

A FAMOUS AUTHOR'S SCHOOLDAYS! SEE INSIDE!

The BOYS' FRIEND Id.

Just Starting! "The Boys of the 'Bombay Castle'!" By Duncan Storm.

No. 849, Vol. XVII. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending September 15th, 1917.



stand. But he can't have much swank left now. I think we might give him a chance."

"Br-r-r!" said Lovell. "After all, he's a good cricketer," said Jimmy.

"And a precious blackguard!" said Lovell. "He's even got friendly with Lattrey again—that shady beast! I know jolly well he was out of bounds only yesterday, playing billiards at a pub. Dash it all, Jimmy, I don't want to set up as a superior person, but a fellow must draw a line somewhere."

Jimmy Silver nodded. "Agreed. All the same, I think that now Mornny's down on his luck, and the nutty fellows have cut him, we might give him a chance. He can't have much tin for billiards and geegees now! I think we might be friendly, and give him a show, and encourage him to stick to cricket, and all that. It would be only decent to let bygones be bygones, now a fellow's so awfully down on his luck. Dash it all, it's a bit of a sudden change, to become one of the poorest fellows in the school, after being the wealthiest!"

Lovell gave Jimmy Silver a look in which affectionate regard was curiously mixed with exasperation.

"Same old Jimmy!" he grunted. "I remember, when a Hun kid came here, you wanted to stand by him, and treat him like a human being; and you know how it turned out. Same with Mornny. He's the kind of bounder to bite the hand that strokes him."

"I'm not going to stroke him." "Fathead! You know what I mean."

"And you know what I mean," said Jimmy Silver, rising. "Let's go and call on Mornington, and be civil to him. He's bound to like it, I should say. His pals have dropped him dead, and he's always been more or less on bad terms with all the decent chaps in the Form. Let's forget everything unpleasant, and make a fresh start. I'll offer him a place in the eleven for the Bagshot final. He's worth it."

"Oh, all right!" "Put on your sweetest smiles," grinned Raby, "and don't you bow to the ground when you enter the study. Also, say 'Hail!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Jimmy Silver frowned. "No, larks!" he said warningly.

"Sober as a judge," said Lovell. "Lead on, Macduff!"

Jimmy Silver led the way, and his chums followed him, grinning.

They had very little faith in Jimmy's idea of letting bygones be bygones, and making a new start with Valentine Mornington.

Their opinion was that Mornny hadn't been improved in the least by adversity, but that poverty had made him even more unpleasant than he had been as the richest fellow at Rookwood.

Still, they were good-tempered fellows, and willing to give the idea a trial. And they admitted that Mornny had been sorely tried by the sudden change in his fortunes.

It was no light matter to lose a large fortune at one fell swoop, and with it all the importance and adulation that had fallen to his lot as the wealthiest of all the Rookwood fellows.

Jimmy Silver tapped at the door of Study No. 4 which Mornington shared with Erroll of the Fourth.

"Come in!" The Fistical Four marched in. Mornington was alone in the study. He was seated in the armchair, leaning back, with his elegant legs crossed, a cigarette between his lips. There was a slight haze of smoke in the study.

It was the best-furnished study at

(Continued on the next page.)

The Sale by Auction of Mornington's Belongings!

THE DOWNWARD PATH!

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

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Just Like Jimmy!

"About Mornny?" It was Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Rookwood Fourth, who spoke. Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, his chums in the end study, replied with a remarkable unanimity:

"Bother Mornny!" and Lovell added, with still more emphasis:

"Blow Mornny!" It was quite evident that Mornington of the Fourth was not popular in the study.

Jimmy Silver smiled serenely. "About Mornny?" he repeated. "Give us a rest!" urged Raby. "Never mind Mornny. We're all fed up with Mornny. Erroll's about the best in the Fourth who can

really stand him. What about the final with Bagshot, Jimmy?"

"Never mind the final with Bagshot," said Jimmy Silver. "About Mornny?"

Lovell grunted. "I suppose we've got to have it," he said resignedly. "Well, what about Mornny? Cut it short."

"I've been thinking about Mornny." "Lots of pleasanter things to think about, I should say," remarked Raby.

"Mornny's down on his luck," said Jimmy.

"Br-r-r!"

"I know he's rather rusty just now," continued Jimmy Silver tolerantly. "But a chap must make allowances for a chap. Mornny was the wealthiest fellow in all Rookwood—rolling in money—reeking with banknotes. It never even occurred to

him that riches take unto themselves wings, like aeroplanes, and fly away. Now all Mornny's money has gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream. He's poor."

"People have been poor before, and no bones broken," remarked Lovell. "In fact, I believe the majority of people in this country are poor. I believe it's the same in most countries. Bow-wow!"

"Only it's a bit rough on Mornny," said Jimmy. "He's always had everything he's wanted—more than was good for him. Now he's as poor as Tubby Muffin—worse off even than old Rawson, who has his scholarship, at least. He couldn't even stay at Rookwood at all, only his uncle Stacpoolle pays his fees here. That's a heavy blow for Mornny. I can't help

feeling sympathetic."

"Go and call on him, and fall on his manly bosom and weep," suggested Lovell satirically. "He will punch your nose, and serve you right! Mornny isn't looking for sympathy. He seems to have become a more sneering beast than ever since he's been down on his luck."

"He's been treated pretty badly," said Jimmy. "We never could quite pull with him, but he was chummy with the nuts—Towny and Toppy, and Peele and Gower, and Smythe of the Shell, and the rest. They've cut him dead."

"No great loss to him!" "Well, no; only he's neglected to cultivate the friendship of really nice fellows like us, you see, so he's left on his lonely own, excepting for Erroll. Now, Mornny as a swanker, a proud bounder was rather hard to



THE DOWNWARD PATH!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Kind of you to say so."
"I suppose you'll be taking up footer when the football comes along?" said Jimmy.
"I think not!"
"No?"
"Can't afford the club subs."
"What rot!" said Lovell. "It's only a few bob."
"A few bobs are a matter of considerable consequence to me now," said Mornington calmly. "I'm hard up, you know."
"Ahem!"

It was odd enough to hear the once purse-proud Mornington glorying, as it were, in his poverty in this way.
"Well, bother the subs!" said Jimmy Silver. "A trifle like that won't keep you out of the footer, Morny."

"Thanks awfully! I quite understand your kind motive, my dear fellow, but I haven't come down to charity yet."
"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Jimmy irritably.

"Bless my hat! I forgot I had to speak to Oswald!" ejaculated Raby, and he left the study.

Raby had had enough of that interesting conversation.
"Wait a tick for me!" said Newcome.

And he followed Raby.
Lovell glanced after them, hesitated, and remained. He felt bound to stand by his study leader.

Mornington threw away the stump of his cigarette, and yawned.
"Mind passin' me the fags?" he asked. "You're sittin' close to the box."

Jimmy, in silence, passed him the box of cigarettes.

Mornington selected one, and lighted it.

The captain of the Fourth felt more inclined to throw the box at his head, but he restrained that impulse. He had not come there to lecture Morny on his bad habits.

Lovell grunted.

"There's a meeting of the Classical Players this evening," Jimmy Silver remarked. "We're going to get up a play that will knock the Moderns into a cocked hat!"

"How good!"

"You'll come along, Morny?"

"I'm not a member."

"No reason why you shouldn't be. Erroll's a member, and you may as well come along with him. I can find you a part."

"Thanks, I don't care for playin' the fool!"

Jimmy Silver coughed hard.

The amateur theatricals of the Classical Club did not appear to the amateur actors as "playing the fool."

Morny's manners had evidently not been improved by adversity.

"You're playing the fool now!" broke out Lovell angrily. "Better acting plays, I should think, than smoking cigarettes like a silly ass!"

"Thanks for your opinion!" said Mornington, unmoved. "Thanks all the more as I didn't ask for it!"

"Ahem!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Lovell gave the dandy of the Fourth a glare, and stalked out of the study. He was fed-up.

"Your friends have gone," said Mornington satirically. "Are you stayin'?"

"I'm rather expectin' Lattrey to drop in for a game of cards."

"Oh!" said Jimmy.

"You're welcome to take a hand if you like. I'm sure Lattrey won't mind. Your money is as good as anybody's!"

Jimmy knitted his brows.

He realised by this time that the visit was a failure, that Morny was still the old Morny, with a new vein of sardonic bitterness in him.

"So you've made it up with Lattrey?" he said.

"Why not?"

"Plenty of reasons why not!" grunted Jimmy. "No bizney of mine, but you could do better if you liked."

"What rot! Lattrey's a sneakin' worm, but he's a rather amusin' worm, and beggars can't be choosers!" smiled Mornington.

"Still, it's very kind of you to take an interest in my personal affairs."

Kit Erroll entered the study as Mornington was speaking. He gave Jimmy Silver a friendly nod, evidently pleased to see him with Morny. Jimmy's face was growing crimson.

"Well, I won't bother you with

any further interest in your personal affairs, Morny," he broke out. "I was a fool to come here, I can see that."

"You always were a fool!" said Mornington calmly.

"Oh!"

"Do you think you're goin' to patronise me because I'm down on my luck?" said Mornington, dropping his air of assumed nonchalance, and speaking with angry bitterness.

"Goin' to be kind enough to take me up—what!—because dear old Smythe and his set have turned their backs on me? Confound your cheek!"

"I never thought of patronising you, as you put it," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I did think we might let bygones be bygones, and make a fresh start."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I'm a poor chap, without a quid to bless myself with," he said, "but I'm not goin' round beggin' to be spoken to. I don't want your friendship. Keep it till I ask for it!"

Jimmy slipped off the table.

"I was an ass, and no mistake," he said, "a silly ass, to think that you'd ever be anything but a sneering, suspicious cad, Mornington, rich or poor. You won't see me in your study again in a hurry."

"I didn't want to see you this time. There's the door!" said Mornington.

Jimmy Silver's hands clenched hard.

Mornington threw away his cigarette, and stood up, looking at him with a sneering smile, evidently ready for trouble and welcoming it.

"Pile in!" he said mockingly.

Erroll strode between them.

"Shut up, Morny!" he growled.

"Oh, let him come on!" said Mornington. "I'm quite in a humour to pitch him neck an' crop out of the study!"

"My hat!" Jimmy Silver breathed hard. His temper was rising fast.

"I've a jolly good mind—"

"Jimmy—"

Mornington pushed Erroll aside.

"Now, what have you a jolly good mind to do?" he sneered.

Jimmy made a rush at him, his anger breaking out at last. Morny's hands were up at once, and he received a sharp drive fairly on the nose. Jimmy staggered for a moment, and then sprang forward again, hitting out fiercely. Mornington went back into the armchair with a crash.

The captain of the Fourth stood looking at him, with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"Stop it!" exclaimed Erroll.

"Stop it, I tell you."

He seized Jimmy Silver by the arm and jerked him to the door.

"Look here, Erroll—"

"For goodness' sake clear off," muttered Erroll. "Don't scrap here, old chap. There's nothing to scrap about."

Jimmy Silver restrained his feelings, and stepped into the passage.

Mornington had leaped up from the armchair, panting; but Erroll, turning back, pushed him into the chair again.

"Chuck it, Morny!" he exclaimed.

"You silly ass! Let me alone!" shouted Morny.

Erroll kicked the door shut after Jimmy Silver, and put his back to it. His study-mate eyed him savagely.

"Erroll! I tell you—"

"You're not going to fight Jimmy Silver," said Erroll quietly. "Don't be such an ass, Morny."

"He's punched me!"

"You punched him."

"What are you interferin' for, you silly ass?" exclaimed Mornington angrily.

"Why can't you keep your temper?" growled Erroll. "I know Silver came here to be friendly. Why couldn't you treat him decently?"

"Hang his friendship!"

"You haven't so many friends that you can afford to insult every fellow who wants to be civil to you," said Erroll tartly.

Mornington gave him a deadly look.

"So you're throwin' it in my face, too?" he sneered. "Do you think I care a rap about Smythe and Townsend, and the rest of that silly gang? I've got no friends here, an' I don't want any! I don't want you, for that matter!"

"Morny!"

"Oh, don't Morny me!" snapped Mornington. "I know what this means. You're goin' the same way as the others, because I'm hard up. A pal without a stiver in his pockets is no use to you!"

Erroll's handsome face paled.

"You don't mean that, Morny," he said, after a long pause. "You know that it doesn't make any difference to me whether you're rich or poor."

"Why shouldn't it?" sneered Mornington. "I know you've been rusty with me for the last few days, an' I know the reason."

"I didn't mean to be rusty. I certainly don't like Lattrey coming to this study, if that's what you're driving at."

"Can't I ask a fellow to my own study if I like? I suppose it's still my study, even if I'm stony broke?"

"You can do as you like, of course. But that sneaking cad, Lattrey—"

"Not a more sneakin' cad than most of the others," jeered Mornington. "I know I've had hardly a civil word from anybody since my money went!"

"How do you treat a chap who wants to be civil?" demanded Erroll.

"Your money makes no difference to anybody but yourself. If you insult a chap as soon as he speaks, and make out that he's trying to patronise you, how the dickens can you expect chaps to be civil. When you had money, you thought everybody was after it, now you're poor, you think everybody wants to patronise you because you're hard up. You think a jolly good deal too much about yourself, Morny."

Mornington set his teeth.

"So that's what I get from you?" he said.

"You'll always get the truth from me," said Erroll. "It's not a pal's job to tell you lies. Ever since you've been hard up, you've been edge-wise, looking for trouble with everybody. You suspect every word and every look, and keep on finding offence where none is meant."

"That's enough!" said Mornington. "I might have known you'd follow the rest, in the long run. Well, I'm not hangin' on to you, Erroll. You go your way, an' I'll go mine."

"We're not going to quarrel, Morny," said Erroll steadily. "I'm willing to put up with your temper. I was only pointing out that the other fellows won't, and you can't expect them too."

"Not now I'm on my uppers," sneered Mornington. "Hang them all, you included! I was an idiot to think I had a pal left. But I'm not goin' to stand lecturin' I can tell you. Go and eat coke! You needn't trouble to speak to me again!"

Tap!

The door opened, and Erroll moved away from it. Lattrey of the Fourth came in. He glanced at the two juniors, from one to the other, and his eyes gleamed. It was easy to see that he had interrupted a quarrel.

"Am I in the way?" grinned Lattrey.

"Not at all," said Mornington. "Come in, old scout. I've got the cards here, an' there's a few smokes left."

"Right-ho!" said Lattrey.

"You're going to gamble here?" asked Erroll in a low voice.

"Oh, just a little game," said Lattrey airily. "Like to take a hand, Erroll?"

"No, you unspeakable cad!"

Lattrey shrugged his shoulders.

"Does that apply to Morny, too?" he sneered. "We're both tarred with the same brush, I imagine."

Erroll left the study without replying. His face was clouded, and his heart was heavy. Mornington had been so "touchy" since the loss of his money that Kit Erroll had had to walk very warily to avoid a quarrel with him. Now the quarrel had come.

But there was no resentment in Erroll's heart for Mornington's bitter words. More than that would have been needed to shake his loyal friendship. He was only too willing to make allowances for the embittered junior.

But if that friendship was broken off, what remained to keep Mornington from falling back into all, and more than, his old shady rascality? Erroll's heart was heavy for his friend.

Lattrey of the Fourth locked the door after him. Cards were shuffled and cigarettes lighted. Mornington was at his old pursuits—but in a different way.

In former days, Morny had gambled to kill time, and had taken a pleasure in the wretched pursuit, as much because it was forbidden as for any other reason. But it was not

mere perverseness now that spurred him on.

There was a hard greed in the handsome face now. Money was an object to him. As the two young rascals sat over their cards, the once superb dandy of the Fourth and the shady Lattrey, there was little to choose between them.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Downward Path!

Jimmy Silver did not waste any more efforts to get on a friendly footing with Mornington of the Fourth.

He had made the attempt in sheer kindness of heart, and it had failed.

He let the matter drop from that point.

Mornington had never been popular in his wealthy days, though he had had his following.

He was even more unpopular now.

Fellows who had been friendly with him for his wealth, such as Peele and Gower and Smythe, avoided him carefully. They did not want a poverty-stricken hanger-on in their select circle.

And Morny's tongue, always bitter, had become so much more bitter of late, that among fellows who were indifferent to him, indifference turned to dislike.

It was natural, perhaps, that the fellow who had fallen from his high estate should be suspicious and "touchy"—on the look-out for attempts at patronage, and ready to take offence at a careless word. But fellows had no time, and no inclination, to think it all out and make allowances.

They found Mornington a decidedly unpleasant fellow to talk to, and they left him alone—and that was all there was about it.

Even Tubby Muffin turned up his fat little nose at him, and told fellows that he had "dropped" Morny.

Which was rather cool of Tubby, for Mornington had certainly never had anything to say to him, unless it was some expression of contemptuous insolence.

Kit Erroll made more than one attempt to get on the old footing with his chum, but he found Mornington hard and repellent.

Indeed, the black sheep of Rookwood seemed to take a perverse pleasure in outraging all the ideas and feelings of the junior who had always been his best friend.

Lattrey of the Fourth, whom he really despised and disliked, was almost his only companion now.

Their tastes were in common.

When Morny broke bounds after lights out, which he did more frequently than of old, Lattrey was always his comrade in rascality.

Lattrey was unpopular, and he had no friend in the Classical Fourth, and that was probably part of his reason for attaching himself to Mornington.

But the desire to exasperate Erroll, whom he bitterly disliked, was part also of his motive. And Morny's reckless blackguardism was quite in keeping with Lattrey's own nature.

It was not long before the eye of authority was attracted to Mornington. Mr. Bootles detected tobacco-stains on his fingers in class, and caned him severely before the Fourth.

A suspicious prefect found a pack of cards in his study, and Mornington was taken before the Head, and severely lectured and caned. Yet even the reckless black sheep had not lost all his good qualities; he had owned up immediately that the cards were his, and not Erroll's.

The general opinion in the Classical Fourth was that Mornington was booked for the sack, sooner or later, and that it was likely to be sooner than later.

He did not play in the last Bagshot match when it came round.

Jimmy Silver held to his offer of putting him in the eleven; but Morny either forgot the match or affected to do so, and another man was put in at the last moment.

After that Jimmy Silver did not waste any thoughts on Mornington in making up the team for the few remaining matches of the season.

Morny had "chucked" cricket.

But though he had given up cricket as a game, it transpired that he still found a use for it in another way.

Jimmy Silver found the fellows in the Common-room discussing the fact that Morny had offered odds on Bagshot for the match, and, as Rookwood had won it, Morny had to pay out several pounds.

Morny's diamond pin disappeared about the same time, from which fact it was easy to guess how he had paid his losses.

"That poor rotter is going to the dogs as fast as he can," Lovell remarked, in the end study, about a week after the futile visit to Mornington. "He used to gamble because

TO THE BOYS AT THE FRONT!

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

Messageries HACHETTE et Cie.,
111, Rue Reamur, PARIS.

Rookwood. Morny had spent any amount of money, in his wealthy days, on providing himself with luxurious surroundings. That beautiful, well-padded armchair alone had cost Morny ten guineas, in the old days. Now the one-time wealthy youth probably had not ten shillings in his pockets.

He did not rise as Jimmy Silver & Co. came in.

He looked at them coolly, through a bluish haze of smoke, with a sneer upon his well-cut lips.

Morny's handsome face had assumed, of late, an almost perpetual expression of sneering.

Certainly, the conduct of his former friends, the merry nuts of Rookwood, had not been calculated to raise his opinion of human nature. But a fellow who had chosen such friends as Peele and Gower, and Smythe of the Shell, ought really to have known what to expect of them in the hour of adversity.

Smythe & Co. seemed to be oppressed with a fear that Morny would attempt to borrow money of them, now that he was hard up. Without waiting for the attempt to be made, they had given him very plainly to understand that he was now quite outside their select circle, and that his acquaintance was not desired.

They were not displeased to repay in that manner the insolence they had received from the wealthy youth in the old days.

As Smythe had remarked to the nuts, it was hard enough to stand Morny when the fellow could pay his "dashed footin'," and it was quite impossible to stand him now he was a "cadgin' cad."

Mornington did not speak, and he did not remove the cigarette from his lips. He only looked at his visitors with a sardonic smile.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome grinned. It was not a promising reception, and they wondered how Jimmy Silver was going to deal with it.

Jimmy Silver, as a matter of fact, felt rather disconcerted himself, but he was not a fellow to be easily beaten. He assumed his most friendly smile.

"Not busy, Morny?" he remarked.

"Not at all."

"Just dropped in for a chat," said Jimmy.

"Awfully good of you. Have a smoke?"

"Ahem! No, thanks!"

"Do!" said Mornington. "There's a box on the table. Help yourself."

"I—I'd rather not, thanks!"

"It's the last chance," said Mornington. "That's the last box, and I can't afford to buy any more."

"You know we don't smoke!" growled Lovell, forgetting the friendly intention of the visit for a moment. "Don't be a silly pig!"

Morny blew out a little cloud of smoke. He watched it curl upward with an air of great interest, and seemed to have forgotten that the Fistical Four were in the study at all. There was an awkward pause.

The 2nd Chapter.

"N.G."

Jimmy Silver sat on the corner of the table, still with a cheery smile. He was determined to be friendly, if it was possible. He affected not to notice the smoke, though it worried his healthy young lungs a little. He was willing to make every allowance for the bitterness in Mornington's breast that had been the natural result of his change of fortune.

"We're getting on to the end of the cricket," he remarked.

No answer.

"The last match with Bagshot comes off this week," remarked Jimmy.

"Does it?" yawned Mornington.

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"There's a place for you in the eleven, Morny, if you like."

"Thanks."

"Well, would you care to play?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"I'll put your name down if you like, then," said Jimmy. "We want a good bowler, and your bowling is really ripping, Morny!"

he was a silly ass; now I think he's trying to make money by it. One way of getting pocket-money, I suppose?" he added, with a snort of contempt.

"Morny won't get much that way!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Lattrey does!" said Lovell. "He sucks up to Smythe & Co., and keeps in with them, and wins their money. I know that."

"Morny won't put his pride in his pocket to that extent. As for making money out of it, it can't be easy; and Morny's not the sort to do it. If he keeps up that game his merry gold watch will follow his diamond pin."

Jimmy Silver's prediction was verified. A couple of days later Mornington was seen with a cheap gunmetal watch in the place of the handsome gold "ticker" all the Fourth had known and admired.

Some of the juniors chipped him on the subject, and received such savage replies that they soon let the matter drop.

Kit Erroll had noted the circumstance, and thought over it. That evening, at tea in the study, he made one more effort to break the ice. Mornington was eating in silence. Tea in No. 4 was always a very silent meal now.

"Morny!" said Erroll quietly.

"Hallo!"

"Hasn't this gone on long enough?" asked Erroll. "Can't we be friends, Morny?"

Mornington laughed.

"What's the good?" he said. "You don't want to be friends with a penniless bounder. I don't want your compassion, thanks. Besides, I should shock you—in fact, I'm always shocking you!" He laughed again. "I suppose you've noticed that my watch is missing?"

"Yes," said Erroll. "Where is it, Morny?"

"Pawnd."

"Oh!"

"Up the spout!" jeered Mornington. "The last resource of a poor rotter down on his luck, you know. Lattrey kindly introduced me to a pawnbroking friend—a relation of his, I believe, by gad!"

Erroll compressed his lips.

"I'm learnin' a new trade," grinned Mornington, watching his face. "You know how Lattrey used to make money out of me at nap and banker when I had any poney? What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the giddy gander. I've tried makin' money out of Lattrey the same way."

"Not much good, I should think."

"Quite so! He's too much for me. Hence these tears!" grinned Mornington. "And the billiard-sharpers at the Bird-in-Hand have been too much for me so far. But you never know. Luck will turn!"

"Morny! You can't be thinking of falling as low as that—the level of a sharper?" muttered Erroll.

"Why not? Beggars can't be choosers. They've made enough money out of me; why shouldn't I make money out of them if I can?"

"Well, you can't, for one thing."

"I'm goin' to give it a good trial. I've got a good tip for a race, and I'm goin' all out to win a pot of money," said Mornington coolly.

"If I have any luck with that geege next Tuesday I shall finger twenty-five of the best!"

"And if you don't?"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"And you think that kind of thing's good enough for you, Morny—a fellow like you?" said Erroll.

"Good enough for a poverty-stricken bounder!" smiled Mornington. "Haven't I said that beggars can't be choosers?"

"It means the sack from Rookwood in the long run."

"Let it!" said Mornington.

Erroll said no more.

But when Tuesday came round he was anxious to know what had happened as a result of Mornington's latest plunge. Mornington hurried down to Coombe immediately after lessons, keen for news.

Erroll was in the gateway when he came in. And his face when he came was so white that the junior had no need to ask him what his news was. Mornington gave him a bitter smile.

"Same old luck!" he said. "Geegee came in seventh. Ha, ha! One of the merry 'Also rans,' you know! Fifteen quid out. Jolly, isn't it?"

"Morny, you know you can depend on me—"

"Fifteen quid in your trousers-pocket?" grinned Mornington.

"Well, no. But—"

"I haven't come down to sponging yet," said Mornington. "I can raise the money. Ta-ta!"

How Mornington, whose allowance was now a few shillings a week, proposed to raise such a sum as fifteen pounds was a mystery to Erroll. But the mystery was soon explained.

When Erroll came into the junior Common-room an hour later he found half the Fourth gathered round a paper pinned on the wall.

The paper was in Mornington's elegant hand, and it ran:

"Notice.
Sale of Study Furniture!
Great Bargain!
Sale will be held in Study No. 4,
Fourth Form, at seven o'clock. Bar-
gains for cash!"

**The 4th Chapter.
Sale by Auction!**

Before seven o'clock there was a considerable crowd of juniors in and around Study No. 4 in the Fourth.

The news of the "Sale of furniture" had spread.

Classicals and Moderns came along, to look on if not to purchase. Mornington, the lofty and superb dandy of the Fourth, in the character of an auctioneer, was likely to be interesting and entertaining.

It was known, of course, that Morny must be very hard up to resort to such an expedient, and some good-natured fellows were prepared to help him out by buying his superfluities.

Others were there with an eye to a bargain. Leggett of the Modern Fourth came along with all the ready cash he could muster, prepared to offer a sixth part of its value for anything.

any, so he must have plenty left—what?"

Rap!

Higgs, the biggest fellow in the Fourth, struck the table with a coal-hammer.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hallo! Are you the giddy auctioneer?" asked Tommy Dodd, the Modern junior.

"That's it," said Higgs. "Can't you see my hammer?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington broke in, with a drawl.

"Higgs has been kind enough to undertake the sale for me," he said. "Higgs will sell off everything, without reserve. It's very kind of Higgs."

"Well, you're standing me your old cricket-bat as a fee," said Higgs. "It's worth my while."

There was a laugh.

The lofty Mornington evidently did not intend to demean himself in the role of auctioneer.

Probably he could have made a more profitable sale by undertaking it himself, and attending to his own business. But his lofty pride came first.

Higgs had been quite willing to undertake it, partly from his usual desire to bring himself into prominence, and partly because he was to have Morny's old cricket-bat as a present for his trouble. Alfred Higgs was not bothered at all by considerations of lofty dignity.

"Two-ten!" said Erroll.

Mornington started as his study-mate made the bid. He gave Kit Erroll a very curious look.

Rap, rap!

"Gentlemen, I am offered two-pound-ten for this splendid arched chair, as used by the nobility. Two-ten! What advance on two-ten? Going at two-ten—going—going—gone! Erroll, old scout, it's yours."

Erroll glanced at Mornington, who had his hands in his pockets, and did not remove them.

"Drop the money in this coffee-pot," said the auctioneer. "The gentleman holding this sale is too aristocratic to touch money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Erroll dropped two pound-notes and a "ten-bobber" into the coffee-pot on the table. Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

Rap, rap, rap!

"Gentlemen, here is a handsome marble clock, real marble, made at Rheims before the bombardment; first-class works; actually keeps time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silly ass gave fifteen guineas for this clock in the days when he had guineas," continued Higgs.

"Oh, cut that out!" growled Mornington.

"I'll conduct this sale my own way, or not at all," said Higgs. "Gentlemen, what offers for this marble

pleased, either, at Erroll being the purchaser. But he could not very well raise objections, and he was silent.

Higgs was running on.

"Gentlemen, here is a handsome fender and fireirons, exquisite workmanship and finish, everything in the best of taste; nothing required but a tip to the maid occasionally to look after them. What offers for these splendid articles?"

"Tuppence!" said Jones minor.

"Tanner!" grinned Lovell.

"Did the gentleman say a tanner?"

"No, the gentleman jolly well didn't; he said a tanner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eighteenpence!" said Peele.

"Two bob!"

"Going—going at two bob—"

"Ten!" said Erroll quietly.

The articles were knocked down to Erroll. Mornington made a restless movement.

"Are you buying up the lot, Erroll?" he muttered.

"Why not, if I want to?"

"Oh, nothin'!"

The sale proceeded.

But it really was not much of an auction, as few of the fellows had money enough to offer anything like the value of the articles; and in every case Kit Erroll chimed in with a top bid.

Article after article was knocked down to Erroll, and in each case he produced the money, and dropped it promptly into the coffee-pot.

Curtains and carpet, desk and sofa, vases and tea-things, and other articles, were sold off one after another, and in each case Kit Erroll proved to be the purchaser.

By the time the sale was concluded the sum paid amounted to twenty pounds, all of which Erroll had produced in ready money.

Higgs of the Fourth gave a final rap on the table, and pitched the hammer into the fender with a crash.

"Gentlemen, the sale is over. Where's that old cricket-bat, Morny? Thanks! Gentlemen, you can go and eat coke!"

And Higgs departed with his bat. The juniors, grinning, cleared out of the study, some of them glancing very curiously at Erroll, who remained with the dandy of the Fourth.

Both Leggett and Lattrey gave Erroll dark looks as they went. They had not secured any of the bargains they had come for, and they had not had the pleasure of seeing the lofty Morny's home broken up.

Mornington kicked the door shut, and turned to Erroll.

"Look here, what does this mean?" he demanded. "What have you bought up the whole study for?"

"Well, it's my study, you know," said Erroll, with a smile. "I should have had to furnish it, or at least stand half, if the things had been cleared away. May as well leave them as they are."

"You've paid more than the others would have paid."

"Must make top bid, you know, at an auction, to secure the goods."

Mornington gave him a grim look.

"Come, don't be an ass, Morny!" said Erroll cheerfully. "I raised no objection to sharing the study when everything in it was yours. You needn't mind the things being mine. It's the same thing the other way round."

"Well, I suppose that's so," said Mornington, after a pause. "I haven't got much choice, anyway. But where the dickens did you get that twenty pounds from?"

Erroll laughed.

"You know I don't spend much money," he said. "I had saved a good bit out of my allowance, and my pater sent me a fiver for a birthday present."

"That didn't make twenty," said Mornington. "You went out on your bike after tea."

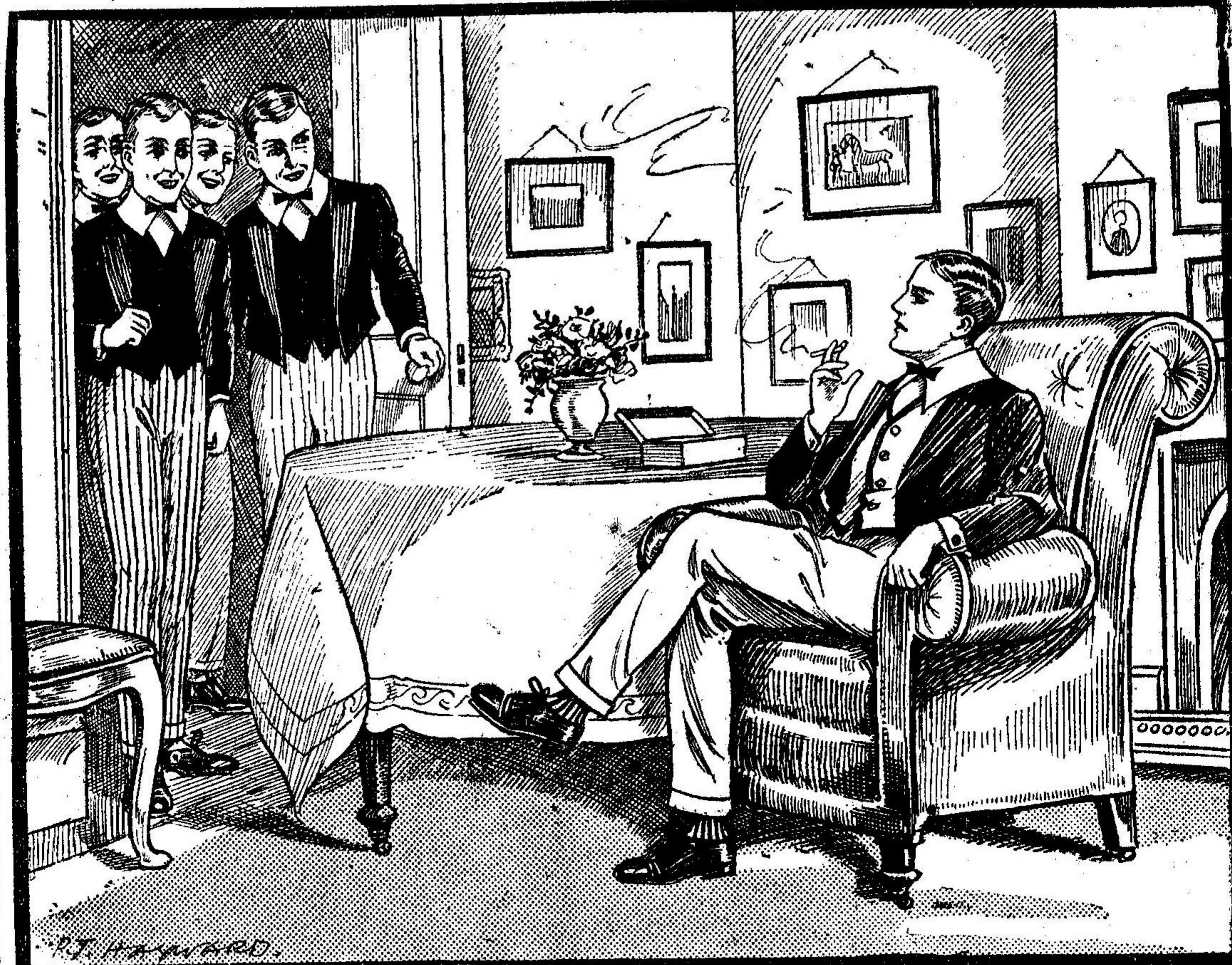
Erroll coloured.

"Well, I took a leaf out of your book, Morny," he said. "I biked over to Rookham, and—left my watch there—the gold ticker my father gave me. I didn't want you—I mean, I didn't want the study cleared out. It's all serene. I've got twenty-five pounds in the Post Office Savings' Bank, and I can draw it out in a few days, and get my watch."

Mornington moved restlessly about the study.

He knew quite well that Erroll had done this to save him from losing the luxurious surroundings he dearly loved. Erroll himself cared nothing for silken sofas and padded armchairs and Persian carpets.

The "lots" would have been cheap at six or seven times what Erroll had given for them certainly; but, as a matter of fact, Erroll did not want them. He had bought them so that Morny should not lose them. And Morny knew it.



Mornington did not rise as Jimmy Silver and Co. came in. He looked at them coolly, through a bluish haze of smoke, with a sneer upon his well-cut lips.

Lattrey was there with the same object. Friendship, in Lattrey's case, was not likely to affect his keenness for a bargain.

The nuts came along in a crowd. Smythe and Howard and Tracy arrived together, and Townsend and Topham, Peele and Gower, of the Fourth, followed them in. Most of the nuts had money in their pockets, and they had often envied Morny's magnificent surroundings. Half the Fourth and the Shell, in fact, crowded the study and the passage outside.

Erroll was there, with a quiet, grave face.

It was his study as well as Morny's, but Erroll had only lately become a member of the study, and he had found it ready furnished, and nothing had needed to be supplied.

Peele and Gower had formerly shared the study with Mornington, and when they had changed out they had taken their belongings. All that remained—the major and expensive part—belonged to Mornington, with the exception of the table, which was provided by the school.

"Goin' to be sold up—what?" smiled Adolphus Smythe, tapping Kit Erroll on the arm.

"It seems so," said Erroll.

"Leave you rather stranded, won't it?" grinned Adolphus. "I understand that most of the things are Morny's."

"All of them," said Erroll.

"Oh, Erroll's got lots of money!" said Townsend. "He never spends

Rap, rap!

"Walk up, gentlemen!" said Higgs. "Lemme see. Here's a fine lot of study furniture going, first-class value, bought by a gentleman of well-known aristocratic taste, who is compelled to sell up owing to a pressing demand for cash—"

"From a bookie!" said Topham.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, here is a handsome study armchair," said Higgs, quite in the manner of a professional auctioneer. "That armchair cost ten guineas. Check action, ball-bearings, gilt-edged, electric light, and all modern conveniences—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What offers for this handsome study armchair?" asked the auctioneer. "Any gentleman might be proud to squat in that armchair."

"Sixpence!" squeaked Tubby Muffin.

"This is not a joking matter, gentlemen. Silver, would you mind wheeling that splendid armchair forward? This armchair has been reposed in by a gentleman connected with all the titled families in the kingdom, from the Prince of Hunstein to the Marquis of Tilbury Docks. What offers? Now, then, gentlemen!"

"Quid!" said Adolphus Smythe.

"Gentlemen, I am offered a quid for that handsome armchair."

"Thirty bob!" said Townsend.

"Thirty-five!"

"Two quid!"

clock, an ornament to any gentleman's mantelpiece?"

"Five bob!" said Topham.

"Ten!"

"Fifteen!"

"Quid!" said Erroll.

"Dash it all," said Adolphus Smythe, "I'm havin' that clock! Thirty bob!"

And the dandy of the Shell gave Erroll a lofty look of disdain.

"Two pounds!" said Erroll.

"Dash it all! Two-ten!" shouted Adolphus.

"Three!"

"Look here, Erroll, blow you—"

"Going—going at three quids, this handsome marble clock—"

"Three-ten!" shouted Smythe angrily.

"Four!" said Erroll.

"Guineas!" yapped Adolphus.

"Four-ten!" said Erroll calmly.

"Going—going at four-ten this handsome marble clock—going to Mr. Erroll at four-ten—going—going—gone!"

"My hat, you're made of money, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver, as Erroll dropped a five-pound note into the coffee-pot, taking out a note for change.

Erroll smiled.

Mornington regarded his study-mate very curiously. He knew that Erroll's father was well off, and made his son a good allowance, but he had not expected Kit to produce quids in this lavish way.

Mornington did not seem wholly

pleased, either, at Erroll being the purchaser. But he could not very well raise objections, and he was silent.

Higgs was running on.

"Gentlemen, here is a handsome fender and fireirons, exquisite workmanship and finish, everything in the best of taste; nothing required but a tip to the maid occasionally to look after them. What offers for these splendid articles?"

"Tuppence!" said Jones minor.

"Tanner!" grinned Lovell.

"Did the gentleman say a tanner?"

"No, the gentleman jolly well didn't; he said a tanner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eighteenpence!" said Peele.

"Two bob!"

"Going—going at two bob—"

"Ten!" said Erroll quietly.

The articles were knocked down to Erroll. Mornington made a restless movement.

"Are you buying up the lot, Erroll?" he muttered.

"Why not, if I want to?"

"Oh, nothin'!"

The sale proceeded.

But it really was not much of an auction, as few of the fellows had money enough to offer anything like the value of the articles; and in every case Kit Erroll chimed in with a top bid.

Article after article was knocked down to Erroll, and in each case he produced the money, and dropped it promptly into the coffee-pot.

Curtains and carpet, desk and sofa, vases and tea-things, and other articles, were sold off one after another, and in each case Kit Erroll proved to be the purchaser.

By the time the sale was concluded the sum paid amounted to twenty pounds, all of which Erroll had produced in ready money.

Higgs of the Fourth gave a final rap on the table, and pitched the hammer into the fender with a crash.

"Gentlemen, the sale is over. Where's that old cricket-bat, Morny? Thanks! Gentlemen, you can go and eat coke!"

And Higgs departed with his bat. The juniors, grinning, cleared out of the study, some of them glancing very curiously at Erroll, who remained with the dandy of the Fourth.

Both Leggett and Lattrey gave Erroll dark looks as they went. They had not secured any of the bargains they had come for, and they had not had the pleasure of seeing the lofty Morny's home broken up.

Mornington kicked the door shut, and turned to Erroll.

"Look here, what does this mean?" he demanded. "What have you bought up the whole study for?"

"Well, it's my study, you know," said Erroll, with a smile. "I should have had to furnish it, or at least stand half, if the things had been cleared away. May as well leave them as they are."

"You've paid more than the others would have paid."

"Must make top bid, you know, at an auction, to secure the goods."

Mornington gave him a grim look.

"Come, don't be an ass, Morny!" said Erroll cheerfully. "I raised no objection to sharing the study when everything in it was yours. You needn't mind the things being mine. It's the same thing the other way round."

"Well, I suppose that's so," said Mornington, after a pause. "I haven't got much choice, anyway. But where the dickens did you get that twenty pounds from?"

Erroll laughed.

"You know I don't spend much money," he said. "I had saved a good bit out of my allowance, and my pater sent me a fiver for a birthday present."

"That didn't make twenty," said Mornington. "You went out on your bike after tea."

Erroll coloured.

"Well, I took a leaf out of your book, Morny," he said. "I biked over to Rookham, and—left my watch there—the gold ticker my father gave me. I didn't want you—I mean, I didn't want the study cleared out. It's all serene. I've got twenty-five pounds in the Post Office Savings' Bank, and I can draw it out in a few days, and get my watch."

Mornington moved restlessly about the study.

He knew quite well that Erroll had done this to save him from losing the luxurious surroundings he dearly loved. Erroll himself cared nothing for silken sofas and padded armchairs and Persian carpets.

The "lots" would have been cheap at six or seven times what Erroll had given for them certainly; but, as a matter of fact, Erroll did not want them. He had bought them so that Morny should not lose them. And Morny knew it.



THE DOWNWARD PATH!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Joey Hook and his friends at the Bird-in-Hand, knowing of Morny's altered circumstances, were by no means as servile as of old. They assumed an odious familiarity which was gall and wormwood to the proud lad.

But they were willing to keep on with him so long as he had money to lose, and hitherto he had contrived to pay his debts, though by this time he had parted with nearly everything he had of value.

Jimmy Silver, who had been thinking about the matter, spoke to Mornington a few days after the sale. He did not like Morny—he could not pull with him. But Morny had good qualities, and Jimmy would have been sorry to see him kicked out of Rookwood.

And it seemed pretty clear that that was what it was coming to. Mornington stared when the captain of the Fourth came up to him in the quad, but Jimmy did not heed his stare.

"Just a word, Mornington," said Jimmy quietly. "You told me once you didn't want me to chip into your personal affairs!"

"I don't!" said Mornington, with a cool nod.

"I'm going to give you a tip, all the same."

"Keep it till I ask for it!" suggested Mornington.

"It's this," continued Jimmy, unheeding. "Every fellow in the Form knows what you've been selling things for."

"They're welcome to the knowledge," said Mornington, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't care a rap what all Rookwood thinks."

"It's to pay debts you get into at the Bird-in-Hand," said Jimmy calmly. "The chaps all know it."

"Quite so!"

"Well, sooner or later you won't be able to pay up."

"I sha'n't ask you to lend me the money," said Mornington satirically. "I shouldn't lend it to you if you did," said Jimmy Silver. "But this is the tip I was speaking of. If the time comes when you can't pay Hook and his gang what you owe them, you're booked for trouble. That rotter Hook isn't the man to lose his money. He would think nothing at all of showing you up to the Head if you didn't pay him."

Mornington started a little.

"That's what I wanted to warn you about," said Jimmy. "Hook has you there if you don't square him. And you can't in the long run. You can't sell up your study twice over, you know."

"I don't see that it matters to you, anyway," said Mornington, with a sneer.

"It doesn't. Only it would mean the sack for you, and I should be sorry for that."

"Awfully kind of you! Would you mind keeping your sympathy and advice another time till I ask for them?"

And Mornington walked away before Jimmy could reply to that.

Jimmy Silver breathed hard through his nose.

He was strongly inclined to follow after Morny and buff his head against one of the beeches in return for his insolence. But he refrained. He reflected that Morny was booked for enough trouble if he kept on as he had begun.

Having done his best in the matter with that result, Jimmy Silver dismissed Mornington from his mind. If the fellow chose to go to the dogs with a crash it was his own business, not Jimmy's.

That Jimmy's warning had had no effect was quite clear that same night. Mornington was out of bounds after lights-out. All the Classical Fourth knew it, and wondered how long Morny would be able to keep up this game without being spotted, in which case the chopper would come down with a vengeance, and Rookwood would see the last of the fallen dandy of the Fourth.

The next day Mornington seemed to have lost some of the cool, mocking nonchalance with which he had girded himself as with armour.

He was absent-minded in the Form-room, and Mr. Bootles was very severe with him. He answered the Form-master insolently, and was caned before the class, and went back to his seat with white face and burning eyes.

Lattrey joined him when the Fourth were dismissed.

"How did you get on last night?" he asked, when they were safe out of hearing in the quad.

Mornington's lip curled.

"I had a plunge at poker," he said. "That merry game you taught me to play, Lattrey. Rippin' game—what?"

"What luck?"

"Lots—for Joey Hook and his pals!"

"Cleaned out?" asked Lattrey, laughing.

"Exactly. With the merry addition of fourteen pounds in IOU's held by the gentlemanly company."

Lattrey stopped dead, staring at him.

"You—you ass!" he gasped.

"You've run up fourteen quid, and given your signature on it?"

"I couldn't have gone on playin' otherwise."

"But you can't pay it!"

"Not a tenth part of it," said Mornington calmly.

"Hook thinks you can pay up, as you've always paid," said Lattrey. "He will be as mad as a hornet if you don't!"

"No doubt."

"But what are you going to do?" asked the cad of the Fourth. "If you ask Hook to wait, he won't wait long. And you've got no prospects. Will your guardian stand it, do you think?"

"I don't think—I know he won't!" said Mornington coolly. "And I've got nothin' more to sell. It was a last plunge to set me on my feet. As I can't pay, I shall be reluctantly compelled to swindle Hook. After all, he's swindled me often enough, dear boy. My conscience is quite easy."

"Only he's not the sort of merchant to be swindled," said Lattrey grimly. "If you don't pay up he'll send your IOU's to the Head. The Head wouldn't take his word against a Rookwood fellow, but he'll have to take it backed up by your handwriting."

"Quite so. Lend me fourteen quid!" said Mornington.

"Are you potty?"

"I should be, if I thought you'd lend me the money!" said Mornington laughing.

"I couldn't, of course."

"You would not, any way I dare say you could. But I shouldn't take it if you offered it!" said Mornington disdainfully. "I shouldn't care to be under any obligation to a fellow like you."

Mornington left him, and Lattrey stared after him, with a curling lip. He knew that Morny had come to the end of his tether at last.

Lattrey, as a matter of fact, could have found the money, but he had not the slightest intention of doing so.

The cad of the Fourth had no use for a "lame duck."

And Mornington's supercilious insolence was not calculated to make his associate feel any keen regret at his ruin.

For it was ruin!

Hook would wait a few days, perhaps, but non-payment would be followed by threats, and the threats would be carried out. Unless Mornington could raise the money the game was up for him at Rookwood School.

And the black sheep, whose curious ambition to become a sharper had been so completely frustrated, had not the remotest chance of raising a quarter of the sum.

The next morning there was a letter for Morny in the rack.

Erroll took it from the rack and brought it to him, with a very grave face, in the quadrangle.

Mornington read it and laughed, and thrust it in his pocket.

"Morny," said Erroll in a low voice, "I know that fist. I've seen it before. Are you mad, to have letters from a bookmaker here? Mr. Bootles might have opened it and seen what's in it."

"It wouldn't make any difference," said Mornington coolly. "Mr. Bootles will know all about Hook tomorrow."

"Morny!" exclaimed Erroll.

Mornington strolled away, whistling. Erroll looked at him with deep trouble in his face. He felt a vague but deep alarm. Had the end come for the reckless blackguard of the Fourth?

It mattered little enough to any other fellow at Rookwood, but it mattered very much to Kit Erroll, for his steady friendship for the reckless junior had never faltered. What-
ever Valentine Mornington was, Kit Erroll was his chum, and quietly ready to stand by him through thick and thin.

Mornington's face was very quiet and a little pale at dinner that day. After dinner he went up to his study. He came down with a coat over his arm and a bag in his hand.

"Hallo! Off for a merry weekend?" asked Jimmy Silver.

Mornington gave him a curious smile.

"Exactly. Good-bye, Silver!" He paused. "I'm sorry I haven't pulled better with you, Silver. I've been rather an ass in some ways. Luck's been against me, too. Good-bye!"

He held out his hand.

Jimmy Silver shook hands with him cheerily enough, but he looked at the dandy of the Fourth in surprise and some concern.

"Going to be long away?" he asked. "You speak as if you were going to the world's end!"

"Some little time, I think," said Mornington. "I hope you'll have good luck with the footer and win no end of matches. Sorry I sha'n't be here to help you. Ta-ta!"

He nodded and walked down to the gates.

Bag in hand, Mornington walked down the lane, his head held high. There was a sound of hurried footsteps behind him, and he turned his head and frowned. Kit Erroll came breathlessly up.

"Morny!" exclaimed Erroll, panting.

"Hallo!"

"I heard what you said to Jimmy Silver." Erroll breathed hard. "Morny, tell me what's the matter! Don't try to fool me! I know you're intending to clear out of Rookwood, and that you're not going home."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders. "Isn't it so?" exclaimed Erroll.

"Well, yes, it is so!" said Mornington impatiently.

"You were going without speaking to me?" said Erroll reproachfully.

"I didn't want any questions," said Mornington. "Still, I'm glad to say good-bye. You're a good chap, Erroll." His face softened. "You've been a better pal than I ever deserved. I—I'm sorry I'm leaving. Good-bye! I've got a train to catch, and—"

"You're not going to catch it, Morny! You can't leave Rookwood like this! The Head!"

"Both the Head!"

"Your guardian—"

"I'm done with my guardian!"

"Morny, what are you going to do?"

"I don't know, and I don't care much. I've got to go!" said Mornington impatiently. "If I stayed I should be sacked before nightfall. Do you understand now? I'm goin' so as to go of my own accord, without bein' booted out. Don't you understand? It's the end—the merry end. I've played my game, and lost. It

was a mug's game. But I've called the tune, and I've got to pay the piper."

"If it's money, you know I—"

"I wasn't goin' to sponge on you, Erroll. An' it's too late now. That letter was from Joey Hook."

Mornington laughed sardonically. "If I don't redeem my IOU's by three o'clock this afternoon they're goin' to the Head! You can guess the merry result—Head awfully shocked, the sack on the spot, angry guardian receivin' me home with frowns. Not good enough for me, old scout. I'm goin' out into the wide world. I'm not goin' home to be sneered at an' patronised by my merry cousins. No fear!"

"How much do you owe Hook?" asked Erroll quietly.

"Fourteen quids!" Morny laughed. "And I've got six bob!"

Erroll breathed more freely. "Thank Heaven it's no worse! You're not going, Morny! I've got the money—"

"In the bank?" grinned Mornington. "All serene. I knew you'd say that if you knew; and I'm not spongin' on you, I tell you. Too late now. It's pay up by three o'clock or the merry sack!"

"I've got the money in my pocket, Morny!"

"By gad!" ejaculated Mornington in astonishment. "How the merry dickens—"

"I knew it must come to this in the long run," said Erroll very quietly. "It couldn't end any other way. I drew out all I had left in the bank to be ready for it."

"Oh, gad!"

"I've got fifteen pounds-ten," said Erroll. "It's all I've got, and thank goodness it's enough to see you through."

"I—I won't—"

"You will!" said Erroll. "Morny, old chap, we've been pals; we're pals still. You can't refuse."

There was a silence.

"Do you know what you are, Erroll?" said Mornington at last. "You're the biggest ass in Rookwood!"

"Good! Let's go down and see Hook and get your paper back."

"But I tell you—"

"Come on!" said Erroll, slipping his arm through his chum's.

And Erroll had his way.

An hour later Mornington had pitched his bag into a corner of Study No. 4. He did not want that now. The chums had walked back from Coombe in silence, but their thoughts were busy.

"You've had your way, Erroll," said Mornington, facing his chum. "You've brought me back, and you haven't asked me even to give up playin' the giddy ox. How do you know I sha'n't plunge in neck-deep in a couple of days, and begin it all over again? Are you goin' to sell your bike ready for the next emergency?"

"Yes," said Erroll quietly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mornington's laugh was hearty and merry, and it made Erroll's face brighten. "Well, you're not goin' to sell your bike, old scout. Do you think I'd have taken your money if I was goin' on playin' the same fool game afterwards? I'm not quite such a worm as that! It's over an' done with, you ass! It's ancient history, and there's goin' to be no more of it!"

"Morny," said Erroll, with a deep breath, "if you mean that—"

"Every word! Do you think that's worth fourteen quid, which I cannot possibly square in three terms?" grinned Mornington.

"Yes, or fourteen thousand, if I had them!" said Erroll.

"Well, it's a go, if it's any satisfaction to you," said Mornington. "I mean real bizney this time; honest injun!" He laughed. "I say, old scout, do you think I've got brains enough to get a scholarship—what?"

"You could if you tried; and I'll help you," said Erroll.

"Done!"

During the next few days Mornington succeeded in astonishing the Fourth Form at Rookwood more than he had ever astonished them before. Morny had entered for a Founders' Scholarship, and he was "swotting" for the exam. It was a nine days' wonder in the Fourth.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"RAISING THE WIND!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT!

WHY BE TOO FAT

If you are too stout and wish to reduce your weight quickly and safely, commence the famous Antipon Treatment now. Antipon cures when all else has failed. It will succeed, no matter how long you have been suffering, or how many so-called cures you have tried without success. Within 24 hours there is a reduction of 8oz. to 3lb., and the subsequent reduction satisfies all expectations. No change of diet is necessary. Antipon has no disagreeable after-effects, and is a pure vegetable compound, having a wonderful tonic effect upon the system, removing all excess fat, restoring the figure, and improving the complexion.



When once the weight is reduced to normal the course is finished, and the fear of over-fatness banished for ever. Antipon is sold in bottles, price 3s. and 5s., from Boots' (580 branches), and all chemists and stores the world over, or privately packed from the Antipon Company, P 27, Store Street, London, W.C.1.



MONTHLY PAYMENTS.—Buy by post Privately. Boots, Costumes, Raincoats, Suits, Luminous Watches, Gold Rings, Cutlery, from 4/- monthly. List Free. State requirements.—MASTERS, LTD., 6, Horse Street, Eves. (Estab. 1899)

FACTORY TO RIDER

Packed Free. Carriage Paid. Thirty Days' Trial. **MEAD Coventry Flyers** Dunlop Tyres, Brooks' Saddles, Speed-Gears, etc. £4 - 10s. to £7 - 19s. EASY PAYMENTS FROM 7/- MONTHLY. Immediate delivery. No delay. Write at once for Free Art Catalogue and Special Offer. **MEAD Cycle Co. Inc. Dep. 129** 11 Paradise St., Liverpool

NERVOUSNESS

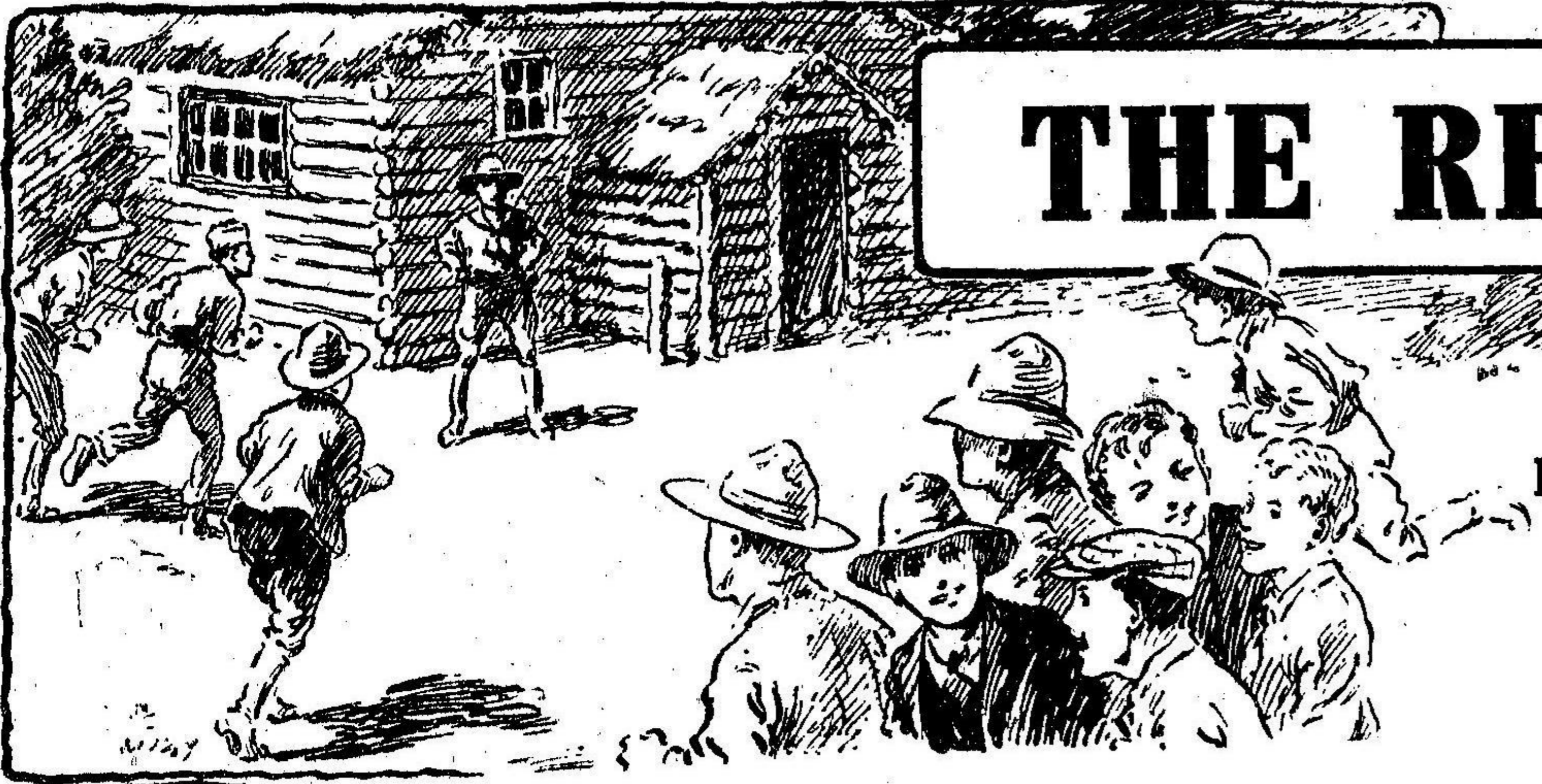
is the greatest drawback in life to any man or woman. If you are nervous, timid, low-spirited, lack self-confidence, will-power, mind-concentration, bluish or feel awkward in the presence of others, send at once 3 penny stamps for particulars of the Mento-Nerve Strengthening Treatment, which is guaranteed to cure in 13 days.—**GODFREY ELLIOTT-SMITH, Ltd., 485, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4.**

ARE YOU SHORT?

If so, let the Girvan System help you to increase your height. Mr. Briggs reports an increase of 5 inches; Driver E. F., 3 inches; Mr. Batsdiffe, 4 inches; Miss Leedell, 4 inches. No drugs or appliances. Send three penny stamps for further particulars and £100 guarantee.—**ARTHUR GIRVAN, Ltd., Dept. A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N.4.**



Applications with regard to Advertisement Space in this paper should be addressed: Advertisement Manager, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4.



THE REMITTANCE MAN!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story,
dealing with the Schooldays of Frank
Richards, the Famous Author of the Tales of
Harry Wharton & Co.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

The 1st Chapter. Good Samaritans!

"Hold on, Bob!"
"What's the row?"
"Look!"
School was over at Cedar Creek. Frank Richards and his cousin, Bob Lawless, were trotting along the forest trail homeward, chatting as they rode.
Frank suddenly pulled in his pony as a figure came in sight on the trail ahead.
It was that of a man in shabby clothes and dilapidated boots, with a ragged Stetson hat on the back of his untidy head. As he came plodding up the trail, he was lurching strangely from side to side, with a curiously unsteady gait.
Bob Lawless looked at him, and his lip curled.
"Come on, Frank," he said curtly.
"Hold on," said Frank. "What's the matter with that fellow, Bob? He must be ill!"
"Oh, he's all right. Come on!"
Frank glanced at his Canadian cousin in surprise.
As a rule, Bob was the first to extend a helping hand to a stranger in distress. Frank had known him to ride a dozen miles to help a new settler in the section to clear his land or run up a shack.
But Bob's good-natured face, as he looked at the lurching figure on the trail expressed only contempt and disgust.
"Dash it all, Bob, the man must be ill," exclaimed Frank warmly. "I'm jolly well going to see. Do you know him?"
"Yes," said Bob shortly. "I've seen him about often enough. He hangs out at Cedar Creek town."
"Who is he?"
"Nobody you want to know. His name's Beauclerc."
"Well, I'm going to stop."
"He's a remittance man," growled Bob; "and if you weren't a howling tenderfoot, you'd see what's the matter with him."
Frank had halted his pony, and Bob did likewise, though with evident unwillingness. The two boys watched the man as he came slowly towards them.
"What's a remittance man?" asked Frank. It was the first the English lad had heard of that curious and well-known character of the Far West.
Bob grunted.
"A man who lives on remittances from home," he said. "There's a good many of them spoiling the landscape in British Columbia. I can tell you. Shiftless wasters who come out to try their luck in the Colonies, you know. The way they try their luck is to hang round the stores, playing poker with the cattlemen, or drinking, or putting on side."
"When their remittance arrives from some ass in the Old Country, they sport new clothes and put on more side. When it doesn't, they loaf about in tatters, or beg, borrow, or steal. That chap is a good specimen. He's supposed to have no end of big connections in England, and they're glad to give him a handsome allowance to keep him a few thousand miles away."
"Oh!" said Frank, rather blankly.
"Want to make his acquaintance now?" grinned Bob.
"But if he's got a handsome allowance from his relations in England, he doesn't seem to thrive on it," said Frank, with a pitying glance at the remittance man's wretched clothes.
"Because he gambles it away as fast as he gets it," said Bob. "I've seen him painting the town red in Cedar Creek and the other camps. He gets a job, of sorts, sometimes, but he's too lazy to work—and too aristocratic." Bob sniffed. "That's not the kind of man that Canadians want to see arrive from the Old

Country, Frank. But they come all the same."
"He looks ill, Bob."
"Oh, you champion duffer!" growled Bob. "He's only suffering from an over-dose of tanglefoot."
"Of—of what?"
"Tanglefoot—whisky."
"Oh, my hat!"
Frank felt his compassion simmer down very considerably.
To a healthy, clean-minded lad, there is probably no sight more repulsive than that of a man in a state of intoxication.
Frank was about to set his pony in motion again, to ride past the approaching remittance man, when the latter gave a sudden lurch, and pitched over heavily among the larches beside the trail.
He made an effort to rise, but sank back again.
Frank paused once more.
"Bob!"
"Oh, come on!"
"We can't leave him there," said Frank. "He's an awful beast, but—hang it all—it will be dark in an hour or two, and he can't get home—like that!"
"Let him sleep there, then!"
"And wake up with pneumonia, perhaps," said Frank. "Look here, Bob, you can get on to the ranch if you like, I'm going to lend the poor chap a hand."
Bob Lawless gave his cousin a rather impatient look, but his good-humour conquered, and he grinned.
"Oh, all right! If you want to, I guess I'll help. Jump down."
"I knew your bark was worse than your bite," said Frank, laughing.
"Let's get him home. I suppose he doesn't live far away."
"About six miles."
"Oh!"
"He lives in a shack outside the town, on the creek," said Bob. "He's not at home much, for that matter—not when he's got any money, at all events."
"Does he live alone?"
"Except for his son, yes."
"He has a son?" said Frank.
"Yes; not a specially nice chap, either," said Bob. "Proud as Lucifer, and poor as a church mouse."
"Must be a pretty hard life for him!"
"He doesn't make it any easier by his manners and customs," Bob laughed. "You see, Franky, there are all sorts of folk in this country. Every fellow who comes out from England isn't a fellow like yourself. Some of the immigrants are silly duffers who don't know enough to go in when it rains."
"This man Beauclerc is one of them, and his son's another. He dresses in tatters, and puts on airs of superiority that make a fellow want to punch his head," Bob grunted. "If we take his father home, he will most likely insult us, and we may have to pull his nose!"
"We'll chance that!" said Frank, laughing.
The cousins had dismounted, and they approached the wretched figure sprawling in the larches.
Now that he was closer, Frank Richards did not need telling what was the matter with the man. There was a very powerful aroma of spirits about him.
Repressing his disgust, Frank bent over him. The man looked up at him with glassy eyes.
In spite of his degraded state, Frank noted that his features were handsome and well-cut. In spite of all, there was an air of what had once been respectability about the man.
"Let me alone! Can't you keep your hands off a gentleman?" he muttered, in husky tones, which yet had a trace of cultivation left. "Let me alone!"
"You can't stay here," said Frank. "Turn me out, will you?" mut-

tered the remittance man. "Ha! You low scoundrel, it would be an honour to you to brush my clothes!"
"What on earth does he mean?" said Frank, in perplexity.
Bob grinned.
"He thinks he's talking to some saloon-keeper, who's turned him out," he said. "Not before it was time, I should think. Hallo! He's gone to sleep!"
"We'll stick him on my pony," said Frank. "I can walk."
"Right-ho!"
The remittance man said nothing further. He was unconscious. He did not even open his eyes as the two lads lifted him and placed him on Frank's pony.
Bob Lawless remounted his steed, riding close, and supporting the man, and Frank walked, helping to support the poor wretch, and leading the pony. It was a strange enough procession, following the long trail under the trees in the sunset.

The 2nd Chapter.

The Son of the Remittance Man.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Bob Lawless at last.
Some distance from Cedar Creek town, on the bank of the creek, stood a long shack on half-cleared ground, surrounded by patches of bush.
There was no sign of life about the place, as the boys halted outside, and lifted their charge to the ground.
"This the place?" asked Frank.
"Yes. The kid must be somewhere about. Get him inside."
Lascelles Beauclerc was lifted by his shoulders and his feet, and carried into the shack, of which the pine door stood wide open.
There were only two rooms in the shack, one the living-room and the other the bed-room.
The furniture consisted chiefly of old packing-cases and boxes and a rusty stove.
But the bed-room into which the man was carried was very clean and tidy.
There were two beds, made up of old cases spread with buffalo robes.
On the larger one the insensible man was laid.
Frank glanced round him with saddened eyes.
He was thinking of the remittance man's son. What surroundings for a growing lad, was the thought in his mind.
"Vere doesn't seem to be around," remarked Bob. "Working out in the fields, perhaps."
"Vere!" repeated Frank.
"Yes. The kid's name is Vere Beauclerc."
"What a stunning name!" said Frank, with a smile.
"Oh, we don't go much on names out here," said Bob carelessly. "Beauclerc or Brown, Plantagenet or Pudkins; it's all the same, so long as a man's a man. We haven't any use for snobbery in Canada—too busy!"
Frank laughed.
"I guess we can leave him here," said Bob. "The kid will find him when he comes in. Hallo! Here he is! Talk of angels."
There was a step in the outer room, and a lad of about fifteen came striding across.
He stood in the doorway of the inner room, looking at the two intruders with a flash in his eyes.
Frank Richards regarded him with keen interest. He was somehow very much interested in this scion of a noble family in the old country, who found himself among such strange surroundings in the great West.
Vere Beauclerc was somewhat tall for his age, slim, and gracefully built. His face was extremely handsome, but it was marred by an expression of haughtiness which seemed strangely out of place there, for he was dressed with painful shabbiness. But he might have been a noble

man, at home in a baronial hall, by his manner.
"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed, and his voice was sharp and haughty. "You have no right here!"
For the moment Beauclerc did not see the still figure on the bed. His dark, flashing eyes were fixed upon the two boys.
Frank felt his cheeks flush at the tone of the remittance man's son. Bob's eyes gleamed.
"Do you think you can enter this house as you please?" Beauclerc went on passionately.
"Oh, cheese it!" broke out Bob. "Do you think we want to enter your blessed old shack? We came to bring your father home."
Beauclerc started.
"My father!"
Bob made a gesture towards the bed.
"Oh! Is my father ill?"
"Er—er—that is—you see—"
Bob broke off suddenly.
Vere Beauclerc understood, and a crimson flush dyed his face to the very ears as he went hastily to the bedside.
Bob touched his cousin's arm.
"Come on, Frank! Let's get out."
Frank followed him from the shack. They caught the ponies that were browsing outside, and were about to mount, when Vere Beauclerc came hastily out of the shack.
His handsome face was still flushed, but his manner was changed.
"I am sorry I spoke to you as I did," he said. "I—I did not know you had brought my father home."
"All serene," said Bob carelessly. "No bones broken."
"I am very much obliged to you."
The words almost seemed wrung from the boy. It was plainly an effort to him to curb his proud and passionate temper, and speak civilly to the two strangers who had seen his father in such a state of degradation. "I thank you very sincerely!"
"Not at all," said Frank, speaking for the first time. "I am very glad we found Mr. Beauclerc in the wood."
Beauclerc gave him a quick look.
"You are very kind!" he said.
He raised his ragged hat gracefully, and turned back into the shack.
The cousins mounted, and rode away down the creek, heading for the distant Lawless Ranch.
"Popper will be wondering what's become of us," said Bob, as they set their ponies to a gallop. "Get a move on!"
The sun had almost disappeared now, and the comrades rode on in growing dusk.
Frank Richards' face was very thoughtful.
He could not help thinking of the lonely lad in the shack, friendless in the country, and repelling by his foolish pride the kind-hearted people who would have been his friends.
"That's a rotten life for that chap, Bob," he said at last. "Couldn't something be done for him?"
Bob shrugged his shoulders.
"He would probably want to knock you down, if you proposed to do anything for him," he said. "He's as proud as Lucifer, I tell you! Sort of wraps himself up in a mantle of pride, you know. His father would take a drink from a half-breed hobo, but that kid wouldn't accept a meal in charity if he was starving!"
"I think I can understand him a bit," said Frank. "I—I suppose he doesn't go to school?"
Bob's lip curled.
"No. The lumber school isn't good enough for him, I dare say."
"The poor chap's got nothing left but his pride, Bob. You can make allowances for that."
"Oh, yes!" said Bob carelessly. "Of course, he'd have to swallow his pride, and go to school, if the district was more settled. But, as it happens,

he can do as he likes, and he doesn't like."
"He ought to go, Bob."
"I guess so."
"He would get a lot of the nonsense knocked out of him, and that would do him good, too," remarked Frank.
"Ha, ha! Better tell him so."
The subject dropped, but Frank Richards was still thinking of Vere Beauclerc when they rode up to the ranch after nightfall.
"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Mr. Lawless as they came in. "Where have you been all this time?"
Bob Lawless explained.
"It was Frank's idea," he added. "After all, we couldn't leave the poor old hobo in the wood, dad."
The rancher nodded.
"You did quite right, my boys," said Mrs. Lawless. "It was a very kind act. Now, have your supper."
And Frank and Bob were very glad to sit down to the substantial Canadian supper. But when they went to their room Frank was still thoughtful. He sat up in bed a little later.
"Bob!"
"Yaw-aw! Hallo!" came Bob's sleepy voice from the other bed.
"I've been thinking about that chap."
"Yaw-aw! What chap?"
"Beauclerc."
"Oh, bother Beauclerc! Go to sleep!" yawned Bob.
And Frank Richards, warned by a deep snore that further conversation was barred, decided to go to sleep.

The 3rd Chapter. Over the Rapids.

"Look out for squalls!"
"It's all right!"
"Pride goeth before a fall!"
grinned Bob Lawless.
It was the next day, and morning classes had finished at Cedar Creek School. Frank Richards was standing in a birch-bark canoe on the creek, and Bob was watching him from the bank—a little anxiously.
Frank had done a good deal of canoeing with his cousin, and had picked up the use of the paddle. But he was ambitious to handle a birch-bark canoe on his own, and he was trying his luck.
"It's all serene, Bob!" he said, laughing. "Easy as falling off a form."
"Easy as falling out and getting drowned!" grinned Eben Hacke, from the shore. "The verdict will be 'Found drowned.'"
"Oh, rats!"
"Made your will, Richards?" called out Chunky Todgers, and there was a laugh from the Cedar Creek fellows.
Frank coloured a little. As a matter of fact, he was not absolutely certain of his ability to "paddle his own canoe," but he did not feel inclined to admit the fact. He had a natural desire to show the merry young Canadians that a tenderfoot was not quite helpless.
"I say, old chap, do be careful!" said Bob. "If you get out into the rapids—"
"I'm not going near the rapids."
"You mayn't be able to help it when you get into the current," said Bob. "There's been a lot of rain, and the creek's swollen. You can see that."
"All serene."
"Better let me come. You can try it on your own on the lake at the ranch."
"I'll try it here," said Frank.
"Well, a wilful ass will have his way!" said Bob. "Keep her head to the current, anyhow, if you get carried down."
"I sha'n't get carried down," said Frank cheerfully.
And the canoe shot out into the creek.
Bob watched the English boy

anxiously. He knew that there was danger for an inexperienced canoeer, a fact that Frank did not realise. He ran along the bank as the canoe glided along.

It seemed plain sailing enough at first, and Frank was glad that he had made the venture alone.

But he discovered soon that the trees on shore were fleeing by with great swiftness, and that Bob, running along the bank, was left behind. He was shouting, but his voice was lost in the distance.

Frank decided to turn back. The swiftness of the water warned him that he was getting near the rapids.

The rapids on the creek were not of a dangerous character to one who knew the ropes. Eben Hacke would have cleared them with ease, or Bob himself. But they were very new to the lad fresh from the old country.

Frank had persuaded himself that he was quite a master of the paddle. To his surprise, the canoe refused to come round.

Instead of doing so, the light little craft rocked broadside on the swiftly-running water, and very nearly capsized.

Frank's heart thumped. He paddled desperately, and the canoe righted, but with her nose on the current, gliding swiftly downstream.

"My hat!" muttered Frank, in dismay.

He had made the interesting discovery that he could not round the canoe in the swift current, and that if he attempted it again he would probably finish his voyage at the bottom of the creek.

There was nothing for it but to run with the stream and get ashore as best he could. The canoe was light enough for him to carry it, or drag it, at least, back to the school landing.

But even getting ashore was not easy for the inexperienced paddler. The rain-swollen waters were rushing on, and ahead Frank could hear the deep, threatening murmur of the rapids.

He set his teeth hard. The realisation that he owed his danger to over-confidence—what he himself would have termed "swelled head"—did not comfort him.

The danger was plain enough. He remembered Bob's advice, and as he drew nearer and nearer to the rapids he kept the canoe's head to the current.

The banks were fleeing by now at what seemed express speed to the boy in the birch-bark canoe.

The lumber school had long vanished behind.

Dizzy with the speed, Frank still kept his head, and kept the canoe steady as he rushed into the rapids.

By luck more than anything else he kept to the main channel, and avoided the dangerous snags that rose on both sides from the swirling water.

The din of the waters seemed deafening to his ears. Foam curled round the bow as the canoe fled on.

He realised that he was "shooting the rapids."

The speed slackened.

Frank panted for breath. The rapids were behind him now, though the water was still running fast. The worst of the danger was over. From somewhere on the bank he heard a sudden shouting. It was a warning, he knew; but before he quite realised it there was a stunning crash.

The canoe had crashed into a floating log, and in a twinkling it was capsized, and Frank was struggling in the water.

His head struck something as he struggled. It was the bottom of the overturned canoe. His senses were leaving him, but he still struggled to swim.

The water flooded over his head, but he came up again, bravely fighting for his life in the heavy swirl. But his head went under again.

The last thing he knew was that a sudden grasp was fastened on his collar, and he was dragged up.

For a second he caught a fleeting glimpse of a face beside him in the swirling water, and then his senses left him.

The 4th Chapter.

Frank's Rescue.

Frank Richards opened his eyes. There was a dull ache in his head. He gazed about him dizzily.

He was lying in the grass by the shining creek, that rushed and sang by within a few feet of him.

He lay in a pool of water, wet to the skin, drenched, and dripping. Something was supporting his head, and as his senses cleared he realised that it was a strong arm. A face bent over him, a handsome face he remembered.

"Feel better?"

"Beaulerc!" gasped Frank.

The son of the remittance man nodded and smiled.

"Yes. I saw you come over the fall, and shouted to you. You're not used to a canoe, are you?"

Frank laughed breathlessly. He was quickly recovering.

"I thought I was, but I'm not. Thank you for fetching me out. I should have been drowned."

"Well, I suppose you would, really," said Beaulerc. "You've got a bump on your head. You had a knock."

"You must be a jolly good swimmer," said Frank.

"Yes, pretty fair," said Beaulerc carelessly.

Something of his old manner was returning now, but Frank was determined not to observe it. He sat up, Beaulerc still supporting him.

"Bob will be anxious about me," said Frank. "I shall have to get back as fast as I can. Am I far from the school?"

"A good six miles."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Longer than that by road," said Beaulerc. "And I suppose you couldn't paddle back, could you?"

"Not much good if I could," said Frank ruefully. "I suppose Bob's canoe is at the bottom of the creek."

Beaulerc laughed.

"Not at all. I brought it ashore after I'd landed you. There it lies."

Frank looked round. The canoe was out of the water.

"By Jove," said Frank, "you're awfully good, Beaulerc! You've

"He didn't want me to," confessed Frank. "I was a pig-headed duffer, and I deserve all I've got. How on earth am I going to get back? I suppose school will be over by the time I arrive. Bob will be no end worried."

Beaulerc hesitated a moment.

"Would you like me to paddle you back?" he asked.

"Could you?"

"Easily."

"I say, you're awfully good," said Frank gratefully. "If you've got the time to spare—"

Beaulerc shrugged his shoulders. "I've plenty of time. I do a great deal of idling. There's little enough for me to do at the shack."

"But the clearing—"

"We don't work the land. Father hasn't taken up cultivation of any sort." He frowned a little. "I dare say you've heard about me," he added bitterly. "Father's a remittance man."

"I—I know."

"You know what that is?"

"Yes."

"We live on an allowance my father gets from his elder brother in England," said Beaulerc, with a sarcastic curl of the lip. "We belong to a good family, and we're too aristocratic to work. Not much use wasters of that kind coming to Canada, eh? But lots of them do, and lots of them go to the bad."

He shrugged his shoulders again. "But never mind all that. Lend me a hand with the canoe. It will have to be

That was a debt Frank Richards was not likely to forget in a hurry.

The strange situation of the remittance man's son appealed to him, too. He could guess that shame at his father's degradation was part of Beaulerc's reason for wrapping himself up, as it were, in an armour of cold pride and disdain.

"Beaulerc!" said Frank at last, breaking the silence—only broken hitherto by the ripple of the paddle.

Beaulerc looked at him.

"Excuse me," Frank coloured a little. "Why don't you come to our school? You could if you liked."

"I don't like."

"Your pater would let you."

Beaulerc laughed.

"That's the first time I've heard a chap's father called his pater since I came west of the Rockies," he said.

"Of course, you are English?"

"Same as you," said Frank. "You don't like the life here?"

"No."

"I do," said Frank. "I think it's splendid. Perhaps you make up your mind not to like it?"

"Perhaps," said Beaulerc calmly. "You'd like the school all right," said Frank. "Dash it all, you ought to be at school, oughtn't you?"

"Plenty of fellows of my age are at work here," said Beaulerc.

"Yes; but you're not at work. How do you kill time?"

"Anyhow."

"I wish you'd come to Cedar Creek," said Frank. "You'd find the fellows right as rain. My cousin Bob—"

There was a shout from the bank as the canoe came gliding up.

"Here he is!"

Bob Lawless fairly dragged Frank from the canoe, almost hugging him in his relief.

"Frank! You duffer! I reckoned you were a goner! Thank goodness you've got back! Come on. You're late for school." He paused, and looked curiously at Vere Beaulerc, who had stepped from the canoe and made it fast. "What's happened, Frank?"

The 5th Chapter.

The New Boy at Cedar Creek.

Vere Beaulerc did not glance at Bob Lawless. He methodically made the canoe secure, apparently ignorant of the Canadian's presence. Bob's eyes were beginning to gleam.

"I came to grief on the rapids," said Frank hastily. "Beaulerc fished me out of the water, Bob. I should have been drowned."

"Oh, by gum!" ejaculated Bob. "He's paddled me back. Goodness knows when I should have got here if he hadn't. I say, Beaulerc, how are you going to get home?"

"Walk," said Beaulerc laconically.

"It's a jolly long way!"

"That's nothing!"

Beaulerc paused a moment, and then held out his hand to Frank Richards.

"Good-bye!" he said.

"Good-bye!" said Frank, as he



The canoe crashed into a floating log. In a twinkling it had capsized, and Frank Richards was struggling in the water.

learned to be more handy than I have out here."

"I've been out here a good many years," said Beaulerc quietly.

"You're not much older than I am," said Frank, looking at him.

"No."

"You remember England?"

"Oh, yes, very well," Beaulerc smiled. "I was at school in England before my father left the Old Country and brought me with him." His face clouded again as he mentioned his father, and his manner became more reserved. "Do you think you can get up now?"

Frank rose to his feet, with Beaulerc's assistance. He was feeling a trifle giddy, but otherwise little the worse for his plunge. His chief concern was for Bob, whose anxiety for him he could guess.

"If you like to come along to the shack I can give you a rub down," said Beaulerc.

"Is it far?"

"A few miles."

Frank laughed.

"Thanks! Then I won't. I want to get back to school. I shall soon get dry in this sun. You're as wet as I am."

"That's nothing."

"Well, it's not very comfy," said Frank, shaking himself, and spattering the grass with drops. "Poor old Bob! He'll think I'm drowned!"

"He shouldn't have let you start alone in the canoe," said Beaulerc. "It was dangerous for a new-comer."

portaged to the other side of the rapids. Can't paddle uphill, you know."

"I suppose not," assented Frank.

The two boys picked up the birch-bark canoe between them, and carried it up the steep bank.

The "portage" was a long one, and the canoe had to be carried some distance before it could be launched above the rapids.

Beaulerc led the way, Frank trusting to his guidance. They lost sight of the creek two or three times as they went on. But Beaulerc evidently knew every foot of the way.

"Here we are," he said at last.

The canoe was set down, and slid out into the creek. Frank was glad enough to sit down. Beaulerc took the paddle, and the canoe glided upstream.

Frank watched him with interest.

He paddled with great skill and untiring strength. The rough life of the backwoods had done much for Vere Beaulerc, so far as physical strength and endurance went.

His face was set now in its usual expression of almost arrogant calm. Frank could easily understand how good-natured, happy-go-lucky Bob Lawless had no liking for the haughty, reserved boy.

But Frank, though to some degree repelled by his manner, could not help feeling friendly towards the lonely lad. Vere Beaulerc had almost certainly saved his life, though he made nothing of it.

"I've met your cousin Bob," said Beaulerc. "You'll excuse me if I say I don't like him."

"Oh!" said Frank, taken aback. "And I shouldn't like the fellows at your school," said Beaulerc. "Do you?"

"Yes."

"Tastes differ!" said Beaulerc. Frank was silent. He understood that the Beaulercs, father and son, were the very last persons to get on in any way in the breezy West. Pride of birth was ludicrously out of place in the shadow of the mighty Rockies, where every man was valued for what he was, and not for what his ancestors might have been.

Frank knew, too, that plenty of Canadians were descended from good old families in the Mother Country, and did not put on the least vestige of "side" on that account. And certainly, so far as the conduct of the remittance man went, it was not calculated to inspire Western democrats with any great respect for "blue blood."

The roughest cattleman in the section felt only contempt for the remittance man.

Beaulerc had saved his life, and Frank felt cordial and friendly towards him. It came as a shock to feel that his new acquaintance was something of a snob, for that was what it amounted to.

He did not speak again, as Beaulerc paddled on untiringly. He was glad when the lumber school came in sight at last.

shook hands with him. "And thanks again!"

"Not at all!"

Frank coloured with vexation as Beaulerc turned away. He had not taken the slightest note of Bob's presence, even by so much as a look. Bob's good-natured face was flushed and his eyes were gleaming.

"You say Beaulerc saved your life, Frank?" muttered Bob.

"Yes. I should have gone under but for him."

"Well, that was decent of him. I suppose. I won't pull a fellow's pose who did that for you," said Bob.

"Let him clear!"

"Bob!" muttered Frank.

Beaulerc was turning away, but he turned back, his lip curling in the sarcastic smile Frank had learned to know already.

"Pray don't let that stop you, dear boy," he said, with cool insolence. "My nose is at your service—if you can touch it!"

Bob clenched his hands, and made a stride toward him. Frank Richards hastily stepped between.

"Bob, old chap! Hold on—"

"Look here—"

"Don't!" said Frank. "He saved my life, Bob!"

Bob Lawless dropped his hands. "Oh, all right! Let him go! I don't want to row with him. You'd better come in, Frank. You're jolly late already."

He grasped Frank's arm and hurried him away to the schoolhouse. Vere Beaulerc stood looking after them for a few minutes, the sarcastic

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."

WELCOMED BY ALL!

More Popular Than Ever.

Every day I receive further proof that our two latest stories are meeting with general approval. At the time of writing I have not had a single letter from a reader stating that he or she does not appreciate "The Boys of the Bombay Castle," or the stories dealing with Frank Richards' schooldays.

Thousands of my staunch supporters are delighted with these tales, and many hundreds of readers have simply gone into raptures over them. Mr. Duncan Storm and Mr. Martin Clifford are authors of the highest class, but I am confident that their latest stories will make them more famous than ever.

"August 13th, 1917," writes a reader who lives in Bootle. "Oh, that longed-for day has dawned, and Mr. Duncan Storm's latest story, 'The Boys of the Bombay Castle,' has appeared in print! What do I think of the opening instalment? My reply is: What do mothers say or do when a son is home on leave from the firing line? Words cannot describe their emotions. In my case, words cannot describe what I think of the opening instalment of Duncan Storm's new story. I realise that it is going to be a masterpiece, undoubtedly Mr. Duncan Storm's best."

This letter I selected at random, and had I the room, I could fill a whole issue of the BOYS' FRIEND with communications from readers written in a similar strain.

Our two latest stories have hit the mark with a vengeance. I must honestly confess that I am not surprised, for, as I said when I announced these tales, there is something new and fresh about them that makes them totally different from the ordinary run of boys' stories.

Needless to say, these stories have not quite secured all the praise. The tales of Jimmy Silver & Co. are popular with all, and Bob Travers, the boy boxer, and Dick, Frank, and Joe, not to forget Pieface, are admired by every one of my loyal supporters.

It goes without saying that there are still a number of boys in this country who do not know of the splendid attractions now appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND. For instance, does your special chum read the good old BOYS' FRIEND? If not, I should esteem it a great favour if you would pass your issue on to him. Every boy who fails to read the magnificent tales in the BOYS' FRIEND is missing a real treat.

Will you tell your chums of the treat that awaits them in the pages of the BOYS' FRIEND? Unless you want to keep your copy, pass it on to your friends, and let them read the stories and judge whether the BOYS' FRIEND is not the finest boys' paper on the market. I have little doubt as to what their answer will be.

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME.

A Splendid Variety of Stories.

Vere Beauclerc figures very prominently in next Monday's magnificent,

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.

long, complete tale, dealing with Frank Richards' schooldays, entitled, "LOYAL TO HIS ENEMY!"

By Martin Clifford.

As you have seen in this week's story, Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc are enemies. They each dislike the other, and neither can see the other's good points. The enmity they share for one another reaches a high pitch in next Monday's story. Bob Lawless' bitter dislike for Beauclerc increases, but the latter comes out in a new light, and, although perhaps he has great cause to hate Bob, he shows himself to be one of the best, forever loyal to his enemy.

Our next instalment of "THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

By Duncan Storm.

is one long thrill from beginning to end. The boys fall foul of a band of villainous tribesmen, and are taken

prisoners. As Lal Tata says, "They are lawless, cut-throat fellows. They will hold us for ransom for much money, and if the money is not paid, they will cut off our ears, and make things jolly unpleasant for us." Whilst we cannot guarantee that the tribesmen would cut off the ears of the boys, it is certainly their intention to hold them to ransom. From this you will gather that there is plenty of excitement in this instalment.

Next Monday's grand, long, complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled

"RAISING THE WIND!"

By Owen Conquest.

Tubby Muffin is very prominent in this tale. Tubby is very miserable. As he says, he has a brother in Germany, and the poor fellow is starving. Tubby expresses great sympathy for his brother, and these sympathies are shared by Jimmy Silver & Co. In fact, they are so sorry for Tubby's brother that they decide to raise the wind on his behalf, and send him a parcel of food. Then comes an amusing revelation. What this revelation is you will learn when you read our next story of the Rookwood chums.

You will, I feel sure, all like next Monday's thrilling tale of Dick, Frank, and Joe, the Crusoe Island Adventurers. It is entitled

"THE BOY WHO VANISHED!"

By Maurice Everard.

In endeavouring to discover the digger of the mysterious hole on the island, Frank Polruan meets with a

most exciting adventure. His life is in great peril, and many thrilling events take place ere he once again returns to his friends.

The last attraction in our next issue is the grand, long, complete tale of Bob Travers, the boy boxer, entitled

"THE UNFINISHED FIGHT!"

By Herbert Britton.

When, in this fine story, Joe Barnett's booth is in danger of being wrecked by a terrific storm that is raging, Bob Travers and the other boxers are called upon to act like heroes in order to save human lives. They are successful in doing this, but the power to save Joe Barnett's booth is beyond them. It is destroyed by the elements, and the old showman's means of earning a living is taken from him. Then something happens that brings fresh hope to Joe Barnett. This "something" will prove of great interest to you.

In conclusion, let me urge every one of you to make a point of ordering your copies in advance. Owing to the splendid attractions which are now appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND, there is, naturally, a great demand for the paper. It is, therefore, obvious that only those readers who order in advance will be sure of securing their copies when publication day arrives.

Your Editor



THE REMITTANCE MAN!

(Continued from the previous page.)

smile still upon his face, and then turned and disappeared among the trees along the creek.

"That's a queer fellow, Bob!" said Frank, as they entered the schoolhouse.

Bob grunted. "Too queer for my taste. He's got the manners of a grizzly bear, if you want to know what I think of him! The son of a drunken waster, turning up his nose at everybody in the section!" growled Bob.

"He can't help his father!"

"He can help being a silly snob, I suppose."

"Well, I suppose so," admitted Frank. "But—but I believe he isn't a bad sort, in the main, Bob. He ought to be at school here. He would get the rot knocked out of him in next to no time."

"Well, I'd help!" said Bob, his face relaxing into a grin. "He wouldn't be here a day without three or four fights on his hands, and I should be one of the first. Come on. You want a rub-down before you go into school."

Ten minutes later the cousins entered the schoolroom.

Afternoon lessons were half over, and Miss Meadows gave them both a very severe glance.

But the schoolmistress was placated by Bob's explanation, and they took their places for the remainder of the lessons.

Frank Richards was generally one of Miss Meadows' best pupils. But this afternoon he could not help his thoughts wandering.

It was no light service that Vere Beauclerc had performed for him, and Frank was not likely to be ungrateful. He knew that Beauclerc, however good a swimmer he was, must have run considerable risk in plunging into the water for him below the rapids.

He had plenty of pluck, as all events; and he must have a good heart to run so much risk for a stranger.

Frank Richards would have been glad to welcome him as a schoolfellow,

and he was wondering whether it could be done.

After school, when the cousins were riding home together, he broached the subject to Bob Lawless. "Couldn't your pater chip in, Bob?" he asked. "Mr. Beauclerc ought to send his son to school, you know!"

"I'm getting rather tired of your new chum, Frank!" said Bob, quite roughly for him.

"Well, he's not a chum," said Frank. "I hardly know the chap. But it seems rotten for him to be wasting his life as he's doing. If your father spoke to Mr. Beauclerc—"

"Oh, rats!"

Frank was discouraged, and he dropped the subject. But Bob himself raised it again as they came in sight of the ranch.

"What are you bothering about that fellow Beauclerc for, Frank?" he asked.

"Well, I wish something could be done for him."

"He would feel like punching your head if he knew that you were suggesting doing something for him."

"I dare say he would!" admitted Frank. "All the same—"

"Still, I agree with you," said Bob unexpectedly. "His father's a regular wastrel. I don't believe he ever gives the kid a thought in any way. And the poor chap's got no mother." Bob knitted his brows. "Look here, Franky, we'll tackle dad about it after supper!"

"Right-ho!" said Frank, brightening up.

And after supper, in the ranch-house, when Rancher Lawless was enjoying his evening pipe, he was duly "tackled."

The rancher listened quietly, blowing out big clouds of smoke the while. He nodded at last.

"I guess you're right," he said. "I'm afraid Mr. Beauclerc is a hopeless case. But I've thought about the boy several times. As a matter of fact, I've spoken to Beauclerc about it, and so have some others. It hasn't done much good. But I'll ride over

in the morning on my way to the town."

And with that Frank Richards had to be satisfied. Bob Lawless burst into a chuckle when they went to their room.

"You'll get your cheery Beauclerc as a schoolfellow," he remarked, "and you'll be fighting him the next day, and so shall I the day after."

"I sha'n't fight him," said Frank quietly. "And I hope you won't, Bob. Why not give him a chance? You've often called me a tenderfoot, but Beauclerc is a bigger greenhorn than I ever was, in some ways. He hasn't learned yet that class distinction doesn't count at the foot of the Rocky Mountains; his head's full of nonsense he learned in the old country. But give him a chance, and he'll turn out right enough."

"Anything you like!" yawned Bob. "After all, he'll have trouble enough on his hands without me. If there's anything the chaps at Cedar Creek won't stand it's a silly ass putting on side!"

"You think your father will manage it?" asked Frank, without pursuing that topic.

"I guess so. Old Beauclerc will borrow some money off him, I fancy," said Bob coolly. "The old galoot will do anything for anybody for a loan when his remittance hasn't arrived. And young Beauclerc will guess, and it will make him wild, and he will be ready to eat you!"

"Oh!" said Frank, rather dismayed. "But—but surely, Bob, he can't like the kind of life he's leading now?"

"Well, it will be better for him to come to school, of course," said Bob. "He will be happier, I should say. But he will guess that he owes it to you, and if he feels under an obligation he will hate you for it."

"I—I can't think so!"

Bob chuckled.

"You'll see."

And Bob went cheerfully to sleep, evidently quite indifferent as to whether the remittance man's son came to Cedar Creek School or not.

On the following morning Mr. Lawless rode away from the ranch with the schoolboys after breakfast, and they parted with him at the fork of the trail. Mr. Lawless rode on to the town, while his son and nephew trotted off to school.

During morning lessons Frank Richards could not help wondering how the rancher's visit to the remittance man's shack had prospered.

He wondered, too, whether he had

done right in asking the rancher to intervene. Yet he could not feel sorry if it resulted in the wayward lad being taken away from the half-savage life he was condemned to by his wastrel father's indifference and selfishness.

After dinner, in the school dining-room, Frank and Bob went down to the creek to try the canoe again, Frank having realised quite clearly that he was in need of more instruction from his Canadian cousin.

The canoe kept them busy till the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

"Lessons again!" yawned Bob. "No rest for the wicked! Make her rip!"

The canoe was rushed to the bank, and the two chums jumped ashore. The Cedar Creek fellows were going into the schoolhouse. Bob Lawless caught his cousin's arm suddenly.

"By gum! Look here, my son!"

"Beauclerc!" exclaimed Frank.

The remittance man's son was coming towards them. His handsome face was flushed, his dark eyes gleaming. There was a deep, suppressed anger and resentment in his look.

Frank Richards gave him a friendly nod, and Bob grinned faintly. Beauclerc was not looking friendly.

"You've joined the school?" asked Frank cordially.

Beauclerc's lip curled.

"Yes; my father has decided to send me to school. There is no choice about my coming here, as there is no other school. Mr. Lawless visited him this morning, and I fancy I owe it to him. It is very kind of him to take an interest in me." Beauclerc's eyes gleamed. "It is odd that he should have taken the trouble to think about me at all."

His eyes gleamed at Frank, who understood the implied question, Frank flushed crimson. For the moment he fully shared Bob's dislike of the arrogant lad before him. After all, he had done a kind action after having received a service. Was he to be called over the coals for that?

"I think I am right," said Beauclerc, with a sneer. "It was you put it into Mr. Lawless' head to speak to my father?"

"Well, and why not?" demanded Frank hotly. "If I had been in your place I should have been glad—"

"So would any chap with any sense!" growled Bob.

"So I owe it to you, Frank Richards?" Beauclerc set his teeth.

"It is not enough for me to be poor, dependent on my own people—I am to be sent hither and thither at a stranger's word, like a pariah dog?"

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"LOYAL TO HIS ENEMY!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!