

JUST STARTING! THE BOYS OF THE "BOMBAY CASTLE"!

FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOLDAYS! JUST STARTING!

# The BOYS' FRIEND

JIMMY SILVER & CO. APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE!

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## A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.  
By OWEN CONQUEST.

### The 1st Chapter. Under the Shadow!

"Master Morny!"  
Mornington of the Fourth spun round as the timid voice spoke in his study doorway.  
Morny had been standing by the window, staring out gloomily into the quadrangle of Rookwood.  
The green old quad was bright in the summer sunshine, and the sound of cheery voices floated up from below. But Mornington's face was dark and gloomy as he stared out.  
Little 'Erbert of the Second Form, the waif of Rookwood, stepped timidly in at the open door.  
He retreated a pace as Mornington turned upon him, so dark and savage was the look of the dandy of the Fourth.  
"So you've come?" said Mornington, between his teeth.  
"Yes, Master Morny," faltered 'Erbert.  
"Lattrey's told you?"  
"I—"  
"Lattrey's told you!" repeated Mornington, making a stride towards the fag. "And you've come to tell me you know, you young rotter! After all that I've done for you, you are going to rob me of everything! Hang you!"  
The fag stared at him.  
"Master Morny!"  
"I brought you to Rookwood," pursued Mornington bitterly. "I found you starving on the road. If I'd left you there you'd never have troubled me again. I brought you in. I made my guardian enter you in the school. I've made you into a Rookwood chap instead of a ragged tramp, and stood by you all through. And now you're going to rob me and leave me bare!"  
The waif of Rookwood's eyes opened wide in astonishment and terror.  
"Master Morny! Wot are you sayin'?" he ejaculated. "You must be fair off your chump, Master Morny. How can I rob you?"  
Mornington gritted his teeth.  
"Hasn't Lattrey told you, then?" he exclaimed.  
"I ain't seen Master Lattrey."  
"Oh, I thought—"  
"I know all you've done for me, Master Morny," said 'Erbert. "I knows 'ow you took me up, me that ain't got even a name of my own, and looked after me. I ain't likely to forget it, sir."  
"You don't know—yet?" muttered Mornington. "I thought Lattrey had told you, when you came."  
"Wot could he tell me?"  
Mornington sneered.  
"Wait till he tells you!" he retorted. "Oh, the cad, the rotter! This is his game, to keep me in suspense. The cat and the mouse over again." The dandy of Rookwood clenched his hands. "And I've got to stand it—I've got to stand it from him!"  
"Master Morny," faltered 'Erbert. "What did you want here?" ex-

claimed Mornington harshly. "If Lattrey hasn't sent you, what do you want?"  
"I came with a message from Jimmy Silver, sir!"  
"Hang Jimmy Silver!"  
"Master Silver says he'd like you to come down to the cricket—"  
"Hang the cricket!"  
"Well, that's all, sir."  
'Erbert of the Second made a movement to retreat from the study, sorry that he had come there. Mornington had been kind and generous to him, but 'Erbert had learned that his patron's temper was very uncertain. And the wild words with which the

dandy of Rookwood had greeted him had really caused him to entertain a doubt as to whether Valentine Mornington was quite in his right senses. Mornington's eyes followed him, gleaming with hatred.  
It was clear that Morny was not quite himself.  
"To give up everything—for you!" he muttered. "You—you ragamuffin—you tramp! You!"  
"Master Morny!"  
"Get out of my sight!"  
Mornington made a spring towards the dismayed fag, and caught him savagely by the shoulder.  
In another moment 'Erbert would

have gone whirling through the doorway.  
"Morny!"  
It was Kit Erroll of the Fourth who spoke, as he stepped quietly into the study.  
At the sound of his chum's voice Mornington released the fag, the colour flooding crimson into his face.  
'Erbert staggered.  
"Morny, are you off your rocker?" exclaimed Erroll.  
Mornington burst into a bitter laugh.  
"Pretty nearly, I think," he said. He looked at the fag. "Run along, 'Erbert! Don't mind my temper."

I'm out of sorts—horribly out of sorts!"  
"I don't mind a bit, Master Morny," said the fag loyally.  
He hurried out of the study, disturbed and troubled in his mind. For many days past there had been passionate outbreaks of Mornington's temper, and the little fag wondered miserably what strange trouble was at the root of it.  
There were few things 'Erbert would not have done for the superb youth who had saved him from want and starvation; and it worried him to think that there was nothing he could do to help Mornington in his trouble—that he could not even guess what that unknown trouble was.  
Kit Erroll shut the door after the fag had gone.  
Then he fixed his eyes on Mornington, who stood with a gloomy brow, his hands driven deep in his pockets.  
"Morny! You needn't rag that poor little chap," he said reproachfully. "What's the matter with you? That kid would go through fire and water for you if you asked him."  
Mornington laughed bitterly.  
"I'm not in a reasonable mood," he said. "You know how the matter stands. Lattrey holds me in the hollow of his hand, and he is still keeping silent. He is playing with me, and I've got to stand it!"  
"That's not 'Erbert's fault."  
"You don't understand."  
Erroll gave him a quick, searching look.  
"Morny!" he exclaimed breathlessly. "It's not possible!"  
"So you've guessed it!" sneered Mornington.  
"You've told me the story—that your missing cousin, Cecil Mornington, has been found, and that you and Lattrey know where he is," said Erroll quietly. "I wondered how it could be. You told me he was a poor, unknown beggar, who did not know his own name. I wondered!"  
"You needn't wonder any more," sneered Mornington. "You might have guessed."  
"I suppose I might have guessed," assented Erroll. "It's 'Erbert!"  
"Yes; it's 'Erbert." Mornington's lip curled sardonically. "The beggar I picked up starving on the road—he's the missing heir of Mornington. I found it out by the birthmark on his shoulder. And Lattrey's found it out, too. That's what Lattrey's been holding over my head; that's why I've been under his thumb. And now I've broken with him he's going to betray the secret, and I'm going to become a nobody, and that young tramp is going to take my place as heir of Mornington. I—I could stand it if I could get it over. Why doesn't Lattrey speak and have done with it?"  
"It's rotten hard lines on you, Morny," said Erroll softly. "But I knew you'd do the right thing in the



A FEARFUL MOMENT! (See Our Grand School Tale!)

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## A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION!

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coolly. "I was willing to keep terms with you, but you wouldn't have it. You can take the consequences now."

"What have you told your father?"

"I've told him that I'm on the track of the missing heir of Mornington!" grinned Lattrey. "That I can put my finger on him any time I please. I've asked him how I stand for a whack in the reward if I do put my finger on him. I haven't mentioned that he's at Rookwood. I'm not giving too much away. The pater will be too keen to let a chance slip. The game's up—for you. You've got yourself to thank for it."

Mornington was silent. The malice in Lattrey's hard face told him that there was no further hope. It was indeed too late to make terms with the unscrupulous junior who had blackmailed him.

He had been under Lattrey's thumb, and if he had remained there patiently the cad of the Fourth would have kept the secret for his own advantage.

But Mornington's passionate temper had been unable to endure it. More than once his temper had broken out fiercely, and the blackmailer had felt the weight of his arm.

The last blow had been one too many, and Lattrey had done his worst.

"I'm expecting an answer from my pater by every post," continued Lattrey, enjoying the expression on Mornington's face. "When it comes I shall blab, as you call it, fast enough. Until the pater's agreed to my whack in the reward, I hold my tongue. That's all. Make the most of what time you've got left. It may be a day or two."

Mornington set his teeth hard. Without a word further, he turned and quitted the study, followed by Lattrey's mocking laugh.

He understood now. Lattrey was enjoying the suspense in which he was keeping him, but it would not last long now.

In a day or two—two or three days at the most—the truth would be told. Little 'Erbert, the waif of Rookwood, would be known as the heir of Mornington. And Mornington of the Fourth would be known as—what? A beggar, dependent on his cousin's bounty—dependent on the ragamuffin he had saved from want! It would be a strange reversal of the position.

Mornington's face was white as he quitted the School House.

If the blow would only have fallen quickly, he felt that he could have borne it better. The suspense was tearing his nerves to tatters.

He walked down to the cricket-field aimlessly.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at practice at the nets, and several voices greeted Mornington as he came up.

"Come and give us some bowling, Morny!" called out Jimmy Silver.

Erroll, who was about to bowl, tossed the ball to his chum at once. He was glad to see Morny there.

Mornington smiled sardonically. Cricket was not much to him at that moment. His old ambition to shine as a member of the Rookwood Junior Eleven seemed a very small thing to him now in the presence of the black trouble that weighed upon his heart and his mind.

But he went on the crease, hoping that the game would help to drive away black care.

Morny was one of the best bowlers in the Fourth when he was in the mood, and the junior bats were glad to get him to practice. A wicket needed watching when Morny was bowling against it, as a rule.

But the dandy of the Fourth was not in form now.

His bowling was wild and erratic, and the first ball did not even go within reach of the bat, let alone near the wicket.

Jimmy Silver stared as Lovell started after the wandering leather.

"Wide!" grinned Raby.

"Very wide!" chuckled Newcome.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Do you call that bowling, Morny?" chirruped Tommy Dodd, the Modern.

"Classical bowling, you know!" said Tommy Cook disparagingly.

"That's how they bowl on the Classical side! Huh!"

Mornington scowled as he heard the uncomplimentary remarks of the junior cricketers.

Lovell tossed back the ball, and he

bowled again, as badly as before, and the third ball went wide.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "You're off your form, Morny! What the merry dickens is the matter with you?"

"Oh, rats!" growled Mornington.

"Hang cricket!"

He drove his hands into his pockets savagely, and strode off the field, leaving the juniors laughing.

Erroll joined him as he went.

"What is it now, Morny?" he asked.

The dandy of the Fourth laughed bitterly.

"I'm out of sorts! I've seen Lattrey, and it's too late! You needn't be alarmed for me, old scout. I've no chance of making a bargain with the cad. He's written to his pater, the sneaking detective who's been hunting for my lost cousin. The game's up!"

Erroll's face was very grave.

"It's hard cheese," he said. "But think a minute, Morny. You've been jolly good to 'Erbert. You saved him from starvation when you brought him to Rookwood. You risked your life to pull him out of the river only a few weeks ago. He's devoted to you. You can't suppose he'll want to take everything and leave you quite stranded. He's bound to treat you generously."

"Do you think I want to take charity from him?" sneered Mornington.

"It won't exactly be that. A rich fellow expects to help his relations."

"And I'm goin' to be a poor relation—me a poor relation hangin' after a chap for what he will give me!"

"You look on the worst side of it," said Erroll. "There's your uncle, too. He will see you through."

"And to think that I pulled that kid out of beggary, and brought him here," said Mornington, with bitter emphasis. "But for that, he'd never have been found. I owe it all to myself."

"You did a kind and decent thing, Morny, and you can't be sorry for it."

"And I dragged him out of the river! If I'd left him there—"

"Morny!" muttered Erroll.

"Am I shockin' you?" Mornington grinned sardonically. "Well, I'll shock you some more. I wish I'd left him in the river, hang him!"

"You don't, Morny," said Erroll quietly. "Don't talk like that! It's bad lines on you; I know, but you've got the pluck to stand it."

"And the pluck to prevent it, if there's a chance left," muttered Mornington, with a dark look.

"It can't be prevented now, Morny—now that Lattrey has given it away."

"Who knows?"

"What are you thinking of now?" asked Erroll, troubled and uneasy, and almost alarmed by the expression on Mornington's face.

Mornington laughed again—a hard laugh that had no merriment in it.

"I won't tell you, old chap. I'd shock you too much! Get back to your cricket. Jimmy Silver wants you to bowl."

"But—"

"Ta-ta!"

Mornington walked away, and Erroll, with a deeply troubled brow, went back to the cricket-pitch.

He was wondering uneasily what thought was in Mornington's mind, that brought that strange look to his face.

He would have been more alarmed if he could have guessed the dark and terrible thoughts that thronged the fevered brain of the dandy of the Fourth.

### The 3rd Chapter.

#### A Surprise for Joey Hook!

"Comin' out, Morny?"

The nuts of the Fourth were standing in an elegant group, chatting, by the gateway, when Mornington came down to the gates.

Townsend and Topham, Peele and Gower eyed him curiously.

Morny's savage temper of late had almost estranged his nutty friends. Torny had complained that there was no standin' Morny now, and the other nutty youths quite agreed with him. If there was much more of it, Torny declared, they would have to drop Morny entirely.

Mornington's face was pale now, and his eyes had an unnatural glitter in them. He hardly glanced at the nuts as they greeted him. Townsend & Co. followed him into the road.

Then Morny turned on them.

"What do you want?"

"What price a run down to the merry old Bird-in-Hand?" said Townsend.

"Old Hook's there, and we can get up a game of billiards."

"Oh, rot!"

"Well, where are you goin'?"

"Never mind where I'm goin'," said Mornington savagely. "I don't want your company."

"By gad!"

Mornington strode away down the lane, and the nuts stared after him in utter disgust and wrath, without following him further.

"Morny's manners are improvin'," remarked Topham, with a shrug of the shoulders.

Townsend set his lips.

"I'm fed up with the cad," he said.

"I'm not standin' any more of it. I'm not goin' to speak to him again."

"Same here!" said Gower.

Quite regardless of the anger of his nutty friends, Mornington strode on. He forgot the existence of Townsend & Co. in a minute or less.

He turned from the lane into the path that led to the long inn garden behind the Bird-in-Hand, and entered the garden by the little gate under thick trees.

That quarter was strictly out of bounds for Rookwood, but Mornington was not in a mood to heed such restrictions now.

He walked up the path in the inn garden, and stopped at the open French windows of the billiard-room.

There was a clinking of ball and cue in the room.

Joey Hook, the bookmaker, was there, killing time with a game with the marker, while waiting for pigeons to flutter in for plucking.

He laid down the cue at once, and turned with an agreeable grin, at the sight of the handsome, elegant Rookwood junior in the doorway.

"Afternoon, sir," he said heartily. "You've looked in for a hundred up, eh—what?"

"No, I want to speak to you."

"Go a'ead, sir."

"Come out here."

"Right you are!"

The hoary, greasy marker glanced curiously at Mornington's white face as the Rookwood junior went back into the garden.

Joey Hook followed him with alacrity.

The wealthy and reckless Rookwood fellow was one of the richest pigeons Mr. Hook ever had the chance of plucking, and his manner towards Mornington was servility itself.

The junior led the way to a little summer-house in the garden, where they were safe out of earshot.

Hook followed him in, and sat down. Mornington remained standing.

"Well, wot is it, sir?" asked Joey Hook cordially. "Always at your service, sir."

Mornington fixed his eyes upon the red, harsh face of the bookmaker. Joey Hook, warned off the Turf for malpractices there, was one of the most unscrupulous rascals outside prison walls, as Mornington well knew. Sharper, gambler, welsker, gaol-bird—such was Mr. Joseph Hook.

"I want you to do something for me, Hook," said the junior abruptly. "Anything, sir."

"It might be risky."

"Oh!" said Mr. Hook, eyeing him narrowly. "Well, I don't mind, sir. You've had a quarrel with some young gent at the school, and you don't want to soil your 'ands on 'im. I'm your man, sir!"

Mornington shook his head impatiently.

"It's more serious than that."

Hook whistled softly. He could see that Mornington was in a strange, unusual mood, and he was beginning to wonder.

"Well, s'pose you tell me wot it is, sir," he said. "I'd do anything I could to oblige a young gent like you, sir."

"You know I'm rich, Hook," said Mornington quietly. "I can get all the money I choose to ask my guardian for, within limits."

"I know it, sir."

Mr. Hook, indeed, knew it well. It was the reason why he had so much soapy servility to spare for Mornington.

"And I could raise as much as I wanted from the moneylender over at Latham," continued Mornington. "I've done it once or twice already, when the geegees went wrong. I could lay my hands on a hundred pounds if I wanted it—or two hundred."

"Yes, sir," said Hook, in wonder. "You'd like to earn a hundred pounds, Hook?"

Joey Hook's beery eyes glistened. "Wouldn't I just!" he said emphatically.

"Well, I'll pay you that, if you do what I want, and another hundred after it."

"My heye!"

Joey Hook stared at the junior in blank amazement. He could not

imagine any service for which the dandy of Rookwood would pay him by the hundred pounds.

"Well, will you do it?"

"But—but wot is it, sir?"

"There's a chap at Rookwood—never mind his name now—a chap whom I dislike—"

Mornington paused.

"You want 'im bashed?" said Hook.

"I want him to leave Rookwood."

"Ye-es?"

"And never return," said Mornington.

Joey Hook started violently. His beery eyes were open and round now, and almost terrified, as they were fixed on the junior's white face.

"And—and—and never return!" repeated Hook mechanically.

"Yes."

"Master Mornington!"

Mornington burst into a hard, bitter laugh.

"You understand what I mean? The fellow's in my way—never mind how. Will you undertake to get him out of the way—for two hundred pounds?"

Joey Hook gave him a steady, searching look, and rose to his feet.

"I think you ain't quite yourself this arternoon, Master Mornington," he said quietly. "You look rather queer about the eyes, sir, if you don't mind my sayin' so. You'd best forget wot you've said to me, and I'll forget it, too. Good-arternoon, sir!"

And with that, Mr. Hook left the summer-house, and strode away towards the inn, without looking back.

Mornington stood still, his hands tightly clenched.

The ruffian had refused! Money could not tempt Joey Hook to such a crime as Mornington had hinted at.

After a few minutes, Mornington left the inn-garden by way of the towing path.

His face was white, and there was still the same strange, strained look about his eyes that Joey Hook had noted. He did not return to the school, but strode away by the path to Coombe Heath.

While the sun sank lower and lower, Mornington tramped over the heath, amid the dangerous old quarries, careless of the pits that yawned about his feet.

He stopped at last upon an abrupt verge, and stood staring downwards into the gloomy depths below, with iron nerve.

Far below, there was a faint echo of running water. Late rains had flooded the old quarry.

For many minutes the junior stood there, staring into the gloomy abyss, the expression on his face growing darker and darker. He turned away at last, in the thickening dusk, with the seal of a terrible resolution on his face.

### The 4th Chapter.

#### 'Erbert is Pleased!

"Mornington!"

Mr. Bootles was taking the roll-call in Big Hall at Rookwood.

Mornington of the Fourth did not answer to his name.

"Mornington!"

The master of the Fourth blinked round over his spectacles, and marked down Mornington as absent.

"Morny's goin' it again!" remarked Townsend, as the juniors came out of hall. "Keepin' it up at the Bird-in-Hand, I'll bet you!"

"And he didn't want us with him!" growled Peele. "Well, I hope he'll get a lickin' for missin' call-over!"

Kit Erroll went to the door, and looked out into the dusky quadrangle, wondering where his chum was. He glanced down as he felt a touch on his elbow, and nodded to 'Erbert of the Second Form.

"Master Morny ain't come in, sir," said the fag, in a low voice.

"Not yet," said Erroll.

"There's somethin' that ain't going right with Master Morny, sir," said 'Erbert. "I wish I knowed what it was. P'raps you know, bein' his pal."

Erroll looked at him very curiously. He could not tell Mornington's secret; it had been imparted to him in confidence. But he wondered what the waif of Rookwood would have thought, and said, if he could have known that he was the cousin of the superb youth who had befriended him, and heir to the estates that were supposed to be Mornington's.

'Erbert would know it soon—that was certain. The news would be strange and startling enough for the little waif who did not even know his own name.

"You know what's the matter with 'im, sir?" said 'Erbert.

"Yes," said Erroll, after a pause. "You couldn't tell a chap?"

Erroll shook his head. "I wish as I could 'elp 'im, some-

long run, and let your cousin have his rights. And you won't be a beggar. Your uncle's rich, and—"

"I'm not complainin'," said Mornington. "I can stand it. I can get out of Rookwood; I'll never take a back seat here. I don't care much what happens to me. But—but—he paused; his eyes gleaming—"if Lattrey intends to keep the secret after all—"

"Morny!"

"Do you think I'm anxious to be a beggar?" exclaimed the dandy of Rookwood fiercely. "I was a fool to quarrel with Lattrey—a dashed fool! He wanted me to give away a cricket-match to let him win his rotten bets. I was a fool to refuse!"

"You were right, and you'll be glad of it yet," said Erroll. "No good ever came of doing what you know to be wrong."

Mornington laughed scornfully. "I'm going to see Lattrey. There may be a chance yet."

"Morny!"

But Mornington left the study, and Kit Erroll was left alone, with a clouded brow. Mornington, between good and evil, had chosen good, but his resolution had already wavered.

The catastrophe that threatened him had dazed him, as it seemed, and he was not quite himself. Erroll stopped into the passage, only in time to see Mornington enter Lattrey's study and close the door.

And Kit Erroll went his way, with a deeply-troubled heart, only hoping that his wayward chum would yet find the right path and follow it.

### The 2nd Chapter.

#### Too Late!

"Come in, Morny, old scout!"

It was Tubby Muffin, Lattrey's study-mate, who greeted the dandy of Rookwood in affectionate tones.

Tubby Muffin beamed upon him, in fact.

Lattrey, the cad of the Fourth, was smoking a cigarette in the study, and he did not even look up.

"Had your tea, Morny?" pursued the fat Classical. "Nothing much here. You know how mean Lattrey is, and I happen to be short of money for once. But I'll tell you what. I'll come to tea with you, if you like."

"Get out!" said Mornington.

"Oh, I say—"

Mornington made a menacing gesture, and Tubby Muffin scuttled out of the study. It was his own study, and Morny had no right to turn him out of it, but Morny was not troubling himself about the rights of the matter.

He kicked the door shut after the fat junior, and turned to Lattrey, who was now regarding him with a sneering smile through the smoke of the cigarette.

"Well?" said Mornington.

"Well?" repeated Lattrey.

"You don't seem to have told your yarn yet," said Mornington.

Lattrey shrugged his shoulders.

"Any hurry?" he yawned.

"I've been thinking over the matter."

"And you've come here to beg for mercy!" jeered Lattrey.

"I've come to make terms, if you choose."

"After knocking me down before all the fellows, and telling them I tried to get you to give away the Woodend match!" Lattrey laughed. "It's too late, my infant! I'm fed-up with you, Morny!"

"You mean to make terms, or you would have blabbed before this!" said the dandy of the Fourth, eyeing him.

Lattrey laughed.

"It's too late!" he said. "I'm fed-up! I'm making terms, but not with you!"

"You haven't spoken to 'Erbert. I know that."

"I don't intend to. I've written to my father."

"Oh!" Mornington drew a deep breath. "You've told him—"

"Not everything—yet. You know my father's the inquiry agent employed by Sir Rupert Staepoole to keep up the search for Cecil Mornington. There's a reward when the kid's found. My information will make the pater able to bag it. That's where I get my whack!" said Lattrey



"ow," said 'Erbert, with a sigh. "Master Morny's got a quick temper, but he's done a lot for me, and I'd go and drown myself, sir, if it would do 'im any good. Course, I can't 'elp him now, but I—I wish there was somethin' I could do. Sometimes, sir, I've thought as Morny's trouble was somethin' to do with me."

Erroll was silent. "A few weeks ago he wanted me to get out of the school, sir, and then he changed his mind, arter Lattrey interfered," said 'Erbert. "If it would give him any pleasure I'd run away to-night, though I don't know why he's turned agin me." 'Erbert's voice trembled. "He don't like me now—can't bear the sight of me, and I haven't done nothing as I knows on."

"Don't think about it, kid," said Erroll kindly. "Suppose—" He paused. "Suppose the time came, 'Erbert, when you could repay Morny for his kindness to you—you'd be glad of the chance, wouldn't you?"

"Wotto!" said 'Erbert. "It may come, kid. In fact, I'm sure of it. When it does, you'll remember that Mornington stood your friend when you needed one."

"I ain't likely to forget it, sir," said 'Erbert. "Mean to say that I shall never be able to 'elp Master Morny like he's 'elped me?"

"I think so." "Wouldn't I be glad of the chance?" said 'Erbert, his eyes glistening. "P'raps Master Morny would be friendly again then."

There was a step in the darkness without, and the fag hurried away—he knew Mornington's step.

"You're late, Morny," said Erroll, as the dandy of the Fourth came up the steps, pale, and breathing hard.

"Yes; I've been on the moor." "You'll have to report to Bootles," said Erroll, watching Mornington's face anxiously.

"Yes, I know." Mornington went to the Fourth Form master's study, where he was duly awarded fifty lines for missing call-over.

Erroll met him in the passage as he came out from Mr. Bootles' study. "You haven't had your tea?" he asked.

"No; I forgot it." "Come up to my study; I've got some tommy."

"I don't feel hungry." "Rubbish! Come along!" Erroll took his chum's arm, and led him upstairs. Jimmy Silver called to them in the Fourth Form passage.

"Hallo, you slackers! Meeting of the Classical Players in the box-room, in five minutes."

"Morny hasn't had his tea; we'll be along a bit later—"

"Oh, bother Morny's tea!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily; and he went on to gather up the members of the dramatic society.

Erroll led his chum into No. 2, where Higgs and Jones minor were engaged in a warm argument as to who should wash up tea-cups.

"Players' meeting in the box-room," said Erroll; and Higgs and Jones minor left the study. The question of washing-up the tea-cups was deferred till another occasion.

Erroll pushed Mornington into a chair, and speedily placed his meal before him. Mornington ate mechanically.

"I've been talking to young 'Erbert," said Erroll. "Hang him!"

"Morny, considering what's going to happen, you're not taking the right line with that kid."

Mornington's lip curled. "Do you think I'm going to suck up to him, because he's going to have my money?" he said. "Am I the kind of chap to curry favour for charity?"

"It's not like that. The kid thinks all the world of you, and he is cut up by your being so rusty to him. It's rather rotten."

"I know it's rotten," said Mornington grimly. "I can't help it, though. I'm a rotter, you know—a rotter, through and through. If you knew what I've been at this afternoon you'd pitch me out of your study neck and crop!"

Erroll eyed him uneasily. "I won't ask you any questions, Morny."

"Better not; I shouldn't answer them."

"But about 'Erbert—why don't you treat him a bit more decently? When

he knows the truth, Morny, he will be anything but pleased, I am sure of that. He won't want to take your place, and he will be anxious to make it as easy as possible for you."

Mornington gave his chum a strange look. "Perhaps you're right," he remarked. "I'll be a bit more civil to the kid. In fact, I'll ask him to come out with me to-morrow."

"That's better," said Erroll, relieved. "The poor kid can't help it, you know—he can't help being who he is, Morny."

"I know he can't! And I can't help wishing that I'd let him go to the bottom of the river, instead of pulling him out, like a fool!" Mornington laughed impatiently as he caught the look on Erroll's face. "Don't give me a sermon, old chap, for goodness' sake—I can't stand it now! Cut along and join the merry Players—I'm not comin'."

"What are you going to do, Morny?"

"Oh, I'll drop in and see 'Erbert!" "Oh, good!"

Erroll left the study, and Mornington finished his tea, and followed a few minutes later. He sauntered away in the direction of the Second Form-room. The fags were gathering there for evening preparation; and 'Erbert came along the passage with Snooks and Jones minimus.

He sighted Mornington at once, and

The two nuts stared at the scratchy sketch. "Well, my hat!" exclaimed Peele. "That's a cheery subject to draw, I must say!"

Mornington had drawn a picture of a gallows. Peele and Gower stared at it and at him. The slumbering fire in his eyes vaguely alarmed them. Morny tore up the sheet of blotting-paper and threw the fragments into the fender.

His face was twisted into a strange, sardonic grin. He did not speak to his study-mates, but left the study to them.

Gower and Peele exchanged glances. "Somethin's jolly wrong with Morny," said Peele sagely. "Did you notice his eyes, Gower—how jolly queer they look?"

Gower nodded. "He's got somethin' on his mind," he said. "It almost looks to me—"

He paused. "It looks to me," said Peele deliberately, "as if Morny's goin' off his blessed rocker!"

"That's what I meant." "Blessed if I half like having him in the study," growled Peele. "If ever a chap looked cracked, Morny does!"

Mornington did not return to his study for prep. Neither did he turn up in the box-room for the meeting of the Classical Players. He was not seen again till bedtime, when the Classical Fourth went to their dormi-

said Jimmy Silver. And the Fistical Four went on their way, much pleased by 'Erbert's pleasure.

Mornington came down to the gates as they left, and cast a dark, suspicious glance after them.

Jimmy paused, and looked back. "You two are going to Latcham—what?" he asked.

"Yes," muttered Mornington. "Like us to pull you there in our boat? We're going to make an afternoon of it."

"No, thanks! We're going to walk."

"Right-ho!" Jimmy Silver hurried after his chums, and the Fistical Four launched their boat, and forgo all about Mornington.

"Come on!" said Mornington abruptly. 'Erbert went out into the road with the dandy of the Fourth. Townsend & Co. were chatting in the road, and they looked with great disfavour at the two as they passed.

"Morny's taken up that young ragamuffin again," said Townsend, with a sneer and a shrug. "I thought he'd dropped him for good."

"You never know how to take Morny," complained Topham. Peele glanced after Morny.

"I don't like the look in his eye," he said. "I say, you chaps, have you ever heard whether there's insanity in the Mornington family?"

"My hat! Not that I know of."

Mornington turned from the path, and then 'Erbert spoke. "It's right on to Latcham, Master Morny," he said timidly.

"We'll go this way." "Orl right, sir."

Knee-deep in grass and ferns, they walked on, Mornington a little ahead of the fag, and walking so fast that 'Erbert had trouble to keep up with him.

The roofs of Coombe had disappeared now, and round them the wide heath stretched, with billowing gorse, to the horizon. Overhead the summer sun shone from a sky of almost cloudless blue.

A vague sense of loneliness settled on 'Erbert. Why was Mornington so strangely silent? This was not the happy walk he had been looking forward to.

"Stop here a bit," said Mornington at last.

'Erbert halted. They stood on the edge of the old, disused quarry, where Mornington had paused, the previous evening, and looked so long into the dusky depths.

Deep down in the old excavations eternal twilight reigned.

Mornington picked up a stone and tossed it into the quarry. From far below came a faint, echoing splash.

'Erbert stole a timid glance at him. "Ain't safe 'ere, so near the edge, Master Morny," he murmured. "And—and we've got a long way to go to Latcham now."

Mornington smiled sardonically. "We sha'n't get to Latcham this afternoon," he said.

"Jest as you like, sir." 'Erbert shrank away from his companion as he looked at him. Mornington's eyes seemed on fire with a strange, unnatural light. A strange and terrible suspicion shot through the fag's mind as he caught Morny's eyes.

He wondered, and feared. Was the dandy of Rookwood quite in his right senses? Instinctively he moved back from the grassy verge of the quarry.

"Is that a seagull?" said Mornington suddenly.

He swept his hand towards the quarry.

'Erbert turned to look in the direction he pointed.

His back was towards Mornington. And as his back was turned a sudden, terrible grasp was flung upon him from behind, and he felt himself forced to the giddy verge of the precipice.

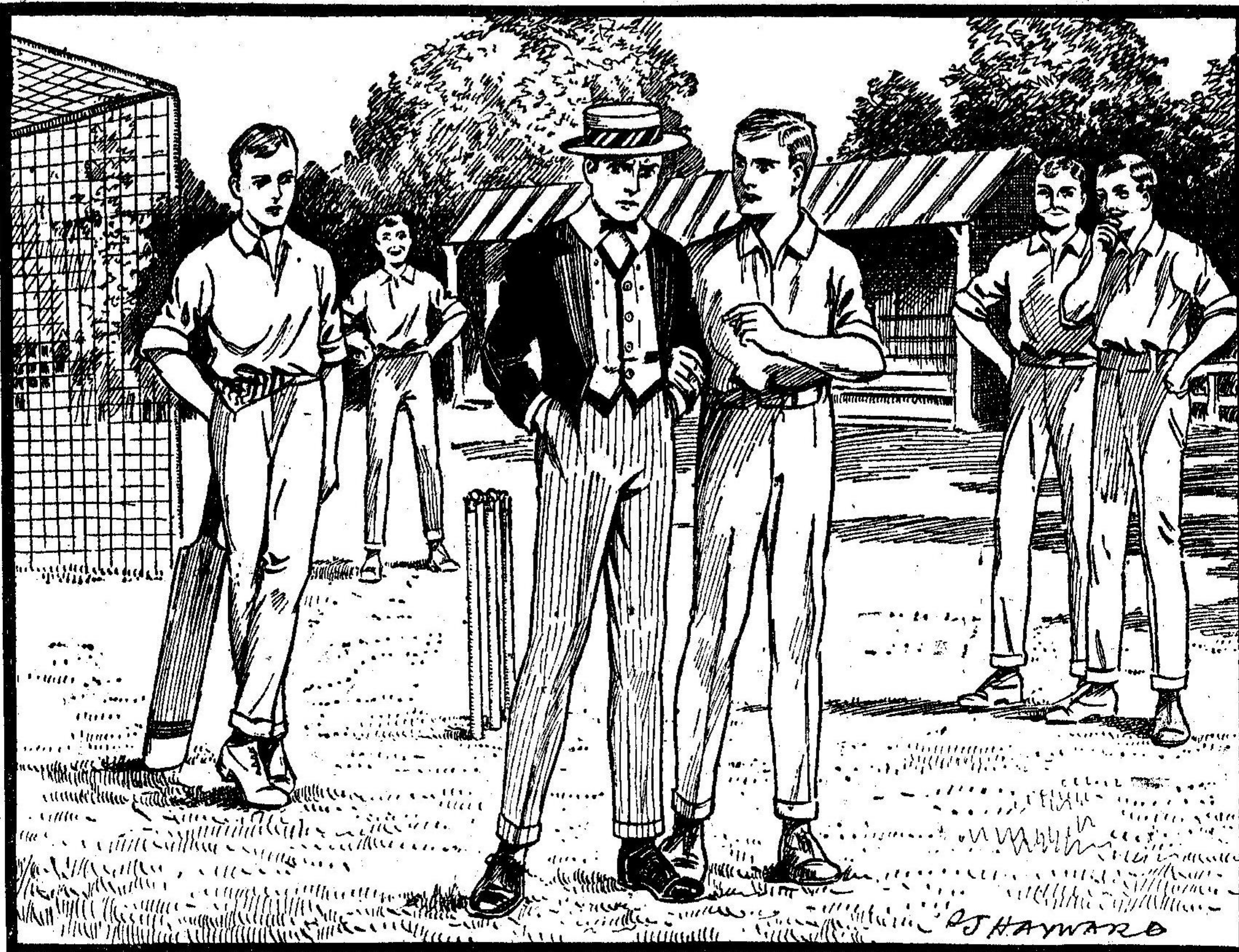
A sharp, terrified scream left the fag's lips.

For a moment quarry and gorse and sky swam round him. The dusky depths seemed to be rushing up to meet him. The solid earth was no longer under his feet. And in that fearful moment the icy hand of death seemed to lay its clutch on his very heart.

The next instant he was drawn back from the giddy edge, and thrown in the thick grass, in safety, and Mornington fell on his knees beside him.

As through a mist he heard Mornington's voice, dimly he saw the white face at his side.

"'Erbert! You're not hurt! Don't be scared, kid! You're not hurt!" 'Erbert sat up dazedly.



"My only aunt!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "What the merry diakens is the matter with you?" "Oh, rats!" growled Mornington. "Hang cricket!" He drove his hands into his pockets, and walked off the field scowling.

looked at him with very much the expression of a dog watching a master who may be angry.

The dandy of the Fourth gave him a nod and a smile, and 'Erbert's face brightened up.

He left his chums, and joined Mornington, as the latter beckoned. "I was a bit rusty with you to-day, 'Erbert," said Mornington. "Don't mind me—you know I've got a rotten temper."

"I don't mind a bit, sir." "Would you like to come for a run out to-morrow afternoon?" asked Mornington. "It's a half-holiday, you know. We could have a walk across the heath, and see the camp at Latcham."

'Erbert's eyes danced. It was the first time his superb patron had asked him to walk with him.

"Oh, Master Morny, I'd like it like anything!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"Then it's a go, 'Erbert?" "Wotto! And—and you ain't waxy with me any more?" asked 'Erbert timidly.

"Not a bit of it!" Mornington nodded, and walked away; and 'Erbert, with a very bright face, followed the fags into the Form-room.

Mornington went to his study, and Peele and Gower came in later to do their prep. They found Mornington idly sketching with a pen on the blotting-pad.

tory. And then he turned in without a word, even to Erroll.

The 5th Chapter.

On the Verge of a Crime.

Jimmy Silver glanced at 'Erbert of the Second, and smiled.

The Fistical Four were heading for the river on that Wednesday afternoon, and they had come down to the gates in a merry crowd.

'Erbert was waiting there. The waif of Rookwood looked unusually cheery, and he was unusually nicely clad. He had on his best Etons, his tie was carefully tied, his shoes were well brushed, and his straw hat was set straight on his head. And he was smiling a smile of contentment.

"Hallo! Have you come into a fortune?" asked Lovell.

"You're looking jolly chippy, 'Erbert," said Jimmy Silver.

'Erbert nodded, and grinned. "Quite 'appy, thank you!" he said. "What's on?" asked Raby. "Has the Head asked you to tea?"

"Or has Miss Dolly asked you to go for a walk?" grinned Newcome.

'Erbert chuckled. "No, they ain't," he said. "I'm goin' to Latcham with Mornington."

"Oh," said Jimmy Silver, laughing, "that accounts for the merry milk in the cocoanut!" "Master Morny's asked me for to go out this afternoon with him," said 'Erbert proudly.

"Have a merry time, old scout,"

"He looks cracked!" said Peele. "Blessed if I'd care for Morny's company this afternoon. I tell you he's got a queer look in his eye!"

Heedless of the comments of the nuts, Mornington strode on, little 'Erbert trotting by his side.

'Erbert was in the seventh heaven. Morny's having asked him to take that walk on that sunny half-holiday was more than enough to make the little fag happy.

It indicated that Morny had "come round"—that the magnificent Mornington had got over those strange fits of temper that had troubled him, and intended to be kind, as of old, to his loyal protegee.

But if 'Erbert had expected pleasant and congenial conversation on the way he was disappointed.

Mornington did not speak, and the fag did not venture to break the silence.

Once or twice Morny glanced at him, and then 'Erbert was surprised and a little startled by the strange, deep fire in his eyes.

He began to wonder, in a vague, uneasy way, whether Morny was ill.

They turned into the path for the moor, and tramped along in silence, and slowly the brightness died out of 'Erbert's face.

Mornington was in a strange mood he could not understand, and he could not keep from wondering why Morny looked at him so strangely.

The wide heath stretched round them now, rising in the far distance towards Latcham, with the red roofs of Coombe far away on the left.

The 6th Chapter.

After Darkness, Light!

'Erbert sat in the grass panting. His brain was in a whirl.

For that one fearful moment Mornington's iron grasp had held him over the very edge of the precipice, helpless to avert his fate, and then had drawn him back to safety.

Was it only a horrible joke? "Master Morny," groaned 'Erbert, "you—you scared me, sir! I—I—"

His voice trailed off and broke. "You're all right, kid! Did you think I was going to pitch you in?" Morny's voice was mocking, and he laughed tunelessly.

"I—I was afeared—"

'Erbert ceased to speak. He was ashamed of the terrible fear that had gripped his very heart and soul as he spun on the edge of the abyss.

"Come!" said Mornington abruptly.

He helped the still shaking fag to his feet, and led him away from the quarry. 'Erbert was glad to follow him. Mornington stopped at last, and sat down on a jutting rock among the gorse, and motioned 'Erbert to do the same.

Mornington's face was white as chalk, and there were thick beads of perspiration on his brow. But the wild light had died out of his eyes, and his manner was curiously calm.

"I've got somethin' to tell you, 'Erbert," he said quietly.

"Yes, sir," faltered 'Erbert. "Do you know why I brought you out here this afternoon?" "N-n-no, sir!"

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# A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Because I was out of my senses, I think," said Mornington. "I don't quite know what was the matter with me. Too much worry, I suppose. But I was goin' to pitch you into the quarry, 'Erbert!"

The tag shrank back with a cry. "Oh, Master Morny! Wot 'ave I done?"

"Nothin'," said Mornington. "Only being yourself, my dear kid, and standing in my light. But—don't look at me like that, 'Erbert. I tell you I was mad just then. As soon as I came to carry out what was in my mind I understood, and he pressed his hand across his eyes. "I'd rather have pitched myself in than you, 'Erbert!"

"Wot 'ave I done, Master Morny?" said the wail miserably. "I know you hate me, and I don't know for why. If you asked me earnest I'd go and jump into that there quarry if it would 'elp you!"

Mornington laughed. "By gad, I half believe you would, 'Erbert!" he said. "But I sha'n't ask you. I've got something to tell you, kid. You remember what you told me long ago, when I found you on the road—about yourself?"

"Yes," said 'Erbert. "You've been a ragamuffin and an outcast all your life, never even knowing the meaning of the birthmark you bear on your shoulder."

Mornington paused. He tore open his collar and turned back the shirt, exposing the white skin of his shoulder to view. "Look!" he said. "My eye!" muttered 'Erbert, in wonder.

On the white skin showed the deep crimson mark, strangely in the form of a wolf's head—the birthmark of the Morningtons.

"That's the same mark wot I 'ave on my shoulder, Master Morny—wot you see the day you pulled me out of the river," said 'Erbert, in amazement. "You got it, too!"

Mornington refastened his collar. "Every Mornington has it," he said. "But I 'ave it, sir!"

"You are a Mornington!" 'Erbert of the Second Form stared at him. It was not easy for the nameless wail of Rookwood to comprehend at once the full meaning of Valentine Mornington's words.

"Me!" he said at last. "Me, sir! Me a relation of yours, sir! That ain't possible!"

"It's not only possible; it's true," said Mornington quietly. "But—but—" stammered 'Erbert dazedly.

"I had a cousin," said Mornington, "the son of my father's elder brother. He was lost, and taken by gipsies, when he was a little kid."

"I was brought up by gipsies," muttered 'Erbert. Mornington nodded. "He had that birthmark on his

shoulder," he said. "He would be about thirteen now if still living."

"Your cousin!" said 'Erbert, still dazed. "Oh, Master Morny, you don't mean as 'ow I am your cousin?"

"That's what I mean," said 'Erbert. "Oh, sir!"

There was a long silence. 'Erbert was trying to assimilate that startling information in his dazed mind. It was too amazing to be fully comprehended at once. Mornington watched his face.

'Erbert looked at him at last. "Master Morny, I—I'm your relation, and you've found it out?"

"Yes." "I'd be glad of that, sir, if you was glad," said 'Erbert humbly. "I—I think I knows now why you turned agin me. You don't want to own the likes of me for your relation. I—I wouldn't think of tellin' anybody, sir—not if you don't like. You've found it out, but nobody else don't know it. There ain't no need to tell anybody. P'r'aps, later on, arter I've been a good bit at Rookwood, when I'm improved, sir, you won't be ashamed of me. Then p'r'aps you'll tell folks, but not if you don't choose. I ain't goin' to say not a single word!"

Mornington drew a deep breath. "What a rotten brute I've been!" he said. "Erbert, my dear kid, I'm not ashamed of you. It's you that ought to be ashamed of me!"

'Erbert grinned. "Me ashamed of you, sir!" he said. "Oh, Master Morny!"

"You know why I brought you out here, 'Erbert? I've told you."

The wail shook his head. "That was all rot, sir! You couldn't have done it! If you even thought of such a thing, it was because you was a little orf your 'ead. You nearly got drowned pullin' me out of the river. Oh, sir!"

"I hated you," said Mornington—"or, rather, I thought I did. What with losing everything, and that cur Lattrey troubling me, I think my head got a little queer."

"Lattrey!" said 'Erbert. "Does Lattrey know?"

"Yes." "So that's 'ow he was worriting you, the 'ound!" said 'Erbert.

"Yes." "But—but if you ain't ashamed of me as a relation, Master Morny, I don't see—" said 'Erbert.

"You don't understand. Your father was my father's elder brother."

"Wot does that matter?" Mornington smiled faintly. "You don't know what an entail is?" he said.

"Never 'eard of it, sir," said 'Erbert. "Wot is it?"

"The Mornington estates are entailed on the eldest son. That means that everything goes to the eldest."

'Erbert started. "Master Morny!" "Do you understand now?"

"I ain't the eldest of us two," said 'Erbert, beginning to understand. "You're a good two year older than me, sir."

"That makes no difference. Your father was the elder brother of my father, and everything was his. It came to my father because you were

lost, and could not be found, and your death was presumed, as the lawyers call it. Now you are found, and take your place as the heir of Mornington."

"Oh!" "You will be rich!" said Mornington grimly. "You will have twenty thousand a year when you are twenty-one, 'Erbert."

"Me, sir!" gasped 'Erbert breathlessly. "Yes."

"My 'at!" 'Erbert was silent for a long time, contemplating the amazing prospect opened up before him by Mornington's words.

"Pounds?" he said at last. Mornington laughed. "Yes."

"My heye!" 'Erbert was silent again. Then he looked suddenly at Mornington, with quick suspicion.

"And wot will you 'ave, sir?" "Nothin'."

'Erbert's lip quivered. "Then—then this 'ere money, wot I'm goin' to 'ave, it's your money—it's wot would 'ave come to you, sir, if I 'adn't been found?"

Mornington nodded. "That's why you said I was a-robbin' you, yesterday!" said 'Erbert, with a flash of recollection. "I—I understand now."

"I wasn't quite myself then, 'Erbert. I'm not goin' to make a fuss. You're goin' to have your rights."

"I'm not goin' to rob you, sir," said 'Erbert quietly. "P'r'aps you're mistook arter all. P'r'aps I ain't your cousin what you think

"There's no mistake." "I understand now," 'Erbert's little face was puckered in thought. "And if you'd left me to starve when you found me that day on the road, sir, you'd never 'ave knowed I was your cousin, and I'd never 'ave knowed. You can't think, sir, as I'm goin' to rob you. I ain't goin' to touch nothing of it! I ain't going to claim your money!"

Mornington smiled. "You can't help it, kid. It's yours, not mine."

"Not if I don't choose to say nothin'," said 'Erbert. "Lattrey knows, and his father."

"Wot 'ave they got to do with it?" "Lattrey's father is the detective employed to search for Cecil Mornington. The search has been going on for years. Your father left instructions for it. Even if you said nothing, 'Erbert, it would come out. And—Mornington drew a deep breath—"I should not say nothing, 'Erbert. I intend to write to my guardian to-day and tell him the whole story."

'Erbert's face was dark and distressed. All the pleasure of the discovery had faded for him now.

"No wonder you 'ated me, Master Morny," he said. "I'd 'ate myself if I touched your money, arter all you done for me. I ain't goin' to touch it! I can go back to wot I come from, and they'll never find me!"

The little wail's voice was deeply earnest. Mornington looked at him fixedly. Once again the temptation rose in his breast. After all, why should he give up everything to this wretched wail, who could never have claimed it but for his kindness in the first place?

Was he to pay this price for an act of charity towards a nameless vagrant? The temptation was strong; it seemed like the whisper of an

evil spirit in his ear. But the dandy of Rookwood threw it aside. Mornington had fought his battle, and won it.

In that terrible moment on the edge of the old quarry the scales had fallen from his eyes, the fevered mists had cleared from his brain. He had found the right path, as Erroll had hoped he would find it, and there was no going back for him.

He rose to his feet, and his hand dropped lightly on 'Erbert's shoulder. "No more of that, 'Erbert! Come along!"

"Where, Master Morny?" "To Rookwood." "But—but—" "Come!" And 'Erbert obeyed.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were coming in, ruddy and cheery from the river, when Mornington and 'Erbert of the Second reached Rookwood. Erroll had joined them in the gateway, with Conroy and Pons and Van Ryn of the Fourth. Mornington came up to the group, with a smile on his face.

"May I introduce my Cousin Cecil?" he asked urbanely. Erroll gave him a quick look, and his face lighted up. The other juniors looked astonished.

"I don't see your cousin," said Jimmy Silver. "Here he is!"

"'Erbert!" ejaculated Conroy. "Yes."

"Is that a joke?" asked Jimmy Silver in perplexity. "Not at all. You remember when I first brought 'Erbert to Rookwood the fellows nicknamed him Mornington Minor. It wasn't so far wrong—he will be Mornington Secundus!"

"I happen to have found out who 'Erbert is, and he's my cousin, Cecil Mornington, heir to the Mornington estates, and the richest fellow at Rookwood—worth knowing, I assure you."

"Gammon!" said the astonished Lovell. "It's true!" said Erroll. "Well, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver in astonishment.

"My cousin is still quite friendly with me," pursued Mornington, with ironic coolness. "He doesn't understand yet that a poor relation, with expensive tastes, is a fellow better kept at a distance. But as soon as Towny & Co. hear the news he will have plenty of friends who will point it out to him."

Mornington paused as he caught sight of Lattrey in the quad. "Lattrey, dear boy!" The ead of the Fourth gave him a scowl.

"Lattrey, my dear infant, I fear that your estimable father will not finger the reward for finding my Cousin Cecil!" said Mornington urbanely. "You will not finger the whack in it that you have been anticipating. I have wired to any uncle that Cecil is found. Congratulate him, old fellow!"

And with a light laugh the dandy of Rookwood sauntered on into the quadrangle, leaving Jimmy Silver & Co. staring after him in astonishment.

THE END.

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## TALES TO TELL.

### ANOTHER FEARFUL DISASTER.

The man who looked like a young newspaper reporter rushed into the country station with every appearance of excitement.

"Quick! I want the details of the terrible accident that happened to the ten-fifty last evening!" he shouted to the astonished booking-clerk.

"But there was nothing the matter with the ten-fifty. It came in quite safely, and right on time!" he said.

"I know," said the bogus reporter politely. "That was the accident I was referring to. Good-morning."

### LOOK PLEASANT!

Facetious Customer: "I suppose you want me to look pleasant?"

Photographer: "Yes; and pay in advance."

Facetious Customer: "What's that for?"

Photographer: "That I may look pleasant, too."

### BEFORE HIS TIME.

It was Mr. Higginbotham's first visit to London, and he was taking his pleasures sadly. Theatres had small attraction for him, and restaurants had less.

How, then, did he spend his time? Giddy person, he was visiting all the ancient places that have played a part in the making of history. At last he had only one more to see.

"I want to visit the building," he remarked to a bus conductor, as the latter took his fare, "in front of which Charles I. was executed."

For a moment the conductor looked mystified, but for a moment only.

"You'd better ask a policeman," he said. "That must have happened before I came here. I've only been in London six months."

### WHAT THE WAITER MEANT.

A party of four, just returning from the theatre, called in at the fashionable restaurant. The prim old maid, who was the guest of the evening, was charmed with everything, especially the music.

While the waiter was standing by the table, she asked him to find out the title of the piece the orchestra was playing. And the willing waiter promised.

But other duties claimed him for a time, and when he returned the lady had completely forgotten her request.

When he bent towards her, and softly whispered something in her ear, she recoiled in horror.

"How dare you!" she cried. "How dare you!"

And it took the terrified waiter quite a time to explain why he had merely breathed the title of the piece so softly: "What can I do to make you love me?"

### TIT FOR TAT.

The famous criminal lawyer had won a shockingly bad case by eloquence and trickery, and a rival lawyer said to him bitterly:

"Is there any case so low, so foul, so vilely crooked and shameful that you'd refuse it?"

"Well, I don't know," the other answered, with a smile. "What have you been doing now?"

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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

## The 1st Chapter.

### Taking the Stranger In.

"School to-day!" said Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards looked up. Frank was doing full justice to a substantial breakfast of fresh salmon, cornflakes, and honey. He had been several days at the Lawless Ranch now, and he was getting used to his surroundings.

He had confided several times to his cousin Bob that he liked Canada. It was a huge change after life at St. Kit's in far-off England, but he was of an age when change itself is a pleasure.

And the fresh, breezy, open life of the British Columbian ranch was pure enjoyment to him.

He was not specially pleased to hear Bob's announcement.

Riding out with Bob in the mornings, visiting the fruit-farm with Mr. Lawless, chatting with the Kootenay herdsmen, canoeing on the river, or roaming in the scented woods, had filled in every hour very pleasantly, and he was not anxious for school.

"School!" he repeated. "This is ripping salmon, Bob."

"Everything in Canada," said Bob solemnly, "is ripping. The national motto is 'Let her rip!'"

Frank laughed.

"Pater the honey, old chap. What topping honey!"

"As good as you got at home?"

"Quite. Has your pater settled for us to go to school to-day?"

"My what?"

Frank coloured slightly at Bob's quizzical look. Unconsciously he used the expressions he had been accustomed to.

"Your father, Bob. You know what I mean?"

"Do they talk Latin in the Old Country?" asked Bob.

"Of course they don't, duffer. But we generally say pater and mater."

"And we sometimes say popper and mopper," grinned Bob. "That isn't Latin; that's American. I hope you're well up in Latin, Frank, or you'll cause disappointment at our school."

"I don't know about being well up," said Frank. "I wasn't an ornament to the Fourth at St. Kit's. And I believe I've forgotten no end during the past few weeks. I wasn't thinking much about Latin on the Atlantic or the St. Lawrence. I suppose the Head won't be hard on a new chap."

"The what?"

"The Head—the headmaster, you know," said Frank rather warmly. "Don't you call your blessed headmaster the Head?"

Bob Lawless chuckled explosively, but he did not reply to the question.

"Is the school far away?" asked Frank. He glanced regretfully out of the big window across the green fields and greener woods. He would have been quite willing to put off school for a few weeks.

"Only a step or two!" said Bob. "We shall ride there."

"Eh? How long is the step?" asked Frank. He was beginning to have some knowledge of Canadian distances.

"About twelve miles."

"Oh!" Frank paused. "Are we coming back here?"

"Do you want to camp out on the floor of the school-room?" asked Bob.

"Numo. I mean—"

"Oh, it's not a boarding-school," said Bob, with a smile. "We go in the morning, and we come home at night, and we get a dinner there."

"I see."

"Not much like the St. Kit's you've told me about," added Bob. "We rough it a bit out West, you know."

"I like roughing it!" said Frank sturdily. "I'm ready for anything. What about school-books. I brought mine from England with me."

"Lemme see. What are they?"

"Principia Latina—"

"Good!"

"Caesar's Gallic War."

"In Latin?" asked Bob, with a glimmer in his eyes.

"Yes; 'De Bello Gallico,' you know."

"Famous!"

"And the usual other Lower Form books," said Frank, somewhat puzzled by his cousin's humorous expression. "I suppose they're much the same in all schools."

"Naturally," said Bob. "Your books will do first-rate, especially the 'Principia Latina' and the 'Gallo Bellico.'"

"'De Bello Gallico!'" said Frank. "Yes, I mean 'De Bello Gallico.' Any Greek?" asked Bob blandly.

"I didn't take Greek at St. Kit's," said Frank. "Some of the fellows did. I didn't. If Greek's compulsory here, I suppose I can take it up. I know the alphabet, anyway."

"You'll find that useful," said Bob. "It will save the Head—ahem!—no end of trouble if you know the Greek alphabet, to begin with."

"Good!"

"Any Sanskrit?" asked Bob.

"Eh? We don't have Sanskrit in English schools," said Frank in astonishment. "Only some wise old johnnies at college know that lingo. Surely they don't teach Sanskrit in Canada?"

"Not at all. But I thought you might have had it along with the Latin and Greek. Now, what about duds?" asked Bob. "Did you bring your school rags?"

"Yes, I thought I'd better, as the pater said I should be sent to school here by Uncle Lawless," said Frank. "I've got two suits of Etons. I—I only brought one topper."

"One which?"

"Topper."

Bob Lawless seemed to be suffering for a moment from internal convulsions. Frank Richards looked at him rather suspiciously.

"Look here, Bob—"

"Famous!" said Bob. "You see, I thought you might have forgotten that, and it's rather important. The Head likes a fellow to be decently dressed."

"I'd rather go in a cowboy hat, of course!" said Frank. "But if the Head's particular—"

"Awfully!"

"Then it will have to be the topper."

Bob Lawless rose from the breakfast-table.

"Better run up to your room and change," he said. "It's time we were off. Mustn't be late, or the Head will jaw us."

"Right you are!"

Frank Richards hurried upstairs to his room. It did not take him long to change into his English public-school clothes.

He found Bob waiting for him outside the porch, where a Kootenay stableman held two ponies.

The Indian stared at Frank Richards.

It was certainly the first time the ranchman's eyes had fallen upon an English public-school boy in Etons and a topper.

Bob Lawless surveyed him, and gave him a nod of approval. Bob himself was clad in homespun, with a shady hat over his sunburnt face.

"Ready?" asked Frank.

"You bet!"

"You're not going to change?"

"I keep my glad raiment in the gilt-edged trunk at school," explained Bob gravely. "The topper especially is apt to get a bit knocked riding under the trees. You'll have to be very careful. Up you get!"

"Shan't we see your pater and mater again before we go—I mean, popper and mopper," said Frank, with a smile.

"Mater's at the dairy-farm, and pater's in the orchard," said Bob. "Won't be back for hours! Come on!"

The cousins jumped on the ponies, and started at a canter down the trail.

## The 2nd Chapter.

### The Adventure of the Plug-Hat!

Frank Richards enjoyed that canter in the sunny, breezy morning.

But certainly he would have enjoyed it more if he had been clad like his cousin Bob.

Frank was a good-looking lad, and with the flush of health in his cheeks,

he looked very nice in his neat, dark Etons and shining silk hat.

But he realised as he rode on that Etons and a topper must be a very uncommon sight on the Canadian ranch lands.

Every hand they passed, whether Canadian, or Kootenay, or negro, ceased whatever work he was engaged upon to stare at the English boy with a broad grin. Even the Chinese cook came out of the cookhouse to stare.

Frank's cheeks began to burn, as he felt himself the cynosure of all eyes. He glanced at Bob several times, but Bob Lawless seemed unconscious of the stares and the broad grins.

Frank was glad when the ranch was left behind, and they cantered down the trail under the big trees through the forest.

But there the topper had bad luck. A low branch caught it, and swung it off the junior's head, and it pitched in the grass behind the pony's heels.

Frank reined in his steed.

"Hold on a minute, Bob!"

"You bet!" said Bob cheerily.

Frank jumped down and retrieved his topper, and jammed it on his head again. Bob regarded him gravely the while.

The junior remounted, and they rode on, Frank ducking his head carefully when he passed under a hanging branch.

For several miles they rode on the forest trail without passing anyone or anything alive save a stray gopher.

But suddenly from another trail two horsemen rode into the path, and came trotting towards the two boys.

They were big, loose-limbed fellows, with slouch hats and tanned faces, and Frank, who was already learning to distinguish, decided that they were cattlemen.

As their eyes fell upon Frank Richards they fairly jumped in their saddles. Both of them reined in their horses in the middle of the trail, as if thunderstruck.

Frank and Bob slowed down.

The big trees encroached on the trail on either side, and they could not pass the two horsemen planted in the middle of the path till they moved aside.

"Waal, carry me hum to die!" ejaculated one of the cattlemen.

"Search me!" stuttered the other.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards felt his cheeks burn again. The cattlemen were staring at his Etons and the shining silk hat with astounded looks.

"Wot is it, Hank?" inquired the first speaker.

"Search me!" repeated Hank.

"Search me!" being an American ejaculation expressive of unbounded surprise.

Frank glanced at Bob.

"Those duffers are blocking the way!" he said.

"Slow down!" said Bob.

"The two had to stop."

"Skuse me, gents!" said the cattleman blandly. "May a galoot inquire wot it is?"

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Frank Richards. "Why don't you let us pass?"

"It's a rip-snorter from Rip-snortersville!" said Hank. "It's a galoot in a plug-hat! Stranger, don't you know that plug-hats are condemned to sudden death on this side of the Rockies?"

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the other.

"This ain't a larfing matter, Bill Bloggs!" said Hank. "This hyer is serious. Hyer's a galoot in a plug hat. There's a duty to be done. Stranger, aire you ready to pass in your checks?"

Frank Richards started, as each of the cattlemen drew a revolver from his belt.

Before the English boy could make a movement the revolvers came to a level, and two loud reports sounded as one.

Crack-ack!

Frank Richards had already heard from his Canadian cousin stories of the "bad men" and "border ruffians," but this was a surprise. His first impression was that the two men were firing at him.

He realised his mistake as the top-

per, struck by two bullets at the same moment, soared off his head and sailed away.

There was a roar of laughter from the two cattlemen, and they pushed on their horses.

Frank Richards, dazed by the sudden occurrence, sat motionless and bareheaded on his pony; but Bob drew his steed back behind Frank's to allow the cattlemen to pass.

They rode on, still roaring with laughter, and fired several more shots at the hapless topper as it reposed in the grass.

Then they disappeared down the trail, still roaring with glee.

"Oh!" ejaculated Frank Richards.

It was only a rough joke of the cattlemen, and he realised that they were good shots, and that he had been in no danger. But the bullets had passed so close that one had clipped a lock of hair from his head. It was some minutes before he recovered from the shock.

## The 3rd Chapter.

### Bob is Too Humorous.

Bob Lawless slid to the ground, and picked up the topper.

With a serious face, he handed it up to his cousin.

That handsome topper, which had come all the way from England in safety, and had survived the perils of the Atlantic and the Canadian Pacific Railway, was in a parlous state.

There were half a dozen bullet-holes in it, and the contact with the rough grass had not improved the nap.

"Better brush it a bit!" remarked Bob gravely.

"I can't brush the holes out of it!" said Frank. "If the Head's as particular as you say, he's bound to notice that."

"Can't be helped," said Bob. "It was unlucky meeting those two chaps. I hadn't reckoned on that. Lucky they didn't try to perforate your Eton jacket, too."

"Oh!" said Frank.

He was very glad the two cattlemen had not carried their boisterous joke to that extent.

The topper was carefully brushed, and Frank set it on his head again, fervently hoping that he would meet no more humorous cattlemen on the way to school.

Fortunately, there was no one else on the lonely trail that morning.

The forest trail was left behind, and they rode up the bank of a creek, and now buildings were in sight in the distance.

"Is that the school, Bob?" asked Frank.

"That's it."

Frank Richards scanned the school curiously as they drew nearer.

He saw a large, log-built structure, surrounded by a fence that enclosed a good space of ground.

He had not expected to see a reproduction of the grey old walls and ivied buttresses of St. Kit's; but the "lumber school" was a surprise to him.

Bob looked at him rather oddly, but Frank did not allow his thoughts to appear in his face.

"Like what you expected?" asked Bob.

"I didn't know what to expect, Bob."

"Here are some of the pupils," said Bob, with a wave of his riding-whip.

Frank looked at them.

There were fellows of all ages from nine to sixteen. Some of them were riding up from different directions, but the majority were on foot. Two or three came in canoes on the creek.

To Frank's surprise, there was a good sprinkling of girls among them. "Girls and boys both here, Bob?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. You see, this is the only school for fifty or sixty miles round," explained Bob. "This isn't Toronto or Montreal, you know. This is the Wild and Woolly West. East you'd find schools more like the one you're used to."

"What is it called?"

"It's the National School."

"Oh, I see."

"Everybody comes," said Bob. "Look at that long-legged fellow in the canoe. He's the son of a rich

rancher who could buy up my dad, and never miss the money. That stumpy kid in the canoe with him is the son of his stableman. That fellow with the nose is the son of a machineman who's settled in the district. He puts on no end of side. His name's Eben Hacke. Hallo! They seem to be interested in us!"

There was no doubt at all about that.

As the two riders came up to the open gateway in the fence, every pupil of the lumber school seemed to become rooted to the ground, and his or her eyes fastened on Frank Richards as if fascinated.

Some of the girls smiled or giggled, some of the boys chortled, and some seemed stricken dumb with surprise.

Frank noticed that nobody was in Etons, and that nobody wore a silk hat.

All were clad in the plain and serviceable garb of the frontier, and did not look much like schoolboys to Frank's English eyes.

"Leave your pony here," said Bob Lawless, jumping down.

"Tethered?" asked Frank.

"No need; they won't wander away."

Frank unhitched his bag of school books, and the cousins entered the enclosure, Frank's cheeks burning as he met stares and grins on all sides.

He remembered his cousin's propensity for practical jokes, and he began to suspect that Etons and a topper were not "the thing" at a British Columbian national school.

He gave Bob a sharp look, but Bob's face was quite unconscious.

"I—I say, Bob—" Frank began.

"This way!" said Bob. "Hallo, Chunky! This is Chunky Todgers, Franky! My cousin Frank, Chunky!"

Chunky Todgers, a plump youth who reminded Frank of Fatty Babbage at St. Kit's, grinned widely, showing a splendid set of teeth.

"Where does he come from, Bobby?" he gasped.

"England!"

"I guessed so! But what—"

"Is that Canadian good manners, Chunky?" demanded Bob severely.

Todgers held out a fat hand to Frank, still grinning, and the English schoolboy shook hands with him.

"Glad to meet you, you know," said Chunky. "But what the thunder—"

"Come on!" said Bob, dragging at his cousin's arm. "You've got to see the Head!"

"The what?" yelled Chunky Todgers.

"Dry up, Chunky! You talk too much!"

Bob Lawless marched his cousin into the log schoolhouse. Behind them they left the playground in a chorus of laughter and giggles.

Frank Richards was feeling very restive by this time. There was something wrong somewhere; he knew that. This could not be the normal way of greeting a new pupil at the lumber school.

"Look here, Bob—" he began again.

"Ah! Here's the Head!"

Frank Richards jumped.

As they entered the wooden porch a trim young lady, with bright eyes and a very pleasant face, appeared in the big doorway.

Frank took off his hat at once.

"Good-morning, Miss Meadows!" said Bob cheerfully. "This is my cousin Frank, from England. I've brought him along to school."

Frank stammered helplessly.

"Bob! You—you said—"

Bob grinned.

"Miss Meadows is the Head!"

And Frank Richards ejaculated: "Oh, my hat!"

## The 4th Chapter.

### The First Day at School.

Miss Meadows gave the new boy a kind smile and nod.

She was undoubtedly astonished by his get-up, but, naturally, had a little more restraint than the schoolboys and schoolgirls outside, and she did not allow her astonishment to appear in her looks.

"I am glad to see you," she said pleasantly. "Mr. Lawless mentioned



that his nephew, Frank Richards, was coming."

"I-I—" stammered Frank. He floundered helplessly, as he realised that he was the victim of another of Bob's practical jokes. "I-I—Ma'am, is it the rule here for new boys to wear Etons and toppers?"

"Good gracious, no!" "Bob, you rotter—" "I didn't say it was, did I?" said Bob, in an injured tone.

"I-I thought from what you said—"

Miss Meadows smiled. "You should not play jokes on a new-comer, Lawless. It would be advisable to change your clothes to-morrow, Richards; but for to-day it does not matter. Something a little stronger and more serviceable is required in this district."

"Yes, ma'am." Miss Meadows disappeared into the schoolhouse. The silk topper and the Etons in a backwoods school at the foot of the Rocky Mountains were almost too much for the gravity even of the "school-marm."

Frank Richards gave his humorous cousin a ferocious look.

"Bob, you beast, I'll jolly well punch your nose for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

"You—you said the Head—" "Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob. "We don't call Miss Meadows the Head; we generally call her the school-marm."

"And—and this clobber—" "Ha, ha, ha!"

The unrepentant Bob seemed on the verge of hysterics. Frank glowered at him, quite unable to appreciate the joke at present.

The thought that he had to go through the whole day conspicuous in Etons, with the grinning glances of the whole school upon him, and to ride home after school in a "plug" hat, almost made him wish that the earth would open and swallow him up.

He shook his fist under Bob's nose, at which the merry Canadian only roared the more.

"You silly ass!" shouted Frank.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've a jolly good mind to lick you!"

"Oh, my ribs!" groaned Bob.

"You're giving me a pain in the side, Franky! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see any joke, you fat-head!"

"Everybody else does! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from outside.

"Pipe his duds!" came in a nasal twang from Eben Hacke.

"And a plug-hat!" chortled Chunky Todgers. "A plug-hat! He's come to school in a plug-hat! What a tenderfoot! Ha, ha, ha!"

A bell clanged out from somewhere above, and the boys and girls began to troop into the schoolhouse.

They hung caps and hats and cloaks on pegs in the hall, and there was another gust of laughter at the sight of the silk topper prominent among them.

Frank's face was crimson as he went into the big schoolroom with Bob Lawless. He had never been troubled with self-consciousness, but he was troubled with it now.

Bob pressed his arm.

"Sorry, old chap!" he murmured.

"It was rather steep, I know; but I couldn't resist it. You were so jolly green, you know!"

"Oh, rats!" said Frank.

"Don't be mad, old fellow!"

Frank grinned in his turn. "Mad" meant angry, or, as Frank would have said, "waxy."

"All serene, fathead!" he said.

"But what a thumping guy I shall look all day!"

"Never mind! You look very nice, you know! You're a credit to the school!" chuckled Bob. "All the girls are admiring your clothes, anyway!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Here's your desk—next to mine."

After the rough outward aspect of the lumber school, Frank was a little surprised to see the well-made rows of desks, with their ink-wells and flaps.

Everything was devoted to use, and little to ornament; but everything that was needed was there. It was evident, even to a stranger's eye, that the Canadian Government had a very keen eye on the education of the Canadian youth.

The schoolmistress had not yet come in, but a tall, slim young man, with somewhat watery eyes and gold-rimmed glasses perched upon the bridge of a long, thin nose, entered, and Frank's glance fell upon him.

"Is that a form-master?" he whispered to Bob.

"We don't call him that," grinned Bob. "That's Slimmey, the assistant-number. Miss Meadows is head-cook and bottle-washer."

"And the other masters?" "I guess you've seen the lot now."

"What Form are we in?" asked Frank.

"You're not in a Form at all, my innocent, uninstructed youth!" said Bob. "Of course, you can call it a Form if you like. There's us and the kids, that's all. We're us, and the kids are the kids! Is that clear?"

"Quite," said Frank, laughing.

Mr. Slimmey was evidently in charge of the younger class. He seemed a tired, patient, somewhat overworked young man.

"Fellow-countryman of yours, Franky," said Bob. "He was as green as you are when he turned up here a year ago. He's a good sort, and forgives the chaps who play tricks on him. Lots of them do. Eben Hacke lassoed him one day."

"My word!" murmured Frank. "I'd like to see a chap lasso my Form-master at St. Kit's. There would be an earthquake!"

"He's spoons on Miss Meadows," Bob further confided to his cousin. "She stands him quite good-temperedly. She's a ripping good sort. Hallo! Here she comes. This is when we dry up chin-wag."

There was evidently great respect in the lumber-school for Miss Meadows. Even Eben Hacke did not look impertinent. The schoolmistress gave her class a kind smile, and came towards the new boy.

"You ass!" growled Frank.

Bob grinned, and took his seat. Lessons were rather trying to Frank at first, as he did not know what to expect, and whether the knowledge gained at St. Kit's would be of any use to him in his new surroundings.

But he soon found that he could deal quite easily with the school work, though of a more serviceable nature than school work at St. Kit's, it was decidedly easier.

Morning lessons passed off very well.

When school was dismissed, Frank Richards marched out with the rest. Those of the pupils whose homes were near the lumber-school went home to their dinner. The rest dined with Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey in a large room with windows looking out on the shining creek.

As he sat at the long table, with Bob on one side of him and a smiling girl on the other, Frank Richards found himself feeling quite at home, only still a little discomposed by the grips that went round the table, and whispered remarks concerning his "duds" and the "plug-hat" that was still hanging in the hall.

It looked as if it would be a long time before the school recovered from the effect of that plug-hat.

The 5th Chapter. A Fight to a Finish!

After dinner, Bob led his English cousin out to see the "sights." The

but the Etons and the white collar and the topper.

Several times the sharp-nosed Eben bore down towards Frank, but each time Bob Lawless succeeded in steering his chum clear, and Frank noticed it after a time.

"What are we keeping out of that fellow's way for, Bob?" he asked.

"He's looking for trouble, I guess!" said Bob.

"With me?"

"You bet!"

"Why should he?" asked Frank.

"He's rather a quarrelsome beast," explained Bob. "A good bit of a bully. He gets into a dust-up once a week, as a rule."

Frank's eyes gleamed.

"And you're keeping me out of harm's way?" he exclaimed.

"That's it."

"Thanks! But there's no need to bother. If Hacke is looking for trouble, there's no reason why he shouldn't find it."

"All serene!" said Bob. "I'll talk to him. I've licked the beast already, and I can do it!"

"And I think you can!" said Frank. "At all events, I'm going to try if he bothers me. And if you chip in I'll punch your nose!"

Bob looked uneasy.

"Look here, Frank!" he said. "He's nearly a head taller than you are, and he's as hard as nails. And he's plucky, in his way, though he's

long grass, when Frank and Bob came out of the lumber-school. Bob hurried his chum out of the gate, but he had to leave him standing there while he caught the ponies with the long trail-ropes.

By the time Bob came back with the ponies Eben Hacke had joined Frank Richards, with a very disagreeable look upon his sharp face.

"Waiting for me—hey?" he inquired.

"Quite ready for you, if you like," said Frank.

"Put them up!" said Eben laconically.

Frank stepped back.

"Not in sight of the girls," he said.

"Come along the trail a bit."

"Look here, Hacke, you clear off!" growled Bob Lawless, coming up with the ponies. "What are you shindy-ing now for, you lanky hobo?"

"I guess this fellah ain't going to hide behind you, you galoot!" said Hacke. "I always climb over chaps of this sort—that's my rule. Where will you have it, you mugwump?"

"Come along the trail, and don't gas," remarked Frank.

Bob Lawless led the ponies, and Frank walked by his side, and the lanky, muscular Hacke slouched along with them. Chunky Todgers at once joined the party, scenting what was on, and half a dozen other fellows speedily joined up.

The party walked down the trail as far as the trees, which hid them



Before the English boy could make a movement, the revolver came to a level, and two loud reports sounded as one. Crack-ask! Frank Richards' topper, riddled by the two bullets, soared off his head and sailed away.

"Have you your books, Richards?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am," said Frank.

"Let me see them."

Frank showed his books, and Miss Meadows' charming blue eyes opened wide at the sight of the Principia Latina and De Bello Gallico.

She gave Bob Lawless a very severe glance.

"Did you advise your cousin to bring these books, Lawless?"

"Ahem!" murmured Bob. "I—I told him they were ripping, ma'am. And—and so they are. He hadn't any Sanskrit books, so he couldn't bring them. I asked him."

"Silence!" said Miss Meadows, frowning. "Richards, I am afraid these books are useless to you here, as Latin is not one of our subjects. Lawless will bring you the books we use."

Frank gave Bob another ferocious look. A fresh cackle had swept through the class at the sight of the Latin school-books.

Bob followed the schoolmistress to her desk, and brought back the new books for his cousin.

"There you are, old son!" he said. "I dare say you will be glad to give De Gallo Bellico—I mean, De Bello Gallico a rest!"

sights were of a familiar kind to Frank now—the clearings, the big trees, the creek, the canoes, one or two solid-looking homesteads in the distance, the great mountain tops far away on the horizon.

He also made the acquaintance of a good many of his future schoolfellows, and he found most of them good-natured fellows enough, though still tickled by his Etons and the celebrated plug-hat.

He was made acquainted with some of the schoolgirls, too, and found them very agreeable; and upon that point he was inclined to pronounce a verdict in favour of the lumber-school as compared with St. Kit's.

Etons certainly were ludicrously out of place amid his surroundings. But Frank looked very good-looking and well-dressed, and the schoolgirls did not seem to find his garb so ludicrous as the boys did.

There was only one fellow who gave Frank unpleasant looks, and that was Eben Hacke, who seemed to have taken a dislike to him, for some reason best known to himself; perhaps because he suspected the English lad of putting on "side." It was a very unjust suspicion; but to that motive Master Hacke chose to attri-

rather a beast. I'd rather you let him alone!"

"Rats!"

Eben Hacke hove in sight just then, and Bob Lawless linked his arm in Franks to lead him along the creek. Frank Richards jerked his arm away, and walked directly towards Eben Hacke.

Hacke grinned, and stood awaiting him. Just then the bell clanged out, and footsteps on all sides were turned towards the schoolhouse.

Bob looked relieved. The "trouble" was inevitably postponed for the time.

"I calculate I'll see you again after school!" he remarked.

"I'll wait for you," said Frank coolly.

And he went to his desk.

During afternoon lessons Hacke contrived to spill ink on Frank's trousers, and squeezed a chunk of maple-sugar down the back of his Eton jacket.

These kind attentions made Frank all the more determined to "wait" for the obstreperous Eben after school, in spite of Bob's evident misgivings.

He was glad when Miss Meadows dismissed school for the day.

The red sun was in the west, and the cool evening breeze waved the

from the sight of the schoolhouse and the scholars going homeward.

There Bob hitched the ponies, and the schoolboys stepped aside from the trail to a level spot under the big trees. Eben Hacke threw off his jacket with a swaggering grin.

It was evident that the lanky youth intended to "air" himself, as it were, by displaying his fistical prowess before the eyes of his schoolfellows, and it was equally evident that he regarded the English lad as "soft," and an easy victim.

But Frank was not quite so soft as Eben judged him. He had fought many a terrific "scrap" in the Fourth Form at St. Kit's, and his hands had not lost their cunning.

He peeled off his Eton jacket quietly, and removed his collar.

"Gloves?" he asked.

Hacke burst into a roar.

"Didn't you bring boxing-gloves along with your plug-hat and your Latin grammar?" he yelled.

"No."

"I'm afraid we've no gloves here, Frank," said Bob Lawless uneasily.

"All the same to me," said Frank. "I was only asking. We usually used gloves at St. Kit's. I'm ready!"

(Continued on page 106)



# LETTERS IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

I would like all my readers to look upon me as their real friend, someone to whom they can come for help and advice when they are in doubt or difficulty. It is never "too much trouble" to me to be of use to my boy and girl friends if they feel they would like to write to me.

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

**THE COMPANION PAPERS:**  
**THE "BOYS' FRIEND,"** 1d. Every Monday.  
**THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY,** 1d. Every Monday.  
**THE "GEM" LIBRARY,** 1d. Every Wednesday.  
**THE "BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.**  
**THE "PENNY POPULAR,"** Every Friday.  
**"CHUCKLES,"** PRICE 1d. Every Friday.

## OUR GREAT ATTRACTIONS!

### Will You Tell Your Chums About Them?

In my opinion, the BOYS' FRIEND has never had such a splendid programme of stories as is at present appearing in its pages. Each story is of an entirely original and novel nature, and is written in a very gripping and fascinating style.

Such stories as "The Boys of the Bombay Castle" and "Frank Richards' Schooldays" have never before appeared in a boys' paper. They are stories out of the ordinary—stories which make a welcome change to the ordinary run of boys' tales.

A great number of stories which have appeared in the BOYS' FRIEND are still talked about, but I am confident that the two tales mentioned above will be remembered for many, many years. They are stories which every staunch supporter of the "B.F." is revelling in, and they are stories which are gaining many thousands of new readers for the BOYS' FRIEND.

I have such a high opinion of our present tales that I am confident a boy has only to be allowed to peruse a single issue to long to read further numbers.

Will you do your Editor the favour of introducing the BOYS' FRIEND to your chums? Will you acquaint them with the splendid attractions now appearing, and persuade them to become loyal readers of your favourite paper? I am sure this request of mine will not be made in vain.

Don't forget, my chums, that I want you all to write and let me know what you think of the tales now appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND. I want you to

give me your candid opinions—to say whether you like or dislike the stories.

If there is one or even two tales which you do not care for, write and tell me so; and if you have any suggestions to make for the improvement of our programme, let me have them. Rest assured, too, that I will do my very utmost to give you a prompt reply to your communications.

## NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME.

Five Ripping Stories!

I do not think I am far wrong in saying that every reader of the BOYS' FRIEND is following Frank Richards' adventures in Canada with added enthusiasm. In next Monday's magnificent tale dealing with the famous author's schooldays, which is entitled

**"FOR LIFE OR DEATH!"**

By Martin Clifford,

Frank Richards makes further progress at the school in the backwoods. A grizzly bear appears at the school, and, consequently, there is considerable excitement. But there are also some anxious moments, especially when the bear makes an attempt to break into the classroom. Whether the animal is successful or not you will learn when you read this grand story. But I can tell you this: Frank Richards and his cousin are thrown into a most perilous adventure—an adventure in which the lives of the two boys are at stake.

There will, of course, be another magnificent long instalment of

**"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"**

By Duncan Storm.

in our next issue. And a topping

instalment it is, too, packed with laughable incidents from beginning to end. The boys go on a fishing expedition, and the events which occur are of a very humorous and interesting kind. But for sheer fun, the fishing expedition is beaten by the cricket match which takes place on the shore between the boys of the floating school and a team from a British man-of-war. There is great excitement when the boys of the Bombay Castle are battling for victory, and the tide is gradually swamping the cricket pitch.

The magnificent long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, in our next issue is entitled

**"MORNINGTON'S VENGEANCE!"**

By Owen Conquest,

Having lost all his fortune, Mornington discovers that he is no longer wanted by his old chums, Smythe, Townsend, Topham & Co. They have no use for a fellow who hasn't plenty of money to lose at cards, and who is not eager to be a shady rotter.

Mornington is, however, determined to have his revenge on the nuts of Rookwood. The scheme he puts into operation meets with immediate success, and, strange to say, Smythe & Co. all of a sudden discover that they never really lost their friendship for Morny! They want to welcome him with open arms and to be his best pal; but then comes an amazing disclosure, and the nuts receive the surprise of their lives. There is no doubt that Mornington's vengeance is complete.

Next Monday's long, complete tale dealing with the adventures of Dick, Frank, and Joe, the Crusoe Island Adventurers, is entitled

**"THE MYSTERY OF No. 3 HATCH!"**

By Maurice Everard.

This story is full of mystery and surprises, and there is thrilling excitement from start to finish. The mystery of No. 3 Hatch completely puzzles the adventurers, but old Joe Tremorne takes a hand in the game, and it is largely through him that the mystery is solved.

The concluding story in our next issue is that dealing with Bob Travers, the boy boxer, which is entitled

**"IN DEADLY DANGER!"**

By Herbert Britton.

In this fine story the conspiracy against Bob Travers develops. Bob obtains a clue as to the identity of the fellow who has been trying to get him turned out of the booth. He follows up the clue, but he goes through a

perilous adventure before he brings his enemy to book.

Don't forget, my chums, the only way to make sure of securing your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND is to order your copy in advance. Owing to the splendid attractions now appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND, we are securing new readers every week. This being the case, unless you place a regular order for the BOYS' FRIEND with your newsagent, it is quite possible you will go round for your copy and find that the copy which would have been yours has been sold.

## SCHOOL STORIES FOR ALL!

Are you aware of the splendid attractions which appear every Friday in our little companion paper, the "Penny Popular"? This week's issue is a magnificent one, and it contains three long, complete stories dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., Tom Merry & Co., and Jimmy Silver & Co.

These stories deal with the early adventures of the famous characters, and they are stories that should be read and enjoyed by every reader of the BOYS' FRIEND. If you have not already seen a copy of the "Penny Popular," take my advice and place an order with your newsagent at once. You will not regret it.

Your Editor



## THE SCHOOL IN THE

(Continued from the previous page.)

## BACKWOODS!

"I wish you'd leave him to me," muttered Bob.

"Rats!" Frank did not inquire whether there were to be rounds and rests. He realised that it was to be a rough-and-tumble encounter. He "toed the line" with perfect coolness, somewhat to Hacke's surprise.

"Go it!" growled Bob. Hacke gave a vaunting look round, and rushed in, to finish the combat at one fell swoop.

But it did not happen like that. Instead of the slim English lad being swept off his feet by the bigger fellow's rush, he stood his ground like a rock. His right and left came out in swift succession, and then his right again. And Eben Hacke had the impression that he had suddenly run up against a stone wall.

He staggered backwards, and fairly rolled in the grass.

"Jerusalem crickets!" he ejaculated breathlessly as he rolled.

"Bravo!" roared Bob in great delight.

There was a fat chirrup from Chunky Todgers, and he removed a chunk of maple sugar from his capacious mouth to cheer.

"Bravo! Bray-vo! Well hit!" Eben Hacke sat up dizzily.

"By gum!" he said.

Then he scrambled to his feet and came on.

There were no more blind rushes after that, and Hacke was much more cautious.

Frank's turn came to go down into the grass, and he went down heavily.

Hacke grinned over him, and stood ready to knock him down as soon as he rose. But Frank gained his feet

with great agility, fending off his bulky antagonist, and the fight was resumed.

Hammer-and-tongs they went at it now.

Eben was the bigger and the stronger of the two, but he had little knowledge of the scientific part of the game. To his great surprise, Frank Richards held his ground well.

Most of Hacke's thrashing blows saved the air, and Frank's fists came home again and again upon his rugged face and his sharp nose.

Hacke's nose was not looking so sharp now; it was growing bulbous. One of his eyes was closed, and he blinked with the other.

Frank found difficulty in seeing out of his left eye, which was darkening to an art-shade in purple. But he kept on coolly.

All Hacke's hot attacks were stalled off, and all the time punishment was being given and taken, but the burly Eben got the lion's share of it. He was beginning to look decidedly groggy, and the Canadian boys were grinning with delight. The bully of the lumber-school was getting a little of what he had wanted for a long time, in their opinion.

But Hacke was not finished yet, by any means.

The fight was hard and fast, harder and more prolonged than Frank's old schoolboy encounters at St. Kit's. And as the bare knuckles were used, there was plenty of damage on both sides.

Frank's left eye was quite closed now, and his nose was streaming crimson. But Hacke's face was a curious study in damages. He could hardly see, but kept on as long as he could keep his feet.

The Western youth might be something of a bully, but it was evident

that he had plenty of pluck and determination.

Frank was feeling the strain, but he stood up grimly to his burly antagonist.

Bob Lawless watched him with wide-open eyes.

It was pretty evident that his fears on his cousin's account were unfounded. It was not the first time Frank Richards had surprised his Canadian cousin.

Chunky Todgers stood, with his chunk of maple sugar in his hand and his mouth open, too keenly interested even to proceed with the mastication of his favourite comestible.

"Hurrah!" jerked out Chunky every few minutes. "Hurrah! Go it, my tulip! One for his nob! Hurrah!"

"Good old Franky!" chuckled Bob. "Who'd have thought it?"

Crash!

Eben Hacke went down more heavily than before, and lay on his back in the grass, blinking up at Frank Richards.

Frank stood panting.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" grunted Hacke.

"Oh, holy smoke! Ow!"

"Done?" grinned Chunky Todgers.

"Nope!"

"Better call it off, Hacke!"

chuckled Bob Lawless. "The tenderfoot is too good for you."

Hacke glared out of his closing eyes.

"I guess he's not!" he gasped. "I guess I'm going to make shavings of him! I guess a blessed tenderfoot can't walk over me! Oh, jiminy!"

Frank Richards grinned.

It was rather a twisted grin, for his face was very damaged by this time, and he felt as if there were not an inch of it left without a bruise. All his old "scraps" at St. Kit's had been as nothing to this.

He was feeling very nearly as bad as Hacke, but he was keeping his feet, and he was sure of victory now.

He waited for the lanky youth to rise. There was no "counting out" in that tussle, or Eben Hacke could have been counted out twice over.

The burly Western youth made an effort at last and lumbered to his feet, panting. Frank could have sent him flying as he did so, but he stood back, with his hands dropped. He would not hit out at a fellow who could not defend himself.

Hacke noted it, and his bruised face assumed a feeble grin.

"You ain't a bad sort, tenderfoot!" he gasped. "But I'm going to whip you all the same, you bet your boots on that!"

Hacke came on again, though it was quite clear that it cost him an effort to keep his footing on the sward. The schoolboys looked on with intense interest now. If iron determination could win the fight, Eben Hacke had a chance of success.

But Frank's determination was as grim as his adversary's, and he was outlasting the Western youth.

"Go it!" chortled Chunky Todgers. "Tenderfoot wins! Why don't you let up, Hacke?"

Hacke paid no heed.

He was making a last furious attack, and before his heavy rush Frank Richards gave ground a little.

Hacke followed him up fast. But it was only a flash in the pan. Frank suddenly stiffened up and stood firm, and Hacke's sagging drives were knocked aside, and the English lad's knuckles came with a crash on his jaw.

Hacke staggered a couple of paces and fell with a grunt.

"Holy smoke! What a sock-dologer!" ejaculated Chunky Todgers in great admiration.

Eben Hacke made one effort to rise, and sank back in the grass, with a groan.

"I guess that's the finish," he said faintly. "Oh, gum! Oh, great snakes! I do feel bad! Ow!"

"So do I!" gasped Frank. Frank was very near the end of his tether, but he could have gone on. Eben Hacke was quite "done"—indeed, Chunky Todgers remarked that he looked overdone.

"Whipped!" muttered Hacke. "Whipped by a pesky dude! Whipped by a dude in store-clothes! Oh, thunder!"

Frank smiled faintly.

"Satisfied?" he asked.

"Yow-ow! I guess so! Yow-ow! Quite!" Hacke gasped for breath.

"I reckon I woke up the wrong passenger this journey—I do, really!"

Chunky Todgers gave him a grip and helped him to his feet. Hacke stood unsteadily, leaning on the fat youth.

"Stranger," he gasped, "you're a more hefty galoot than I thought.

You've whipped me fair and square. Shake!"

He held out his hand, and Frank Richards took it cheerfully enough. Then Bob helped him on with his jacket, at the same time thumping him on the back in delight.

"Good old Franky!" he chuckled. "Who'd have thought it? Can you ride home now?"

"Well, I couldn't walk!" gasped Frank.

"Here's your plug hat!" roared Chunky Todgers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And—and I ain't smashed it!" gasped Eben Hacke. "I was goin' to jump on that plug-hat and make a concertina of it. I guess I was. And I guess I won't now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can to-morrow," said Frank, laughing. "You won't see me in a plug-hat again while I am this side of the Rockies. It's a bit too exciting."

Bob had to help his cousin upon his pony. But, once in the saddle, Frank rode away on his homeward trail sitting firmly enough. The perforated topper adorned his head for the last time while he was in British Columbia.

"How do you feel, Franky?" grinned Bob, as they trotted along the forest trail in the red sunset.

Frank made a grimace.

"Rotten!" he said. "How do I look?"

"Rotten!" chuckled Bob. "You're got a black eye, and the other a beautiful pink, and a swollen nose, and a cut lip—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Altogether, you wouldn't take a prize in a beauty show. But you've made a friend of Eben Hacke, if that's any consolation."

"I—I say," gasped Frank, "what will your father think, Bob?"

"He'll think you've enjoyed your first day at the school in the backwoods!" roared Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!"

And Frank Richards laughed, too, as he rode on to the ranch.

THE END.

## NEXT MONDAY!

**"FOR LIFE OR DEATH!"**

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!