cy Sprague, Lal Tata, Chip, and Captain Handyman.

By DUNCAN STORM.

THE LEADING CHARACTERS IN THIS AMAZING STORY ARE:

**CAPTAIN HANDYMAN**, who is commander of the Bombay Castle.

**CY SPRAGUE**, the famous American detective.

**LAL TATA**, a fat, genial Hindu, who is a master on board the Bombay Castle.

**TOM and FRED MORTON, CHIP PRODGERS, and DICK DORRINGTON**, four high-spirited juniors who belong to "Dormitory No. 3 of the floating school."

**BULLY FLASHMAN and STOAT**, two bullying juniors, in Dormitory No. 1.

In last week's instalment the boys of the Glory Hole were partaking of a ripping feed, when they were raided by the fellows of Dormitory No. 1. At the time the Skeleton, a very thin junior with a big appetite, was opening ginger-beer bottles under the bedclothes.

One of the raiders brought his pillow down on the Skeleton, causing the latter to choke. Dick Dorrington immediately issued orders to shove the Skeleton's head out of the porthole, in order that he might get air. But when they endeavoured to draw the Skeleton back they found that his head would not pass through the porthole.

(Read on from here.)

### A Bad Time for Mr. Binks.

The situation was most alarming. There was the Skeleton, with his head firmly fixed in the porthole, apparently choking to death.

The Skeleton had a big head, also large, projecting ears.

So when the boys tried to pull his head back from the porthole, his ears caught, and they came near pulling his head off.

And all the time he was making the most alarming noise, which must have been heard from one end of the ship to the other.

"Lift his legs, and try him horizontally!" ordered Dick Dorrington. All hands clutched at the Skeleton.

His feet were lifted from the cover of the radiating pipes on which he was standing, and were hoisted nearly to the roof of the cabin.

"Now shove him forward a bit!" said Dick. "Altogether, boys!"

They pushed the Skeleton's neck slightly forward. He made a grim-looking figure in his striped pyjamas, as the apparently headless trunk was wriggled in the porthole.

"Pull him back a little bit!" cried Dick, who had perched himself close up by the porthole, trying to find where the unhappy Skeleton had caught up.

The Skeleton was lifted back slightly, but his chin caught, and a nobbly bump at the back of his head caught.

Chip looked round in despair. "I'll go and bring the captain!" he said. "They'll have to cut a bit of the ship out to get him loose!"

He had half turned towards the door, when it was flung open, and Captain Handyman made his appearance.

"Hi, you young scoundrels!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing with that chap? You'll spicate him if you don't watch it!"

The captain was quick to see the trouble. In a second he was out of the cabin, and in another second he was back with the spanner.

With a few swift wrenches he had unfastened the bolts which held the rim of the porthole in place.

Then he lifted the Skeleton down with the whole of the porthole, brass banding, rubber face, and hinged glass scuttle, round his neck.

As soon as the Skeleton was placed right way up, his paroxysms of choking ceased.

His face turned from blue to purple, and from purple to his natural colour, and Captain Handyman neatly lifted the porthole from his neck.

"Lucky for you, young man, that I found out where all this hullabaloo was coming from," said the captain, as he put the port-scuttle back in its place and screwed it into the fabric of the ship once more. "But what were you up to?"

"I was drinking some ginger-beer under the bedclothes, sir, and some of it went down the wrong way!" replied the Skeleton, wiping the tears from his eyes.

"Where did you get all this fruit?" demanded the captain, looking round at the piles of grapes and melons and apricots which were still laid out on the festive bed.

"We hoisted it up through the porthole in a pillow-case, sir," replied Chip truthfully. "Bought it off one of the shore-boats that came alongside after dark."

Captain Handyman examined the fruit carefully.

"The stuff is sound enough," he said. "It won't give you the colly-wobbles if you don't eat too much of it. But, if you take my tip, you'll shove it away under the bed, and pretend you are asleep. Mr. Binks is nosing round the ship after that noise. And if he catches you he'll have you all up on the carpet before me tomorrow morning, and I'll have to stop your shore-leave for skylarking. Now, Skeleton, have you finished coughing up that left lung?"

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir!" replied the Skeleton gratefully.

"Into bed with you all; here comes Mr. Binks!" said the captain quickly, as he stood at the doorway and switched off the electric light.

In a second all the boys were in bed, and the fruit was stowed away under Tom's cot.

The Skeleton shuddered a bit as he slid down in a bed that was soaked in ginger-beer.

They heard Mr. Binks, the sneaking under-purser, come shuffling along the alleyway outside the cabin, in his rubber-soled shoes.

He was trying to fox the strange noise that had disturbed the peace of the sleeping ship.

He started at the sight of Captain Handyman standing at the door of the suspected Glory Hole, for which he was making tracks.

Mr. Binks was afraid of Captain Handyman. The commander's rough, brusque manner scared him into fits.

"Good-evening, sir!" he said, with an oily, cringing smile, rubbing his hands together as though he were washing in invisible soap. "I thought I heard a strange noise awhile ago."

"So did I," replied Captain Handyman. "Was just having a look round myself."

"A very strange noise!" repeated Mr. Binks.

"So it was," agreed Captain Handyman. "Sounded to me like water gurgling down a sink-pipe!"

Mr. Binks lifted his nose, which was like the nose of a ferret. He could plainly catch the smell of grapes and apricots in the air, accompanied by the aroma of ginger-beer.

"Can you smell ginger-beer, sir?" he asked, as he stood first on one foot and then on the other, outside the door of the Glory Hole, which was blocked by Captain Handyman's broad shoulders.

"Now you come to talk about it. I think I do," replied Captain Handyman amiably.

"And fruit, sir?" suggested Mr. Binks, squirming with eagerness to get a peep into the Glory Hole.

Captain Handyman sniffed. "There is a bit of a fruity smell 'tween decks," he admitted. "But what about it?"

"I am afraid that some of those young rascals have been at my stores,

sir," said Mr. Binks, edging towards the door. "I'd like just to peep into this dormitory, if you don't mind, sir."

Captain Handyman blocked the way into the dormitory by pushing forward a gilt-strapped shoulder.

"I've just looked in there myself," he said; "and all the boys are in bed. I won't have 'em disturbed. The barges are alongside, and we shall start coaling at five. They haven't got much time to sleep."

"I thought the noise came from this dormitory, sir," said Mr. Binks. "I strongly suspect this dormitory of holding nocturnal feasts on stolen goods from my stores, and as the responsible storekeeper—"

"Look here, Mr. Binks," interrupted Captain Handyman, with sudden sternness. "I tell you, I will not have these boys disturbed because you smell some of your dud apples sweating in the lockers! I've looked round myself, and these boys are all a-bed. Go and have a look round on the other side of the ship!"

Mr. Binks slunk off, whilst the listening boys bit their pillows to stifle their laughter as they squirmed in bed.

Captain Handyman watched Mr.

the Rock. And did you see how he edged that sneak Binks off from the door. Come along, you chaps; let's finish up the grub before old Binko comes round again!"

The lights were switched on again, and Captain Handyman's health was silently drunk in a round of ginger-beer.

The Skeleton was able to sit up after his exhausting experience, and to nibble a few pounds of grapes and apricots.

Chip kept cave at the door. He saw the sloping figure of Mr. Binks, still questing the cause of the noise and the scent of fruit, turn a corner of the alleyway in the distance.

Chip was about to give the alarm. But he saw Mr. Binks turn suddenly and disappear up a small stairway that led to the promenade-deck above.

"Now, I wonder what Binko is after?" thought Chip. "He was moving as if he was on the trail!"

Then, with a sudden inspiration, he dodged back into the Glory Hole.

"Lights out, boys!" he said. "Binko is on the war-path, and he's going to nobble us another way. He's just popped up on deck."

"He can't see into the cabin from the deck, you duffer!" exclaimed Dick Dorrington scornfully.

"No," replied Chip, "but he can see in if he gets down on to the coal-lighter that's alongside now. There's a pile of coal on her that will bring his head just about level with one of our scuttles."

"Right-ho!" replied Dick. "Switch out the lights! I can see the rotter's move. He thinks he can shove his head in at the porthole, and suddenly switch on the electric-light and catch us napping. If he does we can grab his arm and catch him. The captain told us to look out for thieves."

Dick pointed to the electric-switch that was fixed in the wall of the cabin, just by the porthole over his own bed.

This switch controlled the light

He descended the ladder gingerly in the darkness.

Then he gave a muttered exclamation of annoyance as the piled coal in the great barge suddenly slid under his feet, and sent him tobogganing down to the coornings in a cloud of coal dust.

"It's Binko all right, as 'e's found it already!" said Chip, with a low chuckle. "Here he comes, climbing up the coals again. Keep your heads down, boys, and get ready to grab him! He's making for this port!"

The end of the barge that lay under the porthole was well stacked up with a wall built of great blocks of coal to hold up the dust and rubbish in which Mr. Binks had been wallowing.

Mr. Binks was black with coal dust now, and in a very bad temper.

"I know the young rascals are up to some devilment!" they heard him mutter. "I'll catch 'em at it! I'll get their shore-leave stopped! Let me see! It's the third port under No. 12 lifeboat!"

Mr. Binks was plainly after the electric-switch.

It was his business to know where every switch and tap and port in the great ship was situated, and he hardly hesitated as he climbed on to the solid breastwork of coal on the barge alongside, and reached for the open scuttle.

With the little play of the tide and night breeze, the barge, though closely moored with her fenders pressing the ship's side, moved slightly, and Mr. Binks had to wait a moment till she closed on the steel plates with a slight creaking of rope-fenders.

Then he stretched out his arm. His coal-grimed hand was thrust in at the porthole, patting about to find the porcelain switch.

It was a long reach, and Mr. Binks had to thrust his arm in, first to the elbow, then almost to the shoulder, to reach the switch.

Before he could turn the light on his arm was grabbed by the three boys, who hung on to it like grim death.

"We've caught him!" yelled Chip, at the top of his voice. "He's one of



"Let 'im go, young gents!" exclaimed the man, grabbing Mr. Binks about the neck. "We've got the thief on't right!"

Binks till his slinking figure had disappeared down the long alleyway.

Then he lit a cigar, and pushed his head in at the cabin doorway.

"He's gone, boys," he said. "You'd better get your feed over now, for he'll be foxing around in another ten minutes. Don't eat too many of those Cholera Jacks, and keep your jackets away from the portholes. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!" murmured twenty respectful voices.

The captain marched off. He did not wear rubber-soled shoes like Mr. Binks, but a good pair of square-toed, squeaky sea-boots, which told everyone when he was coming.

Dick Dorrington sat up in bed. "Isn't he a decent chap?" he exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "He knew that if we were caught out on a dormitory feed we'd get our leave stopped to-morrow, and shouldn't see

over the standing wash-basin in the corner of the dormitory, and was the only one on that side of the cabin.

The lights were promptly doused, and all the boys hustled into their beds, with the exception of Chip and Dick and Tom, who took up their station at the open porthole.

They boosted Chip up, and he looked out.

The electric lights on the Admiralty Mole, a few hundred yards away, and the lights on the Rock, gave enough illumination to enable him to see a figure climb down on to the barge from the deck above by the ladder, which had been placed by the coalies ready for the work of the early morning.

The ladder was lashed to the rail of the ship, and its foot was secured on the pile of coal which rose from the great barge alongside.

It was Mr. Binks right enough.

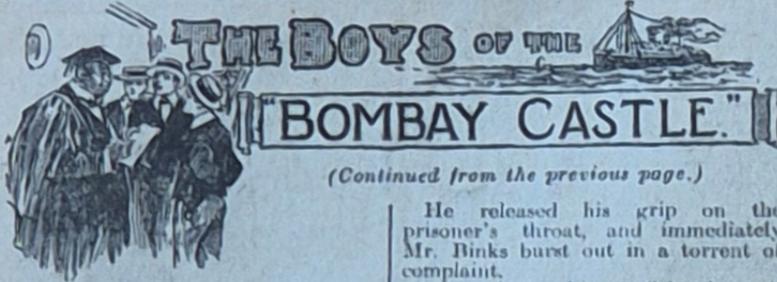
these harbour thieves the captain warned us of. Look out, boys! Hang on to him tight. Don't let him go! He's after that fourpence-a-penny that's hanging up in Dick's trousers!"

Outside the ship, Mr. Binks gave a sudden howl of dismay as he found his arm caught in this fashion.

"Let my hand go!" he yelled. "I am Mr. Binks!"

"No, you don't!" cried Chip, from inside the ship. "You aren't Mr. Binks. Mr. Binks was down here a few minutes ago talking to the captain outside the door of this very cabin. You are one of those hokey-pokey merchants from the shore, trying to pinch our trousers through the port. Call the captain, someone! Call the quartermaster of the watch! Help! Thieves!"

"Shut up, you young fool!" cried Mr. Binks fiercely. "It's me—Mr. Binks!"



(Continued from the previous page.)

He released his grip on the prisoner's throat, and immediately Mr. Binks burst out in a torrent of complaint.

"I won't stand it, sir!" he shouted. "I was just looking round to keep up the discipline of the ship, sir, and I am pounced upon by those rascally boys, and set upon by the crew. I'll have the law on the ship! I'll complain to the Port Authority to-morrow morning!"

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Binks," said Bert Small, with assumed penitence. "But what was you doing with your hand in that porthole?"

"And what are you doing on this barge at all?" demanded Captain Handyman sternly.

"I was just looking round, sir!" replied Mr. Binks, sitting on the coals and coughing coal dust. "I am sure those boys in the dormitory were having a feed—I could smell fruit plainly, sir! I'll make a complaint to-morrow morning."

"I don't think you had better make any complaints, Mr. Binks," said Captain Handyman severely. "Otherwise, I shall want to know what you were doing on this coal barge, and what you were doing with your arm shoved through one of the ship's ports, reaching round in the cabin. I had myself given the boys warning to keep an eye out for harbour thieves, and if they nabbed you you have only yourself to thank."

Mr. Binks again mumbled something about keeping up the discipline of the ship.

Then Captain Handyman turned on him suddenly and fiercely.

"That's my job on this ship, Binks," he said sternly, "and I don't allow purser or steward to usurp my authority. I don't think you were out with intent to steal, but I do think you were out to sneak. And a sneak is always half way to a thief. Now, get up topside and down to your cabin, and don't let me hear any more of this, or I'll put you on the beach to-morrow!"

Mr. Binks crumpled up and slunk off, crawling up the ladder to the ship's deck, a sorry-looking figure, grimed from head to foot with coal dust.

#### Algy the Nut.

At five o'clock the next morning the boys were awakened by a sudden thundering sound.

At first they thought that it was a battery of guns exploding.

Then, sitting up in their beds, they realised that it was the rattling of coal down into the bunkers.

Sleep was impossible. So they all turned out in their pyjamas to lend a hand in coaling the ship.

The coalies laughed when they saw the mob of boys surging up from below, clean and smart in their pyjama suits.

"You want a help-a coal ship?" asked the head coalheaver.

"Rather!" replied Dick Dorrington. "That's just what we've come up for! You are making such a row with your coalheaving that we may as well come and lend you a hand as try to sleep."

"All a right-a!" said the Scorp collier. "Dere vas two hundra-ton-a in de barge. Plenteo coal for you young gentlemen."

The boys swarmed down on the barge, and were soon as busy as bees, shovelling the coal into big, rush baskets, and running with it up the gangways to the deck coalplates, or tipping it through the open traps in the ship's sides.

Others went down below into the bunkers to trim the coal as it came pouring down the shoots in clouds of dust and huge, flying chunks.

Soon they were all as black as sweeps from head to foot, and as merry as sand boys.

Coaling was a novelty, and they enjoyed the experience of getting thoroughly black.

In an hour they had shifted a hundred tons, whilst the amused colliers sat about rolling cigarettes.

Whilst the boys worked the sun rolled up from the far side of the Rock, from which a curtain of blue sea-mist lifted like a veil, revealing the splendid outlines of the great fortress stretching away for three miles.

Maltee Jacko came rowing alongside again with a boatload of fresh grapes and oranges, and the black

mob of boys surged down to the coal barges to buy baskets of muscatels and fresh-picked strawberries.

Then the stewards came up from below with huge jugs of early-morning coffee, and rolls fresh from the baker's oven, and the happy, black, chattering mob gathered round them for big bowls of coffee and milk.

Captain Handyman was up already, smoking an early-morning cigar.

He smiled amiably as he approached the cheery, laughing group that were gathered about the huge canvas bath, enjoying this early breakfast.

"Hallo, you young sweeps!" he said. "I should have thought you'd had enough fruit last night. And don't let me catch you—"

Captain Handyman broke off short, for his eye had caught a large, grey-painted picket-boat, spick and span, with gleaming brass funnels, and decks as white as driven snow.

At the stern of this magnificent steam-launch floated the white ensign, and steering her was a very small midshipman, who was bossing up some very large sailors.

Captain Handyman smiled as he watched the picket-boat racing over the dancing waves towards the Bombay Castle.

"Here comes an early-morning visitor," he said. "I expect it is one of your young friends of H.M.S. Horrible, coming to beat you up."

The boys crowded to the rail to watch the launch, which came dashing up in fine style at full speed, backing, ringing bells, and rattling orders from the little midshipman.

Very neatly and nicely he brought her up to the foot of the gangway, jumped out, respectfully attended by a barefooted sailor, and hopped up the ladder, with his hand upon the handle of his dirk.

Captain Handyman was ready at the head of the gangway with a smart salute. The midshipman saluted in his turn gravely.

"Good-morning, sir!" said Captain Handyman.

"Good-morning, captain!" said the midshipman, with great condescension. "I've come over from H.M.S. Horrible to see one of your chaps—Dorrington is his name. He is my cousin."

Captain Handyman smiled again. "We've got a Dorrington on board, sir," he answered. "You'll find him amongst that crowd of blackamoors, having their coffee in the well-deck."

The midshipman moved forward, attended by his sailor.

He was very neat and smart, and evidently very proud of the little pig-sticker that hung at his waist.

Picking his way over the coal-dusty decks, he ran down the ladder into the well-deck, and marched up to the grinning mob of black-faced boys.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said, in a shrill but masterful voice. "One of you is my cousin. I am Algernon Nuttington-Dorrington, one of the Nuttington-Dorringtons, don'tcher-know!"

"Algy the Nut—eh!" said Chip, with a friendly grin.

"Not so much cheek, you!" replied the midshipman, addressing Chip.

Dick Dorrington stepped forth from the crowd.

"I am Dick," he said, "and I suppose you are little Algy. Why, I haven't seen you since we were pushed about in the same pram, and you sneaked my bottle!"

"And you punched my face!" replied Algy the Nut, grinning.

"How are you, Cousin Dick? They wrote me from home that you were coming out on this beanfeast, and I meant to see you when we met you up in Villarsa Bay, when you played our chaps cricket on the sandbank. I meant to have come out on that lark, but—ahem!—unfortunately I had had a little difference with the bloke, and he stopped my leave."

"Who is the bloke?" asked Dick. "The first-lookout," replied Algy the Nut. "Our first is a terror! But I've squared him—yes, I've squared him, and he's given me a day's leave, so that I can show you and some of your chaps round a bit."

Then Algy slapped his hand on the hilt of his dirk, and looked round the Bombay Castle with an approving, if critical, eye.

"Smart ship!" he said. "Must be rather jolly for you kids to cruise around in her. Makes me almost wish I was back at school again—what—what!"

#### TO THE BOYS AT THE FRONT!

If you are unable to obtain this publication regularly, please tell any newsagent to get it from:

Messageries HADHETTE at Oie., 111, Rue Reaumur, PARIS.

Dick grinned.

Algy the Nut was a few months younger than himself, and but a few short years ago had been attending a preparatory school kept by a lady.

Now, here he was, larger than life, steering his own little ship, and bossing sailors who could have picked him up under one arm and spanked him.

"I suppose some of you chaps would like to see the Rock this morning!" said the middy. "The Rock bores me stiff, but it will be new to you. Must be going now. I am very busy. Jorkins!"

"Yes, sir," said the sailor, saluting.

"You will have the duty steamboat ready at nine-thirty this morning, Jorkins," said the middy. "We will call for these gentlemen, and will proceed to the waterport. You will return to the ship, and call for us again at twelve, noon. We shall then proceed on an excursion across the Bay of Algiers."

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the sailor, saluting once more.

The midshipman nodded to the boys, turned on his heel, and marched off to the gangway.

The steam-pinnace fussed alongside.

He jumped in, and was off in a whirl of spray and smoke, steering towards the mouth of the Admiralty Harbour, dodging in and out amongst the various moving craft like a taxi-driver threading the City traffic.

"Some boy, that!" said Pongo Walker, with a grin.

"He's a cheeky young ass," said Dick. "He's got enough swank for a whole school. But he's all right. Now, let's wash some of this coal dust off."

He climbed up to the spring-board of the bathing-tank, and dropped into the water with a splash, the shouting, coal-grimed mob tumbling in after him, splashing and ducking like a lot of seals.

They came out of their bath as hungry as hunters, and a cheer went up when the bugle went for breakfast.

It was a glorious breakfast, with strange new dishes in the bill of fare.

There were fried sardines fresh from the sea. There was Spanish ham, which looked as if it had been tarred outside, but which tasted a good deal better than it looked.

There were Spanish bunuelos, rings of batter fried in olive-oil, which were topping when spread thick with honey.

There were also doughnuts, greasy and fresh from the bakers.

The Skeleton tried all these new things. He tried the sardines critically.

"I always thought that sardines grew in tins," he said. "I'll have another lot, please, steward."

And the Skeleton found that, though a bit greasy, the sardines were so good that he had a third lot.

He had three goes of ham, kidneys, and bacon, a kipper, and some bunuelos, honey, and three greasy doughnuts.

Then he sighed.

"You might pass us another doughnut, Chip," he said. "I don't seem to have much appetite this morning! But I think I could stow away another doughnut."

After breakfast, they waited eagerly for the arrival of Algy the Nut with his swagger steam launch. And, sure enough, exactly at nine-thirty she came racing out of the Admiralty Harbour to take the Glory Hole crowd on board.

Lal Tata, by special invitation, was included in the list, though Algy the Nut looked a little bit askance at him as "a nigger" when he stepped on board the launch.

But he soon thawed out when Lal, treating him as a grown-up man, offered him a cigarette.

The boys' hair stood on end as Algy, setting the steam-pinnace at full speed, drove her in amongst the crowd of boats and small craft that were dodging about closer to the shore, dodging under the bows of small steamers and sailing feluccas in the most alarming manner, ripping round corners of wharves at reprehensible speed, and shaving row-boats full of Dagoes, who cursed him volubly.

But Algy did not turn a hair. "One has to learn to handle a boat smartly in the Navy," he said. "And it's all right so long as you don't hit anything!"

They landed at the Waterport Gate, and the boys were lost in their admiration of the busy, sunlit scene, and the bustling crowd of Spaniards, Moors, khaki-clad soldiers, and smart British sailors.

The Skeleton paused to buy a few cakes and buns from the stall of an itinerant Spanish vendor, whilst Algy the Nut, having given orders to his steam-launch, lifted his hand in the direction of a row of neat little cabs with canvas curtains.

Instantly six of these Rock cabbies whipped up their horses and dashed towards him.

"You want a go nice-a drive-a?" demanded the leading cabby, a piratical-looking merchant, who looked like an organ-grinder.

"I want a four of your rotten boxes," said Algy the Nut, lifting four fingers. "How much-a?"

"Four-shillin'," replied the driver promptly.

"For the lot-a?" asked the middy. "For esch-a caba," replied the Scorp.

"I don't want a buy the lot-a," replied Algy the Nut, with a grin. "What about threepence a nob for a tootle up the street, you hairy-heeled pirate?"

The Gibraltar cabby lifted his shoulders in a tremendous shrug. "Oh, signor!" he exclaimed reproachfully. "No can do! No monoo. Poor cabbies! Tripence each, him no buy-a macaroni!"

"All right," said Algy the Nut, who was apparently quite up to the ways of the Gibraltar cabby. "Keep your old cab, and sell the horse on skewers. We'll beat it up the street on the hoof!"

He turned to march away, but the cabby, with imprecations, begged that he would take the cabs at three pence a head.

The bargain having been struck, the mob of boys surged into the cabs.

Some climbed up with the drivers, others sat on the roof. And, cheering wildly, the excited crowd drove in procession up Waterport Street, the High Street of Gibraltar, which runs along the foot of the mighty Rock.

At the end of this the leading cab turned and went up the stiff slope of a little side-road, which wound uphill amongst a number of neat villas.

The lane ended in a blind cul-de-sac, blocked by a villa surrounded by a large garden, which apparently backed on to the forbidden land of the fortified part of the Rock, where no one is allowed to go, save on garrison business.

The house was an empty one, and Algy the Nut, jumping from the box of the leading cab, opened the garden gate with a key.

"Come in, you chaps," he said. "This house belongs to our first-lookout, but his wife and kids are home in England for the hot weather. He lets me come up here to sneak the figs from the garden. There's four topping trees of blue figs, if you like blue figs, just ripe, with the sun on 'em. Now's your chance!"

He led the boys into the big garden at the back, and, sure enough, there were four great fig-trees, covered thick with purple figs.

"I didn't bring you up here for the figs alone, you chaps," said the middy. "But this garden backs on to the old Moorish wall that runs right up the Rock; and, if you keep still, you'll get a chance of a squint at the only wild monkeys in Europe, the famous Gibraltar apes. They come down the Moorish wall to sneak the figs when they are ripe, though they mostly live on the other side of the Rock, where it is all precipices and cliffs."

The boys settled down in the garden to eat figs in its pleasant solitude.

They ate figs for half an hour, keeping very quiet, and speaking only in whispers.

The spot where they were sitting was hidden by a cluster of thick lilacs.

At the end of the half-hour, Pongo Walker, who was greatly interested in this chance of seeing the famous Gibraltar apes, began to get a bit tired of waiting.

"I don't believe there are any monkeys," he said, squatting down, and pulling faces in his own inimitable mimicry of a monkey.

And he hopped out on to the open lawn, still playing the goat, or, rather, the monkey.

"Now, gents," he said, "I'll give you my famous imitation of the new baboon at the London Zoo, trying to—"

Pongo broke off suddenly as there came a rustling in the branches of one of the old fig-trees against the wall.

A huge grey ape, leading a long procession of apes, dropped slowly to the ground.

The old, grizzled ape carried a large brick in his hand, and advanced towards Pongo with blood in his eye.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Pongo Walker, and he sat as one spellbound.

(Another magnificent long instalment of this amazing 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.)

# THE RETURN TO REDCLYFFE!

## A Splendid Complete Story of Bob Travers, the Boy Boxer.

### By HERBERT BRITTON.

#### The 1st Chapter. Recognised!

"Bob, my boy, I don't know how to thank you!"

Joe Barnett, the genial old boxing showman, made the remark as he looked along the quiet country road leading to the town of Westchester.

Bob laughed.

"Don't try, Mr. Barnett," he replied.

"But I haven't got over the surprise yet," continued the boxing showman. "When John Matthews offered to buy me a new booth, providing you defeated no less than six schoolboy champion boxers in the ring, I hadn't the faintest idea that you would succeed. Now—now I've got a brand-new booth, and really I don't know what to make of myself."

"Well, I must say it was jolly decent of Mr. Matthews to make the offer," remarked Bob Travers.

"Decent!" ejaculated Joe Barnett. "I should think it was, and, what's more, I have got to thank quite as much as Mr. Matthews, for if you had lost one of those fights I should have been ruined—ruined for life!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "That car's travelling at a good pace!"

The boy boxer pointed ahead to where a powerful motor-car was literally flying over the ground towards them.

"Better get into the side of the road," said Joe Barnett warningly.

"Rather!" said Bob, and he slipped towards the hedge with the old showman.

The motor-car tore along like an express train, and as it flew past him Bob fixed his gaze on the occupants, two prosperous-looking men and the chauffeur.

The car was travelling at a great rate, and it was only a glimpse that Bob got of the occupants.

However, the glimpse was sufficient for him to recognise one of the men who was sitting in the body of the car. He started back suddenly, and Joe Barnett looked at him in surprise.

"By Jove! What's the matter, Bob?" he asked.

"N-nothing!" faltered Bob.

"But you've gone quite pale, my boy."

"Have I?" said Bob, but still he did not enlighten the old showman on the cause of his surprise.

The fact was, Bob Travers had recognised one of the men in the car as Derrick Conway—his guardian. Bob had been an orphan for many years, and had been in the charge of Derrick Conway.

Conway had sent Bob to Redclyffe school, and had then journeyed to India. Bob would probably have been at Redclyffe to this very day had not he been falsely accused of a low-down act, and run away.

He had left school quietly, without writing to his guardian and explaining matters, and had joined Barnett's boxing booth as a boxer.

Bob had spent some happy times with old Joe Barnett, and the open-air life had suited him down to the ground. His schooldays seemed to be events of the past, but really it was only a few months since he had decided to face the world alone.

Bob's guardian would probably have refused to allow him to leave school at such a young age, had he known of the circumstances, but being miles away he had not heard of the occurrence, and was powerless to restrain the young boxer.

Now, Derrick Conway was in England—had actually passed Bob on the road. What did it mean? Was he man searching for Bob? Did he want to take him away from the booth at which he was earning his living, and send him back to school?

"Come along, Mr. Barnett," said Bob, endeavouring to dismiss the matter from his mind. "We'd better be getting along to the booth. What time are you opening?"

"Seven o'clock, Bob," said Joe Barnett, rubbing his hands eagerly.

"And I guess we're going to have a bumper show. The Westchester folk are madly keen on boxing, and what with a brand-new booth and a splendid programme, we ought to do pretty well."

"Well, there's nothing like having a good set-off," remarked the boy boxer.

Bob and the old showman started off again in the direction of the fair-ground.

They arrived there, to find a crowd of boys, and men, too, gazing admiringly at Joe Barnett's new booth. It did certainly look very attractive, being brand new and spotless.

To Joe Barnett it was the happiest day of his life. When his old booth had been hurled to the ground by a raging storm, nothing but ruin seemed to lay before him.

Now, however, he was starting all over again, with a splendid booth, and without a single debt on the books. Joe Barnett's old boxers—Dick Hartley, Larry Green, and several others—had all returned to the fold, so to speak, and the prospects for the future were extremely bright.

Bob Travers wended his way in the direction of his caravan, and directly tea was over Joe Barnett summoned him and the other boxers to the rostrum of the booth.

Winter was drawing near, but flare-lamps, placed in advantageous positions, lit up the fair-ground as though it were day.

Bob looked down from his position on the platform, and saw a regular sea of faces upturned in his direction. Joe Barnett was quite correct when he had said that the Westchester people were madly keen on boxing. They had flocked to the show in thousands.

With a considerable amount of pride, Joe Barnett took his place on the rostrum, and immediately there was an outburst of cheering from the crowd.

The boxing showman put up his hand for silence.

"Gentlemen," he said, in strong tones, "we open here to-night with a magnificent new booth, and a programme of attractions the like of which I am confident has never before been shown in this town of Westchester."

"Hurrah!" cheered the crowd.

"My boxers," went on the showman enthusiastically, "are some of the finest in the land. My boy boxer, Travers, has just returned from a tour, and has beaten no fewer than six champion junior boxers of some of the biggest public schools in the country."

"Good old Travers!"

"Travers is in splendid fighting form," said Joe Barnett, with conviction. "In my opinion, he is fast approaching championship form. Maybe, one day, he will be champion. For the present, he is willing to box all-comers. Now, then, let the champion of Westchester step forward, and Bob will meet him."

"Go on, Charlie Wing, challenge him!" yelled somebody in the crowd.

"Here's a chance for you!"

"Yes, Charlie Wing's the boy!" shouted another.

"Hallo!" said Joe Barnett, gazing intently over the heads of the crowd.

"The champion's here, then?"

"Wot!" shouted one of the Westchester boys. "Charlie Wing's here all right. Step forward, Charlie, and show yourself!"

There was a movement in the crowd, and next instant the stocky form of a fellow of some seventeen years of age walked up the steps leading to the rostrum.

Joe Barnett looked at the fellow inquiringly.

"I'm Charlie Wing," said the latter; "and I'm willing to box Travers right here and now."

"Good!" said Joe Barnett, knowing full well that the Westchester folk would literally swarm in to back up their champion. "You shall box Travers to-night, and the fight shall be the first on the programme!"

Joe Barnett announced particulars of the contest to the crowd, and then he proceeded to issue challenges on behalf of his other boxers. These were readily accepted, and at length the programme was complete for the evening.

"Now, gentlemen," concluded Joe Barnett, "we start in a quarter of an hour's time. The pay-box is round here on the right. Roll up in your thousands, and pay up and look pleasant!"

The crowd swarmed towards the pay-box at once, and soon there was a queue of excited people some

hundred yards in length, waiting anxiously to enter the booth.

By the time Bob Travers and Charlie Wing entered the ring the arena was packed, and there was not a single vacant seat.

Joe Barnett, smiling with satisfaction, entered the ring, and to the accompaniment of a loud burst of cheering, announced particulars of the fight, which was to be one of six rounds of three minutes each.

The boxing showman stepped away from the roped-in square, and then came the call, "Time!"

It was the first fight in Joe Barnett's new booth, and it was to be a memorable one.

The pace was a fast one right from the outset. Bob's opponent was of the slogging variety; but, all the same, he knew a good deal about the scientific side of boxing. Bob was up against a class boxer.

Smack! Thud! Smack!

Give-and take was the order of the day, and both boxers gave as much as they received.

There was a red mark on Bob's face where Charlie Wing a big flat had landed, and one of Charlie's eyes was half-closed.

At the conclusion of the first round both boxers were going strong, and honours were even.

"Good old Charlie!" yelled the Westchester supporters.

"Give him beans!"

"Time!"

The combatants were quickly on their feet again, and going for one another hammer-and-tongs. Many blows were guarded, but many got

"Time!"

The crowd cheered the two boxers in a most enthusiastic manner as they rose for the third round. It was a fascinating fight, and they were simply revelling in it.

The Westchester champion was slower in his movements now, and he was very lucky in guarding an uppercut from Bob's right fist.

Bob repeated the attempt an instant later, but again Charlie Wing dodged in the nick of time.

Bob followed up his man, and, after cleverly feinting with his right, he swung his left home with terrific force. Charlie tried to side-step, but he was a fraction of a second too late, and, landing on the side of the head, the blow completely bowled him over.

Complete silence reigned in the crowded arena as the timekeeper commenced to count.

Would the Westchester champion be counted out?

At "five" the fellow had not moved a muscle. The crowd waited anxiously, and when at "eight" Charlie Wing rose slowly, but unsteadily to his feet, they gave him a cheer that he well deserved.

"Well done, Charlie, boy!" they yelled excitedly.

Once again the two boxers faced each other, but it was obvious that there could only be one result to the contest. Bob Travers was bound to win.

The Westchester boxer fought gamely; but when, an instant later, Bob's left swung out like lightning, and sent him reeling to the boards, no one was surprised.

The timekeeper counted, but it was really unnecessary. Charlie Wing was done to the wide, and had not strength in him to continue the fight.

"Well done, Travers!" shouted the onlookers. "A jolly good win!"

And there was no doubt that it was.

#### The 2nd Chapter. Back to Redclyffe.

Bob, there's a gentleman wants



"Hallo, Bob, old son!" exclaimed Dick Turner, shaking the boy boxer's hand excitedly. "Jolly glad to see you back again!"

home with good effect, and the pace slowed down slightly.

Charlie Wing was breathing heavily, and so was Bob, for that matter. He acted on the defensive for a while in order to regain his breath; but his opponent, eager to bring the fight to a successful conclusion, continued to hammer away.

Bob stopped many of the blows, but, for all his cleverness, some got home.

But the boy boxer was recovering his strength. The Westchester champion wanted to deliver a knock-out blow before Bob regained his strength, but he reckoned without the cleverness of his opponent.

Bob Travers waited—waited until the power of Wing's blows began to diminish, then—

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Three times in quick succession Bob got home on his opponent's face. Charlie Wing was taken unawares. The blows were quite unexpected, and the force of them sent him staggering backwards.

The call of "Time!" came at that moment, and Charlie Wing breathed a sigh of thankfulness as he went to his corner.

"By Jove," said Charlie Wing's second, "you're up against something hot this time, my boy!"

"Golly!" gasped Charlie Wing. "That feller can hit! I never thought—"

to see you," said Joe Barnett, as Bob left the ring.

"See me?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"Yes," said Joe Barnett. "He's waiting in my private office. And he is a gentleman, too—silk hat, frock-coat, and goodness knows what else!"

"What's his name?" asked Bob.

"Can't tell you, Bob," said the boxing showman. "He won't give it; but he says he wants to see you most particular."

"Well, I suppose I'd better go and see what he wants," said Bob; and he trudged along in the direction of Joe Barnett's little office.

Bob walked a yard or so in front of Joe Barnett, but as he entered the office, and saw who was waiting there to meet him, he started back so that he trod upon the boxing showman's toes.

"Great Scott!" was all Bob could say.

"Bob!"

It was a commanding voice, and yet there was quite a genial tone to it.

"Mr. Conway!" said Bob Travers in amazement.

The man who was standing before him was none other than the man he had recognised in the motor-car that morning. He was Derrick Conway, Bob's own guardian.

"You've recognised me, then, Bob," said Derrick Conway slowly. "I've not altered, then, during my stay in India."

"No, you haven't," said Bob. "I had no idea you were in England."

"No, you young rascal!" said Derrick Conway, firmly but kindly. "What's the meaning of this escapade—eh? Give an account of your self, you young rascal! What do you mean by leaving school, and attaching yourself to a place of this sort?"

Bob flushed slightly at his guardian's words.

"I simply had to," he explained. "I was accused of something I did not do, and the Head threatened to expel me. I had no home to go to, so I thought I'd better leave school, and earn my own living."

"Earn your own living!" exclaimed Conway. "And what have you been doing, pray?"

"Boxing," replied Bob.

"Boxing!" ejaculated Conway in surprise. "Do you mean to tell me that over since you left school you've been doing nothing but box in a ring?"

"That's all," said Bob.

"By gad!" gasped Derrick Conway. "You young rascal! Didn't I tell you, the last time I saw you, that I was going to make a solicitor of you?"

"Well, I do remember you saying something about it," said Bob.

"And you had the confounded nerve to become a professional boxer! By gad! And I suppose you've made up your mind to keep to the ring all your life?"

"I really hadn't thought about it," said Bob slowly. "You see, Mr. Conway, I haven't got much choice."

"Choice be hanged!" snapped Mr. Conway. "Here have I been chasing you all over England, in order to send you back to school—"

"Send me back to school!"

"Most decidedly," declared Conway. "You've got to remain at school for another two years yet. Your headmaster has been waiting for you to go back for the last six months—"

"But I can't go back there," said Bob. "The Head was going to expel me."

"Expel be hanged!" exclaimed Conway abruptly. "The real culprit was discovered a few days after you left Redclyffe; and, although Dr. Harrison tried his hardest to find you, he did not succeed. But I've found you, you young rascal, and I'm not going to lose you. You're coming back to school with me first thing in the morning."

"But—but—" faltered Bob.

"No—buts, my boy!" snapped Mr. Conway. "I'm not going to have my search for nothing; and, besides, I'm thinking of your future. A professional boxer! He! You're going to do something better than that, Bob."

Bob Travers looked sympathetically at the old boxing showman's face. There was a very troubled expression on it. The loss of Bob Travers to the booth would be a big one.

"But what about Mr. Barnett?" said Bob to his guardian. "He's been ever so decent to me, and I don't know what I should have done if he hadn't have taken me on."

Mr. Conway raised his hand.

"My dear Bob," he said, "Mr. Barnett shall not be forgotten. I saw you box to-night, my boy, and although I never had any love for professional boxers, I can see that the life has done you no harm. It has developed your physique, and made a fine fellow of you."

Mr. Conway turned to the old boxing showman.

"Mr. Barnett," he said in kindly tones, "I quite realise that Bob will be a loss to you. At the same time, the lad must go back to school. There's a far better career waiting for him than a life in the ring. Mind you, I've nothing to say against boxing and boxers; but, all the same, the education that Bob has had fits him for something better than a boxer's life."

Joe Barnett nodded his head in assent. Although he was sorry to part with Bob, he could not help but see reason in the man's remarks.

"Now," continued Mr. Conway, "I wish to thank you for your kindness towards Bob, and I wish to make you a small present for all that you have done for him."

Mr. Conway handed a cheque to the boxing showman. Joe Barnett looked at it and gasped.

"Fifty pounds!" he muttered.

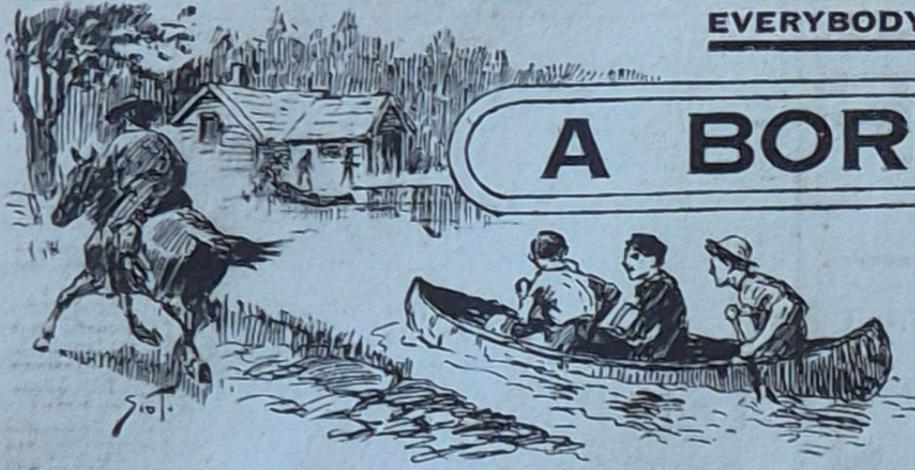
"Yes," said Mr. Conway. "I hope you will find it useful. I trust, too, that your future will be a prosperous one. I must say your booth looks well, and that you have a fine lot of boxers in your employ. No doubt you will regret the loss of Bob, but that cannot be helped. Bob's place is at school, and it is to school he is going. Now, I wonder whether you'd

EVERYBODY IS TALKING ABOUT THIS SPLENDID NEW SERIES!

# A BORROWED IDENTITY!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story, dealing with the Schooldays of Frank Richards, the Famous Author of the Tales of Harry Wharton & Co.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



## The 1st Chapter.

### A Startling Discovery.

"You must go!" Frank Richards started, and looked up from his book.

Frank was seated under a tree on the bank of the creek, some distance from Cedar Creek schoolhouse.

He had "De Bello Gallico" open on his knees, improving the shining hour by giving Cæsar a look-up.

Latin was not in the curriculum at the backwood's school, but Frank, who was of a studious turn of mind, sometimes had a "go" at it in his leisure hours. He had brought his old schoolbooks with him when he came to the Canadian West.

His chums, Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc, were canoeing on the creek, and Frank had retired to that secluded spot for a quarter of an hour with the Gallio War, which had been very familiar to him in the old days.

Mr. Slimmey, the assistant-master at Cedar Creek, was a good Latin scholar, and he sometimes gave Frank a little help in that line. Mr. Slimmey was a somewhat irresolute young man in glasses, and the Cedar Creek fellows not infrequently made fun of him, and of his respectful adoration of Miss Meadows, the schoolmistress. But he was kind and good-natured, and Frank had a good deal of regard and respect for him.

It was Mr. Slimmey's irresolute voice that came to the schoolboy's ears suddenly from the timber behind him.

"You must go, Rufus! Do you hear?"

Mr. Slimmey's voice was agitated, and he was evidently under the stress of emotion.

A laugh followed—a low, evil laugh, that made Frank Richards start as he heard it.

"Rufus! I tell you—"

"I cannot go!" It was a hard, cold voice that replied. "I've come to you for help, Paul!"

"How can I help you—you, a fugitive from justice? How can I help you? And I ought not, if I could!"

"You can—and must! Are you thinking of handing over your own oar to the Mounted Police?"

Frank Richards rose to his feet.

His cheeks were burning.

Chance had placed him in the position of an eavesdropper, but he had not the slightest desire to hear Mr. Slimmey's business.

But he paused as he stood under the big tree.

The tree was between him and the speakers in the timber, and if he went along the bank he would come out into full view of them.

He hesitated.

That Paul Slimmey, the quiet and irresolute assistant-master, had a brother who was a fugitive from justice, was a startling discovery. Frank realised how humiliated the young man would be if he found that his secret had been discovered, however unintentionally.

Frank was in an awkward position.

As he stood hesitating, wondering what he ought to do, the voices went on. The speakers were within a few yards of him.

"You've got to help me, Paul. I've got to get clear, somehow. Hang it all your own twin brother—"

"What kind of a brother have you been to me?" said Mr. Slimmey bitterly. "You have always disgraced me. I had to give up a good position in England on your account. And then, even in this country, you turned up again. Was not the world wide enough for you to go a different way?"

"I swear that was by chance. I was surprised when I first saw you in Thompson. I never intended to trouble you—"

"And yet you have come here?"

"I had no choice. I got into trouble at Vancouver, and I had to clear out in two days."

"The same old tale, I suppose. Drink, cards, and the rest!"

"Never mind that. I was never built your way, Paul—mentally and morally. I mean, though physically it's not easy to tell us apart. We went our different ways from boyhood. Look here, you've got to help me get clear! They are on my track!"

"The police?"

"Yes."

"Good heavens!"

"There are two of them in Thompson now, making inquiries. I can't run for it—where could I go? I thought of you as a last resource. You can hide me somewhere, Paul, till the scent grows cold."

"Hide you—a thief!"

"You've got some quarters here, I suppose! Where do you live?"

"I have a cabin near the schoolhouse."

"You are alone there?"

"I live there alone. Miss Meadows' servants look after the place, and I take most of my meals in the schoolhouse. It would not be possible to hide you in my cabin. It would be impossible. But if it were possible I would not do it. I will not shelter a thief. How do I know that even at this moment you have not your plunder about you?"

"That is neither here nor there. I must have a shelter for a few days, at least, till the Mounted Police have given up looking in this district. After that, I may get away to the hills."

"Impossible!"

"Paul!"

"I cannot help you. You have no right to ask. If I did I should be a criminal myself."

"Don't drive me too far, Paul!"

The voice had a deep, menacing tone in it. "You know I am desperate."

"I am not afraid of you. I will not give you away. I will not utter a word to harm you, but I cannot give you help. That is final."

There was a rustling in the underwood as the master moved away.

"Paul!"

There was no reply. Paul Slimmey was gone.

Frank Richards heard a muttered oath in the timber, and then there was another rustling as Rufus Slimmey crept away.

Frank stood rooted to the ground.

He would have given worlds not to have heard that muttered talk. But, at least, not a word of it should pass his lips, and Mr. Slimmey should never know that he knew.

The boy did not move till long after the receding footsteps had died in the distance.

Then, with a troubled face, he moved away along the creek.

"Hallo, here you are!" A canoe bumped into the grass, and Bob Lawless jumped out, followed by Vere Beauclerc. "Hallo, Franky!"

"Had a good study, Frank?" asked Beauclerc, with a smile.

"Eh—oh, yes!" said Frank, rather confusedly. The conversation in the timber was still troubling his mind.

Bob gave him a curious look.

"Anything up?" he asked.

"No—what should be up?"

"You look worried, my son!" said Bob. "Have you been getting into a poker game with Gunten and Hacke, and losing your dollars?"

"Fathead!" said Frank, laughing.

"There goes the bell," said Beauclerc.

The three chums started for the schoolhouse. Bob was in his usual high spirits, and Beauclerc looked very cheerful. But Frank Richards' face was overcast.

He could not help thinking of what he had unluckily heard, and he was troubled about Mr. Slimmey.

He wondered, too, whether he had a right to keep silent about Rufus Slimmey being in the neighbourhood, when he was a self-confessed thief and fugitive.

Frank Richards was far from being

in his usual sunny humour when he went into the log schoolhouse with his chums.

## The 2nd Chapter.

### A Secret to Keep!

Mr. Slimmey was already in the schoolroom, and Frank Richards gave him a curious glance as he went to his place.

The young master's face was pale and harassed.

Frank had noticed that he had been looking disturbed all the morning, and he realised now that he must have heard from his brother before the meeting in the timber after dinner.

The trouble that had been brought upon him evidently disturbed the young man deeply. He was not of a strong or resolute nature, and it was clear to Frank that he did not know how to face the trouble.

Mr. Slimmey was absent-minded that afternoon, to such an extent that the boys and girls in his class noted it, and smiled to one another about it.

But when lessons began Frank had no time to bestow on Mr. Slimmey.

Miss Meadows was a hard worker, and she made her pupils work, and Frank Richards' attention was kept to his own occupation.

He could not help thinking, however, of the strange state of affairs, and wondering what would happen.

Rufus Slimmey was hiding in the timber near the school, and the Mounted Police were looking for him, as near as could be the town of Thompson, on the Thompson River.

Frank would not have been surprised during the afternoon to hear sounds without of a struggle. If the fugitive was run down by the Mounted Police it was quite possible that he would resist, and there might be shooting.

He could guess that that was in Mr. Slimmey's mind, too, and that the thought of his connection with the pally wastrel becoming known weighed upon the young man oppressively.

Frank was glad when classes were dismissed for the day.

As the Cedar Creek fellows poured out of the log schoolhouse Mr. Slimmey took his way towards his cabin.

He walked with his face downcast and a deep wrinkle in his brow.

Frank noted that Miss Meadows glanced after the young man with some concern.

"Slimmey looks down on his luck, doesn't he?" remarked Bob Lawless.

"Kids have been bothering him, I suppose."

"He's not a bad sort," said Frank.

"One of the best!" said Bob, grinning. "But a chap can't help making fun of him. He really asks for it. Some of the kids rag him no end in class."

"He looks as if he were in trouble," said Vere Beauclerc.

Bob chuckled.

"Same old trouble, I expect," he remarked.

"Eh? What's that?" asked Frank Richards with a start.

"You know he's spoons on Miss Meadows," grinned Bob. "Chunky Todgers says he heard him propose to her once. Ha, ha!"

"So I did!" chimed in Chunky Todgers. "It was in the timber. He said—"

"Dry up!" growled Frank. "Don't tell us what he said."

"Well, it was funny, you know."

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, get off, Frank. If you're going to see him before we get home," said Bob Lawless. "Beau will hang about with me till you're done—won't you, Cherub?"

"Yes, rather!" said Beauclerc.

"By Jove! I'd forgotten!" said Frank.

"Forgotten you were going to do half an hour's Latin with him after school!" ejaculated Bob.

"I—I don't know whether I ought

to bother him this evening," said Frank Richards, hesitating.

"Well, he's expecting you, you know."

"Perhaps I'd better go."

"I guess so. Get a move on."

Frank Richards followed the young master, who had gone into his cabin.

Once a week Frank remained for half an hour's tuition in Mr. Slimmey's cabin. The kind-hearted young man had made the offer when he had discovered that Frank was trying to keep up his Latin, and naturally Frank had been glad to accept.

He was rather doubtful, however, whether Mr. Slimmey would be in a mood for Cæsar or Virgil that evening.

Frank tapped at the cabin door and opened it. Mr. Slimmey's cabin was a small but very neat building, and it contained only two rooms, both on the ground floor. One was a bedroom, the other a study, as the master took most of his meals with the household at the school.

Mr. Slimmey had made no preparations for Frank's lesson, and the schoolboy guessed that it had slipped his memory.

Instead of having the books on the table ready the young man was pacing the room, his face pale, and his brows wrinkled.

He started as Frank came in and endeavoured to calm himself, though not with much success.

"Richards! What is it, my boy?"

Disturbed as he was, the young master spoke with his usual kindness.

"My lesson, sir," said Frank.

"Oh! I had forgotten," said Mr. Slimmey, passing his hand across his brow. "If you will excuse me, Richards, I would like to put it off for once, I—I am not feeling very well."

"Certainly, sir!" said Frank.

"Good-night, sir."

"Good-night, Richards!"

Frank hurried back to his chums.

"Hallo! Not finished yet?" asked Bob.

"Putting it off," said Frank cheerily. "Mr. Slimmey's not very well. We can get off home."

"Right-ho! I admit I'm hungry," said Bob, laughing.

The cousins walked their ponies down the trail to the spot where Vere Beauclerc's way branched off. Then they mounted and rode away in the gathering dusk to the Lawless Ranch.

Frank Richards hardly spoke a word during the ride home.

He was concerned for poor Mr. Slimmey. He had received many kindnesses from the young man, and he was not ungrateful.

But there was nothing he could do to help Paul Slimmey in his trouble, nothing but hold his tongue, and act as if he knew nothing of the young master's affairs. But he would have been very glad to hear that the North-West Mounted Police had succeeded in running down the fugitive from Vancouver.

## The 3rd Chapter.

### In the Dead of the Night!

"What—what shall I do?"

The hour was late.

While Frank Richards was sleeping soundly in his room at the far-off ranch, the assistant-master of Cedar Creek School was pacing his cabin, sleepless, restless.

Cedar Creek School was sunk into silence and slumber. Not a light glimmered from any window.

But a light was still burning in the young master's cabin.

Midnight had passed, but Paul Slimmey was not thinking of bed. He could not have slept.

He was thinking of his brother.

The man who had disgraced him in the Old Country, the man who had been a black shadow on his life from boyhood, was at hand again.

Somewhere out in the darkness the fugitive was lurking.

Paul Slimmey had refused to help him. He knew it was only too probable that the wastrel had about him

at that very moment the proceeds of the robbery for which he was being tracked down by the North-West M.P.'s.

To give him shelter and aid was impossible—indeed, the young master could not have done so if he would. Where was he to hide him?

But, rascal as his twin brother was, he could not help feeling some concern in his fate.

And his fate was sure.

If the Mounted Police had tracked him as far as Thompson, the end was certain. In Thompson they could not fail to learn that a Mr. Slimmey was a master at the lumber school.

Rufus Slimmey's reason for coming to that district would be apparent to them at once when they knew that fact.

They would know that he had come there seeking his brother's help, and they would follow.

He would be questioned. They would want to know if he had seen the fugitive? What was he to say?

"What shall I do?" muttered the young man again and again as he paced the cabin restlessly.

He stopped suddenly as there was a sound at the door. Was it the police already? His heart almost ceased to beat as he faced the doorway, waiting.

The door opened.

Framed in the doorway, with the blackness behind him, stood the figure of the outcast.

"Rufus! You—you have come here!" panted Paul Slimmey.

The man stepped in and closed the door behind him. Without a word he dropped the wooden bar into its place.

Then he turned to his brother.

There was a moment of tense silence as they looked at one another in the light of the kerosene lamp.

Strangely alike they looked as they stood thus.

Dissimilar as they were in character, Nature had cast the twins in the same physical mould.

In height, in build, in features, they were almost counterparts.

The difference was marked in their clothes, and by Rufus Slimmey's thick moustache, and the fact that he did not wear glasses.

Other differences there were none.

Mr. Slimmey stood rooted to the floor, his breath coming and going in gasps. His eyes were fixed upon his brother, as they might have been fixed upon a serpent.

A mocking grin crossed Rufus Slimmey's face.

"You are surprised to see me here, I guess!" he remarked.

"You must be mad to come here!" said Mr. Slimmey huskily. "You were mad to see me at all. The police will be here to-morrow at the latest."

"I know it."

"They will want to know if I have seen you."

"And you will tell them?"

"What can I tell them? Do you think I am going to utter falsehoods on your account?" exclaimed the young man passionately. "You are a scoundrel to come here at all! You knew I could not help a thief to escape with his plunder."

"It was a chance, at least."

"Go!" said Mr. Slimmey. "Go while there is time! Go at once, and I will refuse to answer any questions. That is the utmost I can do!"

The wastrel smiled, and sat down on a stool at the table.

"Have you any food here?" he asked.

"Yes, if you are hungry."

"I am hungry."

"I will give you a meal before you go—such as I can. But—"

"The food—the food!" interrupted the outcast. "Your eloquence can come later, my dear brother. You were always too much given to preaching."

In silence the young man set the food before him—corn-cakes and ham. The outcast devoured them ravenously.

A BORROWED IDENTITY!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Anything to smoke?" he asked, when he had finished. "I do not smoke."

"Then you've nothing here?" "Nothing."

"You were always a fool!" Mr. Slimmey drew a deep breath. "I have done all I can for you—more than my conscience justifies," he said.

"I am not going yet," said the outcast coolly. "My dear brother, it is years since I have enjoyed the pleasure of your company. Let me enjoy it a little longer. Do you remember that old story—what happened in England, when you had to resign your position in a school?"

"I remember only too well!" said Mr. Slimmey bitterly. "Taking advantage of your resemblance to me you penetrated to the place, and committed a robbery. I had great difficulty in proving my innocence; and I had to resign and leave. It was like you—base and treacherous from your birth!"

Rufus Slimmey laughed. "That old story came into my mind while I was dodging the Mounted Police," he remarked. "A game that was played once can be played again—if you choose to help. Look at me! In your clothes, and with a clean face—"

"What do you mean?" "Cannot you guess? You are free to come and go as you like. Disappear for a week, and leave me in your place."

"What!" "I have more than brains enough to take your place here," said the outcast, with a contemptuous curl of the lip. "And as Paul Slimmey, assistant master to a backwoods school, I am safe—I can defy the police. They will see the resemblance—they will note that in any case. But I should play my part well. Your Miss Meadows would answer for it that I am Paul Slimmey, teacher—"

"You scoundrel!" "It would work—if you will go and leave me a clear field!" "To rob Miss Meadows, too, when you were safe?" "I will promise."

"That is enough. Will you go?" "I guess not!" Mr. Slimmey clenched his hands. "Listen to me!" he said. "I have had more than enough of your rascality and insolence. If you are not gone within five minutes, I shall call in the stableman to help me secure you, and hand you over to the police when they arrive here! I mean that!"

The outcast watched his face, with a mocking smile. "I believe you do!" he said. "You will find that I do."

In spite of Paul Slimmey's resistance, his right arm was forced under the outcast's left knee.

Then the ruffian had his other hand free. He extracted Mr. Slimmey's handkerchief, and jammed it savagely into his mouth.

"That silences you, you fool!" he muttered. He drew a length of cord from his pocket, and bound the young master's wrists together.

Then he rose, panting, to his feet. Mr. Slimmey lay on the floor, helpless. But the ruffian had not finished yet. He bound another cord about the young man's ankles, reducing him to complete helplessness.

"That finishes you, Paul!" Mr. Slimmey's eyes burned at him. "I will give you another chance," muttered Rufus Slimmey. "I know you'd keep your word. Will you go and leave the coast clear for me here!"

The bound man shook his head. "Then you will take the consequences!" The ruffian knelt beside his victim,

would have been easier," grinned the outcast. "But I have nerve enough for such a game. I never wanted nerve. And now I must trouble you for your clothes."

The bound man's face brightened for a moment. If he was unbound there was a chance.

But hope died in his breast, almost as soon as it rose. The outcast was leaving nothing to chance.

He unfastened one limb at a time to remove the outer garments from his victim, and replaced the cords.

In a quarter of an hour Mr. Slimmey was stripped of his outer clothes, and he still lay bound on the bed.

Rufus Slimmey discarded the muddy, travel-worn garments from his own limbs, and slipped on the clean, neat homespun the master had been wearing.

His own garments he packed out of sight in a box. "Now, if they come they can find me!" he said, with a grin. "Do you think I shall meet the test, Paul?"

There was despair in the face of the young master. The ruffian searched in the cabin, and came back with several pieces of cord. The helpless man, already bound, was secured to the bed he was lying upon. The outcast threw a buffalo-robe over him.

"Sleep, if you can!" he said. "I'm sorry for this, Paul, but it's the only way. You will have to remain tied up unless you give me your promise not to betray me."

There was no sign from the master, and Rufus Slimmey shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, yes, certainly!" he said. There was no suspicion, however, in the Chinaman's face. It was evident that he believed that the man before him was the assistant master of Cedar Creek School.

The outcast stepped back into the cabin, and the Chinaman followed him in. He was moving towards the bedroom door, when the outcast interposed.

"What do you want?" The Chinaman looked mildly surprised. "Me doee loom!" he said, "Makee beddee, allee samee."

For a moment the impostor's heart throbbled. He had expected something of this kind, and it had to be warded off.

"I could not sleep last night," he said. "I did not go to bed."

"Not gooy beddee, Mistel Slimmey?" "No. There's nothing to do in my room. You needn't trouble."

"Me dustee—" "Oh, don't bother!" Rufus Slimmey spoke sharply, and the Chinaman nodded, and glided out. The sharp tone was enough for him, and he was not sorry probably to be relieved of part of his usual morning's work.

Rufus Slimmey watched him go, and breathed rather hard. "There's risk," he muttered—"confounded risk! But it's the only way!"

Ten minutes later Rufus Slimmey entered the log schoolhouse. Miss Meadows was already at the break-

The three chums walked on together towards the school. Frank Richards was very silent. He was thinking about what was likely to happen at the lumber school that day if Rufus Slimmey was still in the neighbourhood, and he had little doubt on that point. The more Frank thought about it the more he felt that something ought to be done. Mr. Slimmey was not the kind of man to deal with that hardened and unscrupulous scoundrel. He might yield to Rufus Slimmey's demands, and involve himself in deep trouble by breaking the law in helping him, or the ruffian, exasperated by his refusal, might do him harm. In the latter suspicion Frank was nearer to the truth than he supposed. His thoughtfulness drew the attention of both his chums. Bob Lawless had already remarked on it more than once. "Look here, Frank," Bob exclaimed suddenly. "Get it off your chest!"

Frank started, and coloured. "What?" he asked. "Whatever it is that you're logging your poor old brain about," said Bob, "you've been like a wooden image ever since yesterday morning. What on earth is it you've got on your mind?" "Out with it, Frank!" said Beauclerc, with a smile. "I've noticed that there's something up."

Frank paused for a minute. "Look here!" he said at last. "I've been thinking of telling you fellows. It's a dead secret." "My word!" said Bob. "That sounds mysterious. Have you discovered a new gold-mine by any chance?" "No, ass! It's about poor old Slimmey."

"What's the matter with Slimmey?" "It's his secret, really, and I've no right to know it," said Frank, flushing. "But I do know it by chance, and I don't know what I ought to do. I'll tell you fellows; but, of course, not a word at school about it!" "Go ahead!" Frank Richards explained what he had overheard on the bank of Cedar Creek the previous day. His chums did not interrupt him, save by a whistle of astonishment from Bob Lawless. "By gad!" said Beauclerc, when Frank had finished. "How rotten for poor old Slimmey! No wonder he looked worried!"

"Poor old chap!" said Bob. "What a precious brother to have! I'd dot him in the eye if he were mine, I know that. Slimmey ought to have knocked him down and kicked him out."



"If you had chosen to help me, it would have been easier," grinned the outcast. "But I have nerve enough for such a game. And now I must trouble you for your clothes."

and proceeded to fasten the gag more securely, and to knot again the cords that confined his limbs. He did the work with the most thorough care.

Then he opened the door of the bedroom, and lifted the bound man through the doorway, and laid him on the bed.

Carefully he covered the little window with the blind. The bound man watched him, with fierce anger in his eyes, and amazement, too. He could not understand yet the scheme that was working in the rascal's cunning brain.

Rufus Slimmey carried in the lamp from the other room. He searched about the bed-room, and found shaving materials.

Quietly and carefully he shaved off his moustache before the little glass. The moustache gone, his resemblance to the bound man on the bed was more striking. He stood looking down at his brother, with a sneering grin.

"You savvy?" he asked. Mr. Slimmey shook his head. "The Mounted Police will be here tomorrow, to seek me. They will find me—but in your name. You will be looked in this room—silent. I shall face the inquiries of the M.P.'s—and put them off the scent. You understand?"

Mr. Slimmey's eyes glittered, but he could not speak. "If you had chosen to help me, if

"Be it so!" he said. He carried the lamp back into the outer room, and closed the bedroom door and locked it, and placed the key in his pocket.

Then he replenished the stove, extinguished the lamp, and drew a buffalo-robe round him, and laid down to sleep, his feet to the stove.

In three minutes the rascal was sleeping soundly. There was no sleep for the unfortunate man in the next room. He counted the weary minutes till the light of dawn glimmered through the closely-drawn blind.

But after dawn was creeping in at the cabin window the outcast was still sleeping. He awakened as a knock came at the door.

In a moment the buffalo-robe was thrown aside, and the outcast was upon his feet. He stepped to the door, and removed the bars and opened it.

A smiling Chinese stood without. "Goodee-mornee, Mistel Slimmey!" "Good-morning!"

"Mistel Slimmey goes breakfast!" said the Chinese. "I guess so." The Chinese servant glanced at him rather quickly as he spoke, and the keen-witted impostor divined at once that Mr. Slimmey was not in the habit of "guessing."

fast-table, and he could see her through the open doorway from the hall.

The schoolmistress gave him a pleasant smile and greeting. The impostor's heart almost stood still as the Canadian girl's clear, honest eyes rested for a moment on his face.

But there was no suspicion in her glance. To her, as to the Chinese servant, the man was Paul Slimmey, the assistant master of Cedar Creek.

With cool confidence Rufus Slimmey sat down to breakfast, and if he was listening intently for sounds from without, Miss Meadows did not observe it.

That morning he was well aware the Mounted Police would come—that day at the latest. He had to face the ordeal when they came, and in spite of his iron nerve, there was apprehension in his breast. But not by the quiver of a muscle did he betray it.

The 5th Chapter. Frank's Resolve.

"Here's the Cherub!" said Bob Lawless cheerily. Frank Richards and his cousin jumped off their ponies at the fork in the trail. Vere Beauclerc, coming from the direction of Cedar Camp, was already there.

"What do you mean?" "Cannot you guess? You are free to come and go as you like. Disappear for a week, and leave me in your place."

"What!" "I have more than brains enough to take your place here," said the outcast, with a contemptuous curl of the lip. "And as Paul Slimmey, assistant master to a backwoods school, I am safe—I can defy the police. They will see the resemblance—they will note that in any case. But I should play my part well. Your Miss Meadows would answer for it that I am Paul Slimmey, teacher—"

"You scoundrel!" "It would work—if you will go and leave me a clear field!" "To rob Miss Meadows, too, when you were safe?" "I will promise."

"That is enough. Will you go?" "I guess not!" Mr. Slimmey clenched his hands. "Listen to me!" he said. "I have had more than enough of your rascality and insolence. If you are not gone within five minutes, I shall call in the stableman to help me secure you, and hand you over to the police when they arrive here! I mean that!"



A BORROWED IDENTITY!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Slimmey being mixed up in it. That's the idea."

"Good egg!" And Frank Richards' mind was made up by the time the chums arrived at the lumber school.

He had realised, after reflection, that Mr. Slimmey was in danger from the rascally wastrel; and that danger was to be averted, if Frank Richards could avert it.

The chums looked at Mr. Slimmey when they entered the schoolroom. School had not yet begun, but the young man was in the schoolroom. Somewhat to Frank's surprise, he did not wear the same troubled expression that had been so marked the day before.

"Good-morning, Mr. Slimmey!" said Frank.

"Good-morning, my boys!" Frank looked at him. Mr. Slimmey's voice seemed deeper and stronger, he thought, than it had ever seemed before. There was a harder tone in it.

"Which evening shall I come, sir?" asked Frank, referring to the postponed Latin lesson.

"What?" "Which evening would suit you, sir?"

The young man breathed hard for a moment.

"To what are you referring?" he asked.

"The Latin lesson, sir."

"Oh! The—Latin lesson!"

"Yes, sir!" said Frank, in wonder, wondering why that startled look had leaped into Mr. Slimmey's eyes.

At the first glance Mr. Slimmey had seemed quite recovered from his trouble; but evidently he had forgotten the extra lesson he gave Frank once a week.

Beaulieu and Lawless were also eyeing Mr. Slimmey curiously.

It was, at least, extraordinary that the master should have forgotten the matter so completely.

"I—I will speak to you about it later," said Mr. Slimmey, in a halting voice. "At present I am busy."

"Very well, sir!"

The fellows were coming in now, and Frank and his chums went to their places. During first lesson there was a sound of giggling from the junior class.

The younger pupils of the lumber school were finding Mr. Slimmey that morning even more absent-minded than usual. He had even forgotten the names of pupils whom he knew perfectly well, and seemed in some confusion about the school work.

Miss Meadows glanced at him once or twice, with a puzzled expression in her clear, grey eyes.

In the middle of the morning there was a sudden interruption of lessons. Clatter, clatter, clatter!

Frank Richards and his chums exchanged quick glances. Horses were galloping up the trail to the log-school.

They knew who the new-comers must be.

There was a jingling of bridles without. Miss Meadows, in surprise, looked towards the big, open doorway.

A tall, athletic man, in a scarlet coat, appeared there. It was a sergeant in the North-West Mounted Police. Behind him a trooper appeared, with a rifle under his arm.

"Sergeant Lasalle!" whispered Bob.

The big sergeant strode in, and saluted Miss Meadows courteously.

"Pray, excuse me, ma'am!" he said. "I am sorry to interrupt."

"Not at all, if you have business here!" said Miss Meadows, in surprise.

"You have a master here of the name of Slimmey, I am told?"

"Yes; he is here."

"Can I speak to him?"

"Certainly." Miss Meadows looked round. "Mr. Slimmey, will you kindly come here? Sergeant Lasalle wishes to speak to you."

Mr. Slimmey came over from the class.

There was a hush of silence in the schoolroom. Frank Richards and his chums almost held their breath.

The 6th Chapter. Face to Face!

Sergeant Lasalle looked keenly and grimly at the young man, noting the clean-shaven face, the gold-rimmed glasses perched on the nose, over which the young man's eyes looked at him steadily enough.

The sergeant's hand rested carelessly on his belt, within reach of a revolver. The striking resemblance between the man who stood before him and the fugitive from Vancouver could not escape the sergeant's keen eyes.

"What is wanted?" asked Mr. Slimmey quietly. "I am quite at your service."

"You are wanted, I think!" said Sergeant Lasalle grimly.

"Indeed! I do not quite understand."

"Your name is Slimmey?"

"Paul Slimmey."

"That will be for you to prove. I am looking for Rufus Slimmey, late of Vancouver. If you are not Rufus Slimmey, you are his double. I have your photograph here—or his!"

Miss Meadows intervened. "You are making a mistake, sergeant. This gentleman is Mr. Paul Slimmey, and I can answer for it. He has been a master in this school for more than a year."

The sergeant pursed his lips.

"Madam, I should accept your assurance without hesitation, but—well, look at this photograph."

Miss Meadows looked startled.

"It is certainly very like Mr. Slimmey, excepting that this man"—she indicated the photograph—"wears a moustache. But I repeat, sergeant, that Mr. Slimmey has lived here for a year or more, and I can answer for it that he has not been in Vancouver all that time."

"The man I am looking for left Vancouver a week ago."

"I can explain," said the young master quietly. "Miss Meadows, I am ashamed to have to make this admission in your presence, and in the presence of the school. Rufus Slimmey is my twin brother."

"Oh!" said the sergeant, non-plussed. "I heard that a Mr. Slimmey was here, and fancied it might be a relation."

"The relationship is very close," said the master. "Rufus is my twin-brother. We are not friends. He has been a ne'er-do-well all his life."

I know that he was in Vancouver. That is all. I am not surprised to hear that he is in trouble. He was in trouble in England once, and disgraced me there, as now he is doing here."

The sergeant's gaze was hard and keen, but the young man met it unflinchingly.

"If the man is your twin-brother, sir, that explains the resemblance, of course," said Sergeant Lasalle. "For a moment I certainly thought that you were the man. But if you have been a master in this school for a year—"

"I can answer for that!" said Miss Meadows.

"The whole school could answer for it, I think," said Slimmey, with a smile. "You may ask the class, sergeant."

"That is not necessary. Miss Meadows' assurance is sufficient," said the sergeant. "I am sorry for the mistake. You are absolutely certain, madam, that Mr. Slimmey is your assistant master?"

"I could scarcely make a mistake on such a point, Sergeant Lasalle."

"I guess not. I am sorry," said the sergeant frankly. "It only remains for me to ask Mr. Slimmey whether he has seen or heard anything of his brother in the last few days."

Frank Richards scarcely breathed as he heard that question. But the young master faced it calmly.

"Nothing," he replied. "I do not correspond with my brother. After the shame he brought upon me in the Old Country I cast him off for ever. If he communicated with me I should not answer him."

"He has been traced to this locality, sir?"

"Good heavens! Are you sure?"

"I guess I should not be here otherwise. He was seen near Thompson, and seen again making in this direction. I guess, sir, that there is no doubt he was heading for this quarter to see you."

"Impossible! He knows that I should denounce him at once!" exclaimed the master.

"You would do that?"

"I should not shield a criminal, sir; and I gather, from what you say, that he has committed a crime in Vancouver?"

"He has committed a robbery, and lit out with a thousand dollars of other people's money," said the sergeant quietly. "The man's got to be found, and the money's got to be found. He could scarcely have come into this quarter except to seek help from you."

"He would have been disappointed, then."

"You have not seen him?"

"No."

"Not heard from him?"

"No."

"Then I need trouble you no longer."

And, with a military salute, the sergeant wheeled, and tramped out of the schoolroom.

Mr. Slimmey went quietly back to his place.

Frank Richards looked at his chums, his face pale and troubled now. Mr. Slimmey had lied, but it was not for Frank to betray him; and, with a heavy heart, Frank Richards decided to hold his peace.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"LAID BY THE HEELS!"

BY MARTIN OLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!

TALES TO TELL!

A CORK-ER

Three of them—all English and Scottish tourists—were travelling from the North of Ireland en route for Cork.

The train was awfully late, and, to make matters worse, was held up frequently between the stations. During one of these stops an official of the company proceeded to examine the tickets.

"Where for, please?" he demanded, as he climbed into the compartment occupied by the tourists.

"Cork!" exclaimed the tourists in unison.

"Then you're all Cork!" said the inspector.

"Yes," replied the wag of the party; "and if your train were the same, maybe it would be easier to draw! I never saw such a stopper in my life!"

"You are a very naughty boy, Tommy, for stealing one of those tarts out of the pantry! I didn't think it was in you."

Tommy: "Oh, mother, it isn't all in me; half of it is in Harry!"

"Oh, for the wings of a dove!" sighed the poet with the unbarbered hair.

"Order what you like," rejoined the prosaic person, "but as for me, give me the breast of a chicken."

Barnstorm: "When I stand on the stage I see nothing, and am conscious of nothing but the role I am playing. The audience disappears entirely."

Friend: "Well, I can't blame the audience much for that."

A boatman was annoyed by the foolish behaviour of one of a party he had taken for a sail. When the boat sprang a leak far out from the shore the boatman served out lifebelts, but he gave none to the man who had angered him.

"Where's mine?" said the terrified youth.

"Don't you worry, my lad," said the boatman; "you don't need no lifebelt. A feller with an 'ead as hollow as yours can't sink!"

Mr. Oldboy: "Do you think you'll do?" I advertised for a strong boy."

New Boy: "Well, I've thrashed all the other kids that applied for the job!"

QUITE SAFE.

"Why, don't you get up and give that seat to your father, Bobby?" reprimanded the lady. "Doesn't it pain you to see him reaching for the strap?"

"Not on a tram!" chuckled Bobby.

A FAIR CATCH!

"I say, old chap," cried Smarte eagerly the other evening to a friend, "heard about the scandal in the post-office?"

"No," replied the friend, preparing to hear and enjoy.

"Not about our postman getting the sack?" asked Smarte incredulously.

"What did he get it for?"

"To put the letters in, old chap!" said Smarte, with a chuckle.

HORRID TRAGEDY!

Jinks: "Is there a death-scene in your play?"

Binks: "I should think there is! The leading lady murders the part of the heroine at every performance!"

THE RETURN TO REDCLYFFE!

By HERBERT BRITTON.

(Continued from page 225.)

case to have supper at my hotel this evening as soon as the show is over."

Joe Barnett's eyes sparkled.

"Rather!" he replied enthusiastically. "I assure you I'm very sorry to lose Bob. He's been one of my very best boxers. He is a straight-forward, honest young chap, and had he stayed here I am confident that one day he would have been champion of England. But I quite agree with you, Mr. Conway, his place is at school. I must ask you to excuse me now, as I must go and look after the show. I don't want any hitch to occur to-night."

Jan Barnett went off to attend to the boxing programme. As it turned out, there was no hitch whatever. The show was a great success, and everybody went away perfectly satisfied with the boxing turns.

It was quite late when Mr. Conway, Bob, and Joe Barnett were seated at supper that night; but, all the same, it proved a very pleasant meal. Bob was getting quite reconciled to the fact that he was going back to school; in fact, he was looking forward to it.

He was to see his old chums of the Fourth to-morrow. He was to take his place in his old study with his chums Dicky Turner and Tom Harvey. The future seemed very bright to Bob at that moment.

"Here he comes!" A crowd of juniors were standing at the gates of Redclyffe School, looking intently down the road leading to the station. Amongst them were Dicky Turner and Tom Harvey, Bob's old chums.

"Here comes old Bob!" shouted Dicky Turner excitedly. "My hat! Hasn't he grown! He's as big again as when he left!"

"I should just think he is!" said Tom Harvey. "My word! Won't he be able to put us up to some boxing wrinkles now?"

A motor-car containing Bob and his guardian came tearing up the road, and drew up outside the gates.

In another moment the juniors had surrounded the car, and dragged Bob from it.

"Come on, Bob, old son!" exclaimed Dicky Turner, shaking the boy boxer's hand excitedly. "There's a ripping tea waiting for you upstairs. We're jolly glad to see you back again!"

"Leggo my arm, Dicky!" said Bob, endeavouring to shake himself free.

"Impos, old son!" said Dicky Turner. "Come on!"

And Bob Travers was carried upstairs to the Fourth Form passage, and dumped down into Study No. 5. Mr. Conway watched them go, and he laughed to himself.

"Young rascals!" he muttered. "I can see some exciting times happening now Bob's returned."

And Mr. Conway was not far wrong.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

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