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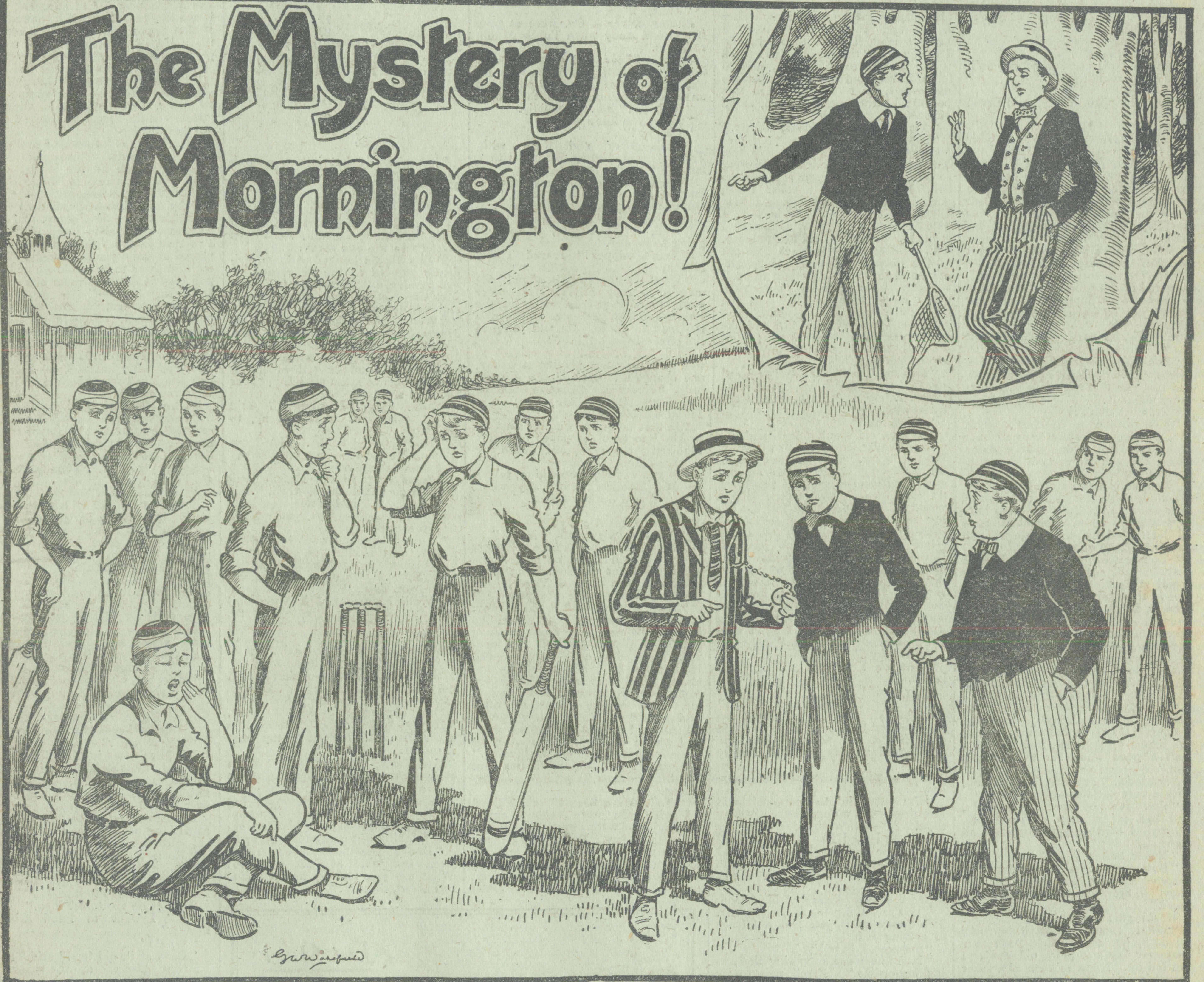
TWELVE PAGES!

No. 953. Vol. XIX. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending September 13th, 1919.

The Mystery of Mornington!



WAITING FOR THE CAPTAIN!

Morny isn't here, I suppose I'd better take his place as captain." Meanwhile Mornington, far away in Coombe Wood, was waving aside Newcome's arguments. "I've something else to think about than cricket!" he said loftily.

Time was passing, and, polite as the Bagshot fellows were, they were showing signs of impatience. The Rockwood cricketers had a hurried consultation. "We can't keep Bagshot hanging about much longer!" said Jimmy Silver. "As

The 1st Chapter. Morny's Way.

"Morny!"

Mornington of the Fourth was sitting in the window-seat in Study No. 4, looking out into the quadrangle.

The sun was setting, and the old beeches were casting long shadows in the quad. Morny's handsome face was dark and thoughtful as he gazed from the window, and he did not turn his head as his chum spoke.

There had been silence in the study for some time.

Kit Erroll was working at the table,

but at intervals he raised his head, to glance towards his chum. Several times a shade of anxiety had crossed Erroll's face as he looked at Morny's thoughtful profile. At last he spoke.

Mornington continued to stare into the quadrangle as if deeply absorbed in watching the lengthening shadows of the beech-trees.

"Morny, old chap!"

Morny heard then, and he looked round, with a slightly irritable expression.

"Hullo!"

"Hadh't you better begin your prep, Morny?"

"Oh, bother prep!"

"Better get on with it," said Erroll mildly. "You don't want any trouble with Mr. Bootles to-morrow."

"Blow, Bootles!"

"It's the Bagshot match to-morrow, Morny, you know. If you should get detained—"

Morny yawned and rose from the window-seat.

"I suppose I'd better begin grindin'," he said discontentedly.

"Bootles is a worry; he's always findin' fault. Just like him to detain me for the afternoon when there's a match on!"

"You've been a bit of a worry to Bootles, you know."

"Bless Bootles! Still, I suppose I'd better toe the line, or there will be trouble. But if anythin' happened, Jimmy Silver could captain the side against Bagshot all right."

"You're captain now, Morny."

"I'm blessed if I know what I was so keen about it for!" vawned Mornington. "It takes up a lot of a fellow's time, and there's always somethin' to worry about."

Erroll's brow clouded, but he did not answer. It was evident that his chum's mood troubled him, and that he did not quite know what to make of it.

Valentine Mornington dropped into

his chair at the table, and drew his books towards him.

He began to work with a listless and dissatisfied air.

In a few minutes, however, he threw his books aside, and rose to his feet restlessly.

"Blessed if I can put my mind into that stuff!" he grunted. "I'm fed up, Erroll!"

"What with?"

"Everythin'!" said Mornington comprehensively.

"You needn't worry about the match, if that's what you're thinking of. We're in great form for to-morrow, and I think we shall beat



Continued from the previous page.

THE MYSTERY OF MORNINGTON!

Bagshot. Jimmy Silver is at the top of his form; his bowling to-day was simply ripping."

"And what was my battin' like?" grinned Mornington.

"Not so good as usual; but you'll be all right to-morrow."

"Perhaps!"

"Look here, Morny——" said Erroll abruptly.

"Well?"

"What have you got on your mind?"

Mornington did not answer immediately. He had turned to the window again, and stood staring out into the deepening dusk in the quad. When he spoke, it was over his shoulder, without looking at his chum.

"What makes you think I've got somethin' on my mind?" he asked.

"Your ways for some time past," answered Erroll quietly. "You seem to have lost interest in things. You're not so keen on cricket, for instance——"

"Cricket's a bore, like everythin' else."

"You were no end pleased at becoming junior captain of Rookwood, and now you don't seem to care anything about it."

"True. I don't!"

"You've taken to slacking at work. Mr. Bootles and Mr. Cardwell have both been down on you a dozen times, and you can't say it was without reason."

"Bootles is a fussy old donkey."

"Well, he's a good sort in his way; and, after all, Morny, we come here to work, you know. School life isn't all loafing about the passages and strolling in the quad."

"You come here to work, old chap," said Mornington, looking round at last. "I don't! I work when the spirit moves me. At bottom, I'm a rotten slacker, and you know it as well as I do. I started here as a slacker, and I should never have tried anything different but for you. You turned me into a worker. But it won't answer. I'm not your sort, Erroll, and if you had any sense you'd give me up as a bad job."

"Something's come over you, Morny," said Erroll anxiously. "You've taken to mouching out of the school by yourself, too. Solitude isn't a good thing for a chap like you."

"Solitude!" repeated Mornington, with a very curious look at Erroll.

"Yes. It's not good for anybody, and bad for a chap of your sort, Morny. I suppose your health is all right, isn't it?"

"Never better."

"But you must admit that you've changed in the last week or so. Now, tell me what you've got on your mind."

Mornington laughed.

"What should I have on my mind?" he answered. "It's my character that's at fault, old scout. I get fed up. I was as keen as a razor to get in as junior captain, and I was pleased when I bagged Jimmy Silver's job. But I'm not much like Silver. I'm tired of the stunt already. Everything I take up is only a stunt, and I get sick of it when the novelty's worn off. When I used to go the pace with Lattrey and his set, I got fed up with that, and turned away from it. Now I've got sick of swotting, and tocin' the line, and playin' cricket, and—and everythin'!"

"I was afraid it was something like that, Morny," said Erroll sadly. "But that's a frame of mind you ought to fight against. It's not good for you."

Morny shrugged his shoulders.

"You see, we're different," he said. "You're a steady old codger, and whatever your hand findeth to do you do it with all your might. I'm like Reuben—unstable as water, thou shalt not excel, you know. That's me all over."

"But——"

"I'm made like that!" said Mornington restlessly. "Besides—besides——" He hesitated.

"Go on!" said Erroll quietly.

"I'm poor!" said Mornington, with a flush. "I was rich once—the richest fellow at Rookwood. Then my cousin turned up—you remember it all—and I was left. Well, I haven't made a howl about it, but I've felt it, all the same. I've missed it all. I want to be the best-dressed fellow in the Fourth, I want expensive motor-cars, and banknotes in my pocket; I want money to burn, and I haven't got it. See?"

"That's not very serious, Morny."

"Not to a chap like you, but awfully serious to a chap like me. You don't care what clothes you wear so long as you're decent; I care no end. I hate wearin' a collar twice, and a necktie three times. I hate havin' my boots soled and heeled. I hate lookin' at a quid twice before I spend it. In fact," said Mornington, with a bitter grin—"in fact, I've got all the tastes of a gentleman's gentleman, and that's what I ought to be, I suppose. I belong to the vulgar rich, and I can't get out of it. And you don't understand it a little bit."

"I could understand it in a cad like Lattrey, or Peele," said Erroll; "but it's rather hard to understand in a fellow like you."

"You see, I'm a good deal of a cad myself," explained Mornington, with cynical candour. "That's where the trouble is."

"What rot!"

"It's so, old scout. And—and like a fool, I've landed myself in a position I'm not fit for. Why couldn't I leave the captaincy alone?" Mornington gave a restless shrug of the shoulders.

"I can't resign it now—the fellows would think I found the job too big for me; and I'm too conceited and swankin' to let 'em think so. But—but—I'm stickin' to the job, but I'm not fit for it. A captain has duties—and there never was a less dutiful fellow in existence than I, I suppose. It's made me ill to hear the chaps talkin' about the Bagshot match to-morrow. I suppose it would shock you to hear that I don't care two pins about the match."

"But why?"

"Because I haven't got any bets laid on it."

"Morny!"

"I knew I should shock you!" grinned Mornington. "You'll be droppin' my friendship some day, old top, like a hot potato, when you understand at last what I'm really like."

"That will never happen, anyhow."

"I'm not goin' to be poor," said Mornington, in a dogged tone. "Why should I, when a chance comes my way? And—and like a fool, I land myself into a job where I know I ought to keep as straight as a die, and set an example to the other chaps. But——"

Erroll stared blankly at his friend.

"You're talking in riddles, Morny. You speak as if you had a chance of getting rich."

"Suppose I have?"

"Not much use supposing that, as it's impossible." Erroll rose to his feet. "Look here, Morny, you alarm me. What is it you have got in your head now?"

Morny did not answer for a moment. But he smiled as he met Erroll's anxious and alarmed gaze.

"It's all right," he said carelessly. "Only blowin' off steam, you know. I'm a discontented ass—that's what's the matter. I've got all I want; and I'm mooning over the things I don't really want. Only gassin', old chap; don't take any notice of my nonsense."

"But——"

"I think I'll take a turn in the quad," said Morny abruptly. "A little fresh air will do me good—after the way I've been swotting!" He laughed. "You stick to merry old Virgil—I'm goin' for a walk."

Mornington left the study before his chum could reply.

The door closed sharply on him; and Erroll sat down at the table again, with a distressed cloud upon his face. The strange mood of his

chum troubled him deeply. Morny's nature was not superficial by any means—but it was volatile, and his changefulness had often troubled his chum. That there was something wrong with Morny now, Erroll knew well, though he could not guess what it was.

He did not resume his work. He sat in deep and painful thought for some time, and then rose and crossed to the window. Outside, the dusk was deepening into darkness. Under the old beeches Erroll caught sight of a moving shadow—and he knew that it was Mornington, pacing to and fro in the gloom, a prey to restless discontent. And Erroll, with a heavy heart, watched him till the deepening darkness hid him from sight.

The 2nd Chapter. A Very Mysterious Document.

"Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at prep in the end study when Tubby Muffin rolled in.

Jimmy Silver had just finished; but Lovell, Raby and Newcome were still hard at work, and Lovell waved an impatient hand at the fat Classical.

"Shut up!" he said politely.

"I say, you know——"

"Dry up!"

"Tea's over and done with, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver, with a laugh. "You're too late!"

"Oh, I knew you had only sardines for tea, and not much of them," answered Tubby. "Blow your tea, Jimmy Silver! 'Tain't that."

"Well, if it's supper, there isn't going to be any."

"'Tain't supper!" roared Tubby Muffin.

"What the thump is it, then?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "If you're going to offer your services for the Bagshot match to-morrow, Morny's the man to go to. He will jump at the offer—I don't think!"

"I'll bet I could play cricket as well as Morny was playing it to-day, and chance it!" said Muffin disdainfully. "Never saw a chap in such rotten form. But it isn't that. I've found something."

"Is that fat idiot going to shut up, or am I to take the poker to him?" inquired Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Look here, Lovell——"

"If you've found something, take it to Mr. Bootles, if it's any value, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver.

"It isn't!"

"Then chuck it away!"

"But it's jolly queer, Jimmy."

Tubby Muffin had a sheet of paper in his fat hand, and he held it up. Evidently there was something interesting on that sheet of paper, from Tubby Muffin's point of view.

"Well, what is it?" asked Jimmy.

"It's jolly queer!" repeated Tubby Muffin. "I've never seen anything like it. I picked it up on the landing. Some chap must have dropped it, mustn't he? I was coming upstairs, when that beast Mornington came down in a hurry and ran into me. Knocked me over, you know," said Tubby Muffin indignantly. "Luckily, I caught hold of his collar and pulled him over, too. And he actually bumped me on the landing."

"Mustn't pull junior captains over by their collars," grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Well, he's a beast!" said Tubby. "I wish you were captain again, Jimmy—you were never quite such a beast as Morny. But I say, I found this paper on the landing, and it's jolly queer. I can't make it out."

"Some deep arithmetical problem, such as twice one are two?" asked

Lovell. "That would be a bit above your brain powers, I suppose?"

"It's a lot of numbers," said Tubby, "and some letters, and it don't seem to mean anything. It's really extraordinary, so I brought it here to show you fellows."

"Well, let's see it!" yawned Jimmy Silver.

Tubby had succeeded in interesting the Fistical Four at last; and all of them looked at the paper as the fat Classical laid it on the table.

They looked at it, and stared. It certainly was an extraordinary paper, and the Fistical Four, though considerably brighter intellectually than Tubby, could make no more of it than he did. It ran:

R.	N.
7	
30	29
	28
	4
	17
	20
23	
5	
	10
27	
7	
19	24
1	
36	

That was all; but it was enough to make the Fistical Four of the Fourth rub their eyes. There was nothing in mathematics that they knew of that bore any resemblance to this. What the letters meant, and what the numbers meant, was a deep mystery to the end study.

Tubby Muffin blinked at them, evidently pleased at the impression he had produced. There was no doubt that the Fistical Four were puzzled and perplexed.

"Well, what does that mean, Jimmy Silver?" asked Tubby Muffin.

Jimmy shook his head.

"Ask me another," he said. "I can't make head or tail of it. It doesn't seem to mean anything, so far as I can see."

"Some joke, I suppose," said Raby. "Did you make this up, to puzzle us, Tubby?"

"No!" howled Tubby. "I tell you I found it on the landing, after Momy had knocked me over."

"Some chap in the Fourth must have dropped it there, then," said Newcome. "You'd better inquire up and down the passage, if you want to find the owner."

"I don't specially want to find the owner, that I know of. I want to know what it means," said the inquisitive Tubby. "It must mean something, you know."

"Well, I suppose a chap wouldn't take the trouble to write it down for nothing," said Jimmy Silver, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "But I can't make it out. Might be some sort of cryptogram. The fist looks a bit like Morny's; he always makes small, neat figures in this style. Take it along to No. 4, and see if it's his."

"Oh, of course!" exclaimed Tubby. "He dropped it when I pulled him over, I expect. I'll ask Morny what it means."

And Tubby Muffin rolled out of the study, with the mysterious document in his fat fist. Lovell and Raby and Newcome resumed their work; but Jimmy Silver sat with a somewhat thoughtful expression on his face. He was thinking of the mysterious paper.

"Done!" yawned Lovell, rising from the table at last. "Hallo! What are you looking like a boiled owl about, Jimmy?"

"I was thinking——"

"Penny for 'em, if they're worth it."

"It's jolly queer about that paper," said Jimmy. "It puzzled me at first; but, now I think of it, I've seen something like it before."

"Where?"

"In a book," said Jimmy. "Last vac I was looking over a book at home about holidays on the Riviera, and there was a description of Monte Carlo."

"Monte Carlo!" repeated Lovell, with a stare. "That's the gambling place, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"What's that got to do with Tubby's paper?"

"Nothing, of course. But I remember, in the description of the place, they mentioned a spoofing game that's played there; red and black numbers on a wheel. There was a specimen list of numbers, and it ran like that list Tubby showed us. If that paper means anything at all, it's a list of numbers kept by some person who's been playing roulette."

"Roulette!" ejaculated Lovell.

"That's the name of the game—some sort of spoof for taking in strangers, I suppose," said Jimmy. "But—but it's illegal in England. It's not possible——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell, in great merriment. "Do you think that some chap in the Fourth has been tripping across to Monte Carlo on a Saturday afternoon?"

Raby and Newcome chortled.

"Fathead!" said Jimmy. "I say the game's illegal in England; but I've read in the newspapers that it's played at some places illegally. Silly fools go there to be swindled, and the police come down on them every now and then. But——"

"My dear man, you're dreaming!" grinned Lovell. "There isn't anything of that kind anywhere near Rookwood; and, if there was, no Rookwood chap would know anything about it. My hat! I can imagine how the Head would look if he heard anything about it."

Jimmy shook his head.

"I suppose there's nothing in it, of course," he assented. "But it struck me—— Never mind. Let's get down, if you're finished. We've got some boxing on with Tommy Dodd & Co. in the gym."

"Come on, then."

The Fistical Four left the end study; but Jimmy Silver was still in rather a thoughtful mood. He was pretty certain that the mysterious paper belonged to Valentine Mornington. And, though Morny was as straight as a die, and Jimmy had no doubt about it, he could not help remembering that in Morny's early days at Rookwood he had been the wildest fellow in the school, and had come very near to being expelled. And the bare possibility that Morny—now junior captain of the school—was returning to his old wild ways, was very discomfiting to Jimmy Silver.

The 3rd Chapter. Morny Loses His Temper.

"Morny here?"

Kit Erroll was in the window-seat, plunged in thought, when Tubby Muffin came into No. 4. His unfinished work was on the table. For once, Erroll was slacking.

He looked up, with less than his usual kind patience, as the fat Classical rolled in.

"Morny's gone out."

"When will he come back, then?" asked Tubby. "I've got something here that belongs to him."

"Put it on the table, then."

"But I want to know what it means."

"What?"

"Look at it, old top!" said Tubby. Erroll glanced at the paper as Tubby held it up. A startled look came over his face.

He rose quickly to his feet, and caught the paper from Tubby's fat hand.

"Where did you get this?" he asked sharply.

"Picked it up on the landing," said Tubby. "I think Morny dropped it after bumping over me. I say, give it to me, you know."

Erroll did not answer. His eyes were glued on the paper, and he plainly did not intend to hand it back to the fat junior.

"You know what it means?" asked Tubby inquisitively. "It must mean something, you know. Jimmy thinks it's Morny's fist. I say, is it something about backing horses?"

"What?"

"Morny used to back horses a lot, you know," said Tubby. "That was when he was thick with Lattrey and Peele and Gower, and that lot. I believe he's given it up since he lost his money. I remember he had some



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THE MYSTERY OF MORNINGTON!

(Continued from the previous page.)

scheme of a system for backing horses, and it cost him a lot of money. He used to make bets through Joey Hook, at Coombe, you know."

"You fat duffer!"

"Oh, I say, Erroll, he did, you know! Everybody in the Fourth knows it, and knows about his breaking bounds at night."

"Oh, dry up!" snapped Erroll.

Kit Erroll knew more than Tubby did about his chum's former habits, but he did not like to hear the subject spoken of.

"Well, you know what it means," said Tubby. "I can see that in your face. Why can't you tell a chap?"

"You can cut along," said Erroll. "I'll give this to Morny when he comes in."

"But perhaps it isn't Morny's; and I want to know what it means."

"It's not your business, Muffin."

"Well, it isn't yours either, if it comes to that," retorted the fat junior. "You give me that paper, Erroll."

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Look here—"

There was a step in the passage, and Valentine Mornington came into the study. His face was a little pale, and as moody and dissatisfied as when he had left. He glanced at Erroll and Tubby Muffin.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" he asked.

"I want to know what it means!" howled Tubby.

Inquisitiveness was almost a disease with Reginald Muffin, and his appetite for information was fairly whetted now.

"What what means, you fat idiot?"

"That paper with the numbers on it." Mornington started, and his hand flew to his pocket. It did not need more than that action to reveal the ownership of the mysterious paper. "You dropped it on the landing," grinned Tubby. "Now Erroll's got it, and he won't give it to me. I say, Morny—Yarooooooop!"

Tubby Muffin, much to his astonishment and indignation, found himself suddenly seized by his fat shoulders.

With a spin, Morny sent him whirling into the passage.

Tubby Muffin spun round like a very fat top, and was across the corridor before he knew what was happening to him.

He bumped on the opposite wall, and collapsed, with a roar.

Bump!

"Oh! Ah! Yah! Yoooop!" roared Tubby breathlessly.

Mornington's eyes glittered after him from the study doorway.

"Cut off, you fat fool!" he snapped. "Yaroooh! Help! Yoooop!"

"Do you want me to kick you along the passage?" said Mornington, between his teeth.

Erroll's hand fell on his chum's arm from within the study. Morny gave him a fierce look for a moment, but he allowed himself to be drawn back into the room, and Erroll closed the door.

Tubby Muffin scrambled up, and rolled away down the passage, simply palpitating with indignant wrath. What was the cause of Morny's sudden outbreak of temper the fat Classical could not even guess.

In Study No. 4, Mornington and his chum looked at one another rather grimly. Then Mornington held out his hand for the paper.

"It's mine," he said.

"I know it's yours, Morny." Erroll passed the mysterious paper to the junior captain of Rookwood. "Will you tell me what it means?"

"Oh, it's nothin'!" said Mornington carelessly.

"Is that all?"

"What the thump does it matter?" exclaimed Mornington irritably. "You're jolly curious all of a sudden, Kit Erroll!"

"I'm not curious, Morny. You've never found me curious about your affairs, I think," said Erroll quietly.

"But I should like to know what that means."

"I tell you it's nothin'!"

Erroll drew a deep breath. "You've nothing more to tell me than that, Morny?"

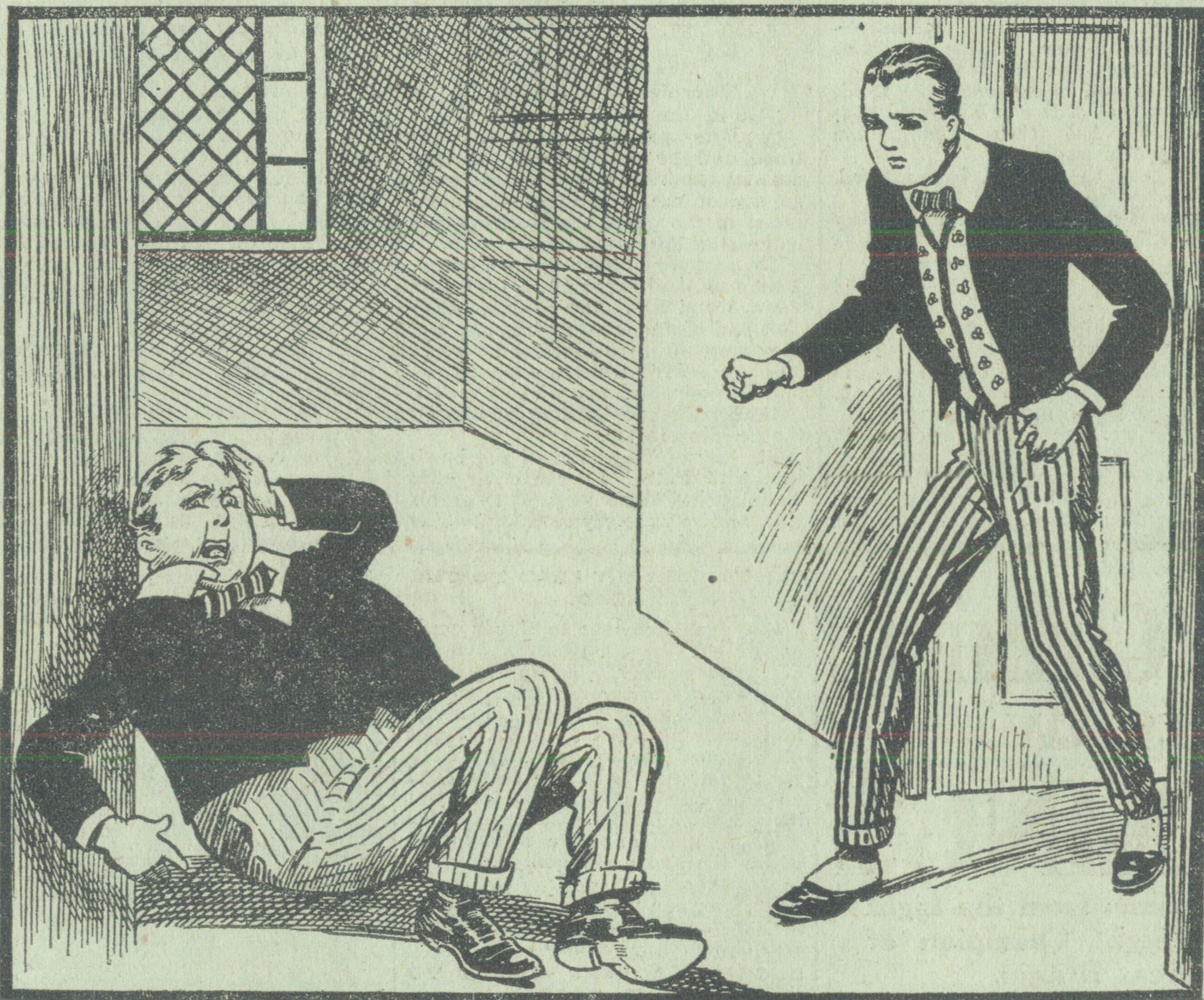
"Nothin'!"

"Very well!"

Erroll did not say another word. He sat down at the table and resumed the work so long interrupted. Mornington looked at him with a clouded brow, and shrugged his shoulders impatiently and quitted the study. There was no prep for Valentine Mornington that evening.

The 4th Chapter. Mornington Missing!

Jimmy Silver wore a pleasant smile as he came out of the School House after dinner the following day. There was bright sunshine in the quadrangle and the old red roofs of Rookwood glimmered in the sun. The cricket-field looked like emerald—a pleasant sight to the eyes of a cricketer. Jimmy Silver was feeling fit and cheerful, and quite well satisfied with himself and the universe generally.



MORNINGTON'S OUTBURST! Tubby Muffin was suddenly seized by his fat shoulders, and with a spin Mornington sent him whirling into the passage, where he bumped on the opposite wall and collapsed with a roar. "Do you want me to kick you along the passage, you fat fool?" said Mornington, between his teeth.

Bagshot was coming over that afternoon, and Jimmy was looking forward to the match. True, he was no longer junior captain. He had captained Rookwood in the last match with Bagshot, but this time Valentine Mornington was in command. But Jimmy did not mind much. He was the champion bowler of the Lower School—indeed, there were Sixth Form wickets that were not quite safe from Jimmy Silver, and his services could not be dispensed with in any important match. Not that Morny showed any desire to dispense with them. The new captain and the former captain pulled together remarkably well, and Jimmy's name had gone down in the list as a matter of course.

Jimmy Silver was going to enjoy himself that afternoon in his own way, which was by taking Bagshot wickets. He only hoped that Morny would prove the good batsman he had always been, in spite of the fact that the new skipper had been rather off-colour lately.

He caught sight of Mornington heading for the gates at a rather rapid walk, and called to him.

"Going out, Morny?"

Mornington glanced round.

"Yes!" he answered shortly.

"Bagshot get here at two-thirty, you know," said Jimmy Silver, rather

surprised that the skipper should be going out so soon before the match.

"Not going far, I suppose?"

"Oh, bother Bagshot!"

"Wha-at?"

Mornington coloured under Jimmy's astonished look. Then he smiled. To Jimmy Silver, the Bagshot match loomed large that afternoon, and Jimmy would have been more surprised still if he had known how little Morny was thinking of it just then.

"I—I mean, it's all right," said Mornington hastily. "I shall be back in plenty of time for Bagshot, Jimmy. I'm only going a little way—not so far as Coombe, in fact!"

"Right you are!" said Jimmy. Valentine Mornington went out at the gates, not seeming to see Kit Erroll, who was coming towards him across the quad. Erroll hastened his steps and then slackened again. It was pretty clear that his chum did not want his company just then.

Jimmy Silver glanced after Morny's disappearing form, and then at Erroll. It occurred to him that there was some rift in the lute in Study No. 4. That was not his business, however, and he sauntered away without a remark. Lovell and Raby and Newcome joined him in the quad.

"Morny gone out?" asked Newcome.

"Yes."

"Silly ass! He ought to be here. Blessed if I know what the fellows elected Morny skipper for," said Newcome. "You used to leave me out of

must say that Morny has looked a bit off colour lately, but everybody else is in great form. Conroy was batting yesterday like a Jessop, and Tommy Dodd is in remarkable form—for a Modern. We shall be all right!"

"Best of luck, old top!" said Newcome. And Newcome strolled away as his chums headed for the cricket-ground.

After two, the Rookwood juniors began to gather on the ground. There was a good team to represent Rookwood: Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, Conroy, Erroll, Van Ryn, Grace, Mornington—Classicals; and Dodd, Cook, and Doyle—Moderns. Ten of the eleven gathered on the ground, in spotless white; but Valentine Mornington was not there.

Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, gave them a look-in on his way to Big Side for practice. The big Sixth-Former glanced over the junior cricketers with an approving eye. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked very fit and business-like.

"Ready for business, what?" asked Bulkeley with a smile.

"Quite!" said Jimmy. "We're expecting Bagshot every minute now!"

"Where's your skipper?"

"Oh, Morny's coming along!"

"He's gone out," said Smythe of the Shell, who was hanging about the pavilion. "Met him on the Coombe road walkin' a quarter of an hour ago!"

Bulkeley looked surprised.

Jimmy called to Erroll.

"Know where Morny's gone, Erroll?"

"No!"

"Or when he'll be back?"

"Sorry, no!"

"Well, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver in dismay.

"Anything up?" asked Cecil Pankley. The Bagshot skipper could see that there was something amiss.

"Well, our skipper hasn't come in," said Jimmy Silver. "Morny's skipper now, you know. Mind waiting a bit?"

"Not at all!" said Pankley politely.

But the Bagshot fellows were smiling. They did not quite know what to make of a cricket captain who was absent, without explanation, when the match was due to begin.

Erroll ran down to the gates and looked out on the road. But there was no sign of Mornington there, and he returned to the cricket-ground with a knitted brow.

Mornington's inexplicable absence was generally known now, and it was the subject of animated discussion among the juniors gathering round the field.

Tommy Dodd was heard to inquire what fellows could expect when they elected a doddering Classical as captain. Tubby Muffin suggested that Morny had dropped into the Bird-in-Hand for a game of billiards, and forgotten all about the match—a suggestion which very nearly earned him a lunge from Erroll's bat.

How to account for Morny's peculiar proceedings was a mystery, and it was a mystery the Rookwood fellows had no time to solve. The minutes were passing, and, polite as the Bagshot Bounders were, they were showing signs of impatience. The Rookwood cricketers held a hurried consultation.

"We can't keep Bagshot hanging about much longer," said Jimmy Silver. "They're grinning at us already."

"We shall have to play without Morny," grunted Lovell. "What the thump does he want to take himself off just before a match for?"

"Goodness knows!"

"He—he may have had some—some accident!" said Erroll hesitatingly.

"Walked under a market cart, perhaps!" suggested Arthur Edward Lovell, with deep sarcasm.

"Well, as he hasn't come back—"

"More likely some of his cheek!" growled Lovell. "He's just gone out and let it slide."

"He wouldn't do that."

"Well, he's done it. The question is, are we going to play Bagshot, or ain't we?"

"You're vice, Jimmy!" remarked Raby.

Jimmy Silver nodded. "As Morny isn't here, we're bound to play the match," he said. "If you fellows agree, we'll get on. I suppose I'd better take Morny's place."

"And if the fellows had any sense, they'd make you keep it!" growled Lovell.

"Never mind that. We shall want another man," said Jimmy Silver briskly. "Where's Newcome?"

"The silly ass has gone out botanising!"

"That's rotten! We can't wait any longer. Pons will fill the bill. Know where Pons is, Conroy?"

"Here he is, old top!" said the voice of the Canadian junior, behind Jimmy. "Ready if you want me."

"Get into your things, then, sharp!"

"You bet!"

Pons was ready very quickly. Jimmy Silver, taking his old place as junior captain for the nonce, tossed with Pankley for choice of innings. It fell to Rookwood to bat first, and Jimmy sent in Lovell and Erroll to open the innings.

"There's still a chance for Morny," he said. "You're last man in, Pons, and if Morny turns up, you understand—"

"I savvy!" said Pons cheerfully.

Probably Pons was not very anxious to see Mornington turn up before the end of the innings. As it turned out, Morny did not do so, and when last man was called, the Canadian junior went in. The Rookwood first innings closed for 60 runs, and when it was over Mornington had not appeared; and every fellow on Little Side was asking himself the question, "Where was Morny?" without being able to find an answer to it.

The 5th Chapter.

A Surprise for Newcome!

"Fool!"

Arthur Newcome jumped.

Newcome was rambling through Coombe Wood, and, in his botanical zeal, he had gone a good distance

from the beaten paths. It was a very pleasant ramble among the big trees, interlaced by creepers and thick ferns, with the sun glinting through thick, green foliage overhead.

Newcome was in a quite contented mood. He would rather have been playing cricket at Rookwood, but he was enjoying himself in his own way.

The junior had supposed himself to be alone in the depths of the thick wood, seldom trodden by anyone. The sudden sound of a voice close at hand startled him.

It was not only the voice suddenly breaking the deep stillness of the wood that had a startling effect. It was the fact that the voice was that of Valentine Mornington.

Newcome had supposed that Morny was on the cricket-ground at Rookwood, deep in the Bagshot match. He stared round him in amazement.

Mornington was not to be seen, but the underwood was so thick that Newcome could not see more than a yard or two. As he looked round him he heard Morny's voice again.

"Fool! Fool!" Newcome grinned. "Morny's being jolly polite to somebody!" he murmured. Then he called out, "Hallo, Morny!"

There was a rustle in the underwood. Newcome pushed his way through, and came on Valentine Mornington.

The dandy of the Fourth was leaning against the trunk of an old oak, his hands driven deep into his pockets, and a black and moody expression on his face.

He gave Newcome a far from pleasant look.

"You!" he ejaculated. "What the dickens are you doin' here, Newcome?"

"Botanising!" answered Newcome cheerfully.

Morny gave a scoffing laugh. "What rot?"

"Thanks!" said Newcome, unperturbed. "But what the dickens are you doing here, if you come to that? I thought you were playing cricket."

"Cricket?"

"You haven't forgotten the match, I suppose?"

Morny's lip curled.

"Cricket! The match! What rot! I'm not thinkin' of cricket."

"It's a cricket captain's bizney to think of cricket, isn't it?" asked Newcome drily.

"Oh, rot!"

"Have you left the fellows in the lurch, then?" exclaimed Newcome warmly.

"Oh, they'll get on all right without me! I don't care a rap whether they do or not. Hang them! Don't talk rot!"

"You seem in a jolly nice temper this afternoon, Morny!" said Newcome, with increasing astonishment.

"If that's the way you treat cricket fixtures, you won't be captain long!" "Do you think I care?" snapped Mornington. "I've somethin' else to think about."

"The fellows will want to know the—"

"Confound the fellows!"

"You seem to be alone here," said Newcome, glancing round. "Whom were you calling a fool? I heard you!"

"Whom do you think?" sneered Mornington. "I was speakin' to myself, if you want to know!"

"Oh, I see! Well, if that's the case, you hit the right nail on the head, and got the right word."

"Oh, shut up!" Arthur Newcome's eyes gleamed, and he took a step nearer to Valentine Mornington. He was a peaceable fellow, but Mornington's manner was very hard to bear peaceably.

Morny regarded him with a sneering look. "Huntin' for trouble?" he asked. "If you are, I can give you all you want, Newcome. I'm just in a mood to smash somebody!"

"You can try your hand on me if you like," said Newcome. "I'm feeling quite inclined to damage your nose for you, you cheeky cad!"

Mornington clenched his hands hard, with a glitter in his eyes. But he unclenched them again, and shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the good?" he muttered. "I've played the fool! Cricket! I suppose I'd have done better to play cricket. But it was a chance—a glorious chance—and—"

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"Oh, nothin'! You'd better clear off, Newcome; let me alone. Hold on, though!" Morny came nearer to Newcome, with a gleam in his eyes.

"Can you lend me any money?" "Money!" repeated Newcome, in amazement. The sudden change of topic astonished him.

"Yes, money! I—I'm hard up. I—I want some tin!" said Mornington

eagerly. "I'm not a chap to borrow, as a rule; you know that. But—but I'm in trouble for want of some money, and that's the fact."

Newcome's face softened. He knew all about Morny's fall from fortune, and he would not have been surprised to hear that the once wealthy and extravagant dandy of the Fourth had plunged into some expense he found it difficult to meet.

"Oh, if that's it—" he said. "That's it! Can you lend me a few quids?"

"My hat! I'm not a giddy millionaire!" said Newcome, smiling. "I can lend you a quid if you like."

"That all?" asked Morny, his face falling.

"It's all I've got, you see."

"Shell out, then."

Newcome took a currency note from his pocket, and handed it to Mornington, whose fingers closed on it greedily. He hardly stayed to mutter a word of thanks, but darted off through the wood.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Newcome.

The sound of brushing foliage and hurried footsteps died away, and Arthur Newcome was alone. Morny was gone, but he had not gone in the direction of Rookwood. Newcome stood for several minutes, staring blankly in the direction Morny had taken, before he turned away from the spot. He shook his head seriously as he turned away. There was something wrong with Valentine Mornington—something very wrong indeed; and Newcome wondered what it was.

The 6th Chapter.
Mornington's Return.

"Go it, Jimmy!"

Shadows were lengthening at Rookwood, and the cricket-match was very near its close. Morny had not put in an appearance, and in the keen interest of the game the Rookwooders had almost forgotten him.

The match had been well contested. Rookwood had taken 60 in their first innings and 50 in the second. Bagshot had 65 for the first innings, and they were 40 in the second for eight wickets. Five were wanted to tie, and 6 to win, and two wickets to fall.

Jimmy Silver's bowling was to be the deciding factor.

Pankley of Bagshot had the bowling, with Putter at the other end. Pankley had done very well for his side, and he was very confident. The

over was beginning, and Jimmy Silver was going on to bowl, and all eyes were upon him.

"Go it, Jimmy Silver!" "Good old Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver sent down the ball, and Pankley smiled as he played it. The leather went whizzing, and it looked like two to Pankley, and he ran, and Putter ran. But the ball came quickly in with a smart return from Kit Erroll, and it proved only a single.

Putter had to face the bowling, and it was Jimmy Silver's turn to smile. He knew that he could handle Putter. Clack!

The sound of the falling wicket followed the ball, and there was a roar from the Rookwood crowd.

"Well bowled, Jimmy!"

"Bravo!" "Good old Jimmy!" "Last man in!"

The last Bagshot man came to the wickets, and he was very wary. He knocked the ball away for a single run, and gave the bowling to Cecil Pankley again. Three to tie, and four to win, and Pankley was in great form.

And the hopes of Rookwood fell almost to zero when Pankley scored two from the next ball.

"All over bar shoutin'!" yawned Adolphus Smythe of the Shell.

"One to tie, and two to win!" murmured Arthur Edward Lovell. "Oh, Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver was not in a hurry to deliver the next ball. The result of the Bagshot match probably depended on it, and Jimmy Silver put all he knew into it. The ball came down, and Pankley played.

There was something like a groan from Lovell as the leather flew hot from the bat.

And the Rookwooders gasped. They had hoped, and more than half expected, to see the wicket go down; and the wicket was still standing, and the batsmen were running.

And then there was a roar. "Erroll, Erroll! Well caught!" "Oh, well caught, sir!"

Kit Erroll, with a flush in his face, held up the ball. And all Rookwood roared:

"How's that?" "Hurrah!" "Well caught, Erroll!" Jimmy Silver rushed up to the fieldsman and gave him a tremendous clap on the shoulder.

"Good man!" he gasped. "Oh, good man!"

"Our win!" chortled Lovell. "Rookwood wins! Hurrah!"

Pankley grinned at Jimmy Silver as he came off.

"Jolly near thing!" he remarked. "That was a good catch—or was it a giddy fluke?"

"No fear!" said Jimmy, laughing. "It was a fluke your getting so near to a win, old top."

"Bow-wow!" was the Bagshot skipper's reply to that.

There was keen satisfaction among the Rookwooders. The end had been very close, but the win was all the more satisfactory on that account. Only Kit Erroll's face was clouded as the cricketers came off the field. He was thinking of his absent chum.

Newcome came in as Jimmy Silver & Co. were heading for the School House.

"How did it go?" he inquired. "Won by a run."

"Good!" "My hat! Morny never turned up, after all!" exclaimed Lovell, remembering the existence of Valentine Mornington. "What do you think of that for a skipper?"

Newcome nodded. "I knew," he said. "I met him in the wood this afternoon."

"Then he's had no accident?" exclaimed Raby.

"He didn't look like it. He seemed a bit worried, that was all."

"He'll get some plain English when he comes back to Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

After the Bagshot fellows were gone, Jimmy Silver repaired to Study No. 4. He knew that Kit Erroll was anxious about his chum. He found Erroll moving restlessly about the study. Erroll looked up quickly as Jimmy appeared in the doorway.

"Has he come in?" he asked eagerly.

"Not yet."

"I—I think there must have been some accident," faltered Erroll. "It's unaccountable, otherwise."

"That's what I came to tell you," said Jimmy Silver. "There's not been any accident."

"How do you know?"

"Because Newcome met Morny in the wood, when he was out on his botany stunt. Morny simply let the match slide."

(Continued on page 348.)

"BOY" McCORMICK TALKS ON BOXING!

Personal Hints from the Light Heavy - Weight Champion of Great Britain.

"BOY" McCORMICK. Holder of Lord Lonsdale's Championship Belt.

THE USE OF THE RIGHT HAND.

The right hand is used principally for guarding, but also for following up an opening made by the left. Remember, it is never advisable to lead off with the right, as your opponent can usually see this hand coming from the further distance, and should you miss your shot you will find yourself in a disastrous position.

When following up with the right (after an opening made by the left) you should bring your right foot forward, so that at the time your blow lands your right foot should be in advance of your left, and your right shoulder turned round to enable you to get your full punching power.

It is neither wise nor necessary to be continually guarding blows with your right forearm, as this defence is purely an old-time custom.

We have been taught by modern methods, blended with experience, to evade at all times unnecessary exertion. Now I am going to deal with "defence," which is the next best thing to "attack."

THE ART OF DEFENCE.

I promised you in the last article that I would deal with the various modes of defence this week, and there is heaps to study in this particular branch of the "noble art." I can assure you.

Defence plays a very prominent part in boxing, and should be given

special and careful attention. A man without a good knowledge of defence completely crumples up before a determined attack.

Now, as a rule, the arms and hands are considered the chief means of protection; but ducking, slipping and blocking must be taken into account, as the incessant guarding or warding of blows with the right or left forearm is very tiring and damaging. Just imagine how bruised and battered your arm would soon get were you to continually ward off your opponent's heavy leads. Also, in defence, just the same as in everything else connected with boxing, it is absolutely necessary to vary your methods in avoiding blows. For instance, if you got into the habit of guarding all his left leads to the face with your right arm, he would only have to feint to cause your arm to go up, leaving him a clear opening to the body, which is all he wants.

So you see how necessary it is to learn all the different ways and means of avoiding blows. By varying your defence you will have your opponent nonplussed, and keep him from his little ways of feinting at you with the idea of getting home his favourite punch.

The use of the head in slipping and ducking blows is invaluable, but will only come to you with experience and constant practice. It is the artistic side of boxing, and partly comprises the science of the manly art. It is advisable when you are practising the moves I am about to explain to you, to choose a sparring partner as near your own weight and size as possible.

SLIPPING A LEFT LEAD TO THE HEAD.

Get your opponent to slowly push out his left for your face. As you see his hand coming, just incline your head slightly to the right, far enough to allow his hand to travel harmlessly over your left shoulder. Don't blink your eyes or look away from your opponent, but keep them fixed on him, and you will find that you have a splendid opportunity now for a left to the face and a right to the body. These are commonly known as counter-hits.

Ducking is a means of defence used for avoiding swings to the face (round-arm blows).

DUCKING A LEFT SWING TO THE FACE.

Ask your friend whom you are sparring with to swing his left round to your face very slowly, and as you see the blow coming, duck under it to your right by bringing the head under first and then under your opponent's travelling left. The movement with the head is practically a half-circle. Had your adversary been boxing seriously, and placed any appreciable force behind his blow, he would have swung himself completely off his balance, leaving you with an excellent opportunity with either left or right, or both.

The duck for the right-hand swing is performed in exactly the same manner, but of course you duck your head under his right, taking a circular downward movement to your left.

By missing you with a right swing, you will find that he has placed himself even more so at your mercy, his body having been swung completely round with the impetuosity of his effort, and consequently you are in a dominating position.

It is unnecessary to go through the wide, sweeping "exercises" with the head; just duck sufficiently to allow the blow to pass over you.

Your opponent might possibly try to deceive you by feinting with his left for a swing to the face, and then, as you duck, endeavour to uppercut you. As a precaution against this possible occurrence, it is as well, when ducking, to drop your head into the palm of your left or right glove. This will form an effective guard.

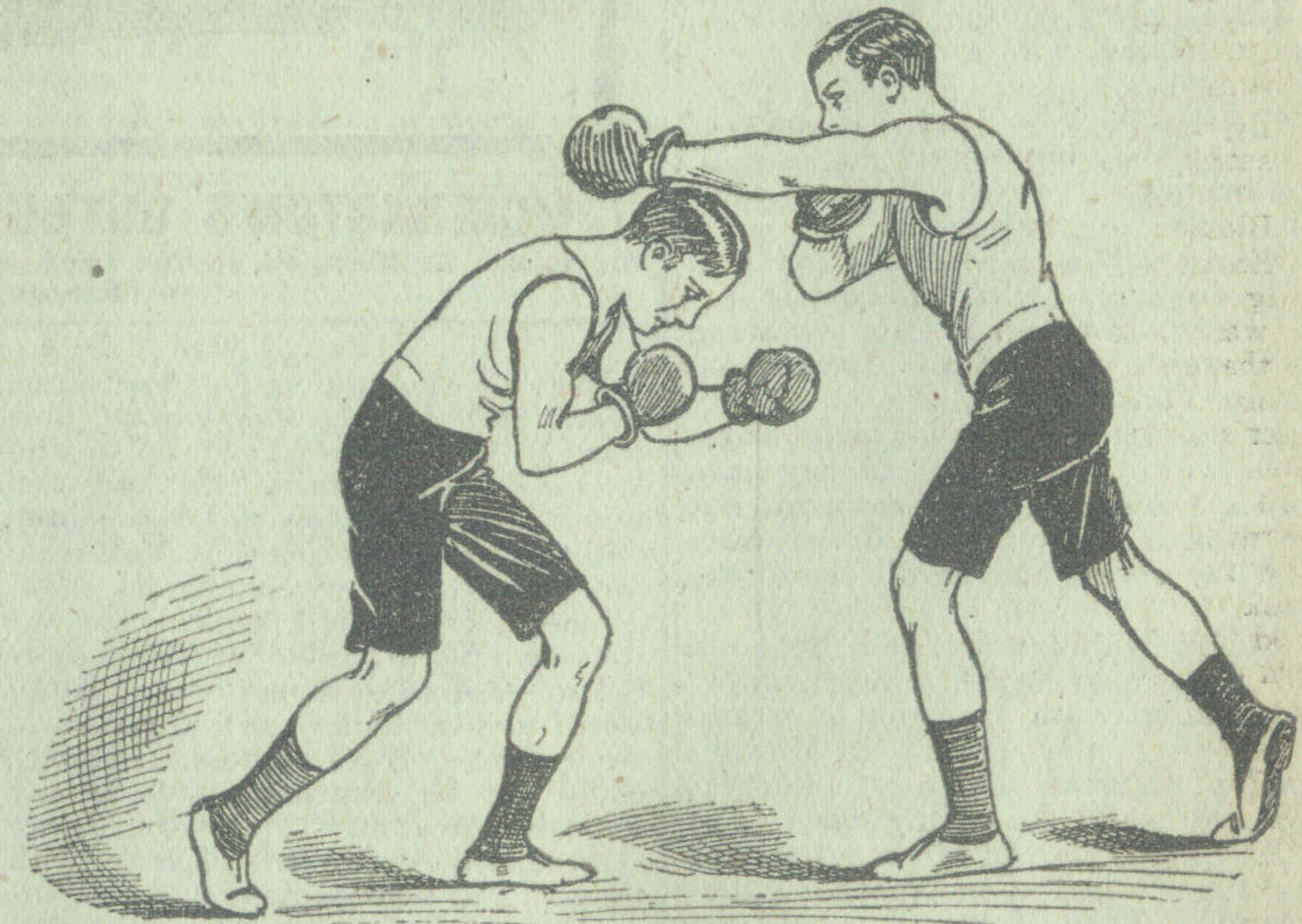
When slipping or ducking a blow, never get flurried or mixed up. If

you have made up your mind to duck his effort, don't lose your head at that very moment and endeavour to guard with your arm as well. You are sure to fall between two stools. Your mind must be made up quickly, and if you are going to use your head to avoid a blow, do it cleanly and with confidence.

There is another way to avoid a straight left or a swing to the face, and that is by drawing the head back sufficiently far enough to allow the blow to fall short by the matter of an inch or two. A miss is always as good as a mile, and the shorter the

versed the position—he will be in the corner.

Side-stepping is also very valuable to the boxer, and is used chiefly to avoid rushes by your antagonist. An easy way to execute this movement is to step back with the left foot, face your right, and take a pace to the right with the right foot, and then bring your left foot over so that you are once more in the correct boxing position. On the completion of the movement you will find that the position you now occupy is a matter of a couple of feet to the right of your former position. As your opponent



Ducking a left swing to the face, if properly carried out, leaves you an excellent opening for a right or left punch to the body. (See accompanying article.)

distance between his fist and your face after his effort is spent, the better. You see, it will enable you to get back all the quicker to land a counter. This is where your judgment of distance comes in, and this latter is most essential in all your movements in boxing.

With regard to the duck, you will notice that if your opponent should get you into a corner of the ring, and, as is usually done, sends out a left swing to the jaw, by ducking swiftly in the manner described and taking a quick step to your right, you will have got out of an awkward situation. Turn quickly and you will have re-

passes you, carried forward by his rush, he will be the recipient of a nasty blow, providing you are quick enough to accept this opportunity.

You will have to practice this side-stepping movement very slowly at first, as it will appear a trifle difficult to the beginner, but you can gradually speed yourself up until you are easily able to avoid a rush and get a counter in as well.

you sincerely
Boy, McCormick



The 1st Chapter.

A Message from the Sea!

"What is it, Bob?" Bob Lawless did not answer. He was standing on the rocky headland at Pacific Point, shading his eyes with his hand and looking away towards the sea.

It was a bright and sunny morning, and the wide waters of the Pacific glimmered blue in the sunshine. The waves broke on the rocky Canadian coast with a deep murmur. Frank Richards & Co. were clambering along the headland, exploring for traces of the schooner wrecked there a couple of days before, when Bob Lawless halted and fixed his eyes upon the sea. Frank and Vere Beauclerc followed his glance, but they could see nothing but the glimmering blue waters. Far out at sea a rocky islet rose barely to view on the horizon, and overhead the seagulls were wheeling and calling. But that was all.

But Bob Lawless evidently saw something more, for he stood shading his eyes and gazing at the sea with an intent gaze. Frank Richards tapped his Canadian cousin on the shoulder. "What are you looking at, Bob?" he asked.

"I guess it's a bottle!" said Bob at last.

"A bottle?" ejaculated Frank.

"Yep!" Frank glanced at the shining sea again. He made out a small object that rolled on the waves, occasionally glittering as it caught the rays of the sun.

"What the thump does it matter?" he asked. "Nothing in a bottle to bother about, that I can see!"

"It's floating!" said Bob. "That's curious!" remarked Beauclerc.

"If the cork were out, it would sink!"

"Then the cork's in," said Frank. "It's a bottle from the schooner that went down, I suppose. What about it?"

"Franky, old man, you didn't learn to think at Cedar Creek School!" said Bob Lawless reprovingly. "If that bottle were full, it would sink; and if the cork were out, it would sink. I guess it's an empty bottle with the cork in—see?"

"Well?"

"Well, you jay!" exclaimed Bob. "Why should anybody put the cork in an empty bottle before chucking it into the sea?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Exactly!" said Bob. "But I'm going to know. It's drifting in on the water, and I guess I'm going to see that it's not broken!"

Bob Lawless ran down to the water's edge, and his chums followed him.

The bottle, dancing afloat on the incoming waves, was plainer to the view now, and the chums of Cedar Creek watched it as it came on. Bob stood ready to wade in to save it from collision with the rocks if necessary.

"There's a good many bottles from the wreck strewn along the shore, Bob," said Frank Richards. "What does one more matter?"

"I guess that's not from the wreck!"

"Why not?"

"It's two days since the schooner went down. Everything that was coming ashore has come by this time. That bottle has been afloat all the time it's been in the sea, and if it had come from the wreck, I reckon it would have been ashore long ago. I guess it's not been in the water so long, or else it comes from a greater distance. And there's something in it—"

"Whisky, perhaps!" said Frank, laughing.

"Whisky would sink it!"

"Then it's empty, I suppose!"

"Correct—so far as liquor is concerned. But it's corked, or it would go down. Haven't you ever heard

of messages from shipwrecked sailors shut up in a bottle and thrown to sea, fathead?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Frank.

He was interested now. Three pairs of eyes were fixed upon the bottle as it danced shoreward on the waves.

Closer and closer it came. The chums of Cedar Creek School watched it eagerly.

The possibility that the floating bottle contained a message from a shipwreck excited them.

And unless it contained something of the kind, it was difficult to see why an empty bottle should have been so carefully corked.

Bob Lawless tramped into the sea as the bottle was tossed close, and grasped it and bore it ashore in triumph.

"Now I'll guess we'll see!" he remarked.

eager to read the strange message from the sea.

It ran:

"Help!"

"Whoever finds this bottle is begged to send help to save a shipwrecked man.

"I am the sole survivor, so far as I am aware, of the American schooner Eliza Smith, a coasting trader belonging to Seattle. I took passage in her from the North, returning from the Klondike. The crew learned that I had gold in my possession, and mutinied during a storm, and the ship struck while the struggle was going on. The ringleader was an Italian named Benedetto. I was thrown into the sea when the schooner sank, but I found a spar and clung to it. This morning I found myself cast upon a rocky islet. Where I am I cannot tell, but I can see mountains to the



AT BAY! "Seize him!" panted the miner. But the oar swept round, and the schoolboys floundered back out of reach. The miner had the empty revolver clubbed in his grasp, but it was useless as a weapon until he could get to close quarters. And the Italian's whirling oar drove him back.

The chums of Cedar Creek gathered eagerly round the prize.

The bottle was a common one, and had evidently contained spirits at one time, but its light weight showed that it contained none now. The cork was driven in flush with the top, so that it could not possibly escape.

"Anybody got a corkscrew?"

"That's about the last thing I should have thought of putting in my pocket," said Frank, laughing.

Crash!

Bob Lawless knocked the neck from the bottle on an edge of rock.

Inside the bottle a folded paper was seen.

Bob Lawless drew it out with fingers that trembled with excitement.

The paper was a single leaf, apparently from a pocket-book, and it was written on in pencil.

And the first word that caught the eyes of the chums of Cedar Creek was "Help!"

The 2nd Chapter.

Benedetto!

"My hat!" murmured Frank Richards. "You were right, Bob, it's a message from a shipwreck!"

"I guess so!"

Bob Lawless unfolded the paper and spread it on a flat rock in the sunshine, and the chums of Cedar Creek bent their heads over it together,

eastward, so I conclude I must be near to the Canadian coast. I have found water in a gully, and the eggs of sea-birds, but there is no other food, and I must perish miserably unless I am speedily rescued.

"Send help! I will divide my gold-dust equally with whoever shall save me.

"Help!"

"ROBERT OAKE."

Frank Richards drew a deep breath as he finished reading. The chums of Cedar Creek looked at one another.

"The schooner that went down here was the Eliza Smith," said Frank. "You remember the name—it was on the boat?"

Bob Lawless nodded.

"And the Italian who escaped from the wreck—the man we dragged out of the sea," said Frank. "He called himself Lazarini, but—"

"As likely as not the man mentioned here, I guess," said Bob. "It's plain enough he was one of the gang who tried to rob this poor chap, Oake, on the schooner. And that's why he's hanging about Pacific Point, though the Mounted Police are after him. He's still after the Klondike gold."

"That's it."

Bob Lawless looked away towards the sea, and pointed to the rocky islet that rose just above the blue waters in the distance

"He's there!" he said. "That's the island he mentions, I'll bet; it's the only islet near this part. He put this message in the bottle and threw it into the sea, and the water's brought it across the bay."

"My hat! Then we—"

"I guess we'll have a boat out today, and visit the island," said Bob. "If he's there, we'll find him. We'll take this paper to Mr. Hichens at the hotel, though."

"Lazarini spoke of an Englishman with a brown beard who was on the schooner," said Frank. "I shouldn't wonder if this was the man. Of course, it's pretty clear. That's why Lazarini was so anxious to know if the Englishman had come ashore—it was the gold he was thinking about."

"Clear enough!"

"And the poor chap's stranded on the island yonder all the time, most likely," said Vere Beauclerc. "If that's the case, we can soon have him off. And the sooner the better."

Bob Lawless spun round suddenly, as there was a sound among the rocks. Only a few yards away a dark and savage face rose over the rocks—the face of Beppo Lazarini, the Italian whom the schoolboys had saved from the wreck.

His black eyes glinted at the chums of Cedar Creek.

The expression on his dusky face showed that he had heard every word uttered by the trio.

"Lazarini!" ejaculated Frank. "Or Benedetto!" said Bob Lawless.

"That's his right name, I guess; and now we'll collar him. Come on!"

The chums of Cedar Creek made a movement towards the Italian.

Lazarini did not retreat.

He came clambering over the rocks towards them, a heavy bludgeon in his hand.

forward, the bludgeon whirling in the air.

But the chums of Cedar Creek were ready for him.

They separated and dodged the savage blow, and at the same moment the lumps of rock were hurled.

Crash, crash!

There was a yell of anguish from the ruffian, as the heavy, jagged missiles struck him.

He staggered back, the bludgeon dropping from his hand.

"Collar him!" shouted Bob Lawless.

The chums of Cedar Creek rushed forward.

In a moment more their grasp would have closed upon Benedetto; but the Italian, eluding them, dashed away among the cliffs and disappeared.

"After him!"

Frank Richards picked up the bludgeon, and the three chums rushed in pursuit.

But the ruffian was gone. "We'll let them know at the hotel!" gasped Bob Lawless, stopping at last. "Not much good hunting him among these rocks—like looking for a needle in a haystack. Come on!"

And Frank Richards & Co. hurried back to the lumber hotel at Pacific Point.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Castaway.

Mr. Hichens, at the Pacific Point Hotel, removed his pipe from his mouth and whistled, as he listened to the story of the Cedar Creek chums.

"Then that Eytalian is still hanging around," he said. "I calculated he had vamoosed the ranch; the Mounted Police haven't been able to find hide or hair of him. You youngsters had better keep around the hotel, I guess, till he's laid by the heels."

Frank Richards & Co. smiled. They had little enough intention of keeping "around" the lumber hotel.

"I guess not, Mr. Hichens," said Bob Lawless. "I reckon we've got a cruise on this afternoon."

"A cruise!" repeated the landlord.

"Correct! We're taking the canoe out to the island, to look for the galoot who put that paper in the bottle."

"What-ho!" said Frank.

Bill Hichens glanced at the sea, and the sky, and nodded.

"I calculate there won't be a blow to-day," he remarked. "You can go in the canoe if you like; the dago won't be able to swim arter you, I reckon. Good luck to you!"

And after lunch at the hotel the chums of Cedar Creek ran out the canoe, and embarked.

The Pacific was as calm as glass, and the little craft was safe enough on the sea in the hands of experienced canoers like Frank Richards & Co. They had done a great deal of canoing in the creeks and on the river in the Thompson Valley. As for the Italian, they gave him no thought. Benedetto might be dangerous ashore, but at sea he could not reach them. And several men from Pacific Point were already searching the headland for the elusive mutineer of the Eliza Smith.

Three paddles flashed into the water, and the canoe glided away swiftly across the bay.

Out in the wide bay the roll was wider and heavier, and the chums had to be careful.

In the distance the rocky islet rose more clearly to the view.

One or two sails glimmered on the sea—coastwise vessels going south to Vancouver or the Californian ports; and far out on the ocean they sighted the smoke-stack of a steamer.

Bob Lawless glanced back towards the land.

Pacific Point was only a spot now, and behind the shore the mountains of British Columbia rose in great masses against the sky.

Near the headland a boat was pulling out to sea, with a single man at the oars.

Bob gave it only a careless glance.

There were several fishermen at Pacific Point, and the chums had often watched them in their boats on the bay.

The boat was following the same track as the canoe, but at a good distance.

"I guess that's the island of the bottle galoot right enough," said Bob Lawless. "He mentioned that he could see the mountains, east, so he couldn't be so very far off the shore. I reckon we'll find him on Gull Island."

"I hope so," said Frank. "We ought to see something of him when we get a bit nearer."

The chums glanced incessantly at the rocky isle as it loomed up larger and clearer.

Bob Lawless shrugged his shoulders. "Will you give me the paper?"

"Nix!"

The Italian seaman made a spring



THE CASTAWAY!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"I guess there's another galoot coming out for you, Mr. Oake," remarked Bob Lawless, with his eyes on the sea.

The man from the Klondike glanced round.

The boat the schoolboys had seen pulling out from the headland was drawing near the island now.

The sun streamed down on the man who sat at the oars, pulling away steadily—a bareheaded man, with thick, black hair.

As his back was to the island, the schoolboys could not see much of him, but it struck them that there was something familiar about the thick, clustering, jet-black hair.

"I guess I've seen that black poll before," said Bob, suddenly. "That isn't the topknot of any of the Canadian fishermen, I guess."

"Lazarini!" exclaimed Frank Richards, with a jump.

Oake sprang to his feet.

"Benedetto!"

As if he knew that his name had been spoken, the man in the boat looked round towards the islet, and the chums of Cedar Creek recognised the swarthy, savage face of the man they had saved from the sea.

The 4th Chapter.

Face to Face.

"Benedetto!"

The man from the Klondike muttered the name between his teeth.

His hand went to his hip-pocket, and a deadly glitter came into his eyes as he watched the Italian in the boat.

The boat pulled steadily on for the islet.

"The hound!" muttered Bob Lawless. "He must have taken that boat from one of the fishermen—it's one of the Pacific Point boats. What's he done to the owner, I wonder?"

"Let him come a little nearer!" said Oake grimly.

He had taken a revolver from his hip-pocket, and was examining it carefully.

Frank Richards & Co. looked at him quickly.

"You're not going to fire at him?" exclaimed Frank.

Oake nodded.

"I guess so," he answered coolly.

"What do you think the dago is coming here for?"

"He heard us talking, after we had found the paper in the bottle—"

"And he knows I am here?"

"Sure!"

"He is still after my gold-belt!" said the Klondike miner. "I reckon it's something else he is going to get!"

"But—"

Oake held the revolver ready in his hand, down at his side, so that the Italian should not observe it, and watched the boat.

Frank Richards & Co. looked at one another.

They knew the Klondike man's intentions.

They knew, too, that Benedetto was pulling to the islet with murderous intent—that he was a mutineer and an assassin, and that he deserved his doom. It was for the sake of Oake's gold-belt that he had roused the mutiny on the Eliza Smith, and thus caused the wreck of the schooner; it was for that, that he had lingered at Pacific Point, instead of making his escape inland. And it was plain enough that he would stick at nothing when he landed on the islet. But it went too much against the grain to see him shot down defencelessly.

The chums of Cedar Creek stood, troubled and undecided, as the boat pulled nearer. The broad back of the Italian, as he bent to the oars, offered an easy target, and the man from the Klondike was only waiting for a favourable moment.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Frank Richards, as Oake raised his arm.

Bob caught at his wrist.

"You can't shoot him!" he said.

Oake uttered an impatient exclamation. It was pretty evident that he had been used to rough ways on the Klondike, where life was held cheap.

"I guess I've two thousand dollars in dust in my belt," he said. "Half of it belongs to you youngsters, for coming here to me. That's what the dago is after. He's going to get lead instead of gold."

"We don't claim any reward for coming here for you," said Bob.

"But—you can't shoot a man in cold blood. Let him land, and we'll rope him in and take him back to Pacific Point a prisoner."

"If he has a shooter about him—"

"He hasn't! He's lost his knife, too," said Bob. "We shall handle him easily enough when he lands."

The man from the Klondike gave a grunt.

"You've saved my life," he said. "I should have starved to death here but for you. You're a fool, but I guess I'll let you have your way. But if he resists, I'll drill him on the spot!"

"That's all right," said Bob.

The boat was very near now.

Benedetto had seen the landing-place and the four figures standing there by the canoe, and he came on, as if intending to land in the same spot. But at a distance of a dozen yards from the shore he stood up in the boat, and his black eyes fixed on the Klondike miner.

Oake eyed him steadily, his hand behind him, with the revolver in its grasp.

"Cospetto! So you are still alive, amico mio," said the Italian. "You also have had good fortune. And the gold—that is still in your belt, non e vero?"

"I guess so," answered Oake quietly.

"Listen to me, then. Throw the belt into the boat, and I will pull away, and leave you in peace."

The man from the Klondike laughed.

"You refuse, signor?"

"I guess so. Come ashore."

"I shall come fast enough, mi amico," said Benedetto. "And neither you nor the giovani will live to tell of what has happened."

"I guess that galoot is a cool customer," murmured Bob Lawless.

"There's four of us here, and he's unarmed."

"Is he unarmed?" muttered Vere Beauclerc. "He must have taken that boat by violence; and he may have obtained weapons."

"He wouldn't be fool enough to attack four of us unarmed," said Frank Richards. "He must have a weapon. Look out!"

Benedetto stooped in the boat, as if to take up his oars again to pull ashore.

The next moment a rifle glinted over the gunwale.

It was evident that the Italian was armed.

"Look out!" shouted Oake.

Crack!

The Italian fired quickly, but the man from the Klondike was on his guard. He dropped on his knees behind a spur of rock, and the bullet whistled harmlessly over his head.

"Cospetto!"

A curse from the Italian floated over the water.

Frank Richards & Co. had darted into cover instantly.

As the report echoed and rang among the crags of the islet, the castaway and his rescuers were out of sight, and the Italian stood in the rocking boat, with the smoking rifle in his hand, gritting his teeth.

"I guess it's my turn now!"

Oake muttered the words grimly.

He raised his head cautiously above the rock.

The Italian was quickly reloading the rifle in the boat, his eyes glinting towards the shore as he did so.

Crack!

Oake's revolver rang out; but the Italian, quick as a cat, dropped on his knees in the boat.

Crack, crack, crack!

Three rapid shots pumped into the boat, but the Italian was lying below the gunwale, and there came no sound from him. But that he was not hit was soon proved. The barrel of the rifle rose into view over the gunwale, glimmering in the sun, the Italian keeping out of sight.

Oake watched grimly.

Frank Richards & Co. peered out of the cover of the rocks, and watched the boat.

They noted that it was drifting nearer to the shore on the undulating waves, and it was only a matter of minutes before the crouching Italian would be exposed to the revolver.

The man from the Klondike was waiting.

He did not waste a shot. Only two bullets remained in his revolver, and he had no more ammunition. He could not afford to waste another ball.

There was a sudden movement in the boat, and Benedetto rose into view, and the rifle rang out. The revolver answered it at the same moment.

Crack-ack!

There came a scream of pain from the boat, and the Italian dropped the rifle.

The Klondike miner stood unharmed. The rifle-ball, fired so hastily, had gone near enough to clip a fragment

of cloth from his shoulder, but that was all.

"I guess that's got him!"

The Italian was clapping his right arm with his left hand, and his fingers were red.

The rifle lay in the bottom of the boat, smoking.

Oake ran down to the water, with the chums of Cedar Creek at his heels. The boat had drifted very close now, and they were able to wade to it in the shallow water.

"Hands up, dago!" shouted Oake, as he strode into the water to the rocking boat.

His revolver was levelled.

Benedetto, with a snarl like a wild beast, threw his hands above his head.

"Our game, I guess!" grinned the man from Klondike. "Ah, would you!"

Benedetto had made a sudden spring from the boat. The revolver rang as he did so; but the shot was hurried, and it missed the Italian by an inch or more.

The next instant the grasp of the ruffian was upon the Klondike miner, and they were struggling furiously in the water.

The 5th Chapter.

For Life or Death.

Splash!

Splash!

The struggle was fierce, but it was brief. Before the chums of Cedar Creek could lend their aid to the Klondike miner it was over. For a moment it had looked as if the big, brown-bearded miner would crumple up the slighter Italian in his grasp; but his foot slipped in the sand under the water, and he went backwards.

The water closed over his head, and the Italian sprang free.

With the water washing to his waist, he stood for a moment, his black eyes glaring at Frank Richards & Co.

But he did not attack them.

He scrambled back to the boat, and clambered in, as Oake rose, panting and spluttering, from the water.

"Seize him!" panted the miner.

He splashed towards the boat.

Frank Richards & Co. were already wading to it as fast as they could. Their object was to seize the Italian before he could reload the rifle. But Benedetto was in the boat again now, and an oar whirled in his grasp. He aimed a savage blow at Oake, and the miner sprang back, splashing.

The oar swept round, and the schoolboys floundered back out of reach. Oake had the empty revolver clubbed in his grasp, but it was useless as a weapon till he could get to close quarters, and the whirling oar drove him back.

Benedetto did not heed the rifle. He would have been given no time to reload it, and he knew it. He shoved the oar against a rock under the water, and the boat sprang out from the shore.

Out of reach of his foes, the Italian seaman seized the other oar, and began to pull.

His black eyes glittered back at the four as he pulled away from them. The blood was running down his wounded arm, but he did not heed the wound. Oake muttered an oath between his teeth.

"He's getting his distance, to pot us from the boat," he said bitterly. "If you had let me drill him at first—"

"Tumble into the canoe!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "I guess the canoe can beat that boat any day. He won't get us yet."

"I guess that's a good idea."

Frank Richards & Co. and the miner tumbled hurriedly into the canoe as the Italian pulled off.

The chums of Cedar Creek flashed out the paddles.

There was no paddle for Oake, and he sat watching the Italian, with the useless revolver in his grasp.

As the canoe glided out into deeper water the Italian ceased to pull. The boat was fifty yards distant, and he had time now. Laying in the oars, he picked up the rifle, and loaded it methodically.

There were tense faces in the canoe now.

Oake was muttering between his teeth. The Italian had been at his mercy, and the schoolboys had held his hand. But it was too late to think of that now. The Italian was preparing to fire.

"I guess we'll beat him yet!" muttered Bob Lawless. "Once we get a start, he'll never get near us in that heavy boat."

"Look out!" muttered Beauclerc.

The Italian, kneeling in the boat, was taking aim at the canoe. The rifle was far from steady. The ruffian's right arm was hurt, and the wound was painful, and the boat was

rocking on the sea. Benedetto dwelt long and carefully upon his aim before he pulled the trigger.

Bob Lawless muttered directions to his comrades. The three paddlers acted as one man.

Instead of proceeding in a direct line, the canoe wound and twisted like a snake on the calm surface of the sea, zigzagging its course, and the evil scowl on Benedetto's face showed how the movement baffled him in taking aim.

He fired at last.

Crack!

But the zigzagging canoe was six yards from the line of fire when the bullet flew.

The ball splashed into the waves harmlessly.

"Good for you!" exclaimed Oake.

"Now," panted Bob Lawless, "go it! Put it on, like thunder!"

His comrades did not need bidding. They paddled with every ounce of their strength to put a greater distance between the canoe and the boat while the Italian was reloading his rifle.

The canoe fairly flew over the shining waters.

"Look out!" called out Oake. "He is taking aim again."

"Play up!" said Bob.

The canoe resumed its zigzagging course.

It was a good hundred yards and more from the boat now, and the Italian's task was more difficult than before. Only by chance could the bullet strike the occupants of the rapidly-twisting little craft.

Crack!

The bullet ploughed up the water, a dozen yards from the canoe, and the chums of Cedar Creek burst into a laugh.

"Now put it on!" exclaimed Bob.

Again the canoe flew on at top speed.

The Italian, standing up in the boat, was reloading the rifle as fast as his injured arm would permit. Had he possessed a repeating-rifle the result would probably have been different. But the fisherman's gun, he had stolen with the boat, was an old-fashioned breech-loader. Before he was ready to fire again the canoe was almost at a safe distance.

Crack!

"I guess he won't hurt us now," grinned Bob Lawless. "Where did that one go?"

"About twenty yards off," said Beauclerc, with a smile.

"He's rowing now," said Oake.

Bob Lawless chuckled.

"Let him row. I guess we can beat that old boat in this canoe, and not half-try."

Bob Lawless was right.

Benedetto had taken the oars again, and was pulling desperately after the canoe. But at every stroke of the paddles the distance between the two craft was increasing.

Pacific Point was in sight now, and the schoolboys could see moving figures on the beach, among them a mounted man in uniform. It was one of the North-West Mounted Police. Benedetto looked round at the canoe, and, with an oath, relinquished the oars. He was losing instead of gaining, and the sight of the mounted officer on the shore gave him pause.

He seized the rifle again, and loaded and fired as rapidly as he could. But the canoe was almost out of range now, and the bullets flew wide. And from the shore there came the crack of a rifle, and a ball flew very near to the Italian's boat.

A furious dusky fist was shaken after the escaping canoe as the Italian abandoned the chase.

He threw down the rifle, and took up the oars again, pulling away to sea. For his life he dared not land, and he had to take his chance on the open ocean.

Frank Richards looked after him, and he was not sorry to see the boat vanishing into the haze of the sea. Benedetto was gone, and Frank wondered whether he had seen the last of him. The gold belt for which the ruffian had plotted and shed blood was safe from him now. Five minutes later the canoe ran on the sand, and Frank Richards & Co. jumped ashore.

The next day the man from the Klondike started for Vancouver, but on land this time, on a horse borrowed at Pacific Point. And for several days afterwards horsemen were riding up and down the coast in search of Benedetto. But the Italian was not found; and Frank Richards & Co. concluded that his boat had drifted out upon the Pacific, and the deep blue waters held the secret of his fate.

THE MYSTERY OF MORNINGTON!

(Continued from page 340.)

"He—he couldn't!" muttered Erroll.

"Well, he did."

"But—but why should he?"

Jimmy's face set grimly.

"That's what he will have to explain when he comes in. The cricket club can't be treated in this way."

"I think he must have a good

reason, Jimmy. Give him a chance, you know."

"If he had a good reason, he can tell us what it was," said Jimmy Silver; and he left the study.

Erroll, with a troubled brow, went downstairs. He could not account for Morny's conduct, but there were dark forebodings in his mind. He had not forgotten the list of numbers discovered by Tubby Muffin, of which he knew the meaning far better than Jimmy Silver did. And there was a deep fear in his heart that evil had befallen his chum.

A good many fellows gathered in the big doorway, to wait for Morn-

ington to come in. It was close on locking-up now, and his return could not long be delayed. Tubby Muffin's fat squeak was heard at last from the dusky quad.

"Here he comes!"

A figure loomed up in the dusk.

Valentine Mornington came striding towards the School House, and he came up the steps with a set face and a black brow. His look was not pleasant; and one or two fellows who had intended to "jaw" him decided not to do so. But Morny's black look had no terrors for Jimmy Silver, and he spoke at once as Mornington entered the House.

"You've missed the match, Mornington."

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"You're supposed to be junior captain!" exclaimed Lovell. "What the thump do you mean by it?"

"Find out!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Morny!" muttered Erroll, in distress.

Mornington did not even glance at his chum.

"Don't you even want to know how it went, Morny?" exclaimed Raby, in angry disgust.

"Not in the least!"

Mornington strode on towards the

staircase, leaving the juniors gazing.

"Mornington!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Go and eat coke!"

And Mornington tramped up the stairs without another word.

Jimmy Silver made a step after Mornington, but he stopped. There was nothing more to be said just then. But it was pretty clear to all that Mornington's days as junior captain of Rookwood were numbered.

THE END.

(Another long, complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next Monday's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND, entitled "Captain and Slacker!")

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."

Readers of the BOYS' FRIEND are invited to contribute short original paragraphs of general interest for publication on this page. Cash prizes of five shillings and half a crown, according to merit, will be awarded to the senders of all paragraphs published.

NEXT MONDAY'S ATTRACTIONS!

"CAPTAIN AND SLACKER!"

By Owen Conquest.

The above is the title of the magnificent long complete story of Rookwood School. The behaviour of Valentine Mornington, the junior captain, forms the topic of conversation throughout the whole junior school, and the general opinion is that the reckless junior is treading the downward path. This yarn is very powerfully written, and none of my readers should miss it.

"SKULL ISLAND,"

By Duncan Storm.

Next Monday's instalment of the greatest adventure story which has ever appeared in the BOYS' FRIEND takes the boys of the Bombay Castle to Ghost Island—an island of mystery populated by savages, where some very exciting happenings occur.

"PERILS OF THE PACIFIC!"

By Martin Clifford.

This splendid story of Frank Richards & Co. deals with their further holiday adventures. The Italian seaman, Benedetto, makes his appearance in a strange manner on board the Ocean Queen, which is taking the chums of Cedar Creek to Vancouver. Benedetto proves a tough customer, and the boys come in for a very adventurous time.

"THE SPORTS OF ST. CLIVES!"

By Arthur S. Hardy.

Another long instalment of our popular school and sporting serial appears in the next issue of the "Green 'Un." A party of juniors from the Lower School investigate the mysterious light which can be seen at night in the direction of the school roof, and some amazing revelations come to light.

GRAND NEW FEATURE.

Already I have received shoals of letters in appreciation of the boxing articles by "Boy" McCormick. Next week the youthful champion gives us a splendid article on

DEFENCE AND FEINTING,

which will prove very instructive to all those who are followers of the "noble art" and who wish to add to their store of knowledge of this universal sport.

In addition to this full programme I have another poem by the Rookwood Rhymester, who this week in his "Personalities" series deals with Lattrey.

A FIRST-RATE TIME.

In saying that I enjoyed the holiday this year more than that of previous years I am not departing from the truth. I consider the holiday I spent this year as exceptionally enjoyable. A party of nine of us started out with the intention of camping out for two or three days. We decided to put up a tent in a field situated between Cuffley and Northaw. The

expedition was a huge success. It was very exciting and adventurous, keeping watch in turns at night and rising early with a wash under a pump were things we liked immensely. Our knowledge of cooking was not profound, but we managed to cook our breakfast fairly well. When at last the time arrived for us to return home we reluctantly packed up our tent and cooking utensils and proceeded homewards. Each of us strongly asserted that it would not be our last camping-out expedition. It is an ideal way of spending a holiday.

Thomas Goldsmith, 12, Hartington Road, Victoria Road, Lower Edmonton, N. 9, sent in this pithy account of his enjoyable holiday. I am sending him the sum of half-a-crown in return.

THE GERMAN SMUGGLERS.

The fortnight before the signing of the Peace terms our division was moved up to the occupied area boundary-line, in case we were needed to advance forward if Germany did not sign. While there we spent many an exciting and amusing day searching the German people who travelled from the occupied area into unoccupied Germany in case they were smuggling goods to their unfortunate friends. One day, while I was on duty with two of my pals, a German farm-wagon came along carrying logs of wood. We stopped it at the barrier and began our search. We unloaded all the wood, and had started replacing it when my pal noticed that the bottom of the waggon looked very funny, so we knocked up the boards, and, to our amazement, we came across soap, rice, cigarettes, tobacco, etc. We at once arrested the "Jerry," and lodged him in prison. The German is very cute, and he is using all the tricks of the trade to smuggle foodstuffs across the boundary-line; but the British Tommy is more than a match for his dodges.

No. 24654, Private J. Wright, 3rd Highland Brigade Headquarters, British Army of the Rhine, will in due course receive the sum of five shillings, which I am forwarding him for the above interesting contribution.

HOW THE "BOYS' FRIEND" IS PRINTED.

The other day I was asked to give an article on this subject. I am afraid that just at present it is impossible to do this, though the whole subject bristles with vivid interest. In fact, the business of printing is one of the really fascinating topics of the day. More and more is being discovered concerning it, and it would cause not a little surprise to many of those who buy their copy of the BOYS' FRIEND on a Monday if they could peep into the vast works where the old "Green 'Un" is prepared for sale. The whirring of the machines pretty well takes the breath away. The scene is full of life, and to those who did not know it might seem that there was confusion, with people rushing to and

fro, orders being given, telephone-bells always ringing, and so forth. But there is no confusion. Everything is in its right place, and the same of every worker. Then as to the actual setting up. In the old days all papers were set up by hand. That was long before the coming of the famous linotype machine. Not that the compositor of the past was slow. Slow! It gave one a headache to watch him, with his swift movements, the smart way in which he picked out the type. I used to think that the compositor looked about the most learned man in the world. I am not at all sure he is not. He has the expression which means intense concentration. It was not possible in his exacting calling—and the same thing may be said of the printer of the present age—for him to let his attention slide, no; not for a single second. I can still see the tableau of unceasing work in an old printing office of a daily paper. The building used to be a theatre in the bygone—it and the street it stood in have both vanished now—and there in the bright light were the rows of cases. Of a morning there was the work of distributing and putting the cases ready for the rush. And later on—it was an evening paper that was printed—there was the rush of news, with boys flying out of the composing-room with wet proof-pulls just off the hand-machine in the corner. These were so wet that the sub-editor had hard work to make his corrections, as one cannot write on damp paper—or not very well. Those are far-away days, but there was just the same rush. Messengers were hurrying in from the House of Commons with fresh consignments of a speech on Ireland by Mr. Gladstone, there was a sensational police-court case being heard at the Westminster Police-court, and everybody scurried. And there was the foreman printer in his shirt-sleeves, his big red beard flaming in the gaslight, cutting up the pages of copy into strips with scissors half a yard long, and handing out, say, a hundred words to this compositor and that, shouting to them by name to come and take their bit. Pretty well everything has changed since that period, in a mechanical way that is; but there is the same need for rush now as in the old times. An evening paper has to dash for the news. By six o'clock the working day is pretty well over, as it is difficult to get the fresh editions distributed after that time. People have left the town and gone home to tea. But all this has taken me no end of a way from the subject of the BOYS' FRIEND as one sees the copies being reeled off the gigantic machines, copies all folded and ready to be sent off north and south and east and west, even faster than old Lars Porsenna's couriers flashed the intelligence that war was declared!

OLD LONDON.

One of these days I should like, if you do not mind, to have a chat about London. Sometimes the thought strikes me, as I see the sweltering

crowd pressing forward for a seaside train, that some of them would get more real pleasure if they elected to spend a short holiday in town. Please don't laugh! There is something in it, though you may fancy the notion sounds strange. Holiday-makers will put up with any inconvenience, and pay large sums to sleep in the open, or in a bathing-machine—which is far worse; for commend me to a bathing-machine for awkwardness and general stuffiness!—when they might enjoy comfort at home and see things which will supply them with cheery reflections for many a long day afterwards. Do not imagine that I am decrying the sea. I am not. A call on the silver sands, a few hours amidst the jellyfish, and a hearty laugh at the pierrots and their amusing songs will all do anybody good; but sometimes, when all the world is on holiday, it is wise to postpone that sort of pleasure for a bit. Now, good old London Town is hardly ever visited by the Londoner. He leaves that pleasure to his country cousin. The Tower of London should be seen again. You can get fresh air enough from the gallery of St. Paul's—currents straight off the North Sea—and there is Hampstead as well. A few day-trips round the little old Thames-side village will repay anyone—the odd corners of the city and their romance, the mulberry-tree which grows on placidly, although there is a restaurant underneath its roots, the interesting foreign quarters where hardly any English is spoken, and a score of other sights and scenes far too numerous to be mentioned. Not but what it goes against the grain to travel through those foreign quarters and see all the notices in the windows, etc., in a language which is unfamiliar. Still, you cannot have everything as you would wish! You must have noticed that fact ere now. And a lot of these foreigners are extremely interesting. Have you ever talked to a Yidd? I have—one night I wandered into a theatre a long way from Charing Cross, though still in London, and listened to a play in Yiddish. One could understand a lot of it, because when the touching bits came along the characters broke into German. I hate German, but it is one of those things which has to be borne. I went round during the performance and had a chat with the chief actor. He was a Russian, and not at all a bad chap. We got along in French, though his accent was pretty husky. He was making up in his dressing-room. The apartment was a gloomy little cave, and his dressing-table was deplorable, likewise the cheap mirror into which he peered to make sure he had got those red streaks all right. He told me a lot of wonderful things about his travels up and down Europe. He seemed to have been everywhere, and he had written the play himself. He was quite a Jack-of-all-trades. Yes; as a Yidd there was nothing to be said against the fine fellow, but his season did not prosper in this city of London. His countrymen were too busy making money to go to the theatre much, I expect!

A NEW CLUB.

Fulham is to be congratulated on the fact of the new club which it is proposed to organise for the lads of the district. The public-spirited organisers of the institution very wisely realise the need for such a headquarters where boys, who would otherwise have to make use of the streets as their playground, can indulge in games and sports of all sorts. Fulham boys do not want a goody-goody club, but a place where they can feel free and at their ease. All success will be wished the enterprise. The other night I visited the club run in Bethnal Green under the auspices of Oxford House. It was a splendid scene altogether. Fellows who had been hard at work all day were playing billiards and bagatelle and other games, and they all seemed right down proud of their club, as well they might, for it is a good one—a model of its kind. One would like to see more of such clubs where a couple of cheery hours might be spent of an evening.

THE CINEMA.

It is plain as paint that there is a bigger time than ever coming for the cinema. One of these days we shall be seeing Jimmy Silver, Tubby Muffin, Lattrey, and the others on the film, not a doubt of it. There is room for school stuff, and every day I find in my post-bag such requests as "Why don't you get the stories on the pictures?" All in good time. But for the moment that was not what I was thinking. The picture-houses must give stories, serials, and otherwise, but it is being more and more recognised that the public, young and old, wants a variety of subjects. Crowds of hard workers like to see something of the news of the day at the cinema. They get a real grasp of facts then. And besides the news there are the wonders of science—the growth of plants, the new discoveries, a hundred-and-one things which can be illustrated on the film to the amusement and the profit of all.

THE POST-BAG.

I mentioned that bulky article just now. It gets bigger and bigger. You should see the worthy postman staggering into the Fleetway House morning after morning! And it is not only once a day. Several times in the course of the interesting period between sunrise and sunset I receive batches of letters from my friends all over the world, and as far as possible I endeavour to answer them all. What I want to say is this—if there is any delay in answering a letter, please put it down to the right cause, namely, press of work.

Your Editor