

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d}/₂

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 6th, 1918.]

PUT TO THE PROOF!

A MAGNIFICENT NEW LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Just Like Jimmy.

"Jimmy!"
"Come on, Jimmy!"
Jimmy Silver hesitated. There was a thoughtful wrinkle in Jimmy Silver's brow. Apparently he was in the throes of reflection.

"If we're going down to Coombe before lessons, we've got to hustle," said Lovell.

"What are you scowling about, Jimmy?" inquired Raby.

"I was thinking."
"Well, don't," remarked Newcome. "Come and get your bike out, instead."

Jimmy Silver shook his head. "You fellows get off," he said. "I was thinking of dropping in to see Lattrey."

"Oh, bother Lattrey!"

"The chap's been in san'y for weeks," said Jimmy Silver. "He can receive visitors now. I don't think he's had many, so far."

"Well, nobody wants to see him," said Arthur Edward Lovell practically. "Why should they?"

"Echo answers why!" grinned Newcome.

"Well, he's down on his luck," said Jimmy slowly. "Yes, I know what you're going to say, Lovell—he's a shady rotter, and he's been sacked from Rookwood, and he's going as soon as he comes out of san'y. But—"

Lovell gave a deep groan.

"And I know what you're going to say, Jimmy, you ass! Just because the chap's down on his luck, we're to forgive everything, and forget what a beast he is, and take him to our waistcoats, and weep over him! Br-r-r!"

"Just like Jimmy!" grunted Raby.

"Well, the poor beast has been through it," said Jimmy Silver defensively. "And you can't deny that he did a jolly plucky thing in getting Mornington out of that railway accident. It was a surprise to all of us; but, there you are, he did it."

"I should think he owed Mornington that much!" snapped Lovell.

"Well, perhaps so; but—"

"But the long and the short of it is that you're going to fool over him instead of coming out for a spin!" growled Lovell. "Well, go and do it, ass; don't ask me to come. I'm off!"

"Same here!" said Raby and Newcome.

"All serene! Cut off!" said Jimmy. "I think I'll drop in and speak a word to the chap."

Lovell & Co. walked away to the bike-shed, and Jimmy Silver, his mind made up now, started for the school sanatorium.

Jimmy had been thinking a good deal about Mark Lattrey lately.

The fellow was a rank outsider, there was no mistake about that.

Nobody at Rookwood had been able to see any good in him.

Jimmy, least of all, had any reason to feel kindly towards the fellow.

Lattrey had always been his enemy—and a bitter, unscrupulous enemy. But one act of bravery outweighed many sins, in Jimmy's opinion; and, besides, Lattrey had been lying ill for weeks.

He had "been through it," as Jimmy said.

It couldn't be pleasant to lie in san'y, ill and restless, knowing that his sentence of expulsion was to be carried out as soon as he was able to move.

In fact, it must have been distinctly unpleasant.

Jimmy wondered, too, whether he had been a little hard even upon Lattrey.

A fellow capable of even one act of unselfish courage could not be all bad.

And it could not be a trick, this time—one of Lattrey's many tricks.

He had run a fearful risk to save Mornington of the Fourth in the railway accident, and he had received injuries that had laid him up for weeks afterwards.

That counted in his favour.

Jimmy Silver was thinking it out as he let himself into the garden and walked towards the sanatorium—at some distance from the rest of the school buildings.

Lattrey was a bad egg, but—

There was a "but."

By an act of sheer ruffianism he had blinded Mornington of the Fourth; an accident, certainly, but Lattrey had acted like a reckless ruffian.

No doubt he owed Morny what he had done for him since.

Still, that did not detract from the credit due to him.

Valentine Mornington had recovered his sight, and, although no credit was due to Lattrey for that, it seemed to make his offence less, somehow.

Jimmy was admitted to the sanatorium at once to see the invalid.

He found Lattrey sitting up in bed, propped on pillows, with a book open on the counterpane.

He was not reading, however.

His eyes were fixed upon a window that gave a view of the garden, where the trees were showing the green of spring.

He started at the sight of Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy started a little, too. Lattrey was much changed.

His face was thin and worn and pale, his eyes hollow, and the hard lines of his face seemed to have been almost effaced by illness.

It was not easy at first to recognise the cool, cynical blackguard of the Fourth, whom Jimmy had known and disliked.

"You!" said Lattrey. "You've come to see me?"

"They told us you could have visitors to-day," said Jimmy, colour-



LATTREY REPENTS!

"Oh, what a fool—what a fool I've been!" muttered Lattrey. "I thought I was the sharpest chap at Rookwood. I used to laugh at you, Silver, for being such an ass, and—look where it's landed me!"

ing a little. "I—I thought I'd look in, Lattrey."

"You're very good! There a chair, there."

The captain of the Fourth sat down.

"You're my first visitor," said Lattrey grimly. "I didn't expect any at all, as a matter of fact."

"I—I hope you're better."

"Oh, I'm mending!" said Lattrey, with a shrug. "It will be another week or two before I'm well enough to be kicked out. But don't be afraid. I'm going."

"I—I—"
"Sorry I'm going?" asked Lattrey, in his old sardonic manner.

"Thanks!"

Jimmy did not answer.

He was feeling the awkwardness of the interview, and was beginning to wish he had not followed his kindly impulse.

But Lattrey's manner changed the next moment.

"Oh, what a fool—what a fool I've been!" he muttered. "I thought I was the sharpest chap at Rookwood. I used to laugh at you, Silver, for being such an ass, and—look where it's landed me! Look where you are, and where I am! What a fool I've been!"

Jimmy Silver looked hard at Lattrey.

That outburst evidently came from his heart; the outcast of Rookwood was not playing a part now.

During the long weeks that he had lain there he had had time to think, and it had been borne in upon his mind that the game of rascality did not even pay.

It was an obvious enough reflection, for, as Lattrey said, he could see where all his sharpness and cunning and unscrupulousness had landed him.

"I'm glad—" began Jimmy, and then he paused.

He did not want to seem to be "preaching."

Lattrey gave him a gloomy look. "I've had time to think," he said.

"Goodness knows, I've had precious little else to do. I thought I was so jolly clever. And here's the net result of all my dashed cleverness! Kicked out of the school—and serve me right! I could have come to that without taking so much trouble about it, couldn't I?"

Jimmy hardly knew what to say.

He was glad to see that change in Lattrey's views, though whether it would be a lasting one he could not even guess.

"Morny's back?" asked Lattrey suddenly.

"Yes."

"How did he get on with the operation?"

"Splendid! He's all right now," said Jimmy. "Not quite all right, perhaps. He's got to be careful for a time. But he's recovered his sight, and that's everything."

"I'm glad of that!"

"We're all jolly glad!"

"I never meant to hurt him like that," said Lattrey, his pale cheeks reddening. "I know I was a brute. But I never meant that. I'd have given anything to undo it afterwards. But what's the good of making excuses? I know what you all think of me, and you can't think worse of me than I do myself. I—I wish sometimes that—that I'd been finished under that train."

"Don't say that," said Jimmy Silver. "You did a splendid thing! You've made it up to Morny!"

"Does he think so?"

"I think he does."

"Well, I'm glad that's set right. But—" Lattrey's lips curled. "I suppose it was a surprise to you, Silver, when you heard what I'd done? You didn't think I was the kind of fellow to risk my life for anybody?"

"Well, no," admitted Jimmy.

"You were astonished, of course?"

Jimmy was silent.

"And you were right," said Lattrey. "I'm not that kind of chap."

"But you did it!"

"Yes, I did it. And while I was

doing it, it was in my mind that it might make a difference for me here—might make the Head change his mind, and let me stay," said Lattrey.

"But you might have been killed!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"I know that. It wasn't all selfishness. I wanted to save Morny. It was an impulse, and it surprised me, myself," Lattrey grinned. "I'd have laid ten to one, myself, against my doing such a thing. But when I did it, it was partly because I was thinking that it might pay. That's my way."

Jimmy looked at him curiously.

Lattrey's confession was evidently true. But why was he making it? Why was he detracting from the credit he had earned by devoted courage?

It was a sign that the change in him had gone deep.

"You're surprised to hear me telling the truth?" said Lattrey.

"Well, I—I—"

"I've had time to think," said the outcast junior. "When I get out of this I'm going to make a fresh start. I've got a cheery time to look forward to. My pater's hard as nails, and he's frightfully down on me for getting expelled. I shall have to go through it. But I'm going to play the game on different lines in the future. I can see now what a fool I've been."

"I—I wish you could stay here," said Jimmy.

Lattrey shook his head. "No chance of that. The Head's too jolly glad to get rid of me. I don't believe he half liked my being brought here when I was hurt. He couldn't refuse, that was all. He's anxious for me to be gone. I don't blame him, either."

"Well, I—I—"

"I don't know that I want to stay, either," said Lattrey moodily. "I was thinking of that when I saved Morny in the railway accident. But I've been thinking since then, while I've been lying here. The fellows

(Continued on the next page.)



(Continued from the previous page.)

are all down on me, and they've got reason. I—I can't go back to my old life. I haven't got the nerve, somehow. I can't stay here with all the fellows looking down on me, and wishing I was gone. I couldn't!"

Jimmy was more and more surprised. "If I had to decide I'd let you stay, Lattrey," he said.

"After what I've done?" asked Lattrey, looking at him curiously. "I know what I've done. I can see it clearly enough now. There's your cousin, young Algy. He is a rascal, and I made him worse. I did it deliberately, because I was a rotter. It amused me. I never got much out of him. It was one up against you. No good saying I'm sorry now, I suppose."

"I believe you are," said Jimmy, much moved. "I'm glad you can look at things like that now, Lattrey."

"Not much use now, as far as Rookwood is concerned. What a thumping fool I've been! And I thought myself so jolly clever!" said Lattrey miserably. "I was too clever by half. I could have gone in for games like you. I could do it. I could have got prizes like Rawson, if I'd liked. Lots of things I could have done. I've got brains. And I chose to play the silly fool, and get a rotten reputation, and the boot at the end of it. Pah!"

He broke off suddenly.

"I—I didn't mean to jaw to you like this, Silver. It's been bottled up, you see, a long time, and I've just let it go. But, of course, you think I'm spothing, same as before."

"I don't!" said Jimmy earnestly. "You are a clever chap, in your way, Lattrey—clever enough to see when you've made a bad break. You could do better if you had a chance."

"Well, I shan't have a chance here, and I don't specially want it. When they sent me to Coventry before I just sneered, and stood it. I couldn't do that again."

"But—" "You'd let me stay if you could," said Lattrey, "and you had a barring-out, to force the Head to expel me."

Jimmy smiled.

"Yes, I know. But that was before you risked your life for Morny."

"A lot Morny cares!" said Lattrey. "I'll bet you're the only chap at Rookwood who'll take the trouble to give me a look-in!"

There was a step in the ward.

"Hallo, old scout! How are you gettin' on?"

It was Mornington of the Fourth, as he came in with Erroll.

Jimmy Silver rose, with a smile, to make room for the new visitors.

Mornington and Erroll came to the bedside, and Jimmy Silver left quietly.

He was thinking deeply as he walked back to the schoolhouse.

He wondered whether, after all, there was a chance for Mark Lattrey at Rookwood.

The 2nd Chapter.

Jimmy Takes the Plunge.

"What's on?"

"What's the little game?"

A number of juniors were gathered round the notice-board, the day after Jimmy Silver's visit to Lattrey.

There was a new paper on the board, in the handwriting of the captain of the Fourth. It ran:

"Form-meeting in Common-room at 5.20. All members of the IVth Form are expected to attend. Important."

"J. SILVER."

"Blessed if I know anything to call a Form-meeting about!" yawned Townsend.

"Somethin' to do with footer, I suppose. Yaw-aw!"

"Then they won't see me there!" remarked Cyril Peele.

"Can't be footer, or Silver would say so," said Conroy. "Hallo, Lovell! What's the merry meeting about?"

Arthur Edward Lovell stopped.

"What's that about a meeting?" he asked.

"Haven't you seen this notice?"

Lovell looked at the paper.

"Not before. What is Jimmy calling a meeting for, I wonder? Do you know, Baby?"

"No more than you do," answered Raby. And Newcome shook his head.

Jimmy Silver's chums were as much in the dark as the other fellows.

"The Moderns will be coming, as it's for all the Fourth," remarked Van Ryn.

"Something awfully important, I suppose. We'll turn up."

Lovell went on up the staircase with his chums.

Jimmy Silver was in the end study, very busy.

There were kippers for tea, and Jimmy was cooking.

He turned a ruddy face to his chums as they came in.

"Just in time!" he said cheerily.

"By gad, you're doing well!" said Lovell. "Six kippers!"

"Two visitors," explained Jimmy Silver, "who are the happy guests?"

"Mornington and Erroll."

"Oh, all serene! I suppose you've told them to bring their own war-bread?" said Lovell, with a grin.

"Yes, ass! Don't fellows always bring their own bread? Lend me a hand dishing up these kippers."

"What's that on the board about a meeting of the Form, Jimmy?" asked Newcome.

"I'll tell you over tea."

"Why can't you tell us now?"

"Little boys shouldn't ask questions," answered Uncle James serenely.

"You cheeky ass!"

"Shush! Lend a hand with the kippers."

"But look here—" began Raby.

"Wait and see, old chap!"

Jimmy's chums had to wait and see, though they were feeling very curious.

Erroll and Mornington came in, the latter looking very bright.

Since the recovery of his sight Morny had looked the happiest fellow at Rookwood. Just to be able to see the sun again made him happy.

"I see you've got a notice on the board, Silver," Mornington remarked as he sat down.

"Something awfully important—what?" asked Kit Erroll, with a smile.

"Well, yes, rather," assented Jimmy.

"I hope you fellows don't mind the tea being rather weak."

"Not at all!"

"Tea!" said Lovell. "Where's the tea?"

"Isn't it in your teacup, fathead?"

Lovell stared at his teacup.

It was full of liquid, certainly, but it didn't look much like tea.

"Do you mean that the tea's weak, or that the water's rather strong?" he asked sarcastically.

"Whichever you like, old scout!" said Jimmy cheerfully. "What's the good of tea, anyway? It's not necessary. I suppose you don't want sailormen to be submerged bringing tea into the country? Mop up your hot water, and be happy!"

"Well, there's no shortage of hot water," said Erroll, laughing. "And it's better for you than tea. Doctors say so."

"But what about the meeting?" asked Lovell. "Jimmy's making a giddy mystery about it. Blessed if I can see why!"

"It's rather important," said Jimmy Silver. "I want you fellows to come, all of you, and back me up."

"Rely on that!" said Erroll.

"Not another barring-out?" grinned Mornington.

"Ha, ha! No."

"Then what on earth is it about?" demanded Lovell restively. "You've got something up your sleeve, Jimmy!"

Arthur Edward Lovell was looking suspicious.

"You're going to back me up, I suppose?"

"I suppose so," said Raby. "This study always stands together."

"Oh, certainly!" said Newcome.

But Lovell looked obstinate.

"I want to know what the little game is first," he said.

"Can't you trust your Uncle James?"

"That depends. Uncle James is a bit of an ass," said Lovell. "Uncle James is liable to have his leg pulled by any fellow who takes the trouble to pull it. Uncle James is rather soft."

"Look here, Lovell—"

"Let's know what the game is before we say we'll back you up. If it's anything to do with Lattrey—"

"You've hit it!"

"I thought so," said Lovell grimly.

"And I can tell you, Jimmy, I'm not taking any. Scat!"

"But what's a Form-meeting got to do with Lattrey?" asked Mornington, looking curiously at the captain of the Fourth across the table.

Jimmy Silver coloured, and seemed to hesitate.

His friends regarded him very oddly.

Jimmy appeared to have some difficulty in breaking the news, as it were, to the end study.

"Oh, I can tell you!" exclaimed Lovell, with a snort of disgust. "Jimmy went to see Lattrey yesterday, and the cad's talked him over and got round him. I knew how it would be. Jimmy's got some scheme for backing up that worm—just because he's taken the trouble to pull Jimmy's leg. Poof!"

"Well, you see—" said Jimmy haltingly.

"Yes; I see—and I'm not taking any."

"Lovell, old chap, you talk too much!" said Raby. "Let Jimmy get it off his chest, anyway."

Lovell snorted again, and devoted himself to his kipper.

But his look was very uncompromising.

"Well, I—I want you fellows to back me up," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm going to put it to the Form! I—I think the Head might be asked to let Lattrey stay at Rookwood."

The cat was out of the bag now.

That was what Jimmy Silver had had "up his sleeve."

And there was a silence of astonishment in the end study, while Jimmy's friends stared at him blankly.

The 3rd Chapter.

"Hands Up!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Raby at last, breaking the silence.

"Great Scott!" murmured Newcome.

Snort from Lovell. He had suspected it.

"I—I talked to the chap yesterday," said Jimmy. "He's changed—changed a lot since his illness."

Snort!

"You can trust my judgment, and take my word, really. He's not spothing this time. He's really in earnest," said Jimmy Silver, his own voice very earnest now. "I believe he would do better if he could start fresh. He's had a lesson. After all, it isn't a light thing to get expelled from school. He's been ill a long time, and he's thought over things."

"He's told you so," grunted Lovell.

"I believe him."

"Well, I don't!"

Raby and Newcome were silent.

They were more inclined to agree with Lovell than with Jimmy Silver, however, as their looks showed.

But Jimmy found support, rather unexpectedly, in the visitors.

Erroll gave an approving nod, and Morny spoke out cheerily:

"I think the same as you, Silver. I had a jaw with Lattrey yesterday. He's not like the same fellow at all."

"I agree," said Erroll quietly.

"After all, it's possible for a fellow to reform," went on Mornington, with a laugh. "Look at me! Consider what I was, and consider what I've become under Erroll's benign influence—a regular model! Why shouldn't Lattrey follow in my footsteps, and become a model, too?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I don't think Lattrey's likely to become a model," he said. "But I think he's had his lesson, and that he's going to try to do better if he's given a chance. His pater was very rough on him when he went home—I know he'd rather be ill here in sanny than go home again. Dash it all, he would be a fool if he hadn't learned, by this time, that being a rotter doesn't pay—and he's no fool, whatever he is!"

"Ahem!" murmured Raby.

"My idea is for all the Fourth to ask the Head to let him stay," continued Jimmy Silver. "He's done a plucky thing—"

"Once in his life!" snapped Lovell.

"Well, that's a beginning. I think the fellows would be willing to give him a chance, and I'm sure he would do better next time. If the Head won't agree, that settles it, of course; but I think he would, very likely. After what Lattrey did in the railway accident, Dr. Chisholm can't want to be hard on him, and if he knew we were willing to receive him back—"

"We're not willing," said Lovell grimly.

"Now, look here, old chap—" said Jimmy Silver persuasively.

"Let me speak!" roared Lovell, laying down his fork, and fairly glaring at his study-leader. "I don't agree. I think you're an ass. Lattrey did a plucky thing once. That's so. But one swallow doesn't make a summer. He's a sneaking cad and blackguard, and a disgrace to Rookwood."

"Yes; but—"

"Oh, don't start butting! He's talked you round, laughing at you in his sleeve all the time; he's done it before. Didn't you go easy with him, and take him home for the Christmas vac? What did he do then? Took your young cousin Algy under his wing, and gambled with him, and so on, and you had to turn him out of your house."

"I—I know. But—"

"He's simply fooling you, as he's done before. If he stays at Rookwood, he'll start his old games again. Sneaking and lying, and breaking bounds at night, and gambling and smoking—same old game. He's a disgrace to the school."

"But—"

"And there's your young cousin, too," snapped Lovell. "You'd like to see him under Lattrey's influence again—what? Don't you think he's a horrid enough young waster without that?"

Jimmy reddened.

"I tell you Lattrey's changed!"

"And I tell you he hasn't."

"I know—"

"You can't know. You only know what he's told you, and he was lying, as usual," said Lovell angrily. "He's trying to work it to stay at Rookwood, and then he'll begin again—get the name of the school into the newspapers, very likely, in the long run. How would you like that?"

"But suppose he has changed," said Erroll mildly.

"Rot!"

Lovell took up his fork again, and jabbed it at his kipper, as if the fork were a bayonet and the kipper a Prussian.

Arthur Edward was very angry.

His anger was really not without reason. He had seen Jimmy Silver taken in before by the cad of Rookwood, and matters had turned out just as he expected.

It was really too exasperating to see Jimmy walking into the same trap again—for that was how Lovell regarded it.

"Well, if you're against it—" said Jimmy at last.

"I jolly well am!"

"Then you won't back me up?"

"No; I won't!"

"Order!" murmured Newcome. "No rags in the family circle."

Jimmy Silver rose.

Tea was finished, and it was time for the meeting.

Lovell gave him a glare.

"You're going to hold the meeting?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Well, I shan't come. I won't stand up against you, but you can leave me out of it."

"Better come," said Newcome uneasily. "I won't; and that's flat!"

Lovell ended the discussion by striding out of the study in great dudgeon.

Mornington coughed.

"Let's go down to the meeting," he suggested.

TO THE BOYS AT THE FRONT!

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"Come on," said Jimmy, rather ruffled. The juniors descended to the Common-room.

That apartment was already filling. Moderns as well as Classics coming in, curious to know what the gathering was about.

Smythe & Co. of the Shell had looked in, too, and Algy of the Third had turned up with some of the fags.

The room was getting crowded when Jimmy Silver & Co. came in—without Lovell.

Jimmy Silver was not feeling wholly easy in his mind.

He was well aware that he erred a little on the side of good nature, and that he had a disposition to forgive a fellow anything if the fellow was down on his luck.

Lovell's determined opposition wearied him, and he could not help seeing that Raby and Newcome were only giving him a very lukewarm support.

But Jimmy remembered Lattrey's earnestness in that talk in the sanatorium, and it made him firm.

He felt that he was doing right.

"Here's the giddy oracle!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, the Modern. "Get up on your high legs, Jimmy, and tell us what it's all about!"

"All here?" asked Jimmy, looking round.

"Nearly all, bedad!" said Tommy Doyle. "Get on with the washing, Jimmy darling, and cut it short!"

"The shorter the better!" remarked Tommy Cook.

Jimmy Silver mounted upon a chair. Townsend & Co. lounged in at the last moment, and nearly all the Fourth were present.

"Go ahead, Jimmy!" sang out Conroy encouragingly.

Jimmy Silver went ahead.

"It's about Lattrey—" he began.

"Oh!"

"What on earth about Lattrey?" yawned Townsend. "Is he well enough to be kicked out yet?"

There was a laugh.

Jimmy Silver went on speaking quietly and earnestly, and the Fourth-Formers listened in astonishment when they saw his drift.

Jimmy told concisely of his view of Lattrey, and the change that had taken place in him.

He dwelt at some length on the act of courage by which he had saved Morny's life; and he expatiated, too, upon the fact that Morny, the fellow Lattrey had most injured, was willing to give him another chance.

But there was a buzz of surprise when he came to the point: the suggestion of a petition to the Head to allow Lattrey to remain at Rookwood.

There were a good many grim looks at that.

But Jimmy Silver was a great power in the Rookwood Fourth; the fellows were accustomed to following the lead of Uncle James.

And there was no doubt that Lattrey's one generous act had made a great impression upon his schoolfellows.

Conroy & Co. started a cheer as Jimmy Silver concluded, and it was echoed by the three Tommies of the Modern side.

Jimmy had succeeded, after all, in carrying the meeting with him.

Jimmy's face brightened.

"Hands up for giving Lattrey another chance!" he exclaimed.

Mornington's hand went up first, and Erroll's next.

Raby and Newcome followed, and the three Colonials.

Then there was a whole forest of hands. Jimmy Silver looked over the crowd quite elated.

There were not more than three or four dissentients in the Common-room.

"Passed unanimously—or nearly," said Mornington. "It's a go!"

"It's a go!" said Jimmy Silver, stepping down from the chair, with great satisfaction. "We'll put it to the Head."

"Suppose he won't listen?" suggested Oswald.

"Well, if he won't, he won't. But I think he will. Anyway, we shall have done all we can."

And so it was settled.

Many of the fellows agreed with Jimmy Silver, and those who were indifferent were ready to leave it to his judgment.

But when Arthur Edward Lovell heard the verdict he gave a snort like an angry war-horse.

The Fourth Form might be satisfied; but Arthur Edward Lovell certainly was not.

The 4th Chapter.

Lovell is Not Surprised.

"About again, what?"

Lattrey looked round as Algy Silver of the Third hailed him.

The invalid was out of the sanatorium for the first time, walking in the sunny garden, still looking very pale and weak.

Algy

Lattrey turned as he heard Lovell's hasty steps grinding on the path behind him.

He eyed the Fourth-Former calmly. "You shady rotter!" burst out Lovell. "What's the matter now?" asked Lattrey calmly.

"You worm!" shouted Lovell. "You got round Jimmy, because he's a silly ass, but I was against it. If you weren't ill, I'd give you the thrashing of your life, here and now."

"You can begin, if you like," said Lattrey, compressing his lips.

Lovell looked very much inclined to begin, but he refrained.

Lattrey was in no condition to stand up to the burly Lovell.

"I won't touch you," said Lovell thickly. "But I'll jolly well tell Jimmy Silver what his cousin's just told me, and I fancy that will make him see sense. You worm, you're not fit for Rookwood; a reformatory is nearer your mark."

And with that Lovell strode savagely away, leaving Lattrey staring after him blankly.

The 5th Chapter.

Morny Takes a Hand.

"All together, I think," remarked Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "We'll catch him in the corridor, when he's coming away from the Sixth."

"Any old thing?" yawned Raby. "Ain't we going over to Bagshot today?" said Newcome.

The chums of the Fourth were discussing the question of the petition to the Head, or, more correctly, Jimmy Silver was discussing it, and Raby and Newcome were yawning.

"No hurry," said Jimmy. "Lovell's not here yet."

"Here I am!" said the voice of Arthur Edward, in the doorway.

"Time we got off," remarked Raby.

"Anything the matter?" inquired Newcome, staring at Lovell's thunderous brow. "Been rowing?"

"I've just seen Lattrey," said Lovell grimly. "He's out in the garden now. Your cousin was with him, Jimmy."

"No harm in that," said Jimmy, a little uneasily.

"Lattrey was pitching into him."

"What?"

"Because Algy wouldn't play cards with the cad!" shouted Lovell, with a red face.

"How do you like that? Still want to petition the Head to let that blackguard stay at Rookwood?"

Jimmy sat very still, and Raby and Newcome grinned a little.

They were not surprised at the news.

"How do you know?" Jimmy asked at last.

"I came on them. I heard Algy yelled from the quad. He told me."

"Oh!"

"Shall we go and petition the Head now?" asked Lovell sarcastically. "Young Algy has improved a bit while Lattrey was away from him. Now you want to shove them together again. Let's go and jaw the Head, by all means."

"If that's true—" began Jimmy slowly.

Lovell crimsoned.

"Can't you take my word?" he roared.

"Yours, yes; but Algy might have been pulling your leg. He's rather a young spoofer."

"Well, that's so," agreed Raby.

Lovell gave an angry snort.

"You mean, you'd believe or disbelieve anything rather than admit that Lattrey has fooled you, Jimmy Silver!" he said bitterly. "You're wrong, and you know you're wrong, and you won't own up."

"I don't know I'm wrong, Lovell. I'll see Algy, and hear what he has to say," said Jimmy, with a worried look.

"What's the good, if you're not going to believe what he says? I knew it all along!" exclaimed Lovell. "I knew Lattrey was spoofing. Now he's out of sunny he will be at his old tricks again, though any day he may have to go. I tell you—"

"Ahem!"

It was Mornington's polite cough in the doorway.

Lovell broke off, and gave Morny a grim look.

"Sorry to interrupt," smiled Mornington. "If you're havin' a row, I'll look in again."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Erroll wants to know whether we're bikin' it over to Bagshot," yawned Mornington.

"Tell Morny, and see what he thinks," suggested Raby.

"Tell him, Lovell," said Jimmy.

Lovell burst out again with his story. Mornington listened with a slight smile on his handsome face.

"What do you think, Morny?" asked Jimmy Silver uneasily. "I'm sorry to say that my young cousin's word can't always be taken."

"I was aware of that, dear boy. But it looks probable enough. The merry leopard can't change his spots—and Lattrey was a very pretty leopard. Still, I believe in giving every dog a chance."

Mornington knitted his brows thoughtfully.

"If the fellow's the cad he used to be, and he's fooling me, of course, I'd be glad to see him kicked out," said Jimmy rather glumly. "But—but I certainly believed he was telling the truth."

"Oh, you'd believe anything!" snorted Lovell.

"You certainly ain't descended from doubting Thomas, Jimmy," said Raby, with a grin. "I think your ancestor must have been Simple Simon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be funny," said Jimmy Silver gruffly. "As likely as not young Algy was spoofing. He knew Lovell would believe what he said, as he's down on Lattrey."

"You were down on him enough at one time," snapped Lovell. "You were the

leader in a barring-out, just to get rid of him."

"That's ancient history," said Jimmy impatiently. "I believe he's made up his mind to be decent, if he gets another chance. At least, I did believe it. Now I don't know what to think; but it's got to be settled somehow before we put it to the Head."

"Well, I'm glad you've got that much sense, at least," commented Lovell.

"Let's have a pow-wow over it this evening," said Mornington. "I've got an idea in my head; it will want thinkin' out. It's time we got off to Bagshot now, if we're goin' to tea with Pankley."

"Right-ho!"

The matter was shelved for the time, and Jimmy Silver & Co. went out for their bicycles.

But Jimmy Silver was very thoughtful during that visit to Pankley & Co. at Bagshot.

The thought that he might have been the victim once more of Lattrey's cunning and duplicity was a troublesome one.

And yet, if the rascal of Rookwood had really repented, as Jimmy hoped and believed, it was hard that he should not be given another chance.

How the matter could be settled beyond doubt was a puzzle, and Jimmy was anxious to hear Morny's idea, whatever it was.

Jimmy could not dismiss the matter from his mind, on the ground that it was, after all, no business of his what became of the outcast of Rookwood.

He had taken up Lattrey's cause, and he was bound to see it through.

Yet the bare thought of Lattrey beginning his wiles again, and resuming his old evil influence over Algy, filled Jimmy with bitter resentment.

He almost wished that he had not paid that visit to the sanatorium, after all, and had allowed the outcast of Rook-

wood to go his own shady way without a helping hand.

But he could not quite wish that, either.

He was glad when the party returned to Rookwood, and gathered in the end study for the "pow-wow."

Lovell came in last, and he brought Algy of the Third with him, the fag looking very sulky, with Lovell's hand on his shoulder.

Evidently Algy did not want to come.

"Here's Algy, and he can tell you himself!" said Lovell.

Jimmy looked very earnestly at the fag.

"Tell us the truth, Algy," he said.

"Don't I always tell the frozen truth?" demanded Algy, a grin dawning on his face. "Ain't I George Washington over again, only more so?"

"No," said Jimmy. "You've told me whoppers often enough. Did it happen as you told Lovell, Algy?"

"What's the merry good of tellin' you, unless you're goin' to take my statement as true?" grinned the fag.

"Tell me, anyway."

"Rats! I'm not tellin' you anythin'," said Algy coolly. "Go ahead an' persuade the dear old Head to keep Lattrey here, if you like. I wish you success. He's a sportin' chap, and we shall have some good times. Ta-ta!"

And Algy, dodging Lovell, scuttled out of the study and fled.

Lovell made an angry movement after him, but Algy was gone. Lovell kicked the door shut.

"Enterprisin' youth, that cousin of yours, Silver," grinned Mornington.

Jimmy grunted.

"I can't help thinking," said Erroll, in

his quiet way, "that Algy was spoofing Lovell, and don't like to tell a lie out direct. But he won't own up."

"Oh, rot!" said Lovell.

"You said you had an idea, Morny," said Jimmy Silver.

Mornington nodded.

"Yass, I've been thinkin' it out. Lend me your ears, and I'll explain. I think I know the way to get at the facts."

Mornington went on to explain.

Jimmy Silver & Co. listened quietly.

There was an expression of distaste on Jimmy's face at first, but he nodded at last.

"We'll try it," he said. "Under the circumstances, it seems to be the only way. There's a doubt, and we can't afford to give Lattrey the benefit of the doubt."

"I should jolly well say not!" hooted Lovell.

"Well, it's a go," said Jimmy. "It will prove the matter one way or the other. And that's settled."

The "pow-wow" in the end study broke up.

The 6th Chapter.

Put to the Proof!

"Merry an' bright—what?"

Lattrey was coming down the garden-path from the sanatorium the following afternoon, when Mornington's voice greeted him.

Morny was seated in a little summer-house beside the path.

Lattrey halted at the trellised doorway. "Yes, I'm gettin' on," he said.

"Come in and squat down. I want to talk to you, old scout."

Lattrey sat down in the summer-house.

Mornington opened a cigarette-case, and Lattrey started a little.

"Smoke, old man?"

"We must work it for you to stay at Rookwood," he said. "We can't spare you, Lattrey. Joey Hook has been inquirin' after you—there's a merry little circle at the Bird-in-Hand will be glad to see you again."

Lattrey's face clouded.

"I shall never go to the Bird-in-Hand again, Morny," he said quietly.

"Eh? Why not? It's a half-holiday to-morrow," said Mornington. "You could slip away—I'd pick you up in a trap outside. What do you say to a jolly afternoon? It will buck you up no end."

"Thanks, no."

"You really wouldn't care for it?"

"No."

"Well, tastes differ," said Mornington, blowing out a little cloud of smoke. "I'm simply longin' to get on the warpath again."

Lattrey did not answer.

The dandy of the Fourth slipped a pack of cards from his pocket, and began to shuffle them carelessly.

Lattrey's eyes rested upon the shining cards, and his eyes glistened.

It was evident that the cards had not lost their old attraction for the black sheep of Rookwood.

"Nap?" asked Morny, looking at him.

"I won't play, Morny."

"Oh, come! It's safe enough here."

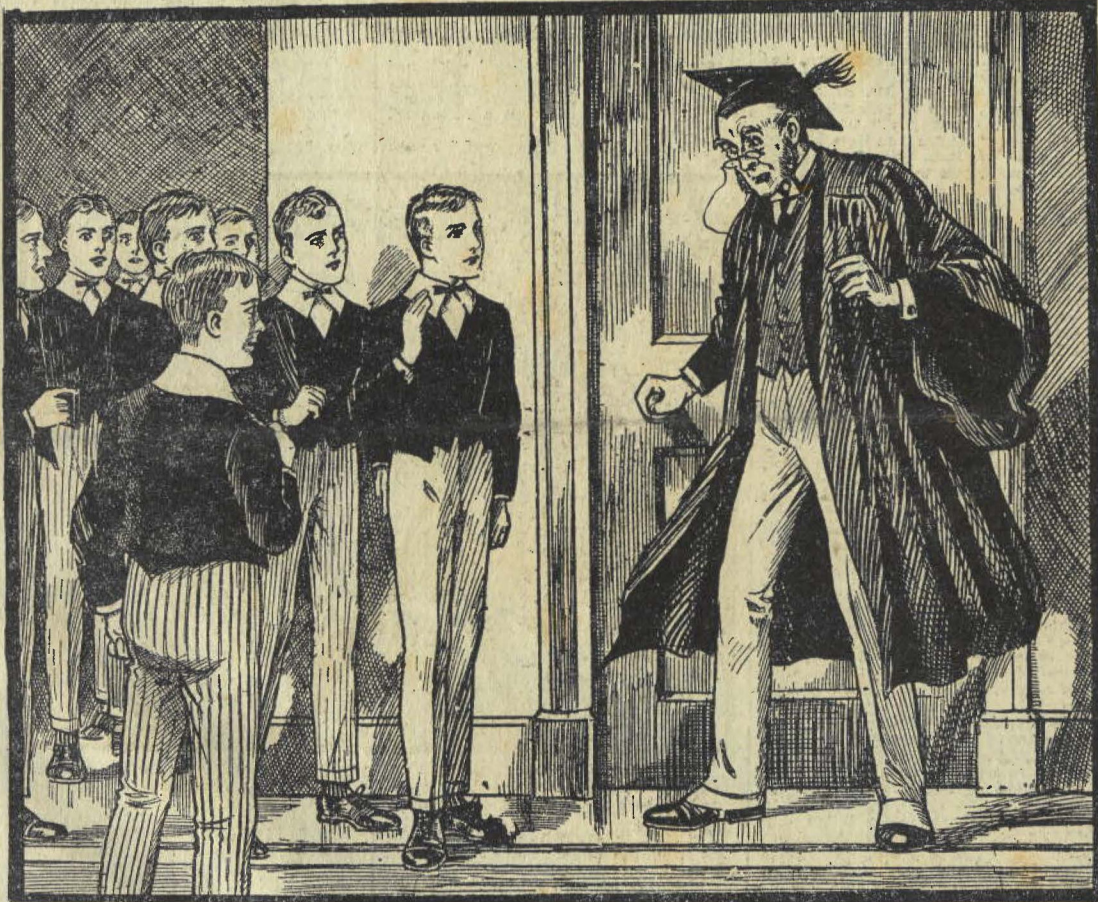
"I wasn't thinking of that."

"What the dickens are you thinking of, then?" asked Mornington testily. "You used to be keen enough on a little flutter."

"It would have been better for me if I hadn't been," answered Lattrey moodily.

"Oh, don't moralise! It's safe enough here, I tell you; and I'm not likely to give you away, like young Algy," grinned Mornington.

"Algy! What do you mean? How could he give me away?"



"If—if you please, sir, we want to make a petition," faltered Jimmy Silver. "Bless my soul!" said the Head. "About Lattrey, sir," continued Jimmy. "We hope that, considering how he risked his life for Morny, sir, you—you might let him stay at Rookwood!"

wood to go his own shady way without a helping hand.

But he could not quite wish that, either.

He was glad when the party returned to Rookwood, and gathered in the end study for the "pow-wow."

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Lovell made an angry movement after him, but Algy was gone. Lovell kicked the door shut.

"Enterprisin' youth, that cousin of yours, Silver," grinned Mornington.

Jimmy grunted.

"I can't help thinking," said Erroll, in

him for yesterday."

"No harm in that, I suppose. The young rotter got my wool off," said Lattrey. "Perhaps I oughtn't to have touched him, but a fellow don't like being called names. I suppose I can't expect anybody to believe me; but—"

"He told Lovell what you were handlin' him for yesterday."

"Oh!" exclaimed Lattrey, with a start. "Then that was why—why Lovell—?" He broke off. "Does Jimmy Silver know?"

"Naturally."

"And—he believes—?"

"What do you think?" laughed Mornington.

Lattrey sat silent for some moments, his face darkly clouded.

"Then Silver won't try to do anything for me, after all?" he said, in a low voice. "He won't believe me if I explain. I can't expect him to. I—I did hope he would—"

"Do you mean that young Algy was lyin'?"

"Yes."

"You can't expect Jimmy Silver to think so."

"I don't," said Lattrey miserably. "Why should he take my word—against his cousin, too? You wouldn't, either."

"Ahem! It is rather thick, isn't it?" grinned Mornington. "But we'll manage it with the Head somehow. Now, then, shall I deal?"

"Don't deal to me, Morny. Look here!" Lattrey paused a moment. "Put those rotten cards away, Morny! It's a mug's game, and a cad's game, and I've done with it. It's brought me pretty low—about as low as I can get. I think. Why don't you chuck it? What's the good,

anyway? You'll end up as I've ended—it's bound to come, in the long run."

"Preachin'—by gad!" said Mornington.

"I don't mean to preach," said Lattrey, flushing. "But if you'd been through what I've been through, you'd see it for yourself. You have made a fresh start. Why don't you stick to it? Play the game, and keep straight. I only wish I'd had sense enough to do it myself, when I had the chance. His voice faltered. "It's all over now, and I can't grumble. If ever a fellow asked for it, I did."

Mornington quietly slipped the cards into his pocket, and threw down his cigarette, crushing it under his heel.

Lattrey's eyes were moist.

Mornington had never seen the outcast of Rookwood moved like this before, and it moved him, strangely, himself.

"Show up, you fellows!" he called out hastily.

Lattrey started, as there was a rush of footsteps round the summer-house.

Jimmy Silver stood in the doorway, with Lovell and Raby and Newcome and Erroll behind him.

Lattrey stared at them blankly.

"Excuse this little game, Lattrey," chuckled Mornington. "Only a little game, to see whether dear Algy was lyin' or not, an' to put you to the proof, old man. I'm not a giddy gay dog. I'm not goin' on the tiles, an' I only wanted to know whether you were. Savvy?"

"Oh!" gasped Lattrey.

He rose unsteadily to his feet.

"You—you heard?" he stammered.

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "And we know now that you're true blue, Lattrey, and we're standing by you."

Lovell's expression was very curious.

Mornington's "wheeze" had worked like a charm; its results had fulfilled Jimmy Silver's hopes, but it had been a great surprise to Arthur Edward Lovell.

He blinked at Lattrey.

But Lovell was convinced now, and he was ready to own up.

"I'm sorry, Lattrey," he said frankly. "You can't quite blame a chap for not believing in you, considering. But—well, I'm sorry."

"Morny, you—you were leading me on?" gasped Lattrey.

"Mea culpa!" said Morny. "I was, old scout! Puttin' you to the proof, you know. I'm sure you'll overlook it, under the peculiar circumstances."

"I—I—I—"

"We're going to see the Head to-day, Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver quietly, "and all we can do is going to be done."

Lattrey did not speak; he could not.

But his look was eloquent.

And when Jimmy Silver & Co. left him, the heart of the outcast of Rookwood was lighter than it had been for many a long day.

"If you please, sir—"

Dr. Chisholm stared.

The corridor was crowded with Fourth-Formers, all of them looking decidedly nervous.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head of Rookwood. "What does this mean?"

"Go it, Jimmy!" murmured several voices.

Lovell nudged his chum encouragingly.

"Go it, Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver cleared his throat, and "went it."

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Well, Silver?"

"We—we want to make a petition, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"About Lattrey, sir. We—we hope that, considering how he risked his life for Morny, sir, you—you might overlook some things, sir; and—let him stay at Rookwood, sir!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"If you please, sir—" chorused the juniors.

"He's changed a lot, sir," went on Jimmy Silver hurriedly, before the Head could speak. "He's going to play the game, if he gets a chance—we all believe him, sir. If you could give him a chance—"

Dr. Chisholm's expression was very kindly.

"As a matter of fact, Silver, I have been thinking about Lattrey's case," he said. "He acted very bravely, and very generously, in rescuing Mornington from danger; and he has suffered severely for his courage and devotion. I was, however, very doubtful as to how he would be received in his Form, if I allowed him to remain at Rookwood. I am glad you have spoken to me. I will consider the matter."

The Head made a gesture of dismissal, and the deputation of the Fourth disappeared.

"That means that it's all right!" Jimmy said confidently.

And it was!

The next day it was known to all the school that Mark Lattrey's sentence of expulsion had been rescinded, and that he was to be given another chance.

TALES of the DORMITORY!

A Great New Series of Short Complete Tales, Told
By Juniors at Rookwood School.

This Week:-

"A FATAL DISGUISE!" By GEORGE RABY.

The 1st Chapter. Taken In!

Scratch!

The only sound to be heard in Study No. 2 at Wedgmore School was the sound of two refractory pens being driven at a fast rate over sheets of foolscap paper.

Scratch, scratch, scratch!

Had they been trying to see who could finish his lines first, neither Dick Errington nor Tom Warren could have written much faster.

At length, however, Errington sat back in his chair, and, with a doleful look on his face, flung his pen down on the table.

"Look here, Warren, old scout!" he said dismally. "I'm fed up with this!"

The other junior stopped work.

"So am I," he replied. "But what the dickens are we to do? I've only done about a hundred, so that leaves another four hundred to be done."

An angry frown spread over Dick Errington's face.

"It's a bit too thick!" he grumbled. "Just because we buzzed a footer into his blessed old study that rotter Dickenson landed us with five hundred lines! If he wasn't our Form-master I'd sock him no end!"

Tom Warren laughed faintly.

"That's where the rub comes," he remarked. "You can't tell a master what you think of him. I was looking forward to a row on the river."

"So was I," agreed Errington sorrowfully. "But that's off now—dead off. We've got to turn these beastly lines in by tea-time. By the way, I wonder where Waller has got to. He hasn't done a single line yet, and—"

Dick Errington paused as there came a tap at the door.

"Come in!" he sang out.

The door opened, to reveal the form of a weedy, crafty-looking junior in the doorway.

The two chums glared at him savagely.

"He, he!" giggled the new-comer. "Staying in—what?"

"If you are not blind you'll see we are!" snapped Dick Errington impatiently. "You can buzz off, Norton. We're not desperately keen on sharing your company."

Norton was the sneak of the Fourth, and as such he was not popular with the juniors.

He stepped into the study.

"Look here, Errington," whined the sneak. "I've got a proposition to make. Supposing—"

"Eh?"

"Supposing I do your lines for you?"

"You can't!"

"Oh, yes, I could!" urged Norton quickly. "I'm a dab at copying anybody's handwriting. I'll do the whole lot this afternoon for thirty bob."

"What?"

"I'll do fifteen hundred lines for thirty bob," reiterated the sneak, "and I reckon I should be letting you down lightly."

Dick Errington gave the fellow a determined look.

"Look here, Norton," he said firmly, "you're too fond of copying other people's handwriting. If you take my advice you'll drop it. You'll get yourself into trouble, sooner or later, if you're not careful."

"I suppose I know my own business best!" protested Norton.

"And I know mine!" said Dick Errington promptly. "I'll do my own lines, and you can take your offer elsewhere."

"But I say, Errington," said Norton, "I'm in need of cash, and I should be glad of the money! Suppose we say twenty-five bob for the job?"

"Suppose you clear out?"

"A pound!"

Dick Errington rose quickly from his chair and picked up a cushion.

"If you don't buzz off I'll—"

"Fifteen—Yow! Yarrowoogh!"

His patience spent, Dick Errington had hurled the cushion with unerring aim at the sneak's head, bowling him completely over.

He landed with a bump in the passage, and next instant Dick Errington closed the door with a bang.

"Thank goodness that bounder's gone!" he said. "He's too fond of trying to imitate another person's handwriting."

"Yes; I saw him copying Dickenson's signature the other day," remarked Warren. "I—I—Hullo! Surely he hasn't the sauce to come here again?"

Tom Warren had heard somebody turn the handle of the door.

The two chums waited for the door to open.

They had not long to wait, for next instant a man of middle age, of stocky build, with a short beard and bushy moustache, stood revealed in the doorway.

"My hat!" exclaimed Dick Errington in surprise. "It's the guv'nor! I—"

"You didn't know I was coming—eh?" interrupted the new-comer in a deep voice.

"Well, Dick, I hope it's a pleasant surprise. I've come to take you out for the afternoon."

"Oh!" gasped Errington.

"Don't look so miserable, my boy!" urged the man, with a kindly smile. "Don't you want to come?"

"Yes, dad; but—"

"But what?"

"We're detained for the afternoon," explained Errington quietly. "We've each got five hundred lines to do."

"Who gave them to you?"

"Mr. Dickenson, our Form-master."

"Oh!" said the man, knitting his brows. "I shall have to call upon Mr. Dickenson, and tell him the lines will have to wait. I can't have you boys staying in here all the afternoon."

"Do you think you can work it, dad?"

"Sure of it, my boy!" said the man confidently. "I'll go along to Mr. Dickenson's study at once!"

The man took his departure, and wended his way towards the Form-master's study.

He was just approaching Mr. Dickenson's study when the door was suddenly opened, and a junior came rushing out.

It was Norton, the sneak of the Fourth. He gave the man a frightened glance, and then tore down the passage as fast as his legs could carry him.

The man gave him a curious glance, and then walked on and tapped at the door of the master's room.

There came no answer from within.

Tap!

He knocked again, louder this time, but still there was no reply.

Then he turned the handle of the door and pushed it slowly open. To his amazement the room was empty. A fire was burning low in the grate, but there was no sign of the master.

Suddenly the door was flung open, and in strode Mr. Dickenson.

"What—what—Ah, Mr. Errington," said the master, "how do you do?"

"Very well, thank you!" replied the man genially. "I hope you do not mind my entering without your permission. I quite thought you were in your study, and—"

"I don't mind at all, Mr. Errington!" replied the master. "You would have been welcome to have taken a seat. I am very pleased to see you. It is a long time since you paid us a visit."

"Quite so!" said the man, in deeper tones than usual. "I rather wanted to take the boys out this afternoon. I find they are detained, but—"

Mr. Dickenson adopted a serious expression.

"Yes," he said slowly. "They have five hundred lines each to do. It is a pity they transgressed the rules of the school."

"Boys will be boys, you know!" said the man, with a broad laugh.

"Yes; but I have to enforce discipline, Mr. Errington!" said the master firmly. "But if you are particularly anxious to take them out this afternoon—"

"I am most anxious!"

"Very well, I will excuse them," said the master. "Perhaps if you are going along to their study you will inform them that they can bring me their lines first thing in the morning, instead of this afternoon."

"Very good."

The man left the master's study and returned to the two juniors, who were gazing moodily out of the window of their study.

"I've worked the oracle, boys!" he said, as he entered the study.

In an instant the chums' faces became wreathed in smiles.

"Oh, good!" said Dick Errington cheerily.

"Buck up and get your things on," said the man. "We must not waste any time."

"No, dad; but, I say. Where the dickens can that ass Waller have got to? We can't go without him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The man laughed heartily. "You needn't worry about him, my boy," he said. "He'll be with you all right."

"Have you seen him, dad?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Once again the man burst into a roar of laughter. Dick Errington looked at him in surprise. He had never heard his father laugh like this before.

"Oh, you noodles!" said the man; but his voice had lost that deep tone.

The two chums started, for the voice sounded familiar to them—like the voice of their chum Waller.

The next instant the man had put his hand to his chin, and when he pulled it away his beard and moustache had disappeared.

"Waller, you ass!" gasped Dick Errington in amazement, for it was not his father who stood before him, but his chum Waller.

Waller had always been fond of amateur theatricals, much to the annoyance of his chums, who had no enthusiasm for acting.

They had regarded acting as a waste of time. But now—

"Well, I'm blowed!" muttered Tom Warren, dumbfounded. "Whoever put you up to this?"

"Perhaps you'll admit that acting is worth while now?" asked Waller calmly.

"My hat!" exclaimed Dick Errington. "I should think so. I could have sworn you were my guv'nor."

"And so would old Dickenson," said Waller, with a grin. "I've arranged things with him all right. Now, get a move on. I shall have to come out with you in this clobber, in case Dickenson spots us going out. It won't matter much. I shall be able to enjoy myself just as much in these togs. At any rate, I've got my Ettons on underneath, and I can do this other stuff up in a parcel when we get well away from the school. I shall have to tell Dickenson in the

morning that it was not your father who called on him. He'll probably pile into me, but it won't matter to-morrow. It's to-day I'm thinking about."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dick Errington. "This is ripping! We shall have a jolly time, after all!"

And the chums left the study with the intention of enjoying themselves, never realising that Waller's disguise would bring about strange results—results which would cause them many anxious moments.

The 2nd Chapter. Finding the Culprit.

Dick Errington & Co. spent a most enjoyable afternoon. The spring sun was shining forth in all its glory, and, hiring a boat, they rowed down the river as far as the market town of Wedgdale.

There they left the boat, deciding to walk back to the school.

They set off at a steady pace, and were passing through the village of Huddersley, when they observed a junior emerge from a disreputable-looking inn called the Five Feathers, and start running down the road.

"My hat!" exclaimed Waller. "Do you see who that is?"

"Norton!"

"I wonder what he was doing in there?" asked Dick Errington.

"Up to no good, you bet!" exclaimed Tom Warren emphatically. "I've had my suspicions of that kid lately. I believe he's getting mixed in with a rotten set at that place."

"Shouldn't be at all surprised," agreed

Waller slowly. "He owes that rascal Hope some, and, from what I can gather, that bookmaker villain has threatened to come up to the Head unless he receives three pounds, which Norton owes him, by to-night."

"But what about the fiver?" said Dick Errington. "Has he changed that yet?"

"No," said Waller quickly. "Nobody at the Five Feathers has seen him playing with a fiver."

"Well, we can't prove that he's got it."

"Can't we?" exclaimed Waller, with a shake of the head. "You wait and see! I suppose you chaps will admit now that I'm a pretty good actor?"

"H'm! You disguised yourself pretty well as my guv'nor," admitted Dick Errington.

"Well, do you think I could disguise myself as Jerry Hope?"

"How the dickens do I know?" asked Dick Errington non-committally. "I'm no judge of that sort of thing."

"I'm going to have a jolly good shot, at any rate," declared Waller enthusiastically. "One thing, it will be dark when I meet Norton, and—"

"You're going to meet Norton?"

"Yes; but I shall be disguised as Jerry Hope."

"Oh!"

Waller sat down at the table, and drew pencil and paper before him.

"First of all," he said, "we've got to send Norton a little note."

He commenced to write in a sprawling hand.

"Listen to this, you fellows," he said at length. "'Dear Norton,—Please meet me by the side of the fountain at eleven o'clock to-night. If you don't come—You know what will happen then.'"

"J. H."

"Sounds all right," said Dick Errington; "but supposing Norton sees through it?"

Waller wagged a warning finger at his chum.

"Look here, Errington," he said, "don't you suppose so much. Norton's not going to see through it."

"Oh, all right," said Errington resignedly, although he was still doubtful.

Waller left the study, and made arrangements for the note to be handed to Norton.

When the chums went up to the dormitory that night, Norton was already in bed.

The juniors turned in, and soon the majority of them were fast asleep.

Ten o'clock chimed out from the old tower, then half-past, and at a quarter to eleven Norton slipped quietly out of bed, and, after donning his clothes, left the dormitory.

Two minutes later Waller followed suit. He made tracks for his study, and hastily donned his disguise.

Then he made his way to a window at the other end of the passage, and let himself down into the quad.

In a few moments he was outside the school, and walking down towards the village of Huddersley.

When he had travelled about two hundred yards away from the school, he turned, and slouched back along the road in the direction of the school.

As he drew near to the fountain, he observed that a junior was waiting there, stamping his feet impatiently.

Waller drew up to the sneak of the Fourth.

He grunted in the way in which he had often heard Jerry Hope grunt.

Norton stepped forward.

"I've got it," said Norton slowly, as he held out his hand.

Waller noticed that it contained a crisp piece of paper, and, quite unnoticed by the sneak of the Fourth, his eyes lighted with satisfaction.

"Waecher got there?" said Waller, with a grunt.

"It's a five-pound note," said Norton quietly. "You'll have to give me two quid change."

"Hoh!" grunted Waller, in a rasping voice. "Where did yer get this from?"

"That's no business of yours!" said Norton boldly.

"Well, let's look at it," said Waller, striking a match.

Norton allowed the other to take the note. Next instant he received the surprise of his life, for the voice of his companion underwent a complete change.

"Thanks very much, Norton," said Waller firmly. "I'm much obliged to you. I'll return this to Dickenson in the morning."

"What—what—"

"You're bowled out, my son," said Waller, "and the best thing you can do is to get back to the dormitory. I'll look after this note."

Norton laid a shaking hand on Waller's arm.

"Waller!" he begged. "Listen—"

"Can't be done," said Waller, dragging his arm free. "It's too cold out here. I'm going back to the dormitory!"

And he went, leaving the sneak of the Fourth shaking and gasping by the fountain.



"Thanks very much, Norton," said the disguised junior, in his natural voice. "I'll return this fiver to Dickenson in the morning." "What—what—" faltered the sneak of the school.

Waller. "I've often wondered what he does on half-holidays. You never see him on the foot-ground."

"Well, it's his own funeral," said Tom Warren. "He's sure to be bowled out in the end, and if he gets the sack I sha'n't shed any tears."

"No jolly fear!"

By this time, the sneak of the Fourth was out of sight.

The three chums tramped on towards the school, Waller holding a parcel under his arm, which, of course, contained the things he had worn to disguise himself as Dick Errington's father.

As they entered the school-house, they stopped before the notice-board.

A fresh notice was pinned there, and they were anxious to see what it was about.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Waller. "Look at this, you fellows!"

The chums stared at the notice, which read as follows:

LOST!

A five pound note. No. xy 247589.

Herbert Dickenson.

"Serves him right!" said Dick Errington unsympathetically. "He ought to look after his five-pound notes."

"Rather!" agreed Waller. "I expect he's put it somewhere, and forgotten where."

"He never forgets when he gives us lines," said Dick Errington.

"Not he."

The chums went on to their study, thinking little more of Mr. Dickenson and his five-pound note.

They were soon brought back to the matter, however.

Tea was over, and they were sitting at the table doing lines, when the door was opened, and in strode Torrance, the captain of the school.

"Cheer-ho, Torrance, old man!" said Dick Errington jocularly.

The captain smiled genially.

"I understand your guv'nor's been down this afternoon, Errington," he said.

"Ahem!"

"He's gone now, I suppose?"

Dick Errington looked round the study.

Waller paused. He was thinking deeply.

"Who was the kid?" asked Dick Errington.

"Norton!"

"Phew!" gasped Dick in surprise. "Surely, he couldn't—"

"Couldn't have pinched the fiver," concluded Waller, looking up.

"Yes; that is what I was going to say," Waller knitted his brows thoughtfully. "I shouldn't be at all surprised," he said. "We saw him come out of the Five Feathers this afternoon, didn't we?"

"Yes."

"Well, isn't it quite possible that he's been getting in debt there with that bookmaker rascal, Jerry Hope, and that, being unable to pay, he's robbed old Dickenson?"

"More than likely," said Dick Errington. "But—but how the dickens could we prove it?"

Waller did not reply. He was thinking the matter out.

"We shall have to find out where the fiver's gone," said Dick Errington. "Otherwise, that silly ass Dickenson will continue to suspect my guv'nor, and—"

"Oh, we'll find out where it's gone," said Waller, a smile spreading over his face.

"How?"

"You leave that to me," said Waller promptly. "I'm going out now. Sha'n't be long. You chaps get on with your lines. I'll tackle mine when I come back."

Before the others could protest, Waller had slipped on his hat and coat and left the study.

It was a full hour later when he returned. His face was wreathed in smiles, and his chums looked at him questioningly.

"Well?"

"I'm pretty sure that Norton pinched that fiver," said Waller firmly. "I've made inquiries at the Five Feathers, and, to all accounts, Norton is in the habit of paying surreptitious visits to the place."

"Phew!"

"He owes money all round," went on

Waller slowly. "He owes that rascal Hope some, and, from what I can gather, that bookmaker villain has threatened to come up to the Head unless he receives three pounds, which Norton owes him, by to-night."

"But what about the fiver?" said Dick Errington. "Has he changed that yet?"

"No," said Waller quickly. "Nobody at the Five Feathers has seen him playing with a fiver."

"Well, we can't prove that he's got it."

"Can't we?" exclaimed Waller, with a shake of the head. "You wait and see! I suppose you chaps will admit now that I'm a pretty good actor?"

"H'm! You disguised yourself pretty well as my guv'nor," admitted Dick Errington.

"Well, do you think I could disguise myself as Jerry Hope?"

"How the dickens do I know?" asked Dick Errington non-committally. "I'm no judge of that sort of thing."

"I'm going to have a jolly good shot, at any rate," declared Waller enthusiastically. "One thing, it will be dark when I meet Norton, and—"

"You're going to meet Norton?"

"Yes; but I shall be disguised as Jerry Hope."

"Oh!"

Waller sat down at the table, and drew pencil and paper before him.

"First of all," he said, "we've got to send Norton a little note."

He commenced to write in a sprawling hand.

"Listen to this, you fellows," he said at length. "'Dear Norton,—Please meet me by the side of the fountain at eleven o'clock to-night. If you don't come—You know what will happen then.'"

"J. H."

"Sounds all right," said Dick Errington; "but supposing Norton sees through it?"

Waller wagged a warning finger at his chum.

"Look here, Errington," he said, "don't you suppose so much. Norton's not going to see through it."

"Oh, all right," said Errington resignedly, although he was still doubtful.

Waller left the study, and made arrangements for the note to be handed to Norton.

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THE END.

(Next Monday: "A Traitor to His Side!" By Valentine Mornington. Don't miss it!)

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**, **DICK DORRINGTON**, **PONGO WALKER**, and the **SKELETON**, high-spirited juniors, who belong to Dormitory No. 3 of the floating school.

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

Last week's instalment concluded with Cy Sprague cleverly defeating a cunning scheme on the part of a rascally Turk named Ali Pasha, for kidnapping Dick Dorrington & Co.

(Read on from here.)

The Pillow Fights.

If Ali Pasha had been in power, instead of being in disgrace, the Bombay Castle would never have been allowed to pass peacefully through the Sea of Marmora and the narrow passage of the Dardanelles, with his jewel-crested sword hung on the bulkhead of the Glory Hole, and his pet nigger, Slook, labouring down in her stokehold.

Slook was set to work on No. 3 furnace, the hardest stoking furnace on the ship, since it was farthest from the bunks.

And, to make matters more unhappy for him, there was a bad streak of coal going through the furnace just then.

So Slook, stripped to the waist, and trembling in the unaccustomed sights of the stokehold, laboured like a navvy to keep up the required head of steam.

How the perspiration poured off Slook, accustomed as he was to fat and luxurious living!

How he trembled at the roar of the furnaces, and the vibrations of the ship!

The wild figures of the stokers frightened him.

He stared at them with wildly rolling eyes as, with their sweat rags caught in their teeth, they flung wide the furnace doors and raked and sliced at their fires, trimming the glowing beds of burning coal, and breaking up the clinker.

"That's where you deserve to be, Slook-ho!" said Umpty Ginsen cheerfully, as he prodded Slook in the ribs. "You've been a naughty boy, Slook, and you don't deserve a beautiful trip down to Alexandria, same as you are goin' to have!"

Now that the stokers had got Slook down, they bore him no malice.

Captain Handyman had sent word to the stokehold that he was to work his passage, and the stokehold crowd meant to see that this order was obeyed.

They chased him in and out the bunks, and set him coal trimming till he was a blacker nigger, if possible, than he had ever been in his life.

Then they showed him how to slice and trim fires, and how to keep a head of steam on the gauges.

"Don't you make any mistake about it, Slook-ho!" said Umpty kindly. "By the time we've finished with you, you'll be fit to earn your four-ten a month and your tucker as good as any fireman. An' that's better work than 'angin' round tryin' to pinch British schoolboys. You won't pinch any more British schoolboys, will you, Slook?"

Slook made no answer, as he panted and perspired till he shone like a wet, bronze figure in the arc lamps.

It was not until four o'clock in the morning that the relief came on, and Slook's gang was off duty.

"Now you come along o' me, ole Cete-wayo," said Umpty amiably, "and I'll show yer your kip!"

Slook did not know what a kip was. He slunk after Umpty tremblingly, and was led through all sorts of queer passages and steel-walled chambers, lined with pipes big and small.

Coal-grimed men laughed as he passed, and thumped him on his fat, quivering back.

"Allo, Umpty!" they asked. "Who's your friend? Is he the nigger prince that tried to pinch the boys? Must have been off 'is napper to think of collarin' those young imps!"

Slook fully expected that a kip was a headman's block, and that his head would be sliced off now that he was in the power of his enemies.

But it turned out to be a fairly com-

fortable bed and an oilcloth table, where a mug of cocoa and a ship's biscuit were awaiting him.

He drank the cocoa, and crept into the bunk, aching in every limb and muscle of his fat, pumpered body.

In four hours Slook had put in more solid work than in all the forty years of his life.

It was one thing to be spy and factotum to a Turkish prince.

It was quite another thing to work in the stokehold of a modern liner.

He slept soundly, though, and would have gone on sleeping, but at seven in the morning he was awakened by being shaken violently.

He opened his eyes with a start and a cry of fear, and was hardly reassured by seeing Umpty's grim face bending over him.

Slook was sure now that his last hour was come.

They were probably going to throw him overboard, he thought.

His fat face turned the ashy-grey colour which is the nearest a nigger can do to turning white, and so great was his fear that it was apparent even to Umpty.

"Don't get in a sweat about it!" said Umpty. "They ain't goin' to chuck you overboard, ole Sweeney Tod; but the young gents are jest a-goin' to take their bath in the fore well deck, and it's Master Dick Dorrington that set 'em callin' for you. They wants you to go an' join the festive wash!"

Half of this was thrown away on Slook. He was mystified when Umpty produced a pair of school bathing-drawers.

"Put these on!" he said.

Slook thought that the bathing-drawers must be some sort of ceremonial cap which the victim for execution was expected to wear.

He had never seen a pair of bathing-drawers in his life.

So he tried to pull them over his woolly head with trembling hands.

Umpty roared with laughter.

"You are a one, you are!" he exclaimed.

"You'll want to wear your boots on your 'ands next!"

And he showed the mystified and trembling Slook how to get into a pair of bathing-drawers.

Then he led him along countless steel-walled passages, and up stairways and ladders to the deck.

Slook saw that the ship was passing out of the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean, and from the fore part of the vessel he heard his own name called in a monotonous chant by eighty shrill voices.

"We-want-Slook!"

Dick Dorrington & Co. had got the fellows well on the shout.

The great canvas tank was slung in its place on the fore well deck, and was filled with six feet of clear, blue seawater.

But the boys would not get into it.

They sat along the edge of the tank, wrapped in towels and dressing-gowns.

"Has Slook passed this way?" shouted Dick.

"No-o-o-o!" yelled every boy, with great delight.

"Then he must have gone the other way!"

"Hoo-ray!" roared the whole school.

Then they took up the monotonous chorus:

"What's the matter with Slook?"

"He's all right!"

and

"We-want-Slook!"

A perfect roar went up when the prisoner was shoved by Umpty into the great space of the fore well deck.

Slook was shaking like a jelly.

He was sure that the boys were going to take vengeance on him.

They were going to drown him or tear him to pieces.

But the boys, especially Dick Dorrington & Co., seemed to show no malice for the events of the previous night.

They cheered Slook wildly when he made his appearance.

Slook made up his mind that they were all mad.

He was sure that everyone on the ship was mad.

Chip danced up to him, wrapped in a towel, and addressed him in pure Arabic.

"Have no fear, hushbee" (black man), said Chip cheerfully. "The boys will not harm thee. They do but make merry jest. Dick Dorrington effendi would pillow fight with thee!"

Slook understood this all right.

It was enough for him that he was not to be killed, and the matter of pillow fighting was soon made plain to him.

A huge, padded spar from one of the boat-davits was laid across the tank, resting on its edges.

Dick, sitting astride of this slender perch, held a good, hefty pillow.

Another pillow of the same sort was thrust into Slook's hand, and it was indicated to him that he was to sit astride of the slippery, varnished spar facing Dick, with his legs dangling over the tank in the same fashion.

Slook meekly did as he was told.

The boys gathered round the tank

with eager interest, as the two combatants faced one another, waiting for the word to strike.

They roared with laughter as Slook's huge, black body wobbled on the precarious seat like a jelly.

"Go!" shouted Porkis, who was conducting the fight.

Slook hung on to the spar with both hands, grabbing his pillow tightly as Dick raised his weapon.

Whiz!

Dick's pillow swung through the air.

At the same moment Slook ducked his head, and Dick, hitting the thin air, nearly lost his seat.

He just managed to save himself from rolling into the tank by a clever twist.

Slook looked round in mild astonishment as the crowd shouted "Good old Slook!" with great approval.

Slook had never met British sportsmanship before.

He could not understand why these boys, who, according to his Turkish lights, must be thirsting for his death, were now shouting for him.

Neither could he understand why Dick Dorrington, the very boy he had sought to injure, should be calmly seated across that absurd pole, facing him and smiling cheerfully, telling him that it was his turn to take a whack.

Truly, argued Slook, all the British must be mad!

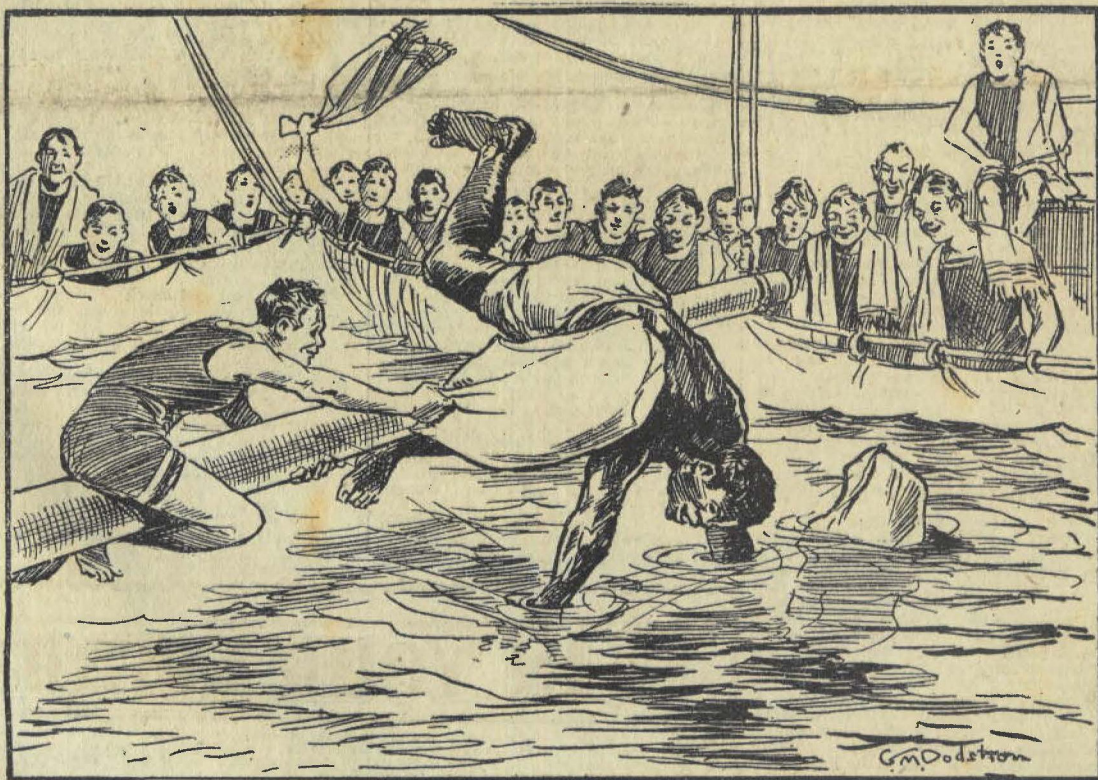
There was the terrible Captain Handyman himself, leaning on the rail of the bridge, grinning down at the scene.

Slook bucked up.

He steadied himself on the pole, and let fly a blow at Dick's head, which was cleverly stopped in mid-air.

Then both combatants got a good grip of their seats, and the fun grew fast and furious.

Whack, whack, whack! went the pillows.



Bending almost to the spar, Dick Dorrington let the pillow whistle over his head, and before Slook could recover himself the pillow crashed into him, bowling him completely over.

Dick lurched in his seat and recovered. Slook rolled half over, and managed to save himself in a most extraordinary fashion, whilst the school yelled with delight.

"Sock him, Slook!"

"Slam him, Dick!"

Thus yelled the boys.

Slook, getting the hang of the thing, played up for all he was worth.

With a mighty swing he gave a side-cut at Dick's head.

This was the chance that Dick was watching for.

Bending almost to the spar, he let the pillow whistle over his head, and before Slook could recover himself he let go a back-handed sloop, which fetched the nigger well in the neck.

Slook gave a yell as he rolled over.

Then the yell ended with a gurgle as his fat legs flew up and he plunged into the clear water of the tank like a hippopotamus.

A tremendous cheer went up from the boys as they fished Slook out of the tank; whilst Dick, sitting astride of the spar like a victorious knight, waited for the next challenge.

This was none other than Bully Flashman.

With his ugly jaw shoved forward, Flashman edged out on the spar, pillow in hand, waiting for the word to go for Dick.

The Bully calculated on an easy victory.

At the word "Go!" he launched a vicious blow at Dick's head, working up as close as he could, with his usual notion of foul practice, hoping to get in some of the weight of his arm.

But Dick, instead of ducking, leaned back sharply, and before the Bully could recover down came Dick's pillow on his neck, sending him with a splash into the tank.

Then what a yell went up from the school!

The Bully, with a face as black as thunder, swam to the side of the tank and climbed out.

What annoyed him more than anything was to see Slook, whom he had supposed to be the arch-enemy of Dick Dorrington & Co., clapping and laughing his nigger laugh with the rest of the crowd.

"Yaw-haw-haw-haw!" roared Slook.

His laugh was infectious.

It spread to the boys around him.

They roared with laughter as Chip, challenging Dick, slid out on the spar, pillow in hand.

"Great Scott!" said Captain Handyman on the bridge. "Hear that nigger laugh! Did you ever hear such a smile in your life?"

And the laugh spread to the bridge.

"Yaw-haw-haw-haw-haw-haw-haw-haw-haw!"

Dick and Chip were facing one another, ready to let go.

Slook's laugh had spread all round the tank now.

"Stop that nigger laughing!" gasped Porkis, with tears running down his cheeks. "He's like a laughing jackass!"

Dick was laughing now, so was Chip.

"Go!" yelled Porkis.

But Chip was helpless.

Slook's laugh had got him.

Doubled up, he hung with both hands to the spar, laughing till the tears ran down his face.

Dick feebly swung his pillow, but the laugh had spread to him also.

The pillow missed, and both combatants, unable to keep their seats a moment longer, rolled, laughing, into the tank.

"My win!" gasped Chip, as he came to the surface.

"Oh, rats!" laughed Dick, spouting water like a dolphin. "You didn't knock me off the pole. I laughed myself off."

How can a chap sit on a spar with a nigger laughing like that?"

Cigars for Two.

"I think it is most reprehensible," said Mr. Perkins, the chemistry master, at lunch-time that day, "that this negro fellow, who has endeavoured—ahem!—to kidnap some of the brightest—ahem!—spirits of our little community, should be taken by the boys and treated almost as a dear, old friend. I distinctly saw that churlish boy, the Skeleton, press a bun on him this morning in the friendliest possible manner. Furthermore, immediately after morning school Skeleton stole off to the cookhouse and obtained a whole bag full of raspberry-puffs, which he bestowed upon this nigger."

Captain Handyman, who was lunching in the saloon that day, laughed.

"You leave that rascal Slook to me and the boys, Mr. Perkins," he said. "I'll sweat the wickedness out of him in the stokehold, and the boys will teach him fair play and good sport on deck."

"And mark you, Mr. Perkins," added Captain Handyman, with a twinkle in his eye, "boys are sometimes wiser than their masters. I have always held that the boy is the schoolmaster of the boy—the real schoolmaster. He's got his own ideas of right, and justice, and generosity; and I don't mind betting you a box of cigars against your Sunday hat that Slook will leave this ship at Alexandria a better and a wiser nigger than when he came on board."

Even Dick Dorrington & Co. won't make a white nigger of him in two days. But they'll make a whiter nigger than he ever was as a Turkish Pasha's slave!"

Mr. Perkins stiffened a little as Cy Sprague smiled and nodded his head in agreement with the little captain.

Then, by way of changing the conversation, he remarked:

"What about this new boy who is going to join us at Alexandria?"

"Ah," exclaimed the captain, "that reminds me! I received a letter from his mamma at Constantinople, putting him especially in my charge. She says that he is very delicate and sensitive—her 'little Arty,' she calls him. I must see Master Dick Dorrington about him after lunch. I think I'll put him in that Glory Hole crowd. They are a decent lot of young rips, and they'll look after him."

So it happened that after lunch the captain's steward came to Dick, with a polite request that he should attend the captain on the bridge.

Dick was a bit perturbed.

A little before lunch-time, he and Porkis had painted the overalls of Slushy, the cook, with big broad-arrows all over in orchil dye that would not wash out.

Slushy had been at his dinner at the time, and Slushy was a bit queer-tempered.

So he might have gone to the captain and made trouble over it.

So Dick was a little bit anxious when he stepped up on the bridge-deck, and tapped at the open door of the captain's cabin.

The little captain was reclining at his ease in a big cane chair, smoking one of the blackest cigars that Dick had ever seen.

"Afternoon, Dorrington!" said the captain, with a nod. "Take a seat!"

Dick took the edge of a chair, feeling rather nervous.

"Oh, Dorrington," said the captain casually, "I have noticed Flashman and Stoat, and some of that crowd, smoking about in corners of the ship on the sly—some of those nasty, scented fags that they picked up in Constantinople. Now, though I am captain of this ship, I am not the schoolmaster; but if those chaps

"Yaw-haw-haw-haw-haw!" yelled Slook.

The boys hammered him on the head with sticks to make him shut up.

But Slook's head was like an anvil.

You could have hit it with a hammer without disturbing him.

He kept on laughing till Umpty, yelling to him that it was the stoker's break-fast-time, came and hauled him off.

And even then Slook did not stop laughing.

The boys heard his "Yaw-haw-haw!" dying away down the passage of the ship, and floating up through the ventilators and skylights, till it died away in the stokers' mess.

The boys straightened their faces and dried their eyes.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Porkis, who was a boy of imaginative ideas. "If you could just get Slook-ho to come on and laugh at a music-hall he'd bring the house down!"

But there was one boy who had not laughed.

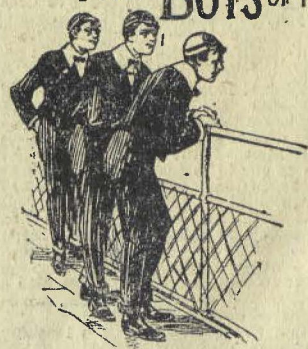
This was Bully Flashman.

He took all the laughter to himself, and marched off to his cabin to dress, muttering under his breath:

"All right, Dick Dorrington, I'll make

THE BOYS OF THE "BOMBAY CASTLE"

(Continued from the previous page.)



want to smoke, let them smoke something that is a real smoke.

"Give 'em one of these cigars apiece from the captain, and tell them that if they can smoke a man's smoke I'll get permission for them to smoke in the open, here you are! These are the real, old-fashioned Maltese Tail-Twisters!"

And Captain Handymen, reaching his hand into the cigar-box, gave Dick two of the black cigars for presentation to the bullies.

"But that's not what I have called you up here to talk to you about," said the captain, producing a letter from his pocket—a letter written in a lady's handwriting.

"We've got a new boy joining us at Alexandria," continued the captain. "He's coming across by the Brindisi packet-ship, and we shall about meet her, for we are timed to reach about the same hour. The boy's name is Arthur Dove, and it is plain from his mother's letter that he is a 'mammy's darling,' who's father has sent him to sea on this cruise to make a man of him. Here is his mother's letter. You can read it."

Dick took the letter. "Dear Captain Handymen," it ran, "my darling little boy Arty will join your ship at Alexandria. As you will have heard, his father insists that he shall go in this school-ship, as he thinks that the life will have a bracing effect on him."

"Arty is a very timid and gentle boy. He is quite unused to rough, school life, so I am writing to you, as captain of the ship, to beg that you will take the utmost care of him."

"Please be careful that he does not get his feet wet, and that his underclothing is always well aired; and do see that the boys are not unkind to him. Put him in the charge of some dear, noble boy who will protect him, and fight his battles for him."

"Will you see that his servant, or steward, airs all his things as soon as he gets on your ship, and that he is not allowed, under any account, to eat tinned lobster, which always disagrees with him? Thus you will earn the everlasting gratitude of his weeping mother."

"Lillian Dove."

Captain Handymen's lips twitched under his moustache as he watched Dick's face whilst he read the letter.

"It's no good pulling faces about it, my boy," he said. "I am going to berth Arty in the Glory Hole, and Dick Dorrington & Co. are going to look after him and make a man of him!"

"But, sir," pleaded Dick, "the chap must be a regular milkop!"

"Reads like it, doesn't it?" agreed the captain. "I expect we shall find him toggled out in a velvet suit with a lace collar, and sausage curls all down his back. But you've got to take him in, and make a man of him. I know something of his father. He's a big man in the iron trade, and a bit of a hard nut. That's why he's sent him to sea, to get him away from a too loving mother, who is probably doing her best to spoil him."

"But, sir—"

"There aren't any 'buts' about it, my boy," snapped the little captain. "I've got great faith in you and your friends. I've seen the way you've toned down that nigger, Slook. What you've got to do is to tone this boy up, and get a bit of zinger into him! I'll bet by the time he's been round with you and Porkis and Pongo Walker an' his pal, the orang outang, for a fortnight or so, there won't be much curls and lace collar left!"

"Now get!" added the little captain. "And don't forget to give those smokes to Flashman and Stoot, with the captain's compliments, mind. Take the letter with you, and show it to your pals."

Dick slid off, and dropped down the stairs from the bridge in no very amiable mood.

The Glory Hole gang were in top-hole form.

They were just a nice little clique, thoroughly shaken down.

They played the best cricket. They headed the list in deck sports, and were the hardest-pulling boat's crew in the ship.

The introduction of this milkop would upset everything.

"Hallo, Dick, my young friends! What is the matters?" asked the voice of Mr. Lal Tata, who was leaning on the rail watching the blue sea, and smoking his after-lunch cigar. "Your brow is clouded, and you look as if you had got severe humps."

"Matter enough, sir," replied Dick sorrowfully. "The captain wants to push a new partner into Dorrington & Co. And read that letter!"

Lal Tata took the letter and read it.

"This little fellow appears to be some milkop," he said. "And you, Dick, are to be the dear, noble boy who will make great lights for him!"

"He'll spoil everything, sir!" said Dick ruefully.

But Lal shook his fat head wisely. "Do not pay money till you have tried the horse," he said, quoting the old Alghap horse-dealer's saw. "Perhaps this

coddlesome fellow is not such a simple fool as affectionate mother indicates."

But Dick saw no comfort in Lal's wisdom.

He went off down the deck to look for Pongo and Porkis and Chip, that he might warn them of this great trouble that was coming to Dick Dorrington & Co.

In a cross alleyway he stumbled on Flashman and Stoot.

They were ostentatiously puffing at some of the cheap-and-nasty cigarettes they had purchased at Constantinople.

"Hallo, Mr. Funny Dorrington!" snarled Flashman. "What have you got in your hand there? I thought you never smoked; you are such a virtuous youth!"

"Sometimes I do," said Dick casually. "But when I smoke I don't smoke kids' smokes. I like something more nutty and full-flavoured—a man's smoke!"

"Well, give us up those cigars!" said the bully rudely. "We'll smoke 'em for you!"

"As a matter of fact," replied Dick, "they are for you, with the captain's compliments. He says that he's seen you and Stoot puffing those scenty Turkish fags round the decks, and thinks that you ought to try something a bit more manly."

"We'll smoke 'em all right," replied Stoot boastfully. "I like a good, full-flavoured cigar. My governor smokes the strongest Havanas, and I sneak 'em out of his box at home. I've smoked hundreds of cigars, I have. I'm not afraid of cigars!"

"Well, you try those," said Dick, handing over the two evil-looking Maltese Tail Twisters.

The bullies fell into the trap, took the cigars, and lit up.

Mr. Parkins was out of the way, taking an afternoon siesta in his cabin, for he was very tired with his sight-seeing in Constantinople.

So the bullies had the deck all to themselves.

As the captain had sent the cigars, they did not see why they should not smoke them openly.

"So they strolled boldly up and down the deck, courting the admiration of the smaller boys, who looked on them with awe."

"Awfully kind of the captain to send us these smokes!" said Bully Flashman, in a voice that all could hear. "There is nothing I like better after a meal than a good, full-flavoured cigar."

"They are a topping flavour!" agreed Stoot, who had never dared to smoke a cigar before in his life. "It is just how I like them—well kept and dry."

The news soon flew round the ship that the bullies were regaling themselves with choice Havanas, and Chip and Pongo Walker made their appearance.

"Hallo, Flashman!" said Chip cheerfully. "Mind you don't make yourself sick!"

"I'll make you sick if you don't look out!" growled the bully, in reply.

And he waved his cigar in the fashion of a hardened smoker, and blew a cloud of blue smoke into the air.

"Pheew!" said Chip, sniffing the air. "Where did you get that Flor de Perisher?"

"The captain sent them to Stoot and Flashman," said Dick Dorrington, with a wink. "If they can smoke them he says that they are men enough to be allowed to smoke when they want to."

"Smoke them!" said the bully, who caught this remark. "Why, I'd smoke a box of them before breakfast!"

"He, he!" chuckled Stoot, puffing vigorously. "I believe you could, Flashy. I wish I could get hold of half a dozen of them every day!"

But, all the same, there was a hollowness in Stoot's laugh, and Chip noticed that he was turning pale round the nose

and mouth—a sure sign that the Maltese Tail Twister was getting in its deadly work.

Now, the Maltese Tail Twister is a cigar that lights up mildly.

It does not begin to kick back till an inch or so has been smoked.

Then it begins to get stronger as the rich juices of the coarse leaf of which it is made begin to accumulate in the leaf.

And the bullies had by now reached the inch mark.

"This cigar does not draw quite so well as it did," said Stoot, pulling hard on his smoke.

"The flavour isn't quite as good as when we started," agreed Flashman. "All the same, they are prime smokes!"

Stoot grew paler.

He took his cigar out of his mouth more frequently, and did not puff so majestically.

He was beginning to feel a queer dizziness and a sinking feeling in his heart, with a rising feeling in his stomach.

The Tail Twister, that the bully was smoking now began to talk back.

The same yellowish paleness showed round his mouth.

But he still talked loudly as the bullies turned to and fro on the deck, walking arm-in-arm before long lines of admiring small boys.

Half the school was lined along the rail watching the cigar-smokers.

"It's beginning to catch Stoot in the neck, now!" muttered Chip to Dick Dorrington. "See how he is turning pale? See how wild he is getting in the eye? He'd like to chuck that cigar away, but he daren't!"

"Bully Flashman is beginning to look a bit glazy in the eye, too," said Dick. "He's not talking quite so loud now."

"No," agreed Chip; "it's the cigar that's doing all the talking!"

Stoot had let his cigar out.

The paleoess had spread all over his face now, and a cold perspiration bedewed his brow.

But he hung doggedly to the smoke which was upsetting him.

He could not go back with half the school looking on, and that wretched Dick Dorrington & Co. watching him narrowly.

"My whiff has gone out, Flashy, old chap!" he said. "Lend us a light out of that timber-yard of yours!"

Flashman produced a box of matches from his pocket, and Stoot struck a lucifer, and applied it to his Maltese Tail Twister.

It was the lighting of the cold, dead, flabby cigar that broke him up.

All of a sudden Stoot's arms dropped to his side, and the cigar fell to the deck.

"I say, Flashy, old chap, d'you know I'm feeling jolly queer!" he said suddenly. "It must ha' been—it must ha' been the sardines, it must—"

Stoot said no more.

He just made a straight bolt to the rail, and leaned over it in anguish, looking down into the blue depths of the Mediterranean.

The bully laughed loud.

It always pleased Flashman to see anyone suffering, even if the sufferer was one of his cronies.

"Why," he exclaimed, "I believe the cigar's knocked you! Well, Stoot, you are a dunder to allow a little light smoke like that to sting you! Why, I could smoke a box of these—I could smoke a box of these—I could smoke a box of these—"

The bully broke off short.

He had turned a pale green, and he swung unsteadily on his feet, whilst his greasy forehead grew damp with perspiration.

The bully was stronger than Stoot, and the cigar had taken a few seconds more to get in its deadly work on him.

But it got there, all the same.

He reeled unsteadily on his feet as he walked over to where the unhappy Stoot was leaning over the rail.

"What are you looking down into the sea for, you silly ass?" he demanded.

"Ho!" moaned Stoot.

The bully dropped his cigar into the scuppers.

"He's looking for mermaids!" said Pongo Walker.

"What I like," said Porkis slowly, and in a clear, distinct voice, addressing no one in particular—"what I like is a good, fat, rich, juicy Havana cigar after my lunch!"

Bully Flashman, who had now dropped his head on his arms, lifted a pale and anguish-stricken face.

"You shut up, Porkis," he snarled, "or I'll punch your jaw! Oh! Ow-yow! Crumbs!"

And he doubled up on the rail, leaning over the side of the ship alongside Stoot, gazing miserably into the depths of the blue sea, and wishing that he were buried a thousand fathoms deep.

It was just at this moment that Captain Handymen came strolling along the deck with a twinkle in his eye and another black Maltese Tail Twister held unlighted between his fingers.

He marched up to where the two unhappy bullies were leaning over the rail. "Hi, you smokers," he said, "I want a match!"

But neither Bully Flashman nor Stoot could turn.

They were doubled up in anguish.

"Ah, I see what is the matter with you two chaps!" said the captain, addressing their heaving shoulders. "You've been trying to tackle those cigars I sent you. That's just what I wanted! You've been hanging round the ship setting a bad example to the kids, puffing those miserable little Turkish scented fags. That's why I sent you a couple of man's smokes. Now you have set an example to the kids of what happens when a chap smokes real tobacco before he is old enough. And I hope the kids will take the lesson."

The captain stood for a moment surveying the backs of the two unhappy youths.

"When you've finished looking at the sea, young gentlemen," he added, "you had better go and lie down in your berths till you are feeling better. And, since you can't smoke without making yourselves sick, and showing yourselves up as a moral example to the youngsters, you had better not let me catch you puffing gaspers again, or I'll clap you in irons. Now, be off with you!"

The captain turned on his heel, and the two wretched bullies slunk off to their cabin, each silently registering a vow that he would never smoke a cigar again, especially a Maltese Tail Twister!

Arty Dove—New Boy.

As the Bombay Castle drew near the Egyptian coast, the spirits of Dick Dorrington & Co. steadily sank as they perused and re-perused the letter which Captain Handymen had given Dick, and contemplated the introduction of Arty Dove, the milkop, into their company.

"Crumbs! Isn't it too awful!" exclaimed Pongo, reading bits out of the letter as it was handed round. "Please be careful that he does not get his feet wet. Put him in charge of some dear, noble boy who will protect him, and fight his battles."

"I know exactly what he's like," said Porkis miserably. "He's a wretched little beast with a snub nose and long, corkscrew golden curls and a velvet suit—a regular mammy's pet! And as like as not he'll be a rotten little sneak! Look at his name! Arty Dove! That's enough to tell you what sort of a chap he'll be!"

"We shall never have any fun," agreed Dick sorrowfully. "We shall always be told off to see that Arty don't get his feet wet. And the bullies have got wind of him at once. Bully Flashman has got over his cigar now, and swears that he's going to give Arty a hiding as soon as he comes on board. We shall have a fight on with some of that crowd every day—over Arty!"

"And you'll have to be the dear, noble boy," laughed Tom.

It was just at sunset that the Bombay Castle, steaming in from the north-east, made the low-lying Egyptian coast.

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."

FOR NEXT MONDAY!

"ALGY'S PAL!"

By Owen Conquest.

Readers of the BOYS' FRIEND will remember that Algy Silver came from High Combe School. At this school Algy's closest chum was a fellow named De Vere, a thorough little rascal. Now you can guess how Algy's pal is.

Algy waxes very enthusiastic over Algy's arrival at Rookwood, but his cousin, Jimmy, is not nearly so enthusiastic. Jimmy knows too well the character of Bertie de Vere, and realises that his influence over the self-willed Algy would not be for good.

Algy and his pal are determined upon having what they term "a good time." Jimmy is equally determined to nip the fags' plans in the bud. Jimmy goes to work in a resolute manner, but Fate is very unkind to him. Algy is allowed to carry out his intentions, but—

After the feast comes the reckoning. Jimmy Silver is not the sort of fellow to throw up the sponge because of a slight setback, as Algy Silver learns to his cost. At the beginning of the story Algy and De Vere are the best of friends, but there is a rift in the lute, and feelings are somewhat strained between them at the end of the yarn.

"AN AFFAIR OF MYSTERY!"

By Martin Clifford.

In next Monday's magnificent tale of Frank Richards & Co. we find Vere Beaucherc back at the school in the backwoods. But as the son of the remittance-man is returning to his shack after lessons, he meets with a strange adventure.

Vere goes to the rescue of a man who is being robbed by 'Frisco Jo and a couple of rustlers, but he arrives too late to be of any assistance. The man has been carried off by the rustlers. Beaucherc almost forgets about the affair, but it is brought back to him in a peculiar manner.

A mystery centres round the man who was being robbed by the rustlers and a new master who arrives at Cedar Creek—a mystery which completely puzzles Frank Richards & Co. I shall be surprised if the mystery does not puzzle you, too.

"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

By Duncan Storm.

Arty Dove, the new boy, is very much to the fore in next Monday's instalment of our amazing serial. Arty hits upon a wheeze for taking down Flashman & Co.

Arty does not do things by halves, as you will see when you read about the manner in which he carries out his wheeze.

Utterly unconscious of the new boy's real character, Flashman and his cronies are bent upon ragging Arty, but the bullies have a nasty fall, a fall that is brought about entirely by the cleverness of the new boy.

"A TRAITOR TO HIS SIDE!"

By Valentino Mornington.

In next Monday's tale of the dormitory Mornington describes how a junior at St. Wode's School was left out of the Junior Eleven, how he set to work in a treacherous manner to prevent his side from winning a big match, how his scheme was neatly defeated by a loyal page-boy, and how in the end the schoolboy traitor learned that caddish tricks do not always pay.

Your Editor

As she made for the anchorage a smudge of smoke showed on the horizon to the westward, and soon a smart little steamer, little larger than a cross-Channel boat, came tearing along in fine style, heading for the port.

This was the Brindisi mail-packet, the famous Osiris of the P. & O. Company.

Travelling like a destroyer, she soon overhauled the Bombay Castle, and was in at her moorings by the time the Bombay Castle was ready to drop anchor.

As soon as the port doctor had paid his visit, the steam-pinnacle of the Bombay Castle was lowered to the water, and Captain Handymen sent for Dick.

"Hallo, Master Dick Dorrington!" he said. "If you want a little run before supper, you and a few of your pals can go over to the Osiris, and bring that little boy aboard. I've spoken to the ship, and told them to keep him on board till he is sent for. And mind you are not rough with him. Remember his mamma's letter!"

Dick ran off.

It was jolly to have a trip over to the other steamer to collect the new boy and his luggage.

But his heart was heavy at the introduction of the new fellow into the Glory Hole.

He called together his chums, and they tumbled into the stern-sheets of the pinnacle, which dashed off through the glowing Egyptian twilight to the mail-packet, which was already glittering with lights.

"I expect the little brute has been seasick all the way," said Pongo, in depressed tones. "Why on earth didn't they send a nurse and a pram with him?"

The men in the pinnacle laughed.

They, too, had heard all about Arty Dove, for somebody had whispered it to Umpty Ginsen, and Umpty had told the joke to the stokehold.

"Brought 'is bottle, Master Dorrington?" asked the engineer of the pinnacle, rubbing his forehead with a piece of greasy cotton-waste, as he stirred up his little fire.

"You'll be able to take little Arty for a ta-ta-to-morrow, young gents," said the helmsman, with a laugh, as he swung the pinnacle round the stern of the mail-packet. "Here we are, young gents! Tell the baggage-officer on board to swing down the pram gent like an' to see that he ain't left 'is Mellin's food on board!"

The boys jumped on the ladder as soon as they were alongside the mail-steamer, and ran up it to the companion, where an officer with a gold stripe on his shoulder was standing.

"Hallo!" said the officer. "You are from the Bombay Castle, aren't you? We've got one of your chaps on board!"

"Yes; we've called for him, sir—him and his luggage. Arty Dove, his name is," replied Dick, with a long face.

"Well, you don't seem to be very pleased to have a new shipmate," said the officer, laughing.

"Well, sir, we are told that he's an awful milkop, sir, and our skipper wants me to look after him and act as nursemaid; and we've got a very jolly little party, and it looks as if he's going to spoil it for us," replied Dick ruefully.

The officer laughed.

"That's all right," he said. "You go and ask the deck-steward for Master Dove. He's got his luggage all roped-up ready. I'll see that it's put in your pinnacle."

And the officer turned away, laughing.

Dick went up to the deck-steward.

"We've called for a little chap called Arty Dove, one of your passengers. Will you tell the kid to hurry up?"

The deck-steward grinned.

"Come along, sir," he said. "He'll be done in a minute. He's just pullin' off the last round in the stewards' boxin'-tournament. They let him in 'cause he was such a nib, an' 'blowed if e ain't polished off the lot of 'em!"

"Polished off the lot of them?" gasped Dick, in wonderment, for the stewards of the Osiris were known as a boxing crowd of great quality.

"This way, young gents!" said the deck-steward, leading the way to the break of the well-deck.

They reached the end of the deck just in time to look down into a crowded ring.

They saw, in the half-light, a boy—a huge boy, wearing their own school cap, driving a stiff punch at a fat steward.

The punch went home, and the steward was counted out, and a tremendous yell of congratulation went up from the on-lookers.

The victor hastily slipped on his coat and dodged out of the ring, answering the call of the deck-steward.

"Master Dove," cried the deck-steward, "you are called for!"

"Right-ho!" replied a deep, booming voice, as the boy ran up the ladder.

"Young gents from the Bombay Castle called for you!" announced the steward.

Dick stood speechless at the head of his little group.

Arty Dove was a boy right enough.

But he was a boy nearly six feet high and four feet wide, with a chest like a bullock, and a voice like a bassoon.

He had a black eye, and a bright, pleasing smile on his somewhat heavy face.

"We are Dick Dorrington & Co.," announced Dick almost timidly. "But surely you are not Arty Dove?"

"That's me all right!" said the new boy, in his deep voice. "I'm little Arty! I suppose my dear old mother's been writing to the captain of your ship?"

"Ye-es!" replied Dick.

THE SHADOW OF FEAR!

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.

The Last Day at School.

"Cheer-ho, Franky!" Bob Lawless clapped Frank Richards on the shoulder as he spoke, riding close to him on the trail through the timber, and Frank nearly pitched on to his horse's mane.

The chums of Cedar Creek were on their way to school, in the bright, sunny morning, and Frank Richards had sunk into a deep reverie.

That hearty clap on the shoulder effectively roused him from it.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

Bob laughed.

"Twenty-five cents for them, old chap!" he said.

"Eh! For what?"

"Your thoughts, of course. They must be worth it, to judge by the way you've been scowling for the last ten minutes."

"Have I been scowling?" asked Frank mildly.

"Well, perhaps you'd call it a thoughtful frown," grinned Bob. "I know you've been staring at your geegee's ears, with a face tied up in a knot. You don't seem to notice what a gorgeous morning it is. Can't you smell the scent from the pine-woods?"

"Ye-es. But I was thinking of old Beau," said Frank.

Bob's cheery face became grave at once.

"Well, I've been thinking about him, too," he said. "It's pretty rotten, old Beau clearing off, and leaving us in the lurch, Franky. I guess I shall miss the Cherub. We began our acquaintance by punching each other's noses, but—"

"I suppose it's better for him to go, Bob," said Frank, with a sigh. "His father's right, I suppose. But we shall miss him. He will miss us, too."

"I guess so. Can't be helped," said Bob. "There's a few days yet."

"I—I wish—"

Bob Lawless gave his English cousin a quick look.

"You wish you were going back to the Old Country with him?" he asked.

"I wasn't thinking of that. I wish he could stay here."

"But it was a change for you, coming out here, Frank. You were at a public school in England before you came to Canada. I should think it was ripping!"

"So it was," said Frank. "But I should not like to leave Cedar Creek now. Beau doesn't want to leave, either, though he's going to what would be called a much finer sort of life."

"Fancy the Cherub being the nephew of an English earl!" said Bob. "Some fellows would swank on that. It doesn't count for anything out here, but I suppose in the Old Country it means an awful lot. The Cherub will grow into a terrific dude, and he will wonder that he ever managed to put up with Cedar Creek and the backwoods."

Frank Richards shook his head.

"You don't think that, Bob. Hallo! Here he is!"

Vere Beauclerc, on his handsome black horse, was waiting at the fork of the trail.

He smiled faintly as his chums joined him, and they rode on together.

Beauclerc's handsome face was very grave.

It was evident that the coming departure did not make him happy, though he was little accustomed to betraying his feelings.

Wealth and distinction awaited him in England; but it meant a break with all he had known, and, above all, with his two loyal chums, and with his father, the remittance-man of Cedar Camp.

Lascelles Beauclerc, the wastrel of the family, was not wanted at home.

His brother was willing to provide for Vere, but it was upon the understanding that the wastrel remained where he was.

Vere felt the slight to his father, and he had passionately refused to accept his uncle's offer, but Mr. Beauclerc had accepted it for him.

The die was cast now, and in a couple of days more Vere Beauclerc was to take the post-wagon to Kamloops, the nearest railroad town, to start on his long journey.

"Looking forward to it, Cherub?" asked Bob Lawless, breaking a long and grim silence, only broken hitherto by the tattoo of hoofs on the hard trail.

Beauclerc started.

"To what? Going home, do you mean? No."

"Not to the baronial halls?" asked Bob, with a smile.

Beauclerc smiled, too, but very faintly. "I'd rather stay here," he said. "I was brought up here—this is my home. And—and I don't want to leave my father. I—I can't help thinking—" He broke off.

"Your pater's all right?" asked Frank.

"Oh, yes; better in health, I think, than he has been for a long time," said Vere. "But—but there's something I don't quite understand about him. I know it will be a blow to him when I go, but he thinks it his duty to send me. But—but he will miss me; he will be all alone at the shack, and—and—" He broke off again, his brow clouding.

His chums were silent.

All three of them felt keenly the shadow of the coming change.

Bob and Frank, too, could not help wondering that the remittance-man, the hopeless wastrel, had found firmness enough to do his duty in that respect, for they could guess what a loss his son's departure would be to him.

Vere was all he had.

Of late, the waster had seemed to change his ways.

He had not been seen at the camp saloons, or in the poker-parties at Gunten's store in Thompson.

The once familiar sight of the remittance-man zigzagging home in the small hours of the morning had not been seen for some time past.

It was as if the unfortunate waster wished his son to take away with him the best recollection possible of his father.

But after Vere was gone, would the change last?

The boy would have been glad to think so, but—There was a "but."

He could not think so.

When Lascelles Beauclerc was left quite alone, was it not only too likely that he would sink deeper than ever into the mire he had lately emerged from?

That thought haunted Vere, and embittered the parting, shadowing whatever anticipations he might have had of his new life.

With a clatter of hoofs, the three chums rode up to the lumber-school.

They were early for lessons, and a good many of the Cedar Creek fellows gathered round them in the playground.

The news about Beauclerc was known at the lumber-school, and it excited a great deal of interest there.

At one time Beauclerc had not been popular in the school.

The cheery, hearty young Canadians hardly understood his quiet reserve, and were inclined to attribute it to snobbishness, on account of his great connections at home.

They understood him better now, and Beauclerc was very well liked.

"So you're going home, Beauclerc?" said Chunky Todgers. "Gunten says you've got a place in the post-wagon for Wednesday."

Beauclerc nodded.

"Yes, Chunky."

"I say, is your uncle really a nobleman?" asked Chunky inquisitively.

"Yes."

"Does he wear a crown?" inquired Chunky.

"A what?" ejaculated Beauclerc.

"Don't they wear crowns?" asked Chunky innocently.

"Coronets," said Eben Hacke, with an air of superior wisdom. "Coronets, you young jay! How much did your uncle give for his coronet, Beauclerc?"

"Ha, ha! I don't know."

"Ever seen the old sport?"

"Yes, when I was a little kid," said Beauclerc.

"Was he wearing his coronet then?" asked Chunky.

"Coronet!" yelled Hacke. "Not a coronet—a coronet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No; he was wearing a bowler hat when I saw him last," said Beauclerc, laughing.

"Oh, my!" said Chunky, evidently disappointed. A nobleman in a bowler hat did not fit in with Chunky's previous ideas of peers of the realm.

"What's his title?" asked Hacke.

"Lord St. Austell."

"My! That sounds tiptop!" said Hacke admiringly. "I suppose you're feeling simply glorious at going?"

"Not at all," said Beauclerc quietly.

"I'd rather stay here, if I had my choice."

"Well, carry me home to die!" ejaculated Eben Hacke. "Look here! I guess

I'll do a trade with you, if you like. Let me go instead of you. I dare say your uncle will be just as pleased—more, very likely."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're all sorry you're going, Beauclerc," said Tom Lawrence.

"Me so, too!" said little Yen Chin.

"Me miss nicey ole Chelub. Pool lill! Chinee cly."

"We'll come and see you off in the waggon, if Miss Meadows will let us off," said Dick Dawson.

"And I've got a box of maple-sugar for you to take with you," said Chunky Todgers. "I don't believe you can get it in England."

"You've got it, Chunky?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Yep."

"Then I'll bet you ten to one that it doesn't last till Cherub goes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bell rang, and Cedar Creek went in to lessons.

The 2nd Chapter.

Father and Son.

It was Beauclerc's last day at Cedar Creek.

The next day was to be spent in the final preparations for his journey.

After lessons he walked about the school



Vere Beauclerc's groping hand caught something that floated, and with feverish, almost mad energy, he dragged his burden shoreward. "Father!" he gasped. "Father!"

grounds with his chums, taking his last look at Cedar Creek.

His face was clouded.

He was surprised himself to find how attached he had grown to the school in the backwoods.

When the chums left at last Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmy bade a kind farewell to Beauclerc, and gave him their good wishes.

In the setting sun the three chums rode on the homeward trail.

All three were silent.

At the fork of the trail they halted.

"We shall see you to-morrow, Beau," said Frank.

"For the last time," said Beauclerc, his lip trembling a little.

"No fear!" said Bob. "We're going to see you off on Wednesday morning when the wagon goes. I believe some of the fellows are coming, too."

"It's jolly good of them!" said Beauclerc.

"I—I never thought anybody at the school would care if I went, excepting you fellows, of course."

Frank and Bob trotted onwards towards the ranch, and Beauclerc followed the branch trail towards Cedar Camp.

The black horse proceeded at a walk in the gathering dusk, the rider remaining plunged in thought.

He came in sight of the shack, and saw his father at work in the field close by the little home.

Lascelles Beauclerc was delving industriously, and Vere watched him curiously as he rode up.

In former days he had not often seen his father work.

Sometimes the remittance-man had turned to in a desultory way, but always with grumbling and repining.

His thoughts were always with his old life, and the pleasure of labour was unknown to him.

In breaking up new ground, and forcing the wilderness to yield a golden harvest, there was a keen pleasure to the settlers of the Thompson Valley, a pleasure far greater than anything offered by the artificial life of cities.

But it was in the great city that most of Mr. Beauclerc's life had been passed, and it was there that his hopes and dreams ever turned.

But now, for the first time in Vere's remembrance, a quiet contentment seemed to have come to the remittance-man.

The clearing round the shack was growing more trim than it had ever looked before, though the boy's labour had always kept it in something like order.

Lascelles Beauclerc looked up, and stood leaning on his spade, as he heard the clatter of hoofs.

Vere jumped down.

His father gave him a kind word of greeting, and then, leaving the spade jammed in the earth, went into the shack.

Vere put up his horse in the shed and followed him in.

Since the decision that Vere was to go he had received nothing but kindness from his father, and it went strangely to the boy's heart.

They sat down to the evening meal.

Vere could eat little.

His heart was heavy, and his attempt to keep up a cheerful appearance was not very successful.

After the meal Lascelles Beauclerc lighted his pipe.

Father and son sat silent for a long time.

It was Vere who broke the silence.

"Father!"

"Yes, lad."

"I—I don't want to oppose your wishes," faltered Vere; "but—but if you would let me stay—"

"That is all settled, Vere."

"I—I know. But—"

"I suppose you feel it a little parting from what you have been accustomed to, my boy," said Mr. Beauclerc. "But you can trust your father's judgment that it is for the best."

"I do, father. But—"

"You will miss Richards and Lawless at first, but you will make other friends in England, Vere."

"I wasn't thinking of that just then."

But—

no good to remain with your father, Vere. I have thought of that very much lately."

"Father!" murmured the boy.

"You are going to a new life, a life suitable for one of your name and family," went on the remittance-man.

"You will feel a wrench at first, but that will pass. You will have every chance, and you will make more of life than I could make of mine. You are differently built. I was doomed from the beginning—a bad training, early self-indulgence. So long as my father lived I was denied nothing, and I denied myself nothing, and the end of it you see."

He made a restless movement.

"I've been a waster all my life, Vere. I've fought against it sometimes—never for long, and never effectually. I have to drag it out to the end. Drink and gambling have been my bane, but I cannot give them up."

"But—"

"As I have lived, I must live. I am too old to change. Vere, if you remained with me you would see me sinking lower and lower."

"Don't!" muttered the boy miserably. "This is the truth, Vere. You are young now, and you do not fully understand. And you are an affectionate son, and you make allowances that others will not make. But as you grow older you will grow to despise your father."

"Never!"

"Even now, Vere, you have felt the stigma of my reputation," said the remittance-man coldly. "You have never told me so, but I am well aware that, even at the backwoods school, you have had to listen to sneers and hints on the subject of the remittance-man, the loafer—"

Vere Beauclerc crimsoned.

"All that must end," said Mr. Beauclerc. "Now it is ending, Vere."

"But—but, father, since the flood you—you have been different!" faltered Vere timidly. "Why not—"

"The leopard cannot change his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin," said the remittance-man moodily. "I have made an effort, for your sake, Vere, but that effort will not last."

"Then—then, after I am gone—"

"There is no need to speak of that, my boy. The best thing you can do, when you get to the Old Country, is to forget that you ever had a father."

"You know that couldn't be, father. But—but I will not go!" exclaimed Vere. "If it is as you say, you need me, and I shall stay."

The remittance-man rose to his feet.

"No more of that, Vere. You must go; that is settled and irrevocable! And I have my own plans, after you are gone, and your presence here would seriously interfere with them."

Vere compressed his lips, bitterly wounded.

"Then you do not want me, father?"

The 3rd Chapter.

The Parting.

"Hallo, Cherub!" There was a clatter of hoofs outside the shack in the sunny morning, and Bob Lawless shouted cheerily as he rode up.

Beauclerc came out to meet his chums. The remittance-man was not to be seen.