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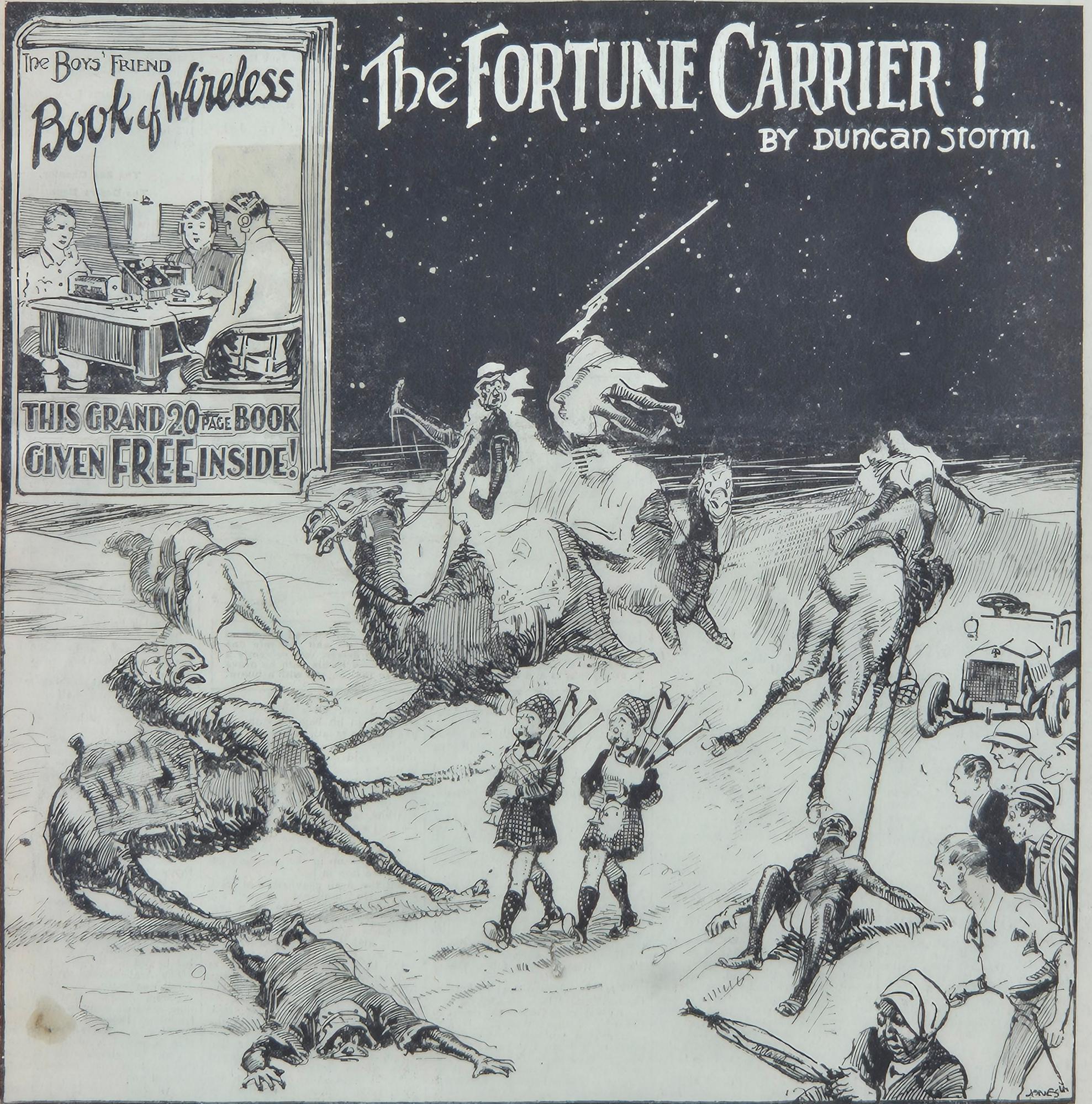
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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending December 20th, 1924.]



The FORTUNE CARRIER!

BY DUNCAN STORM.

THE TWO JOCKS GET BUSY WITH THEIR BAGPIPES AND ROUT THE ARAB BANDITS!

(A thrilling incident from the great story of Dick Dorrington & Co. in this issue.)

ANOTHER RIPPING STORY OF THE FEUD BETWEEN ROOKWOOD AND OAKSHOTT SCHOOLS!



A Victim of His Own Treachery!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

Chilcot plots to injure Jimmy Silver, but it is he himself who suffers!

The 1st Chapter. Caught Napping!

"Stop him!"
"Collar the cad!"
There was a sudden rush of footsteps under the leafless trees in Coombe Lane.

Jimmy Silver stopped, panting. He had been running rather hard. Jimmy had reasons for haste. In the village High Street he had happened on Hansom and Talboys of the Fifth Form. There was snow in the High Street, and Hansom and Talboys of the Fifth, as usual, had been walking as if they were monarchs of all they surveyed, and did not think much of it.

So the temptation had assailed Jimmy Silver to gather up two snowballs and knock off the hats of Hansom and Talboys—which was done neatly, efficiently, and successfully with two rapid shots. Whereat Hansom and Talboys of the Fifth waxed exceedingly wrath. Hence the speed with which Jimmy Silver was negotiating Coombe Lane.

At a distance behind him, breathing vengeance, were Hansom and Talboys, also running hard. They were yearning for reprisals on the cheeky Fourth-Former who had knocked off two Fifth Form hats. But Jimmy Silver had a good start, and he was putting on his best speed. He had little doubt of keeping clear of the vengeful Fifth-Formers, till that sudden shout and rush of footsteps stopped him in the lane.

It was not often that Jimmy Silver was caught napping. But caught napping he undoubtedly was now.

He was thinking of the danger behind, and not dreaming of danger in front. And almost before he knew what was happening five or six fellows had rushed him down and collared him, and he was sprawling in snow and mud in the wintry lane.

Half a dozen fellows in Oakshott caps sprawled over him. Valence Chilcot, captain of the Oakshott Fourth, chuckled breathlessly.

"Bagged the cad!"
"Got him!" said Vernon Poole-Poole. "Got him nicely! Our win." Jimmy Silver struggled.

"Let go, you rotters!" he panted. "Not quite!" grinned Merton. "By gad! How the brute wriggles! Sit on his head, somebody."

"Hold him, you chaps!" said Chilcot. "Bang his head if he wriggles!"

"You bet!"
Bump!
"Oh!" roared Jimmy Silver, as his hapless head came into violent contact with the hard earth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Take it quietly, old bean!" advised Poole-Poole. "We've got you, you know. You're for it."

Jimmy Silver panted for breath. He was in the hands of the Philistines. He had quite forgotten Hansom and Talboys of the Rookwood Fifth now. He had much more serious reprisals to expect from these Oakshott fellows.

Valence Chilcot looked down on him with a malicious grin, as Jimmy lay gasping in the grasp of the Oakshott crowd.

"Your turn now, Silver," he said. "I rather hoped we might fall in with you this afternoon—that's why we came over this way. My luck's in, and yours is out."

"You came over to look for another licking?" asked Jimmy Silver undauntedly. "Your nose still looks as if it had been butting into a motor-car. Do you want it punched again?"

Chilcot knitted his brows.

"You're for it now," he said. "I've had a high old time, as I dare say you know. I've had a flogging from my headmaster, for fightin' a Rookwood chap over a football match and gettin' black eyes, and for tellin' him a yarn about a tramp pitchin' into me. I've had a jaw from my pater on the same subject, and I'm in his black books. I owe it all to you, you Rookwood cad. I told you I'd make you sorry for it, didn't I?"

He swished a cane in the air—a light Malacca cane.

"I've had a flogging, as I said, I'm goin' to see that you have one—laid on a little harder. Catch on?"

"You rotter—" began Jimmy. "Turn him over," said Chilcot. "Oh, yaas!" chuckled Poole-Poole. Jimmy Silver resisted desperately.

But even the great fighting-man of the Rookwood Fourth had little chance in the hands of half a dozen fellows.

In spite of his resistance he was rolled over in the slush and snow, and pinned face downwards on the earth.

With two or three fellows holding his arms, and another trampling on either leg, Jimmy Silver was helpless.

"Keep clear, you fellows!" said Chilcot, swishing the Malacca again. "You bet!" grinned Poole-Poole.

Lash!
The cane came down across Jimmy Silver's back with a lash that rang out on the frosty air like a pistol-shot.

There was a yell from Jimmy Silver. "Ow! You rotten funk! Ow!" Whack, whack!

Jimmy Silver squirmed and struggled.

Jimmy had wondered whether the trouble with Oakshott was at an end, or whether he would hear anything more of Valence Chilcot and his threats of vengeance. Certainly he had not expected anything like this.

Chilcot, the dandy of Oakshott School, was a good deal of a black-guard, as he knew; but he had not supposed that even Chilcot would play the hooligan in this fashion.

He struggled desperately, and the Oakshott crowd had plenty to do to hold him down. But they held him, and Chilcot, with a bitter vindictiveness, laid on the blows with the Malacca cane.

Whack, whack, whack!
Six times the cane had risen and fallen, and Chilcot was very far from finished. But then there came a sudden interruption.

Round a bend of the lane came Hansom and Talboys of the Rookwood Fifth, in hot pursuit of Jimmy Silver. They were running hard, and they came on the scene so suddenly that they were almost upon the Oakshott fellows before they saw them.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Hansom. "My hat!" exclaimed Talboys. "What?"

"Rescue!" yelled Jimmy Silver. The Rookwood Fifth-Formers did not need asking. The sight of a Rookwood junior held down by half a dozen fellows, while another flogged him, was more than enough for them.

After a second's pause, in sheer astonishment, they got busy on the Oakshott crowd.

Right and left they knocked the nuts of Oakshott; and in less than two minutes Poole-Poole and Merton and the rest were fleeing as if for their lives—with the exception of Valence Chilcot.

Chilcot would gladly have fled with the others, but Hansom of the Fifth had grasped him by the collar.

"No, you don't!" said Hansom grimly.

And Chilcot squirmed in the powerful grasp of the Fifth-Former, while Jimmy Silver, smothered with snow and mud and gasping for breath, scrambled to his feet.

The 2nd Chapter. Paying the Piper!

Jimmy Silver panted. His back was aching from the lashes of Chilcot's cane; and for once "Uncle James" of Rookwood was seriously wrathful. A scrap or a ragging he would have taken with his usual cheery good-temper; but this was quite beyond the limit. Valence Chilcot shivered as Jimmy's eyes turned on him.

"Thank you for helping me, Hansom," said Jimmy breathlessly. "I—I say, I'm sorry I snowballed you—only a lark, you know."

"You mustn't lark with the Fifth," said Hansom. "But never mind that now. Who's this chap, and what does it all mean, anyhow?"

"It's Chilcot, of Oakshott," said Jimmy.

"Oh, I remember him—he played football with your fag team a few weeks ago, and I was referee," said Hansom. "He fouled you, and the match wasn't finished. I remember."

"We had a scrap afterwards, and he refused gloves, and got damaged," said Jimmy Silver. "He told his headmaster a lie about a tramp attacking him to account for his black eyes, and he's been found out and flogged. That's why he was flogging me with his cane. Now you can hand him over to me."

Hansom grinned. "We'll see fair play!" he said. "Yes, rather!" smiled Talboys.

Chilcot's collar was released. The dandy of Oakshott cast a hunted look up and down the lane. His comrades were well out of sight now; there was no help for him. And there was no escape; the two Rookwood Fifth-Formers saw to that. Jimmy Silver pushed back his muddy cuffs.

"Are you ready, Chilcot?" he asked.

"I'm not scrappin' with you," said Chilcot sullenly.

"Your mistake, you are," said Jimmy Silver. "You can't lay into a fellow with a stick and then say you're not scrapping. Put up your hands, you cad!"

"I won't!"
Smack!

Jimmy Silver's open hand came across Chilcot's face.

"Now will you put up your hands, or take a licking with your own cane?" he said. "That's your choice."

Chilcot's choice was soon made. He clenched his fists and rushed furiously at the captain of the Rookwood Fourth.

Jimmy Silver met him more than half-way.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!
Jimmy Silver, for once, was in a black and vengeful mood. The lashing of Chilcot's cane on his helpless back was an injury and an insult that had to be avenged.

His attack was like a whirlwind, and the Oakshott dandy was knocked right and left.

Chilcot put up a good fight, fighting savagely; and for five minutes or more the two juniors tramped in the snow, panting and punching. Then the dandy of Oakshott went down heavily.

"Time!" grinned Hansom. Chilcot did not rise. He lay in the trampled slush, and looked up at Jimmy Silver with savage eyes.

"I'm done!" he muttered thickly. "Oh, you're not done yet!" said Hansom banteringly. "You can take another punch or two. Get up and get going!"

"I'm done!" snarled Chilcot. Jimmy Silver gave him a glance of contempt.

"If you're done you can crawl away," he said scornfully. "I've a jolly good mind to start you with my boot. Get out of sight!"

Valence Chilcot rose painfully to his feet. His nose was streaming crimson, and he dabbed at it with his handkerchief.

"You'll hear somethin' more of this, Silver!" he said between his teeth.

Jimmy laughed contemptuously. "You'd better keep clear of Rookwood," he said. "You won't get off so easily next time. Now clear before I kick you!"

Valence Chilcot picked up his hat, and with a last savage look at the captain of the Rookwood Fourth, tramped away down the lane. Jimmy Silver dabbed his nose, which had also been damaged in the combat.

"Much obliged, Hansom," he said. "I'm really sorry I knocked off your tile—yours, too, Talboys."

"Quite so," agreed Hansom of the Fifth, with a grin. "We were bound to chip in and stop those young hooligans. But you can't snowball the Fifth, my young bantam. I won't

consistent with the dignity of the Fifth Form of Rookwood.

The 3rd Chapter. A Precious Pair.

Mr. Joseph Hook, glancing from a back window of the Bird-in-Hand inn, near Coombe, grinned.

His grin was caused by the sight of a youth who had just turned into the inn garden, from the slushy little lane that ran beside the Bird-in-Hand.

"His nibs 'ave come a cropper!" murmured Mr. Hook.

Valence Chilcot certainly looked as if he had come a cropper. Usually he was a nut of the nuts—what he did not know about the tying of a necktie, or the crease in a fellow's trousers was not worth knowing. But the elegant and expensive dandy of Oakshott was in a sad state now. He was smothered with mud and snow—he was untidy from head to foot—his nose was red and damaged; and his expression was almost Hunnish.

Only too plainly the dandy of Oakshott had come a cropper.

As Chilcot was on a friendly visit to Mr. Hook, Mr. Hook might have been expected to be sympathetic. But his derisive grin, from the window, did not express much sympathy.

Probably Chilcot's lofty ways did not conciliate Mr. Hook's regard, though the fat bookmaker found his acquaintance a profitable one. Possibly Mr. Hook was even glad to see that his uppish young friend had "come a cropper."

Chilcot, unaware of the grinning glance turned on him, ascended the steps of the crazy wooden veranda



TO JIMMY SILVER'S RESCUE! "Rescue!" yelled Jimmy Silver, as Hansom asked. The sight of Jimmy Silver held enough for them. After a second's pause, in sheer astonishment, they got busy on the in less than two minutes Poole-Poole and Merton and

lick you—you've had enough of that. But—"

Hansom stooped and scooped up snow. Talboys grinned and followed his example.

Jimmy Silver backed away. "I say! Oh, my hat!"

Whiz, whiz, whiz!
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hansom, as the Fourth-Former dodged the whizzing snowballs. "Give him some more!"

"Ow! Oh, my hat! You silly asses—you Fifth-Form dummies—oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Whiz, whiz, whiz! Crash! Smash!

Jimmy Silver decided that it was time to go. He went—at a good pace. After him came the two Fifth-Formers, buzzing snowballs at him at a great rate, and roaring with laughter.

Hansom and Talboys were quite enjoying the game. They followed Jimmy Silver fast, buzzing incessant snowballs, till all at once, at the cross-roads, they ran into a crowd of the Fourth-Lovell and Raby and Newcome, and Mornington and Erroll, and half a dozen more.

Then the tables were suddenly turned.

"Back up!" yelled Jimmy Silver. "Down with the Fifth!" roared Lovell.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!
And Hansom and Talboys, in their turn, retreated from a volley of snowballs, and departed from the spot with more haste than really was

behind the Bird-in-Hand, and came along to the dirty french windows. By that time Mr. Hook's derisive grin had vanished, replaced by an expression of respectful concern. He opened the french windows and stooped aside for the Oakshott fellow to enter.

"Arternoon, sir!" said Joey Hook. "Had an accident, sir?"

"No—yes! I'm in a pretty rotten state," said Chilcot scowling. "Can I get a clean-up here?"

"Suttin'ly, sir! Step into my room, sir."

Mr. Hook opened a communicating door, and Chilcot passed into the adjoining room. Mr. Hook sat down to smoke a cigarette, grinning over it, as he waited for Chilcot to reappear.

It was a quarter of an hour before Valence Chilcot came back, and he looked a great deal improved. But his damaged nose stood out in startling contrast to his pale face.

"Sit down, sir!" said Mr. Hook. "Your friends comin' along, sir?"

"I don't know where they are—half-way to Oakshott by this time, I dare say," replied Chilcot sourly. "We fell in with some Rookwood chaps, and there was a row."

"Cheeky young rips, them Rookwood kids, sir," said Mr. Hook. "Specially young Silver, and Lovell, too. Why, sir, I've been punched myself by them young rips—actually punched, sir. Straight!"

Chilcot's lip curled. He was not worrying about Mr. Hook's grievances; and obviously did not care whether Mr. Hook had been punched or not by the cheeky Rookwooders.

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Joey Hook carelessly shuffled a pack of cards on the table. He was expecting to do business, in his own peculiar line, with the young blackguards of Oakshott, that afternoon.

"The other fellows won't be coming now," said Chilcot, "and you can put those cards away—I'm not in a humour for that rot."

"Oh!" murmured Mr. Hook. The fat sharper frowned.

It was very condescending for Valence Chilcot to give him a look-in, in his dingy quarters at the Bird-in-Hand. But lofty condescension was not exactly what Mr. Hook wanted. He was not disposed to waste time upon a young gentleman whom he secretly characterised as an uppish, cheeky, snobbish puppy. That was, in actual fact, Mr. Hook's genuine opinion of the dandy of Oakshott.

"I've got something else to talk about, too," added Chilcot.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Hook. "If it's a horse—"

"It isn't a horse," said Chilcot impatiently. "Haven't I told you I'm not in a humour for that foolery?"

"Hem!" "You spoke of young Silver just now," said Chilcot. "I owe Silver this nose, and a good deal more. I've been flogged by my headmaster, and ragged by my pater, and all through him. I've told him that he's going to be sorry for it all. I think you can help me."

"Me, sir?" said Mr. Hook, in astonishment.

Chilcot set his teeth.

"I want him put through it," he said in a low voice. "He's going to

blackguard, he knew already. But even the cynical Joey Hook had never suspected Chilcot of blackguardism to this depth.

"Well, my eye!" ejaculated Mr. Hook.

Chilcot looked at him with a sneer. "Don't give me any rot about scruples on the subject," he said. "You can cut all that out, Hook. Will you do it?"

"It won't be easy, sir."

"Easy enough. You're not to mention my name, of course, or to give your man a hint that he's employed by an Oakshott fellow. You're not to mention Oakshott, or me, at all. It's a private quarrel of your own, see?"

"Of course. But—"

"But what?" snapped Chilcot impatiently.

"I can find a man, of course," said Mr. Hook. "Billy Chivers would do it for a fiver; it's his trade to pinch watches at the races, and if he has to biff a man, why, sir, he biffs him 'ard. Chivers is the bloke, and I can tip him the wink easy enough. But 'ow's it going to be arranged, sir? He's never seen young Silver, and he can't ang round Rookwood School watching for a cove to biff. How can he?"

Chilcot laughed impatiently.

"Of course not. I shall have to fix that part. I'll think that out and fix it up for Jimmy Silver to be in a certain place at a certain time. Chivers can be there, too, with a good, thick stick."

Mr. Hook wrinkled his fat brows thoughtfully.

"If you can fix that, sir—specially arter dark—"

The 4th Chapter. Chilcot's Challenge!

"Rot!" Thus Arthur Edward Lovell. It was the way of Arthur Edward to express his opinions with more vigour than grace.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at tea in the end study in the Fourth Form passage at Rookwood a couple of days after the affair with the Oakshott fellows.

That affair had already been dismissed from Jimmy Silver's mind. He had plenty of other matters to think of, especially with the Christmas holidays close at hand.

But Lovell was of another opinion. Chilcot's amazing impudence, in undertaking to flog a Rookwood fellow, moved Arthur Edward's deepest ire. Arthur Edward was prepared to carry on the feud with Oakshott, and make an example of Valence Chilcot, whereas Jimmy Silver was glad to let the matter drop.

"Rot!" repeated Lovell. "I've said rot, and I say it again—rot!"

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"Well, now you've said it twice, chuck it, old man," he said. "Let's talk about the vac."

"Blow the vac!"

"Only a few days to breaking-up, you know," remarked Raby.

"All the more reason why that cad Chilcot should be given a lesson," said Lovell.

"But he's had one," said Jimmy.

"I licked him—"

"You let him off, you mean," said Lovell scornfully.

"What he wants is a thorough good thrashing, something that will teach him to keep his distance from Rookwood."

"Oh, he'll keep his distance all right now," said Newcome. "Let him rip."

"Rot!" said Lovell emphatically.

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

"Rot! The fellow's just as spiteful as a wildcat," said Lovell. "You'd have had a flogging if those Fifth Form chaps hadn't butted in the other day. The cheek of it; the neck, you know! Suppose he tries it on again."

"Oh, he won't," said Jimmy cheerily.

"My idea is that we should go over to Oakshott and give him a jolly good ragging," said Lovell.

Jimmy shook his head.

"There's been trouble enough," he said. "Chilcot's bagged his share of trouble for rowing with us. I fancy he'll give us a miss now. We don't want a shindy. Chuck it, old man."

Lovell grunted.

Tap!

"Come in!" called out Jimmy Silver.

The door of the end study opened, and to the surprise of the Fistical Four it was not a Rookwood fellow who appeared there. It was Vernon Poole-Poole, of the Fourth Form at Oakshott.

"Excuse my buttin' in," said Poole-Poole. "I found my way up here. Pax, you know. I've got a message for Silver."

"You can come in."

Poole-Poole came in.

Arthur Edward Lovell eyed the nut of Oakshott morosely.

"Message from Chilcot?" he demanded.

"Yaas."

"I told you you hadn't done with the cad, Jimmy."

"Well, what is it, Poole?" asked Jimmy Silver restively. "I don't want to hear anything more from

Oakshott. What's the good of keeping up the trouble?"

"Yaas, that's all very well," said Poole-Poole. "My view exactly. That's what I told Chilcot. There's been trouble enough. Let the rotters alone, was what I said to him."

"The what?" roared Lovell.

"Rotters," said Poole-Poole. "Excuse me. I should have said fellows. No offence, you know. Let me get on with it. Chilcot asked me to come over with his message, and he wouldn't take no for an answer. He's got his old back up, you know."

"Well, what does he want?" asked Jimmy.

"Well, I wouldn't say so to old Chilcot, of course," said Poole-Poole, with a grin, "but my opinion is that what he wants is another jolly good lickin'."

"What?"

"You see, he can't handle you, Silver," said Poole-Poole. "We all wanted him to lick you, and he thought he could, but he couldn't. He got into no end of trouble with the Head over his black eyes last time. It beats me that he hasn't had enough. But he hasn't."

"Well, he's a hog, and no mistake!" said Raby. "He's really had enough, if he only knew it."

"Just what I told him," said Poole-Poole cheerfully. "And the trouble is that he's had a floggin'; and he'll get another, safe as houses, if Dr. Cranston finds out that he's been fighting Rookwood chaps again. The Head is awfully down on him at present. But Chilcot's goin' to risk it—that is, of course, if you don't funk comin' up to the scratch, Silver."

"Fatead!" said Jimmy Silver politely.

"Only he's got to be jolly careful," went on Poole-Poole. "If it comes out, he's for it, at Oakshott. The Head is fairly fed with him and his goin's on. So he wants to meet you, but the meetin' is to be kept a dead secret—no witnesses, and all that."

Jimmy Silver frowned.

"He thinks he can lick you, given a fair chance," went on Poole-Poole. He's determined on tryin', anyhow. If you don't choose to play up, don't; but I've got to deliver the message. Chilcot will come alone from Oakshott after lessons on Wednesday, and meet you in the wood near Coombe. He'll wait for you near the dead oak on the footpath. You know the place?"

"Yes."

"You're to turn up there. If he's first on the spot, he'll wait; if you're first, you'll wait. That clear?"

"Quite clear."

"Take the gloves with you," went on Poole-Poole. "Last time, I think, Chilcot wouldn't have the gloves on. This time he'll bring his mittens with him."

"He's learning sense!" grinned Lovell.

"Well, is it a go?" asked Poole-Poole. "Time for the meetin', four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon; no witnesses, and the whole thing kept a dead secret. I'm tellin' you before your friends; but they'll agree not to say a word about it, of course."

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

He was fed-up with Oakshott and Chilcot & Co. and all their works. Yet it was difficult to refuse the challenge.

Arthur Edward Lovell broke in.

"That's all jolly well," he said. "I understand that Chilcot's got to keep it dark, or get into a row with his headmaster. But how do we know

that he won't have an Oakshott crowd with him to handle Jimmy?"

Poole-Poole coloured.

"Chilcot will play the game," he said. "If he wouldn't, I wouldn't have a hand in it. If you can't trust us, I'll come over here, if you like, and be a giddy hostage. If Silver gets an Oakshott raggin', you can jolly well give me a Rookwood raggin'. Can't say fairer than that."

"Oh!" said Lovell.

"We play the game at Oakshott," said Poole-Poole loftily.

"Catch Chilcot playing the game!" growled Lovell.

Jimmy Silver gave Poole-Poole a very keen look. If there was any trickery about Chilcot's challenge it was pretty clear that Vernon Poole-Poole was not a party to it. His offer was a guarantee of that.

"Well, is it a go?" asked Poole-Poole. "I don't want to hurry you, but I've got to get back to Oakshott for call-over."

"Oh, I'll come!" said Jimmy impatiently. "If Chilcot wants another licking, he can have it. I'll trot along into Coombe Wood about four o'clock on Wednesday."

"Done!" said Poole-Poole. "And I'll bike over here, and hang on till you get back, to satisfy your friends, if you like."

"Well, that's square enough," said Raby.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"That's not necessary, Poole. I know you're square enough, whatever Chilcot may be. Tell Chilcot I accept his challenge, and that I'll try to make him tired of carrying on a feud with Rookwood. That's all?"

"Yaas."

And Vernon Poole-Poole lounged out of the end study and took his departure.

The 5th Chapter. Treachery!

Jimmy Silver came off the football-ground, on Wednesday afternoon, after a House match with the Moderns, and proceeded to change. The match was over in time for the captain of the Fourth to keep his appointment in Coombe Wood.

Arthur Edward Lovell was thoughtful and rather morose. He did not like the idea of Jimmy going alone to the appointment; partly, perhaps, because he had a keen desire to see Valence Chilcot receive the licking that was the certain outcome of the fight.

"I don't like it, Jimmy!" he growled. "You're an ass, old chap, as I've often told you. You can't say I haven't told you so."

"Bow-wow!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "It's all right."

"Blessed if I quite like it, either," said Newcome as the Classical chums left the changing-room. "Chilcot is a downy bird. I don't trust him a quarter of an inch."

"Same here," agreed Raby. "It's all very well about the need of keeping the thing dark; but it's quite on the cards that Chilcot may bring three or four fellows with him, and make it a ragging instead of a fight. He's capable of it."

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"I know that," he said. "I'm not quite an ass. I don't trust Chilcot any more than you fellows do. If he's got any trick on, Poole-Poole doesn't know it; but there may be a trick on, all the same. But I'm not exactly going to run into a trap."

(Continued overleaf.)



Hansom and Talboys dashed up. The Rookwood Fifth-Formers did not need to be held down by half a dozen fellows, while another flogged him, was more than enough for the Oakshott crowd. Right and left they knocked the nuts of Oakshott, and the rest were fleeing as if for their lives.

have all that I've had, and a little more. I had a chance to-day; but my luck was out, and I got the worst of it again. I'm not going to try handlin' him personally any more. I'm in the Head's black books now, and I can't run any more risks. But he's got to have it."

Mr. Hook eyed the pale, malicious face before him, puzzled.

"Well, what can I do, sir?" he asked. "I can't undertake to 'andle the young cub. You don't mean that."

"No," said Chilcot contemptuously. "I thought of that at first, but I don't suppose you could handle him—you're too fat and flabby, and I dare say he could knock you out."

"He seems to have knocked you out, sir!" said Mr. Hook, stung to retort.

Chilcot scowled.

"Never mind that. Look here, Hook, you spend half your time on the racecourse, and I suppose you know plenty of the ruffians who go there—racing roughs, and that kind."

"Course I do," said Mr. Hook.

"I've got plenty of money, you know that, as you've had a lot of it," said Chilcot. "I want Jimmy Silver thrashed—nothing serious, of course, but a thrashing that will make him wriggle, something like a Head's flogging, only twice as thick, see? Find a man to do it, and you can hand him five pounds, with another fiver for yourself."

Mr. Hook stared at the Oakshott dandy.

That Valence Chilcot was a young rascal, and a pretty thorough-going

"Leave that to me. If I let you know the exact place where Silver will be, at a certain time, can you fix it for your man to be on the spot and handle him?"

"Quite easy, sir," said Mr. Hook. "You fix that much, and I'll answer for the rest. You'll only 'ave to let me know."

"That's settled, then," said Chilcot.

"You'll drop me a line—"

"I'll telephone," said Chilcot, with a sour smile. "I'm not ass enough to put things in writing, Hook. Get your man here, and keep him ready, and I'll ring you up when it's fixed. Mind, not a word about me—your Chivers isn't even to know of my existence."

"That's understood, sir."

Mr. Hook shuffled the cards again. But Valence Chilcot was not to be tempted. He rose from his chair.

"It's settled, then," he said. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, sir," said Joey Hook, disappointed.

Chilcot left the Bird-in-Hand by way of the veranda at the back. Mr. Hook stood at the window and watched him go.

"Well, I knowed that young 'ound was no good!" soliloquised Mr. Hook. "If ever there was a rotten egg, that young gent is it, and no error. I don't like young Silver, he's a cheeky young cub, but I'd rather see Chivers give Master Chilcot a thrashing than 'im, that I would, straight! But that wouldn't be business."

And Mr. Hook shook his bullet head regretfully.



SNOWBALLED! Hansom stooped and scooped up snow. Talboys grinned and followed his example. Jimmy Silver backed away. "I say—oh, my hat!" he gasped. "Whizz, whizz, whizz! Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hansom, as the Fourth-Former dodged the whizzing snowballs. "Give him some more."

"The Red Crusaders' Panto!" By Victor Nelson.

"The Captain of the Fourth!" By Frank Richards.

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A Victim of His Own Treachery!

(Continued from previous page.)

fight, hand-to-hand, that Chilcot intended, it was not a ragging from a crowd of Oakshott fellows, though that would have been treacherous enough. It was a savage beating from this hired ruffian that Jimmy Silver was to have received, if he had walked up to the place of appointment by the footpath unsuspectingly.

"The awful rotter!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

He backed a little, into deeper cover, lest the ruffian should turn his head. But Bill Chivers did not think of looking behind him, he was there to watch the footpath and to assail the schoolboy who would come along to the dead oak and wait there. He was growing more and more impatient in his cold and misty ambush as the minutes passed, but he still waited and watched.

Jimmy Silver was satisfied now; he knew the whole of Chilcot's dastardly scheme. And in cautious silence he backed away from the spot and trod cautiously away through the wood.

The ruffian continued to watch, while Jimmy Silver, threading his way through the misty wood, retired farther and farther from the spot. Jimmy grinned a little as he went, wondering how long the hooligan would keep on in his useless ambush.

At a safe distance, Jimmy came back into the footpath and walked along towards Coombe Lane.

The open lane was before him, and in a few minutes more Jimmy Silver would have been out of the wood, and on his way back to the school. Then suddenly, from the dusky woods behind him, came a loud and startling cry, and the Rookwood junior halted and turned round.

"What the thump—" he ejaculated.

Loud and sharp, from the depths of the wood, came yell on yell, ringing wildly through the winter dusk.

The 6th Chapter.

The Wrong Man!

Valence Chilcot stirred uneasily and muttered below his breath.

He was cold, he was angry, and he was impatient.

Chilcot had left Oakshott quite early that afternoon, and his friend Poole-Poole was under the impression that he had gone to keep the secret appointment with Jimmy Silver by the dead oak in Coombe Wood. In the cunning and dastardly scheme Chilcot had laid for the punishment of his enemy the vacant Poole-Poole had been quite an innocent agent. Though Poole-Poole was not a particular fellow, certainly he would have drawn the line at entering into any such plot.

Chilcot had simply made use of him, telling him nothing. Chilcot left Oakshott School alone, as if to keep the appointment with the captain of the Rookwood Fourth, but nothing was farther from his intention than keeping the appointment.

Only too well Chilcot knew that, hand to hand, he was no match for Jimmy Silver, of Rookwood. Twice he had been defeated, and once would have been enough to impress the fact on his mind. But he was savagely, bitterly keen to see Jimmy Silver take the punishment that he could not inflict. He had not a pang of remorse for his wretched plotting, not a twinge of compassion for the unsuspecting fellow who was to receive a brutal beating from the hired ruffian. All he wanted was to be a witness of the scene in secrecy and safely.

He trod his way through the misty glades of Coombe Wood, and stopped at a distance from the dead oak. He knew that he was near enough to the scene to hear what passed—it was not likely that Jimmy Silver would be silent in the grasp of the ruffian.

Under a tree, leaning on the trunk, Valence Chilcot waited, looking at his watch at intervals. Four o'clock came—and went—and still there was no sound.

He still waited.

It was likely enough that the Rookwood junior would be a little late at the appointment; it had been cunningly stipulated that the fellow who was there first should wait for the other. Jimmy Silver, arriving and finding no one at the rendezvous,

would wait—till the watching ruffian closed in on him and dealt with him.

Twice Chilcot had telephoned to Mr. Hook, at the Bird in Hand, to make sure that all was arranged. As he waited in the misty wood he pictured to himself the unsuspecting Rookwood fellow walking fairly into the grasp of the hooligan who was watching for him, and he grinned.

There was no danger of his own part of the affair coming to light. He did not suppose that even Jimmy Silver would suspect it.

He would come on the scene after the Rookwooder had received his thrashing and the hooligan had gone; it would be easy to give an excuse for having arrived so late. If Jimmy Silver suspected him he would not care—nothing, at all events, could be proved.

His vengeance was certainly safe; indeed, as he reflected upon the matter he thought that he would prefer Jimmy to guess to whom he owed his beating, so long as no proof was to be had.

And there could be no proof; the

He glanced at his watch again.

It was past half-past four; the misty dusk in the wood was deepening, and soon it would be dark.

Yet there had been no sound! Chilcot gritted his teeth with bitter anger.

Something had gone wrong—he could not doubt that now. Possibly Jimmy Silver had suspected foul play, and had failed to keep the appointment; it was not likely, but it was possible. More probably Joey Hook had played him false, or the man Chivers had failed him. Whatever was the explanation, something had gone wrong with the scheme, that was certain. The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang oft agley, as the poet has said; and Chilcot's scheme had evidently done so.

He moved from the spot at last where he had waited, shivering in the cold wind. He came out into the open footpath and listened, staring through the thickening dusk towards the dead oak.

There was no sound, no movement. The footpath, lonely even in the

keepin' me kicking my 'eels so long.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Nuff said!"

Chivers made a spring at the Oakshott junior, and his rough, stubby hand closed on Chilcot's collar.

Valence Chilcot panted in terrified alarm, and strove to drag himself away.

"Let go!" he panted. "You—you ruffian—let go! You're making a mistake—you fool! I'm not Silver!"

"I don't know who you are, only you're my mutton," grinned Bill Chivers. "I ain't got any more time to waste, neither. You're for it, my boy."

"I tell you—oh! Help!" yelled Chilcot, as the ruffian, grasping him brutally, threw him into the wet grass of the footpath like a sack of coal.

"Old your row!" growled Bill Chivers. "I ain't going to wring your neck, you young fool—only give you a 'iding!"

"I tell you—"

"Oh, shut up!"

Chilcot panted with terror and dismay. He realised the ruffian's mistake now; he understood what was to come.

Bill Chivers had waited and watched for a schoolboy, whom he did not know by sight, to arrive at the dead oak and wait there. It was not Jimmy Silver, but Valence Chilcot who had arrived. That made no difference to Mr. Chivers, who did not even know the name of the fellow he was hired to thrash. All he knew was what Joey Hook had told him; and Mr. Hook had mentioned no names.

"Let me go!" screamed Chilcot, almost beside himself with terror. "I tell you I'm not the fellow you want!"

Bill Chivers chuckled grimly. With one strong hand he twisted Valence Chilcot over on his face in the wet grass, heedless of his howlings. With the other he swished the stick in the air.

Lash!

A fearful yell burst from Chilcot as the stick came down.

It was a hefty swipe; Bill Chivers had a heavy hand. And he had been instructed to administer a severe beating; why, he neither knew nor cared. He knew that he was to receive five pounds for the "job," and that he had done more lawless and ruffianly things for less money. This, indeed, was quite a mild episode in the career of Mr. Chivers, who had served three or four sentences in his time for robbery with violence.

Lash, lash!

Valence Chilcot struggled and writhed under the rain of blows.

Never for an instant had it crossed his mind that his scheme, however it might fail or go awry, could possibly have such an outcome as this. That he should fall into his own trap and receive on his own back the beating intended for his enemy, was a possibility that had never entered his thoughts.

And it was happening; and in utter dismay and horror he realised that there was no escape for him. He could not have convinced Chivers of his mistake, even had the ruffian listened to him—and Bill Chivers would not even listen. To Chivers, it was a "job" to be done, and he was anxious to get through with it and go.

Whack, whack, whack!

Chilcot's yells rang through the dusky wood.

He had planned this beating for Jimmy Silver, in return for the flogging he had received from his own headmaster. But the Oakshott headmaster's flogging was nothing to this. Bill Chivers had a heavier hand than Dr. Cranston.

Whack, whack, whack!

Wild yells rang out from the hapless victim of his own treachery. The misty wood echoed with them.

"Old your row!" grunted Bill Chivers, as he laid on with the stick. But with every lash came a fiendish yell from Valence Chilcot, mingled with wild shouts for help; though in that lonely wood, at night-fall, it was not likely that there would be ears to hear.

But, unlikely as it was; there were ears to hear; and Jimmy Silver, far away on the footpath, turned back as he heard the wild yelling of Valence Chilcot.

The 7th Chapter.

Goals of Fire!

Jimmy Silver came along the dusky footpath under the leafless trees at a rapid run.

What was happening in the depths of the shadowy wood, he did not know—only that somebody was in
(Continued on page 400.)

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man Chivers was a stranger in the locality, and would disappear immediately after his work was done. Even in the unlikely event of his being traced Chivers knew nothing about Chilcot; had never even seen him, or heard his name. So far as the dandy of Oakshott could see, there was no weak spot in his armour—he was safe in any event.

But he grew uneasy and disquieted as the minutes passed after four o'clock and still there was no sound in the dusky wood. He doubted whether he had stopped a little too far from the rendezvous, and he moved nearer, cautiously, among the wet, misty bushes. He stopped again, and leaned on a tree, and waited and listened. He knew that he was now near enough, without a doubt, to hear any cry from the spot where Jimmy Silver's punishment was to take place, and it was now nearly half-past four. Yet there was no sound.

He stirred, and shifted, and muttered savage words under his breath. What had happened? Or rather, why had nothing happened?

Had Joey Hook deceived him? Was it possible that, after all, Hook had pocketed the money and failed to play his part? Or had the man Chivers failed to arrive after all?

The dandy of Oakshott waited and listened, more savagely impatient with every passing moment.

day-time, was utterly deserted and solitary.

"Hang him! Hang him!" muttered Chilcot bitterly.

The whole thing was a failure, how, he did not know; but the fact was certain. He stood savagely in the footpath, staring towards the dead oak—black against the dimming sky. It was useless to wait longer. He struck a match to light a cigarette, with the intention of going.

There was a rustle in the wood.

Chilcot started and glanced round. From the trees a roughly-dressed man emerged. In the dusk Chilcot had a glimpse of a stubby, coarse face—the face of a racing rowdy. The man came quickly towards him with a stick under his arm.

Chilcot stopped back in vague alarm. He wondered whether this was the ruffian hired by Joey Hook—the hooligan who had been set to watch for Jimmy Silver.

The man eyed him and came closer.

"You're late, hay?" he said, with a leering chuckle.

"What? What do you mean?" asked Chilcot, in a faltering voice. He backed farther away, the rough following him up.

A HUGE SUCCESS—THIS MAGNIFICENT STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ST. KIT'S!



The voting for a new captain of the Fourth Form at St. Kit's is remarkable, to say the least of it!

The 1st Chapter.

When it seems that Rex Tracy will become the new captain of the Fourth Form at St. Kit's without there being a contest, Algernon Aubrey St. Leger persuades his cousin and studymate, Harry Wilmot, to oppose the leader of the nuts of the Fourth. Great excitement prevails in the Fourth on election day, and it is only by the skin of his teeth that Algy St. Leger gets Bunny Bootles, the fat boy of the Form, whom he discovers in the school tuckshop, to the Common-room before the door is closed for the voting.

The 2nd Chapter. Honours Divided.

Oliphant of the Sixth glanced round the crowd in the Glory Hole and exchanged a look with Hilton, who nodded. The two seniors had kindly consented to take charge of the junior election; partly from good-nature, and partly because a junior election without a prefect present was likely to end in a terrific shindy. But both the seniors had affairs elsewhere, and were not anxious to put in more time than could be helped in the Glory Hole.

"Time!" said Oliphant. "Get on with it."

"Two candidates, I think," said Hilton of the Fifth.

"Yaas," said Algernon Aubrey St. Leger, his cool and nonchalant self once more. "Here's my man."

"And here's ours!" said Durance. "Well, somebody get up and propose, and somebody else second," said Oliphant briskly. "Time's going."

Dick Durance stepped on a chair. "Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, I beg to propose my friend and trusty comrade, Rex Tracy, for the high and honourable post of the captain of the St. Kit's Fourth—"

"Hear, hear!" roared the nuts.

"I beg to second the motion!" said Howard, "and to add a few remarks—"

"Never mind the remarks," said Oliphant. "Let's come down to the mutton. You got anything to say, St. Leger?"

"Lots, dear boy."

"Cut out the lots; time's going."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen of St. Kit's," said the Honourable Algernon, "I propose my esteemed friend and relative, Harry Wilmot, and beg that you will afford him your suffrages. The said Wilmot—"

"Nuff said!" interrupted Oliphant, who certainly seemed to be in a very business-like mood that afternoon. "Anybody second that?"

"Seconded!" rapped out Stubbs. "Hear, hear!" "Show of hands for the first candidate, Tracy."

Ten hands went up. Tracy made a movement, hesitating whether to put up his own hand in favour of himself. Catesby whispered to him.

"Shove it up—Wilmot won't—he's too jolly lofty to vote for himself."

And up went Tracy's hand. There was a roar from the rival party at once.

"He's voting for himself! Is that in order, Oliphant?"

"No. Put your paw down, Tracy!" snapped the St. Kit's skipper. And Tracy blushed and put down his paw.

"Ten!" said Oliphant, counting. "You make it ten, Hilton?"

"That's it—ten," said Hilton.

"Now hands up for Wilmot."

Eight hands went up promptly, Algy's the first. Then Licke, with a kind and forgiving blink at Wilmot put up his hand. Bunny Bootles, instead of putting up his fat paw, gave Algernon Aubrey a malevolent blink, and rubbed his fat ear. Bunny's ear was still suffering—and his thoughts were on the feed in the tuckshop—now gone for ever.

Algernon Aubrey breathed hard. His eye was on Bunny—gleaming through his monocle. And in that gleaming eye Bunny read deadly threats—and Bunny remembered, in time, that Study No. 5—that land flowing with milk and honey—would be closed to him in case of back-sliding. Bunny bethought himself in time; and as Hilton and Oliphant began to count, his fat and grubby hand went slowly up.

"Ten!" said Oliphant, and Hilton laughed. "Make it ten, Hilton?"

"Yes."

Oliphant rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Looks like a tie," he said.

"It does."

"Any of you kids changing your minds, if we take another count?" asked the St. Kit's captain, at a loss how to deal with the problem.

"No fear!"

"Nothing doing, old top."

Oliphant shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, it's a tie, and neither candidate is elected," he said.

"The election will take place again on Saturday; and if there is still a tie, a Form-captain for the Fourth will be selected by a meeting of the prefects."

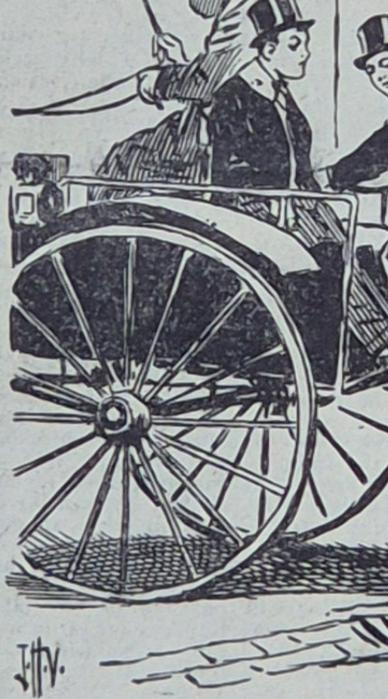
With that Oliphant of the Sixth walked out of the Glory Hole followed by Hilton.

There was a hubbub as soon as they were gone.

"You fat rotter, Bootles," hissed Tracy. "You agreed—"

"It was all St. Leger's fault. He—"

"How much did you tip Catesby?"



BUNNY IS SURPRISED! Much to the surprise of Bunny Bootles, Tracy and Durance climbed into the trap. "I say, have you been tipping Cooto to take you for a drive, you fellows?" inquired Bunny. Tracy and his comrade did not deign to answer. Old Cooto took the reins, cracked the whip and started. Bunny Bootles was left staring after the trap.

to vote for you, Tracy?" bawled Stubbs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tinker Smith came over to Howard and Durance, with a beaming smile.

"Now this rot's over, we can talk," he said. "I was telling you about that little thing of mine in D minor— Oh!"

Durance and Howard never learned about Tinker's little thing in D minor. They were fed-up with the cheery musician, and they were done with him now. Now was the time to repay the biggest bore at St. Kit's for the ruthless way in which he had

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bored them. They collared Tinker simultaneously, and upended him, and Tinker went rolling along the floor in a state of great astonishment.

The meeting in the Glory Hole broke up in confusion, with mutual defiance and howls and cat-calls exchanged between the rival parties. Rex Tracy stalked with his comrades, with a black and lowering brow. He had not been beaten; but he had not been successful, and he was in a mood of savage disappointment. Harry Wilmot's handsome face was clear and calm as he walked away with St. Leger.

"Rather rotten, what?" asked Algy.

"Well, I'd have liked to be elected," said Harry frankly. "I think I could do some good as captain of the Fourth—more than Tracy, anyhow. But it can't be helped. I suppose the result will be much the same on Saturday."

"I suppose so—I'll see that they don't bribe Bootles with tuck to desert us, anyhow."

"Then the prefects will select a captain for the Form," said Harry, thoughtfully.

"Nobody will like that," said Algernon Aubrey. "We've got to manage it somehow. I'm goin' to do some big thinkin'."

Wilmot smiled.

A little later Bunny Bootles cornered Algy in the Fourth Form passage. The fat junior came up to him with deep reproach in his fat face.

"You owe me a pound, Algy!" he said.

other!" said Algernon Aubrey, ferociously.

But Bunny Bootles didn't want the other. He sat and roared, while the dandy of the Fourth walked away; and Cuthbert Archibald Bootles never claimed the other pound!

Startling News.

Bunny was the first fellow that knew!

But it was soon all over the Fourth Form.

The rumour spread along the Fourth Form passage, causing excitement in every study.

Tinker Smith busy upon his little thing in D minor, wasn't interested; but he was the only fellow that wasn't: Even Licke showed some interest when he heard the rumour.

The rumour was discussed almost breathlessly by the nuts in the top study. It was like a ray of light to Tracy & Co.

"That's our chance!" said Tracy.

And the St. Kit's Goats agreed that it was.

In Study No. 5 there was less excitement. Harry Wilmot, indeed, refused to be moved by the news at all. Algernon Aubrey St. Leger polished his eyeglass thoughtfully, and looked at Harry.

"That may be our chance!" he said.

And Harry nodded.

Bunny was full of it. He was the first with the news; he generally was the first with news. So long as keyholes were made to doors Bunny Bootles was always likely to know a great deal that was going on.

It was Friday when the rumour spread. The deferred election was to take place on Saturday afternoon; and on Friday evening the rumour had been substantiated into fact!

The rumour was one that would have caused not the faintest ripple of excitement in the Fourth in ordinary times. It was simply a report that a new fellow was coming on Saturday!

New fellows came to St. Kit's at times and nobody was a penny the worse, or a halfpenny the better. New fellows simply did not matter. But the occasion was unique.

For it was ascertained that the new fellow was coming into the Fourth; and a new fellow in the Fourth meant one more voter in Saturday's election; and if the new fellow cared to vote it was in his power to decide the contest at his own sweet will. Only one vote was required to turn the scale!

For the strength of the rival parties had not changed. A sense of honour kept fellows from deserting the party they had chosen, as well as the exasperated state of feelings induced by party strife and mutual defiance and scorn.

And Tracy & Co. were careful to look well after their supporters; while Algernon Aubrey had a keen eye on Wilmot's voters. Even Bunny Bootles was firm and faithful now, it having been impressed upon his fat mind that if he turned traitor or missed the election the dandy of the Fourth would cut him dead for ever afterwards. And Algy was a sort of goldmine to Bunny—and Bunny realised that one tempting spread, however tempting, would not compensate him for being kicked out of the noble society of Algernon Aubrey for good. So Bunny was firm and faithful; and he made his noble loyalty the excuse for borrowing small sums from Algy about twice a day. He never failed to point out that Tracy was open to bribe him; and that he was nobly resisting bribery and corruption. He wasn't a fellow like Catesby, Bunny declared loftily.

He was backing up Algy's party from sheer loyalty and loftiness of principle—and losing money by it. So he felt justified in asking for small loans—and he did it without ruth.

Ten voters on either side was the

(Continued overleaf.)

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(Continued from previous page.)

fixed number, therefore; and there was not the slightest prospect of a change, till the rumour spread that a new fellow was coming into the Fourth.

That put a new complexion on matters at once.

It was certain that the new junior would not be a quarter of an hour inside the school before he heard of the burning question that divided the Fourth. It was fairly certain that, finding himself entitled to a vote, he would vote. And the side upon which he would vote would carry the day!

So the new fellow, as yet unseen, assumed a strange and amazing importance in the estimation of the whole Form.

Half the Fourth had determined to see him as soon as he arrived, and explain to him the crucial state of affairs, and how he ought to vote.

Stubbs declared that if the new kid had the sense of a bunny rabbit he would see how matters stood, and would vote on the right side, and save the Fourth Form of St. Kit's from going to the dogs. While Howard declared that if the new kid was endowed with the commonest principles of decency he would see which was the right side to vote on, and save the

Fourth from "goin' to the giddy bow-wows." Stubbs' and Howard's views differed as to which was the right side.

Algernon Aubrey turned the matter over in his noble mind on Friday evening while resting his weary and elegant limbs in the armchair. Wilmot, who was at prep, looked at him reprovingly.

"Prep!" he said. Algy waved a delicate hand. "My brain's workin'," he said. "Don't interrupt the mighty processes of my powerful intellect, dear boy."

"But if you cut prep Rawlings will be down on you in the morning, old chap," said Wilmot seriously.

"Let him be down!"

"You missed it last night—"

"I was thinkin' over this serious situation, dear boy."

"And the night before—"

"I was worryin' over the tie in the election—"

"And the night before that—"

"I was gettin' ready for the election then."

Harry Wilmot laughed.

"My dear chap, you must do some work. Blessed if I know how you keep your end up in class at all."

"Never mind class now," said St. Leger; "more important things than class to think of. I think I begin to see light. Wilmot, old man, go on with the thrillin'

joys of prep, while I enjoy the light an' genial conversation of our esteemed friend Bunny. Bunny, my fat old bean, lend me your ears. You know all about this new fellow, of course."

"I generally get to know things," said Bunny modestly.

"What's his name?"

"Rake."

"Ye gods! What a name! Any other name?"

"Robert."

"Where does he come from?"

"Australia."

"My only aunt! He's not comin' from Australia to-morrow, is he?"

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"He's coming down from London. He's been with some people there. A solicitor or something is coming with him."

"How the thump do you know all that?" asked Harry.

Bunny grinned.

"I happened to hear the Head telling Mr. Rawlings—"

"Br-r-r-r."

"If you jolly well turn up your nose at me, Wilmot, I jolly well sha'n't vote for you in the election on Saturday."

"Go and eat coke."

"Look here—" roared Bunny indignantly.

"Shut up, Bunny! You talk too much!" said Algernon Aubrey. "I'm always tellin' you that you

talk too much, old bean. So the new kid's named Rake, and he hails from Australia, and he's comin' on Saturday. Know when?"

"The two-thirty at Wicke. Cootie's to take the trap and fetch him and the legal jobny here."

"He will be with the Head and Mr. Rawlings for some time," said St. Leger musingly; "but there will be lots of time before four. I fancy that new kid is goin' to vote for us."

Wilmot looked up, with a smile.

"Why should he?" he asked; "he doesn't even know us."

"We're goin' to introduce ourselves, an' he's bound to see what nice chaps we are," said St. Leger. "Easy as fallin' off a form. After his legal protector's gone, we'll get him in the study to tea—"

"But—"

"And talk to him like Dutch uncles—"

"But—"

"Bother your butts, old man. We'll have a party to meet him at tea, to introduce him to his future Form-fellows. All our voters, in fact. And he'll walk down to the Glory Hole with our crowd for the election. He will vote on our side like a good little man, and everything in the garden will be first chop. What?"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunny Bootles.

"Well, what does that harmonious cackination mean, my fat and bloated Bunny-rabbit?" inquired Algy.

"He, he! Suppose Tracy & Co. play the same game?"

"By Jove, they might—they're rotters enough to try and nobble the new kid, an' catch his vote before he's had time to look round him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wilmot; "isn't that what you're proposing to do?"

"Ahem! There's a difference, of course—"

"Where does it come in?" asked Harry.

"Dear old man, you're catchin' Bunny's complaint; you talk too much, at times," said Algy. "Leave this to me. I'll have a talk with some of the fellows. You can

stand out of it Wilmot—nobblin' voters isn't your bizney. Leave that to your election manager."

"But—"

"Bow-wow, old bean."

Algernon Aubrey strolled out of the study, evidently full of his new idea. In the top study at the same time, a discussion was going on, on the same topic. The new boy from Australia, when he arrived, was likely to be somewhat surprised by his reception at St. Kit's. The contest for the possession of the new junior was likely to be as fierce as the historic struggle for the body of Patroclus. In his bed in London that night Bob Rake certainly was not dreaming of the excitement his coming was causing at St. Kit's.

Bob Rake, of Australia.

"Whoa!" said old Cootie. Cootie, the porter at St. Kit's, was always called old Cootie—not to his satisfaction. In Cootie's own opinion he was a rather youngish-looking man of fifty. But the estimates of his age, among the St. Kit's juniors, varied from seventy-five to a hundred.

Old Cootie was taking out the trap; but he did not seem in a hurry to start. It was Saturday afternoon—a fine winter's afternoon. Cootie had been directed to take the trap to the station to fetch the new junior, and his travelling companion, the legal gentleman, who was to laud the new fellow safely at St. Kit's and leave him there. Cootie grumbled as he led out the trap, and grumbled as he held the horse and waited. Old Cootie was given to grumbling. Bunny Bootles loomed up in the offing, and bestowed a lofty nod on old Cootie.

"Going to the station?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, Master Bootles."

"Fetching Rake?"

"Yes."

"Like the job?"

Grunt!

"I'll drive for you, if you like," offered Bunny.

Grunt!

"Oh, here you are, Cootie!" said



("The Scoutmaster" will be pleased to answer any queries addressed to him, c/o the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped addressed envelope for a reply should accompany all communications.)

No. 3.—WINTER "HIKES" AND CAMPS.

I have been wondering what some of you fellows would think of a winter "hike." (Look at old Jackson shivering at the very thought of it!) I don't mean camping out in the open and building houses with blocks of ice like a mob of Eskimos, but a jolly good tramp across country on a bright December day with a "shake-down" in a barn at the end of it.

Some of you may say: "What's the matter with a tent?" and my reply is: "Nothing, in the summer, but a lot too risky in the winter." I've heard chaps say that they go camping all the year round, and I'm not going to argue that it can't be done; but when you consider the vagaries of the British climate I think you'll agree that sleeping under canvas in December or January doesn't sound very attractive. But that's no reason why we shouldn't have one or two winter "hikes." A good-natured farmer who lends us his field for a camp in August will most likely be as willing to find us a corner in his barn in winter, and if we can't make ourselves cosy with plenty of hay and straw and our own blankets it

doesn't say much for our Scouting. If we try the experiment, I propose that we write to Jelf—he's a splendid old boy—and ask him whether we can sleep in his barn one Saturday night. It's a hundred to one



A good fire can be made in an old pail.

he'll say "Yes," so we may as well start discussing plans right away.

I think we ought to limit the first party to six, or say eight at the outside. It's an adventure, after all, and I don't want half the troop laid

up with the "flu." We shall want much the same sort of "clobber" as we take to an ordinary camp—except the tents—and I suggest that we send down to Jelf's farm beforehand ground-sheets, blankets, dixies, canvas buckets, kettles, and all the stuff we are not likely to require on the tramp. We had better take a "Primus," although I feel pretty certain Mr. Jelf will let us make a fire outside the barn, or in an old pail as the night-watchmen do when they are "minding a hole in the road."

There will be grub to buy (ah, this is where Bliffham pricks up his ears!) but I propose we make our purchases en route. What do you say to sleeping-bags? Of course, they would be very snug if the thermometer happened to drop to zero; but, on the other hand, they cost money, and we ought to be quite "comfy" on straw or hay, with our blankets and ground-sheets wrapped round us. The great idea is to send down by rail as much impedimenta as possible, so as to have a smaller pack to carry on the road. If the experiment is a success, we can leave our "traps" at the farm and explore another part of the country later on, making Jelf's our rendezvous as before; but in any case, it only means repacking the luggage when we leave and sending it home by train.

Now for the plan of campaign. (Jackson, old chap, just nip into my room and get me the map.) Suppose we start one Saturday morning, about ten. Well, here's Jelf's farm, twenty miles from where we're sitting, and I vote we follow the footpath way wherever there's one available. I'm not very keen on high roads and motor-cars, and I don't suppose you are. Let's say tram or bus to Steerwell—there's no fun in tramping through bricks and mortar—and then on to Jelf's, via Tophill, Hanbury, Loffside, Twitcham, and Brenton.

We ought to make Brenton by seven o'clock—the farm is only a mile farther—and if we take out an hour for dinner at Hanbury, and another hour for tea at Twitcham (I

don't believe in hurrying), that allows about seven hours for walking fifteen or sixteen miles—just over two miles an hour. It doesn't sound much; but don't forget I want you to see Hanbury church. That takes time, and we mustn't miss the remains of Loffside Castle or the Saxon Embankment between Twitcham and Brenton. We'll read up the history of the county before we start.

We shall be ready for supper and bed by the time we get to Jelf's farm.



Churches are well worth inspecting.

Now what about Sunday? Breakfast, to begin with—we'll say 8.30—and I propose that we should ask old Jelf if there is any little job we can do before we clear off. We can pack our gear and leave it for our next visit, or instruct Jelf's man to get it down to the station on Monday. That's a mere detail; but I think it is important that we should put up some food to take with us. It isn't always easy to get grub on a Sunday, and a hunk of bread and cheese and a tomato goes down very nicely if there is nothing else handy. Very well. Most of you know the "padre" at Brenton—Mr. Joliffe—and I'd like to be in time for the morning service.

The return "hike" would be by way of Denby, Croftholm, Steephurst, and Bishopswell—roughly 17 miles—and we ought easily to catch the 7.50 from Bishopswell to home, sweet home.

There's an awfully interesting

Market Hall at Steephurst, and, if there's time, we'll take in Willingbourne, where the Cavaliers and Roundheads had a "scrap."

The next consideration is: what shall we wear? I am all for warmth and comfort (I see old Bliffham agrees with me!); so I say flannel—next-the-skin, and a good thick sweater. In fact, I'd lay everything on "thick"—thick boots, thick stockings, a thick cardigan (in reserve), and a thick stick to help the poor pilgrims on their way. Above all, a good "mac," or trench-coat, which could be rolled up and slung across the shoulders in fine weather.

Haversacks by all means, and, if any of you can run to it, a thermos flask. I needn't tell experienced campers like you what to put in the haversack; you know the game as well as I do. Each of us ought to carry an emergency ration, a bit of candle (not to eat, of course!) a box of matches, and a ball of string. We are not likely to forget soap, toothbrush, towel, knife and fork, plate and mug; but, you see, most of our personal paraphernalia will be waiting for us at Jelf's farm. That's the best of it. I shall bring my first aid outfit, a map, and a compass—and we'll appoint Jackson official photographer to the expedition.

The long dark evenings are a big drawback to winter "hiking." That's why I'd like to choose a moonlight week-end; and, besides, I think that we ought to have a clinking good laup in the barn. As to cost, I suppose it would work out at anything from five to ten shillings "a nob" for the two days, but that would depend on the way we set to work. There wouldn't be any margin for dainty food, but I fancy I could draw up a menu for the "hike" which would suit our pockets and satisfy the "inner-man." Well, boys, "them's my sentiments," as the American politician said, and now the matter is open for discussion.

("How to Raise a Hundred Pounds!" is "The Scoutmaster's" great article for next week.)



AFTER THE ELECTION! Tinker Smith came over to Howard and Durance with a beaming smile. "Now this silly election's over we can talk," he said. "I was telling you about that little thing of mine in D minor—oh!" Durance and Howard never learned about Tinker's little thing in D minor. They were fed-up with the cheery musician, and they were done with him now. They collared Tinker simultaneously, and up-ended him, and Tinker went rolling along the floor in a state of great astonishment.

Tracy of the Fourth, coming out with Durance. Old Cootie touched his hat to the nuts of the Fourth and salute he had not troubled to bestow on Bunny Bootles.

Evidently Cootie had been waiting for the two nuts. Much to the surprise of Bunny, Tracy and Durance proceeded to climb into the trap.

"I say, have you been tipping Cootie to take you for a drive, you fellows?" inquired Bunny.

Tracy and his comrade did not deign to answer. Old Cootie clamoured laboriously into his place, took the reins, cracked the whip, and started. Bunny Bootles was left staring after the trap.

Rex Tracy grinned as the vehicle bowled away down the road to Wicke. He had stolen a march on the enemy, he was sure of that. While the Honourable Algernon Aubrey was laying his plans to "nobble" the new junior at St. Kit's, Rex Tracy was going to meet him on his arrival at the station, and get in the first word. Tracy had little doubt that he would be able to enlist the new fellow. He was going to be gracious to him—kind and gracious—and hold out hopes to him of admission to the magic circle of the nuts of St. Kit's; he was going, in short, to pull Bob Rake's leg, and secure his vote at the election, at any cost. And he was pleased at the prospect.

"No end of a stunt," he confided to Durance, as the trap bowled along, all Cootie's attention being fixed on the horse, which was rather fresh. "We'll bag the savage from the wilds before those blighters have a chance to put in a word, what?"

"Better not allude to him as a savage from the wilds, though," said Durance dryly.

Tracy laughed. "Oh, trust me to butter him," he answered. "I hear that he comes from some fearful place in the bush, or somethin'—but I don't care if he eats with his knife, and breathes through his mouth, and drops his H's, so long as he votes for me. That's the point. We can drop him like a hot brick after the election—once it's over and I'm captain of the Fourth."

"Which will give the stranger from afar a delightful impression of public school manners in the old country," remarked Durance.

"Oh, don't be a goat," said Tracy. "You've always got some-thing rotten to say, Durance."

"Suitin' my words to your actions, old top," said Durance imperturbably.

"Oh, rot!" The trap rattled into Wicke village, and stopped at the station. Tracy and Durance alighted there. Tracy looked at his watch.

"Two-twenty-five!" he said; "lot's of time! Let's amble into the station, and meet the noble savage on the platform."

"Right-ho!" Old Cootie stayed with the trap, while the two juniors went into the station. Tracy and Durance had dressed themselves very nicely for the occasion, and they looked very elegant, and they had their best manners on now. They wanted to make the best possible impression upon Bob Rake and his legal companion.

The train came in, and the two nuts looked eagerly for the new arrival. Tracy had it fixed in his mind that the new boy was some sort of a savage barbarian, and he would not have been surprised to see him arrive in leather breeches and a sombrero. But there was no such figure to be seen among the few passengers who alighted at Wicke. A stout and portly gentleman, with an unmistakable legal aspect, alighted from a first-class carriage, and Durance looked at him and nudged his companion.

"That's the lawyer bird, you bet," he said.

"And where's the merry barbarian?" asked Tracy.

"Here he comes."

"Gad! He looks quite decent!" A lad of about fifteen, in Etons, with a coat on his arm, stepped from the carriage.

The nuts regarded him very curiously. Bob Rake—if this was Bob Rake—certainly did not look like a savage from the wilds, as Tracy had pictured him.

Certainly he was not so elegant as the nuts—his clothes were not so expensive, and he did not look as if he spent a great deal of time upon the arrangement of his hair and his necktie.

But he was quite well-dressed, and he had a manner of easy assurance, and a bright and cheerful glance. He was very sturdy in build—as sturdy as the sturdiest fellow in the Lower School at St. Kit's. His chest was broad, and his limbs were powerful. His feet, undoubtedly, were a good size. They could not have been crammed by any means into Tracy's elegant

boots. His face was not exactly handsome, but it was so healthy, so good-natured, and so frank and cheery, that one could not help liking it at the first glance.

Most fellows would have taken a liking to Bob Rake. But Tracy at least, realised that the new junior was "not his sort." Bob Rake did not look as if he was the kind of fellow to enjoy surreptitious cigarettes and games of banker behind a locked study door. He looked as if he would be more at home on the football field.

He came down the platform with a free and easy tread, while the portly gentleman was speaking to a porter about the baggage.

"Go it!" murmured Durance. Tracy nodded, and "went it."

He stepped forward, and raised

his shining silk topper politely to the new junior. The latter stopped, looked at him, and raised his own hat in reply. Probably he guessed that the elegant youth was from St. Kit's.

"Excuse me," said Tracy, with great courtesy; "new chap for St. Kit's, what?"

"Yes."

"Rake, I think?"

"That's my name," assented the new fellow.

"Mine's Tracy—this chap is Durance. We're in the Fourth Form at St. Kit's."

"Glad to meet you," said Rake.

"I understand that it's already arranged for you to go into the Fourth?" said Tracy.

Much depended on Rake's answer to that question.

For if the new junior was not going into the Fourth Form he would not have a vote in the Form election, and he would be of no use to Rex Tracy. In which case Tracy was prepared to drop him on the spot without wasting further trouble or politeness on him. But the answer was in the affirmative.

"Yes," said Bob Rake.

Tracy beamed with cordiality.

"Good—our Form! We thought we'd hop along to the station and meet you, as you've come such a thumpin' long way," he said.

"Sort of welcome you to the school, you know."

"You're awfully kind," said Bob, with real cordiality and gratitude in his tone. He did not know much about St. Kit's, but he understood that this was rather an unusual act of courtesy towards a new boy, and naturally he did not suspect any ulterior motive at that stage.

"Don't mench," said Tracy airily.

"New kids feel a bit lost at first, sometimes," remarked Durance.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"We're goin' to look after you, an' all that," said Tracy, and with all his desire to be pleasant he could not keep a finge of patronage out of his voice and manner.

Bob Rake smiled cheerily.

"You're very good," he said; "I fancy I can look after myself pretty well, but I'm very much obliged to you all the same."

The legal gentleman came up, and the nuts introduced themselves and learned that his name was Mr. Scupper. Quite a pleasant

party walked out of the station to the trap.

Tracy took a seat in the trap with Bob Rake and Mr. Scupper. There was no room for Durance.

That youth raised his hat very politely as the trap drove away. When it was bowling away down the old High Street of Wicke Durance shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"Ten to one Tracy makes a muck of it!" he murmured. And Durance strolled away to the Lizard, to knock the balls about in the billiards-room until it was time to turn up at St. Kit's for the election.

Tracy Tries It On.

Bob Rake looked about him with eager interest as the trap rattled out of Wicke and passed along the lane. The green, English countryside seemed attractive to his eyes, and he did not think of concealing the fact that he was happy and cheerful, not having learned the lesson of the nuts, that lofty indifference and nonchalance constituted the first duty of man.

"Jolly looking country," he remarked to Tracy.

"Oh, yes!" assented Tracy.

"They're the Sussex Downs yonder, I suppose?"

"Oh, the Downs—yes!"

"Fine country."

It had never even occurred to the chief of the St. Kit's nuts to notice whether it was a fine country or not.

"Plenty of colour about, though it's winter," said Bob.

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

Tracy wasn't interested in the scenery. Just then he was surveying his own elegant trousers, and thinking how much more nicely they were creased than Bob Rake's.

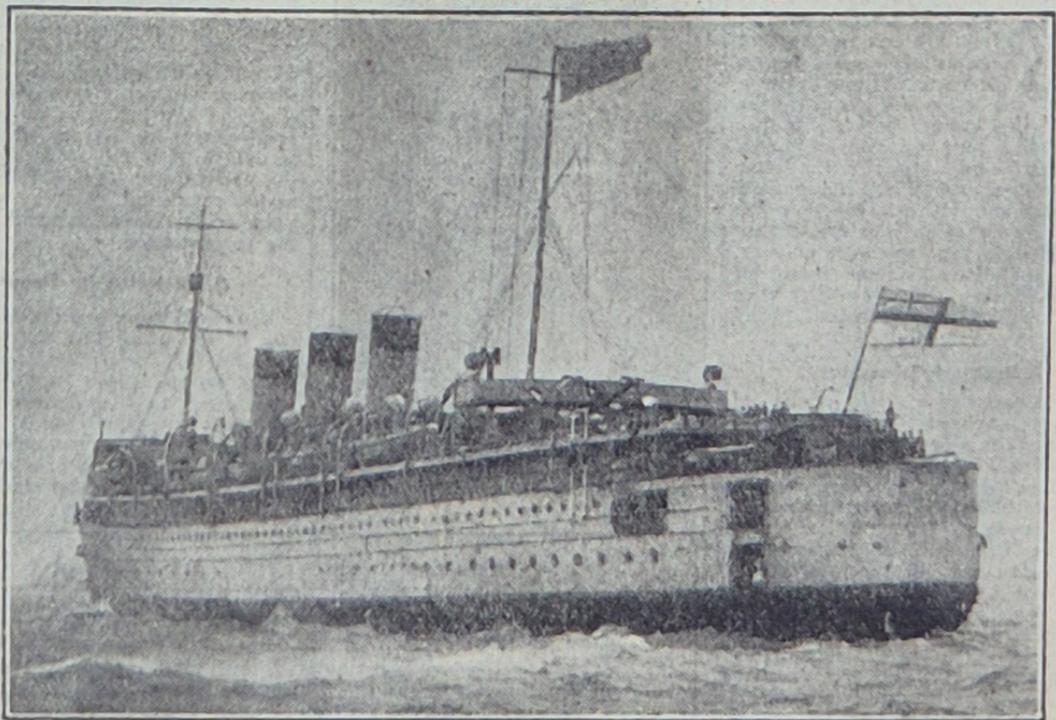
Bob's necktie, too, afforded Tracy much secret entertainment. He wondered whether the fellow had the brains ever to learn how to tie a necktie. It took Tracy five minutes to arrange a tie to his satisfaction. Probably it took Bob about five seconds.

"St. Kit's is a jolly place, what?" asked Bob, seeking for information regarding his new school.

"Oh, no end!" said Tracy. "In fact, you'll find the Fourth Form full of excitement to-day."

(Continued overleaf.)

BEAUTIFUL PRESENTATION ART PLATE
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Special treat! "Claud Duval's Christmas!" by Edmund Burton. A grand story of the famous highwayman appearing in our Christmas Number!



(Continued from previous page.)

"Something special on?"

"Exactly."

"Football match?" asked Bob.

Tracy laughed, he could not help it. The idea of the lofty and fashionable nuts of St. Kit's getting excited about a football match tickled him.

"Not exactly," he said. "Not quite! We're havin' a Form election."

"A—a what?"

"You know, every Form at St. Kit's has its own captain," said Tracy, with a touch of patronage again.

"I don't know the school customs, of course," said Bob, in his frank way. "I'm quite keen to learn, though. There's a captain of the school, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; old Oliphant of the Sixth. But every Form has a captain, too—Hilton's captain of the Fifth, Babbie of the Shell, and so on. Carton was captain of the Fourth, but he's left. I'm puttin' up in his place."

"Oh, I see!"

"The election takes place at four this afternoon, so you'll just be in time for it," said Tracy. "As you're new, you know, I'll give

you some pointers about it—put you up to the ropes, as it were."

"Thanks!" Bob Rake glanced round him. The trap was passing over the stone bridge over the Wicke, half-way to St. Kit's. "That looks a jolly little river—bathing and swimming there, I suppose?"

"Oh, lots! That's where St. Leger was nearly drowned once," said Tracy. "A chap dived from the bridge here and fetched him out."

"My hat! Must have been a hefty chap to do that," said Bob Rake, with great admiration. "It wanted some nerve."

Tracy decided not to mention that it had been Harry Wilmot who did that great dive.

"St. Leger a St. Kit's chap?" asked Bob.

"Yes, in the Fourth."

"Who fetched him out of the water?"

"Oh, a fellow—I forget his name," said Tracy hastily.

"About the election—"

"Oh, yes; about the election?"

"I'm expectin' rather a bumpin' majority," said Tracy. "But every vote tells. There's rather a rotten character in our Form who's got the nerve to put up as a candidate—a fellow who's no class, and generally disliked. I want to make sure of beatin' him."

Bob Rake gave him a rather keen look.

"If he's no class, and generally disliked, he can't have much chance of getting in at an election, can he?" he asked.

Tracy bit his lip.

"Well, he's cunning," he said. "Sort of works things, you see."

Bob did not quite see, but he nodded. Somehow, he did not find himself liking this elegant junior very much, though Tracy had apparently gone out of his way to be kind to the newcomer.

"I'd like to count on your vote,

a few minutes now," said Tracy. "You'll have to see the Head and your Form master. Come to the top study when it's over."

"The top study?" repeated Bob.

"Yes, that's my study, the best in the Fourth Form passage. I'd like you to fix up there," said Tracy mendaciously. "I'll ask Mr. Rawlings to let me have you as a study-mate—after the election. You'll be jolly comfy in the top study. Come there to tea to-day, will you? Anybody will show you the way."

don't know the rights of the affair—I haven't even seen the other candidate," said Bob.

"Wouldn't it be rather better for me to stand out of the matter?"

"You'll be expected to vote," said Tracy. "The fellows would take it in very bad part if you stood out, when the whole Form's burstin' with the affair."

"Oh, I see! In that case I'll certainly vote."

"For me, I hope?"

"Well—" said Bob slowly.

Tracy's eyes glistened.

Apparently his task was not going to be quite so easy with this new fellow as he had expected.

"I'm counting on you," he said. Bob coloured slightly.

"I'd hate to refuse," he said frankly. "But if it's an election surely a voter ought to see both candidates, at least, before he makes up his mind."

"Not necessary at all. I've told you the other man is a rotter."

"Yes, but—"

"But what?" said Tracy sharply.

"Well, we might take different views, you know," said Bob. "I'd really like to see the other man, at least, before I decide how I'm going to vote."

Rex Tracy drew a deep breath. The trap was close to the school gates now, and there was not much more time.

Result of Another BOYS' FRIEND "Warships" Competition.
No. 8.—H.M.S. QUEEN ELIZABETH.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution. The FIRST PRIZE OF £5 has therefore been awarded to:

FRED SHAW,
61, Pontypridd Road,
Porth, Rhondda, Glam.

Seven competitors with one error each, tied for the six footballs offered. In the circumstances the Editor has decided to award a match football to each of these readers:

A. Anderson, 93, Balsusney Road, Kirkcaldy, Fife; Kenneth Dimond, 3, Frederick Place, Weymouth, Dorset; T. Edmonds, 15, Nightingale Road, Southcourt, Aylesbury; Gilbert Rees, 28, Pottery Street,

Llanely; Robert Rees, 28, Pottery Street, Llanely; Harold Thompson, West Sunderland, Biggleswade, Beds.; R. W. Wilson, Waynsflete House, Ings Road, Hull.

The Correct Solution is as follows:
The White Ensign has been flown by many celebrated warships, but none more so than Queen Elizabeth. This fine vessel created great consternation among the Turks when in the year 1915 she appeared at the Dardanelles, and battered their forts with her big guns. Admiral Beatty chose her for his flagship, and it was in her fore-cabin that he received the surrender of the German Navy.

Now get busy with the great new competition on Page 390 of this issue.

Two real Bassett-Lowke model railways and six footballs offered as prizes.

old man," said Tracy. "I'll show you exactly what to do, you know. You'll be with my friends, and they'll see that you're not put on by the other party. You just have to walk into the Glory Hole an' vote. Put up your hand when my name's called, you know."

Bob was silent.

St. Kit's was in sight now, the grey old tower, and some of the red roofs showing over the trees.

"That's the school?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes! We shall be there in

"You're very good—"

"Well, I like to look after a new fellow a bit, and make him feel at home," said Tracy, quite surprising himself with his powers as an Ananias. "There are the school gates. By the way, I suppose I can count on your vote at the election this afternoon, Rake?"

"Well, you see—" Bob paused.

"Is a new fellow allowed to vote?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Of course, being so new, I

"Look here, Rake," said Tracy. "I want you to vote for me. I've taken a lot of trouble about it. It's goin' to be a very close thing, and I want your vote."

"But if the other fellows a rotter, and generally disliked, how can the election be such a close thing?" asked Bob.

Again Tracy bit his lip. His astuteness had been a little too astute. And he was getting angry now.

"Well, he's got his supporters," he said.

"Rotters like himself?" asked Bob innocently.

"Yes, exactly."

(Continued on the next page.)

FOOTBALL GOSSIP!
By "Goalie"

Brothers on Opposing Sides.

The game between the Arsenal and Leeds United to be decided at High-bury this week-end has one item of special interest. It lies in the fact that the captains of the competing teams are brothers. Alfred Baker is new to the skipper's job with the Arsenal this season, but his brother James has been captain of Leeds United for some time. As the latter appears at right-half and the Arsenal man at right full-back, the pair are not likely to come into direct conflict after the toss for choice of ends, so we shall have no opportunity of seeing whether their brotherly love will show itself on the football-field.

A Brotherly Love Story.

There are, of course, plenty of brothers playing with different football teams in these days, and in this connection I recall a good story told by Jack Howcroft, the famous referee. Some time ago, he told me that he had control of a game between Oldham Athletic and the Wednesday, and the brothers Wilson were on opposite sides—Dave playing for Oldham and Andrew, the present manager of Bristol Rovers, wearing the colours of the Wednesday. The match had not been long in progress when David was fouled by a Sheffield man, and forthwith Andrew walked straight up to the offender and told him very plainly not to offend against his brother again.

The game went on, and shortly afterwards Howcroft had to give a foul against Andrew for tripping his brother David. Having done so, the referee remarked to Andrew: "What do you mean by telling one of your colleagues not to foul your brother,

and then you do it yourself a few minutes later?" Back came the reply



H. BARNES. (Preston North End.)

from the offender: "Well, you see, Mr. Howcroft, the other player might have hurt Dave, but I was careful not to do so."

Proud Preston Humbled.

Right from the beginning of the season it has been obvious that the players at the command of the Preston North End club were not good enough, and if the full story could be told of the efforts made by the management to strengthen the side, it would provide an interesting sidelight on the worries connected with the running of a team which is failing consistently. Some of the money which Preston received for Tom Roberts when he was transferred to Burnley was spent on securing Horace Barnes from Manchester City, but it is obvious that, good player as Barnes undoubtedly is, North End fell so far behind in the early weeks that nothing but a really wonderful recovery will save them from relegation at the end of the present term.

A Hat-trick by Request.

Horace Barnes, the inside-left, was one of the many fine sharp-shooters brought out by Derby County, and when, some years ago, he was transferred to Manchester City the fee paid was the then record one of £2,500. Barnes has scored many goals for the Lancashire club since that time, and has also made several

appearances for England. Among the many goal-scoring feats was a hat-trick which he owed to the kindly thought of a colleague of his, Tom



P. BARTON. (Birmingham.)

Browell. In a particular match three or four years ago, Barnes had twice found the net, and he was going through with a good chance to score a third when he was fouled inside the penalty-area. The City were awarded a penalty-kick, and Max Woosnam, the captain of the City, asked Browell to take it. But Browell told the captain that he

happened to know Barnes was keen on completing the hat-trick, and would he allow Horace to take the penalty. Barnes duly took it, and scored. This is typical of the spirit which is often found among paid players on the football-field.

Is Attack the Best Defence?

I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that when the history of the present football season comes to be written we shall have to say that one of the distinguishing features about the campaign has been the tendency to concentrate on defence. It used to be accepted as a truism that attack was the best sort of defence, but several clubs—in the First Division especially—have done very well this term by keeping the other fellows out. Birmingham provide a typical example of this. The Midlanders have done surprisingly well, but the great majority of their victories have been won by a goal to nothing, so it does indeed look as if they owe their stock of points rather to the defenders than to the attackers.

We may not like to think so, perhaps, but it is undoubtedly a fact that a team which does concentrate on keeping the other fellows out is really very difficult to beat. And the forwards of such a team can't be expected to get a lot of goals if the half-backs spend all their efforts on stopping the opposing forwards. Fortunately, Birmingham have one half-back who is a believer in the offensive type of game in Percy Barton, an Edmonton man, who was allowed to go to Birmingham to earn fame on the football-field. As a left half-back he has played in several International matches, and in them has shown ability to dribble almost as well as the best of our forwards.

"Goalie"

(For the best footer information you can't beat "Goalie." Don't miss his great new article appearing in our next issue!)

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN ON SATURDAY.

Below will be found our expert's opinion of the probable results of the big games to be played on Saturday, December 20th. The likely winning side is printed in capitals. Where a draw is anticipated, both clubs are printed in smaller letters.

First Division.	Second Division.	First Division. Scottish League.
Arsenal v. Leeds United.	Barnsley v. Chelsea.	ABERDEEN v. Third Lanark.
ASTON VILLA v. Burnley.	BLACKPOOL v. Oldham Athletic.	CELTIC v. Hamilton Acads.
BLACKBURN ROVERS v. Cardiff City.	Bradford City v. Leicester City.	COWDENBEATH v. Ayr United.
BURY v. West Bromwich Albion.	DERBY COUNTY v. Coventry City.	DUNDEE v. Airdrieonians.
HUDDERSFIELD TOWN v. Preston N. E.	Fulham v. Crystal Palace.	HIBERNIANS v. St. Johnstone.
Liverpool v. Bolton Wanderers.	HULL CITY v. The Wednesday.	Kilmarnock v. Ralith Rovers.
MANCHESTER CITY v. Birmingham.	MIDDLESBROUGH v. Stockport County.	Motherwell v. Hearts.
Newcastle United v. Notts County.	PORTSMOUTH v. Clapton Orient.	PARTICK THISTLE v. Falkirk.
Nottingham F. v. Tottenham Hotspur.	Port Vale v. MANCHESTER UNITED.	Queen's Park v. Morton.
SHEFFIELD UNITED v. Everton.	SOUTH SHIELDS v. Stoke.	St. Mirren v. RANGERS.
WEST HAM UNITED v. Sunderland.	WOLVERHAMPTON W. v. Southampton.	

"But half the Fourth at St. Kit's can't be rotters, surely?" Tracy gave the new junior a sharp, suspicious look. It actually came into his mind that Bob Rake, of Australia, was poking fun at him. But the new junior's cheery face was quite serious.

"The question is, will you vote for me, Rake?" he said.

"I'd like to think it out first, if you don't mind," said Bob politely.

"I do mind!" snapped Tracy. "Well, all the same, I'd like to think it out first."

"If that's what you call decent, after all the trouble I've taken over you—" burst out Tracy, losing his temper.

Bob's lip curled slightly.

"You make me begin to think that you had a reason for taking a lot of trouble over me," he said dryly. "The fact is, Tracy, I'm not going to promise to vote for anybody until I know the rights of the matter. I'm sorry—but there it is."

"Look here, you cad—"

"What?"

The trap stopped. Tracy, feeling that he had said too much, and afraid to trust himself to speak further, jumped down, and hurried away without another word to the new junior. Bob Rake stared after him in surprise.

"Well, my hat!" he murmured. The probability was great that Bob Rake would not be in a hurry to vote for the junior who had so kindly met him at the station.

"A Much Sought-After Youth. He's come!"

Bunny Bootles made that announcement in Study No. 5.

Harry Wilmot was on the football ground; but Algernon Aubrey St. Leger was adorning the armchair in Study No. 5 with his elegant person.

He sat up.

"Who's come?"

"The Rake-bird," chuckled Bunny.

"Seen him?"

"Yes. Looks a rather hefty chap," said Bunny. "Tracy came with him in the trap from Wicke. I saw him get out."

"Begad! Did Tracy go to the station with Coote, then?"

"I saw him," grinned Bunny. "He's stolen a march on you, Algy. Bet you he's nobbled the new boy's vote already."

Algernon Aubrey breathed hard through his noble nose.

"Where's the new kid now?" he asked.

"In the Head's study."

St. Leger glanced at his hand—some gold "ticker."

"Three o'clock," he said. "Lots of time. Bunny, you'll remember to be in the Glory Hole in good time to-day."

"You don't think I'd go back on an old pal, do you?" asked Bunny, in a tone of deep reproach.

"I think you'd better not, you fat owl."

"Oh, I say!"

"I've no time to watch you to-day," said St. Leger. "But if you back out, Bunny, look out for a thin time ahead. You'll fancy you're in the Russian famine."

"I'm sticking to my old pals," said Bunny affectionately. "I say, Algy, can I do some shopping for you for tea? Better have tea immediately after the election; we shall be hungry."

"If Wilmot is elected, old bean, there will be a spread in this study that will break all records," said Algernon Aubrey. "I'll give you carte blanche to do the shoppin'."

Bunny's eyes glistened.

"Good man," he said. "As for depending on me, Algy, you could trust me with your life. I'm votin' for dear old Wilmot. D-d-do you think Oliphant would notice it if I voted with both hands? That would count one to the good if he didn't notice it—"

"You fat rascal!" roared Algy.

"Oh, I say!"

"Why they sent you to St. Kit's, Bunny, instead of to a reformatory is a puzzle to me," said Algy, shaking his head.

"Oh, don't be a funny ass, you know," said Bunny. "I say, we've got to get our man in somehow. Must do it—for the good of the school, you know—and—and so on. That new kid's got to vote

for him; that'll do the trick. I'll get a chance of telling him about the spread—"

"Dry up!"

"You're not so keen about electing old Wilmot as I am, Algy," said Bootles. "I'd do anything for such an old pal. Will there be meringues at the spread? Mrs. Coote's got meringues."

"Give me a rest, fatty. Blow away for a bit, old bean."

"I say, Algy—"

"Well?"

"I've run out of tin. Could you lend me half-a-crown?"

"Go and eat coke!"

Algernon Aubrey walked out of the study. Bunny Bootles blinked after him with a very injured look.

"Blessed if some fellows wouldn't go and vote for Tracy after that," he murmured. "But—but—I'll stick to Algy. That cad Tracy would turn me down immediately after he got elected; I know that. Not the sort of fellow we want for Form-captain."

And Bunny Bootles generously decided to forgive Algy and to stand by the old flag at all costs.

Algernon Aubrey walked down to the football ground, where he found Harry Wilmot busy. But Harry came off at St. Leger's call.

"Only practice, isn't it?" asked St. Leger.

"Yes," said Harry, with a smile.

"The new kid's come."

"Has he?" said Harry, indifferently.

"I want you to come and lie in wait for him, and make his acquaintance, old bean."

Wilmot shook his head.

"Look here," urged Algy.

"How can I ask the kid for his vote when I don't even know him?" asked Harry.

"Tracy bagged him at the station, and came in the trap with him. Bet your Sunday socks Tracy's asked him."

"Then it's too late."

"He mayn't have promised."

"Leave it till the election," said Harry. "If Rake is there he will be able to decide for himself whom to vote for."

Algy groaned.

"Call yourself an electioneer?" he said, in disgust. "Go back to your merry football, you ass. I'll do the best I can for you."

"Join us at the footer," suggested Harry.

"Oh, rats!"

Harry laughed and rejoined the footballers. Algernon Aubrey walked away to the School House.

As he strolled in a leisurely way into the Head's corridor he found that there were three other fellows there already. Tracy and Howard and Lumley were lounging by the window. They grinned at the sight of St. Leger.

"Lookin' for our bird?" asked Howard.

"Eh, what?"

"You know the new kid's with the Head, and you're after him," sneered Tracy. "Well, you're not goin' to have him."

Algy shrugged his graceful shoulders.

"That remains to be seen, old pheasant," he answered.

And he strolled about the passage until the door of the Head's study opened. As the door opened there was a general movement of interest in the corridor. But Mr. Rawlings, the master of the Fourth, came out with Rake, the legal gentleman remaining with Dr. Chenies.

Mr. Rawlings glanced at the juniors in the corridor, and walked on with Bob to his own study. The door of that apartment closed on them.

Algernon Aubrey shrugged his shoulders, and Tracy & Co. muttered under their breath. All four of the juniors got a move on, and took up a position in the passage outside Mr. Rawlings' study.

When the door of that study opened there was again a movement of interest. But again Mr. Rawlings came out with the new junior.

Bob Rake smiled faintly as he



MEETING THE NEW BOY! Tracy stepped forward, and raised his shining silk topper politely to the new junior. The latter stopped, looked at him, and raised his own hat in reply. Probably he guessed that the elegant youth was from St. Kit's. "Excuse me," said Tracy, with great courtesy, "new chap for St. Kit's, what?" "Yes," "Rake, I think?" "That's my name," assented the new fellow.

saw the same crowd in the passage, Tracy among them. Bob was "catching on" to the state of affairs in the Fourth Form at St. Kit's, and finding it rather amusing.

Mr. Rawlings walked away with Bob to the house-dame's room. Tracy & Co. exchanged looks of disgust.

"Jever see anythin' so beastly annoyin'?" growled Tracy. "When are we goin' to catch the brute?"

"St. Leger's followin' on—"

"Come on, then."

Four expectant juniors took up their stand near Mrs. Brown's door. After the interview with the house-dame Mr. Rawlings came out with Bob, and raised his eyebrows at the sight of St. Leger, Tracy, Howard, and Lumley. He was growing rather surprised at seeing so much of those juniors. But he did not leave the new boy even then. He walked with him to the Fourth Form class-room.

"Showin' the cad round," muttered Tracy.

Four juniors followed on. They were joined by a fifth, Durance having returned by this time.

Mr. Rawlings came out of the Fourth Form room, and his eyebrows went up again at the sight of his increased following. He paused and called to Algernon Aubrey.

"St. Leger!"

"Yaas, sir."

"Kindly take Rake—this is the new boy, Robert Rake—kindly take him to the Fourth Form passage—"

"Oh, yaas, sir!" said Algy brightly. "Very pleased, sir."

"Rake will be placed in Study No. 9," said Mr. Rawlings. "There is room for him there, as Carton has left."

"Oh!" said Algy. Tracy grinned.

Certainly he did not want the fellow to be planted in his study for good. But he wanted him very much for that afternoon. Afterwards Tracy did not doubt that he would find some way of getting rid of the encumbrance.

"Rake is a new boy from a distant country, St. Leger," said Mr. Rawlings. "In the circumstances I should be glad if you would show him any little attention in your power on his first day at the school."

"Delighted, sir," said Algy, with such heartiness that Mr. Rawlings smiled and nodded very approvingly.

"Thank you, St. Leger," he said. "Not at all, sir."

"Rake, you will go with St.

Leger now, and he will show you your new quarters."

"Very well, sir."

Bob Rake walked away with the dandy of the Fourth, and Mr. Rawlings rustled off to his own quarters. Tracy & Co. looked at one another. Durance smiled. It was because Mr. Rawlings knew that Algy, with all his dandified ways, had a kind heart and a generous nature, that he had trusted the new boy into his care instead of calling upon Tracy, whom otherwise he would naturally have selected as Bob's future study-mate. Tracy had only himself to thank for being overlooked, for in other circumstances Tracy would have looked on the task of taking charge of a new boy as a bore and a trouble, and would have shown his feelings pretty plainly. Hence Durance's smile. Tracy gave him a savage look in answer to his smile.

"Is there anythin' to grin at?" he snarled.

"Keep your wool on, old bean," said Durance, laughing. "The game isn't lost till it's won. As he's goin' to be our study-mate we ought to be able to bag him somehow?"

"Come on," said Tracy, between his teeth.

And the nuts followed on the trail of Algernon Aubrey St. Leger and the new junior.

(There will be a further long instalment of this popular school story in our Bumper Christmas Number out on Saturday, December 20th. Don't miss it, nor the grand Book of Christmas Fun given FREE to all readers!)

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A VICTIM OF HIS OWN TREACHERY!

(Continued from page 394.)

severe trouble, and that he was ready to help. That Valence Chilcot was there, and that he had fallen a victim to his own treachery, Jimmy did not think of guessing. But it was clear that someone was being severely hurt; and Jimmy came up the footpath at breathless speed.

Whack, whack, whack! He heard the lashing of the stick, amid the wild yelling of the dandy of Oakshott, as he arrived on the scene. In the dusk neither Chilcot nor Bill Chivers saw him, and on the thickly-strawn fallen leaves of the footpath his footsteps made no sound. He came up with a breathless rush, and in the dimness he saw a writhing form in the grasp of the ruffian, and the stick descending; and without waiting a second, Jimmy Silver rushed right at Bill Chivers.

Crash! With all his strength and all his weight behind it, Jimmy Silver drove his fist into the ruffian's stubble face.

There was a hoarse yell from Chivers, and he rolled over on the path, dazed by that hefty drive.

Chilcot rolled free from him. The stick dropped from the hooligan's hand, as he sprawled on his back, seeing more stars than an astronomer ever saw through the most powerful glass. Jimmy Silver caught it up.

"Now then, you scoundrel—" "Oh, my eye!" gasped Chivers. "Ow!"

"Help!" panted Chilcot. Chivers scrambled up. Even in the dusk Jimmy recognised him as the man he had seen watching the dead oak. And quite aware that he had to deal with a dangerous ruffian, Jimmy did not stand on ceremony with him. As Chivers scrambled to his feet, the Rookwood junior lashed out with the stick, and Chivers roared as he caught it with his head.

The ruffian sprang away, and dodged into the wood. There was a crashing in the bushes as he fled. Jimmy Silver turned back to the fellow sprawling in the path. It was not till he bent over him that he recognised him.

Then he jumped. "Chilcot!" he ejaculated.

Valence Chilcot panted. He was aching all over from the beating he had received, though Jimmy's arrival had saved him from worse; and he was almost weeping with rage and pain.

"Oh—oh! Ow—ow!" "So it's you!" said Jimmy Silver, staring at him blankly in the dusk.

"You! My hat!" Chilcot staggered up.

"Silver!" he muttered. "You! Where—where's that scoundrel? Is—is he gone?"

"He's gone," said Jimmy dryly. Chilcot stood panting.

"You!" he repeated. "You—oh gad! It—it was you helped me—you, Silver!"

"Little me!" said Jimmy. "Your man seems to have made a mistake, hasn't he? Did he take you for me in the dusk?"

"My—my man?" stammered Chilcot. "I—I don't understand—"

"Don't you?" said Jimmy grimly. "I think you do. You've got what you meant for me, you rotter!"

"I—I—I—" "That's enough," said Jimmy Silver. He tossed away the stick into the trees. "You're a pretty sickening rotter, Chilcot—not much better than that rough, I think. Pah!"

And with that Jimmy Silver turned away. Chilcot made a sudden movement after the Rookwood junior.

"Silver!" Jimmy stopped and turned his head. "I—I'm sorry! It—it was awfully decent of you to help me. I'm sorry!" stammered Chilcot. "I don't know how you know, but it's true—I meant it for you, and I got it. And if you hadn't helped me—" He broke off. "I—I'm sorry, Silver, and I've only got what I deserved. That's all."

And without waiting for an answer Valence Chilcot hurried away.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Jimmy. And in a thoughtful mood he walked back to Coombe Lane and took his way to Rookwood.

"Well?" Lovell and Raby and Newcome uttered that monosyllable in chorus, as Jimmy Silver came into the end study at Rookwood.

They stared, as Jimmy told the tale of what had happened in Coombe Wood.

"Well, of all the rotters!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "It's the limit—even for Chilcot. Next time, you ass, you won't go without your pals to look after you, fathead!"

"I don't think there'll be a next time!" said Jimmy Silver with a smile.

And Jimmy was right; it was the end, for the time at least, of the Oakshott Feud.

THE END.

"A Christmas Chase!" is the great story of Jimmy Silver & Co. appearing in our Bumper Christmas Number out on Saturday, December 20th. Don't miss it, nor the grand FREE Book of Christmas Fun!

THE FORTUNE CARRIER!

(Continued from page 388.)

niggers, saw one of these islands drifting down on them. They opened the boom to let it pass and watched it as it glided through.

It passed and slid on into the gloom. Then a watchful eye amongst the Pinto guards saw the white gleam of a lifeboat in the floating reed and a shot buzzed over the island. Yells resounded along the boom and from the canoes attached to it, and a rattle of musketry woke the echoes of the river as a wild volley of bullets whistled down-river.

The floating island opened and out of it glided a launch and two lifeboats, heading down-stream. And after it darted a long white steam-launch, crowded by the Brothers Pinto and their followers, vowing vengeance on the crowd who had stolen this mysterious march on them.

Captain Handyman let them come, for far behind the last lifeboat swizzled through the water the dark shape of a steel petrol container just about the size of a Mark 14 torpedo. "I will have vengeance!" shouted Manoel Pinto through the darkness. "I know you. It is Handyman! It is those infernal boys of da Bombay Castle! I will catch you all, and I will put you in my slave coffin, and I will cut the hides off you!"

In Two Weeks' Time! "THE LION AT BAY!" A Powerful War Story of 1975. Look out for it!

"A verra unpleasant person, Hameesh!" whispered Angus to Hamish as they watched Mr. Pugsley laying on his face with a small box to which was attached a length of insulated wire which slid into the water with the tow-ropes of that long steel torpedo-like shape astern.

Mr. Pugsley watched the white launch in the darkness. He also watched a tiny electric bulb on his torpedo till it was trapped under by the oncoming launch. Then he pressed the button. There was a flash and a shattering roar. The Pinto launch lifted on a great fountain of water, and there was a gurgling on the Goom River as the shattered launch swung round on the sand bar, where the Brothers Pinto walked ashore, a thousand pounds poorer than they had been five minutes before.

"That'll teach 'em!" said Captain Handyman, grinning, as he towed a hundred thousand pounds' worth of radium, enclosed in leaden boxes, down the dark river. "They are the Brothers Half a Pinto now. Now, you Scotch gentlemen, you can make all the noise you like! Play us that piece that sounds like a dog run over by a Ford car!"

Angus grinned. "Ye'll mean 'The Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon,' captain," he said.

"That's it," said Captain Handyman. "Where we draw the club-money this morning!"

THE END.

(A story you'll enjoy no end—"The Sultan of Bong!" By Duncan Storm. Appearing in our Bumper Christmas Number out on Saturday, December 20th. Don't miss your BOYS' FRIEND whatever you do, nor the Book of Christmas Fun given away FREE with every copy!)

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers upon any subject. Address your letters to: Editor, "Boys' Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

THAT WIRELESS BOOK!

Another famous number of the BOYS' FRIEND this week! With this record issue I am giving away the handiest, most useful, and the best possible vade mecum for wireless enthusiasts that ever found its way on to the market. Be sure you get it! It's a perfect marvel! So is the current number of the old "Green 'Un."

WHAT OF OUR NEXT?

I am prepared to answer this myself. No good leaving it to echo. Our coming issue is just the goods for Christmas. It is so full of grand attractions that I am puzzled to know just where to start.

A REAL BUMPER CHRISTMAS NUMBER!

This new issue of the BOYS' FRIEND will be on sale on Saturday, December 20th, and a jolly suitable day, too! This Grand Christmas Number contains a brilliant batch of Christmassy yarns, all as fresh as paint, and with a crisp, bright spirit about them. It does not end there. With the new number comes a splendid Free Book.

A BOOK OF CHRISTMAS FUN!

How's that, umpire? Every fellow likes to swot up something smart and lively for Christmas. Here lies the opportunity. Just consult the BOYS' FRIEND Book of Christmas Fun if you have any serious intention of decorating your Christmas parties with merry jests, and fascinatingly original games, etc. The Book of Christmas Fun will help things along right well. As Jack Point said, nobody utters a complain so long as you are funny. This new feature is full of the real, rib-tickling material which raises a laugh on all sides.

REAL BASSETT-LOWKE MODEL RAILWAYS GIVEN AWAY!

For our new one-week competition there is a prize-list which would rouse the Seven Sleepers from their slumbers. The principal prizes to the won in this jolly picture-puzzle competition are real Bassett-Lowke model railways, while six pairs of Boxing Gloves are also offered, as is only fitting, since the puzzle-picture deals with the forthcoming BOYS' FRIEND Book of Boxing, shortly to be presented as a Free Supplement. The Model Railways are really something to be enthusiastic about. The 4-4-0 express, type tender locomotive is accurate in detail and locale, and is fitted with the best clockwork mechanism, with brake and reverser in cab. By a special device it can also be started and stopped from the track. The bogie coaches are beautifully made in the most accurate detail, and the railway is complete with sufficient best quality rails to make an oval track 4ft. by 6½ft. These railways are not in any way to be compared with cheap and shoddy foreign-made sets, but are beautifully made in every detail, and manufactured by Bassett-Lowke, the famous model engineers, of Northampton. They are prizes worth striving for!

"A CHRISTMAS CHASE!"

Of course, our Grand Christmas Number has a brilliant batch of Christmas stories. The chase mentioned above refers to a brisk little snowballing affair at Rookwood. Lovell, as it happened, chucked a snowball into the air, and it fell to earth—well, he just jolly well didn't know where the missile fell. That snowball crashed down right on to—but that is telling! Lovell was unlucky. There was Head and front to his offending. You will laugh, then you will feel a bit sorry, and after that you will laugh some more. And so on. It is a brisk and rollicking yarn.

"THE SULTAN OF BONG!"

Duncan Storm pitches his new tale in the Island of Bong. The yarn is tres bon, and you will feel keenly intrigued about the doings of the autocratic sultan. What is more, it is Christmas-time, and Dick Dorrington & Co. take the festive season in a right and proper spirit of becoming cheerfulness. It will have to stand at that!

"THE RED CRUSADERS' PANTO!"

Next, please, as the chatty barber says. Well, the next item is this pantomime, which is the stimulating story of an actor who has come crack on hard times. He is a topping fellow, a regular Thespian of the old school. All the best lessons were learned at the old school. The man has a rival who stands at nothing, and just thereby hangs the tale. Why say more? You cannot boil down the tale of the Red Crusaders into a few lines. My remarks are merely to impart a pleasant inkling of the threat in store.

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE FOURTH!"

You can take it direct from Mr. Frank Richards that the fight for the captaincy of the festive Fourth at St. Kit's still goes strong. The new instalment is a ripper.

"CLAUDE DUVAL'S CHRISTMAS!"

By Edmund Burton. This time the author gives us a vivid scene straight out of the Stand and Deliver days of long ago. The yarn has a remarkable swing in it, and plenty of snap, while as for the dramatic surprise which awaits a certain noble lord, no words of praise are adequate. Mr. Burton has won lots of applause. This tale will send his reputation up pegs higher.

THE SCOUTMASTER AND OTHERS

Our next issue will contain another rattling "Talks to My Troop," by "The Scoutmaster" on the enticing subject, "How to Raise £100." There is good advice here for all Scouts and others who are out to augment club funds, etc. Mind you drop a hint about the "Holiday Annual" when you get cross-examined about what you would really fancy for a Christmas present.

Your Editor.

BOOKS OF SPORT, SCHOOL AND ADVENTURE. It's Worth Your While—To Give Them A Trial! The Boys' Friend Library. The Sexton Blake Library. No. 741.—THE LUCK AGAINST HIM. No. 742.—THE OUTCAST OF ST. BASIL'S. No. 743.—THE RIVAL SPORTSMEN. No. 744.—FACING THE FOOTLIGHTS. No. 359.—NEXT OF KIN. No. 360.—THE CASE OF THE JADE-HANDLED KNIFE. No. 361.—IN THE LAND OF THE RIFPS; OR, Sexton Blake, Sheik. No. 362.—THE CASE OF THE SLEEPING PARTNER.

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