

Are You a Lucky Winner?—Turn to Page 70 and See!

# The BOYS' FRIEND

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

No. 1,027. Vol. XXI. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending February 12th, 1921.]

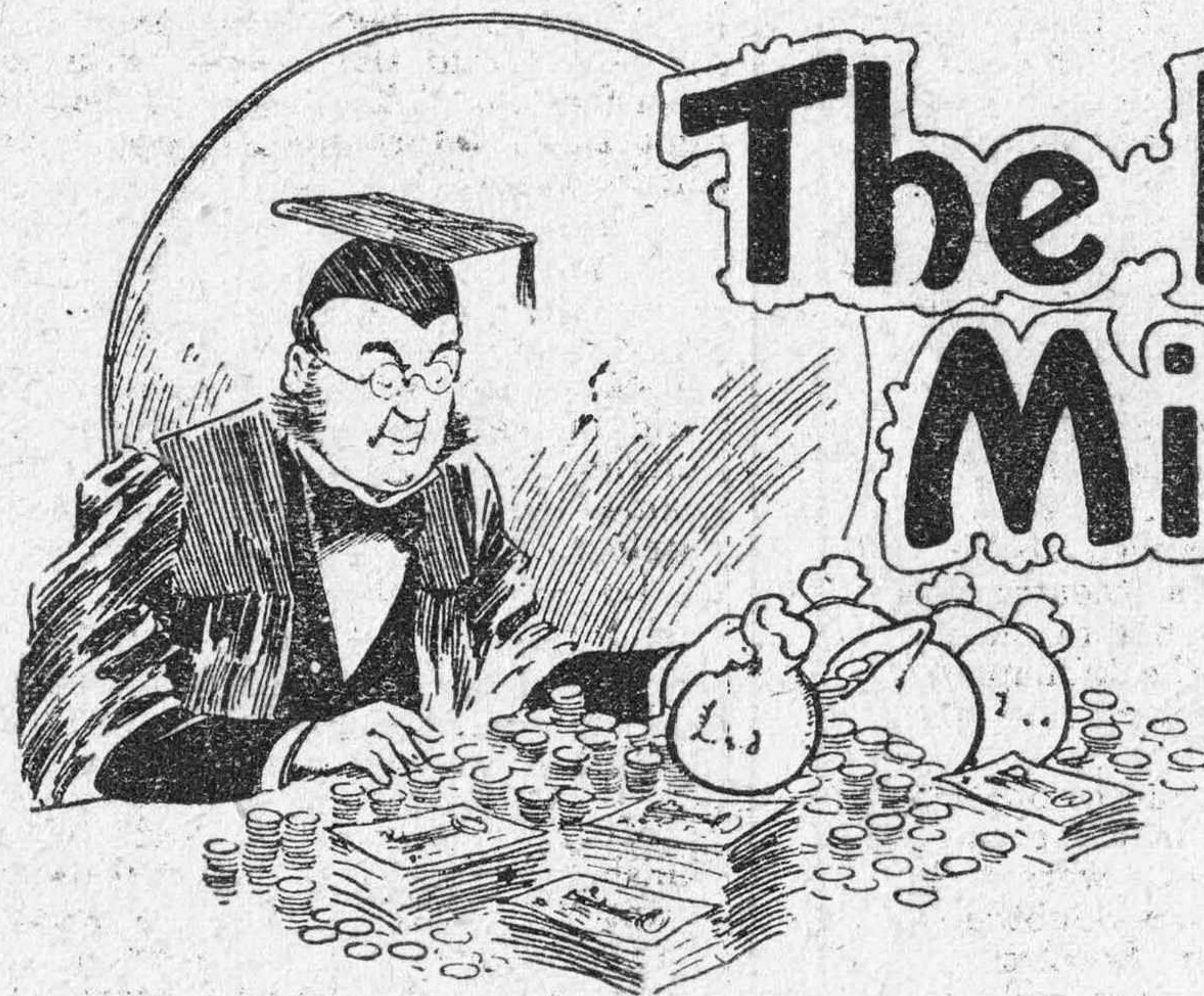


**BACK TO SCHOOL!**

With decorations flying, Chuta sitting on the bonnet, Snap barking, and various loud calls from the boys on top, the 'bus made its way through the London streets regardless of all speed limits. Don Darrel & Co. were going back to Eaglehurst School—and they meant it to be known!

New Story of Don Darrel & Co.—“The Schoolboy Multi-Millionaire!” APPEARS NEXT WEEK!

A LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & Co.



# The Rookwood Millionaire!

A Fine Yarn of the Chums of Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

## The 1st Chapter

### Looking after Bootles!

"Jimmy!"

Arthur Edward Lovell of the Classical Fourth burst into the end study, his face flushed with excitement.

Jimmy Silver was sitting on the corner of the table in that famous study, laying down the law on the subject of the off-side rule to Raby and Newcome. Raby and Newcome were listening meekly and dutifully—possibly because they were consuming toffee from a packet belonging to Jimmy Silver. It was barely possible that when the toffee was finished, the lecture would have to finish as well. But as yet all was calm and bright; and Jimmy Silver was expounding his views with considerable eloquence, when Arthur Edward Lovell burst in like a hurricane.

"Jimmy!"

"From the throw-in—" said Jimmy.

"Jimmy!"

"Dry up a minute, old chap," said Jimmy Silver, without turning his head. "I'm trying to lighten the darkness of these benighted duffers, so—Yaroooh!"

Lovell's hand descended upon Jimmy Silver's shoulder, and he was whirled off the table quite suddenly.

Jimmy just contrived to land on his feet. He had a narrow escape of landing on the back of his neck.

Then he spun round on Lovell in great wrath.

"You howling ass!" he roared.

"Have some toffee, Lovell," said Raby hospitably. "It's Jimmy's. Help yourself, old top!"

"Bother toffee now—"

"And listen unto Uncle James expounding the off-side rule," grinned Newcome. "We're going to let him run on so long as the toffee lasts. The toffee's all right, at least!"

"Why, you ass—" began Jimmy Silver warmly.

"Jimmy—" shouted Lovell.

"Fathead! Dry up a minute—"

"Mr. Bootles!"

"Never mind Mr. Bootles now," said Jimmy Silver crossly. "I was just getting some sense into the heads of these duffers—at least, I hope I was—"

"Mr. Bootles—" persisted Lovell.

"Bother Bootles!" hooted Jimmy Silver. "What do you mean by howling Bootles, Bootles, Bootles, at a chap like that?"

"There's a man—" gasped Lovell. "A man, you know—a chap—a fellow with a long beard—come to see him!"

"Well, let him see him, and be jiggered!" said Jimmy Silver. "No law against a chap with a long beard seeing Bootles that I know of!"

"Don't you savvy?"

"No; dry up! Now," said Jimmy Silver, turning to the grinning Raby and Newcome, "I was just saying that—"

Lovell grasped his shoulder again. "You've got to listen to me, you ass!" he exclaimed.

"I never seem to be doing anything else," said the exasperated captain of the Fourth. "When it comes to jawbone solos, Lovell, you can beat anybody in the House of Commons. Why not give your chin a rest?"

"About Bootles—"

"Bless Bootles!" shrieked Jimmy Silver.

"What on earth about Bootles?" asked Raby, in surprise. "Has somebody been trying to kidnap the dear old gent again?"

"That's it!" said Lovell.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jimmy.

Jimmy Silver was serious at once. The attempt on the part of some person or persons unknown, the previous

week, to kidnap the master of the Fourth Form, was still much talked of in Rookwood School. The Fistical Four, in the kindness of their hearts, had taken the Form-master under their protection—without acquainting him with the fact, naturally.

Probably Mr. Bootles would not have been specially pleased at being taken under the wing of his four most unruly pupils.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. meant business. They were going to look after the little gentleman, and see that he came to no harm.

Already they had once distinguished themselves—by collaring a suspicious character they had found watching the school. True, it had turned out that the suspicious character was Inspector Sharpe, of Rookham—watching over Mr. Bootles for his own good! But a little error like that couldn't be helped; and the Fistical Four were not discouraged for long.

If somebody was "after" Mr. Bootles again, Jimmy Silver & Co. were quite prepared to chip in.

"Go it—tell us all about it, old top!" said Newcome. "I'll finish the toffee while you're burbling!"

"There's a man—"

"Which, who, where, and what?" inquired Jimmy Silver succinctly.

"A man asking to see Bootles," said Lovell. "I've just seen him in the hall. Johnny with a long beard. Might be disguised—you know that scarred villain who attacked Bootles had a false beard? Tupper's just taken his name in—and if Bootles sees him—"

"He may seize Bootles!" suggested Newcome, venturing on a pun.

But Lovell was too excited to heed this feeble effort at humour.

"If Bootles lets him in, he may be landed," he said. "You know Bootles hasn't been outside the gates since they tried to kidnap him. Now somebody's come to see him. It looks suspicious to me."

"But people have called on Mr. Bootles before now," objected Raby.

"This man's a stranger."

"How do you know?"

"Because I heard him speak to Tupper!" said Lovell triumphantly.

"His name is Tulkerton—"

"That sounds suspicious!" said Newcome gravely. "Chap oughtn't to go around loose with a name like that!"

"Ass! He mentioned to Tupper that he was a stranger to Bootles, but said his business was important!" Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful.

"Well, Bootles is a good little ass, and we've made up our minds to look after him," he said. "Let's go down, anyhow. If it's a rotter after some mischief, we'll stop him fast enough."

"Shall we pull his beard and see if it'll come off, like Lovell did the inspector's the other day?" asked Raby innocently.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a snort.

"If we're going to waste time listening to Raby being a funny idiot—" he began.

"Oh, come on!" said Jimmy Silver.

The captain of the Fourth led the way from the end study, and the Co. followed him.

They hurried along the passage, and down the big staircase.

On a seat in the lower hall, a gentleman dressed in rusty black was sitting, with a little black bag resting on his knee. He had very sharp features, very sharp eyes, and a long, straggling white beard. His lips were thin and straight, and seemed to shut like a vice.

The Fistical Four, taking a strategic survey of the possible enemy over the banisters, did not like his looks.

"Is that the johnny?" whispered Raby.

"That's the rotter!" said Lovell. Arthur Edward had already made up his mind that Mr. Bootles' visitor was a rotter.

"I don't like his looks," commented Jimmy Silver. "Looks as if he would bite like a rat. Let's get a nearer view, anyhow."

The Co. descended the rest of the stairs, and passed within easy distance of the waiting visitor, and went along the passage.

Mr. Tulkerton did not take the slightest notice of them.

Whether that was a suspicious circumstance or not, Jimmy Silver & Co. could not quite make up their minds.

They moved on towards Mr. Bootles' study, in an undecided frame of mind. Tupper, the page, came along the corridor from the Head's study, and Jimmy Silver stopped him.

"Where's Mr. Bootles?" he asked.

"With the 'Ead," said Tupper. "I been a-looking for 'im—man waiting to see 'im, sir. In a 'urry, if you don't mind, Master Silver!"

"Hold on a minute!" said Jimmy.

"Is Mr. Bootles going to see the man?"

"Yessir; I'm to show 'im into the visitors'-room, sir."

Tupper passed on.

Jimmy Silver turned quickly to his chums.

"This way—quick!"

"What—"

"Buck up, and don't jaw, old chap!"

Jimmy hurried away, and his wondering chums followed him. It was into the visitors'-room that he led them.

"Cover!" said Jimmy hurriedly.

"But—I say—"

"We're going to keep an eye on the man, when Bootles sees him here," Jimmy explained, in a hasty whisper. "If he means mischief, we shall be on the spot—see? If he doesn't, well and good!"

"But—" gasped Raby.

"Take cover, you ass! I can hear Tupper's hoofs in the passage now."

There was a massive screen near the window, and Jimmy Silver darted behind it, and his chums followed.

They were only just in time.

Scarcely had they vanished, when Tupper's voice was heard in the doorway.

"This way, sir!"

And the page showed Mr. Tulkerton in.

## The 2nd Chapter

### Mr. Bootles—Millionaire!

Jimmy Silver & Co. scarcely breathed.

Tupper stirred the low fire together, and placed an armchair near it for Mr. Tulkerton, and then quitted the room.

The visitor was left alone—as he supposed.

The high back of the chair was towards the screen, and Jimmy Silver, peering out from cover, caught just a glimpse of the bald spot on top of the visitor's head, over the back of the chair.

Evidently the bearded man did not suspect that there were four keen and excited watchers in the room.

Mr. Tulkerton blew his nose, sniffed, coughed, and put out his feet to the fire. It was a cold day, and there were flakes of snow in the wind that whistled round the ancient pile of Rookwood. Some minutes elapsed before Mr. Bootles arrived. Apparently that gentleman had remained to finish his chat with Dr. Chisholm, before attending to his visitor. But his footsteps were heard approaching the visitors'-room at last.

The door opened, and Mr. Bootles came in. The plump little gentleman blinked inquiringly at his visitor over his glasses.

"Mr.—er—Tulkerton?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Bootles, I presume?" said Mr. Tulkerton, rising to his feet.

"Precisely!"

"No doubt you are surprised by this call on my part."

"A little, certainly," answered Mr. Bootles, advancing towards the fire, but keeping at a certain distance from the visitor. Since his amazing adventure with the kidnapers, Mr. Bootles was very chary of strangers. "I do not remember having had the pleasure of meeting you before."

"You have never met me before," said Mr. Tulkerton. "But I have important business with you, notwithstanding."

"Indeed!"

Behind the screen, Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged a glance.

They were growing more and more suspicious of this mysterious Mr. Tulkerton.

It was very odd, at least, that a man who had never seen Mr. Bootles before should have important business with him.

It occurred to Jimmy—rather late, certainly—that the Co. had placed themselves in the position of eavesdroppers, if the visitor was bona-fide after all. That reflection was rather an uncomfortable one, though they were conscious of the very best intentions. If the man turned out to be one of the kidnaping gang, their conduct was certainly above reproach. But if he didn't—

These reflections came too late, as reflections sometimes do. The Fistical Four were in for it now.

"You may wonder why I did not write," resumed Mr. Tulkerton. "I preferred a personal interview for many reasons."

"I know the reasons, you rotter!" murmured Lovell, sotto voce. "But we've got an eye on you!"

"Shurrup!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Tulkerton was glancing round. Perhaps he had heard a faint sound.

"We are alone, Mr. Bootles?" he asked.

"Quite sir."

"I thought I heard a sound—"

"The wind probably. Please come to business, Mr. Tulkerton," said the Fourth Form master. "Lunch will be announced soon—"

"Quite so. I preferred to see you personally; it will be necessary for your identity to be clearly established, Mr. Bootles. I shall refer to the headmaster on that point, before I leave. Prepare yourself, sir, for very startling news."

"Really, sir—"

"My card, Mr. Bootles, has informed you that I am a solicitor."

"A blessed lawyer!" whispered Lovell. "I knew he was a wrong 'un!"

"Upon my word! I am sure I heard something!" exclaimed Mr. Tulkerton, who evidently had very sharp ears. "There is certainly someone in the room beside ourselves, Mr. Bootles!"

Jimmy gripped Lovell's arm.

"Not at all!" said Mr. Bootles, backing a pace farther away from his visitor. "You seem very particular on that point, Mr.—er—Tulkerton. I should be very glad if you would explain yourself."

And Mr. Bootles leaned on the mantelpiece, with one hand resting carelessly on the bell-push. Mr. Bootles had been in a twitter of nerves ever since the kidnapers' attack; and he was beginning to regard his mysterious visitor with considerable uneasiness. At all events, he did not mean to be taken by surprise.

"As a solicitor," resumed Mr. Tulkerton, "I have had the honour of acting for your late uncle, Mortimer Bootles."

"My late uncle!" repeated Mr. Bootles.

"Yes—he is now dead!"

"Ah!"

There was a pause.

"I am sorry to give you such disconcerting news—"

"I will be frank, sir," said Mr. Bootles. "I have not seen my Uncle Mortimer for thirty-five years, and there has never been any special affection between us. He was a hard man, and did not care for family ties. I have had no news whatever of him for a quarter of a century. He might have died that time ago, and I should have been none the wiser. I am not, therefore, upset by the news. I am sorry, that is all."

"There is more startling news to come, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Your uncle died in South Africa, a rich man."

"I was aware that he was a rich man," said Mr. Bootles. "I never expected any of his wealth to descend to me, however. He had another nephew—my cousin, Mortimer Stacey, who was named after him. Doubtless he is my uncle's heir."

"Quite a mistake, my dear sir," said Mr. Tulkerton. "Mortimer Stacey, unfortunately for himself, went to the dogs, and for many years past Mr. Mortimer Bootles refused to have any dealings with him. Your uncle's fortune descends wholly to you, by his will."

"What—what?"

"One million pounds, sir!" said Mr. Tulkerton impressively.

Mr. Bootles jumped.

"Are you serious?" he stuttered.

"Undoubtedly! That is the news I have brought you," said Mr. Tulkerton. "You are a millionaire, sir!"

Mr. Bootles sank feebly into a seat. He was quite overcome.

It was, indeed, startling news to a little gentleman whose life had been spent in retired scholastic shades, who found difficulty in putting aside a yearly twenty-pound note as a provision for his old age, and who looked forward to a headmastership as the topmost point of his ambition.

A millionaire!

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Bootles, at last. "Is—is—is it possible? What—what?"

"Not only possible, but true," said Mr. Tulkerton, with a smile. "You are now worth well over one million pounds, sir, as I shall have pleasure in demonstrating to you when you honour me with a visit at my office in London. That will be necessary, of course, as there are steps to be taken and—"

"But—but what of Stacey?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "I have not seen my cousin since childhood. I should not know him if I met him—still—"

"He is cut off with one shilling in the will," said Mr. Tulkerton. "I may say that he deserves it. At the time of your uncle's death he was in prison for forgery, and was only released several days later. He is a thoroughly bad character, I am sorry to say."

"He is, however, my relation," said the kind-hearted Mr. Bootles. "I shall certainly make a provision for him."

"That is as you wish, of course."

"Bless my soul! A million pounds!" said Mr. Bootles faintly.

"Doubtless you will go through these papers with me?" said Mr. Tulkerton, opening his black bag. "And if you can fix the date, fairly soon, for seeing me at my office—"

"Most certainly! I—I will speak to Dr. Chisholm, and I have no doubt I can see you to-morrow—to-day, indeed," said Mr. Bootles, getting animated. "I will return with you to London, if you wish. You will stay to lunch, and afterwards—"

"Very good!"

Behind the screen Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at one another blankly.

The news they had heard had astounded them as much as it had astounded Mr. Bootles.

But Arthur Edward Lovell pressed Jimmy's arm significantly.

"Spoof!" he whispered.

"Wha-at?"

"It's a trick to get Bootles out of gates with him!" breathed Lovell.

Jimmy shook his head.

"Really, sir, I am absolutely certain we are not alone in this room!" exclaimed Mr. Tulkerton. "I am assured that I heard a distinct whisper!"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Raby.

Mr. Tulkerton rose to his feet, staring round him very suspiciously. He came towards the screen and looked round it.

"Upon my word!" he ejaculated.

The next moment he threw the screen aside, and it crashed against the wall.

Mr. Bootles sprang to his feet in astonishment.

Jimmy Silver & Co., with crimson faces, stood revealed.

## The 3rd Chapter

### Lovell Knows Better!

"What—what—" stuttered Mr. Bootles.

"Oh dear!"

"Ha! Some inquisitive youths!" ejaculated Mr. Tulkerton. "Paul Prys—ha?"

"Silver—Lovell—you have dared to—"

"Now we're in for it!" murmured Newcome.

"Oh crikey!"

The unhappy four stepped forward. Mr. Bootles was fairly glaring at them over his glasses.

"Boys, I am surprised—shocked—"

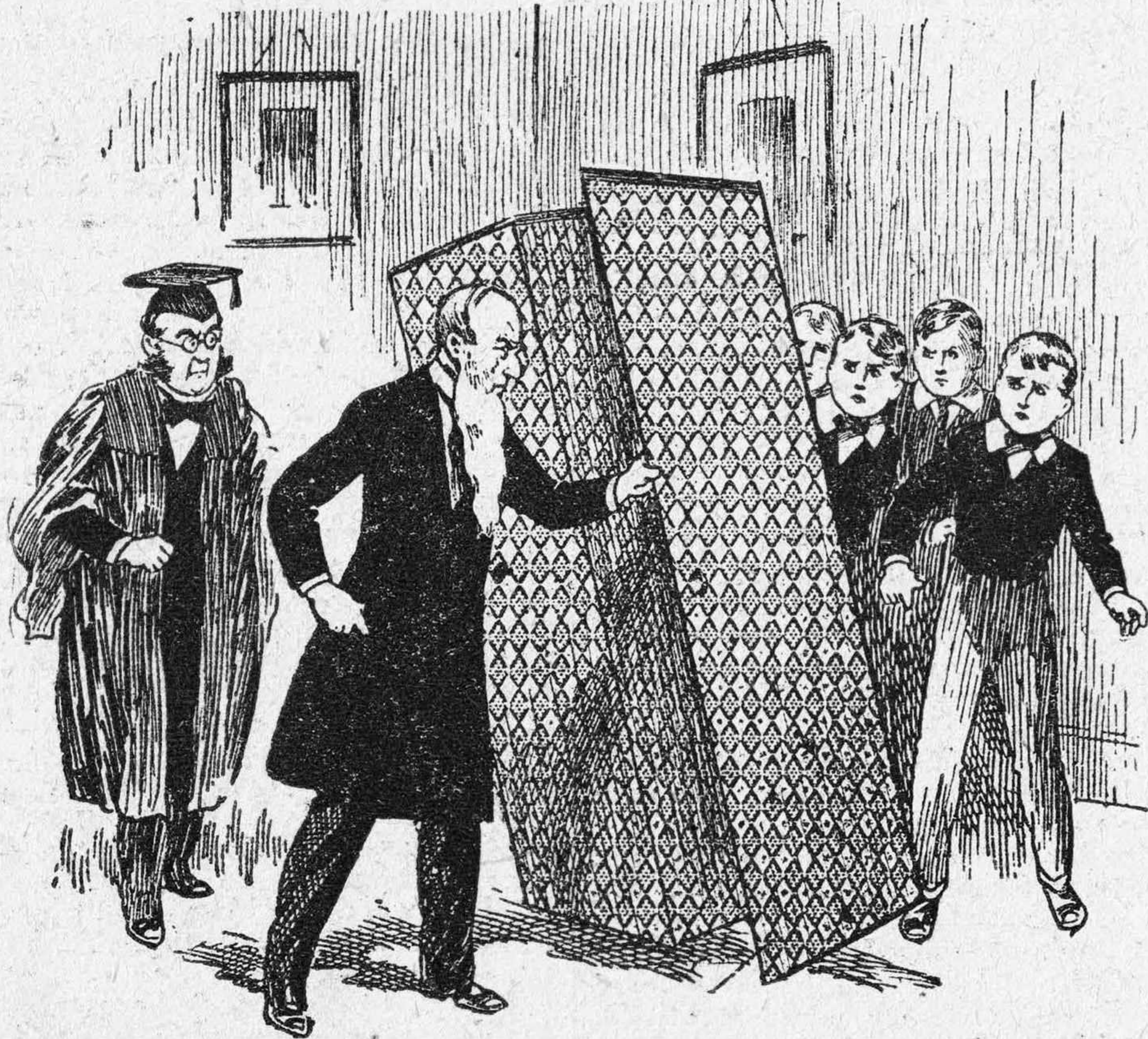
astounded! This—this petty inquisitiveness—this—this—  
Jimmy Silver's face burned.  
"We—we didn't listen, sir—"  
"What? You must have heard every word uttered in this room!" thundered Mr. Bootles.  
"Only by accident, sir—"  
"Silver!"  
"We—we came to look after you, sir," stammered Newcome.  
"What—what?"  
"Well, we thought that chap was one of the kidnapers, sir," said Jimmy, in desperation. "We—we were going to collar him if—he tried any tricks, sir."

"If these boys saved you they have done you a very great service," said Mr. Tulkerton. "I should recommend forgiving them for their present very extraordinary action."  
"Quite so, quite so! Silver, you may go! But if anything of this kind should occur again—"  
The Fistical Four hurried out of the visitors' room without waiting for Mr. Bootles to finish.  
They were glad to escape.  
In the corridor they breathed more freely. The door closed on them, and Mr. Bootles and the solicitor were left in deep consultation.

opened, and Mr. Bootles came out with the solicitor. The Fistical Four departed from the vicinity at once.  
Mr. Bootles did not appear at the Fourth Form table at dinner. He had his lunch in his study with his visitor, whom, evidently, he delighted to honour.  
After dinner, Tubby Muffin informed Jimmy Silver & Co. that Bootles had taken his visitor to see the Head. Tubby was very curious on the subject of that visitor. But the Fistical Four did not impart their startling information to Muffin. That information was Mr. Bootles', to be announced when the Form-master deemed fit.  
But very shortly after dinner it was known.  
Mr. Greely of the Fifth, and Mr. Wiggins of the Second, had been invited into Mr. Bootles' study to smoke a cigar with the distinguished visitor. Probably Mr. Bootles was not unwilling to let his colleagues learn of his good fortune quite early.  
Soon after that all Rookwood knew. The news flew through the school like wildfire.

but undoubtedly Mr. Bootles and the lawyer from London were inside.  
Lovell made a move at once.  
"We'll follow it, inside the hedges, at a bit of distance," he said. "Then we shall be on the spot when—"  
"Look!" gasped Mornington suddenly.  
"My hat!"  
Through a gap in the hedge the juniors saw the hack again. It had stopped. A rough-looking man had the horse's head in his grasp. Another man, with a thick beard, had leaped from the hedge, and run to the cab-door. He had a revolver in his hand. The juniors gazed spellbound.  
It was like a theatre scene suddenly revealed before their eyes.  
"It—it—it's the kidnapers!" stutted Jimmy Silver.  
"Come on!"  
The juniors raced on—their footsteps soundless in the snow. Whether Lovell's suspicions were well-founded or not, it was undoubtedly another attack upon Mr. Bootles.  
The cab-door was wide open now. "Step out!" The scarred man with the false beard was speaking. "Step out, or I shoot! Quick!"  
"Good heavens!"  
Mr. Bootles bundled out of the cab, followed by Mr. Tulkerton. The latter was white as a sheet. It was clear, from his look, that he was no party to the ambush; he was twittering with alarm.  
"You can get back, you meddling fool! Mr. Bootles, come with me. One shout—one cry—and I lay you dead in the road."  
"Bless my soul!"  
The hack driver stared down from his seat, dazed. But he made no movement. The sight of the threatening revolver was enough for him. Jimmy Silver burst through the hedge, ahead of his comrades. The scarred man spun round furiously at the sound of the crashing hedge.  
Whiz!

and the captured ruffian, Gadger, was bound with his own muffler. He lay in the snow and spat out curses.  
"One of them, at least, Mr. Bootles," said the lawyer, with grim satisfaction. "The other, I fear, will get away—Mortimer Stacey, I have little doubt."  
"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles feebly.  
"I have no doubt they were on the watch, and saw me arrive at Rookwood," said Mr. Tulkerton. "They laid in wait on the chance that you might return with me. But how came these boys here—very fortunately for us?"  
Lovell chuckled.  
"We came to look after Mr. Bootles, sir," he said.  
"Lovell thought—" began Morny.  
"Shurrup!"  
Mornington grinned, and did not finish. Arthur Edward Lovell did not want Mr. Tulkerton to know what he had thought. It was evident now, even to Lovell, that the lawyer-chap was above suspicion.  
"Lovell thought—" said Mr. Tulkerton, with a sharp look.  
"Ahem! He thought there might be danger—"  
"It—it was very—very thoughtful of Lovell," gasped Mr. Bootles. "Oh dear! I—I begin to wish that—that my uncle had not— Oh dear! This is—is—is most distressing."  
"We shall take this rascal to the police-station," said the lawyer, "and probably he will help the police to find his associate, to save his own skin."  
"Don't you reckon on that, old covey?" sneered Gadger. "You won't get nothing out of me."  
"Was your companion Mortimer Stacey?" demanded Mr. Tulkerton.  
"Find out!" answered the ruffian sullenly.  
And he refused to utter another word. Jimmy Silver & Co. came streaming back from the fields—empty-handed.  
"He dodged us," said Jimmy.  
"There was a car waiting on the Rookham road, and he got off. But we've got one of them."  
"My dear boys, how can I thank you?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "You have saved me—a second time. I shall invoke the protection of the police, these—these experiences are most—most unerving. Perhaps—you boys would not mind coming as—as far as Coombe—as you are here—"  
"Certainly, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "We'll walk after the cab."  
"Thank you very much, my dear Silver."



**LOOKING AFTER BOOTLES!** "What—what?" stammered the Fourth Form master in surprise. "What are you boys doing here?" "We—we came to look after you, sir," stammered Newcome. "We thought this chap was a kidnapper!" said Jimmy, in desperation.

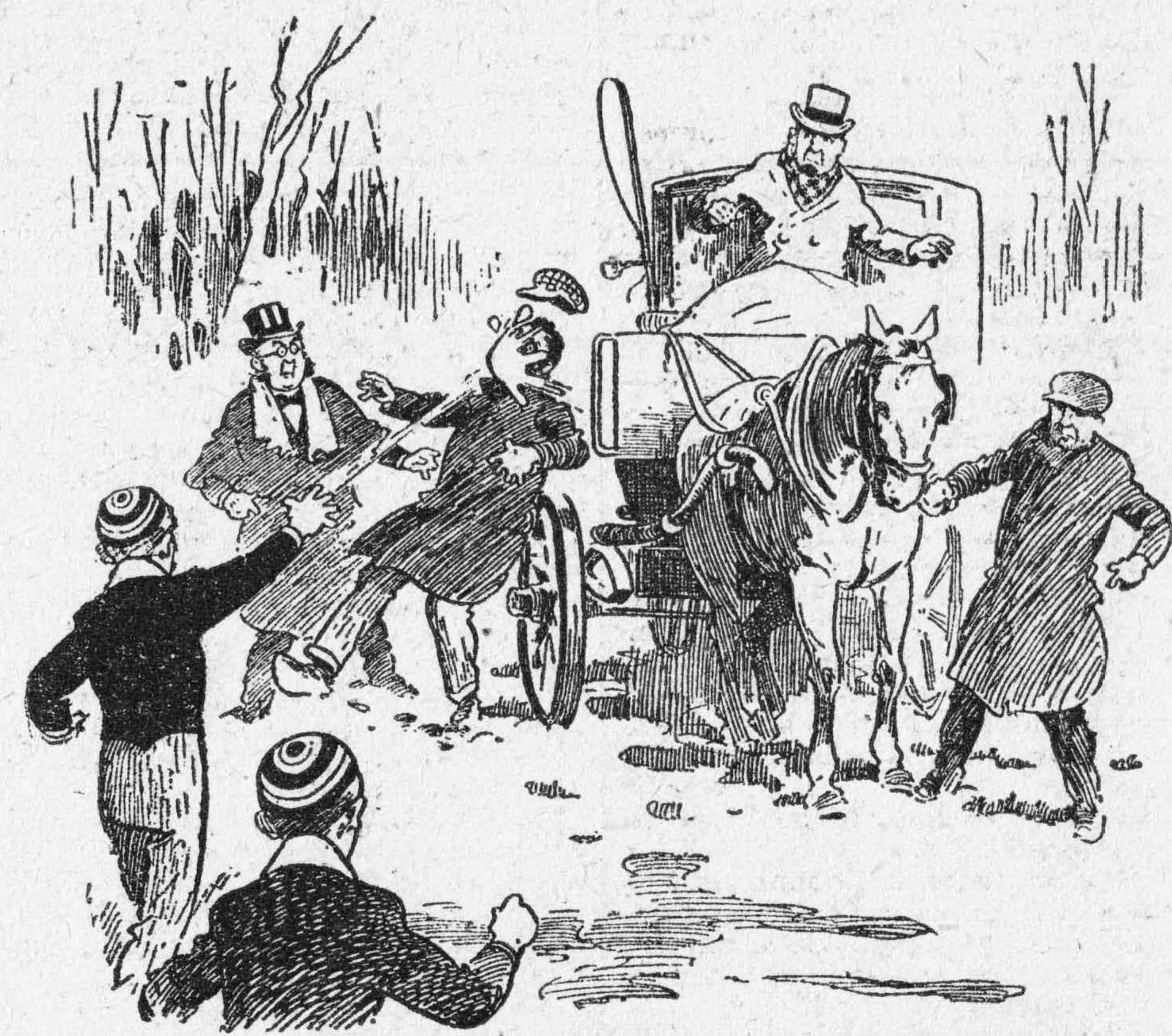
"You utterly absurd boy!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.  
Mr. Tulkerton blinked.  
"Kidnapers!" he repeated. "Is the boy mad?"  
"There is—dear me!—some reason in his observation, sir," said Mr. Bootles. "Last week an attempt was made to kidnap me by two ruffians utterly unknown to me. These boys came on the scene and saved me—which I suppose is their reason for this astounding act of impertinence."  
The Fistical Four wriggled painfully. It was rather hard lines to hear their generous devotion to their Form-master's interests characterised as "astounding impertinence." Their unhappy faces were the colour of newly-boiled beetroots by this time. They fervently wished that the floor would open and swallow them up.  
But it didn't. They had to go through with this painful scene.  
"This is—is very startling," said Mr. Tulkerton, turning to the Form-master, evidently greatly interested. "An attempt to kidnap you—"  
"Yes, by two ruffians—"  
"Unknown to you?"  
"Quite!"  
"If you have their descriptions and—"  
"One was a man of about forty, with a scar on his face—"  
"Your cousin Mortimer Stacey is a man of forty, with a scarred face," said Mr. Tulkerton drily.  
"Good heavens!"  
Mr. Bootles sank limply into his chair again.  
He understood now. And so did Jimmy Silver & Co. The amazing attempt to kidnap Mr. Bootles, which had so perplexed Rookwood, was explained at last.  
"In case of your death, sir," said Mr. Tulkerton grimly, "your uncle's fortune would pass to Stacey—as he is doubtless well aware. My client was extremely bitter against him on account of his conduct; but he did not desire his money to pass out of the family, and, failing you, it goes to Mortimer Stacey."  
"Good heavens!" repeated Mr. Bootles.  
"Please do not infer that I believe Stacey capable of causing your death, bad as he is," said Mr. Tulkerton. "But, in the event of your disappearance, after a time death could be assumed in the courts, which would come to the same thing. I greatly fear, sir, that you have had a narrow escape of falling into the hands of a villain, who would not have scrupled to keep you hidden in some obscure place in perpetual confinement, in order to inherit your uncle's fortune."  
Mr. Bootles gasped.

"Well," said Jimmy Silver, with a deep breath, "here's a go!"  
"Fancy Bootles a millionaire!" said Raby, with a whistle.  
"Good old Bootles!" said Newcome. "I'm jolly glad! He's a good little sort; though he isn't so grateful as he ought to be for fellows trying to take care of him."  
"Gammon!" said Arthur Edward Lovell obstinately.  
"Eh? What's gammon?" asked Jimmy.  
"All gammon! There isn't any million quids, and that lawyer is a sea-lawyer, and it's all a trick to get Bootles out of Rookwood!" said Lovell.  
When Arthur Edward Lovell had an idea in his head it was exceedingly difficult for that idea to be got out again. There was what he considered the firmness of a rock in his character; his chums sometimes called it the obstinacy of a mule.  
"Oh, that's rot!" said Jimmy decidedly. "The yarn's true enough! For instance, it's clear now that that scarred chap who tried to kidnap Bootles is his cousin Stacey, who gets the dubs if Bootles does a fade-through."  
"Yes, that's very likely—"  
"It's certain, ass!" said Raby.  
"I dare say. All the same, this Tulkerton is a spoofer, and he's trying to get Bootles into harm's way," said Lovell. "I'm quite sure that if Bootles goes out with him this afternoon that scarred chap and Gadger his pal will be waiting for him."  
"My dear chap—"  
"Look what a chance they've got!" said Lovell. "The road to the station is lonely at all times; more so in this weather. Nothing whatever to prevent the rotters piling on poor old Bootles and bagging him, if this lawyer chap gets him outside the gates. That's what he's here for! You leave it to me," said Lovell confidently. "I know a rascal when I see him—and he's a lawyer, anyhow—"  
Lovell gave a snort. "It was a lawyer who bolted with my father's bonds that time—"  
Evidently Arthur Edward Lovell hadn't a high opinion of the gentlemen whom the ancient poet described as "furred law-cats."  
"Lovell, old man, you're wandering in your mind," said Raby. "Let's go and see whether dinner's ready. I'm hungry."  
"Well, you can do as you like; but I'm not going to let poor old Bootles get nabbed," said Lovell. "Luckily, it's a half-holiday! I'm going to keep an eye on them when they go."  
"Bow-wow!" said Newcome.  
The door of the visitors' room

opened, and Mr. Bootles came out with the solicitor. The Fistical Four departed from the vicinity at once.  
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Soon after that all Rookwood knew. The news flew through the school like wildfire.  
Bootles a millionaire!  
Little Bootles a gilt-edged capitalist, as Mornington put it. It was more than a nine-days' wonder for Rookwood School.  
"He'll leave now, I suppose," said Putty Grace. "Millionaires don't take jobs as Form-masters—even with such nice boys as us! We are going to lose our Bootles!"  
"I say, he ought to stand a spread or something before he goes!" said Tubby Muffin. "I would if I were a millionaire."  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"He's goin' back to London with the giddy lawyer," remarked Mornington. "Fancy little Bootles! Some bounders have all the luck!"  
"He could buy up all Rookwood if he liked!" said Tubby Muffin. "I—I wonder if he would lend a chap a five-pound note? He ought to, now he's a millionaire. I say, I saw old Greely being awfully civil to him. He always used to patronise little Bootles."  
"Bootles will get so much civility now he'll be staggered," chuckled Mornington. "I've always admired him myself! I wonder if he would like to adopt a really nice chap—"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Edward Lovell took no part in the cheery discussion of Mr. Bootles' wonderful fortune. Like Lara looking on the dancers, Arthur Edward stood aside with a thoughtful brow. He was thinking deep thoughts. Whether Mr. Bootles was a millionaire or not, Arthur Edward Lovell was convinced that "that lawyer-chap" was simply leading him into a trap. It was no use arguing with Lovell, and his chums had given it up. But Lovell, at last, began to argue with them.  
"You fellows think I'm wrong—" he began.  
"We know it, old sport," answered Newcome.  
"Will you back me up in looking after Bootles this afternoon?" demanded Lovell.  
"Ahem!"  
"I haven't the slightest doubt that Tulkerton—if his name's really Tulkerton—is leading him out to be bagged," said Lovell. "They've telephoned for the station-cab. Now, look here, let us be on the road, in case anything happens. Say a dozen of us—"  
Jimmy Silver laughed.  
"My dear chap, it's all moonshine. But a walk after dinner won't hurt us, and there's no footer to-day. We'll come, if you like."  
"Any old thing!" yawned Newcome.  
"I'll speak to some of the others, then," said Lovell.  
"You'll only get cackled at, ass."  
"Rats!"  
Lovell meant business. Mornington and Conroy and Rawson, though they certainly cackled, agreed to join the party. Putty Grace and Oswald came, too. Nine juniors walked out of Rookwood under the lightly-falling snowflakes, and sauntered down the lane towards Coombe.  
The station-cab came rumbling along, and passed them, and turned in at the gates. And Jimmy Silver & Co.—all but one smiling—took up their stand under the trees, on a hillock close by the lane, to watch.  
**The 4th Chapter.**  
**A Desperate Attack!**  
"There's the giddy hearse!" grinned Mornington.  
The old hack, rolling away from the gates of Rookwood, showed up in the distance on the powdery snow of the lane.  
It was closed against the weather;

but undoubtedly Mr. Bootles and the lawyer from London were inside.  
Lovell made a move at once.  
"We'll follow it, inside the hedges, at a bit of distance," he said. "Then we shall be on the spot when—"  
"Look!" gasped Mornington suddenly.  
"My hat!"  
Through a gap in the hedge the juniors saw the hack again. It had stopped. A rough-looking man had the horse's head in his grasp. Another man, with a thick beard, had leaped from the hedge, and run to the cab-door. He had a revolver in his hand. The juniors gazed spellbound.  
It was like a theatre scene suddenly revealed before their eyes.  
"It—it—it's the kidnapers!" stutted Jimmy Silver.  
"Come on!"  
The juniors raced on—their footsteps soundless in the snow. Whether Lovell's suspicions were well-founded or not, it was undoubtedly another attack upon Mr. Bootles.  
The cab-door was wide open now. "Step out!" The scarred man with the false beard was speaking. "Step out, or I shoot! Quick!"  
"Good heavens!"  
Mr. Bootles bundled out of the cab, followed by Mr. Tulkerton. The latter was white as a sheet. It was clear, from his look, that he was no party to the ambush; he was twittering with alarm.  
"You can get back, you meddling fool! Mr. Bootles, come with me. One shout—one cry—and I lay you dead in the road."  
"Bless my soul!"  
The hack driver stared down from his seat, dazed. But he made no movement. The sight of the threatening revolver was enough for him. Jimmy Silver burst through the hedge, ahead of his comrades. The scarred man spun round furiously at the sound of the crashing hedge.  
Whiz!



**TO THE RESCUE!** Whiz! It was a snowball from Putty Grace. It struck the scarred hold-up man in the face, and he staggered back. For the moment the situation was saved.

The man holding the horse essayed to follow, but Mr. Tulkerton, who was nearest to him, charged after him with upraised umbrella. The umbrella came down with a crash on the ruffian's head, and he reeled. Before he could recover, Lovell and Mornington were upon him, and he went down with a crash.  
"Pin him!" yelled Jimmy Silver.  
"We've got him," panted Lovell. "Get after the other."  
Jimmy Silver & Co. streamed away in hot pursuit of the scarred man, who was running like a hare across the fields. Mr. Bootles leaned on the hack, and gasped. Mr. Tulkerton went to the aid of Lovell and Morny,

and the captured ruffian, Gadger, was bound with his own muffler. He lay in the snow and spat out curses.  
"One of them, at least, Mr. Bootles," said the lawyer, with grim satisfaction. "The other, I fear, will get away—Mortimer Stacey, I have little doubt."  
"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles feebly.  
"I have no doubt they were on the watch, and saw me arrive at Rookwood," said Mr. Tulkerton. "They laid in wait on the chance that you might return with me. But how came these boys here—very fortunately for us?"  
Lovell chuckled.  
"We came to look after Mr. Bootles, sir," he said.  
"Lovell thought—" began Morny.  
"Shurrup!"  
Mornington grinned, and did not finish. Arthur Edward Lovell did not want Mr. Tulkerton to know what he had thought. It was evident now, even to Lovell, that the lawyer-chap was above suspicion.  
"Lovell thought—" said Mr. Tulkerton, with a sharp look.  
"Ahem! He thought there might be danger—"  
"It—it was very—very thoughtful of Lovell," gasped Mr. Bootles. "Oh dear! I—I begin to wish that—that my uncle had not— Oh dear! This is—is—is most distressing."  
"We shall take this rascal to the police-station," said the lawyer, "and probably he will help the police to find his associate, to save his own skin."  
"Don't you reckon on that, old covey?" sneered Gadger. "You won't get nothing out of me."  
"Was your companion Mortimer Stacey?" demanded Mr. Tulkerton.  
"Find out!" answered the ruffian sullenly.  
And he refused to utter another word. Jimmy Silver & Co. came streaming back from the fields—empty-handed.  
"He dodged us," said Jimmy.  
"There was a car waiting on the Rookham road, and he got off. But we've got one of them."  
"My dear boys, how can I thank you?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "You have saved me—a second time. I shall invoke the protection of the police, these—these experiences are most—most unerving. Perhaps—you boys would not mind coming as—as far as Coombe—as you are here—"  
"Certainly, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "We'll walk after the cab."  
"Thank you very much, my dear Silver."

Mr. Bootles and the lawyer re-entered the hack, and Gadger was lifted in.  
"By gosh!" said the Coombe cabman.  
It was his first remark. He drove on, and Jimmy Silver & Co. trotted after the cab as far as the police-station, where Mr. Gadger was duly charged and handed over to the police. Then they saw Mr. Bootles off at the station.  
**THE END.**  
*(Mind you read "The End Study to the Rescue!" A fine, complete yarn of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)*



