

The BOYS' FRIEND

See inside for "Frank Richards' Schooldays!" By Martin Clifford.

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending November 17th, 1917.]



CONFRONTED!

"You are Gentleman Jim, the cracksman, who stole me when I was a child, and almost broke my father's heart," said Kit Erroll grimly. "You are the man who tried to train me to be a thief, and used me cruelly when you failed. You are Gentleman Jim, and the game is up!"

THE IMPOSTOR'S DOWNFALL!

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

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Missing!

"Seen 'Erbert'?" Jimmy Silver asked that question as he looked into Mornington's study at Rookwood. Mornington and Erroll were there, at work on their prep. Erroll was working in his usual quiet, steady way, Morny with many half-suppressed yawns. Work did not seem to agree with the dandy of the Fourth. "Erbert!" Mornington repeated, looking up. "No. Hasn't he come in?"

"He seems to have vanished," said Jimmy Silver. "He wasn't in to calling-over, and he hasn't shown up since. Mr. Wiggins is waxing wroth. Somebody says he went out after lessons." "He went out right enough," said Mornington. "He went down to Coombe for me. I thought he was back long ago." "Well, he doesn't seem to have come in. But I'll tell Mr. Wiggins that he's gone to Coombe." And the captain of the Fourth left Study No. 4 to carry that information to the master of the Second Form.

Mornington did not resume his work. "What can have become of the kid, Erroll?" he asked. "It's long past locking-up. What on earth is keeping him out?" "I don't see that anything can have happened to him," said Kit Erroll, with a shake of the head. "He will turn up!" "But it's close on bed-time for the Second," said Mornington, looking at his watch. "He's had lots of time to get back a dozen times over. He can't have come in or he'd have brought me my new footer. That's what he went down to Coombe for."

Erroll looked rather curiously at his chum. Mornington was anxious, he could see that. Morny had never shown much sign of affection for his Cousin Cecil—more familiarly known in the Lower School as "Erbert." But Morny never was a fellow to wear his heart on his sleeve. He certainly seemed concerned now. Mornington caught his glance, and coloured slightly. "He's a good kid," he said, half apologetically. "Something may have happened to him. I can't understand why he should stay out till nearly nine. It means a thumpin' lickin' for

him when he comes in." Morny rose from the table. "Get on with your work. I'm leavin' mine for a bit."

Erroll rose too. "I'll come with you," he said. "I've nearly finished, anyway."

The two chums left the study. Nine o'clock was sounding from the tower, in muffled strokes. It was the bed-time for the Second Form at Rookwood, and the fags were trooping off to their dormitory under the charge of a prefect.

Mornington and Erroll looked them over as they went; but Mornington II. was not among them. He had not come in.

Jones minimus and Snooks and Fisher and the other fags were excitedly discussing 'Erbert's absence as Neville shepherded them off to the dormitory.

"Dashed queer," said Mornington. "Erbert wouldn't stay out after bed-time unless he'd had an accident of some sort."

"Mornington!" It was Lattrey's voice, and Lattrey, the cad of the Fourth, came up the stairs.

"Well?" snapped Mornington. "Mr. Wiggins wants you in his study."

"All right." "Your dear cousin seems to have disappeared," remarked Lattrey, his narrow, sharp eyes scanning Morny's face. "Jolly queer that he should stay out like this. And it seems that it was you sent him down to the village."

"Yes, it's queer." "An accident, perhaps," said Lattrey.

"Looks like it." "Not much doubt about it," said Lattrey coolly. "Only an accident could keep a fag of the Second out after bed-time."

"No need to be alarmed yet," said Erroll.

Lattrey laughed. "Is Mornington alarmed?" he asked, with a sneer. "If young 'Erbert's had an accident—or vanished into thin air—it may be a very good thing for his affectionate cousin."

Morny's face flushed, and he made an angry stride towards Lattrey.

"What do you mean, you cad?" he exclaimed fiercely.

"I mean what I say," said Lattrey coolly. "If your Cousin Cecil had never turned up, you wouldn't have lost the Mornington fortune. If he disappeared again, your money would come back to you. You sent him out of gates, and he hasn't come back. If he doesn't come back, Mornington—"

Mornington raised his clenched hand. His face was dark with anger. Lattrey backed away quickly.

"None of that," he said, between his teeth. "It may pay you better not to quarrel with me, Morny. It only needs a few words from me to spoil your little game."

Mornington stared at him, and then he burst into a harsh laugh.

"You silly fool!" he exclaimed. "Are you dotty enough to think that my cousin has been taken away, and that I've had a hand in it? Are you mad?"

"Not quite; but I'm certainly dotty enough to think that," said Lattrey quietly. "In fact, I know it!"

"You know it?" ejaculated Mornington.

"Yes; and Erroll is a party to it. That's why his old cracksman friend, Gentleman Jim, is hanging about Rookwood," said Lattrey, in a low, bitter voice. "I wondered at first what it meant—now I know."

Erroll started violently. "Oh, he's mad," said Mornington contemptuously. "But mad or not,

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THE IMPOSTOR'S DOWNFALL!

(Continued from the previous page.)

he's not going to talk to me like that!"

He advanced on the cad of the Fourth, his eyes gleaming.

"Put up your hands, Lattrey, you cad!"

"Mr. Wiggins wants you, Morny," said Erroll.

"He can wait a bit."

Lattrey was backing away, his face savage and bitter. But he had to put up his hands, for Mornington was attacking him hotly.

"Hallo! What's the game?" asked Jimmy Silver, coming along the passage as Lattrey went to the floor with a crash and a yell. "More trouble in the family?"

"He asked for it," said Mornington.

Lattrey raised himself on his elbow and gave Mornington a deadly look. He did not get up.

"Morny, you hound! I'll let all Rookwood know!"

"Let them all know, you fool, that you're a candidate for an asylum," said Mornington scornfully. "Do you think anybody will listen to you, unless he's as potty as you are?"

"What the dickens—" began Jimmy Silver in amazement.

"Lattrey's got an idea that I've had my cousin kidnapped," said Mornington. "What do you think of that?"

"Well, of all the howling idiots—"

"That's what he's going to tell all Rookwood!" grinned Mornington. "He's welcome to. Are you going to get up, Lattrey? Or are you going to get up, Lattrey? I've got another for your nose."

Lattrey replied only with a glare, and Mornington, laughing, turned to the stairs. He tapped at the door of Mr. Wiggins' study a minute or two later. He found the master of the Second looking worried.

"Ah, it is you, Mornington!" said Mr. Wiggins. "It seems that you sent your cousin down to the village."

"Yes, sir, soon after lessons."

"Where did you send him?"

"To Potter's, sir, for my new footer."

"Nowhere else?"

"No, sir."

"It is extraordinary that he should not have returned," said Mr. Wiggins. "Do you know whether it was Mornington II.'s intention to go anywhere else as well?"

"I'm sure not, sir. He just went down to the village to oblige me," said the Fourth Former. "I can't understand why he hasn't come back."

"Very well, Mornington. You may go."

Morny left the study, and Mr. Wiggins, with a perplexed countenance, proceeded to the Head to acquaint him with the matter. Mornington rejoined Erroll and Jimmy Silver.

"I'm goin' to look for my cousin," he said. "You comin'?"

"Gates are closed," said Jimmy Silver.

"The porter's a good-natured chap. I dare say he'll see us through," said Mornington. "Let's try, anyway. It's half an hour till dorm."

"May as well," said Erroll.

Jimmy Silver nodded assent. He was growing anxious, too, about little 'Erbert. Jimmy's chums—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—joined them as they went out into the dusky quad, and the party made their way to the porter's lodge.

Lattrey of the Fourth, with a handkerchief to his nose, watched them over the banisters as they left the house. There was a bitter sneer on Lattrey's face.

Amazing as his accusation against Mornington was, there was no doubt that Lattrey of the Fourth believed it, and that he had not the slightest expectation of 'Erbert's return to Rookwood.

The 2nd Chapter. No Sign.

Jimmy Silver knocked at the door of the porter's lodge.

It was opened by John Brown, the new porter, who had taken old Mack's place at the school.

The quiet, suave porter looked surprised at the sight of the half-dozen juniors outside his door.

His glance rested for a moment upon Kit Erroll, but only for a moment. He looked inquiringly at Jimmy Silver.

"Have you seen anything of Mornington II., Brown?" asked Jimmy.

"I saw him go out, sir," said the new porter. "About five o'clock, I think."

"And he hasn't come in?"

"Not by this gate, sir."

"It's jolly queer," said Jimmy.

"Look here, Brown, we're afraid some accident has happened to him, and we want to go out and look for him. Open the gates, like a good chap. We'll be in before bedtime."

The porter hesitated.

"Does Mr. Bootles authorise—"

he began.

"Ahem! We haven't bothered Mr. Bootles. We just want to go, you know."

John Brown shook his head.

"I'm afraid I can't open the gates without instructions, sir, at this hour."

"Oh, be a sport, you know!" urged Mornington. "Something's happened to my cousin. He may have been run over, or something."

"I hope not, sir."

"Well, let us out."

"I'm afraid it can't be done, sir. If Mr. Bootles gives permission—"

"Oh, rats!" said Mornington crossly.

"I'm sorry, sir; but duty, you know—"

"All serene!" said Erroll. "Come on, you fellows!"

The juniors moved away, and John Brown closed the door. But they did not return to the schoolhouse.

"This way!" said Mornington. And he led the way to the school wall where it was shadowed by the big beeches.

"Breaking bounds?" said Lovell, with a whistle.

"You needn't come if you don't want to. I'm goin' to look for 'Erbert."

"Oh, we'll come!" said Jimmy Silver.

The juniors agreed on that. They climbed the school wall and dropped into the road, and followed the road towards Coombe.

"We've got time to get to the village an' back before we have to turn up in the dorm," said Mornington.

"We'll ask whether he showed up at Potter's. Put it on."

And the juniors broke into a run, quickly covering the distance to the village. The shops in Coombe were all closed at that hour, but when they reached Potter's, Mornington rang a loud peal at the bell at the side door.

The door was opened by Mr. Potter, the outfitter, himself.

"Good-evenin', Mr. Potter!" said Mornington. "Sorry to disturb you—"

"Master Mornington!" exclaimed Mr. Potter in surprise.

"Yes. I sent my Cousin Cecil here for my new footer this afternoon," said Mornington. "He hasn't come back. Did he come here?"

"Yes, sir. I gave him the football!" said the outfitter. "That was a long time ago—soon after five o'clock."

"An' he started back for Rookwood?"

"I suppose so, sir!" said the astonished outfitter. "He certainly left here with the football, and went down the street towards the lane."

"Thank you, Mr. Potter!"

The juniors left the shop and the door was closed. They stood in the street in a puzzled group.

"Well, that beats it!" said Raby. "If he started walking back to Rookwood, why didn't he get there?"

"Can't have sunk into the earth or risen into the air," remarked Newcome. "It's a giddy mystery."

Jimmy Silver was silent, his eyes resting strangely on Mornington's clouded face.

He had laughed at Lattrey's wild accusation against the dandy of the Fourth, but it came back into his mind now.

It was absurd—impossible! Yet

'Erbert's strange history was well known. It had seemed like the very

irony of Fate, that the poor little waif whom Mornington had rescued from want should turn out to be his missing cousin, heir to the great Mornington fortune and estates.

Mornington had taken it very badly at first, as was not surprising. It was no light thing to fall from his high estate to become a mere nobody, instead of the wealthiest fellow at Rookwood.

But he had come round.

It was Mornington himself who had announced 'Erbert's real identity, and he had been consistently kind and friendly with the waif of Rookwood ever since.

Was it possible that the dandy of the Fourth, irked by poverty and dependence on his uncle, had entered into some mad scheme for regaining all that he had lost?

Such a desperate game would be in keeping with Mornington's reckless character, in a way.

Jimmy Silver could not drive the thought from his mind. For where was 'Erbert? Even if he had been run over by a motor-car in the lane, the news would have been made known at the school long ago.

"Penny for 'em!"

Mornington's sarcastic voice broke upon Jimmy's grim reflections.

The captain of the Fourth started and flushed.

"I—I was thinking—" he stammered.

"Yes, an' I know what you were thinkin'!" said Mornington, with a curl of the lip. "By gad! You were thinkin' that I know somethin' about 'Erbert's vanishing like this!"

Jimmy's face was crimson.

"I couldn't help remembering what Lattrey said, Morny. But I don't think so! I can't think so!"

"Thanks, awfully! I dare say all Rookwood will be thinkin' so to-morrow if 'Erbert doesn't turn up."

"He must turn up!" said Lovell.

"Let's call at the police-station, and ask if there's any news of an accident," said Erroll quietly.

"Yes, that's a good idea!"

To the little village police-station they proceeded accordingly. P.C. Boggs was there, and from him they learned that, so far as he knew, there had been no accident in the neighbourhood of Coombe that day.

There was nothing more to be done in the village, and they turned their steps in the direction of Rookwood.

"We've time to get in if we buck up!" remarked Raby.

"I'm not buckin' up," said Mornington coolly. "The moon's comin' up now, and we can look for 'Erbert along the road. I'm goin' to, anyway."

"We'll chance it!" said Jimmy.

And instead of hastening back to the school the juniors proceeded slowly along the road, scanning the fields behind the hedges, in some vain hope of seeing traces of the missing fug.

What had happened to him was a complete mystery, but it was evident that something had happened.

The moon was high now, shining through the drifting clouds, and they had plenty of light for the search.

But all the way back to Rookwood there was no trace of the fug.

If any attack had been made upon him there he might have dropped Morny's football, or perhaps his cap, or something else, and the juniors had hoped to find some such clue. But there was nothing to be found, and they arrived at the gates of the school disappointed, alarmed, and tired.

"May as well ring up Brown," said Mornington. "It's nearly ten now, and we've been missed."

Mornington clanged the bell, and the porter came down to open the gates. He stared at the juniors through the bars.

"We've been lookin' for my cousin," said Mornington. "We haven't found him. Let us in, and don't stand starin', man!"

"Certainly, sir! I shall have to report this!" said Brown.

"Report, and be dashed!"

The porter opened the gates, and the juniors tramped in and went into the schoolhouse. Bulkeley of the Sixth met them as they came in, with a wrathful brow.

"Oh, here you are, you young rascals! Report yourselves to Mr. Bootles at once!"

"Right-ho, Bulkeley!" said Jimmy Silver. "Anything heard of 'Erbert yet?"

"Nothing."

"We've been out to look for him, you know!" said Lovell.

"Like your cheek! Go in to Mr. Bootles."

Jimmy Silver & Co. presented themselves in the Fourth-Form master's study. Mr. Bootles picked up his cane.

"You have been out of bounds at bed-time!" he exclaimed sternly.

"We went to look for my cousin, sir," said Mornington. "We were anxious about him."

"You should not have done so without permission," said the Form-master. "However, have you learned anything of him?"

"No, sir. He fetched my footer away from Potter's, and started for Rookwood, and seems to have vanished. We hunted all along the road, but there wasn't a sign of him."

"It is extraordinary!" Mr. Bootles laid down his cane. "You may go to your dormitory. I excuse you, but do not let this happen again."

And the juniors, glad enough to be excused instead of caned, repaired to the dormitory of the Classical Fourth.

The 3rd Chapter.

Lattrey's Game!

Rookwood School was in a buzz of excitement the next morning.

'Erbert had not returned, and he had not been found.

He had disappeared—vanished as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up.

That there had been foul play of some kind was a certainty now.

Unless the fog had deliberately run away from school, there was no other way of accounting for his disappearance.

And it was incredible that he had gone of his own accord, without a word of explanation. There was no motive.

He was happy at Rookwood; he was not in trouble of any kind. He had not taken any of his belongings with him, not even a coat.

He had simply walked down to Coombe to fetch a football from the shop there, and he had started back to school with the football. And then he had vanished.

It was the clearest possible case of kidnapping, and Dr. Chisholm took that view. There was no other to take. The police had been communicated with, and a search was going on over the countryside. That was all that could be done.

After morning lessons a crowd of Rookwood fellows left the school to scour the countryside in the hope of finding some trace of poor 'Erbert.

Jones minimus, who was looking very lugubrious, led out quite an army of the Second Form to join in the hunt. The Fistical Four went with a crowd of the Fourth, Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, joining in with great zest.

But they came in tired and dusty for dinner without having made any discovery.

Lattrey was lounging on the steps when a crowd of the Fourth came in, fatigued and disappointed. He eyed them curiously.

"Found anything?" he asked.

"Nothing!" said Jimmy Silver curtly.

"Morny's been exerting himself, I suppose?" smiled Lattrey.

"Yes."

"Good old Morny! He must be feelin' this deeply."

"He is!" said Jimmy Silver sternly. "And if you dare to hint—"

Jimmy Silver had driven from his own mind the dark suspicion which had for a moment found lodging there.

"I'm not hinting anything," said Lattrey coolly. "Of course poor old Morny is feelin' it. I'm simply feelin' sympathetic."

Jimmy Silver gave him a look of contempt and passed in.

After dinner Erroll followed Lattrey to his study, whither Lattrey had retired to smoke a cigarette—one of his delightful customs. He was smiling in his feline way, through the haze of smoke, when Erroll knocked at the door and came in.

Erroll closed the door behind him, and faced Lattrey, who did not move.

"I want a few words with you," Lattrey, he said quietly.

"Go ahead."

"You spoke to Morny yesterday, hinting that he had something to do with his cousin's disappearance?"

"I talked a bit too freely," said Lattrey, with a smile. "I never intended to shout it out. If Morny had not been so handy with his fists—"

"You haven't said so since," said Erroll.

"I never meant to. It was Morny repeated what I said to Jimmy Silver. That was his way of brazening it out, I suppose—a bad move, in my opinion," said Lattrey calmly. "No need for anybody to know a word about it excepting ourselves."

"Ourselves!" said Erroll, with a stare.

"Exactly—us three!"

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I fancy you know well enough what I mean," sneered Lattrey. "At

present only Morny and you and I know the facts."

"Do you mean to say you believe what you accused Mornington of, then?"

"Of course!"

"And if what you've just said means anything, it means that you think I am a party to it!" said Erroll, in angry amazement.

"Quite so."

"Are you mad, Lattrey?" exclaimed Erroll, really doubting for a moment whether the blackguard of the Fourth was quite in his senses.

Lattrey smiled, and blew out a whiff of smoke.

"You really think that 'Erbert has been kidnapped through Mornington, and that I was a party to the scheme?"

"I don't think it, I know it!"

Erroll looked at him blankly. The cad of the Fourth spoke with an air of absolute certainty. It was clear that there was no doubt in Lattrey's mind, at least.

"I think you are out of your senses, Lattrey," said Erroll at last. "I warn you not to repeat a statement like that in public. You will be called to account for it."

"I'm not afraid of being called to account," grinned Lattrey. "But I don't intend to make it public. That isn't my game."

"Your game?"

"Yes. I've got an axe to grind as well as you."

Erroll was silent for some moments. The cad of the Fourth watched his perplexed face with a mocking smile.

Evidently Lattrey believed that Erroll was playing a part in affecting ignorance, though why that conviction should have been rooted in his mind was a mystery to Kit Erroll.

"Anything else to say?" yawned Lattrey.

"Yes," said Erroll quietly. "I won't discuss your silly suspicions, Lattrey. But yesterday, when you accused Mornington, you mentioned Gentleman Jim."

"Quite so."

"You said he was hanging about Rookwood."

"Well?"

"That's what I've got to speak to you about," said Erroll. "I don't know how you know anything about the man. He was a scoundrel, and he wronged me; he stole me from my father in my childhood, and tried to make a thief of me. He never succeeded, but that was his intention. I knew some time ago that he had escaped from prison, and I had reason to believe that he had joined the Army and gone out to Flanders."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I will tell you this much," said Erroll steadily. "I had a telephone-call last week from that man, and he told me he had joined up, and was in a draft for the Front. I believed him."

"Good!" smiled Lattrey.

"Now you say he is hanging about Rookwood. If he deceived me, if he really is in this neighbourhood, I shall denounce him to the police if I find him."

"Ha, ha!"

"You don't believe that?"

"Did you expect me to believe it?" smiled Lattrey.

"I suppose an habitual liar believes very little!" said Erroll scornfully.

"You can believe or not, as you choose. But if Gentleman Jim is really in this district, he must have telephoned to me to deceive me, so as to put me off my guard. It would be like one of his tricks, though I never suspected it till now. Now that I think of it, it seems quite likely enough. I want to know, Lattrey, what you know about the man? If you know anything of him, it is your duty to inform the police."

"Pile it on!" said Lattrey.

"I'll tell you what I mean," said Lattrey deliberately. "You can spin a yarn of being a noble youth who resisted evil if you like, but my belief is that when you belonged to Gentleman Jim's gang, you were exactly like the rest. I believe that you and Gentleman Jim were birds of a feather; in fact, I know you were. You may or may not be the son of Captain Erroll, but at least you were hand-in-glove with that cracksmán, and you are hand-in-glove with him still."

Erroll's face was white.

"You dare to say so?" he muttered thickly.

"You know it is the truth," said Lattrey calmly. "When I found that Gentleman Jim was hanging about here I knew it must be with your collusion. I wondered what he wanted here. Another attempt to rob the school was what I suspected. But as soon as 'Erbert disappeared I knew what the real game was."

"Mornington wants his fortune back, and you're helping him, and you called in your old cracksmán pal

to work the oracle. That's the game. 'Erbert's vanished, and he won't turn up again. He's gone for good. Sooner or later, Morny steps into his shoes—into his old place again. Then he makes it worth your while to have helped him, and worth Gentleman Jim's while. And"—Lattrey spoke with bitter emphasis—"he's also going to make it worth my while to hold my tongue, though he hasn't calculated on that."

Erroll listened without interruption.

That the cad of the Fourth believed every word he uttered was only too clear. Upon his belief was based his own rascally plan of sharing in the plunder.

For the missing fag's fate he cared nothing.

He was willing to stand by and see the supposed plot come to success, then to step in and claim a heavy share of the profit as the price of his silence.

The baseness of the fellow, grinning at him through the cigarette-smoke, almost dazed Erroll. He could only stare at him.

"So that's the programme," said Lattrey, with a light laugh. "Go ahead with it, but count on me for a share—a big share—when it comes to dividing the swag."

He threw away the stump of the cigarette.

"Well, what have you got to say now? I know the whole game from start to finish, and at present I'm only a looker-on. Keep it up, and keep on hunting for 'Erbert. Nothing like keepin' up appearances. And as soon as you come to handle the loot, count on me to chip in. That's where I come in, my friend."

Erroll was about to speak, when the door was thrown open, and Mornington looked in.

Morny's face was blazing with excitement.

"Erroll, you're here? I've been hunting for you. Come, quick!"

Without a word or a look to Lattrey, Mornington grasped his chum by the arm, and fairly dragged him from the study.

Lattrey grinned, and lighted another cigarette. Matters were going very well with the cad of the Fourth from his own peculiar point of view.

The 4th Chapter.
The Temptation.

Mornington had gone out into the quadrangle by himself after dinner, while Kit Erroll went to Lattrey's study. The dandy of the Fourth was in a gloomy and despondent mood.

The disappearance of his cousin weighed upon his mind.

It had hardly occurred to him before to reflect whether he cared for little 'Erbert or not. He had had a kindly regard for him when he had rescued him from want and brought him to Rookwood.

He had been amused, and a little touched, by the fag's loyal and unshaken devotion to him.

For a short time, when 'Erbert, all unwillingly, had supplanted him as head of the Morningtons, he had hated the fag, but that bitterness had soon passed.

Now, when 'Erbert was gone, it was borne in upon Morny's mind that he did care for his young cousin. Blood was thicker than water.

Though 'Erbert's disappearance, if it was for ever, meant wealth and position for him, there was no consolation in that thought. His heart was heavy with anxiety for the one-time waif of Rookwood.

Adversity had done much to strengthen Mornington's character, and to bring out the nobler traits in it, and at bottom his character was a noble one.

Now, as he pondered, his heart was heavier than he had ever known it before even at the time when ruin had first stared him in the face.

Now he knew that not all the wealth of Mornington could compensate him if misfortune had fallen upon the waif of Rookwood.

Where was 'Erbert?

It seemed clear that he had been kidnapped, but a miserable doubt was gnawing at Morny's heart.

He knew how willingly the loyal little fag would have handed back to him the fortune he had reluctantly taken, and he wondered whether it was possible that 'Erbert had deliberately made a sacrifice of it all, and gone on his own accord in order that Valentine might regain what 'Erbert still persisted in regarding as his rights.

Mornington was thinking of it with a moody brow under the beeches, when he saw the new porter come up to him, touching his hat.

"Excuse me, sir!" said John Brown, in his suave tones.

"What is it?" asked Mornington irritably.

"A letter for you, sir."

"Oh, thanks!" Mornington took the letter. There was no superscription on the envelope.

"How did this come?" he asked, in surprise.

"A gentleman handed it me, sir, at the gate," said John Brown. "He said it was for Master Mornington of the Fourth Form. That's you, sir. He said there was no answer, sir."

"Very well, Brown." The porter retired, his eyes lingering for a moment upon the Fourth Former, with a peculiar expression that Morny did not notice.

Somewhat puzzled, Mornington slit the letter, and opened it. He wondered if it was a communication from his old sporting acquaintances at the Bird-in-Hand, whom he had not seen for a long time now.

But as his eyes fell upon the missive he started, an expression of blank amazement coming over his face.

For the letter, in an unknown hand, ran:

"Master Mornington,—Your cousin is in safe hands. It depends on you whether he returns to the school.

"The beggar whom you befriended robbed you of a fortune. That fortune is yours again if you choose to say the word.

"Say the word, and Cecil Mornington vanishes for ever. He will not be

Head of the Morningtons once more, wealthy, respected, sought after, instead of dependent upon an uncle, exposed to the sneers of grudging cousins.

This scoundrel who had done this—had he misjudged him, after all? Was Mornington capable of profiting by his crime and paying blackmail to keep his cousin out of the way?

He was wavering. It meant so much to him. Wealth had been his as of natural right. He was born to grace a high position, and what was wealth to poor little 'Erbert? He would never have found his fortune if Mornington had not rescued him from beggary and rags in the first place.

Was it so terrible, after all, that 'Erbert should go back to a lot more happy than had been his when Mornington first found him?

Mornington drew a deep, sobbing breath. He pressed his hand to his burning forehead. He felt giddy. What was he thinking of? Were his senses leaving him? Was he capable of this, as once, he felt, with a shudder, he had been capable?

Who was it, then, who knew him so well? "Good heavens!" muttered Mornington. "Good heavens!"

The dark temptation was struggling in his wayward breast. The loyal, patient face of the little fag came before his mind, and he shivered. Was he capable of this?

"Kit!" he called out, forgetting

"In Heaven's name, Morny, what has happened?" exclaimed Erroll.

"You've got to save me!" said Mornington. "You've got to watch me, and see that I—I—" He panted. "Oh, by gad, you've got to see me through, Erroll, or I may do it yet!"

"Morny, what—"

"You've never quite known the fellow you chummed with, 'Erroll," said Mornington. "By gad, I've never quite known myself till now! This very minute, old chap, I've been as near dipping into crime as a fellow often gets without going over the edge! He knows me well! Whoever he is, he knows me!" He laughed bitterly. "Yes, he knows me, better than you do!"

"Who does? Morny, what are you driving at, in Heaven's name?" exclaimed Erroll, aghast.

"He stepped into my shoes," said Mornington. "Why shouldn't I step into his? Only a word needed—only a word! As I stand here, Erroll, I believe that but for you I should have spoken the word! Read that; you'll understand."

He flung the letter on the table. Kit Erroll picked it up and read. His face grew blacker as he read.

"Oh, the scoundrel!" he said, between his teeth. "He dares to think that you'd join in the scheme for kidnapping your cousin!"

Mornington laughed harshly. "He knows me," he said. "It was hard to give it all up, Erroll. I

calmly. "He knows the whole story, you can see, and he counts upon my being like what I was when I went to Joey Hook. I—I wasn't myself then, but a scoundrel like this man wouldn't understand that. He thinks I meant it—that I'd be glad of the chance. Some of the fellows have been wondering whether 'Erbert was kidnapped for a ransom. It's I that have got to pay the ransom—to keep him away from Rookwood!"

Erroll compressed his lips.

"He shall suffer for it!" he said. "But who's the man, Kit? This letter ought to help us find him, and find poor old 'Erbert, since I'm not acceptin' his offer," added Mornington, with a sardonic laugh.

"I think I know who the man is, Morny."

"You know?"

"Yes, Gentleman Jim."

"By gad! That rascal! But he's in France," said Mornington. "You told me so yourself. He joined up." "He told me on the telephone that he had joined up, to deceive me," said Erroll, with a darkening brow. "It put me off my guard. After that, I never thought of looking for him near Rookwood. That was his game, of course."

"But how do you know?"

"Lattrey has seen him."

"By gad! Near Rookwood?"

"Yes," Erroll set his lips. "Listen to me, Morny. I've got something to tell you of Lattrey." Erroll proceeded to explain, in quiet tones, what had passed in Lattrey's study. Mornington clenched his hands till the nails dug into his palms.

"The rascal!" he muttered. "He dares to think—"

"He has seen Gentleman Jim," said Erroll. "He believes every word he said to me. He believes that Gentleman Jim is here with my connivance, and that you and I and that scoundrel are in the plot together. He is going to hold that over our heads, Morny—as he thinks."

Mornington laughed softly.

"By gad! The cunning fool! We'll take this letter to the Head, Erroll, and take Lattrey, too. If he knows where Gentleman Jim is, he can tell the Head."

"He can tell us," said Erroll. "You interrupted me before I could finish with him. I'm glad you did, as it turns out. Where did you get this letter, Morny—by post?"

"No, Brown brought it to me."

"The porter!" exclaimed Erroll.

"Yes, someone gave it to him at the gate for me."

"The new porter!" said Erroll, a strange look upon his face. "It came through him. Morny, there has been talk among the fellows about Brown. Tubby Muffin claims to have seen him at the Bird-in-Hand—I've heard Higgs say the same—and that he was talking with Joey Hook. The man who wrote this letter seems to have had information from Joey Hook."

"By gad! You don't mean—"

"Come with me, to see Lattrey," said Erroll abruptly. "Lattrey's got to tell what he knows. I'll call Jimmy Silver, too."

"Good egg! By gad, Erroll, through this we may be able to find 'Erbert!"

"We shall find him."

The chums left the study, and Erroll called over the banisters to Jimmy Silver, who was chatting with his chums in the hall below.

"Hallo! Anything on?" asked Lovell, looking up.

"Yes; you're wanted."

"Oh, all right!" The Fistical Four, somewhat puzzled, came up the stairs. To their surprise, Erroll led them to Lattrey's study.

"What's the game?" demanded Raby. "We don't want to see Lattrey. We're not looking for an after-dinner smoke."

"Come in with me," said Erroll.

He threw open the door. Lattrey rose to his feet as they came in. There was a cigarette between his thin lips, and he kept it there.

He regarded the juniors with a cool sneer.

"Haven't you come to the wrong study?" he inquired. "I don't remember askin' you in here."

"Come in, you fellows!"

Jimmy Silver & Co., greatly wondering, came in, with Erroll and Mornington, and Erroll closed the door.

"Would you mind telling us what all this means, somebody?" inquired Jimmy Silver politely.

"I'll tell you," said Erroll quietly.

"Show them that letter, Morny."

"Great pip!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, as he read the letter. "Is this a joke?"

"It is not a joke! That letter, I firmly believe, was written by Gentleman Jim, the cracksman, and



"We've been lookin' for my cousin," said Mornington, as the porter came down to open the gates. "We haven't found him. Let us in, and don't stand starin', man!"

hurt. He will be well taken care of, and better off than he was when you picked him up starvin' on the road.

"You will be called upon to pay handsomely for his keep. You understand? He will not suffer. You will be rich again."

"A FRIEND IN NEED."

Mornington stared blankly at the letter.

For a minute or two it seemed to him that he was dreaming.

He had wondered whether 'Erbert had disappeared of his own accord, because it seemed impossible to find a motive for a kidnapping.

Here was the motive. 'Erbert had been removed from his path, and the villain who had kidnapped him evidently supposed that he was base enough to connive in the crime for the sake of the fortune that was at stake.

The hot blood surged into Mornington's face, and his hand clenched convulsively on the letter, crumpling it in his fingers.

Who was it that held this opinion of him, then?

But that mood passed. A strange, almost terrible, expression came over the schoolboy's face. He thrust the letter into his pocket, and gave a hurried look round—a look that was almost furtive.

He had not done this. He had had no hand in it. But it was done, and if he chose he could reap the profit.

that his chum was not near him. "Kit!"

Instinctively he turned to his comrade at that moment; but Erroll was not there. He made a stride towards the School House, and stopped.

Then, thrusting the maddening temptation behind him, as it were, he dashed towards the house. He caught Jimmy Silver by the arm in the doorway.

"Where's Kit? Have you seen Erroll?"

"I think I saw him go into Lattrey's study," said Jimmy, with an amazed glance at Mornington's face, which was almost ghastly. "What's happened? What—"

He broke off in utter astonishment as Mornington ran past him up the stairs.

The 5th Chapter.

Lattrey Speaks.

"Come! Come, quick!" Erroll, in astonishment, allowed Mornington to drag him from the study. Morny's wild excitement alarmed him.

"What is it, Morny?"

"Come with me!" Mornington dragged him into his own study. The perspiration was thick on the brow of the dandy of the Fourth. Kit Erroll had never seen him labouring under such deep emotion.

haven't whined over it, but I've felt it—deep! Oh, he knows me! Erroll, I'll tell you something. When I first knew it, that 'Erbert was my lost cousin, and heir to the fortune I believed mine, I—I—" His voice sank. "I went to Joey Hook, Erroll—you know that rascal—and—asked him—"

"What did you ask him, Morny?" said Erroll quietly.

"I was out of my senses. I think," said Mornington, in a whisper. "I—I asked him to—see that 'Erbert left Rookwood, and—and did not return. I was mad at the time, Erroll. Whoever has written this letter to me knows that. He's some man who knows Hook, and has got it from him. And—and when I read this letter, Erroll, it came over me—all I'd lost, and only a word needed to make it all mine again, and—and—"

His voice died huskily.

"You couldn't have done it, Morny."

"I was near it," muttered Mornington. "But for you, Erroll. I—I came to you at once. I came to you to save me from it!"

"Morny," said Erroll softly, "old chap, I know you better than you know yourself. You couldn't have done it. But this villain, whoever he is, thinks you could. Oh, the scoundrel!"

"Yes, he's a scoundrel, and no mistake!" said Mornington, more



THE IMPOSTOR'S DOWNFALL!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Gentleman Jim is near Rookwood. Lattrey can tell us where he is. He knows.

"Lattrey does?" yelled Lovell.
"He said so."
"Are you mad?" muttered Lattrey hoarsely. "You fool! What's your game?"

"Our game," said Erroll contemptuously, "is to find 'Erbert, and bring him back to Rookwood."
"What?"

"Listen, you fellows," said Erroll, in deep, steady tones. "Lattrey has found that Gentleman Jim is hanging about Rookwood School. He believes that I was a party to his being here. That Morny, and I, and the crackman, were all together in a plot to kidnap 'Erbert. Lattrey is willing to keep silence, and let it go on, if we allow him to share the plunder."
"My hat!"

Lattrey was white to the lips now. "As it happens," went on Erroll icily, "he was mistaken. Through judging others by his own standard, I suppose. I believed that Gentleman Jim was in Flanders. Neither Morny nor I, of course, knew anything of 'Erbert's disappearance. Lattrey's evil mind hatched the whole plot. But from what he said, and from this letter, it is pretty clear to me that Gentleman Jim is the kidnapper—and when we find him, we find 'Erbert. Lattrey is going to tell us where to find him."

"By gad!" said Lovell, with a deep breath. "That rotter ought to be kicked out of the school. Let's take him to the Head."

Lattrey stood breathing with difficulty.

Even his cynical and evil mind had to admit the truth now—that, in the depth of his own baseness, he had misjudged Erroll, and misjudged Mornington.

The card-castle he had built was tumbling down about his ears now, with a vengeance. The plot he had believed he had discovered had existed only in his own evil imagination.

The scorn and disgust in the faces round him stung even the thick-skinned cad of the Fourth.

And the sense of his own danger made him almost giddy. For he knew that Gentleman Jim was lurking at Rookwood, and he had not denounced him.

He had kept the knowledge secret, hoping to turn it to his own profit; to use it somehow to Erroll's detriment, firmly believing that Erroll was an accomplice of the crackman. And how was he to explain to the Head why he had not denounced the man?

He could not tell Dr. Chisholm that he had waited for the crackman to commit a robbery at the school, in order to denounce Erroll as an accomplice.

For that was why he had been silent, till the kidnapping of 'Erbert gave a new turn to his cunning plans.

He sank back helplessly into a seat, his face white, his eyes with a hunted look. Never before had the wretched blackguard of Rookwood been so overwhelmed with defeat, though more than once his cunning had over-reached itself.

There was a grim silence in the study, till Lovell repeated:

"Take him to the Head!"

"Let him tell us where to find Gentleman Jim," said Erroll quietly. "That's all we need to know. I have a suspicion already. Lattrey has got to confirm it. You understand that you've got to speak, Lattrey."

"I—I—I'm willing to tell you," muttered Lattrey. "I—I thought—"

"Never mind what you thought," said Erroll contemptuously. "Tell us where that scoundrel is—at once."

"The new porter," muttered Lattrey. "John Brown is Gentleman Jim. I—I believed that you knew."

"The porter!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Impossible."

"It's true," muttered Lattrey. "I—I've searched his lodge—one night when he was out, at the Bird-in-Hand. He came back—and caught me. He had a revolver. I—I spoofted him into believing that I didn't know—"

"And why haven't you denounced him?" demanded Jimmy Silver sternly.

"I—I thought—" Lattrey's voice failed him. He dared not tell Jimmy Silver what his base scheme had been.

"That's enough," said Erroll. "I suspected it—though till to-day I did not." He turned to the door. "We've done with Lattrey. Let us go to the lodge. We've got to see Gentleman Jim."

"I—I can't quite believe it yet," said Jimmy Silver dubiously. "Look here, we'd better make jolly certain, anyway."

"We're going to do that. Come on."

The juniors left the study. Arthur Edward Lovell paused in the doorway, turned back, and strode towards Lattrey.

Without a word, but with a gleam in his eyes, Lovell drove his fist into Lattrey's face, sending him spinning across the study.

Then he strode after his chums.

The 6th Chapter. Gentleman Jim's Last Card!

John Brown looked surprised when he opened his door at a knock, and found six juniors standing outside. He was still more surprised when they marched into the lodge without waiting for permission.

His eyes gleamed for a moment at Kit Erroll.

"Really, young gentlemen—" he murmured.

"The game's up, Gentleman Jim!" said Erroll coolly.

For a moment the man blanched. But in a second he was himself again, and he looked at the junior with an expression of surprise.

"Excuse me. I do not quite understand, Master Erroll," he murmured. "You called me—"

"I called you Gentleman Jim!"

"Is this a joke, sir?" asked the porter, with an expression of wonder.

"You will not find it one," said

Erroll grimly. "You are Gentleman Jim—the crackman who stole me when I was a child, and almost broke my father's heart. You are the man who tried to train me to be a thief, and used me cruelly when you failed. You are the liar who pretended to be joining the Army, in order that you might play this game under my nose without being suspected. You are the kidnapper who seized Mornington's cousin, and you wrote the note you handed Mornington this afternoon. You are Gentleman Jim, and the game is up."

"Is this young gentleman in his right senses, sir?" asked the porter, looking at Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy Silver looked hesitatingly from one to the other.

He was in strong doubt.

Erroll spoke with calm conviction. But, to the other fellows, it seemed well-nigh impossible that the respectable-looking porter was in reality the notorious crackman in a new guise.

"Erroll!" muttered Jimmy.

Erroll smiled slightly.

"You came here as John Brown," he continued, "after your falsehood on the telephone led me to believe that you had gone in a draft to Flanders. You have imposed on Dr. Chisholm with forged recommendations. I know your skill with the pen, Gentleman Jim. I believe you planned to come to harm me and to carry out the robbery you failed in before; but you found a game more to your profit. You dared to believe that Mornington would be a party to the kidnapping of his cousin. Do you confess?"

"I am quite bewildered, sir," said John Brown simply. "I think you must be a little wrong in the head, sir, if you don't mind my saying so. If this is a joke of you young gentlemen, I don't mind—"

"You deny that you are Gentleman Jim, the crackman?"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"By gad!" murmured Lovell uneasily. "Erroll, old scout, it's too thick, you know."

Even Mornington, great as was his faith in his chum, looked dubious.

If John Brown was the crackman, he was playing his part well, and with an iron nerve.

But Erroll did not falter. He knew Gentleman Jim's nerve of old.

"Morny," he said quietly, "go to Mr. Bootles' study, and ask him to ring up the police-station, and tell them that Gentleman Jim is here."

Kit!" muttered Mornington.

"Do as I ask you, Morny."

"I'll chance it, if you say so."

Mornington turned to the door.

"Surely, Master Mornington, you will not do so absurd a thing," remonstrated John Brown.

"I'm doin' as Erroll says, an' chance it," said Mornington, his hand on the door.

It was then that the crackman dropped the mask.

"You need not trouble to go!" he said. "I warn you, Kit, that if I am arrested here, Cecil Mornington will die of hunger in the old quarry where I have hidden him. You had better make terms, if you care for his life."

"My hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Mornington swung back from the door.

"You—you confess?" he ejaculated.

John Brown shrugged his shoulders.

"Tell me!" exclaimed Erroll sternly. "Where is Cecil Mornington?"

The crackman laughed.

"You want him found alive?" he asked.

"Yes, you villain!"

"By gad, I have played a bad hand!" said Gentleman Jim. "But the trump is still mine. Cecil Mornington is where he could not be found in weeks of searching. Listen to me! When he left school yesterday I followed him in the trap, and I met him on the road as he returned, and offered him a lift to the school. It was simple, was it not?"

"In the trap I took the road over the heath, and as soon as the boy grew suspicious a chloroform pad silenced him. There was no one to witness it. Where I placed him is my secret. I intended to take him food at night. He lies, bound, a prisoner, in his hiding-place. If I am handed over he will perish of hunger. Take your choice."

He laughed again.

"I will guide you to the place if you will give me half an hour before you speak," he said. "This is all I ask!"

The juniors looked at one another.

It was their duty to hand the rascal over to justice. But a still nearer duty was to save poor little 'Erbert from the fearful fate that threatened him.

As the crackman had said, he held the trump card.

"Half an hour!" said Erroll at last.

"That is all I ask."

Erroll looked at his comrades.

"Let it go at that," said Jimmy Silver at last.

"Then I am at your service," said

Gentleman Jim coolly. "May I take away a few personal belongings with me?"

"You may not!" said Erroll. "I can guess what your belongings are. You will come as you are."

The crackman shrugged his shoulders.

"I am ready."

"Come!" said Erroll curtly. "Take care that he does not escape, you fellows. He is as cunning as a fox. And first search him. I am sure he has a weapon."

The crackman set his teeth, but he submitted. His revolver was of little use to him now, he could not venture to use it. Erroll turned out his pockets, and the deadly weapon was tossed into a corner. Then Gentleman Jim left the lodge with Jimmy Silver & Co.

The 7th Chapter. Mr. Bootles is Wrathful.

Six members of the Classical Fourth had failed to turn up in the Form-room for afternoon lessons.

Naturally, the master of the Fourth waxed wrath.

It was not till the Form was dismissed from lessons that a shout in the quadrangle announced the return of the missing juniors. Mr. Bootles whisked-out of his study, thoughtfully taking a cane with him.

"Bravo, Jimmy! He's got him!" roared Conroy.

"'Erbert! Here he is!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

Six juniors, dusty from their long tramp, marched up to the school-house, and in the midst of them, pale and worn, but looking very happy, was 'Erbert of the Second Form!

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Bootles. "You—you have found Mornington II. My dear boys, I excuse you for missing lessons, though it was very irregular—very irregular. Mornington secundus, where have you been all this time?"

Erbert grinned.

"I been kidnapped, sir, by a rotten bloke!" he said—"that there new porter cove, sir—Brown!"

"Good heavens!"

"I been 'id in a blooming quarry," continued 'Erbert. "Tied up, sir, and getting awful 'ungry, till Mr. Morny and these chaps came for me. Which I'm very glad to be back at Rookwood, sir!"

"Come to the Head!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

And Jimmy Silver & Co., a few minutes later, had the pleasure of explaining to the astonished Head of Rookwood. Lattrey was not mentioned, but all the rest was told.

"And where is this man, this vile impostor now?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm.

"We—we left him on the moor, sir, after we'd made him show us where 'Erbert was," said Erroll. "If you telephone to the police, sir—"

"I will do so at once, of course. You should not have taken the matter into your own hands like this," said the Head severely. "You should have informed me at once when you recognised that man, Erroll."

"We were so anxious about 'Erbert, sir!"

"Yes, yes! I excuse you, as you have brought Mornington II. safe home," said the Head. "But—however, I excuse you. I dare say you thought you were acting for the best. You may go."

And as the juniors left the study the Head picked up the telephone-receiver, and in a few minutes the hue-and-cry after Gentleman Jim had begun.

Erbert was at once surrounded by a crowd of curious fellows; but Jones minimus & Co. of the Second took possession of him and marched him off. 'Erbert was the hero of the Second that day, and for many days afterwards. That evening, in Study No. 4, Mornington grinned as he took out his books to "swot."

"I'm after that dashed scholarship, Erroll, an' I'm going to bag it if it turns my hair grey," he remarked.

"I wonder, old scout, whether I've played the fool to-day, after all!"

But Erroll only smiled.

"You've played the man!" he said. "Gentleman Jim made a mistake. Now, then, where's cheery old Xenophon?"

"Dareion kai Parysatidos gignontai paides duo—" grinned Mornington.

And the chums settled down to work.

THE END.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

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

BETTER THAN EVER!

Stories that Cannot be Beaten!

I am confident that all my readers will agree with me when I say that the stories now appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND are better than any that have ever before appeared in the paper. Both for quality and quantity, the BOYS' FRIEND is extremely hard to beat at the present time.

In next Monday's issue there will, of course, be another magnificent, long, complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., entitled:

"A FOOL AND HIS MONEY!"

By Owen Conquest.

The fool is none other than Adolphus Smythe, the dandy of the Shell. Smythe receives a fifty-pound-note, and as the dandy is a weak-willed, easily-led fellow, he does not make the use of the money that he should. Mr. Mooney urges him to invest the money, but Smythe has other schemes in mind. He has his own way, and carries out his own schemes, with disastrous results, as you will learn when you read this splendid story.

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

"SAVED FROM A CRIME!"

By Martin Cliford.

Beaulere, the son of the remittance man, appears very prominently in this story, and so does the remittance man himself. Beaulere senior is a source of continuous anxiety to his son, and Vere Beaulere has to go to great efforts to save his father from committing a crime. There is a strong mystery in this story, one which will, I am sure, appeal to all of you.

There are humorous incidents by the score in next Monday's instalment of

"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

By Duncan Storm.

The boys have some rare fun with a fat sergeant of the police, and the latter also receives the scare of his life when he sees the pier walking away before his very eyes. I am not going to explain to you what causes the pier to walk away, but I will say this, the boys of the Bombay Castle have something to do with it.

Next Monday's magnificent, long, complete story in our great new series, entitled, "King Nadur's Diamonds," will be called

"THE PURPLE SCARAB!"

By Maurice Everard.

Dick and Frank set out to see the sights of Cairo, accompanied by an Arab guide. The latter proves to be a treacherous rascal, and leads the chums into a trap. They find themselves prisoners in the Lair of the Five Tombs, in which there are countless numbers of beetles, a sting from one of which means instant death. What happens after this makes most interesting reading, and I am sure you will revel in the yarn.

Last, but not least in the list of splendid attractions due to appear in our next issue, is a grand "Tale of the Dormitory," entitled:

"FOILING THE FOOD HOGS!"

By Arthur Edward Lovell.

This story is a very humorous one, and will send you into roars of laughter.

In conclusion, I would urge upon every reader the necessity of ordering his copy of the BOYS' FRIEND in

advance. There is a great demand for the paper at the present time, and only those readers who place a standing order with their newsagent are sure of securing their copies.

THE CALL OF THE SEA.

During the last six months I have received an enormous number of letters from readers who wish to join either the Royal Navy or the Mercantile Marine. I want to tell all these readers, and many others who feel the call of the sea, that if they are in need of information, they cannot do better than to purchase a book entitled "The Sea Services," by Mr. John S. Margerison.

This book is published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, at the price of one-and-threepence, and is obtainable from all newsagents and book-sellers.

No matter what you want to know about the Sea Services you will find the information in Mr. Margerison's book. I am always pleased to give my readers information through the post, but I would impress upon you all that, in the space of a letter, I cannot give you one-thousandth part of the information contained in "The Sea Services." Therefore, if you are thinking of embarking upon a career on the ocean wave, don't write to me; secure a copy of "The Sea Services," by John S. Margerison.

DATES TO REMEMBER!

I am sure all my readers will be pleased to learn that the Special Christmas Number of the BOYS' FRIEND will be on sale week ending December 15th. The Special Christmas Number of the "Penny Popular" will appear week ending December 1st. More about these special numbers anon!

YOUR EDITOR.

NEXT MONDAY!

"A FOOL AND HIS MONEY!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT!

TALES OF THE DORMITORY!

A GREAT NEW SERIES OF SHORT COMPLETE STORIES, TOLD BY JUNIORS AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

No. 1.—“THE MAKING OF MORLEY!” By JIMMY SILVER.

The 1st Chapter.

Jimmy Silver's Scheme.

“Get up, you kids!” Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, entered the Fourth Form dormitory. Jimmy Silver & Co., startled out of their sleep, sat up in bed and stared at the head prefect.

“Hallo, Bulkeley! What's the matter?” sang out Jimmy Silver.

“Air-raid warning,” announced Bulkeley. “The Head's issued orders for all juniors to get up and dress and wait for further orders. I don't suppose the Germans will succeed in getting as far as Rookwood, but you never know. Put your things on quick, and if there's any sign of danger I'll let you know.”

The next instant the juniors of the Classical Fourth were out of bed and hastily putting on their clothes.

“Blessed nuisance!” said Higgs. “Just when I'd got to sleep, too. I can't make out what they wanted to wake us for.”

“Best thing,” said Jimmy Silver blandly. “No good lying in bed when bombs are dropping all round you.”

“Not a bit!” agreed Lovell.

“Suppose they don't get here?” remarked Higgs disagreeably.

“Well, they don't; that's all about it,” said Lovell.

“I know,” said Higgs obstinately. “But what I mean is, what's the good of keeping us awake for hours? We've got to sit here and do nothing, and—”

“Oh, shut up, do!” said Lovell impatiently. “Get your things on, and be sensible!”

Higgs snorted, and proceeded to dress with the others.

“I suppose there is no harm in lighting a candle?” remarked Newcome.

“Better put it on the floor, then,” said Jimmy Silver wisely. “We don't want a light to shine outside and guide those blessed Huns.”

“No fear!”

A candle was forthwith lighted and placed on the floor. It shone a dim light, hardly sufficient to show outside the building, but, all the same, bright enough to relieve the darkness in the dormitory.

The juniors finished their dressing at last, and waited anxiously for further news. Some of the fellows sat on the beds, others squatted on the floor, whilst Tubby Muffin lay back on his bed and emitted a snore that told only too plainly that he was asleep.

A dig in the ribs, however, and a squeeze with a wet sponge soon awoke him, and caused him to jump up in bed with a fright.

“What—ow—yow—what's the matter?” stammered Tubby. “Get away, Lovell, you beast!”

“Well, keep awake, then!” said Lovell unsympathetically. “You don't want to be bombed, do you?”

“N-n-no!” stammered the fat junior.

“Are they near? Are they—?”

“No, fathead, they're not! But if they hear your voice they're bound to be attracted by it, and make tracks for the school!”

“Oh!” groaned Tubby; and he lapsed into silence.

Tubby kept awake after that, and, sitting on the edge of his bed, shivered with fear.

Higgs walked impatiently up and down the dormitory. Higgs possessed a fair amount of nerve, and had he only himself to please he would probably have gone back to bed and fallen fast asleep, irrespective of the fact that danger from the skies was lurking near at hand.

“I'm getting jolly well fed up with this!” he said disconsolately. “If I had something to do it would be better, but to mess about doing nothing—”

“By Jove!” exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

“What's the matter with you, Silver?”

“I've got a wheeze.”

“What for?”

“For whiling away the time,” explained the Classical captain. “There's no knowing how long we shall be kept hanging about here, so why shouldn't we do something?”

“Echo answers ‘Why,’” remarked Lovell.

“What's the idea, Silver? Spout it out!”

The juniors gathered round the Classical captain, and Jimmy Silver began to explain his great wheeze.

“My idea is for all of us to sit down on the floor,” he said, “and that somebody shall tell a story. It'll help to pass the time away, and—”

“Jolly good wheeze!” said Raby.

“But who's got a story to tell?” asked Oswald.

“Oh, anybody can tell one!” said Jimmy Silver. “It really doesn't matter who.”

“Well, I vote that Silver takes the job on himself,” said Higgs, who was not really taken with the notion.

“Yes, that's only fair,” said Lovell. “It's your idea, Jimmy, so it's up to you to carry it out.”

“Oh, I don't mind,” said Jimmy Silver, with a smile. “If I can think of a yarn!”

The Classical captain scratched his head in deep thought for a few moments.

“I've got it!” he said at last. “Come on, you chaps! Sit down in a circle, and I'll spin the yarn.”

“Good!” said Newcome. “What's it called?”

“‘The Making of Morley,’” said Jimmy



[With a bound Morley jumped across the room, and, picking up the piece of charred pasteboard, he flung it quickly into the fire.]

Silver, “and it'll be a tale dealing with Ackshott School, the school to which a cousin of mine went.”

“Good bizney!” said Dick Oswald. “Get on with it, Jimmy, old son!”

The juniors sat down in a circle upon the floor, and waited eagerly for Jimmy Silver to commence his story.

Jimmy Silver started.

The 2nd Chapter.

A Great Change.

Morley was in the Fourth Form at Ackshott School. He was a powerfully-built fellow, and one of the blades of the school.

Morley spent most of his spare time in gambling at a local public-house with his pals, Gorman and Graham. Day after day the three of them managed to spend some time at the pub, and the gambling spirit got a fair hold on Morley.

If he wasn't gambling at the pub he was gambling in his study. Morley's father was a wealthy stockbroker, and consequently he was pretty flush with money.

It did not matter to Morley whether he won or lost. He simply revelled in gambling, and if he was a few pounds out of pocket at the end of the day, he did not feel the loss.

And Morley lost more often than he won. Gorman, a poor fellow really, but with a crafty, cunning disposition, was generally the winner.

Money simply rolled from Morley's pocket into that of Gorman's. Morley remarked about the coincidence more than once, but Gorman expressed the opinion that it was all a matter of luck.

Morley never suspected at the time that Gorman won by unfair means. Apart from his goey habits, Morley was quite a straightforward fellow, and had a keen sense of playing the game.

One day Morley received a great shock. His father failed in business. He wrote and told his son that, although he could manage to keep him at Ackshott, he would have to cut down his allowance considerably.

It was a big blow to Morley.

“Look here, you chaps,” he said to his chums, explaining the matter to them. “I shall have to chuck up cards, and—”

“Oh, rot!” exclaimed Gorman, with a sniff. “You can keep on playing.”

“How can I?” exclaimed Morley, making a gesture. “Supposing I lose, where's the money coming from for me to pay you?”

“Give us IOU's, of course,” suggested Gorman. “You don't think we're such rotters as to insist upon your paying up at once, do you? Besides, you may win. And think what the money would be to you then!”

“Quite so. But—”

“Don't be such a silly fool, Morley!” said Graham, who was a weak, easily-led sort of fellow. “Stick it like a man! Don't say you're going to spoil our enjoyment just because your guv'nor's had a bit of a setback.”

“It's more than a setback,” protested Morley.

“Oh, rats!” exclaimed Gorman. “Perhaps he'll recover in a few weeks. Don't look so pippish, old man. Get the cards out, Graham, and let's have a game. It'll cheer old Morley up, I guess.”

“No, no!” protested Morley. “I'd rather not—”

“Bosh!” snapped Graham, as he handed the cards to Gorman. “Sit down, Morley. A game of nap will cheer you up.”

Morley gave way. It was hard for him to resist the temptation. He knew that if he lost he had no money to pay his debts. It was a great risk to run, but Morley ran it.

All the evening the three of them played and smoked, and when the time came for them to go up to the dormitory Morley was out of pocket to the extent of five pounds.

He could not pay; he had no money to pay with. Never before had he been in such a state of poverty; never before had he been unable to meet his debts.

He handed his chums IOU's for the amount he owed them, and, feeling very miserable and sick at heart, he wended his way up to the Fourth Form dormitory.

A wonderful change had taken place in Morley's life, but a still greater change was to occur ere long.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Mystery of Morley.

“What do you say to a trip down to the pub this afternoon?”

Thus Gorman to his chums after lessons the next day.

“I'm keen,” said Graham.

“You can count me out,” said Morley slowly.

“What rot!” exclaimed Gorman. “Surely because we've got IOU's of yours you're not going to chuck us overboard? Be a sport, and—”

“No; I'd much rather not?” said Morley miserably.

“All right!” said Gorman curtly. “If you don't wish to be pally, that's an end of it. Come on, Graham, old man! Time we shifted.”

Graham and Gorman left the study. They were really not very keen on taking Morley to the Coach and Horses with them.

They intended to meet a local book-maker, Jerry Toms, at the public-house, and they knew only too well that Jerry would never play with a fellow who had only IOU's to pay his debts with.

Left on his own, Morley thought deeply. He thought about his father's loss, but he thought more about the IOU's which he had given to his chums.

Morley hated to think that he was in his chums' debt, but what could he do to rectify matters? He had no money, and he realised only too well that it was no good writing to his father for any.

Suddenly the junior's face brightened up. He rose from his seat and left the study. He wended his way towards the school gates, and then made

tracks for the pawnbroker's shop in the village presided over by Mr. Abrahams.

Morley entered the shop, but came out again within a few minutes. His hand clung tightly to five one-pound notes—money which he had received in exchange for his magnificent gold watch.

Amongst the notes was a pawn-ticket—a ticket of receipt for his brand-new tucker. Morley never dreamed that he would ever have cause to recourse to such an act to obtain money.

But Morley had debts to pay, and his pride would not permit him to owe his chums money for any length of time. He meant to get out of debt that very day.

It being a half-holiday that afternoon, there were very few fellows in the school buildings. Most of the juniors were on the footer-field, except fellows like Gorman and Graham, who were enjoying themselves in secret.

Thus Morley encountered nobody on his journey back to his study. The fact was, however, he did not want to see anybody at that moment.

Morley wanted to think—to think what a fool he had been ever to chum up with such fellows as Gorman and Graham. The more he thought about it the more he realised what a silly idiot he had been.

What had his gambling habits brought him to? Very few fellows in the Fourth liked him, and very few sympathised with him in his trouble. Even his own particular cronies thought more about their own enjoyment than of extending the hand of sympathy towards him.

Morley made up his mind to have done with the old ways—to turn over a new leaf and start afresh. It would be a hard matter to win favour amongst his Form-fellows, but Morley resolved to do it—and to do it at once, too.

About five o'clock Gorman and Graham returned from their little excursion, their faces wreathed in smiles.

“By gad, Morley, old man,” said Gorman, laughing, “you ought to have come with us!”

“Oh!”

“Yes,” said Gorman. “It was simply great. I knocked old Toms down for three quid, and Graham's won two-ten. Haven't you, Graham, old man?”

“Yes,” said Graham. “Two-ten, mind you! I've never done so well before. I guess you're sorry, Morley, that you didn't join us!”

“Not a bit!” said Morley casually.

“Not sorry?”

“No,” said Morley calmly. “The fact is I've decided to chuck playing the fool. I've been a silly ass too long, and I'm going to stop all this rotten gambling and betting.”

Gorman and Graham roared with laughter.

“Oh, dear!” exclaimed Gorman. “Hark at him! Turning into a dear little Eric—eh? Oh, my! Wonders will never cease!”

“I say, Morley, you silly fool,” said Gorman. “I suppose you intend to pay up for those IOU's before you change into a good little Georgie?”

“Yes. I've got the money here,” said

Morley; and, putting his hand into his pocket, he brought forth the five one-pound notes he had received in exchange for his gold tucker.

Gorman gasped with amazement at sight of the notes.

“Where did you get those from?” he asked. “I didn't know you—Hallo! What's this?”

Gorman's gaze suddenly became riveted upon the floor, on which a piece of pasteboard was lying. He picked it up.

“Dear me!” he said craftily. “A pawn-ticket—eh? Now, Morley, dear little Eric don't pawn, you know. You don't mean to say—”

“Give that to me!” snapped Morley, his eyes blazing. “That belongs to me!”

Gorman slipped his hand behind him, and stepped back a pace.

Morley strode forward and drew back his fist.

“I give you three seconds!” he said determinedly. “If you don't give me back my property before I count three I'll give you the biggest hiding of your life!”

“Are you sure?” asked Gorman quietly.

“Yes!”

“Very well,” said Gorman, digging his hands deep into his pockets. “The first time you touch me with your fists I post this pawn-ticket to your father. No doubt he will be pleased—Ah, I thought you'd listen to reason!”

At Gorman's words Morley had started back, and his face had turned deathly white.

Send the pawn-ticket to his father! That would never do! His father would disown him if he knew that he had pawned his magnificent gold tucker to pay a gambling debt.

“You low-down cad!” exclaimed Morley between his teeth.

“Cad or no cad!” said Gorman bluntly. “I'm not going to be dictated to by you, Morley! You can put that in your pipe and smoke it! Mind, if you dare to touch me, I'll have my revenge on you!”

“You—you—”

Words failed Morley at that moment. He turned on his heel and left the study, filled with a resolve to give the cad a wide berth in the future.

That very evening Morley shifted his belongings into another study whilst Gorman and Graham were out of doors.

When the two cads observed what Morley had done they were greatly incensed.

“The stuck-up little prig!” exclaimed Gorman heatedly. “He's going to have done with us, is he?”

“It looks like it,” remarked Graham.

“Oh, does it?” said Gorman bitterly. “We'll see about that! If you want to see a bit of fun, you come along with me, old man.”

“Right-ho!” said Graham; and he followed his chum out of the study.

Gorman looked in all the studies in the Fourth Form passage for a sight of Morley. At last they found him in Study No. 10, together with Grimes and Murphy of the Fourth.

Morley was doing his prep, and he looked up in surprise as his old cronies entered the study.

“Ah, here you are!” said Gorman. “You're just the fellow I wanted to see. I want you to come along to my study. You've left one or two of my books lying about.”

“I suppose you can put them back?” said Morley quietly.

“Not at all!” said Gorman loftily. “I never soil my hands with work, doncher-know. I leave that sort of thing to a poverty-stricken bounder like you!”

Morley flushed, and his new study-mates looked at him in surprise.

“Go for him, Morley!” said Grimes quickly. “Don't put up with any of that cad's sauce!”

Morley did not move. One blow from his strong fist would have sent Gorman to the floor. But Morley could not strike that blow. If he did he knew only too well that Gorman would carry out his threat.

“Well, if you won't come willingly, I shall have to make you,” said Gorman; and he took a firm grip on Morley's ear. “Come on, my son!”

And, to the surprise of his new study-mates, Morley went. They could not understand why the burly Morley kow-towed to the cads. It was a complete mystery to them.

Still keeping a firm grip on Morley's ear, Gorman led the way to his study, and he assisted Morley to enter that compartment by means of his boot.

“Just put those few books back where you found them!” he said.

Morley proceeded to carry out the order, whilst Gorman handed his cigarette-case to his chum.

“Have a fag?” he asked.

Graham took a cigarette, and the two lighted up. Morley had just finished his task when the door opened and in walked Mr. Hall, the short-sighted Fourth Form-master.

The cads hastily slipped their cigarettes into their pockets.

“H'm!” muttered Mr. Hall unsuspectingly. “Your fire's smoking, Gorman, I believe. Open the window, boy, and let the smoke out.”

“Certainly, sir!” said Gorman; and he hastened to carry out the master's command.

“That's better, Gorman,” said Mr. Hall

(Continued on page 240, col. 5.)

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The 1st Chapter. Mum's the Word!

"Richards!"
Frank Richards started, and coloured, as Miss Meadows spoke in severe tones.
"Yes, ma'am," he stammered.
"I asked you a question, Richards," said the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek severely.
"Ye-es, ma'am."
"The name of the British commander at the battle of Quebec?" rapped out Miss Meadows.
"Rufus Slimmey, ma'am."
"What?"
"Miss Meadows uttered that ejaculation in tones of astonishment, as well she might. There was a loud chortle from the Cedar Creek fellows at Frank Richards' reply.
Frank's face was crimson.
He did not mean to be inattentive during the history lesson, for he was generally one of Miss Meadows' most painstaking pupils.
But that morning his thoughts were wandering, in spite of himself.
His glance rested almost incessantly upon Mr. Slimmey, the master of the junior class, who was busy in another part of the big log schoolroom.
Mr. Paul Slimmey was not, as a rule, particularly interesting. But matters were not quite as usual that morning.
"I—I'm sorry, ma'am," stammered Frank. "I—I mean General Wolfe, ma'am."
"You must not think of other matters during lesson-time, Richards."
"N-n-no."
"I will excuse you, as lessons have been interrupted this morning by the visit of Sergeant Lasalle," said Miss Meadows severely. "But you must be more careful, Richards. Give me the name of the French commander also."
"Montcalm, ma'am."
"Not Rufus Slimmey this time!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Oh, you duffer, Franky."
"Silence, please, Lawless."
"Ahem! Yes, ma'am."
Frank Richards tried to keep his attention on the lesson, but it was not easy work. He was glad when classes were dismissed for the morning, and he was able to escape from the schoolroom.
Frank came out with his chums, Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc, in the crowd of Cedar Creek fellows.
There was a buzz of discussion round him. Only one topic, just then, was of interest to the schoolboys—the visit of Sergeant Lasalle, of the North-West Mounted Police, to the lumber school.
The sergeant had come in quest of Rufus Slimmey, the twin brother of Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master. And the resemblance between the two twin brothers had very nearly led him to arrest Miss Meadows' assistant master in the schoolroom.
It was an exciting episode, and naturally it was discussed with the keenest interest.
Mr. Slimmey, with his somewhat vacant face and big glasses, was regarded with a good-humoured toleration by the Cedar Creek fellows.
It was a startling revelation, that the quiet and unassuming young man's brother was a fugitive from justice, sought for by the Mounted Police.
"Poor old Slimmey!" said Chunky Todgers compassionately. "This must be a big shock for him."
"I guess it's a disgrace to the school," said Gunten, the Swiss junior. "Slimmey ought to be fired."
"Oh, shut up!" said Bob Lawless savagely. "How can poor old Slimmey help his brother being a rascal?"
"Yep!" chimed in Eben Hacke. "He can't help it any more than your brother could help you being a rascal, Gunten, if you had a brother."
There was a laugh, and the Swiss

sneered. His sneering remarks found no echo among his schoolfellows. All of them were sorry for Mr. Slimmey, and the disgrace that had fallen upon him through his connection with the fugitive from Vancouver.
"There he goes!" murmured Dick Dawson.
All eyes were turned upon Mr. Slimmey as he left the log schoolhouse and walked towards his cabin by the creek.
Mr. Slimmey walked straight on, looking neither to the right nor to the left. He did not appear to observe the curious glances on all sides of him.
"And there's the sergeant!" said Lawrence.
"Still on the trail!" grinned Hacke.
The big, athletic figure in the scarlet coat of the Mounted Police loomed up in the gateway.
Sergeant Lasalle's keen eyes were resting on Mr. Slimmey as he walked towards his cabin, not suspiciously, but very searchingly.
Mr. Slimmey's resemblance to the photograph of Rufus Slimmey was still evidently in the sergeant's mind.
Save for the fact that Mr. Slimmey was clean-shaven, and wore glasses, that resemblance was exact.
Only Miss Meadows' positive assurance that Mr. Slimmey had been her assistant master for over a year had convinced the sergeant that he had not, after all, found the man of whom he was in search.
But Sergeant Lasalle apparently hoped yet to find some trace of his game at the lumber school, for he was not gone.
Frank Richards sauntered down to the creek with his chums, leaving the other fellows still engaged in excited discussion.
Frank's face was clouded and troubled.
"This is rotten, you chaps," he said, when they were out of hearing of the others.
"I guess it is," assented Bob Lawless. "I wondered what was going to happen when the sergeant was questioning Slimmey in the schoolroom."
"And I," said Vere Beauclerc. "I did not think that Mr. Slimmey would tell him a lie. But from what you've told us, Frank—"
Frank nodded.
"That's what beats me," he said. "Mr. Slimmey denied, point-blank having seen or heard from his brother. And—and I told you fellows how I happened to hear them talking in the timber yesterday. There was no mistake about it—it was Slimmey and his brother Rufus. The man did come here—and Slimmey knows it. He met him and spoke to him. He told him he wouldn't help him certainly. But—"
"He can't be expected to give his own brother away to the police!" remarked Bob Lawless.
"No. But—but I did not think he

would lie," said Frank. "It made me feel rotten, to see him standing there telling lies, without turning a hair. I should never have thought that of Slimmey."
"If he'd refused to answer, the sergeant would jolly soon have tumbled to it that his brother was about here somewhere."
"I know! But—it was rotten, all the same, and it's so unlike Slimmey, too," said Frank. "It beats me! Slimmey is rather an ass; but I always thought he was the soul of honour."
"It beats me, too," said Beauclerc thoughtfully. "Slimmey seems rather queer to-day, in more ways than one. He was even forgetting the names of the kids in his class. And he had forgotten all about the Latin lesson he gives you in his cabin once a week, Frank."
"Yes; I shall have to see him about that some time. I suppose it's worry," said Frank Richards. "Look here, you fellows, we shall have to keep mum now about what we know. It's horrid, Slimmey having lied to Mr. Lasalle like that, but—but—we're not going to show him up."
"No fear!"
"I was thinking of letting the sergeant know that Rufus Slimmey had been here, and getting the rotter taken away," said Frank. "We can't do that now without giving Slimmey away. It's a rotten position. I—I wish he hadn't lied."
"Shove it out of your mind, and come out in the canoe," said Bob Lawless cheerily. "No good thinking about it."
Bob Lawless' advice was too good not to be taken.
But as they paddled the canoe on the shining creek, Frank Richards could not wholly dismiss the matter from his mind. Rufus Slimmey haunted his thoughts.

The 2nd Chapter. A Desperate Game.

Mr. Slimmey entered his cabin, and the door closed behind him.
As he had crossed the school-ground the young man's manner had been indifferent, and he had not appeared to observe the many glances that were turned upon him, or the fact that the big sergeant was eyeing him from the distance.
But immediately the cabin door was closed, the indifference dropped from him like a cloak flung aside.
The calm composure of his face vanished, and his look became anxious, almost drawn, and his eyes restless and unquiet.
He paced to and fro for some minutes in the little cabin, his brows deeply wrinkled, his hands clenched.
Then he moved to the little window, and, without removing the curtain, peered out towards the School House.
In the distant gateway the big sergeant was still visible, talking now to a trooper of the Mounted Police.

"Hang him!" The young man muttered the words savagely. "Why does he linger here, when I have told him? He cannot still suspect me, after Miss Meadows' evidence. He believes that Rufus Slimmey—the fool!—came here—that he will pick up his trail here. Hang him! What if he should come here!"
He drew a deep, almost sobbing breath.
He left the window, and placed the bar in the sockets at the door. Then he unlocked the door of the inner room—the bed-room—and entered.
On the camp-bed the figure of a man lay stretched.
He was bound to the bed, and securely gagged. He could move nothing but his eyes, which fastened at once upon the man who came in with a burning glance.
If Sergeant Lasalle could have looked into the room, he would have had no doubt that he was hot upon the track of the fugitive from Vancouver.

For the bound man on the bed was the exact counterpart of the man who stood looking moodily down upon him.
He could not speak, but his eyes told volumes of anger and scorn and bitterness.
"You are not looking happy, Brother Paul!" The man's lips curled sardonically as he looked down at his prisoner. "Hang you! Why could you not give me the help I asked? I might have been safe now. But I would rather be in your position than mine, hang you!"
The bound man's eyes burned at him.

"But I guess I shall play the game out, Brother Paul. I've managed to get through morning lessons." He laughed. "By gad, what would they say if they knew that their teacher was Rufus Slimmey, robber and out-cast, hunted by the North-West M.P.'s. I've faced the sergeant himself, my dear brother, and your kind head-mistress bore witness that I had been a master in this school for a year or more! She takes me for you, my dear Paul, as everyone else does!"

Rufus Slimmey laughed mockingly. But his reckless insouciance could not conceal the anxiety that was gnawing him.
He had taken his brother's place, and his brother was a silent and helpless prisoner, while he played out the cheat. But the position was full of danger.

So far, he had played that dangerous game successfully.
But the sergeant was not satisfied; he had not gone. And so long as he remained at Cedar Creek there was ever-present danger.

Already the Chinese servant at the School House was surprised by "Mr. Slimmey's" refusal to allow him to enter the locked bed-room.

That refusal would have to be renewed on the morrow.
What if the sergeant should question the servants, and learn that "Mr.

Slimmey" was not allowing the Chinese to perform his usual household tasks in the cabin?

He would guess at once that the fugitive from Vancouver was concealed there. He would search, and he would find, not the fugitive, but the real Mr. Slimmey.

The imposture would be revealed then with a vengeance.
And there were other dangers. There was the boy Richards, who had asked him some question about a private lesson, of which he knew nothing. He had put the boy off. But there would be another occasion—

"Paul, listen to me. If I free you, will you help me? Close your eyes if you mean 'Yes.'"

Paul Slimmey's eyes remained wide-open, gleaming.

The adventurer made an angry gesture.

"You fool! Do you want to stay tied up here for days, without food, without drink? That is what it means."
No sign from the prisoner.

"Listen, Paul! There is a boy here, named Richards, to whom it appears you give private lessons. Will you tell me the details, if I remove your gag, so that I can ward him off?"

No sign.

"Otherwise, he may suspect, and a tattling tongue may do me harm."
Still the same steady look from the bound man. Rufus Slimmey had no help to expect from that quarter.

He gritted his teeth.

"Very well. Remain as you are—starve, for all I care! I shall play the game out without your help."

He quitted the room, and locked the door, putting the key into his pocket. He removed the bars from the outer door, and he had barely done so when there came a tap on the outside.

For a moment the adventurer's face went white.

But with a steady hand he threw open the door, and looked over his spectacles at the tall figure of the Canadian sergeant without.

Rufus Slimmey was quite himself again now. His face was calm, and he looked at the big sergeant with polite inquiry.

"These are your quarters, I think?" said Sergeant Lasalle.

"Yes, that is so. Will you step in?"

Sergeant Lasalle entered.
Only the board wall separated him from the room where the gagged prisoner lay bound. But the door of the bed-room was closed, and it was not evident that it was locked. There was nothing to excite the sergeant's suspicions.

"Well?" said Mr. Slimmey. "I am quite at your service, sergeant. Believe me, if I could do anything to help you, you would not need to ask."

"You are not on friendly terms with your brother Rufus," the sergeant remarked, his eyes on the young man's face.

"Not in the least. He has always been my enemy, as well as his own."
"Yet he has fled to this place."

"Is that certain?" asked Mr. Slimmey.

"Quite certain. He has been traced on this side of the town of Thompson. Certainly, he has been within five miles of the school."

Mr. Slimmey looked troubled.
"Then I can only conclude that his object was to see me, if possible," he said slowly. "I can guess his intention, I think. I—I admit, sergeant, that I am not a man of resolute character, and on a previous occasion Rufus extorted money from me by threats. Possibly he hoped to gain my assistance this time by the same methods. But I have not seen him yet."

"And if you should see him—"
"I shall give information at once, of course. He has forfeited all the claims of a brother upon me."
"Thank you, Mr. Slimmey! If you wish to communicate with me, you

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can do so at Gunten's store, in Thompson's.

"You're going back to Thompson, then?"

"It doesn't seem much use remaining here."

The sergeant was disappointed. There was a vague suspicion in his mind that Rufus Slimmey was concealed in the vicinity, assisted by his brother.

But he scanned Mr. Slimmey's face in vain for any sign of relief at his announced intention to depart.

Instead of looking relieved, Mr. Slimmey had an anxious expression.

"Of course, you know your own business best, Sergeant Lasalle," he said hesitatingly. "But—but in case the ruffian should come here, attempting to see me, would it not be advisable for you to remain nearer at hand? My brother Rufus would think nothing of resorting to the most desperate violence."

The sergeant's lip curled involuntarily.

"I—I admit that I am afraid of him," stammered Mr. Slimmey. "I have not led a life like yours, sergeant. I have led a quiet, scholarly existence, and—and I am not the kind of man to deal with a desperate character. If—if you remained in the neighbourhood, I should feel more able to deal with that scoundrel if he should appear. They would put you up at the Hopkins' farm, if you wished; that is only a mile away."

"I will think that over, Mr. Slimmey."

"But you will let me know?" asked Mr. Slimmey anxiously.

"Yes, I will let you know."

And the sergeant departed, dissatisfied. Mr. Slimmey closed the cabin door after him, and breathed hard.

He had played his part well—the part of a pusillanimous man, who feared the arrival of the desperate fugitive from Vancouver. And if the sergeant adopted his suggestion of putting up at the Hopkins' home-stead, he would be near—too near; but at least the schemer would know where he was, and could be on his guard in that direction.

Rufus Slimmey had played his cards well.

But there was deep anxiety in his breast.

He had succeeded, so far. The sergeant, at the most, suspected that he knew where the fugitive was, but never dreamed that he was the fugitive himself. But he was feverishly anxious for the strain to be over, and to place long miles between himself and the lumber school.

But not till the hunt was over, and the Mounted Police were gone for good, could he venture upon flight. Until that hour came, he had to play out the desperate game he had entered upon.

Frank Richards could not help glancing at Mr. Slimmey when Cedar Creek School assembled for afternoon lessons.

The young man came in as usual to take his class.

His aspect was quite normal. Frank had expected him to be worried and troubled by the occurrences of the morning, but Mr. Slimmey was quite calm.

His class, however, did not find him quite as usual. It was odd that Mr. Slimmey, who was very short-sighted, and had to peer through his glasses at everything, now wore his spectacles well down his nose, and looked over them. Several of his pupils observed that oddity with some curiosity.

But the impostor had no choice in the matter. His sight was not defective, and he could not look through lenses designed to assist defective sight.

And his forgetfulness, as they deemed it, on the subject of the names of his pupils, afforded the "kids" considerable merriment.

It was impossible, of course, for his pupils to suspect the change in the identity of the master, and they were only curious and amused by his many mistakes.

They found, however, that Mr. Slimmey was not so good-tempered and patient as usual. He was decidedly irritable and snappish.

Immediately classes were dismissed Mr. Slimmey went to his cabin.

He was anxious to avoid Miss Meadows, whom a chance remark at any time might have made suspicious by betraying his ignorance of many things which Paul Slimmey knew perfectly well.

He was anxious, too, about his prisoner.

He had to take the risk of leaving Paul Slimmey unguarded in the cabin, secured only by the locked door of the bed-room. And the sergeant and the trooper were still in the vicinity, he knew that. Sergeant Lasalle had not yet carried out his intention of returning to Thompson.

To his relief he found his cabin as usual, and no trace that any inquisitive person had been prowling round it.

He went at once into the bed-room, after barring the outer door, to make sure that the prisoner's gag and bonds were still secure.

Meanwhile, Frank Richards was discussing Mr. Slimmey with his chums. The kind-hearted master was in the habit of helping Frank with his Latin once a week, to assist him in keeping up that subject, which was not taught in the backwoods school.

Once a week Frank stayed for half an hour or an hour after lessons to "swot" with Mr. Slimmey in his cabin.

"I suppose I'd better go, you chaps," Frank said dubiously. "Slimmey put me off yesterday, but I suppose he meant me to stay to-day instead. It would look rather slighting if I let the lessons slide. Only I don't want to bother him while he's worried about that blessed brother of his."

"Well, you can put it to him," said Bob Lawless. "Ask him whether it's convenient."

"I suppose I'd better."

"I guess so."

"We'll wait for you," said Vere Beauclerc. "I dare say you'll get your lesson this time, Franky. Buzz off!"

"Right-ho!"

Frank Richards made his way to the log cabin.

He tapped at the door, and pushed it, but the door did not open.

Frank could not help feeling surprised. Why Mr. Slimmey should bar his cabin door in the day-time was a mystery.

He tapped again.

He heard a hurried movement within, and the sound of a closing door, then the unmistakable click of a key turning in the lock.

A moment or two later the door was opened from within, Frank clearly detecting the sound of the bars being removed.

Mr. Slimmey looked out at him, his eyes glittering over his spectacles.

Frank, utterly astonished, stood dumb for a moment. Mr. Slimmey had been in the inner room, and he stopped to lock the door before opening the outer door. Frank's glance wandered involuntarily to the inside door.

The key was not to be seen. After locking it, Mr. Slimmey had evidently put the key in his pocket, a proceeding so surprising that the schoolboy was dumbfounded.

"What is it? What are you troubling me for?" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey, in sharp and angry tones.

Frank flushed.

"I—I came—"

"What have you come for?"

"I—I—about the lesson, sir," said Frank.

"I did not have it yesterday, sir. I don't want to bother you, of course, sir, but I thought I'd better mention it."

"Oh, the lesson!" Mr. Slimmey's face cleared. "I—I am afraid that I cannot give you the time this evening, Richards. Another time."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

Mr. Slimmey closed the door in the schoolboy's face.

"Well, my hat!" muttered Frank. He walked away, surprised and uneasy, suspicion creeping into his mind in spite of himself.

His face was so disturbed when he rejoined his chums that Bob and the Cherub looked at him curiously.

"Slimmey seedy again?" asked Bob.

"No. But—"

"What's happened?" asked Beauclerc quietly.

"Blessed if I catch on!" said Frank. "I—I can't help thinking that—that—"

He broke off abruptly. He hardly cared to frame in words the dark suspicion that had forced itself into his mind.

"Go ahead!" said Bob. "What's the trouble, old chap? Get it off your chest!"

"I—I say, it's jolly serious, I believe!" said Frank. "The door was barred on the inside when I knocked!"

"What on earth for?"

"Well, it was. Slimmey was in the other room, and when he came to let me in he locked the bed-room door and put the key in his pocket. What the dickens should he do that for?" Frank drew a deep breath. "I've been in Slimmey's cabin lots of times, and he's never done anything of the kind."

"He could only act like that for one reason," said Beauclerc. "He wasn't running any risk of anybody looking into the inner room. It can't be possible that—that—"

Beauclerc paused, startled by his own thoughts.

"He couldn't be ass enough to hide

that rascally brother of his in his own cabin!" breathed Bob Lawless.

"I—I couldn't help thinking of it," said Frank. "He lied to the sergeant, and that could only have been to help Rufus Slimmey to keep clear."

"But it's impossible!" said Bob, after a moment's thought. "The Chinese does his bed-room every morning, you know. Old pigtail must have been in there as usual to-day."

"That settles it!" said Beauclerc. "If—the Chinese did the room this morning as usual."

Frank Richards compressed his lips. "I like Slimmey," he said. "I always thought him a good sort. I was for standing by him, even after he lied to the sergeant in that rotten way. But if he's hiding a thief, with his plunder still in his pockets, at this school, the time has come for us to chip in. If he's doing that he's no better than a criminal himself."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob.

"Right!" said Beauclerc. "My hat! If he's doing that— But I can't think of it, Frank. A dangerous criminal hidden here, with boys and girls crowding the place; and Miss Meadows, too! It's too thick!"

"I'm going to speak to the Chinese," said Frank.

"I guess that will settle it," remarked Bob.

The three chums walked away to the cook-house, where the Celestial

there. This school isn't a refuge for criminals."

"No jolly fear!" said Bob Lawless emphatically. "Let's go and put it straight to Slimmey. Either the man clears off at once, and takes his chance, or else we call the sergeant in. That's fair."

"Come on!" said Frank Richards. And a few minutes later the chums were at the door of Mr. Slimmey's cabin, with very determined expressions on their faces.

The 3rd Chapter. An Amazing Discovery.

Frank Richards knocked at the cabin door, and opened it. This time it was not fastened.

Mr. Slimmey was in the room, moving about restlessly. The young master spent much of his leisure time in study, but there was no sign of study in the room now. He swung angrily towards the door as it opened.

"You again, Richards!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir."

"I have told you that I cannot be troubled with you this evening. Is not that plain enough?"

Frank bit his lip.

"Quite, sir. I have not come to speak about the lesson."

"Then what do you want?"

"I will explain, sir. I had better come in."

Frank entered, followed by his

think he's persuaded you somehow to give him shelter here," said Frank. "It can't be done, sir. We all like and respect you, Mr. Slimmey, but we can't keep silent while you hide a thief and criminal in the school. You know what Miss Meadows would say if she knew."

"You—you have not told her this—this ridiculous suspicion—"

"No."

"Have you told anyone?"

"Not yet."

"Not yet? That means—"

"That means that unless the man goes, we are bound to call in the sergeant!" said Frank Richards.

"Oh!"

"Don't think we intend to be disrespectful, sir," said Bob Lawless. "But we should be doing wrong if we let him stay here and said nothing. You can see that."

"And we don't want him arrested here," said Beauclerc. "Simply let us know that he is gone, sir, and that ends it as far as we're concerned. We're not asking you to give the man up."

"But—but you are out of your senses!" panted Mr. Slimmey. "Do you imagine for one moment that I have the man hidden in this small cabin?"

"Will you let us glance into the bed-room, sir?"

"The—the bed-room?"

"Yes," said Frank steadily. "If that room's empty we shall know that we were mistaken, and we'll beg your pardon, sir. If there's no one in the room you needn't mind us seeing."

"I give you my word, Richards, that Rufus Slimmey is not in that room."

"Will you let us see, sir?"

"Do you dare to doubt my word?"

"You gave the sergeant your word this morning, sir, that you had not seen or heard from your brother, and I had heard you talking to him in the timber," said Frank quietly. "I'm sorry, sir, but we shall have to see into that room, or else—"

"Or else what?"

"Or else we shall have to ask the sergeant to make a search of this cabin, sir."

There was a silence.

Slimmey's face was pale, and his eyes were burning. The three schoolboys were very quiet, but very determined. If the inner room was empty, there was no reason why Mr. Slimmey should refuse to throw open the door.

Why did he not do so? To that question there was only one answer—the room contained a secret. For it was impossible for Mr. Slimmey to stand upon his dignity as a master after the three schoolboys had heard him lie to the sergeant.

If he had lied to help the hunted thief he would conceal him, and it was for him to prove that he had not done so.

Frank Richards broke the silence.

"We're sorry to take this line, sir; but you can see for yourself that we couldn't take part in hiding a criminal in the school, for that's what it amounts to if we conceal what we know. Let the man go, and we shall say nothing."

Mr. Slimmey drew a panting breath.

"You—you are mad to suspect such a thing—"

"Will you let us see into the other room?"

"No, I will not. Am I to be dictated to by schoolboys? I shall report this insolence to your parents."

But the attempt at bluster had no effect upon the chums of Cedar Creek. The matter was too serious for that.

"We intend to tell our parents, in any case, sir, unless that man goes," said Bob Lawless. "That cuts no ice, sir. We've got to see that man off."

"If—if I should admit the—the truth of what you say, will you keep silent?" muttered Slimmey.

"Yes, if the man goes."

"I—I agree, then! Keep silent, and as soon as it is dark the man shall go. I promise you that."

The chums of Cedar Creek looked at one another. It was a complete admission. The man was there. They had been sure of it, yet that complete surrender on the part of the assistant master startled them a little.

"Are you satisfied?" he muttered hoarsely. "I will do as you wish. I—I will pass over your conduct in treating me in this manner. The man shall go to-night. That is a promise."

His face was deadly white, a hunted look was in his eyes. His hand was in his pocket, and the schoolboys knew, from the sagging of the coat, that it was grasping a weapon hidden there.

It was not the Mr. Slimmey they had always known, and there was a vague fear and suspicion in their



Crack! The ruffian spun round, and the revolver went up, but the whizzing stool struck him at the same moment, and he rested.

was at work. He gave them a broad grin as they looked in.

"Chu, old scout, did you do Mr. Slimmey's room as usual this morning?" asked Frank Richards.

Chu Chung Chow gave him a rather curious look, and shook his head.

"No doee loom!" he replied.

"By gum!" muttered Bob Lawless, startled by that confirmation of the strange suspicion in the minds of the chums.

"You didn't?" asked Frank.

"No, Massa Richards."

"But why didn't you?"

"Massa Slimmey no wantee loom touchee. Him sayee so to me. No go to beddee last nightee, Massa Slimmey sayee, and not wantee anything donee."

"Then you didn't go into the inner room at all?"

"No goey!"

"Did you see into it at all?"

"No see. Dool shutee."

"Right you are, Chu!"

The chums left the cook-house without vouchsafing any explanation to the Chinese as to why they had questioned him.

Their faces were very grave now.

"That's a cinch!" said Bob. "If Chu had done the room as usual it would have settled it. But he was kept out of it. That's a bit too thick to be only a coincidence!"

"Yes, rather!"

"And what are we going to do?" asked Beauclerc. "If the man's there, we're not going to let him stay

chums, watched angrily by Mr. Slimmey. His anger did not deter Frank Richards, however. He had a duty to do, and he had come there to do it.

"Well, what is it?" snapped the man.

"I ought to tell you first, sir, that yesterday I heard you talking in the timber with your brother Rufus," said Frank quietly.

Mr. Slimmey started violently.

"You—you heard—"

"Yes. It was quite by accident. I had gone there to mug over my books, when I heard your voices," said Frank. "I never intended to let you know that I had heard you, or knew anything about your brother—"

"My—my brother—"

"Your brother Rufus, the man Sergeant Lasalle is in search of."

"Oh!"

The expression of relief in the man's face puzzled the schoolboy. Frank did not know that for one terrible moment the impostor had feared that the boys knew the whole truth.

"You told the sergeant in the school-room that you had not seen or heard from your brother," went on Frank, in the same steady tone. "It isn't for me to judge you, sir, but that man cannot stay here."

"What—what man?"

"Rufus Slimmey!"

"Are you mad? Do you think he is here?" panted the man.

"I can't help thinking so, sir. I



LAI'D BY THE HEELS!

(Continued from the previous page.)

looks. Mr. Slimmey had never been known to carry a weapon, yet they knew that this man had a revolver hidden in his coat, upon which his fingers had closed convulsively.

What did it all mean? What amazing change had come over the quiet, irresolute man? Why was that hard and desperate look creeping on his pale face?

The distrust they already felt intensified. His eyes gleamed at them with anxious and savage inquiry.

"Well," he muttered, "what do you say?"

"That's good enough, sir," said Frank, after a long pause. "Let the man clear off. We don't want to have a hand in arresting your brother. The sergeant can take the money he has stolen. That can be arranged."

"The money! What do you mean?"

"Sergeant Lasalle told you that he had the stolen money upon him," said Frank. "He cannot take that away with him. We can't agree to be parties to a robbery, sir! If he keeps his liberty he is lucky. He cannot take the stolen money. Let him leave it here, and it can be handed over to the sergeant in some way to be taken back to Vancouver."

"Agreed! Now go."

"But the money?" said Frank.

"He shall leave it here."

Frank smiled slightly.

"He is hardly likely to do that at your asking, sir."

"He will do as I ask—"

"He will not," said Frank quietly.

"When I heard you talking to him in the timber, sir, it did not sound as if he would do as you asked. You asked him to go, and leave it in peace. Did he do so? I mean, Mr. Slimmey, but—"

Frank Richards paused suddenly.

He started violently as a strange and startling suspicion flashed into his mind. On that occasion, when he had heard the brothers speaking in the timber, there had been a contrast between Paul Slimmey's hesitating tones and the clear, cool, hard voice of the adventurer from Vancouver. The voices had been similar, but the manner of speaking very different.

Unconsciously the impostor, in his anxiety and bitter rage, had spoken without disguising his tones. He was no longer affecting the low voice of the schoolmaster, and back into Frank's mind came the hard, sardonic tones he had heard that day in the timber.

"Good heavens!" muttered Frank, almost dazed by the startling suspicion. "Good heavens!"

The look on the boy's face was enough for the adventurer. He knew that Frank Richards knew.

His hand flashed from his pocket now, and a revolver glittered in it.

Frank sprang back.

"Look out!" he shouted. "Look out! That is not Mr. Slimmey—that man is Rufus Slimmey!"

With the bound of a tiger the ruffian reached the cabin door, slammed it shut, and set his back to

it. The revolver in his hand rose to a level, gleaming at the startled chums of Cedar Creek.

"Silence!" he hissed.

The 4th Chapter. At Close Quarters.

"Silence!" Frank Richards panted. He knew the truth now—Rufus Slimmey's action left no doubt of it—and his chums knew.

Amazing as it was, they wondered that they had not guessed it before. It was not Mr. Slimmey, but his double. All was clear now.

The resemblance, which had almost made the Canadian sergeant arrest him in the school-room, had enabled Rufus Slimmey to play this trick upon the school.

And the secret of the locked room was that it hid the real Paul Slimmey, not his outcast brother; that was clear now. He was a prisoner there, or— Frank felt a chill as he looked at the desperate face of the outcast. What had happened to the man whose name and place the outcast had taken?

"Silence! One word aloud, and you shall die for it!" hissed Rufus Slimmey. "Hang you! Hang you! You shall pay dearly for spying on me!"

"Rufus Slimmey, by gum!" said Bob Lawless dazedly. "Well, carry me home to die! This beats the whole deck!"

"You have found me out!" Rufus Slimmey gritted his teeth. "Mind, I am a desperate man. Your lives will not stand in the way of my freedom!"

"What have you done with your brother?" muttered Frank Richards.

"He is a prisoner; and you will join him, while I get clear," said Rufus Slimmey grimly. "Hold up your hands!"

The chums hesitated.

"You dare not shoot!" said Vere Beauclerc quietly and contemptuously.

"Sergeant Lasalle is not twenty yards away."

"I shall take my chance of that. Up with your hands!"

There was a pause, and then the schoolboys obeyed. The ruffian looked desperate enough to shoot, and his liberty was at stake.

"I shall not be taken alive!" said the outcast, between his teeth. "And if I am to swing for a trooper, I may as well swing for you. If you want to save your lives, you will give me no trouble. If it were not that that accursed sergeant would hear the shots, I would shoot you out of hand!"

He advanced towards them, the revolver still levelled.

"Open that door, Richards." He flung a key to Frank. "Open the door, and get into the next room, all three of you!"

Frank unlocked the bed-room door. The three schoolboys backed into the room. The bound man on the bed gave them a look. Paul Slimmey had heard every word that was uttered in the outer room.

He had hoped, for some brief moments, now that the truth was known. But the desperate outcast still held the upper hand.

Rufus Slimmey followed them in, and with his left hand placed the key on the inner side of the door and locked it.

"Now I will deal with you," he said, between his teeth. "I shall leave you bound here, while I take my chance. And if you resist, beware! Keep your hands up!"

He drew a cord from his pocket with his left hand.

"Make a noose in that, Richards."

Frank obeyed.

The outcast threw the noose over Bob Lawless' wrists, and drew it together.

Frank was standing close by a stool under the window, and as the ruffian was securing the cord his hand closed on the stool.

It was a desperate chance, for he knew the man would shoot; but he took it. With a sudden swing of his arm the stool was lifted and flung at the same moment.

Crash!

The ruffian spun round towards him, the revolver up; but the whizzing stool struck him at the same moment, and he reeled.

Crack!

The pistol-shot filled the little room with deafening sound. But the bullet flew into the plank ceiling. The next moment Vere Beauclerc drove his fist under the chin of the staggering man, and Rufus Slimmey went with a crash to the floor.

Beauclerc was upon him in a second, and he kicked the revolver from the rascal's hand before he could pull the trigger again. Frank Richards was only a second behind, and as Rufus Slimmey struggled up Frank hurled himself upon him, and bore him to the floor again.

"Back up!" panted Frank.

Panting with rage, Rufus Slimmey struggled in the grasp of Frank Richards and Beauclerc. He would probably have been too much for the two of them; but Bob Lawless had dragged the unfastened noose from his wrists, and he joined in with great vigour. He caught up the fallen revolver, and clubbed it, and the heavy butt crashed on the ruffian's head.

Rufus Slimmey yelled, and sank back on the floor.

Frank Richards' knee was jammed on his chest, and Beauclerc grasped his wrists. Bob thrust the revolver muzzle fairly into his mouth.

"Chuck it!" said Bob grimly.

"The cord—quick!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

Dazed by the crashing blow, the ruffian lay almost helpless. Frank Richards caught up the cord, and looped it over his wrists as Beauclerc held them, and drew it tight and knotted it.

Then the schoolboys left him, lying on the floor and panting with rage.

"Fetch the sergeant here, Beau!" exclaimed Frank breathlessly.

"You bet!"

Vere Beauclerc unlocked the door and dashed out. Frank took out his pocket-knife, and cut the bonds that held Paul Slimmey to the bed.

He removed the gag, and Paul Slimmey strove to speak, but no word would come from his numbed lips. He groaned faintly as he moved.

"All right now, Mr. Slimmey?" said Frank cheerily.

There was a heavy tread in the outer room. The sergeant had heard the pistol-shot, and he was already coming toward the cabin, when Beau-

clerc found him. The big Canadian loomed up in the doorway.

"Here's your man, sir!" said Bob Lawless.

"Holy smoke!" ejaculated Sergeant Lasalle. "And—and who is this?"

His eyes turned to the man stretched on the bed.

"That's our master, sir—Mr. Slimmey. That villain had been passing himself off as Mr. Slimmey!" panted Frank.

"By gad!"

The sergeant understood now. His bronzed face was very grim as he stooped and jerked Rufus Slimmey to his feet.

"I guess you played a bold hand, my man," he remarked. "But the game's up now. You are the man I want!"

The exposed impostor ground his teeth.

"I owe it to that brat!" he muttered, his eyes glittering at Frank Richards. "I shall not forget this!"

Frank Richards laughed.

"Remember it as long as you live," he said cheerily. "I'm jolly glad I had a hand in laying you by the heels!"

"Same here," said Bob Lawless. "I guess the rotter's got his plunder about him, sergeant. We make you a present of the dear man!"

The sergeant laughed, and marched his prisoner out with an iron grip upon his shoulder.

Five minutes later the two Canadian M.P.'s were riding away for Thompson, and, between them, bound upon a horse, was Rufus Slimmey. The lumber school had seen the last of the desperate rascal.

Miss Meadows, to whom the sergeant had briefly explained, came to the cabin, in great astonishment.

The chums had helped Mr. Slimmey into the outer room, and he was sitting there, pale and worn, when the schoolmistress entered.

Mr. Slimmey made an effort to rise, but sank back from sheer weakness.

"Don't get up," said Miss Meadows. "The sergeant has told me. My poor friend, you have had a terrible experience. If one had only guessed! But you are rid of that rascal now. And you boys were the cause of the discovery?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Frank Richards modestly.

"You have not been hurt?"

"No. The rotter—ahem!—I mean Rufus Slimmey—had time for only one shot," said Bob. "That's in the roof. All serene, ma'am!"

Miss Meadows smiled.

"You had better go home now," she said. "You have done very well and bravely. I am proud of you!"

And the three chums walked out, feeling very proud of themselves after that. The next day the lumber school was buzzing with the story, and Frank Richards & Co. were the cynosure of all eyes.

For several days Mr. Slimmey did not appear in the school-room; but he came back at last, looking very quiet and subdued. By that time a judge and jury, in far Vancouver, were dealing with the reckless rascal whom Frank Richards and his chums had laid by the heels.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"SAVED FROM A CRIME!"

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!

THE MAKING OF MORLEY!

By JIMMY SILVER.

(Continued from page 237.)

simply—"that is much better! I came here to see if I could find Fisher. Have you seen him anywhere?"

"He was in the gym half an hour ago," said Morley at once.

"Thank you, Morley!" said Mr. Hall, turning on his heel. "I will look for him there."

The Fourth Form-master shut the door of the study behind him, and Gorman quickly thrust his hand into his pocket with the intention of withdrawing his cigarette.

Next instant he drew his hand out of his pocket and let forth a cry of fear, for the papers it contained were smouldering from the heat of the lighted cigarette.

Gorman dropped them quickly to the floor, and as he gazed at them Morley caught sight of his pawn-ticket, charred at one end.

With a bound he jumped across the room, and, picking up the piece of charred pasteboard, he flung it quickly into the fire.

Gorman drew off his coat quickly, for fear that it might catch alight. Then he glanced evilly at Morley.

Morley flung off his own coat, too; not because of any fear of fire, but because he intended to give the cad a thorough thrashing. The pawn-ticket had vanished into the flames of the fire. Gorman could no longer carry out his fell threat.

"Come on, you cad!" exclaimed Morley, pushing back his cuffs. "Put your fists up!"

"I—I—I—" stammered Gorman, backing away.

But Morley was in a desperate mood. He leaped forward, and swung his left fist forward quickly. It landed full on the cad's nose, and he staggered backwards.

"Look here, Morley—Ow! Yow!"

Morley had no mercy to show for the cad. He hit him again and again, and forced him round the study. Gorman had never received such a whacking before.

By the time Morley desisted Gorman's nose was bleeding profusely, and one of his eyes was half closed. The cad had been paid in full for his cunning scheme. From that day Morley was a different fellow. Never again did he go back to his old ways.

The failure of Morley senior had been a great disaster, but nevertheless it had been the making of his son.

Jimmy Silver jumped to his feet as he concluded his story.

"Jolly good yarn!" said Lovell praisingly. "I couldn't have told a better one myself. Hallo! Here comes Bulkeley!"

The door of the dormitory opened, and in walked the captain of Rookwood.

"You kids can get into bed," he said. "The raiders have been beaten back."

The juniors cheered Bulkeley's announcement to the echo, and then proceeded to undress again.

"I say," said Lovell, as he jumped into bed, "I've got a jolly good wheeze! Why not make a regular thing of this story-telling? Suppose we stay up every night and let one fellow tell a yarn each evening?"

The juniors immediately showed their ready approval of the scheme.

"Very well," said Lovell. "As I suggested the scheme, I suppose it's up to me to keep the ball rolling. I reckon I'll tell the next yarn, but I won't guarantee that it will be as good as Jimmy Silver's."

And so it was arranged. The tales of the dormitory were to be a regular thing at Rookwood.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"FOILING THE FOOD HOG!"

By ARTHUR E. LOVELL.

DON'T MISS IT!

Advertisement for Pain's Presents House, Dept. 7, Hastings. Features 'FREE' offers, watches, and stamps.

Advertisement for Mead Coventry Flyers bicycles (30 days free trial) and Nervousness treatment.

Advertisement for The Royal Card Co. offering 'FREE' Christmas cards for selling or using 1/- worth of goods.