

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

See inside for "The Boys of the 'Bombay Castle'!" By Duncan Storm.

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending October 20th, 1917.]

A THIEF IN THE NIGHT!

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

The 1st Chapter.

Mornington's Answer.

"Morny!"
"Dariou kai Parysatidos—"
"Mornington!"
"Gignontai paides duo—"
"Oh, shut up that rot, Mornington!" exclaimed Lattrey of the Fourth irritably. "Give it a rest!"
Mornington did not even look up.

The dandy of the Fourth was seated on a bench, under one of the old beeches in the quadrangle at Rookwood.

Xenophon's "Anabasis" was open on his knees, and Morny was mumbling over the Greek.

He was not looking happy. The once magnificent Mornington, dandy and slacker and "blade," was about the last fellow at Rookwood to take to "swotting" of his own accord.

But here he was swotting on a half-holiday!

On Little Side, his chum Erroll was at football practice with Jimmy Silver & Co.

Mornington would have been glad to join the footballers. On that keen afternoon in late autumn football would certainly have been more agreeable than sitting under the beeches with Xenophon.

But Morny was sticking it. He detested work, and he hated Greek. The celebrated "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" possessed no interest for him whatever.

Yet here he was, mumbling over the "Anabasis," and Lattrey of the Fourth regarded him with mingled surprise and irritation.

"Look here, Morny—"
"Dariou kai Parysatidos—" repeated Mornington deliberately.

"You silly ass!"
"Gignontai paides duo—"
"Morny!"

"Presbuteros men Artaxerxes, neoteros de Kuros—"
"Goal! Well kicked, Erroll!"

It was a shout from the footer ground, and Morny looked up then and glanced away to the playing-fields. Kit Erroll had put the ball in, beating Conroy in goal.

"Good man!" said Mornington.

"Morny!"
"Hallo!" Mornington's eyes fell on Lattrey at last, as if he had seen him then for the first time. "You there? Did you speak?"

"You know I spoke!" said Lattrey, his eyes gleaming savagely. "Same swanking bouncer as ever, Morny, though you're as poor as a church mouse now, instead of being the richest fellow at Rookwood."

"Quite so," said Mornington calmly. "Not worth your wastin' your time upon, Lattrey. My riches have taken unto themselves wings and flown away, and my dear pals have naturally flown after them, and I've had to chuck banker in the study and billiards at the Bird-in-Hand. And, surprising as it may seem to you, Lattrey, I don't want to be honoured with your estimable acquaintance. Would you mind cuttin' off and leavin' me to work?"

"Work!" said Lattrey. "You work!"
Morny laughed.



MORNINGTON'S GUILT! See Our Grand School Tale!

"Surprisin' ain't it?" he said. "I'm swottin'."

"How are you getting on with your swotting?" asked Lattrey sarcastically.

"Rotten! And none the better for bein' interrupted."

"Towny says you're entering for a scholarship and working for the exam," said Lattrey, eyeing him.

"Towny's right for once."

"You'll never get it!"

"I don't suppose I shall. But I'm goin' to try. I wish I'd given Greek a bit more attention. Horrid bore!"

"Suppose you get it, what's the good of it to you?" asked Lattrey.

"Three years without fees, and some money for books. Pah! Your uncle's paying your expenses here now. You don't stand to gain anything. It will only save your uncle's pocket if you get the schol."

"Quite so."

"Then what's the game? I don't understand."

"You wouldn't!"

"Look here, Morny, I can tell you a trick worth two of that!" said Lattrey, sitting down on the bench.

"No need for us to be enemies because we've had rows."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders. He did not like Lattrey, and he had had bitter quarrels with the cad of the Fourth. But he did not repulse him now. He was so horribly bored with work that any excuse for taking a rest was welcome to him.

"No need for you to be so jolly hard up, and having to ask your uncle, old Staepole, for pocket-money," continued Lattrey.

"Got a special tip for another swindlin' race?" grinned Mornington.

"No. Look here. Since your Cousin Cecil turned up and claimed the Mornington estates, and got them, you're on your uppers. Only your guardian, old Staepole, stands between you and the workhouse. I suppose you've got some fat-headed idea of making yourself independent by getting a schol. There's an easier way."

"Oh, rot! I've tried my luck at cards and geeges and got skinned of what little I had left," said Mornington, with a shrug. "I've chucked all that, anyway. I can't afford it. An'

I've promised Erroll. I'm goin' to grind Greek an' Latin an' maths now. What a prospect!"

"I could put you up to gettin' as much as ever you had. I wonder you haven't thought of it yourself."

"Well, I'll hear you. Pile in!"

"Your cousin, Cecil Mornington, is in the Second Form here," said Lattrey.

"Well?"

"Well," said Lattrey impatiently, "I suppose you haven't forgotten that Cecil Mornington was the starvin' brat you picked up on the road and cared for before you knew he was your cousin at all. He's Mornington Secundus now, with no end of money in his pockets, but he's just the same 'Erbert that you picked up on the road, and he thinks as much of you as ever he did. He hasn't got it into his silly, kiddish head yet that he's the rich relation and you're the poor one. He still looks on you as a little tin god, as he always did."

"Good old 'Erbert!" smiled Mornington.

Mornington's face softened a little. In his fall from wealth and conse-

quence it had been some comfort that he was still the magnificent Mornington in the eyes of the waif of Rookwood, the cousin who had unwillingly supplanted him.

'Erbert's devotion had never faltered, and was never likely to.

'Erbert of the Second Form was Mornington II. now, heir to a tremendous fortune when he came of age. But he could not forget that that good luck would never have come his way had not Valentine

Mornington rescued him from poverty and rags and brought him to Rookwood.

Lattrey watched Mornington's handsome face eagerly.

"You see?" he exclaimed. "That's the wheeze! That kid, 'Erbert, would do anything you told him. He would follow your lead in anything and everything."

"I know that."

"Well, don't you see?"

"No, I don't!"

"Oh, you're blind!" said Lattrey impatiently. "Can't you see that that young ruffian is a goose that could lay golden eggs? What about having him in the study, teaching him nap and banker and bridge, and making a regular income out of him—what? I know he's a sharp little beast, and mightn't lose his money, but there are ways and means. That's where I can help you. You can't afford to be particular, Morny. Beggars can't be choosers. That kid has quids and quids, and nothing to do with them. Why, between us we could fairly skin him! And under your influence he would come like a lamb to the slaughter—see?"

Lattrey's voice was eager, his eyes glistening.

Mornington looked at him fixedly.

There was not the slightest doubt that Lattrey's scheme would be a success, if Morny chose to adopt it. And Morny had been a very good deal of a blackguard in his time.

But there is a difference between blackguardism and sheer rascality, which Lattrey did not allow for.

Morny's eyes were burning.

"So that's the idea?" he said quietly.

"That's it. Easy as falling off a form."

"But it's rather superfluous," drawled Mornington. "If I chose to take money from 'Erbert, he would hand it to me for the askin'. No need to swindle him at all."

"Yes; but could you take charity from the kid? I know how touchy you are," said Lattrey. "It would get about, too. That's why you haven't done it."

"Well, I had some other reasons for not doin' it, too," remarked Mornington. "Reasons you wouldn't understand, dear boy. And if I were inclined to rob poor old 'Erbert, I think I'd rather do it by borrowin' his money than by inveiglin' him into games of banker and cheatin' him. But it's a great idea, Lattrey—simply great! And worthy of you! Just the kind of idea you'd be likely to think of. As for what I think of it, I'll show you!"

Morny's hand shot out suddenly,

(Continued on the next page.)



A THIEF IN THE NIGHT!

(Continued from the previous page.)

No. 4 when Mornington came in with 'Erbert of the Second.

'Erbert was looking very cheery. The change in the fortunes of the waif of Rookwood had not changed him much personally.

He had plenty of money now, and was looked upon with more respect in the Second, but he was the same simple-hearted little fellow as of old, and his devotion to Morny had never wavered.

He was Mornington II. on the school books, but he was seldom called anything but 'Erbert, except by the masters.

He had left Jones minimus and Snooks, his pals in the Second, with-out hesitation, to accept Mornington's invitation to tea in No. 4.

Tea in No. 4 was not the plenteous repast of old. Strict frugality reigned there. But 'Erbert was very glad to come. It was not the loaves and fishes that attracted him.

His chubby little face beamed at the tea-table.

Unwillingly enough 'Erbert had stepped into his cousin's shoes, when his identity was established as the heir of Mornington.

He had feared that it would make his cousin Valentine dislike him—and certainly for a time, Morny had yielded to feelings of disappointment and anger. But that was all over now, and Morny was very kind to him.

But 'Erbert's keen desire to share his good fortune with Valentine was never gratified. Nothing could have induced Morny to touch the plentiful cash with which his one-time protege was now provided.

"How are you getting on in the Second now, 'Erbert?" asked Morny, as he helped his guest to war-bread and marmalade.

"Fust-rate!" grinned 'Erbert. "Tracy minor is awfully pally—same as Tracy of the Shell! Lots of fellows that never knowed me before are awfully pally now. Old Jones got his back up a bit at first—he thought I was going to put on side, says he. But he's all serene now."

"I suppose you've got plenty of dubs?"

"Eaps!" said 'Erbert brightly. "Sir Rupert sends me a big allowance, you know. I don't spend much. I've got ten pounds now."

"My hat! What a merry millionaire!"

"Course, it was a bit queer 'aving banknotes of my hown at first," said 'Erbert. "But you soon git used to it. I got two fivers in my pocket now, and I sometimes forget they're there. There ain't so very much in 'aving money. If you spend it, it's gone and you ain't got it, and if you don't spend it, it's the same as not 'aving it."

"You're a philosopher, 'Erbert," said Erroll, laughing.

"Would you mind listenin' to a word of advice from a poor relation, 'Erbert?" asked Mornington blandly. "Oh, Master Morny!"

"I believe you've had offers of friendship from some chaps in the Fourth, and the Shell—Townsend, and Peele, and Gower, and Smythe, and that crowd."

"Yes, sir!"

"How did you get on with them?"

"I've told 'em to go an' eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I knowed what they was arter," said 'Erbert disdainfully. "When I was a poor kid, they turned their noses up at me, and sneered at you, Master Morny, cause you took me in and looked arter me. I know their sort, and I ain't taking any!"

"What about Lattrey of the Fourth?"

"I hit him in the eye!"

"What?"

"He wanted me to play banker," said 'Erbert. "Course, I used to play banker at Dirty Dick's, when I was a nipper—they all did. But not at Rookwood. Besides, I knowed what Lattrey wanted. So I hit him in the eye!"

Mornington and Erroll roared.

"He went for me," continued 'Erbert. "But old Jonesy came up, and we bumped him down the passage. He ain't spoken to me since."

Mornington chuckled.

"So that's why dear old Lattrey was tryin' to enlist my assistance," he remarked. "I've had a flatterin' offer from Lattrey, kid. We were to go halves in swindlin' you at banker."

"The utter rascal!" exclaimed Erroll hotly.

"Yes, he is rather a corker."

agreed Mornington. "I wanted to put you on your guard against that bouncer, 'Erbert, but you don't seem to need it. Don't have anythin' to do with him."

"No fear!" said 'Erbert emphatically. "He's a rotter all through, he is. I wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole!"

Mornington grinned when 'Erbert left the study after tea.

"My fatherly advice wasn't needed," he remarked. 'Erbert can look after himself. I fancy Lattrey will find him a hard nut to crack. Now about that Greek, Erroll, if you feel up to it."

"Right!"

And the books were got out, and the two chums were soon grinding.

'Erbert went down the passage to the stairs, and as he passed Lattrey's study the cad of the Fourth stepped out.

'Erbert eyed him grimly.

"You've been to tea with Morny—what?" asked Lattrey, with a sneer.

"That ain't your business," said 'Erbert. "But I 'ave, if you want to know."

"I can guess what he wanted you for," said Lattrey, eyeing him. "I heard from Tracy minor that you've got two five-pound notes."

The fag's face crimsoned with anger.

"You're a liar!" he said, with the directness of speech he had learned before he came to Rookwood School.

"Master Morny never wanted nothing of the sort, an' you know it."

"Have you got the notes now?" sneered Lattrey.

"Find out!"

"No need to find out," said Lattrey, laughing. "I can guess where they are."

"You lyin' 'ound!" exclaimed 'Erbert furiously. "Look 'ere!"

He jerked a pocket-book out, opened it, and showed two crisp five-pound notes inside.

"Wot price that, you rotter?" he demanded.

"Oh," said Lattrey, "I was mistaken it seems!"

"You wasn't mistaken. You was lyin', and you know it."

"You surely don't carry those banknotes about with you, kid?"

"Why shouldn't I? They're mine, ain't they?"

"But is it safe—"

"Not while you're about, I dessay!" said 'Erbert.

And with that Parthian shot he scuttled on towards the stairs, just eluding Lattrey's angry clutch.

Lattrey, his eyes gleaming, made a rush after him. 'Erbert ran down the stairs and bumped into the Fistical Four, who were coming up. Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome grasped him together, and sat him down.

"Look where you're going, young 'un!" said Lovell severely.

"Ow!" gasped 'Erbert. "That 'ound Lattrey's arter me!"

"Oh, all serene!"

Lattrey paused on the stairs at the sight of Jimmy Silver & Co. He would have retraced his steps, but the cheery Co. ran up and collared him before he could escape.

"Bullying 'Erbert again—what?" said Jimmy Silver. "I think I promised you something for that, Lattrey."

"Let me go, hang you!" shouted Lattrey savagely.

"Yes, when you've had what you've been promised!"

"I—ow—yow—"

Bump, bump, bump!

The cad of the Fourth, struggling in the grasp of the Fistical Four, smote the landing thrice in succession. His yells rang along the passage.

Peele and Gower came out of their study.

"Look here—"

"Do you want some?" demanded Raby.

Apparently Peele didn't, for he retreated into his study. The Fistical Four walked on to the end study, leaving Lattrey gasping on the floor. Gower gave him a hand up.

'Erbert, chuckling, cut away to the Second Form quarters. Lattrey's luck seemed to be out all round.

The 3rd Chapter. A Strange Mystery.

Jimmy Silver started, and awoke. It was past midnight, and deep gloom reigned in the dormitory of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood.

Jimmy turned his head on the pillow, blinking into the darkness. Something had awakened him, and he listened for a moment or two, with the thought of air raiders in his mind.

Faintly, in the darkness, came the sound of a cautiously-closed door.

Jimmy grunted.

He knew that that sound was made by someone creeping out of the dormitory.

"Rotter!" murmured Jimmy sleepily.

He wondered which member of the Classical Fourth was going out of bounds. It was an old habit of Morny's, but Morny had dropped it of late.

Lattrey and Peele, Gower and Townsend and Topham were given to breaking out of bounds after lights out, too.

Evidently it was one of the "nuts" of the Fourth.

But Jimmy was puzzled, too. The merry nuts who sneaked out of the school after lights out generally went much earlier than this. There could not be much going on at the Bird-in-Hand after midnight.

But Jimmy Silver was sleepy, and he was still thinking over it, when he fell fast asleep again.

He did not awaken again till the morning light was streaming in at the high windows and the rising-bell was clanging out over Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver sat up and yawned.

"Blessed old bell!" grumbled Lovell, as he turned out.

Jimmy Silver rose, and he remembered the incident of the night, and glanced at Townsend & Co. None of them showed any signs, so far as he could see, of having left the dormitory during the night.

"Which of you bouncers was out last night?" asked Jimmy.

Lattrey glanced at him.

"Was somebody out?" he asked.

"Yes. I woke up and heard him go."

"Well, didn't you see who it was?"

"I'm not a cat, fathead! I can't see in the dark. Besides, he was outside when I heard the door close. One of you nutty rotters, of course!"

"It wasn't I!" yawned Townsend.

"Was it you, Morny?"

"My dear idiot, I've given up such wicked ways!" said Mornington. "I can't afford to be welched at the Bird-in-Hand now. Lattrey, most likely."

"I was fast asleep all night," said Lattrey.

"That settles it!" grinned Lovell. "Lattrey couldn't tell a lie if he tried!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lattrey scowled, and made no rejoinder.

"By gad, though, who was it?" said Topham curiously. "It wasn't one of us, and it wasn't Lattrey. He's not due at the Bird-in-Hand till to-night. It was for to-night, wasn't it, Lattrey?"

"Oh, ring off!" grunted Lattrey.

"Morny at his old games!" chuckled Gower. "I thought he was spoofing."

Morny gave Gower a grim look.

"I've already said it was not I, Gower," he said quietly. "If you take the liberty of doubtin' my word, dear boy, I shall assume the liberty of pullin' your nose!"

"Oh, rats!" said Gower.

And he turned to his washstand, and the subject dropped.

Jimmy Silver was frowning a little as he went down with his chums. It was not exactly Jimmy's business, but the "blades" of the Classical Fourth had an exasperating effect on him.

Sooner or later there was certain to be a discovery, probably to be followed by disgrace and expulsion from the school, and though Jimmy would have been glad to see Lattrey at least kicked out of Rookwood, he was sensitive about the honour of his Form.

He did not want the Modern fellows to cackle about Classics getting expelled for shady conduct, for one thing.

"That rotter Lattrey wants pulling up!" growled Jimmy, as the Fistical Four went out into the quadrangle.

"According to Topham, he's going out on the giddy ran-dan to-night, so I suppose it wasn't Lattrey last night. But he jolly well ought to be stopped."

"Perhaps a prefect will drop on him, and then it will be good-bye to Lattrey," said Lovell. "Hallo! Here's young 'Erbert!"

"Master Morny down yet?" asked 'Erbert, as he came up.

"His merry lordship is still at his toilette," said Raby. "He's a bit more particular than us common mortals. Anything up?"

"I s'pose it's a joke," said 'Erbert. "Somebody been playin' tricks. I found Master Morny's hanky in our dorm this mornin'."

"His handkerchief?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, in astonishment.

"Yes. Here it is."

'Erbert held it up. Morny's beautiful handkerchiefs, with his monogram in the corner, were well known in the Fourth. There was no mistaking the article.

"You found that in your dorm?" exclaimed Newcome.

"Yes. Jones saw it lyin' beside my bed," explained 'Erbert. "It wasn't

there when I went to bed last night. Somebody's put it there. Blessed if I know why. I want to see Master Morny an' give it to 'im."

"Well, my hat!"

Mornington and Erroll came out of the School House together, and 'Erbert ran off to them. The Fistical Four looked at one another.

"What on earth does that mean?" asked Lovell. "Looks as if it was Morny went out last night, and went to the Second dorm. What on earth should he do that for?"

"Goodness knows!" said Jimmy Silver, quite mystified.

"Hallo! That's my handkerchief," said Mornington, as the fag came up with it in his hand.

He felt in his pocket.

"What on earth are you doin' with my hanky, 'Erbert?" he exclaimed.

The fag explained.

Mornington stared at him blankly as he took the handkerchief, and listened to 'Erbert's explanation as to where he had found it.

"Is that a joke?" he demanded, at last.

"Course it ain't, Master Morny! Jones saw it on the floor, and then I picked it up, and saw it was yourn."

"But how the merry thunder did my handkerchief come to be in your dorm?" exclaimed Mornington. "It was in my pocket when I went to bed."

"I dunno, sir. But there it was, and 'arf the Second saw me pick it up," said 'Erbert, rather warmly.

He felt that a doubt as to his statement was implied.

"Have you taken to sleep-walking, Morny?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Of course I haven't, you ass!"

"Then it's jolly queer. Somebody went out of our dorm last night, and your hanky's picked up in the Second dorm this morning. You must have been there."

"I never opened my eyes all night."

"It must be a practical joke of some sort," said Erroll.

"But where does the joke come in?"

"Oh, I give that up!"

Mornington thrust the handkerchief into his pocket. He was astonished and annoyed—unless he was acting. Jimmy Silver wondered whether he was acting. Morny might have broken bounds by way of the Second Form dormitory, but it seemed unlikely.

It was not like him, either, to deny it, if he had done so. He cared nothing for the other fellows' opinion of his conduct. Jimmy had to admit that it was a puzzle. If some practical joker had taken Morny's handkerchief there, it was extremely difficult to see where the joke came in.

The breakfast-bell called the juniors in, and the matter was dropped. But some of the fellows remembered it, and wondered.

The 4th Chapter. A Startling Discovery.

"Great pip! What's the matter?"

Lessons were over at Rookwood, and the Fistical Four were sauntering in the quad before tea, when they came upon 'Erbert under the beeches.

They halted at once, as Jimmy uttered a startled exclamation.

'Erbert's expression struck them.

The fag was standing by a beech, with a pale and troubled face, and a deep wrinkle in his brow. He looked as if all the troubles of the universe had suddenly settled on his shoulders.

Jimmy Silver tapped him on the arm, and the fag looked up suddenly, his pale face flushing crimson.

"What's the matter, kid?" demanded Jimmy.

"Nothin'!" stammered 'Erbert.

"Oh, don't be an ass! There's something wrong. Has Lattrey been ragging you again? My hat, I'll—"

"Tain't Lattrey, sir," said 'Erbert hastily. "Nothin' of the sort."

"Well, what is it? You can tell your Uncle James," said Jimmy Silver encouragingly. "Keep smiling, you know, and tell your kind old uncle."

But 'Erbert did not smile, and he did not speak.

"Can't you talk?" demanded Lovell.

"Nunno! I mean, no!"

"Take him to Morny," suggested Newcome. "Morny's his patron saint!"

"Ha, ha! Good! Come on, kid!"

'Erbert shrank back.

"No!" he exclaimed shrilly. "I don't want to go to Master Morny! Lemme alone! There ain't nothing the matter. I ain't going to say nothing."

Jimmy Silver looked at him hard. It was only too easy to see that 'Erbert was in a state of great stress of mind.

Jimmy could only conclude that he had been bullied, and that was a

and his finger and thumb closed on Lattrey's sharp, thin nose.

His grip closed there like a vice, and Lattrey uttered a yell of anguish.

"Yow! Oh! Let go, you rotter! Oh!"

Mornington tweaked the nose of the cad of the Fourth grimly.

Then he let go, and jumped up.

"That's what I think of your idea, my dear fellow," he drawled. "Now, if you'd like to put up your hands, I'll give merry old Xenophon a rest while I thrash you—what?"

Lattrey, in anguish, clasped his nose with both hands. He was hurt.

But he did not accept Mornington's invitation. He had not come there for a scrap.

"Ow-ow!" he mumbled.

"Put 'em up, dear boy!"

"Oh, you rotter! You hound!"

"Not spoilin' for a fight?" grinned Mornington. "Well, then, clear off! You're rather too unclean to sit on the same bench with me, dear boy!"

Cut!

Lattrey gave him a look of deadly hatred, and moved slowly away.

Mornington sat down again, smiling. He renewed his application to the "Anabasis" with a more cheerful expression on his face. The tweaking of Lattrey's nose seemed to have comforted him.

The 2nd Chapter. Mornington II.

Jimmy Silver greeted Mornington with a friendly nod, when the dandy of the Fourth came down to the football ground a little later.

Since Morny's fall from wealth, he had been a different fellow in some respects, and Jimmy found it much easier to get on with him.

"Come on, Morny!" said the captain of the Fourth cheerily. "We shall want you in the front line when we play Greyfriars, you know!"

"I hope so," said Morny. "I couldn't get down before. I've been grindin'."

"You grinding! Ha, ha!"

"Honest Injun!" said Mornington. "But I've done enough for a bit. I'd rather play footer."

"I should think so!" said Jimmy, laughing.

Mornington joined in the practice with great zest.

He was in good form, too. Swotting did not detract from his form so much as his old habits, by any means.

He enjoyed the practice, and when it was over, he left the footer ground with Erroll, a ruddy glow in his face.

"How are you getting on with the Greek?" Erroll asked, with a smile, as they walked to the house.

"Rotten! Like a kid in the Third!"

"We'll have a go at it together after tea, if you like."

"Oh, dear!"

Erroll laughed.

"Not unless you like, Morny," he said.

"Oh, I do like!" said Mornington.

"I've got to stick it! I've simply got to get that schol. I'm not goin' to have my Stacpoole cousins turnin' up their noses at me as a pensioner on my uncle!"

"Perhaps they wouldn't turn up their noses, Morny," suggested Erroll gently.

matter for Uncle James to see to. Uncle James had a very heavy foot to put down on that kind of thing.

The fag was moving away, but Jimmy's hand on his shoulder jerked him back.

"Now, I don't want to bother you, kid," said Jimmy kindly, "but I'm going to see into this. Tell me what's the matter."

'Erbert hesitated. His glance dwelt doubtfully upon Jimmy's chums, and they understood his look, and grinned.

"Pitch it to Jimmy by himself," said Lovell. "Jimmy's the kind uncle. See you later, Jimmy, when you've finished the father-confessor bizney."

And the Co. laughed and walked away together.

"You'd rather tell me alone, kid?" asked Jimmy, in amazement.

"I—I'd like to tell you, Master Silver, an' ask your advice," faltered 'Erbert, "but nobody else. You keep it dark, sir."

"My hat! Is it something serious?"

"Yes, sir."

Jimmy's face became grave now. "You've always been very good to me, sir," mumbled 'Erbert; "and you're friends with Master Morny now, so I'd like to tell you. But—"

"Is it something to do with Morny, then?"

"No, it ain't," said 'Erbert hastily. "But—but rotten fellers might say it was—specially sneakin' cads like that chap Lattrey!"

"Blessed if you're not mysterious!" said Jimmy Silver, more and more amazed. "Well, go ahead and tell me, and I'll give you my advice. I'll keep it dark, of course, if you want me to."

"Thank you, sir," mumbled the fag.

"Well, what is it?"

"I—I've been robbed, sir!"

Jimmy Silver jumped.

"What!" he shouted.

"Robbed!" repeated 'Erbert. "My banknotes, sir. I 'ad two five-pun notes, and they've been took!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Jimmy Silver, aghast. He was serious enough now. "Are you sure, 'Erbert?"

"Quite sure, sir," said 'Erbert miserably. "I never found it out till arter lessons. I kep' the two fivers in the pocket-book, in my inside jacket-pocket. I never wanted them to spend, really. But arter lessons today, I was going to get something for tea, and I found I was out of tin, and I thought of changing one of them at the school shop. And when I looked for them they was gone!"

"Your pocket-book was gone?"

"No, the notes. They was took out of the pocket-book. That was still in my pocket."

"My hat! But how could they be taken out of your pocket-book if you keep it in your pocket?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

'Erbert gave him an almost haggard look.

"They must 'ave been taken when I 'ad the jacket on, sir."

"In the dorm?" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Yes, sir, when I was in bed," said 'Erbert. "That's the only time they could 'ave been took. I never missed them till now, 'cause I never opened the pocket-book till now. They was took last night."

Jimmy Silver's face was sombre. Mornington's pocket-handkerchief, found in the Second-Form dormitory by 'Erbert's bed, had a new significance now.

"Last night, 'Erbert? They may have been taken some other night, if you haven't looked at them lately."

'Erbert shook his head.

"It was last night, sir. They was there yesterday, 'cause I showed them to Master Lattrey. He was makin' out that Master Morny borrowed my money, an' I showed 'im the notes to prove he was a liar. But for that, I should 'ave thought they was taken some other night."

"You haven't mentioned this, 'Erbert?"

"Only to you, sir."

"You ought to go to the Form-master. Mr. Bootles will have to inquire into it," said Jimmy Silver.

"No, sir—oh, no! Don't you see?"

'Erbert's voice was low and husky—"Master Morny's 'anky was picked up near my bed this mornin' in the dorm. Fellers will say at once that he was there. Master Morny's poor now, an' I'm rish, sir; and—and it's really 'is money. Fellers—specially chaps like Lattrey—will say—you understand, sir."

Jimmy Silver nodded. He understood only too well.

It was as clear as daylight, Jimmy Silver thought. The dandy of the Fourth was hard up—all Rookwood knew that. Doubtless he regarded the Mornington money as his own, in a sense. At all events, he considered it hard that he should be deprived of it.

He wanted money, and he had helped himself. Like a clumsy thief,

he had dropped his handkerchief on the scene of the theft.

It was all too painfully clear.

Blackguard and gambler Morny was known to be. Was it a very long step from that to stealing?

The fag was watching Jimmy Silver's face anxiously. He could read there the thoughts of the captain of the Fourth only too clearly.

"You, too!" he muttered. "You think it was Morny, an' you know what a splendid feller he is! You know what he did for me. That's why I ain't said nothing, sir. I knowed silly fells would say it was Master Morny!"

"Well, I hope I'm not a silly fool, 'Erbert," said Jimmy, smiling slightly. "But it looks pretty clear to me."

"I wish I 'adn't told you, now," said 'Erbert miserably. "I thought you would 'ave more sense, Master Silver. I thought you might 'elp me find the 'ound what has took my banknotes. I don't care nothin' for the money, only I want to find that 'ound, in case it comes out, and then fellers will think it was Morny."

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

The little fellow's faith in his magnificent friend was touching. It was only the fear that Morny might be unjustly suspected that troubled 'Erbert.

Not for a single instant did he allow a doubt of Mornington to creep into his loyal heart.

"What do you think of that rotter Morny, Jimmy?" he asked, with an expression more of sorrow than of anger. "He's kicked me out of his study! I just dropped in to tea, and he kicked me—me, you know!"

"Serve you right!" said Jimmy Silver unsympathetically.

"I say, young Mornington," said Tubby to 'Erbert, "I hear that you've got two fivers!"

"Oh, you've heard that, 'ave you?" said 'Erbert gruffly.

"Tracy minor said so."

"Bother Tracy minor."

"Well, my idea is that you might lend me one of them," said the fat Classical confidentially. "You see—"

"Oh, dry up!" said 'Erbert.

your cousin and your good angel, and he ought to know. If he's innocent, as you think, you ought to tell him."

"He—he might think I—I—" 'Erbert faltered.

"He wouldn't think you suspected him, you young ass! He knows you wouldn't suspect him if you caught him in the act," said Jimmy, laughing. "Come along with me, and tell Morny! He's got a right to know!"

"Orl right, sir."

And 'Erbert, though evidently very uneasy in his mind, accompanied Jimmy Silver to Study No. 4 in the Classical Fourth. Tubby Muffin was in the passage there, and he stopped them at once.

"What do you think of that rotter Morny, Jimmy?" he asked, with an expression more of sorrow than of anger. "He's kicked me out of his study! I just dropped in to tea, and he kicked me—me, you know!"

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"Oh, dry up!" said 'Erbert.

on my uncle, unless I take to card-sharpin' or burglary."

"Master Morny!" gasped 'Erbert.

"Well, I'd rather be a burglar than a swot, if it was a matter of choice," said Mornington, laughing. "Look out for your merry banknotes, 'Erbert. I shall burgle them some night when I get quite fed up with Greek!"

"Don't!" stammered 'Erbert, his face quite pale. "Don't, Master Morny! Don't talk like that 'ere!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mornington. "Do you think I was serious, you young ass?"

Erroll laughed, too.

"But what have you honoured me for, if it isn't footer?" asked Mornington. "Have you come to lend a hand at the coachin', or to take a lesson in Greek? Do you feel interested in cheery old Darius, who had two giddy sons, the elder Artaxerxes, the younger Cyrus—"

"Chuck it!" said Jimmy Silver.

"It's serious, Morny. 'Erbert's got something to tell you—something jolly serious!"

"Go it, 'Erbert!" said Mornington.

"Anything's welcome as a change from Greek!"

"Oh, Master Morny!"

"Has anything happened?" asked Mornington, becoming serious at last.

"You're looking a bit like a boiled owl. Have you been playing banker

ington. "Why haven't you been to your Form-master, 'Erbert? He's the proper person to deal with this. Of course, you can afford to lose the money, you bloated aristocrat, but a thief ought to be dropped on heavy. It's up to you, kid."

'Erbert did not answer. His face was pale and red by turns.

"'Erbert's got his reasons," said Jimmy Silver. "He's afraid of suspicion falling upon the wrong party."

"I don't quite see it!" said Mornington, puzzled.

He glanced at 'Erbert, Jimmy Silver, and Erroll in turns. He did not seem able to understand the expression on their faces. Erroll was quite pale.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Mornington sharply, staring at them. "What are you blinking at me like that for, you owls?"

"Don't you see, Master Morny?" groaned 'Erbert. "Your 'anky—"

"My what?"

"Your 'anky, sir."

"My handkerchief?" Morny stared at him. "What are you babbling about my handkerchief for?"

Then the truth suddenly flashed on him. His face changed, and he sprang to his feet. The drawing indifference was gone now.

"By gad! My handkerchief was found in your dorm—near your bed! You young scoundrel, have you come here to tell me you suspect me of stealing your filthy money?"

He made a furious movement towards his cousin. 'Erbert started back with a cry.

"Master Morny! It ain't that! I don't! I don't! It's what the fellows would say—"

"What do you mean, you young idiot?" demanded Mornington harshly.

"Easy does it, Morny!" said Erroll quietly, laying his hand on his chum's arm. "Don't jaw 'Erbert—he doesn't mean anything of the sort."

"Course I don't!" muttered 'Erbert, his voice trembling, and the tears coming into his eyes. "Oh, Master Morny, you might 'ave known better than to think I'd go for to think anything like that 'ere."

"What do you mean, then?" snapped Mornington.

"Can't you see?" broke in Jimmy Silver angrily. "Your handkerchief was left in the Second dorm last night, near 'Erbert's bed. The banknotes were taken about the same time. 'Erbert thinks the fellows will put two and two together, and make it an excuse for accusing you."

"Chaps like Lattrey would be glad of the chance, sir!" pleaded 'Erbert. "Course, I knowed it wasn't you! I'd hit anybody what said it was. But the chaps what say so, sir—specially Lattrey an' Peele an' that lot."

Mornington sat down again. His face was set, his lips compressed.

"I understand," he said. "By gad, it would look pretty black, too. Lattrey would be able to make a yarn out of that, and he would do it like a shot. So you've kept this dark, 'Erbert, in case I should be suspected?"

"Not suspected, sir," said 'Erbert loyally. "Nobody what knows you could suspect you of anything dishonourable. But fellers like Lattrey would pretend to suspect you, sir. They'd make up a yarn out of it, I know that."

Mornington chuckled.

"'Erbert, old scout, you're worth your weight in gold," he said. "I'm sorry I jumped out at you like that—I didn't catch on. I suppose you wouldn't suspect me, even if you saw me doing it—what?"

"No, sir," said 'Erbert simply. "I should think you was orf your onion."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it's not quite a laughing matter, Morny," said Jimmy Silver. "'Erbert's a little prize-packet. I know; but he's about the only fellow at Rookwood who thinks of you like that."

"Not the only one," said Kit Erroll quietly. "There's another here."

"Two merry believers in my honesty!" smiled Mornington.

"What's your opinion, Jimmy Silver? But I needn't ask."

"I haven't any opinion—yet," said Jimmy. "You know what it looks like, Morny. Your handkerchief didn't walk into the Second dorm last night, did it?"

"Not likely! I should imagine that it was taken there by the cad who bagged 'Erbert's banknotes," said Mornington coolly.

"Oh!" said Jimmy, taken somewhat aback.

"You never thought of that, of course?" said Mornington sarcastically. "You wouldn't! But are you idiot enough to think I should leave my visitin'-card at the place where I'd



Mornington made one bound to the door, and tore it open. There was a yell as Tubby Muffin tumbled headlong into the room.

But Jimmy was far from sharing 'Erbert's unwavering faith. He knew that there was good in Morny, but he knew that there was much evil, and he had seen much more of the evil than of the good.

"Won't you 'elp me, sir?" pleaded 'Erbert. "It wasn't Morny; that's all rot. It was some chap—I don't know who. If you can't 'elp me, and I can't find 'im, I want to keep it dark."

"But the money—"

"Hang the money! I don't care for that! I'm only afraid of them cads accusin' Master Morny."

"You know how it looks to me, 'Erbert?"

"I thought you'd 'ave more sense, sir."

Jimmy Silver laughed—he could not help it.

"Well, my advice to you is to go to the Form-master, and tell him what's happened," he said. "Your own Form-master; or I'll take you to Mr. Bootles, if you like. Or the Head."

"Then they'd find out about Master Morny's 'anky bein' there, an' think it was him."

"They'd find out the truth," said Jimmy.

"They might, an' agin they mightn't! I ain't doing anythin' to 'urt Master Morny; I know that. I ain't goin' to my Form-master."

"Well, then," said Jimmy Silver, "let's go to Mornington! Morny's

"Cut off, Fatty!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, if you're after 'Erbert's fivers—Yarough!" roared Tubby, as Jimmy sat him down on the floor.

Tubby sat on the floor and roared, while Jimmy Silver and 'Erbert went on to Mornington's study and entered, Jimmy closing the door carefully after him.

The 5th Chapter. By Whose Hand!

Mornington and Erroll were working in the study.

Tea was over, and the books had been brought out, and the chums of the Fourth were grinding.

If Valentine Mornington did not get a chance for the "schol," it would not be for want of help from his loyal chum. Indeed, Kit Erroll was really doing more work for the exam than Mornington was.

Mornington looked up as Jimmy Silver came in with 'Erbert. He was glad of a rest.

"Hallo, Silver!" he yawned. "Don't say footer—no footer for me this afternoon. I'm swottin'."

"It isn't footer!" said Jimmy.

"By gad! I wish it was!" grinned Mornington. "I think I should let you persuade me. Erroll, old scout, I shall never get that scholarship, and I shall have to stick to spongin' with Lattrey, after all, and lost your tin?"

"No, I ain't. I—"

"'Erbert's been robbed," said Jimmy Silver, coming to the point. "Somebody took two fivers out of his pocket-book while he was asleep last night."

"By gad!" exclaimed Mornington in astonishment.

"That's serious enough," said Erroll, his face growing very grave. "I suppose there's no mistake about it?"

"It seems not. 'Erbert knew the banknotes were there yesterday, and they were gone when he opened the pocket-book this afternoon. They could only have been taken last night."

"My hat!" said Mornington. "That means a jolly serious scandal. Some young rogue in the Second Form. Can't you guess who it was, 'Erbert?"

"No!" said 'Erbert, in a low voice.

"Tracy minor, perhaps," yawned Mornington. "He's very goey for a fag—he's been the pace sometimes with his cheery major, Tracy of the Shell, and dear old Adolphus Smythe! What a sad end for a merry blade to come to, right at the beginnin' of his riotous career!"

"Never mind Tracy minor!" said Jimmy Silver. "'Erbert hasn't reported the matter yet, though I've advised him to."

"I advise him to, also," said Morn-



A THIEF IN THE NIGHT!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Yow! Wooop! Leave off kicking me, you beast!

But Mornington did not leave off kicking.

He kicked the fat junior with terrific vim, and Tubby Muffin rolled about the carpet, yelling frantically.

"Yow-ow! Wooop! Help! You rotten thief, Mornington! I'll tell all the fellows you've got 'Erbert's banknotes! Yarooop! Oh, crumbs!"

Tubby Muffin dodged out of the study at last, and fled.

His hurried footsteps died away in hot haste down the passage.

"Not much chance of keeping it dark now," said Jimmy Silver drily.

Mornington panted.

"Well, that fat rotter's got something for eavesdroppin'," he said. "I wish I'd given him some more!"

"It'll all be out now!" muttered 'Erbert. "Oh, the fat brute! I'll go arter him and smash him!"

"It would be better to go to Mr. Bootles about it now," said Erroll.

"Muffin will spread the yarn up and down the Form in five minutes."

"Let him!" said Mornington.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage. The door opened, and Conroy of the Fourth looked in.

"Hallo! It's spreadin' already!" said Mornington sarcastically.

"You fellows know what's up?" asked the Australian. "Tubby's got a thrilling yarn down the passage."

"Oh, we know!" said Jimmy Silver.

"I suppose there's nothing in it?" said Conroy, looking from one to another. "I should suggest your bottling Tubby up. I came to give you the tip."

"It's true!" Tubby Muffin's voice came in a yell from the passage, where a crowd of the Classical Fourth was gathering already.

Morny's bagged that fag's fivers. He's got 'em in his pocket now! He's a thief!"

"Shut up!" came Dick Oswald's voice.

"I'm not going to shut up! Morny's a thief, and he's going to be shown up! He's kicked me, the beast! Think I'm going to be kicked by a thief? Yah!"

Mornington compressed his lips.

Evidently the idea of "keeping it dark" had to be given up now. Everybody in the Fourth Form passage could hear the voice of the indignant Tubby.

The crowd thickened round the doorway of No. 4, looking in.

"What on earth does all this mean?" demanded Higgs of the Fourth. "You been bagging a fag's banknotes, Morny?"

"No, you fool!"

"Not so much of your 'No, you fool!' snapped Higgs. "This wants looking into. I've heard about the fags finding your hanky in the Second dorm. If a kid there has been robbed—"

"'Erbert's been robbed!" howled Tubby Muffin. "Two fivers! And Morny's got them in his pocket, and 'Erbert isn't going to tell Mr. Bootles because he don't want Morny to be sacked!"

"Shut up, you fat fool!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"It's true!" yelled Tubby.

The passage was in a buzz. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were in the crowd; nearly all the Classical Fourth were there now. Towny and Topy and the rest of the nuts had come along, and Lattrey's sneering face looked into the study.

Mornington glared at the crowd at the doorway, with gleaming eyes, and his lips tightly compressed. He looked a good deal like an animal at bay.

"Dash it all," said Arthur Edward Lovell, "this will have to be gone into! Tubby, if you shout again, I'll wring your neck! We don't want the prefects here!"

"I tell you—" roared Tubby.

"Yaroooh! Leggo my collar, Lovell, you rotter, or I'll kick you! Yow-ow!"

Lovell pitched Tubby Muffin into the study.

The fat Classical squirmed behind Jimmy Silver, as far from Mornington as possible.

Mornington eyed the buzzing crowd with a bitter sneer.

"You can clear out of my quarters!" he said. "Go and hold your merry meetin's somewhere else, you silly duffers!"

"Oh, Morny, fancy it comin' to this!" chortled Peele. "Was it bad luck on the gee-gees, old scout?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gower.

Mornington made a furious stride at Peele, and caught him by the throat.

Cyril Peele fairly crumpled up in his grasp. Morny, beside himself with passion, compressed his grip, shaking the junior like a rat.

"Help!" gurgled Peele. "He's choking me! Help—"

Erroll and Jimmy Silver dragged the furious Mornington back. Peele tore himself away, clapping his throat, and gasping thickly.

"You murderous ruffian!" he panted. "You're a thief! I believe you're a thief! You ruffianly cad, you ought to be kicked out of the school!"

Mornington struggled in Erroll's grasp.

"Let me go!" he said hoarsely. "I'll thrash him! I'll throttle his lies down his lying throat, I tell you!"

"Quiet!" said Erroll, holding his arm. "Quiet, old chap! It's no good thrashing Peele! It's the lie you've got to knock on the head, and there's a way of doing it."

Mornington yielded silently to his chum.

"Listen to me," said Erroll, and his voice, though quiet, was clearly heard over the excited buzz. "This matter has got to be settled, and it can be settled. Tubby Muffin was listening at the keyhole; that's why Morny kicked him out, and serve him right. He hasn't told you all the yarn."

"Well, let's hear it," said Higgs. "No need for Morny to fly out like a wild Hun, if he's got nothing on his conscience!"

"If!" sneered Lattrey.

Erroll gave the cad of the Fourth a look of contempt.

"You needn't chip in, Lattrey," he said. "Now, you fellows, here's what happened. Last night somebody sneaked out of the Fourth dormitory—you all know that."

"We know it was Mornington!" said Lattrey.

"You know nothing of the kind!" said Erroll sharply. "Hold your confounded tongue, you cad, or I'll shut you up. Somebody sneaked out—Jimmy Silver heard him. Somebody sneaked into the Second dorm, and took 'Erbert's banknotes from his pocket, while he was asleep. That somebody left Morny's handkerchief on the floor. That's clear now. Well, it wasn't Morny—"

Oh, draw it mild!"

"Let me finish. Whoever sneaked down a passage from the Fourth dorm to the Second, wouldn't take the trouble to dress before he went—he would go in his pyjamas. He wouldn't be many minutes gone. Well, if it was Morny

that went, he would be in his pyjamas—but his handkerchief would be in his clothes, where he left it. I suppose he wouldn't take his hanky with him specially to leave there as evidence against himself?"

"By gad! That's well put!" said Townsend. "Chap wouldn't dress for that, and he wouldn't have his hanky in his pyjamas!"

"Whoever left that hanky there, left it on purpose," said Erroll.

"Some cad who wanted to bag 'Erbert's money, and wanted to make himself safe by putting it on another chap—some chap he disliked! Morny's got enemies here!"

"Makes 'em wherever he goes, I should say!" grinned Townsend, and there was a laugh.

"Never mind that," said Erroll. "I've made it clear that it wasn't Morny. Some sneaking cad has got 'Erbert's banknotes, and he's trying to make it look as if Morny has them. Now, Morny hasn't been out of the school to-day. This is his study, and here's Morny. If he's got the plunder, it's here. You're all present to see a search. Select a couple of fellows to search Mornington and his belongings, and if you find any banknotes, I'll eat them!"

"Good egg!" said Jimmy Silver. "You're a regular lawyer, Erroll!"

"Does Morny agree?" said Townsend.

Mornington bit his lip.

"No, I don't!" he said curtly.

There was a buzz at once.

The refusal of the dandy of the Fourth had the immediate effect of undoing the good impression Erroll's arguments had produced.

"Master Morny!" muttered 'Erbert.

"Morny!" exclaimed Erroll.

Mornington smiled a sneering smile.

"Do you think I'm goin' to be searched, like a dashed pickpocket at a police-station?" he exclaimed, passionately. "Go an' eat coke, the lot of you!"

"That settles it," said Townsend, with a curl of the lip.

"You know what the fellows will think, Mornington," said Jimmy Silver, with a grim look.

"Let 'em think what they like!" sneered Mornington. His haughty, passionate temper was fully roused now. "Hang them, and hang you! Get out of my study!"

"Confound your cheek!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver hotly. "You're acting like a thief, Morny, afraid of being found out!"

"Think so if you like."

"Morny!" said Erroll.

"You needn't talk, Erroll! I'm not goin' to be searched," said Mornington. "I've got a bit too much pride to stand anything of the kind, I hope. Let 'em think what they like, an' be hanged to them!"

Erroll was troubled and silent. He could make allowances for Morny's haughty temper, but the rest of the Fourth drew their own conclusions, and their looks showed what conclusions they drew.

"By gum!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell angrily. "I think we've stood about enough of Mornington's cheek! Morny, if you don't get searched, as your own pal has suggested, it will look as if you've got the banknotes about you, and want to get rid of them as soon as you're clear of us."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Well, we're not going," said Lovell grimly. "If there's a thief in the Fourth, he's going to be shown up! What do you say, you fellows? If Morny won't agree to a search, let's search him, willy-nilly!"

"Good egg!" exclaimed Lattrey.

"Jolly good idea!" exclaimed Conroy.

"You cheeky cads!" shouted Mornington. "Lay a finger on me, and I'll—hands off, hang you!"

Mornington was fighting furiously the next moment.

His insolent defiance was too much for the Fourth, under suspicion as he was. He was collared on all sides, and struggling furiously, borne to the floor. Erroll made a move forward, and then paused. Jimmy Silver was grimly in the way. He could not help Morny—and he said quietly:

"Morny, old chap, it's for your own good! It's to prove your innocence, and it's got to be proved!"

"Search him!" chuckled Tubby Muffin. "I'll bet he's got the banknotes about him. And if he's got any, they're 'Erbert's—he's got none of his own, now."

Mornington was held firmly in the grasp of the Classical juniors, panting with rage. Higgs of the Fourth searched his pockets. There was a sudden yell as Alfred Higgs drew his hand out of an inside pocket of Morny's jacket, and held it up.

A crisp five-pound note rustled in his hand!

"Look at that!" roared Higgs.

"The banknote!"

"Thief!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Erroll, staggering back. He sank helplessly into a chair. Well he knew that Morny had no banknotes of his own now.

Mornington suddenly ceased to struggle. His face had gone white.

"Let me go!" he said very quietly.

"There's two—find the other!" chortled Tubby Muffin. "'Ain't there two, 'Erbert?"

'Erbert with a face like death, had slipped from the study. The discovery had almost stunned the loyal fag. Erroll looked stunned, too. He had suggested the search to prove his chum's innocence. And it had proved his guilt!

But the search failed to reveal the second banknote. Mornington was allowed to rise to his feet.

"I'll hand this to young 'Erbert," said Higgs. "Where's the other, Mornington—there are two. You may as well own up now."

"Did you—did you get that out of my pocket?" muttered Mornington huskily.

"You know I did! Where's the other one?"

"I—I—" Mornington panted. "That banknote was put in my pocket, by the same fellow that left my handkerchief in the Second dorm!"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"And it was Lattrey!" shouted Mornington, his eyes burning at the cad of the Fourth.

"Did Lattrey make you refuse to be searched, too?" sneered Townsend.

Mornington was dumb.

Too late, he realised how his haughty, passionate pride had played into his enemy's hands. Who would—who could believe him now?

"I fancy we all know what to think," said Lovell contemptuously. "You'd better get that other fiver and hand it back, Morny, or there'll be trouble for you. I'm done with you!"

"Thief!" growled half-a-dozen voices.

The juniors crowded out of the study.

Mornington was left alone with his chum.

He stood for some minutes, looking dazed.

Erroll did not look up.

Mornington fixed his eyes on his chum as if waiting for him to speak. But Erroll did not speak, and he did not look up to catch Mornington's haggard glance.

Very quietly, the dandy of the Fourth crossed to the door, and left the study.

In the deserted passage, outside, 'Erbert was waiting. He caught Mornington's arm.

"Master Morny! It's all lies! You never did it! I know you never did!" 'Erbert's voice was half a sob.

"Master Morny, I know you never did!"

"Thank you, 'Erbert," said Mornington quietly.

He went on down the passage. The study-door was flung open, and Erroll came quickly out, calling:

"Morny! Morny!"

But Mornington was gone, and he did not hear the voice of his chum.

THE END.

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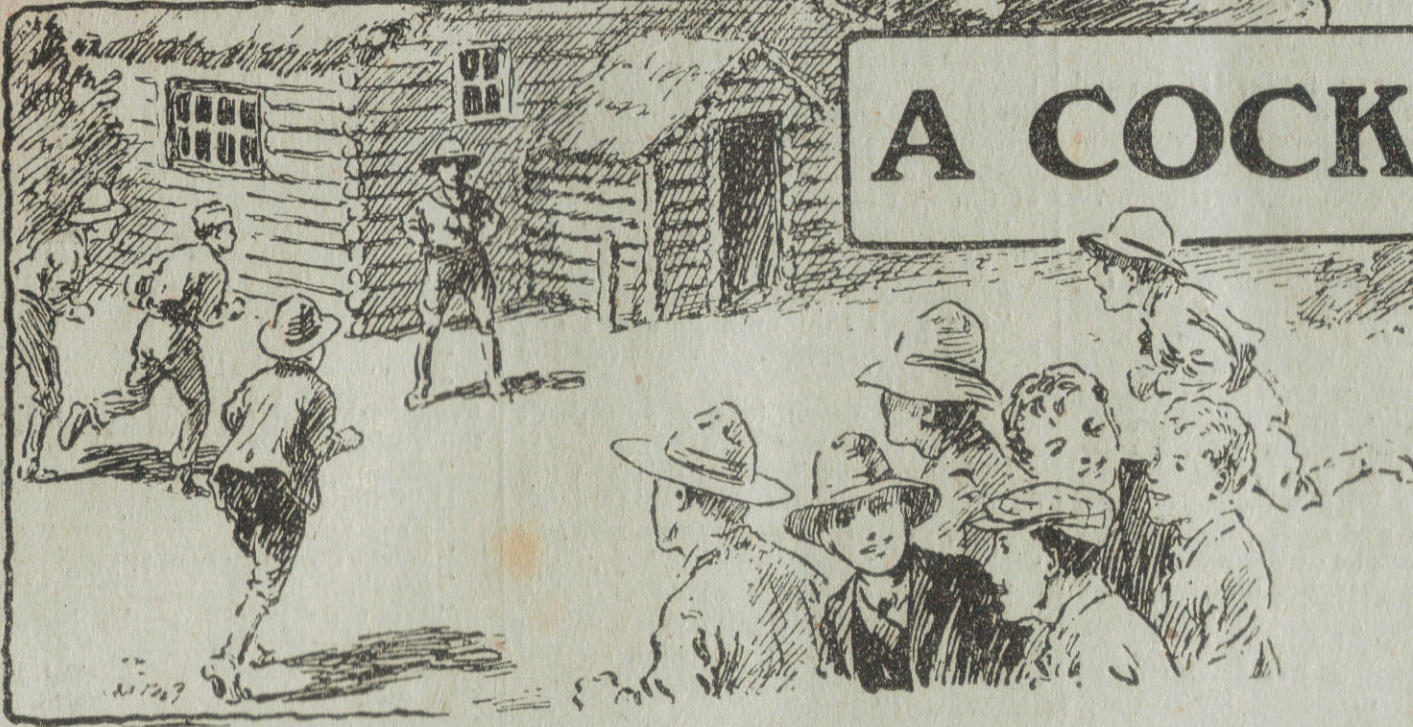
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A COCKNEY IN CANADA!

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.

"Like a holiday to-day, Franky?" Bob Lawless propounded that query, after breakfast, at the Lawless Ranch, when it was nearly time to start for Cedar Creek School, as usual.

"What-ho!" said Frank Richards at once. "Is it a school holiday to-day?"

"Nix. But I guess I can work it with dad," said Bob Lawless. "I mean a backwoods holiday, you know."

"What's that?" "A bit harder work than usual," said Bob, laughing.

"All serene," said Frank. "I'm not afraid of work, and it's a bit of a change from lessons, anyway."

"Then let's go and tackle popper." Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin left the ranch-house, and looked for Mr. Lawless. They found him giving instructions to a Kootenay cattleman at the gate of the corral.

"Hallo! Isn't it time you youngsters were off?" asked the rancher, as the two schoolboys came up.

"I guess so, dad. But I've got an idea," explained Bob. "There's a new emigrant at Cedar Camp from the Old Country, and he's starting for his holding to-day. He's a regular greenhorn—a cockney from Cockneysville."

"How do you know?" asked the rancher.

"One of the men back from Cedar told me," explained Bob. "I've thought it would be only neighbourly to go and lend him a hand. You know how these new emigrants get stuck up on the trails, popper, and there's been rain."

Mr. Lawless looked thoughtful.

"Good Samaritans, you know, dad," urged Bob. "They'll get landed a hundred miles from everywhere; if they haven't a fellow with some hoss-sense to help them. You remember the Lawrences getting stuck in the mud down by Kamloops, when they came first from Ontario?"

The rancher smiled.

"It's a good idea, Bob, and I'm glad to see you so thoughtful for your neighbours. You can go, if you like. I'll send word to Miss Meadows at the school by the store-waggon."

"Right-ho!" said Bob. "Come on, Franky!"

It did not take the chums long to saddle and mount their ponies, and they rode off in the direction of Cedar Camp.

Frank Richards was rather curious to see the new emigrants. He was interested in people from the old country, his former home, which he was not likely to forget, though he had found the most cordial hospitality and good-fellowship in Canada.

He was quite ready, too, to spend a day in helping the emigrants settle in their new home, and he had seen enough of the Canadian West to be aware that that was not an easy business.

"I guess we shall catch them on the trail," Bob remarked, as they cantered away from the ranch. "Billy Cook told me they were starting soon after sun-up. Cook thought they'd get about a mile, and then stick, and wait for Providence to pull them out. He says they're Cockneys. Their name's Hopkins, but they pronounce it 'Opkins.'"

Frank laughed.

"How many are there of them?" he asked.

"Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins and a kid," said Bob. "I dare say the kid will come to our school, as they're settlin' in this section. Their clearing will be on the creek, about a mile from the school. It's a patch of grass and timber now, and will want clearing—not an easy job. People often roll up

to help new-comers get over the first difficulties here."

"A jolly good idea!" It was a pleasant change, to gallop over the prairie in the sunny morning, instead of sitting down to lessons in the log schoolhouse at Cedar Creek. Frank Richards liked his school, but he enjoyed the holiday.

"Hallo! I guess that's the outfit," exclaimed Bob Lawless suddenly.

The schoolboys were not yet in sight of Cedar Camp when Bob sighted the "outfit" on the prairie trail.

There had been rain, and the trail, marked only by wheel-ruts and the stamp of horses' hoofs, was deep with mud. A drove of cattle passing at dawn had tramped up the mud in thick masses.

In the middle of the trail a waggon was halted.

There was a dip in the plain at this point, and the bottom of the hollow was soft and oozy.

"Looks like it," said Frank. "I'm glad we came along. I'm blessed if I see how that waggon's to be got out, though. It's loaded up to the hilt, and they've got the wheels buried to the axles."

"Just like greenhorns from the dickens knows where," said Bob. "Only a howling tenderfoot would have thought that one geegee could rag that outfit over a trail like this. Let's help."

The two schoolboys rode up, with a spatter of mud, and jumped off their horses. They raised their hats politely to the plump lady.

The man and the boy, tugging at the wheels, relinquished them, and stood up, panting for breath.

Frank Richards looked with some interest at the lad who was likely to be his schoolfellow at Cedar Creek.

The lad was about fourteen, with a bullet-head, and unruly hair growing almost upright on it, a pug nose, and a mouth of considerable size.

"Take a what?" ejaculated Bob. "A tram! Don't you know what a tram is?"

"Don't be a young hass, 'Arold,'" said Mr. Hopkins. "There ain't no trams in this 'ere uncivilised country!"

"Perhaps you could call us a cab, sir," said Mrs. Hopkins, looking at Bob appealingly. "I suppose there are cabs in this country?"

Bob Lawless suppressed his desire to chuckle, and Frank Richards, with a heroic effort, kept his face quite serious.

The idea of taking a tram, or calling a cab, in a half-settled section of British Columbia, was almost too much for them.

"I guess the cab would have to come too far, ma'am," said Bob, with a shake of the head.

"Ow far?" asked Mrs. Hopkins hopefully.

"From Toronto, I think."

Council ought to see to this 'ere road. Disgraceful, I call it!"

Like many emigrants, the Hopkins family had brought all their Old Country ideas, unchanged and unimpaired, to their new country with them.

Doubtless, when Mr. Hopkins, in his dwelling in the Old Kent Road, had decided upon emigrating, he had pictured the Canadian West as a country adequately provided with tram-lines and cab-ranks.

Naturally, he had been surprised and disappointed.

But Bob Lawless was quite used to the peculiar ideas and beliefs that inexperienced emigrants brought out to the West with them. He only smiled at Mr. Hopkins' exasperated remark.

"Well, we came along to help," he remarked. "We heard you were starting this morning, Mr. Hopkins."

"I'm sure, you're very kind," said Mr. Hopkins gratefully. "But 'ow is this 'ere waggin goin' to git goin', hay?"

"We're stuck 'ere for good, it seems to me," said 'Arold dismally.

"Accidents will happen," said Bob. "But you'll get out of it all right. Unload the waggon first."

"Oh, my eye!"

"Then we'll hitch on our ponies, and pull you out."

"I s'pose there ain't nothing else to be done," said Mr. Hopkins, dismayed at the prospect of having to unload the packed waggon.

"Nothing else, I guess."

"Well, bear a 'and, 'Arold."

Mr. Hopkins was inexperienced and a little unreasonable, but, fortunately, he was docile. He was so tired with the failure of his own efforts that he was glad to put himself under the direction of a native Canadian.

Father and son set to work unloading the waggon, and Bob and Frank piled in with great energy to help them.

Household goods and all kinds of parcels and packages were piled up beside the trail.

Many hands make light work, and the process of unloading was not so long as the hapless emigrant had feared.

When it was completed, Bob hitched the two ponies to the waggon, and the three horses pulled together, and the heavy wheels, slowly and reluctantly, rolled out of the mire.

"Brayvo!" gasped Mr. Hopkins. Bob drew on the horses till the waggon was safe on firmer ground. Then the process of re-loading was undertaken.

It was completed at last, and Mrs. Hopkins took her seat in the waggon. "We shall git stuck agin, you bet your socks," said 'Arold 'Opkins dismally.

"Not with three horses," said Bob cheerfully. "We're sticking to you till you get home, you know."

"You're very kind," said Mr. Hopkins, greatly relieved and comforted.

"Not at all; it's a Canadian custom," said Bob, laughing.

Bob and Frank walked with the horses, leading and helping them, and Mr. Hopkins and his son gave the waggon an occasional shove. And at high noon the party arrived on the bank of Cedar Creek, about a mile down the stream from the school.

The 2nd Chapter. Making a Home.

"This 'ere our 'ome, father?" exclaimed Harold Hopkins, in tones of incredulous horror, as the waggon halted.

"Yes, 'Arold!" "Oh, crumbs!"

Harold could say no more than that. Speech failed him.

"I come out yesterday on a 'orse, and saw over it," Mr. Hopkins explained to the cousins. "It knocked



"Keep him in!" roared Hopkins, as Chunky Todgers struggled wildly towards the shore. "Keep him in there, and let him drown! Anybody got a gun?"

There the mud was softest, deepest, and thickest.

And there the emigrants had evidently come to grief.

The waggon was stuck fast in the mud, and the single horse—not a very sturdy beast—was dragging at it in vain.

A man and a boy were wrenching at the heavy wheels, to help the horse by turning them; a buxom, plump-faced woman was looking on, with an expression of hopeless dismay. A dog barked dismally round the group.

Bob Lawless grinned.

"I reckoned they'd be in trouble on the trail," he remarked. "Looks as if they'd found it—hey?"

He could not be called handsome, but his face was very good-natured and good-tempered, and Frank rather liked his looks.

"Can we help you, sir?" asked Bob. "Mr. Hopkins, I think?"

"That's my name," said the emigrant, gasping for breath. "Enry 'Opkins, at your service. As for 'elping me, I don't know. I think this here waggin is going to stick 'ere till nigh on Doomsday. I wish I was back in the Old Kent Road—I do that!"

"Can't we leave it 'ere, father, and take a tram?" asked the youthful Hopkins, who had evidently had enough of attempting to drag the waggon out of the mire.

"Toronto!" roared Mr. Hopkins. "That's about a thousand miles from 'ere."

"Sure!" assented Bob. "Oh, dear!" said Mrs. Hopkins.

"I guess cabs and trams are off, in this section," said Bob. "The colony's going ahead top-speed, but it hasn't sprouted hansom cabs yet. We manage to do without 'em."

"Oh, wot a country!" groaned 'Arold. "Fancy, a country where you can't 'ave a cab when you can afford one!"

"This 'ere road ain't kept in proper horder," said Mr. Hopkins, wiping the perspiration from his brow with a big red handkerchief. "The County



A COCKNEY IN CANADA!

(Continued from the
previous page.)

me pink, I tell you. I never knewed it was like this 'ere. But other folks manages some'ow, and so can we. Keep your 'eart up, 'Arold."

The view was certainly not encouraging to a totally inexperienced emigrant used only to town life.

The Hopkins' holding lay along the creek, which was a great advantage, as it ensured a constant supply of water at their very doors. But this tremendous advantage was quite lost upon these "babes in the wood." Quite possibly they had expected "company's water" to be laid on!

The land was good and rich, in its way, and the eye of an agriculturist would have been delighted by it. But the cockney emigrants had all their knowledge of agriculture yet to gain.

The land produced, at present, rough grass and innumerable wiry weeds, with an occasional clump of birch and larch, and a few scattered trees of large size, which had to be "cleared" before the land could be farmed.

There was, naturally, no shelter of any kind for man or beast. Frank Richards wondered whether the Hopkinses had expected a handsome house to rise from the ground of its own accord to greet them.

Fortunately, it was a fine, sunny day, though the ground was steaming from late rains.

"But where are we going to sleep to-night, father?" asked Harold, when he had recovered the use of his voice.

"We have to build somethin', 'Arold."

"Oh, crumbs!"

Mr. Hopkins mopped his brow.

"Didn't you know what to expect here?" asked Frank Richards.

"No fear," said Mr. Hopkins. "This ain't much like the coloured pictures you see of Canada and the Wonderful West. I dunno 'xactly what I expected, but it wasn't this 'ere."

"It was not!" said 'Arold emphatically. "Build a 'ouse! Oh, crumbs! Why, there ain't a brick to be 'ad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, unable to repress his merriment.

'Arold stared at him.

"Well, I can't see any bricks," he said warmly.

"Ha, ha! You don't want any bricks."

"Build a 'ouse without bricks!" said 'Arold. "You're kiddin'!"

"You've got to run up a shack," said Frank, smiling.

"A what?"

"Shack!"

"What's a shack?"

"A cabin, of course."

"Oh, a log cabin," said 'Arold, with a glimmer of comprehension. Evidently he had heard of log cabins.

"Well, the log cabin will follow," said Bob Lawless. "You'll have to run up something quick for shelter, and extend it into a full-sized cabin afterwards—see? You get your materials for nothing—they're growing all round you. You only want an axe and some elbow grease."

"Oh!"

"And we're going to help," said Bob, "and I dare say other folk will drop along to lend a hand. They often do, with new-comers."

"Well, that's kind and 'earty," said Mr. Hopkins.

"Course, I know what a log cabin is," said 'Arold, with new interest. "I've read all about Buffalo Bill, you know."

"Buffalo what?"

"Buffalo Bill and Deadwood Dick," said 'Arold.

It was Bob Lawless' turn to stare. Amazing as it seemed to the Cockney youth, Bob had never heard of either of those thrilling characters.

"What about Injuns?" asked 'Arold, looking round at the shadowy wood behind.

"Injuns?" repeated Bob.

"Yes. S'p'ose they was to come down on us—eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can 'arf," said 'Arold warmly, "but I don't see as it's a joke to be scalped and perhaps tortured at the stake by Injuns, like the trappers in the Buffalo Bill stories I read at 'ome."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob. "Don't worry, old chap—that won't happen to you."

"Ain't there any Injuns 'ere?" asked 'Arold.

"Lots! But they're all right! They won't do anything worse than sell

you bead ornaments for twice what they're worth." Bob Lawless wiped his eyes. "My dear chap, your scalp is as safe here as it was in the Old Kent Road. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, orl right!" said 'Arold, still a little dubiously. Thrilling fiction on the subject of the Wild West had given him a weird idea of Canada, which he could not get out of his head all at once.

"Better have lunch now, and then get to work," said Bob Lawless.

The chums had brought sandwiches with them, and lunch was the next step. Mrs. Hopkins unpacked a basket of provisions from the waggon.

Over lunch the spirits of the emigrant family revived.

The glorious keen air and sunshine of British Columbia had its natural effect upon them, in spite of their misgivings.

Bob and Frank noticed that occasionally Harold Hopkins cast a glance over his shoulders at the dusky woods, and they could not help grinning.

Evidently the reader of those great literary works that dealt with the weird adventures of Buffalo Bill and Deadwood Dick was not quite satisfied that the wood did not conceal lurking braves in war-paint, with murderous tomahawks in their hands.

There had been, of course, a time when red braves in moccasins and feathers had roamed those hills and valleys, savage and untamed. But that time was long past—it was before Bob Lawless' time.

Redskin raiders in British Columbia were as much out of date as the old-time Danish pirates on the coast of Yorkshire.

But, naturally, Harold Hopkins was not fully aware of that fact, and the interesting fiction he had read about the Far West had not prepared him for a country as law-abiding as Lincolnshire or Lanarkshire.

After lunch, the emigrants set to work, Frank Richards and his chum labouring like Trojans to assist them.

Wood had to be cut in quantities on the edge of the forest, and it was hard work, though not so hard to the native Canadian as to the "tender-foot."

While they were at work, a horseman rode up, in the scarlet coat of the North-West Mounted Police. It was Sergeant Lasalle, whom the schoolboys knew.

The sergeant dismounted, and with a cheery greeting to the emigrants, piled in to help in the work of erecting the shack.

Later in the afternoon, two neighbours came along—neighbours in the frontier sense, that is. Their holdings were a good many miles away. They were Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Dawson, whose sons were at Cedar Creek school.

They joined in the work as if it were a matter of course.

It was rather an eye-opener to Mr. Hopkins, and to the cheerful 'Arold. It was a Canadian custom that was very pleasant and useful to the new-comers.

Later still, Beauclerc, the remittance man of Cedar Camp, came along the creek with a rod under his arm. As soon as he saw the work going forward, he laid down his rod, removed his coat, and joined the workers. It was a matter of course. Many hands made light work.

The shack was run up in very quick time, and small as it was, it was a good weather-proof shelter, all that was needed until a more substantial building could be erected.

Mrs. Hopkins looked much more cheerful, when she was able to arrange some of her household goods about her new dwelling.

As her husband remarked, it made it look a good deal more like "ome."

The sun was low in the West when the kind helpers took their leave.

'Arold joined the schoolboys as they went to fetch their ponies.

"Safe 'ere—eh?" he asked.

"Safe as houses!" said Frank, with a smile.

"There ain't a gun about the place," said 'Arold.

"What do you want a gun for?"

"Well, them Injuns," said 'Arold doubtfully.

"Oh, gum!" exclaimed Bob.

"Don't I keep on telling you that's all bunkum?"

"Oh, orl right, if you say so," said 'Arold, apparently satisfied.

Bob chuckled, as he rode away with Frank for the ranch.

"That chap's greener than you were when you came, Franky," he remarked.

"I should say so, fathead! A good deal!"

"You remember how I got you captured by Red Indians—who turned out to be our Kootenay cattlemen?"

"Fathead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "I guess Hopkins would have his leg pulled at school, if he talks about Buffalo Bill and Deadwood Dick. But they're often like that. I heard of a new chum in Ontario—Ontario, mind you—who started farm-work with a revolver in his belt, and a bowie-knife in the leg of his boot—same as in the Wild West shows, you know. There was such a cackle that he had to clear out of the place. But Deadwood Dick—in British Columbia! It's too rich!"

And Bob roared again.

The chums enjoyed their supper at the ranch that evening. Hard work had given them an excellent appetite. And there were smiles along the table when Bob described 'Arold 'Opkins and his uneasiness concerning the safety of his scalp.

The 3rd Chapter.

Taking the Stranger in.

It was about a week later that Harold Hopkins put in his appearance at Cedar Creek school.

Frank and Bob found him there one morning when they arrived.

Hopkins was the centre of a little crowd in the school ground, who were making him talk, apparently deriving considerable amusement from his odd pronunciation. He grinned in a friendly way at the cousins, and came towards them.

"Ere I am!" he announced.

There was, at least, no shyness about Master Hopkins.

"How are you getting on at the clearing?" asked Frank.

"First rate," said 'Arold. "Lots of work to do. I'm only comin' 'ere 'arf the week at present. I 'ave to 'elp father."

"Good man!" said Bob.

"Father's 'ired a man, though," said Hopkins. "What do you think? They fetch up the stumps of trees by 'arnessing oxen to 'em, and draggin' 'em out. Jevver hear of such a thing?"

"It's the usual way," said Bob, laughing.

"Seems jolly queer to me," said Hopkins. "Lots of queer things in this country, if you ask me!"

"And more coming every day," grinned Bob.

Hopkins laughed. He could take a joke against himself.

"Seen any redskins, yet?" asked Frank, with a smile.

Hopkins looked disgusted.

"Yes, and they ain't much like the redskins I've read about. No bloomin' war-paint, or tommyhawks, or anything. The Injun I saw yesterday was wheeling a barrow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better than raising scalps," grinned Bob.

"Yes, I s'pose so," agreed the new boy. "But it ain't what I expected. I ain't seen any buffaloes yet, nor yet no grizzly bears. But I 'ear there are plenty of wild Indians about, arter all."

"Oh, you've heard that, have you?"

"That fat chap told me so," said Hopkins, nodding towards Chunky Todgers. "He says it's likely enough the school 'ere might be raided, and set afire, and all of us skelped!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank and Bob were still grinning as they went into the schoolhouse.

Evidently Hopkins was more prepared to place faith in Chunky Todgers' fairy tales than in the facts. Chunky's fearsome yarns were more in keeping with his preconceived notions of the Far West.

"Blooming schoolmarm 'ere—eh?" Hopkins remarked, as he went in with the cousins, with a glance at Miss Meadows, who was in the porch.

"That's our schoolmistress," said Frank. "She's a very nice lady."

"Who's the chap in the blinkers?"

"The—the what?"

"That cove with the barnacles, I mean."

"Oh, the chap in specs," gasped Frank. "That's Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master. He takes the Lower Form."

Hopkins looked round the school-room with a critical eye.

New as he was, and decidedly green, he had the cool self-possession of the born Cockney, and was not in the slightest degree put out by finding himself a stranger in a strange place.

"Not a bad show this," he finally pronounced. "More'n I expected to find 'ere. 'Allo, wot is it?"

Chunky Todgers joined the Cockney youth, as Frank and Bob went to speak to their chum, Vere Beauclerc. Chunky was a humorous youth, and his love of a joke was as great as his circumference, which is saying a good deal. Chunky saw great possibilities of fun in the new-comer.

"I suppose Lawless has given you a tip about the anthem," he remarked. Hopkins stared.

"He ain't said nothing about any anthem," he replied. "What are you driving at?"

"Do you mean to say you don't know it's a custom here?"

"Course I don't—ain't this 'ere my first day?" said Hopkins. "I've 'ad just a word with the schoolmarm, and that's all."

"It's all right," assured Chunky. "A custom in Canadian schools, that's all. I suppose you want to do the right thing?"

"Wotto!"

"Otherwise, the schoolmarm might be down on you, and think you mean to be disrespectful."

"I shouldn't like 'er to think so," said Hopkins, in alarm. "What's this 'ere custom you're talking about? Tell a cove, can't you?"

"Right ho! A new boy here always has to sing the school anthem, as soon as the schoolmistress comes in," explained Chunky Todgers. "The whole class rises, of course, and then the new fellow sings the anthem. You're the only new fellow here to-day, as it happens!"

"But I don't know the anthem," said Hopkins in dismay. "Ow's a chap to sing wot he don't know?"

Not for a moment did Hopkins dream of doubting Chunky's veracious statement. Certainly he would have been suspicious of such a statement in a school at home. But in Canada he had come across any number of customs that appeared to him extraordinary and weird.

After seeing a house built in a day, and tree-stumps dragged out of the ground by a team of oxen, he was prepared for anything. If Chunky had told him that he had to stand on his head in the middle of the school-room, he would hardly have been surprised.

He was only anxious to get information as to what he had to do, so that he would not appear wanting in respect to Miss Meadows. And Chunky was quite prepared to give him information.

"I'll tell you," said Chunky, with a face as solemn as an owl's. "If you don't know the school anthem—sure you don't?"

"Course I am!"

"Then you sing 'Rule Britannia' instead. You know that?"

"Everybody knows that, I s'pose," said Hopkins. "I don't know that I could sing it all through, though."

"That's not necessary—the chorus is enough. Just stand up and sing that when Miss Meadows comes in, and you'll be all right. Don't you do that in English schools?"

"Never 'eard of such a thing," said Hopkins, with a shake of the head. "But this 'ere ain't much like the schools at 'ome, anyway."

"Hush! Here she comes!" whispered Chunky.

There was a rush for the forms as Miss Meadows appeared in the doorway. Chunky Todgers kindly drew Harold into a seat by himself.

"You sit here, Hopkins. Wait till the class rises, and then go ahead."

"Right you are, and much obliged to you!"

"Not at all. We always help new-comers to learn the ropes," said Todgers cheerily.

Miss Meadows came into the school-room, and the class rose respectfully as she came towards them. And Harold Hopkins, warned by a nudge from Chunky that the moment had come, started.

"Rule, Britannia—"

Hopkins' voice was not musical, but it was powerful. He had to sing, and he put his beef into it. His voice rang from one end of the school-room to the other.

There was a general jump.

Everyone in the school-room stared at Hopkins. Miss Meadows stood petrified. Mr. Slimmey looked round from his class, his glasses nearly falling off his nose in his astonishment.

Headless of the general amazement—in fact, unaware of it—Hopkins thundered on:

"'Britannia rules the waves!'"

"Good gracious!" gasped Miss Meadows.

"'Britons never, never, never—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"'Shall be slaves!'" concluded Hopkins in a roar.

He sat down, feeling that he had acquitted himself well. The school-room almost rocked with laughter.

The 4th Chapter.

Chunky Todgers on the Warpath.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

It was not so easy to get silence. Hopkins' extraordinary feat was too much for Cedar Creek.

The new fellow looked round in surprise. He could not see what caused that burst of Homeric laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"He must be potty!" murmured Frank Richards in wonder. "What the dickens—"

"Silence, Hopkins!"

Hopkins stood up again.

"Yes, marm."

"What do you mean?"

"Eh?"

"What do you mean by bursting out shouting in that absurd manner in the school-room?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"My eye! I wasn't shouting, marm; I was singing!" said Hopkins indignantly.

"Well, singing, then, you absurd boy. Do you think that this is the proper place to sing at the top of your voice when lessons are about to commence?"

"Yes, marm."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Cert'nly, marm!"

"Hopkins!" gasped Miss Meadows, quite taken aback.

"I 'ope it's all right," said Hopkins anxiously. "Seeing as I don't know the school anthem, marm, I understood that 'Rule, Britannia' would do."

"Are you out of your senses, Hopkins?"

"I 'ope not, marm."

"Then explain to me, at once, why you acted in such a ridiculous manner."

"Ridiklus is the word, if you ask me, marm," agreed Hopkins. "But it ain't for me to say nothing about a Canadian custom."

"A Canadian custom!" ejaculated the schoolmistress.

"Yes, marm."

"Is it possible, Hopkins, that someone has told you that such an action is a Canadian custom?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, beginning to see light.

"Yes, marm. Which it was very kind of the fat chap to tell me, seeing as I'm a stranger 'ere, and never 'eard of the custom."

Miss Meadows fixed her eyes upon Chunky Todgers. She could guess that he was the "fat chap" alluded to.

"Todgers!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Chunky.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Did you induce Hopkins to act in this ridiculous manner?"

"Only a—a joke, ma'am," stammered Chunky.

"Ho!" ejaculated Hopkins. "A joke, was it? You were pulling my leg, you fat frump, was you?"

"Silence, Hopkins! Todgers, you should not play these absurd jokes on a new boy. I shall give you a detention task this evening!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Chunky, not at all pleased at this outcome of his little joke.

"Silence in the class, please!" said Miss Meadows severely.

And the titters were subdued, and Cedar Creek School settled down to the morning's work.

Chunky Todgers was rather wrathful during lessons. He liked the feast, but not the reckoning.

His fat face was frowning when the school was dismissed at noon, and the fellows streamed out of the log schoolhouse.

"Did you ever see such a silly ass?" Chunky asked, appealing to Frank and his chums as he joined them outside. "He ought to have had sense enough to keep his silly mouth shut, oughtn't he?"

"You oughtn't to have pulled his leg, you fat fraud!" said Frank.

"Oh, rats! That chap was simply born to be stuffed!" said Todgers. "I'll jolly well stuff him again, too, outside the school this time, though."

"Ha, ha!"

"He's full of Red Indians and things," said Chunky, a grin over-spreading his fat face. "I've been pitching him yarns about Redskins, and he's full up to the chin with them."

"Perhaps he will take a discount off your yarns after this," remarked Beauclerc.

"Wait till he sees a Red Indian!" said Chunky. "Lend me your pony to trot down to Thompson, Richards. I want to get some things there."

"You're not going to get a Red Indian in the town, I suppose?" exclaimed Bob.

Chunky chuckled.

"No; I'm going to borrow a Red Indian outfit at Gunten's store. He's got them there, you know, and he's

(Continued at foot of next page.)

LETTERS IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

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

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

THE COMPANION PAPERS:

- THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 1d. Every Monday.
- THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Monday.
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COMING SHORTLY!

Great New Attractions!

Loyal admirers of the stories introducing Dick and Frank Polruan, old Joe Tremorne, and Pieface, will be glad to learn, I feel sure, that Mr. Maurice Everard is at present hard at work on a great new series introducing these famous characters.

This magnificent new series will be entitled

"KING NADUR'S DIAMONDS!"

and it will deal with the further thrilling adventures of Dick, Frank, and Joe in the wilds of Darkest Africa. The mere mention of Africa will be sufficient to prove to you that this new series will be of a most exciting nature.

The tales of "Crusoe Island" have proved immensely popular; but I feel confident that "King Nadur's Diamonds" will make a still stronger appeal to you.

I have still another splendid forthcoming attraction to announce, and that is a grand series of short complete tales under the title of

"TALES OF THE DORMITORY!"

Each week there will appear a tale, told in the dormitory by a junior at Rookwood School. The stories will not necessarily deal with the Rookwood boys, but will be of a varied

and interesting nature. The first tale in the series will be entitled

"THE MAKING OF MORLEY!"

By Jimmy Silver,

and it will appear in the Boys' FRIEND in a few weeks' time. Next Monday I will give you fuller particulars of our splendid forthcoming attractions.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

Five First-class Stories!

Our great series of tales dealing with Mornington and young 'Erbert created a good sensation. They were, without doubt, the finest tales ever written by Mr. Owen Conquest. Mornington is a well-drawn character, and any stories in which he is the leading character are well worth reading.

Next Monday's magnificent long complete tale of the Rookwood chums is entitled

"MORNINGTON'S TRIUMPH!"

By Owen Conquest.

In the past Mornington has suffered a good deal through the cunning schemes of Lattrey, the cad of Rookwood. In next Monday's fine tale, however, Morny emerges triumphant. He is accused of theft, and barred by a large section of the school, but Mornington does not despair. He sets to work to prove his own innocence; and, I am sure, readers of the BOYS' FRIEND will be

pleased to learn that he is successful. This is a very gripping story, and will hold you right up to the very end.

Our next story, dealing with the schooldays of Frank Richards, the famous author, is entitled

"FOR HIS FATHER'S SAKE!"

By Martin Clifford.

As readers of earlier stories in this series will remember, the remittance man at Cedar Creek, Vere Beauclerc's father, is a very hard character. Many of the juniors at the school treat him with contempt, but not so Vere. His affection for his father is strong, in spite of the fact that Beauclerc senior possesses many bad qualities.

Even when, in next Monday's story, Beauclerc senior is preparing to give way to crime, Vere's one aim is to prevent his father from falling into

deep degradation. To save his father Vere has to obtain fifty dollars in a very short time.

He sees a chance of securing the money, but it is a small chance, yet without fraud with danger to himself. But the junior does not shrink from the task. He is resolved to save his father, and runs the risk. What the result of Vere Beauclerc's plucky attempt is, you will learn when you read this splendid story.

Next Monday's magnificent long instalment of

"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

By Duncan Storm,

finds the boys back on the ship once again. Flashman and Stoot, the two bullies, are reintroduced, and once again they suffer for their bullying ways. The bullies upset old Fatima, with disastrous results to themselves. There is some rare fun in this instalment, especially when Mr. Parkins takes the boys in chemistry. Mr. Parkins gives practical illustrations of the subjects he deals with, and—well, then the fun begins to fly!

Our next long complete tale of Dick, Frank, and Joe, the Crusoe Island adventurers, is entitled

"THE FOUR MEDICINE MEN!"

By Maurice Everard.

The little party have the misfortune to fall out with the natives on the island, and then there are thrilling

happenings by the score. It seems that nothing can save the lives of the four, when a determined scheme occurs to Joe. They carry the scheme out, with what result you will learn when you read this grand tale.

The concluding item in next Monday's issue is the long complete tale of Bob Travers, the boy boxer, entitled

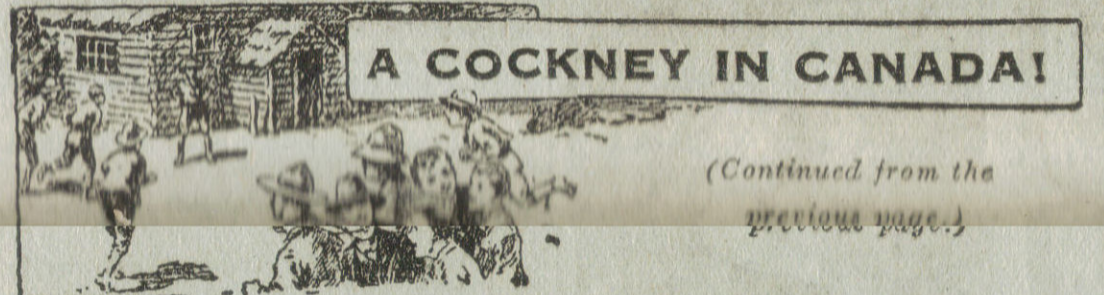
"THE BLUFFING OF PONSONBY!"

By Herbert Britton.

In this story Bob goes to Highcliffe, and it is arranged that Frank Courtney shall box Bob, when Ponsonby, the nut, butts in, and secures permission from Mr. Mobbs to represent Highcliffe.

Ponsonby thinks the fight will prove a walk-over for him, but when he sees Bob box his opinion is rather shaken. Not wishing to be knocked out in sight of his schoolfellows, Ponsonby adopts an artful scheme to ensure his winning. But there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, as Ponsonby learns to his cost. You will, I feel sure, greatly enjoy reading this story.

Your Editor



A COCKNEY IN CANADA!

(Continued from the previous page.)

will lend them for an afternoon for a dollar. You lend me a dollar, Bob."

"But look here—"

"Don't spoil a good joke!" pleaded Chunky. "After school I'm going to copper my face, and dress up in the Indian things, and scare that young greenhorn out of his silly wits. You watch out."

"It's hardly fair on Hopkins," said Frank.

"Oh, rot! Isn't he simply asking to be taken in? It will do him good!" urged Chunky. "Besides, it will be no end funny."

Chunky Todgers was persuasive, and he had his way. With Bob Lawless's dollar in his pocket he mounted Frank Richards' pony, and started at a gallop for the town.

He came back very late for dinner, and was spoken to severely by Miss Meadows; but he was so meek that the schoolmistress was disarmed. She was very far from suspecting the cause of Chunky's absence.

Before afternoon school, Chunky very mysteriously guided Frank Richards & Co. to the old corral near the school, where a bundle reposed on the ground.

"That's the things!" he announced. "Feathers and blanket and moccasins, same as the chaps used in the show at the Mission. I've got some paint for my face, too. I shall make a top-hole Redskin. You fellows will have to keep Hopkins from clearing off till I'm ready."

"But—"

"Oh, bother your butts!" said Chunky. "Take him down to the creek and show him your canoe, and then bring him for a walk this way. I'll be ready in less than half an hour after lessons."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Lawless, laughing.

And they returned to the school-house, where several other fellows were taken into the joke—not, of course, including Hopkins. That innocent youth was left in blissful ignorance.

But Chunky Todgers occupied what time remained before lessons in relating to Hopkins thrilling yarns of Indian risings, and speculating whether a ferocious brave was likely to drop in at the school in search of scalps.

It was possible that the keen Cockney had had his eyes opened by Chunky's previous "wheeze," and that he did not take the humorous youth's statements as gospel now. But Chunky was quite satisfied.

He was grinning all over his fat face when Cedar Creek went in to afternoon lessons.

So keen was Chunky on his "jape" that he was extremely inattentive to lessons, and more than once came under Miss Meadows' special and severe attention.

But Chunky bore that philosophically. It could not be helped.

When the school was dismissed at last he bestowed a fat wink upon Bob Lawless, and disappeared in the direction of the old corral.

Bob at once seized upon Hopkins, and took him down to the creek to see the birch-bark canoe. Hopkins was in no hurry to get home, and he accompanied the chums of Cedar Creek cheerfully.

Half an hour after lessons they turned their steps down the creek in the direction of the old corral.

Chunky Todgers had had time to put on his war-paint and feathers, and it was time for the wild Indian to appear.

"Hallo! Somebody in there!" remarked Bob Lawless, as there was a sound within the old fence of the corral.

He moved along to the gate, and looked in. The next moment he struck an attitude of dramatic terror.

"Indians!" he gasped.

"Indians!" repeated Frank and Beauclerc in gasping voices.

"Oh, dear!" ejaculated Harold Hopkins.

There was a wild whoop in the corral, and a fearsome-looking figure came bounding into view through the gateway. Harold Hopkins stood rooted to the ground, blinking at him.

The 5th Chapter.

Rough on the Redskin.

"Whoop!"

"Holy smoke!" gasped Hopkins.

The Indian was terrifying to look at.

In build he was short and stout, but a magnificent headdress of war-

feathers made him look taller. He wore moccasins and a blanket, and his skin was brown as a berry, and daubed with war-paint in red and yellow ochre.

In his brown hand he flourished a tomahawk as he charged towards the group of schoolboys on the bank of the creek.

Bob, Frank, and Vere Beauclerc crowded behind Harold Hopkins as if for protection.

The Red Indian, brandishing his tomahawk and letting out ear-splitting whoops, rushed right at them.

Hopkins seemed petrified for some moments.

But as the Redskin came close, Hopkins lowered his head and charged at him with a suddenness that startled his companions, and the Redskin, too.

The Cockney rushed under the flourishing tomahawk, and grasped the Redskin round the body.

"Yaroo!" roared the startled red man in tones quite unlike those of a Red Indian on the war-path.

Hopkins whirled him off his feet, and brought him to the ground with a crash.

The tomahawk flew through the air, and most of the Indian's feathers were scattered far and wide. The Redskin rolled on the ground, roaring under the weight of the Cockney in his strong grip.

"Yoop! Ow! Leggo!" roared the Red Indian.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrrgg!"

"Got him!" yelled Hopkins. "Got the Injun! Lend me a 'and, you coves, and chuck him into the water!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frank Richards, wiping his eyes. "Oh, dear! Poor old Chunky! He's woke up the wrong passenger."

"Yah! Oh! Yawp!" came from Chunky, in tones of anguish, as Harold Hopkins pommelled him.

Thump, thump, thump!

"That's 'ow I 'andle wild Injuns with tommyhawks!" yelled Hopkins, as he pommelled away. "Take that, you Redskin rotter! Take that, you wild Injun! Take that, you skelper!"

"Yaroo! Oh! Ah!"

"Hopkins, you ass, let him alone!" gasped Bob Lawless, almost in hysterics. "He's not an Indian. Do you hear?"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Hopkins, you ass, I tell you—"

"Gammon!" retorted Hopkins.

"He's an Injun right enough. Look at his war-paint! Look at his tommyhawk! Take that, you waster! Take that, you skelping blackguard!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Oh, crumbs! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you up to, Hopkins?"

shrieked Bob Lawless, as the Cockney, crimson with exertion and excitement, dragged the fat Redskin down the bank towards the creek by main force.

"Lend a 'and!" gasped Hopkins.

"I'm going to drown him!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"That's the only way of killing him. I ain't got a gun!" yelled Hopkins. "I'm going to drown him! Bear a 'and!"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

"Help!" shrieked the unhappy Chunky.

"Help! Yaroo! I ain't going to be drowned! Oh, jiminy! Help me, you dummies! Yooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. were almost doubled up with laughter. This outcome of Chunky's jape was so totally unexpected that it overcame them.

Instead of frightening the Cockney schoolboy out of his wits, poor Chunky had only turned him into a terrific fighting-man with deadly intentions. Chunky was no match for the Cockney, and he was encumbered by his blanket and moccasins. He had simply no chance. With a rush, Hopkins brought him down the sloping bank to the water.

"Great Scott!" gasped Beauclerc.

"We mustn't let him drown poor Chunky! Come on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three chums rushed down the bank after the ferocious Cockney.

But Hopkins was not to be baulked.

He raised the fat Redskin bodily in his arms, and Chunky, with his feathers and arms and legs wildly flying, was rushed down to the water.

"Stop!" roared Bob Lawless.

"Oh, crumbs! After him! Stop him!"

Splash!

"Gug-gug-gug!"

Chunky Todgers went bodily into the shallow water by the bank, and Harold Hopkins stood panting.

Chunky's head came up, and his face showed with half the Redskin complexion washed off it as he struggled wildly towards the shore.

"Keep him in!" roared Hopkins.

"Keep him in there, and let him drown! Anybody got a gun? Why ain't somebody got a gun?"

Frank Richards grasped Hopkins, and fairly dragged him back, while Bob Lawless and Beauclerc helped Chunky out of the water.

"Don't let him get out!" yelled Hopkins. "Wait till I get his tommyhawk and brain 'im! 'Old 'im while I finish him off!"

"Groogh! Hoooh! Whoop! Oh,

dear! I'm all wet. I'm soaking. Yow-ow-ow!" wailed Chunky.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you silly dummies?" howled Chunky indignantly. "Look at these clothes! Who's going to pay for the damage?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. laughed till they wept. They could not help it. It was such an unexpected ending to Chunky's great jape, and he looked such a draggled object as he stood squelching in water and mud.

"Oh, you ass, Hopkins!" gasped Bob at last. "I tried to tell you that it was only a joke. It was only Chunky—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hopkins.

"Oh, you can see it now, can you?" exclaimed Bob.

Hopkins roared.

"You jolly nearly drowned me, you dangerous idiot!" howled Chunky Todgers.

"No, I didn't," said Hopkins, chortling. "I knowed the water was shallow there, my tulip. I knowed there wasn't any danger, 'cepting to your Injun complexion. Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards jumped.

"You knew it was Chunky all the time?" he yelled.

"Ha, ha! 'Old me, somebody!" gasped Hopkins. "Of course I knowed. I'd know that fat little hoyster anywhere if he was dressed as a Red Indian or a pink nigger. Ha, ha, ha! Still, he wanted me to take him for an Injun, so I took him for an Injun—see?"

And, with a chuckle, Harold Hopkins walked away, leaving Frank Richards & Co. blinking at one another.

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank at last.

"Gug-gug-gug!" came from the unfortunate Chunky. "I shall c-c-catch cold! Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Cedar Creek, laughing hysterically, marched Chunky away to get him dried. They were rather late in starting for home that evening, but they went in a merry mood.

As for Chunky Todgers, his sense of humour was quite damped for the time, and it was probable that he would think at least twice before he attempted to take another rise out of 'Arold 'Opkins.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"FOR HIS FATHER'S SAKE!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!

THE COURTFIELD CHAMPION!

A Splendid Complete Story of Bob Travers, the Boy Boxer,
introducing Solly Lazarus, of Courtfield Council School.

By HERBERT BRITTON.

The 1st Chapter.

Solly Lazarus' Loss.

"I'll take thith money along to the bank."

It was Solly Lazarus who spoke. He was sitting in the little parlour of his house, with his chums Trumper and Grahame.

The three juniors belonged to the Courtfield Council School, where they were leading lights in the cricket and football teams.

Solly Lazarus, who had the misfortune to talk with a lisp, was treasurer of the Courtfield Games Club.

Trumper and Grahame were on the committee, and the three chums had just been holding a meeting.

The subscriptions for the season had lately been collected, and, being treasurer, it was Solly Lazarus' business to look after the money. Hence his resolve to take the money to the bank for the sake of security.

"Good!" replied Trumper, jumping up from his chair. "Grahame and I will go down to the station to meet Bob Travers. He's due to arrive by the six o'clock train."

"Very well," said Solly Lazarus, slipping the subscription money into his pocket. "I will come back towards the station to meet you."

The three chums left the little parlour, and, once outside, they separated, going in their different directions.

Solly Lazarus wended his way in the direction of the bank. It was dark, and there were very few people about.

Solly kept on, but suddenly he pulled up short as a shrill whistle rent the air in his rear.

He listened, and the sound of footsteps could be plainly heard.

The next moment a dim figure became plainly discernible, making straight towards him.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Solly Lazarus in surprise, as the fellow stopped in front of him. "What do you want?"

"You!" replied the new-comer. "Your name's Lazarus, ain't it?"

"Yeth."

"Well, you've just left two of your pals, haven't you?"

Solly Lazarus nodded assent.

"Nothing's happened to them, I hope?" he said, noticing the concerned look on the other's face.

"There just 'as!" said the new-comer. "Him as named Trumper come up to me 'e did, and 'e ses, 'Run as fast as yer can an' catch up a feller named Lazarus. Tell 'im 'is pal Grahame 'as been knocked down by a motor!"

Solly Lazarus' face went pale. "Been run over!" he ejaculated.

"Yus, about five minutes ago."

"Then—then it must have been just after I left them!" faltered Solly.

"I don't know anything about that," said the fellow. "You'll excuse me, young sir, but you're wasting time waiting 'ere. That young feller wants 'elp, 'e does, and—"

"All right," said Solly concernedly. "I'll come along now."

Solly broke into a run with his companion, and he retraced his steps towards the little pawnbroker's shop presided over by his father.

They passed the shop, running at full speed.

"How much farther?" shouted Solly Lazarus breathlessly.

"Keep on!" said the other. "Another minute and— Got yer!"

Before the Courtfield junior knew what was happening, a leg-of-mutton fist crashed into the side of his head, and, with a faint cry, he was sent reeling to the ground.

They had just left the High Street, and there was nobody about.

Solly Lazarus was dazed. He lay perfectly still on the hard road.

His companion bent over him, and, with an evil grunt, commenced to rummage through all his pockets in turn.

"Got 'em!" he exclaimed at length, as his hands fastened on the five one-pound notes which Solly had been going to bank.

Suddenly realisation came to the Courtfield junior. His head buzzed horribly, but he was fairly capable of taking in the situation.

"You villain!" he exclaimed hotly. "That money itn't mine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The rogue laughed

coarsely. "That don't matter. It's mine now, and—"

The fellow broke off abruptly as a left-hander from Solly Lazarus smashed between his eyes.

"Oh, would yer?" he exclaimed. "You'd show fight, eh? Well, take that, and shut up!"

The fellow's gnarled fist darted out once again, and Solly Lazarus was sent back to the hard road. His head came into contact with the ground, and he lay perfectly still.

With one evil glance at his victim, the thief made off.

Solly did not move for several minutes. Gradually, however, his senses came back to him.

His head was aching horribly, but in a few moments the happenings of the last few minutes became clearer to him.

He felt in his pocket with the faint hope that the notes might still be there, but they were gone. They had been stolen from him, and there seemed little hope of ever regaining possession of them again.

Solly staggered slowly to his feet. At the same moment the sound of voices became audible to his ears.

He listened, and soon recognised the voices of his chums Trumper and Grahame. There was also another voice which he did not recognise, but which he gathered to belong to Bob Travers, the boy boxer.

Solly let forth a whistle familiar to his chums, and the next instant it was answered.

Solly waited, and at length his chums pulled up short in front of him.

"Found him all right!" said Trumper, indicating the boy boxer.

"Solly, old son, this is Bob Travers, the chap you're going to meet in the ring to-morrow!"

"Jolly pleased to meet you!" said Bob Travers, holding out a friendly hand.

Solly gave the boy boxer's hand a feeble grip, but he said nothing.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you, old son?" broke in Trumper, noticing the concerned look on his chum's face. "Anybody'd think you'd lost a quid and found a farthing!"

"I wish I had!" said Solly Lazarus, with a faint smile. "It's far worthe than that!"

"Worse!" ejaculated Trumper. "Why, what's happened?"

Solly Lazarus took hold of his chum's hand, and pressed it on the back of his head.

"Can you feel a bump there?" he asked.

"My hat! Yes."

"Well," explained Solly Lazarus, "thome beastly bounder came along and told me that Grahame had been knocked down by a motor-car, and—"

"Me?" exclaimed Grahame, in amazement.

"Yes."

"But I—"

"I know you haven't," said Solly Lazarus quietly. "It wath only a hoax, and—"

"Good job, too."

"I know," said Solly. "But it didn't end there. Naturally, I pelted along to thee what had happened. That low-down blackguard came along with me and biffed me on the head!"

"By Jove!"

"Didn't you go for him?" asked Grahame.

"No," replied Solly, with a tone of regret. "I was abtholutely knocked out, and before I could hit out the rotter had gone through my pockets and pinched the club money!"

"Phew!" whistled Trumper. "That's jolly rotten!"

"It's worth than rotten!" said Solly gloomily. "How'th the club going to run through the theason? I can't afford to repay the money, and the fellowth will kick at having to pay again. Bethides, I don't thuppose any will be able to if they were asked."

"That's a fact they won't!" said Trumper.

"I suppose there's no chance of catching the rotter?" asked Bob Travers concernedly.

"Great Thcott, no!" said Solly Lazarus. "The brute pretty well knocked me thenthleth, and it mutht

have happened quite a quarter of an hour ago. He'th probably a mile away by now."

"Well, it's no good worrying about it now," said Trumper. "We'd better let the police know, at any rate. They may be able to get on the track of the thief, but I have my doubts."

"Same here," said Grahame.

"What a pity I hadn't decided to come in the morning!" said Bob Travers reproachfully. "Then—"

"Oh, it's no good blaming yourself, Travers, old son!" said Trumper, endeavouring to be cheerful in spite of himself. "The money's gone, so we shall have to find some means of getting out of the difficulty."

"But five poundth!" exclaimed Solly Lazarus. "Where shall we be able to get five poundth from?"

"Don't ask me," said Trumper helplessly. "We shall have to think about it later on. Now, look here, Solly, don't you get worrying yourself about it. We want you to be in form to-morrow for the fight with Travers. You've got the honour of the school to uphold, and if you get brooding over this affair, I can see you being knocked out in the first round."

"I shall be all right," said Solly

think about is your fight with Travers to-morrow. For the present the money business can wait. We'll think about that afterwards."

Solly Lazarus smiled faintly.

Trumper had made a big effort to keep his chum's spirits up, but it was a hard job. Solly's loss was a big one, and he could not help brooding over it.

There was another in a troubled frame of mind. Bob Travers was deeply concerned for his new chum.

Bob Travers knew that the trouble weighed heavily on the Courtfield junior's mind, and he knew, too, that unless the money was recovered Solly would be bound to put up a poor show in the ring to-morrow.

Five pounds was a big amount to these Council School fellows. In contrast to fellows at a public school, they did not possess unlimited pocket-money.

The money which went to pay their subscriptions was probably money which, by great efforts, they had saved out of their small weekly allowance. Many weeks would have to elapse before they could accumulate a similar sum again.

Bob Travers would have helped the chums then and there had he had the money, but he hadn't.

Mr. Matthews, the bluff, good-hearted boxing promoter, who was going to buy Joe Barnett a new boxing booth, providing Bob defeated no less than six schoolboy champion boxers, would probably have presented him with five pounds had he asked for it; but John Matthews was many miles away at that moment.

The boxing promoter would be at the fight on the morrow, but Bob Travers wanted to help Solly now—at once. He wanted to buck his new chum up, and enable him to put up a strong fight on the morrow.

Bob Travers saw no satisfaction in

beating a fellow who had a load of trouble on his mind. But what could he do?

Lazarus with an effort. "I'm looking forward to the fight no end."

"Oh, good!"

Solly Lazarus linked his arm with that of the boy boxer's.

"Come on, Traverth!" he said in a friendly manner. "I've made arrangementth with dad for you to thtath at our place until the fight ith over. By the way, I thought Mr. Matthewth wath coming with you."

"He was," said Bob. "but he had to go up to London on business. He's coming down, however, in time for the fight to-morrow evening."

"Oh, good!"

The four boys walked along slowly to the little shop controlled by Lazarus senior. The latter was usually of a grumpy temperament, but he greeted the juniors in quite a genial manner as they entered the little parlour at the back of the shop.

A very tempting meal was spread on the table. The juniors sat down, and there was a constant flow of conversation while the meal was in progress.

Solly Lazarus was apt to be rather quiet, but his chums, refusing to look on the black side of the affair, did their best to cheer their chum up.

"Shouldn't thay anything to dad," said Solly Lazarus. "He'll probably give me a lecture on carelethneith if he knowth that I've lotht five quid."

Trumper looked at his chum in surprise.

"What! Still thinking of that affair?" he said. "Didn't I tell you to forget all about it?"

"Yeth; but—"

"Well, do as your uncle tells you!" said Trumper. "All you've got to

"As much as you can," said Bob, ignoring the man's remarks.

"I vill let you haf four pounds," said Mr. Lazarus.

"Why, the watch cost every penny of ten pounds!" said Bob.

"Maybe," said Mr. Lazarus, with a shake of the head. "But ith thecond-hand now, and I thould never get ten poundth for it."

"Oh, you won't have any occasion to sell it!" said Bob quickly. "I only want the money for a few hours—a day at the most. Why, I wouldn't part with that watch altogether for anything!"

"Very well, I vill let you haf five poundth," said Mr. Lazarus. "But that ith the very motht I can allow."

"That's all right!" said Bob eagerly. "Five pounds will do mo nicely."

Mr. Lazarus counted out five one-pound notes and handed them to Bob.

"By the way," said Bob, as he slipped the money into his pocket, "I hope you won't say anything about this to Solly. I shouldn't like him to know—"

"Quite so! Quite so!" said Mr. Lazarus, winking his eye. "I understand. I vill thay nothing at all."

Bob left the shop and went back to the little parlour. Then he took out pen and paper, and after scribbling a short note he slipped it into an envelope, together with the notes he had received in exchange for his watch.

Then, after addressing the envelope to Solly Lazarus, he left the shop, with the intention of going down to the station to meet Mr. Matthews, the boxing promoter.

John Matthews arrived by the six o'clock train, and then, after having tea at a friend's house in Courtfield, Bob and the boxing promoter wended their way to the little gymnasium in which the boxing contest between Solly Lazarus and Bob was going to take place.

Solly met Bob at the door, his face wreathed in smiles.

"Hallo, Bob, old thon!" he said. "I've got thom good newth for you."

"Oh, good!" said Bob.

"Yeth," said Solly earnestly. "Thome kind fellow hath thent mo five poundth! I don't know from Adam who he ith. He merely thigus himself 'A Well-wither.'"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Bob. "That's jolly good! I suppose you feel up to the mark now."

"Rather!" said Solly Lazarus. "It'th a load off my mind with a vengeance, but I with the fellow had thent his name."

"Perhaps you'll find out one day," said Bob.

"I hope tho."

Bob went off to his dressing-room, smiling to himself. Solly Lazarus was a different fellow now. He was going to put up a stern fight, and Bob was glad of it.

At length the boy boxer emerged from his dressing-room, and made tracks for the ring. The little gymnasium was crowded with fellows from the Courtfield Council School, who cheered their champion to the echo.

The gymnasium was a public institution, and therefore there were a number of fellows there whom Solly Lazarus and his chums did not know. Some of them, too, were very rough characters in appearance.

Bob Travers went to his corner, and sat there until the call of "Time!"

In an instant Bob was on his feet and facing his opponent. Solly Lazarus' face bore a cheerful expression, and he kept his eyes glued on Bob's fists.

Solly boxed warily, and Bob had a hard job to get between the Courtfield junior's guard. He succeeded at length, however, but an instant later Solly staggered him with a stirring left-hander.

The first round ended with honours pretty well even. The second round opened in spirited fashion, both boxers hitting out in resolute style.

"Go it, Solly!" yelled the Courtfield supporters.

And Solly went it with a vengeance. He was very lithe and active on his feet, and time and again he dodged blows that were meant to send him backwards.

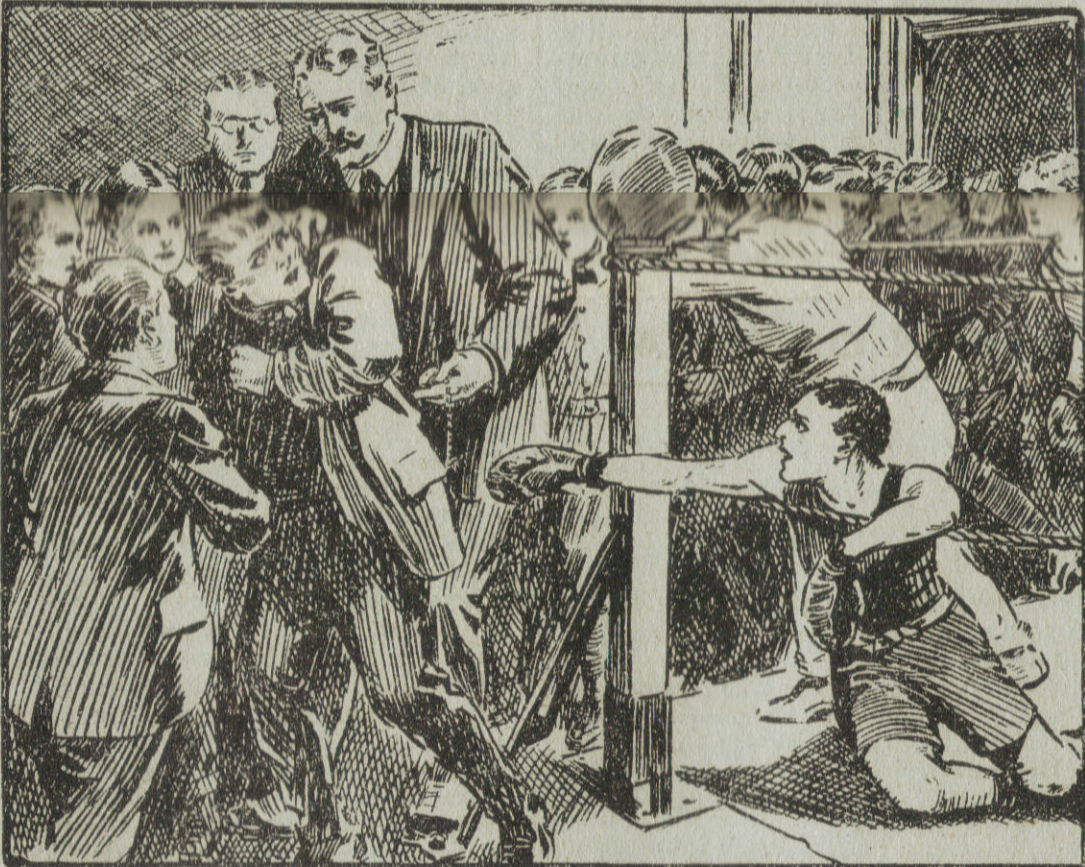
Now and then Solly managed to get home with good effect upon Bob's face, but he received quite as good as he gave.

It was a splendid fight, and the on-lookers showed their appreciation by cheering the combatants enthusiastically.

The end of the second round came with Bob forcing Solly to the ropes. Bob had managed to get slightly the better of his opponent, but the call of "Time!" prevented him from delivering a knock-out blow.

Solly profited by the rest, and he

(Continued on page 192, col. 5.)



"Hallo!" exclaimed Solly Lazarus, holding on to the ropes of the ring, and staring at John Matthews' captive. "I recognithe that fellow'th voice!"

The 2nd Chapter.

Bob Travers' Ruse.

"By Jove! I'll do it!"

It was the next afternoon, and Bob Travers was sitting alone in the little parlour owned by the Lazarus family.

Solly and his chums were at school. They had informed the police of the daring theft, but so far no trace of the fellow had been found.

Bob Travers had been thinking all the morning, in an endeavour to find a wheeze for getting Solly Lazarus out of his difficulty. At last a ruse had occurred to him.

He pulled out his gold watch, and fixed his gaze on it for a moment hesitatingly. Next moment he slipped it back into his pocket, and walked into the little pawnbroker's shop, to find Mr. Lazarus standing behind the counter.

"Good-afternoon, Master Traverth," said Mr. Lazarus, rubbing his hands. "And what can I do for you?"

Bob pulled out his gold watch and laid it on the counter.

"I want you to lend me some money on this," he said slowly.

Mr. Lazarus looked at the boy boxer inquiringly.

"In money difficultieith, then, Mathter Traverth," he said artfully. "Ah! It ith a bad thing when boyth haf to pawn. H'm!" He picked up Bob's watch, and scrutinised it carefully. "And how much do you want me to allow you on thith?"

"I hope tho."

Bob went off to his dressing-room, smiling to himself. Solly Lazarus was a different fellow now. He was going to put up a stern fight, and Bob was glad of it.

At length the boy boxer emerged from his dressing-room, and made tracks for the ring. The little gymnasium was crowded with fellows from the Courtfield Council School, who cheered their champion to the echo.

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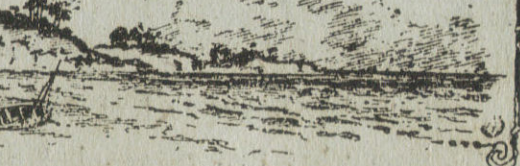
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(Continued on page 192, col. 5.)

CRUSOE ISLAND



(Continued from the previous page.)

Frank suggested. "You, Pie, can fetch more timber from the wreck."

All through the afternoon, and until well into the evening, the four of them laboured, with their few small tools, in making big cases to hold the gold.

The next morning the boys were anxious to take a stroll to the beach, to see how Roqueto, alias the professor, was getting on.

Joe, however, opined this was hardly wise.

"You see, if we start hanging about, after he's given us the straight griffin to stand clear, he'll be standing up on his hind legs to find out why we're so interested. No; take the tip of one who knows, and let the rascals bide!"

This seemed pretty sound advice; so, directly the breakfast was over and all the crocks cleared away, Pie gave Bunjik his morning meal, and the four of them returned to the workshop, and set about their tasks.

For a good two hours the place was filled with the sound of hammering.

The hot sunlight streamed through the open door, making the place almost suffocating. Joe wiped the moisture from his streaming forehead.

"Out o' Latrobe's treasure, we'll treat ourselves to a few nice winders for this ere workshop," he said. "Shades of Aunt Mary, 'ow did that happen?"

The "that" was a mighty bang, caused by the sudden slamming of the door, which plunged the workshop in almost total darkness. The force of the slam shook the structure, and made the floor shake.

"Mighty funny! There's no wind, and that door wants a bit o' shiftn', seein' it's made from solid bogs," said Joe. "Open it, Frank, or we'll be stifled!"

The boy dropped his tools, and set his shoulder against the woodwork. The door refused to budge.

"Won't move an inch," he announced. "Give a hand, Dick."

Still no result, even when Joe and Pie added their weight.

"Looks as though we're properly shut in," said Joe. "Hark!"

The silence was shattered by thunderous blows rained on the outside.

Frank changed colour. A big hammer, wielded by some mysterious hand, was clanging nails into the woodwork of the door.

"Roqueto has shut us in!" he whispered, applying his eye to a narrow slit between the logs. "Three of his chaps are bringing up half a tree-trunk to nail it across, so that we can't get out."

Now that part of their work was safely accomplished, the treasure-seekers made no secret of their intentions.

"Got 'em trapped fine!" said a voice which they recognised as the professor's. "Take them a week of Sundays to get out!"

In a very few minutes the balk of timber was fixed and nailed in position, and the four were prisoners.

Joe sat down on the nearest packing-case.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he muttered.

"To think I've let a dago mug-wump like Roqueto pull the sticky stuff across me!"

"Guess you're the mug-wump, not Roqueto," Frank said, with a light laugh. "Now, Joe, what's to be done?"

Joe scratched his head.

"I've been asking myself that question the last five minutes, my lad. What can be done? We're tight shut up in this yere box, and can't get out. But, all the same, we've got to get out, somehow!"

He scrambled off the box, and made a tour of inspection. The result wasn't very encouraging.

They had built the hut well, far better and stronger than they thought at the time. And now the excellence of their work was turned against them, mocking them in their helplessness.

The walls were best part of a foot thick, the logs and parts of tree-trunks fastened together with ten-inch nails brought from the steamer. The roof was formed of split trees, nailed tightly down on immensely strong rafters.

A low groan broke from Joe.

"And all the while those thieving robbers are lifting Latrobe's gold out of our beautiful sand!" he moaned. "Oh, what a fool I was ever to let him and his scum land!"

The 3rd Chapter. Caught in the Quicksands.

Meantime, a scene of a very different character was taking place on another part of the island.

The professor's plan for unearthing the bones of the mythical mammoth had proceeded apace.

No sooner did Joe Tremorne and the boys take themselves off than the professor showed himself in his true colours.

Whipping off his beard and false eyebrows, he called to one of the men waiting by the boat, and commanded him to bring a measure.

"Now, then, look swift!" he bawled. "You, Barker, follow the line to the spring under the hill, while you, Gates, had better step out the ground as far as the centre of the three palms. Half-way along the line from the middle of the base to the apex of the triangle, we ought to find the gold."

It took best part of an hour to locate the spot marked on the chart. When this was done, spades were brought from the boat, and the whole party started digging feverishly.

In a little while there was a hole in the sand large enough to put a fair-sized waggon into, but no sign of the treasure-chests.

Roqueto stood on the edge of the crater, impatiently pulling at a long Mexican cheroot.

"Dig deeper and faster!" he cried, his eyes flashing hungrily. "We want to get the stuff out before those other fellows get anxious about what we are doing."

For a time there was an almost intolerable suspense, and men looked at one another with haggard, greedy eyes.

Then a cry broke from one of them as a spade struck on something hard.

"The treasure! The treasure!" cried Roqueto, rushing round and waving his arms above his head.

But almost as quickly the triumph died out of his voice. The hard substances were parts of human skeletons.

"The bones of the men Latrobe shot and buried on top of the chests," the villain cried. "We're on the right spot this time."

They threw the grinning skulls out on the burning sand.

The work went on till the sun began to drop behind the hill, and grey mists crept up from the valley and went down to the sea.

Suddenly a second shout went up, and one of the men staggered out of the pit, dragging a box after him.

With comparative ease he shouldered it over the rim, where Roqueto bent over it.

"The chest! The gold chest!" the villain cried. "Quick! Help me turn it over!"

One of the men tilted it, and it dropped with a hollow noise on one of the spades. Then they saw that the bottom of the box was missing.

What had happened was only too clear. The water in the sand had rotted the wood away, and the gold had dropped out and sunk in the sand.

"We shall find it if we dig deeper," said Roqueto; and once more they set to work.

The result was that several pieces of gold were brought to light.

Roqueto drew a deep sigh of relief, and called his men off.

"You can do now tools for to-night," he said. "It's not very wise to show lights along this beach, in case a passing ship should mistake them for signals. We'll begin again in the morning. Watson and Durrell, you can mount guard over the spot till morning."

The next day the work was resumed, and the spades bit eagerly into the yielding sand, every glance straining for the first glimpse of the coins and jewels which had escaped from the chests.

At a depth of twenty-five feet, seven more boxes were discovered, but the bottoms of each, and some of the sides, were decayed, yielding the contents to the merciless sand.

A little lower down, however, a small gold cup and more coins were brought up. Success appeared imminent when the diggers came upon a vein of quicksand.

Roqueto stared blankly. It was quite obvious that any weighty substance, such as gold in large quantities, meeting with such a treacherous vein, would continue to sink until it reached something more solid.

"THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN!"
By MAURICE EVERARD
IS NOW ON SALE IN BOOK FORM.
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"BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. LIBRARY.

"Better enlarge the hole," Roqueto said.

Still the sand continued to slip away under them and the walls of the pit to subside.

"There's nothing for it but to secure timber and keep the sides up," the Spaniard said. "To get it, we shall have to raid those whites."

This, the only course now open, was decided on and prepared for.

Half an hour later a party of six were on their way to the camp. They approached from the woods, and crouched in shelter on the fringe of the trees.

"I must have timber and tools, and I'm prepared to shoot the whole crowd down to get what I want," Roqueto whispered to the man nearest to him. "Not a bad sort of show they've built themselves, but where are they?"

The place certainly appeared deserted. The little living-room, with the covered veranda looking towards the sea, was empty. A thin trail of blue smoke curled lazily upwards from the iron chimney pot above Pie's galley fire.

Then the silence was broken by the sound of light hammer-blows.

"They're in that shed, making boxes," Roqueto's companion announced. "You stay here, chief, while I reconnoitre."

He was away only a few minutes, then returned with his evil face expanded in a leering grin.

"We've got 'em well inside a coffin," he laughed. "The place hasn't a single window to it. Once shut the door on them, and they're as helpless as babies."

Roqueto sized the position up quickly. He despatched a second man to the house to search for hammers and nails, which were easily found.

Then the whole lot of them rushed

the shed, nailed a big balk of timber across the door, and so rendered Joe and the boys powerless to interfere with them.

This done, they ransacked the place, shouldered as much gear as they wanted, and set out for the beach once more.

At the edge of the clearing Roqueto looked back.

"When we've got the money, Durrell, we'll come back and make a bonfire of that shed," he leered. "I'd like to get a bit of my own back from the old man, for trying to be funny with me!"

Joe was at his wit's end to know what to do to get himself and the boys out of their prison, when a whoop of delight burst from Pie.

He was bending down, with one eye glued to a crack between the logs.

"I've got it!" he yelled. "Here comes dat young scamp of a heffer-lant!"

"Well, what can he do, anyway?" asked Joe irritably.

"You wait and seeums," said Pie. "Bunjie! Bunjie!"

As he called, the elephant halted in the middle of the clearing, looked about him, flapped his long ears, and then came at a lumbering trot towards the shack.

"Bunjie, Bunjie, come heah! Dis black feller wants you!" called Pie.

The note of haste in the boy's tone awoke responsive chords in the animal's intelligence.

He ran towards the hut, and hit the door with a resounding thwack which made the timbers rattle.

"You see," said Pieface jubilantly, poking a lump or two of sugar under the door. "When he sees I reward him, he'll do it again."

There was a moment's pause, during which Bunjie devoured the sugar, then Pie called again.

This time the lumbering beast lowered his head and charged. The timbers cracked, and two of the logs dropped at Joe's feet.

"Good, Bunjie!" shouted Pie, handing more sugar through the opening. "Do dat again, and we'll soon be out ob dis hole. Bunjie! Bunjie!"

His voice rose in a simulated cry of terror. The elephant, realising that his master wanted him, lowered his head again, and charged terrifically.

The enormous weight, backed by the immense impetus, carried everything before it. The door crashed down on its hinges, and Bunjie's

huge form almost blocked the opening.

"Free! Free!" shouted Joe, leaping out. "Now I'll show Roqueto what I think of him. Come on!"

They dashed to the living-quarters, and emerged carrying guns and cartridge-belts. A swift run took them across the end of the island to the high ground dominating the beach.

Near the edge, Joe drew up, raising his hand in warning as a fearsome scream sent the gulls wheeling in fright over the reef.

"Look! They're running for the boat!" cried Joe.

The boys came forward and looked down. Four of the six men were racing down the slope, but every few yards they stumbled and fell on hands and knees.

"The quicksand! They've started a quicksand!" said Frank hoarsely. "And look—there's Roqueto and another poor wretch struggling in the pit!"

It was true. Swiftly the sides of the immense hole were caving in, burying the two treasure seekers, who vainly tried to extricate themselves.

Nor was this all. A wide stretch of yielding sand was moving at an ever-increasing pace down the slope towards the shore.

And in this the four promised speedily to be engulfed. They reached the boat, however, and pushed her off just in time, and, still crying wildly, they pulled out towards the waiting steamer.

Joe and the boys hastened down to the path to lend what aid they could to the trapped men. But they were too late. By the time they reached the beach, the quicksand had sucked the unhappy wretches under.

Roqueto, his companion, and Latrobe's treasure were lost to sight for ever!

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"THE FOUR MEDICINE MEN!"
By MAURICE EVERARD.
DON'T MISS IT!

"THE COURTFIELD CHAMPION!"
By HERBERT BRITTON.
(Continued from page 190.)

was looking quite fresh when he rose to his feet for the third round.

Out flashed Solly's left. Bob ducked quickly, and his right shot forward, and landed right beneath the Courtfield junior's chin.

It was a powerful blow, and it staggered Solly. He was a game fighter, however, and returned to the fray, determined to hold his own to the bitter end.

Bob rushed in quickly, and once, twice, his young fists crashed into Solly's face.

The Courtfield junior reeled slightly. His head buzzed from the effect of the blows, and for a few seconds he was all at sea. Had not the call of "Time!" come at that moment he would certainly have been knocked out.

Solly jumped up for the fourth round, looking somewhat groggy.

He cleverly guarded a thrust at the head, but a moment later he was sent staggering backwards from a terrific right-hander. He remained on his feet, but next instant his guard was swept unceremoniously aside, and a blow from Bob Travers' left hurled him to the boards.

At "seven" Solly was on his feet again, but he simply hadn't the strength to put up a strong resistance. Bob's left shot out like a piston-rod, and landing full between the Courtfield junior's eyes, sent him to the boards again.

It was the fatal count this time. Solly was done to the wide, but nevertheless he was not disgraced.

"Thief!"

Bob was just making for his corner, when the cry fell upon his ears. He looked up quickly, and to his amazement he saw John Matthews dashing through the crowd of onlookers.

In front of the boxing promoter was a very rough-looking fellow, running as fast as his legs would carry him for the door of the gymnasium.

"Hold him, somebody!" exclaimed John Matthews.

The next instant several of the Courtfield juniors joined in the chase, and before the man could get to the door he was captured and held down.

The boxing promoter strode up to the man.

"You rogue!" he exclaimed severely. "You've got my watch, and—Ah! Here it is! We must see about handing you over to the police!"

"No, no, guv'nor!" said the man pleadingly. "I won't ever do it again, I won't really!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Solly Lazarus, holding on to the ropes of the ring, and staring at John Matthews' captive. "I recognise that fellow 'th voice. By Jove! It 'th the chap who robbed me lath night!"

"What's that?" exclaimed John Matthews.

Solly Lazarus explained how he had been attacked the previous evening.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed John Matthews, passing his hands through the villain's pockets. "Perhaps he's got some of the notes left. Hallo! Here are three of them."

Solly Lazarus gazed intently at the numbers of the notes.

"By Jove," he cried at length, "they're mine!"

"Good!" said John Matthews. "You'd better hold on to them, while I see this fellow handed over to the police!"

The boxing promoter ushered the thief out of the gymnasium, and a few minutes later the man was in the hands of the local police.

Solly was very thankful for the recovery of three of his stolen notes, and he did his utmost to discover the name of the "Well-wisher" who had presented him with the five pounds.

He was unsuccessful, however. Bob never gave away his secret. That night he told John Matthews all about the affair, and a little later, with the boxing promoter's assistance, he recovered his gold watch from Mr. Lazarus, senior. Bob spent a happy time with Solly and his chums, and never did he forget his great boxing contest with the Courtfield Champion!

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"THE BLUFFING OF PONSONBY!"
By HERBERT BRITTON.
DON'T MISS IT!

RHEUMATISM



There is no need to suffer a day longer without relief. Every reader who is suffering from Rheumatism, Gout, Sciatica, Lumbago, Neuralgia, Gouty Eczema, Gravel, or any complaint caused by excess uric acid in the blood, should send their name and address to the Urace Laboratories, 2, Princes House, Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.4, who will send them a box of the wonder-working Urace Tablets free to try.

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