

# The BOYS' FRIEND I 1d 1/2

TWELVE PAGES!

TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

No. 1,004. Vol. XX. New Series ]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending September 4th, 1920.

## The Man In Black!

By Owen Conquest



### A WARM RECEPTION FOR THE GIDDY GOATS!

The man in black chased the juniors down the hall with a heavy malacca cane. Falling over one another, the hapless Goats crammed into the little kitchen in their hurry to escape.

#### The 1st Chapter.

##### A Little Joke on Adolphus.

Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell, adjusted his necktie before the glass in his study at Rookwood with a careful hand—a very careful hand. In such matters Smythe of the Shell always was careful. He might be careless in lessons and thoughtless as regards prep., and a hopeless slacker in games; but when it came to neckties Adolphus was "all there."

"Ready, you fellows?" drawled Smythe, when the beautiful tie was adjusted exactly to his satisfaction, which was not till he had spent a good five minutes upon it.

"Waitin'!" said Tracy. "Waitin' some time," remarked Howard, with a touch of sarcasm.

"Then we'll start, dear boys. I hope the other fellows are ready."

"I can see Towny and Toppie at the end of the passage."

"Good!"

five juniors proceeded downstairs together.

It was a half-holiday at Rookwood, and evidently the nuts of the Lower School had planned a little excursion for that half-holiday. Jimmy Silver & Co., of the Fourth, were chatting in the doorway, discussing what was to be done with the afternoon. The Fistical Four smiled as Smythe & Co. came elegantly along.

Arthur Edward Lovell affected to shade his eyes with his hand, as if dazzled by the brilliance of the nutty quintette.

Smythe bestowed a lofty frown upon him.

"Hallo, going out, Smythey?" asked Jimmy Silver cheerily.

"Yes."

Smythe's reply was lofty and distant.

He was not on amicable terms with the heroes of the end study in the Fourth.

"Race you across the quad!" said Jimmy affably.

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Adolphus. The bare idea of racing across the

quad on a warm afternoon, and clad in his nuttiest garments, made Adolphus feel almost faint.

"Good idea!" said Raby. "We'll give you a start, Smythey."

"Six yards!" said Newcome liberally.

"Oh, don't act the goat!" said Smythe. "Do you think we're going to race about with a set of fags?"

"Hardly!" said Tracy. And Howard sniffed.

The elegant company walked past the Fistical Four and went down the steps. Jimmy Silver winked at his comrades.

"Six yards, that's agreed!" he called out.

Adolphus looked back over his shoulder in alarm.

"We're not racin'!" he exclaimed. "Don't you fellows begin playin' the goat, I tell you!"

"Your mistake, Smythey—you're racin', said Lovell. "If we catch you we're going to roll you over!"

"In the dust!" chuckled Raby. "And squash your toppers!" said Newcome.

"Look here, you ruffians—"

"All serene! We've got an eye on you!" said Jimmy Silver. "We'll start as soon as you're ready."

"We're not goin' to race!" shouted Adolphus.

"My dear man, you are!" Adolphus & Co. halted. The Fistical Four, grinning cheerily, watched them from the steps.

"What are you waiting for?" called out Lovell.

"Oh, come on!" muttered Townsend. "It's only their cheek. Come on!"

The nuts started again. "They've got their six yards!" said Raby.

"Start!" called out Jimmy Silver. The Fistical Four came down the steps with a rush.

"Better hook it!" muttered Adolphus uneasily, trembling for his silk hat.

The nuts broke into a run. They headed for the gates at their best speed, with the Fistical Four whooping on their track.

It was really only playfulness on

the part of the Fistical Four, but Smythe & Co. were alarmed. Their nutty clobber was not designed for a rough-and-tumble with playful Fourth-Formers.

They put it on to the best of their ability, flying for the gates.

"Bravo, Smythey!" chortled Lovell. "I've never seen him run like that before, except once, when the Coombe butcher's boy was after him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Adolphus. He clutched at his topper as it nearly sailed off his head, and caught it just in time.

"Go it!" sang out Mornington, who was sauntering under the beeches with Erroll. "Put it on, Smythey!"

"Oh, gad!"

"Two to one on the end study!" chuckled Conroy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Half-way to the gates the Fistical Four were close on the tracks of the fleeing nuts. They could have overtaken them at any moment they had chosen, but they refrained. Keeping

behind the running nuts, they contacted themselves with tapping them on the shoulder, or poking them in the back, just as a warning to keep up. Adolphus's eyes were red and breathless and panting, and in terror every moment of being collared from behind and rolled in the dust.

Townsend and Topham arrived at the gates first, and sped out into the road. Tracy and Howard escaped after them, the pursuers stopping in the gateway. But Adolphus Smythe lagged. Two many cigarettes after dinner had given Adolphus trouble in the wind, and he was lagging and gasping and spluttering dolorously.

Jimmy Silver gently tilted up his hat from behind to spurt him on, and Adolphus gave a howl. His hat flew off at last and rolled in the gateway.

"Jump on it!" roared Lovell. Now, the Fistical Four certainly were not to have missed a fifty-five shilling topper by jumping on it; but Adolphus was not aware of that. He sprang furiously after his topper, and came down on his hands and knees as he hurriedly recaptured it. The temptatress Adolphus presented on his hands and knees was too much for the playful pursuers. Four boots pushed Adolphus in the rear at the same moment, and Adolphus rolled over.

"Yoop!" he roared. "Ow! Yoop!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Adolphus clutched up his topper and sprang to his feet. He shook a furious fist at the grinning four.

"Ow! You rotters! Yow! Keep off, you cads! Yaroooh!"  
Topper in hand, Adolphus bolted over the gate and chased his comrades in the road. They started for Coombe at a great rate.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Jimmy Silver & Co. remained in the gateway, shouting with laughter. The Giddy Goats of Rookwood then appeared down the road, only too happy to be pursued no farther by the exuberantly playful four. The latter, Adolphus has dropped something!" exclaimed Lovell, at the same moment. "Excuse me, but we caught sight of a slip of paper lying in the dust."

Jimmy Silver picked it up.  
"A letter or something," he said. "I'll keep it, and give it to the duffer when he comes in. Why, my only hat!"

It was not a letter that Jimmy held in his hand. It was a tradesman's bill, and Jimmy could not help seeing what was on it.

"SNOOKS & CO.,  
Wine Merchants, Rookwood.  
1 bottle champagne £1 15 0  
Paid."

## The 2nd Chapter.

### Tubby Gets Left.

Tubby Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, detached himself from the shell Coombe Lane, with a fat grin upon his face.

From the direction of Rookwood School five juniors came in sight, loafing along now at a leisurely pace.

"Here they come!" murmured Tubby.

The fat Classical rolled out into the middle of the lane to intercept Smythe & Co.

They did not seem glad to see him. Smythe & Co. were still annoyed by the encounter with the Fistical Four, though they had resumed the calm repose of manner which they cultivated with great assiduity. Smythe's topper, though not jumped upon, had lost a little of its pristine brilliance, in spite of careful smoothing with a handkerchief. But even if the Giddy Goats of Rookwood had not been in a state of annoyance, they would not have been pleased to meet Tubby Muffin. Fellows seldom were pleased to meet Muffin.

Tubby seemed pleased, however. He nodded and grinned at the Giddy Goats with great affability.

"I've been waiting for you chaps," he said.

"You needn't have taken the trouble!" snapped Smythe. "I'm not at all in a hurry. Roll away, you fat porpoise! You spoil the landscape!"

"He, he, he!"  
"What are you cacklin' at?" demanded Tracy.

"Your little joke, old chap," answered Muffin. "Come on! How lucky I didn't miss you, isn't it?"

"It would have been luckier for you if you had," said Smythe, drawing back his boot. "Where will you have it?"

Reginald Muffin dodged.  
"I say, Smythe?"  
"Roll him in the ditch!" growled Tracy.

"Good egg!"

"Look here, you fellows, I want to be friendly," urged Tubby Muffin.

"I'm coming with you, you know—I'm coming to the bungalow!"

"Smythe gave a start.

"What do you know about the bungalow?" asked Jimmy Silver.

The fat Classical grinned.  
"My dear man, there's precious few things I don't know!" he answered. "I know you're going to Heath Bungalow for a spree, and I'm coming."

"We're goin' over to Latham," remarked Howard carelessly.

Tubby Muffin closed one eye.

"You've been listenin' at the key-hole again!"

"I may have happened to hear you talking about it, Smythe," said Tubby Muffin. "I may, and I may not. Anyhow, I know you've got a smoking-party on this afternoon, and you're going to play cards at the bungalow, because you're afraid Bulkeley might spot you at Rookwood."

"Nothin' of the sort!" said Tracy. "How could we get into the bungalow, you duffer, when it's been locked up for ages by the tenant wret?"

"Tubby wouldn't again."

"Think I don't know you've been there before?" he said. "I know all about the back window being unfastened."

"You spyin' rotter!" said Smythe, between his teeth.

"Don't you call a chap names, Smythe, when he's being chummy!" said Tubby Muffin warmly.

Bulkeley mentioned to Jimmy Silver what Tubby was saying after this.

"He wouldn't believe you; he knows what a thumpin' liar you are!" growled Smythe.

Smythe had looked uneasy; but that reflection reassured him. Jimmy Silver, as junior captain of Rookwood, might very probably have felt it his duty to intervene if he had known of the Giddy Goats' plan for that afternoon. But he was not likely to place much faith in a yarn of Tubby Muffin's. Tubby was a little too well-known as a faithful repeater of Ananias.

"Of course, I'm not going to say a word," said Tubby. "I wouldn't give my name away, you know. I know you fellows want me to come—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"I happen to be short of money," said Tubby. "O—don't deny it; but I suppose I'm all right?"

"I'm a dab at card games, you know," pursued Tubby. "You fellows ain't the only sports at Rookwood, I can tell you. I'm a regular demon when I get going!"

There was a loud chortle from the nuts.

Tubby Muffin was rather hard to take seriously as a "regular demon" at any time.

"Of all the born idiots!" said Topham.

"Come on!" said Tubby. "We're wasting time, you know!"

Smythe exchanged a glance with his companions.

"We don't want that fat cad followin' us!" he muttered. "Collar him!"

"You bet!"

The five juniors closed round Tubby Muffin.

Five pairs of hands were laid upon him wherever there was room for a hold.

"Here, I say—" yelled Tubby. "Roll him over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"I'll tell Jimmy Silver!" howled Tubby, as he went rolling in the dusty lane.

"Here's a bad of nettles!"

"Shove him in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh!"

The ditch by the lane was dry, and it was half-full of nettles. The nuts of Rookwood gave a heave all together, and Reginald Muffin sat in the nettles, with a prolonged howl.

Leaving him sitting there, Smythe & Co. walked on, chuckling, along the lane.

Tubby sat in the nettles and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow! Yah! Rotters! Blackguards! Smoky rotters! Yoop! Help!"

Smythe & Co. disappeared along the lane and turned into the wood, following a short cut to the heath.

There was no help for Tubby Muffin.

He scrambled out of the ditch, considerably stung by the nettles, and gasping with wrath.

"Oh, that rotten wret!" growled Tubby. "When a chap was being really friendly, too! Ow! Wow! I'm stung! Ow!"

The fat Classical shook an enraged fist in the direction in which the Giddy Goats of Rookwood had disappeared. "Yow-ow-ow! I'll tell Jimmy Silver! But—"

"I won't believe me, the beast! He never does believe me, the rotter! Just as if I wasn't the most truthful

chap at Rookwood—yow! But I'll tell him, all the same! Yow-ow-ow!"

And Reginald Muffin started for Rookwood, growling as he went, fully determined to expose Jimmy Silver of what he knew—though with a dismal foreboding that he wouldn't be believed.

## The 3rd Chapter.

### A Surprise!

"Here we are!" said Smythe.

The Giddy Goats had arrived at their destination.

At some distance from the edge of the wood, on the wide heath, the bungalow stood in a very lonely position.

There were several bungalows on Coombe Heath, which were usually let to summer visitors; but it was some weeks since this one had been occupied. Its lonely situation, and some defects in its construction, made it less desirable than the others.

The last tenant, during a rain-storm, had found his bed swimming in rain, and had cleared off in consequence, not caring for the open life to that extent.

It was nearly two miles from the village, and only a cart-track led to it. But the bungalow, though not popular among summer visitors, was just the thing for Adolphus Smythe and his nutty companions.

A heavy window lacked a fastening, and it was easy enough to enter. And in the lonely and deserted bungalow it was easy enough for the Giddy Goats to make their entry.

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The kitchen was a small one, and it was pretty well crowded by the five Rookwood juniors when they were all inside.

"Come on!" said Adolphus gaily. "I'll show you the kitchen-ward which led into a passage which ran through the bungalow from front to back."

At the other end was the front door, and on either side of the passage several other doors opened the whole building, of course, being on the ground floor.

"Hallo!" muttered Tracy suddenly. "What's the matter?"

Tracy pointed with a startled finger. In the hall, ahead of them, was a bamboo hall-stand. The juniors had seen that before—the bungalow was a furnished one. But now, on the pegs of the stand, hung a hat and coat!

The Rookwooders stopped dead. The utterly deserted appearance of the bungalow, from the outside, had reassured them; they had taken it for granted that it was still quiet. But the hat and the coat hanging on the pegs told a different tale. And close by the hall-stand they discerned a leather travelling-bag.

"B-b-y gad!" stammered Smythe. "There's some somebody here—"

"It's late!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Hook it!" gasped Townsend. Before the startled and scared nuts could move back, however, to retreat the door of the front room opened.

A man came out into the passage. Undoubtedly he had heard the footsteps of the intruders.

He jumped at the sight of the five juniors. Smythe & Co. stared at him blankly.

He was a little man, dressed in black, with a dark, swarthy face that hinted of foreign blood. He wore a pointed black beard, and a moustache that curled up to the corners.

For a moment or two the juniors and the occupant of the bungalow stared at one another, mutually astonished.

The tenant found his voice first.

"Who—who are you?" he stammered. "Oh, gad!"

"Sorry, sir—"

"We—we thought—Oh crumbs!"

"You spying young rascals!" shouted the man in black, a storm of rage. "How dare you enter my house!"

"Oh dear—"

"We—we thought it was empty, and—"

"We—we didn't know—"

"Look out!" shrieked Townsend. The man in black made a dart towards the hall-stand, and snatched up a heavy malacca cane.

What he intended to do with that cane was not clear.

The frightened nuts stampeded frantically for the kitchen, Smythe dropping his precious bag in his hurry.

Crash!

The bottle that had cost the nutty Adolphus thirty-five shillings smashed into pieces on the tiled floor, and spilt champagne swamped over squashed pastry.

Adolphus did not heed.

He was not thinking of either champagne or pastry just then, but of the cane in the hand of the angry tenant of Heath Bungalow.

Falling on their hands, their heads, their hapless Goats crammed into the little kitchen, and Tracy was first at the window.

He jammed in it, in his haste, with his comrades gasping round him, and then the man in black came racing up.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooh!"

"Stoppit!"

"Yooopoo!"

"Oh orkies!"

No doubt the man in black, like the prophet of old, did well to be angry. The invasion of his residence was quite unexcusable. But certainly his anger seemed to pass all reasonable limits. He lashed round with the heavy cane with an utter recklessness of the damage he did. Only a ruffian would have used one in such a way.

Tracy was the offence given by the hapless juniors.

Lash, lash! Whack! Swack!

"Oh crumbs!"

Smythe & Co. couldn't even get at the window. Lashed and whacked, and utterly confused, they dodged frantically round the man in black, and fled into the passage again.

The man paused, before pursuing them, to look at Tracy, who was already situated for a whacking.

The cane lashed and rang on the hapless Shell fellow's trousers, and he rolled headlong through the window, shrieking. Then another man in black dashed into the passage after the other four. Smythe was frantically

fumbling at the front door to get it open, but the enemy was upon him before he could do so.

Lash, lash, lash!

"Yoop! Stoppit! Ow!"

"Scat! Help! Yaroooh!"

The terrified juniors scattered again, dodging along the passage and into the woods.

Smythe staggered into the front room, half-dead before he knew that had caught him on the head, nearly smashing his valuable topper.

Howard, Towney, and Topsy bolted into a bed-room, and the man in black bolted after them. Smythe was left alone in the front room for a minute or two.

He leaned helplessly on the table, gasping for breath.

The yells of his hapless comrades rang in his ears. The man in black, who at close quarters with them, thrashing them without mercy.

"Oh gad!" almost sobbed Smythe. He was too breathless and terrified to move for the moment, he leaned on the table for a moment for breath.

As he did so his eyes rested on the papers that lay on the table. Then, in spite of his terror and confusion, he gave the papers a second glance.

For what he saw before him was a heap of engraved sheets of thick paper, covered with small print, with some words in larger type, and figures.

They were bonds!

Smythe, whose father was in the City, knew a bond when he saw one, and he was conscious that he was looking at a heap of War Bonds worth hundreds of pounds, at least—perhaps thousands.

Evidently the tenant of 158 bungalow had been going over his bonds, examining them, when the juniors startled him from his occupation.

But Smythe did not waste time thinking about the wealth that lay before his eyes. He snatched it, simply because he could not help doing so. As soon as his breath came back he scuttled to the window, dragged it aside the blind, and tore the sash up.

In a ruffianly man in black behind him, he rolled through the window, and dropped upon the neglected flower-bed below the sill.

He knew a bond when he saw one. He leaped up and ran as if for his life, quite forgetful of his unlucky comrades still inside the building.

He did not stop till he was outside the dilapidated fence. Then, gasping for breath, he paused and looked back.

A side window was open now, and Howard, Townsend, and Topham came tumbling out, one after another, each with anguish as the heavy cane lashed after them.

They rolled on the ground, and sprang up again, and bolted across the garden.

"Come on!" panted Smythe.

Tracy was already half-way to the wood. Smythe & Co. bolted after him, in terror lest the man in black should issue forth from the building and pursue.

He did not do it.

The windows were closed again, the blinds fell into place, and the bungalow resumed its silent and deserted appearance as the unhappy boys of Rookwood stumbled out of the wood, and dodged in among the trees, and threw themselves upon the greensward, utterly spent.

Adolphus Smythe's wretched party had not been the joyful occasion that the Giddy Goats of Rookwood had anticipated!

## The 4th Chapter.

### Looking After Adolphus.

"I say, Jimmy—"

"Scat! Jimmy—"

Jimmy Silver almost snarled, as Tubby Muffin addressed him. He was in no humour for Tubby.

The Fistical Four were entering along the lane near the school when Muffin joined them, breathless.

There was a grim shade on Jimmy's brow.

The wine-bill belonging to Adolphus Smythe was in his pocket, but the thought of it was not in Jimmy's mind.

Jimmy was pretty well aware of the manners and customs of the Giddy Goats, but he had not hitherto suspected Adolphus & Co. of having reached this limit, and he was wondering what he ought to do. As junior captain of Rookwood he was bound to intervene in a disgraceful case such as the lesson of their lives.

Jimmy would not have hesitated to "wade in," and give the reckless young rascals the lesson of their lives. But the Giddy Goats had long been out of sight, and Jimmy had no idea where to find them.

So Jimmy, who was feeling worried and disgusted, was not as patient as when the fat Classical fastened upon him in the lane. Jimmy, if he did not "suffer fools gladly," according to the old injunction, was at least very patient with Tony, as a rule. But now he gave the fat junior a gentle shove which caused him to sit down, and walked on with his chums.

"Why, you rotter!" howled Tubby. He scrambled up and pursued the Fistical Four.

"I say, Jimmy—" "Go away!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Buzz off! Travel! Don't worry! Disappear!"

"I've got something to tell you!" howled Tubby Muffin indignantly.

"Oh, rats!" I don't want to hear any of your yarns now, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver gruffly.

"Tain't a yarn!" "Bosh!" "Tell you Smythe—" "Jimmy stopped, arrested by the name.

"What about Smythe?" he asked quickly.

"Well, you'll listen now!" grunted Tubby Muffin. "I've a jolly good mind not to tell you now, after your cheek!"

"Please yourself, fathead!" Jimmy Silver snapped, and he turned away again.

"Hold on, Jimmy! I'll tell you!" gasped Muffin. "Don't make me run after you like this, you beast! I'm tired and I'm out of breath, and—"

"Can't you stop a minute? You ought to know about it, as captain of the Lower School."

"About what?" exclaimed Lovell.

"About what Smythe's boozing."

The Fistical Four exchanged quick glances.

"Smythe—boozing!" repeated Raby.

"He's guzzling champagne at this very minute, and smoking, and playing cards," said Tubby impressively.

"I felt it my duty to tell you, Jimmy. And it's really true—it really is, you know, this time!"

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"At any other time he would have dismissed Tubby's impressive information as simply one of Tubby's yarns."

But the wine-bill in his pocket was a confirmation of the story.

"I—I say, you believe me, don't you, old chap?" pleaded Muffin hopefully.

"I don't know. Tell me what you know about it, and cut it short!" said Jimmy Silver sharply.

Muffin gasped out his tale.

"I happened to hear the rotters talking it over yesterday, you know—quite by accident, of course!"

"Oh, of course!" snorted Arthur Edward Lovell.

"If you don't believe me, Lovell you—"

"Get on with the yarn!"

"Well, I—I was awfully shocked, of course—"

"Cut that out!"

"I—I waited for them in the lane this afternoon, and—and remonstrated with them—"

"More likely you wanted to make one of the party, and they weren't taking any!" growled Lovell.

"You beast, did you see—I mean I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, I remonstrated with them, and—and begged them, with tears in my eyes, to be good," said Tubby, "just—just like little George, you know, in the story."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But they wouldn't follow my example," said Tubby. "I begged them to think over their bad actions now—"

"Leave out the whoppers, and get on!"

"They chucked me into a bed of nettles—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't call it funny! I'm stung!" howled Tubby Muffin.

"Then they went on to the bungalow and—"

"What bungalow?"

"The empty one, you know, near the wood—the one Mossio lived in once, when he—"

"I know," said Jimmy Silver. "It's been empty ever since the last tenant was washed out by the rain."

"That's it," said Tubby. "I heard them planning it all, you know, and I was being with them—I mean I was going to beg them to—"

"Cheese it!"

"Well, I've told you!" snorted Tubby. "It's up to you as junior captain to put a stop to these disgraceful goings-on, and you know it. If the Head knew about it he would be awfully down on you for not stopping—"

"I know that, ask. Let me alone," said Jimmy Silver walked on with his

chums, and this time Tubby Muffin did not follow. Quite unexpectedly—to Tubby—he saw that the junior captain did believe his story, and he was satisfied that Smythe's wine-party was a sudden and disagreeable interruption. The Giddy Goats would be sorry, after all, that they had not included Tubby in their little party; they would resent it if they had dropped him into a bed of nettles, instead of enjoying his fascinating story. And that was what Reginald Muffin wanted.

The fat Classical grinned a fat grin of satisfaction as he rolled on to Rookwood. He was going to be avenged. Jimmy Silver & Co. kept on towards Coombe, Jimmy with a knitted brow, and very silent.

"Well, are you going to do anything about it, Jimmy?" Arthur Edward Lovell asked at last.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"I'm bound to," he said. "And besides that, it's up to any Rookwood fellow to stop a set of blackguards from disgracing the school!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You fellows coming with me?" asked Jimmy.

"Of course!"

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"Hear, hear!"

"You fellows coming with me?" asked Jimmy.

Giddy Goats were now behind them. Jimmy Silver & Co. hurried on towards the lonely bungalow, and a few minutes later they had squeezed through the broken fence into the garden.

**The 5th Chapter. Not So Easy!**

Jimmy Silver surveyed the little building from the garden. There was no sign of life about it; but if the blackguards of Rookwood were there, "keeping it up," he did not expect them to make their presence known. As for the fact that the bungalow had been left since last he had seen it, that did not cross Jimmy's mind. The silent and with its drawn blinds, deceived him as it had deceived Smythe & Co. an hour before.

"I suppose they're there," remarked Lovell. "The doors seem to be shut. How would they get in?"

"There used to be a window unfastened at the back," said Jimmy. "I remember, when we came here once last term. Let's see!"

The juniors passed round the house.

Jimmy found the kitchen window, and tried it. The sash did not open to his touch.

out for something; let's nip in when the door's opened!"

"Good!" They heard the click of a key turning back in the kitchen door, unlocking it.

The four juniors gathered round the doorway, two on either side, ready to rush in as soon as it was opened. Not for an instant did it cross their minds that the person inside was not a member of the Giddy Goats.

The door was opened swiftly.

"Now—" The juniors sprang forward.

They were met half-way. A man dressed in black sprang out of the doorway, with a malacca cane in his hand.

The juniors stopped, and jumped back.

They were too surprised by the unexpected apparition to do anything but stare at the man in black, for a moment.

He did not give them time to recover from their surprise.

He raised the heavy cane, and sprang at them, lashing out savagely.

Arthur Edward Lovell caught the cut of the cane across his shoulder, and staggered back with a yell of pain.

"Hold on, man!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "What are you at? Oh!"

The cane lashed at him.



**RETREATING IN DISORDER!** Adolphus Smythe sprawled furiously after his topper, and came down on his hands and knees as he hurriedly recaptured it. The temptation the junior presented on his hands and knees was too much for the pursuers, and four boots pushed Adolphus in the rear at the same time.

"Ha, ha, ha!" He pressed his face against the glass, and tried to look closely at the catch. He could see that it was still broken, as of old; but a wedge of wood had been driven between the sashes, keeping the window hermetically fastened.

"They've jammed the sash with a piece of wood," he said. "That shows they're inside, I suppose."

"It shows somebody is."

"Well, it could only be that silly gang. I dare say they thought Tubby might follow them, and wanted to bar him out."

"Very likely."

"Only—how are we to get in?" asked Jimmy. "We can't very well push a pane of glass."

"Ahem! No! What about banging at the front door?"

"They wouldn't open it."

"Hallo! I can hear somebody moving inside!" said Raby suddenly.

"That shows they're there."

"Jimmy had stepped back from the window, as he consulted with his chums. The sound of footsteps could be heard on the stone floor of the kitchen within."

"Coming to the door!" muttered the juniors.

"Newcomer." "One of 'em's coming

The juniors jumped back in alarm. "Keep off!" roared Jimmy. "We're doing no harm here; we didn't know the house was let!"

The man in black did not answer; he rushed after the juniors, lashing out furiously.

Probably he expected to see them run in terror, as the Giddy Goats had done, and to thrash them unmercifully as they ran. But the Fistical Four were made of rather sterner stuff than the Giddy Goats of Rookwood.

One lash of the malacca was enough for Jimmy Silver; instead of running, he sprang at the aggressor, and in a second his chums were after him.

Two or three savage lashes fell upon them as they assailed the ruffian, and then the cane was wrenched away from him, and tossed far; and the man in black came to the ground with a bump, with the juniors scrambling over him.

"Pin him down!" yelled Lovell.

"What-ho!"

"There, you rotter—"

"You ruffianly cad—"

The man in black struggled savagely. Little as he was, he was lithe and active and strong, and he

nearly succeeded in tearing himself loose from the Rookwooders.

But not quite. Down he went on his back again, and Jimmy Lovell's knee was planted on his chest. Lovell & Raby grasped his arms, while Newcome too excited to be clearly aware of what he was doing, trampled on his legs.

"Got him!" said Jimmy grimly. "Now, you ruffian, you'd better give in, or it'll be the worse for you!"

"Release me!" panted the man in black savagely.

"So that you can begin on us again?" grinned Jimmy Silver. "No, you ruffian! You're rather too handy with your stick."

"You young scoundrel—"

"Easy does it," said Lovell. "No fancy name, please; you'll get your nose tweaked—"

"You young villain—"

"Like that!"

"Gerrooough!"

"I'll keep on tweaking your silly nose so long as you call us pretty names."

The tenant of the bungalow snarled with rage, his little greenish eyes glittering up at the juniors.

"Keep smiling!" said Jimmy Silver. "We're not going to hurt you if you behave—"

"You—you—you—"

Arthur Edward Lovell's finger and thumb were ready, and the man in black stopped suddenly.

"Now, what do you mean by jumping on us like a wild beast?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

The man gasped.

"If you were going to break into my house—trespassing in my garden—"

"I suppose we were," admitted Jimmy Silver. "But we didn't know the house had been taken."

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"If you were going to break into my house—trespassing in my garden—"

"I suppose we were," admitted Jimmy Silver. "But we didn't know the house had been taken."

**The 6th Chapter. A Painful Duty Done.**

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked very wary as the tenant of the bungalow scrambled up. They were surprised by the fury of the man in black, and could not fail to observe that he had a savage and brutal temper, and they were quite prepared for another attack.

The tenant glared round him, as if in search of his Malacca; but it had fallen out of sight among the thick, overgrown rhododendrons.

He stood panting for breath, his little narrow eyes fairly burning as they were fastened on the juniors.

"Had enough?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell affably. "If you have, well, you'll have to leave the garden. If not, we'll give you some more. You've only got to take your choice."

"You are trespassing here—"

"We didn't mean to trespass, and we're sorry to hear we know the house is occupied," said Jimmy Silver. "Come on, you fellows!"

"Who are you?"

"Jimmy opened his lips, and closed them again. It occurred to him that it was just as well not to let this savage-tempered fellow know that they belonged to Rookwood School. It is common, before the head-

master might mean trouble.

"Never mind that!" he answered. "We don't want to know who you are, and you can manage to survive without knowing us."

"You belong to some school in this neighbourhood," said the man in black, eyeing them furtively.

The juniors grinned. As they were in Etons it was not difficult for the bungalow tenant to guess that.

"Tell me the name of your school."

"Find out!" suggested Lovell.

"You—you—"

"Oh, let's introduce ourselves!" said Raby. "This chap"—he pointed to Lovell—"is the Prince of Wales."

"What?"

"This is the Duke of York—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This one is Lord Haig—"

"You young fool!"

"And I'm Winston Churchill," continued Raby. "Now you know who we are, and I hope you're satisfied!"

"Come on!" chuckled Lovell.

"Will you tell me who you are, and where you come from?" shouted the bungalow tenant furiously.

"We've told you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors walked away to the fence, and the man in black made a step in pursuit. Jimmy Silver & Co. turned round, ready for him, and he thought better of it—which was rather fortunate for him. He strode into the bungalow, and slammed the door

behind him with a slam that made the flimsy building shake.

"Nice man!" yawned Lovell, as they pushed through the fence and gained the open heath. "I suppose he was coming up to the school with a yarn about trespassing if he'd found out who we were."

"Plain enough!" said Jimmy. "I hope he won't find out! It would be awkward to explain to the Head—we don't want to give Smythe away."

"Oh, I don't suppose he'll find out!"

"There's something queer about that fellow," said Raby thoughtfully.

"A man might be waxy at finding fellows in his garden, but there's no reason to fly into a rage like that. It's just as if he was frightened of being seen, or of something being found out—"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"He's a queer fish!" he said. "I wonder whether Smythe & Co. fell foul of him?"

"They must have if they went there. We'll ask them."

"There they are!" said Newcome.

Ahead of the Fistical Four, as they followed the footpath through the wood, Smythe & Co. came in sight. The nuts of Rookwood were not looking so nutty as of old. They had a rather dishevelled appearance, and some of them bore marks of the malacca cane. Jimmy Silver, as he

scanned them, had no doubt that they had fallen foul of the tenant of the bungalow.

Smythe & Co. looked round as they heard footsteps, and grinned at the sight of the Fistical Four.

"Hallo! Where have you been?" chuckled Tracy.

"Been up against it, what?" grinned Adolphus Smythe.

"You've been to the bungalow?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Yaas, we dropped in," smiled Adolphus. "We saw you goin' there, too, and hoped you'd have an agreeable time! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorused the nuts.

"Why, you rotters!" exclaimed Lovell. "If you saw us going, why didn't you give us the tip that that wild beast was there—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver felt in his pocket for the wine bill.

"You dropped something in the gateway this afternoon, Smythe," he said quietly. "It's rather lucky for you that I picked it up, and not a prefect or a master. What have you done with the champagne?"

"Champagne?" said Adolphus vaguely. "What champagne? Oh, I see! Muffin has been pullin' your leg! Is that it?"

Jimmy Silver held out the wine bill, without speaking.

The dandy of the Shell jumped as

he saw it, and snatched it quickly from Jimmy Silver's hand.

"Oh gad!" he ejaculated.

"You awful ass to drop that about!" exclaimed Tracy aghast. "Suppose Bulkeley had picked it up and—"

"Oh gad!" repeated Adolphus faintly.

"Where's the champagne?" asked Jimmy Silver grimly.

"Smashed in the bungalow when that ruffian caught us there, if you want to know!" growled Smythe.

"Good! That's the best thing that could have happened to it! And now something's going to happen to you!" said Jimmy Silver. "There's a limit, Smythe, even for a shady worm like you. And as you don't seem to know the limit, we'll try to impress it on your silly mind!"

"Look here, keep off! Yow-ow-woop!"

The next moment the nuts of Rookwood were rolling in the bracken, and the Fistical Four rolled them and bumped them and hustled them till there was hardly an ounce of breath left in their nutty bodies. Smythe & Co. needed a lesson, and they got one—the second, in fact, that they had had that afternoon.

"That will do," said Jimmy Silver at last.

Leaving five breathless and dishevelled Giddy Goats gasping in the

bracken, the Fistical Four walked on cheerily to Rookwood, feeling that their duty was done. But as they went they were wondering—not wholly without uneasiness—whether they were to hear anything further of the man in black.

THE END.

### NEXT WEEK!

Another Grand  
Complete Story  
of Jimmy Silver  
& Co., entitled:

### "FALLEN FORTUNES"

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Make a Point  
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