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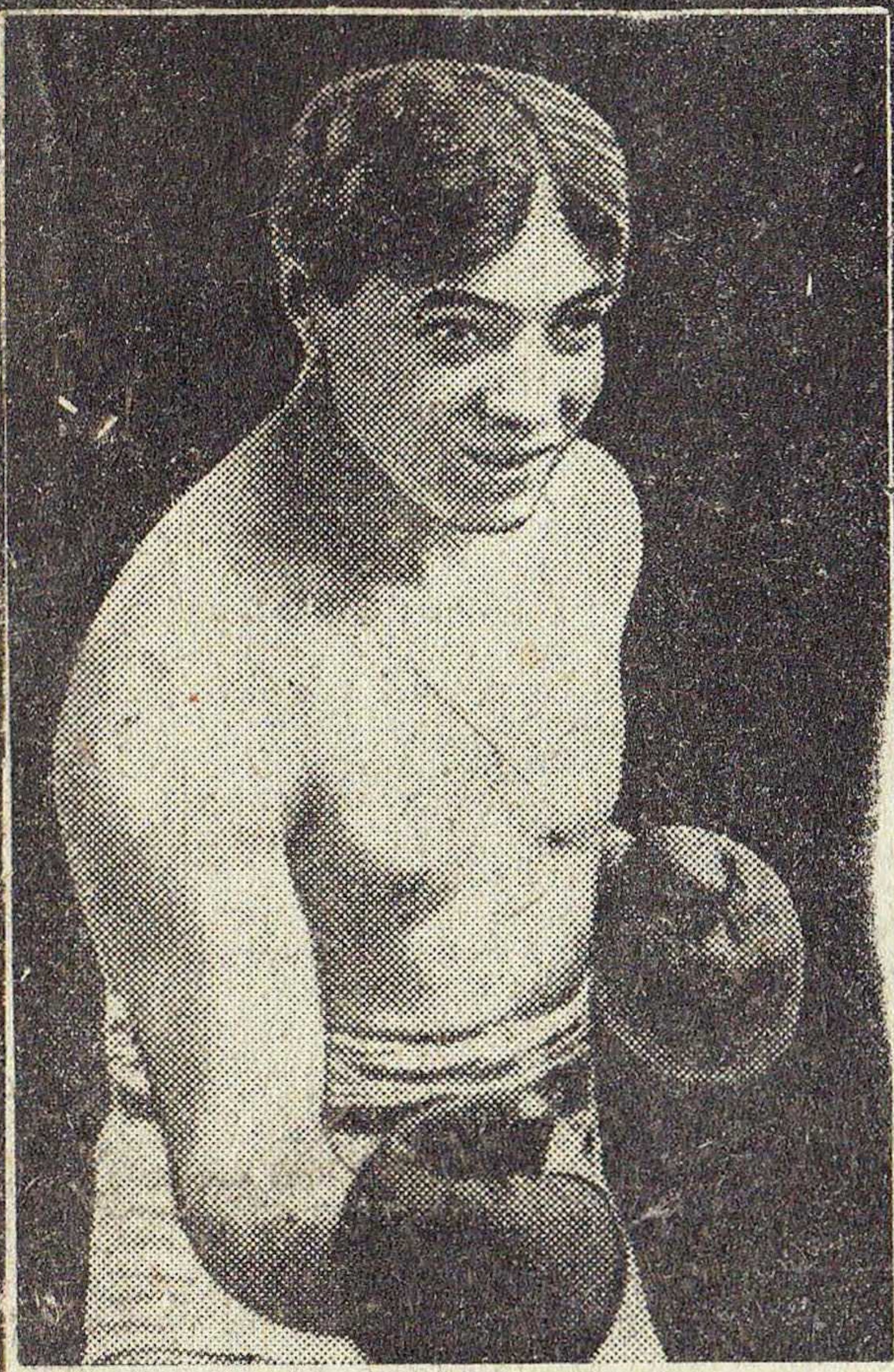
# The BOYS' FRIEND 1<sup>1d</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

ON SALE EVERY MONDAY.

No. 1,095.]

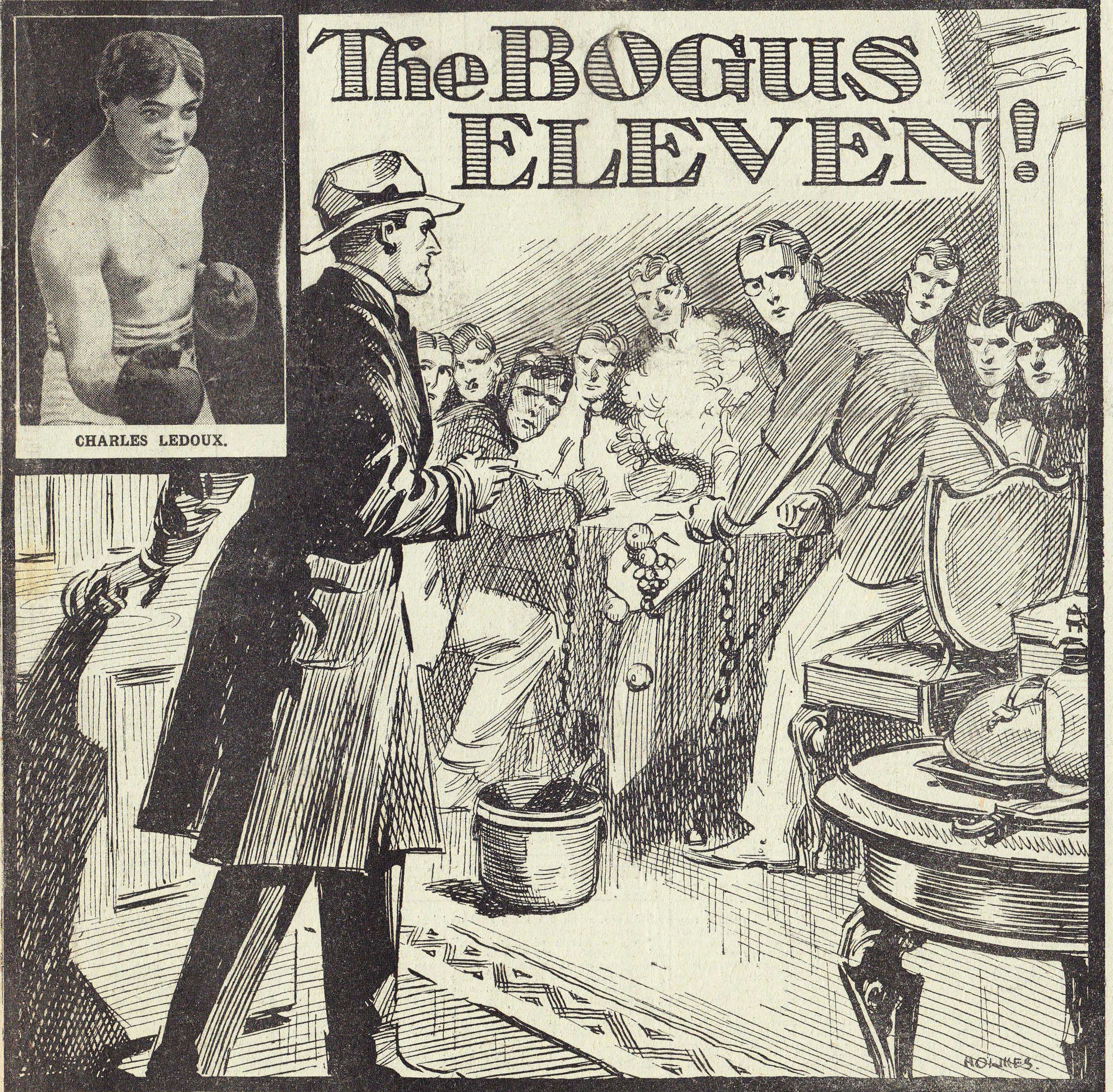
THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending June 3rd, 1922.]



CHARLES LEDOUX.

## The BOGGUS ELEVEN!



### THE HANDCUFFED DINERS!

"What does all this mean?" asked Rollo. "Permi. me to explain, my dear Dayton!" said the musical voice of the Duke. Rollo swung round as though he had received an electric shock, to see the master-criminal advancing into the room. (A Dramatic Incident from this week's Great Sporting Story.)



A Splendid Story of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School!



# Left Behind!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

## The 1st Chapter.

### Mornington is Mysterious!

"Seen Morny?" Erroll of the Fourth asked that question in the junior Common-room at Rookwood, addressing nobody in particular.

It was getting towards bed-time for the Fourth, and most of the juniors were in the Common-room. But Valentine Mornington was not to be seen there.

Jimmy Silver shook his head as he met Erroll's glance.

"Not since—" Jimmy began, and stopped.

Arthur Edward Lovell chuckled, and finished the sentence for him.

"Not since we licked him in Oswald's study, Erroll. That isn't very long ago."

Erroll made no reply to that. After a rather worried glance round the Common-room, he turned and went down the corridor.

He paused at the foot of the big staircase, and then slowly mounted the stairs, and went to his study, No. 4 in the Fourth.

The quarter-past nine had chimed out; and, so far as Erroll had been able to discover, Mornington was not in the School House at all. He had looked for him in the study, in the Shell passage, and downstairs, and he was not to be found. If the scapegrace of Rookwood had gone out of school bounds, he was in imminent danger of discovery, as he would certainly be missed if he did not turn up for dormitory at half-past nine. And Erroll, knowing that his chum was in a bitter and reckless mood that evening, was worried and a little alarmed.

He gave a slight exclamation as he came up to the door of Study No. 4. He had left the study in darkness, but the light was on now. Erroll pushed the door open quickly.

"Morny!" Mornington of the Fourth was seated in the armchair in the study, his hands in his pockets, and his feet on the table.

He nodded coolly to Erroll as the latter came in.

"Hallo!"

"You here, Morny—"

"Nothin' surprisin' in findin' a chap in his own study, is there?"

"Well, yes," said Erroll. "I've been looking everywhere for you for the last half-hour. I—I was afraid you'd gone out of bounds."

"Lookin' for me?" yawned Mornington.

"Well, I've been for a trot in the quad."

"I didn't see you come in."

"Oh, I got in at a window at the back!"

Erroll compressed his lips a little, but made no rejoinder. He knew now that Mornington had been out of the school after lock-up.

"Perhaps I went a bit farther than the quad," said Mornington meditatively.

"Perhaps I dropped over the wall, and took a little ramble along the high-road in this giddy moonlight. Perhaps I met a man, and had a little chat with him. Why not?"

The dandy of the Fourth seemed quite cheerful, almost merry; but there was a sardonic, mocking light in his eyes that Erroll did not like. Certainly Morny did not look like a fellow who had received a Form licking a short time before—the effects of which he must still have been feeling. Erroll sat on the edge of the table, regarding his chum with some uneasiness.

"And to-morrow," said Mornington thoughtfully, "is the merry cricket-match with St. Jim's. You're goin', Erroll?"

"Yes, as I'm in the team."

"You don't feel inclined to chuck it up, as a protest against your best chum bein' dropped from the team?" Erroll looked deeply troubled.

I can't very well, Morny, old chap. I wish you'd be a bit reasonable. Silver had to leave you out as you're not in form. I—I wish you'd let Oswald alone, Morny."

"You think it was rather high-handed to pitch into him, because he bagged my place in the team?"

"The place was given him, and you've made the fellows think that you wanted to crock him for the match to-morrow. I know it's unjust, but that's what they think now."

"They're right."

"Morny?" "I was goin' to give Oswald a decorated visage that he couldn't possibly have taken over to St. Jim's for a cricket-match," yawned Mornington. "Shocks you, old bean, what?"

"I should say so!" Erroll drew a deep breath. "If that's the truth, Morny, Silver was quite right to interfere, and you deserved the Form licking you got—every bit of it."

"Thanks! You always were a candid friend, old bean. But somebody may be sorry for that Form lickin', all the same," said Mornington, with a glint in his handsome eyes. "So you're goin' over to St. Jim's with the merry cricketers to-morrow, Erroll?"

"Certainly!"

"Leavin' me pinin' on my lonely own?"

"You don't ask me to cut cricket, Morny, because you've dropped practice and lost your place in the team?"

"Oh, no! Besides, you're vice-captain, and if anything happened to Jimmy Silver you'd be wanted to take the giddy command."

"That's not likely to happen."

"Stranger things have happened," remarked Mornington. "Somethin' might prevent Silver from goin' over. Then you'd be wanted. Suppose that, were to happen, you'd play your own pal in the team, although Silver thinks he isn't good enough—what?"

Erroll gave his chum a startled look.

"Morny! You—you haven't—you can't have been playing any trick to keep Silver away from St. Jim's to-morrow! It's not possible—"

"How could I?" said Mornington, laughing.

"Of course, you couldn't," said Erroll.

"But if it happened—"

"What's the good of discussing what might happen, when it's practically certain not to happen?" said Erroll.

"Things do happen," yawned Mornington. "Jimmy Silver might be detained by the Head, or he might have an attack of apoplexy."

Erroll laughed. "But if you did happen to get the captaincy for the day, Erroll, you'd play me?"

Erroll did not answer.

"Can't you give me an answer, Erroll?" asked Mornington, looking at his chum with a very unpleasant light in his eyes.

"How could I play you, Morny, when you're dropped from the team because you're utterly off your form, and not fit to take part in a fixture of any importance?" said Erroll impatiently.

"So friendship counts for nothin'?"

"It wouldn't in such a case. Why, Jimmy Silver has left both Raby and Newcome out of the eleven, though they're his pals, and jolly keen to play. If I were in his place, I hope I should do my duty as he does. So would you, Morny. But what's the good of discussing what won't happen? And it's bed-time."

Erroll slipped from the study table.

"I think you would play me, all the same, if you had the chance," said Mornington quietly. "If you had the chance, and didn't stand by your chum, it would be the end of a good many things. I suppose you know that?"

Erroll shook his head.

"Then I'm glad the occasion won't arise," he said. "When you're more reasonable, Morny, you'll agree with

my view. Anyhow, I'm not going to quarrel with you over something that won't happen. Let's get off to the dorm before Bulkeley comes after us with his ashplant."

Mornington said no more, and the two juniors joined the crowd of the Fourth on their way to the dormitory.

## The 2nd Chapter.

### Called Away!

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny on Rookwood School.

There were a dozen juniors that morning at Rookwood who were specially and particularly merry and bright.

For Jimmy Silver's team it was a whole holiday instead of a half, and the cricketers, who were going to St. Jim's, prepared for their journey instead of for morning classes.

Raby, who was not in the team, was going with them; but there was leave only for the round dozen, and Newcome was staying behind. It

Jimmy Silver laughed. "Newcome, old chap, give it a rest. Erroll's coming, if we have to carry him in a cricket bag. Come over in the afternoon if you can, and we'll all come home together."

The Fistical Four were in the end study just then, and there came a tap at the half-open door. Tupper, the page, presented himself there with a telegram in his hand.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "I hope that isn't from St. Jim's—can't be anything to prevent the match—"

"Master Silver—" said Tupper.

"Thanks, kid."

"Mr. Dalton said I was to bring it up to you, sir," said Tupper. "The boy's waiting for an answer."

Jimmy Silver nodded and opened the telegram. He glanced at it, with the same thought in his mind that had occurred to Lovell: that something might have happened at St. Jim's with regard to the match fixed for that Saturday. His chums watched him as he read it. They looked anxious as they saw Jimmy's colour change.

"Good heavens!" muttered the captain of the Fourth.

"They're scratching!" exclaimed Lovell.

"No! No! It—it's not from St. Jim's!" Jimmy Silver pulled himself together, but his lips were trembling. "It's from home! Father—"

"Bad news, old chap?" asked Lovell, his expression changing.

"Look!"

Jimmy's chums read the telegram. It ran:

given leave," said Jimmy Silver. It was just like Jimmy to think of his chum in that moment of deep trouble for himself. "I'll show this telegram to Mr. Dalton and speak to Erroll. You get my bike down to the gates ready, Newcome!"

"Right-ho!" Newcome cut away down the passage. Jimmy Silver read through the telegram again and put it into his pocket. His face was pale still, but he was cool and collected.

"Good-bye, you fellows; play up at St. Jim's," he said. "I must see Erroll before I go, though!"

And Jimmy hurried out of the end study.

He looked into No. 4, but that study was empty. He ran downstairs, and came on Mr. Dalton in the passage. The Fourth Form master glanced at the telegram and looked very grave.

"You must go at once, Silver," he said. "I will explain to the Head. Let me know by wire or telephone if you are not able to return to the school to-night!"

"Yes, sir; thank you," stammered Jimmy.

He hurried out into the quadrangle. Mornington and Erroll were talking together there in the sunshine, and Jimmy spotted them. He hurried up to Erroll.

The latter stared at his pale, harassed face.

"Not time to start yet—" he began.

"I'm not going," said Jimmy hastily. "I've had a telegram—"

"What!"



**JIMMY SILVER ARRIVES HOME!** A grave-looking gentleman, who had evidently seen Jimmy's breathless arrival from a window, opened the door to him. Jimmy started back violently. "Father!" he gasped.

needed all Newcome's solid commonsense to realise that Jimmy Silver was right in leaving him out for a better man. Newcome did not quite see, personally, that the better man was better; and Jimmy's selection had shaken his faith a trifle in Jimmy's judgment. But he bore his destiny with cheerful resignation, and he helped Jimmy and Lovell and Raby to get ready. They were starting for the station soon after the rest of the school were due for classes.

"May give you a look-in in the afternoon!" Newcome remarked. "I think I'll come over and see the finish. I say, Jimmy—"

"Yes, old chap?"

"As Erroll's so jolly chummy with Morny he might like to hang on at Rookwood and keep him company!"

"Bow-wow!"

"He's helping Morny with his Latin too and Morny's swotting for the Latin exam—"

"Your father seriously ill. Come at once.—Phyllis."

"It's from Cousin Phyllis," muttered Jimmy. "I—I didn't know she was staying at the Priory. Father ill—it must be jolly serious for a telegram to be sent calling me home. Oh!"

Jimmy caught his breath. He looked round the study rather blindly for a pen and paper.

"Ere's a form, sir," said Tupper quickly.

Jimmy took the form and wrote hastily:

"Coming by first train.—Jimmy."

Tupper took the telegram downstairs to be handed to the waiting telegraph lad.

Newcome had already got a timetable out of a drawer and opened it. Jimmy, with a white face, glanced over it for trains. All thought of the cricket match had been obliterated from his mind for the moment.

"Nine thirty-five at Latham Junction," he said. "I can catch that on my bike, and leave the bike there. You fellows—"

"I'll get your bike out!" said Newcome.

"Hold on a minute. There's the cricket." Jimmy remembered that now. "I can't go over to St. Jim's. Erroll will skipper the team and Raby will play!"

"That's all right!" said Raby.

"You can go with the eleven, Newcome, as a dozen fellows are

Erroll almost shouted the word.

"You're not going to St. Jim's, Silver?"

"No; I can't—now—"

Erroll turned a look, full of black suspicion, upon Mornington. He could not help remembering Mornington's words of the evening before; in his mind was the irresistible suspicion of a trick of some kind. Morny did not meet his glance. He was looking at the pigeons in the quad with a smiling face and whistling softly. His manner was perfectly cool and unconcerned.

"My father's ill," said Jimmy. "I'm called home—by telegram. I'm catching the train at Latham Junction—on my bike. You'll skipper the team at St. Jim's, Erroll?"

"Yes, yes—but—"

"No time to waste. I've told Raby he's to play, and Newcome will come over with you. Beat St. Jim's if you can!"

"But—" panted Erroll.

"That's all!"

Jimmy Silver said no more, but started at a trot for the gates, where Newcome had already wheeled his bicycle.

Erroll made a step after him, but paused. He turned back to Mornington, who was still watching the pigeons.

"Morny—"

The dandy of the Fourth looked at him at last. He met Erroll's suspicious look with a cheery smile.

(Continued overleaf.)

**NEXT MONDAY'S  
FREE BOXING PHOTO  
IS OF  
JIM HIGGINS,  
THE SCOTTISH BOXER  
AND HOLDER OF A  
LONSDALE BELT.**



"So the unexpected has happened!" he said, laughing.

"Was it unexpected—to you?" Mornington raised his eyebrows. "What do you mean? I couldn't foresee the illness of Silver's estimable pater, could I?"

"You were saying yesterday—" Erroll stammered. He had been unable to keep that black suspicion from flooding his mind; but already he was ashamed of it. It was impossible—there could be no trick. It was only a coincidence!

"I was sayin'—what?" "It doesn't matter," said Erroll. "The—coincidence startled me—it's queer enough. I—I—"

"Poor old Silver!" said Mornington. "He looks a bit knocked over. Let's see him off."

He walked quickly down to the gates, and Erroll followed him. Newcome was coming back into the quad; it was too late to see Jimmy Silver off. Jimmy was on his bicycle, and the pedals were flying round. With his head bent over the handle-bars, Jimmy Silver was racing to Latcham Junction to catch the express. The cricket match—Rookwood—everything had vanished now from Jimmy Silver's mind—he was thinking of his father, of the house of sickness and danger, as he drove at the pedals, and the dusty road and hedges flew by him.

### The 3rd Chapter.

#### The Breaking of a Friendship!

"Well?"

Mornington uttered that monosyllable in an interrogative and very significant tone.

It was close on time for morning lessons now, excepting for the cricketing party. Most of the Rookwood juniors were discussing Jimmy Silver's hurried departure, with sympathy and concern for Jimmy, and misgivings for the St. Jim's match.

The Rookwood juniors were going over to St. Jim's minus their skipper and best bowler. It put a different complexion on Rookwood's prospects. Kit Erroll was a good man in Jimmy's place, so far as the captaincy went. But Raby in his place, as a player, was a very second-best substitute. Raby was good enough in his way, and a fairly reliable bat, but it was the champion bowler that would be missed. Jimmy Silver was the last man that could be spared, with Mornington off his form and out of the team.

"Well?" repeated Mornington, as Erroll did not answer. Erroll was deep in thought.

Morny touched him on the arm. "Yes, yes, what is it?" asked Erroll.

"Thinkin' out the giddy problem?" asked Mornington with a touch of sarcasm.

Erroll smiled faintly. "Even cricket captains don't see eye to eye," he said. "Jimmy's put Raby into the team, and I should rather have picked out Putty Grace. But they're much of a muchness, so I shall leave it as it stands."

"You're cricket captain now!" "For to-day!" assented Erroll. "You've a right to choose your own men."

"Well, yes. But it wouldn't be quite the thing to make much of a change in the circumstances. After all, Jimmy's got good judgment, and he picked out Raby for the vacant place. I was only thinking that Putty is a bowler, and we want bowlers."

"His highness didn't stop to think of that," said Mornington satirically. "Raby's his chum."

"That wasn't his reason," said Erroll rather sharply. "I shall leave the team as Jimmy left it."

"Well, never mind about Putty Grace," said Mornington. "I wasn't wastin' time thinkin' of him, as a matter of fact. But there's a vacancy in the eleven, and you're not bound to play Raby."

"It's Raby or Putty, and I'm going to follow Jimmy's judgment. I think it's better so."

"What about little me?" "You!" repeated Erroll, as if to gain time.

"Little me!" said Morny with an unpleasant smile. "I'm supposed to be a cricketer."

Erroll looked worried. "It's no good beginning on that, Morny. You know you're off your form."

"I know nothin' of the kind," said Mornington deliberately. "In the House match—"

"Hang the House match!" "Well, it's no good arguing," said Erroll. "You've been giving all your time for weeks to swotting for the Latin prize, and you've cut cricket. You don't want to go over to St. Jim's and let the side down, Morny."

"I think I should put up a good game."

"Silver didn't think so."

Mornington's eyes glistened. "Never mind Silver," he said. "Silver's off the scene now. I'm dealin' with you, Erroll. You're skipper to-day, and you can play any man you like. Silver dropped me from the team. I want you to put me in again."

"I can't, Morny!" "You mean you won't?"

"No, I don't mean that, old fellow," said Erroll patiently. "You ought to know that I don't. If you were in your old form I'd jump at the chance of having you, we want you badly enough. But you know how you lost the Classical side the House match, and that was a trial match for this fixture. Silver had no choice about dropping you. And now we've lost Silver I couldn't dare to take risks with the team."

"So that fat duffer, Raby, is a better cricketer than I?"

"Not as a rule—not half so good as a rule. But he's better now, and you'd know it if you'd only be reasonable."

"The long and short of it is that you won't play me, Erroll!"

"I can't!"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome came out of the School House with Conroy and Rawson. They were ready to start.

"Time, Erroll!" called out Arthur Edward Lovell.

"I'm ready!"

"Time for you to get into the Form-room, Morny," said Conroy.

"The other fellows are gone in."

Mornington did not heed. His eyes were fixed on Erroll. There was bitter chagrin and anger in his face.

Lovell & Co. looked at him and at Erroll's distressed face, and they

after all! And it's my own chum who's given me the boot."

"Morny, old man," said Erroll miserably.

"Are you coming, Erroll?" bawled Arthur Edward Lovell from the gates. "We're starting. You'll lose the train!"

"I must go, Morny!"

"Leavin' me behind," said Mornington between his teeth. "You know I'd play you, if I were in your place, if you wanted me to, if it cost us every win at cricket for the whole season."

"I hope not—it wouldn't be playing the game. You ought not to ask me, Morny. You know you oughtn't!"

"That's enough! You refuse?"

"Yes."

"That's your answer! And here's mine!"

With that, Valentine Mornington struck full at Erroll's face, and his open palm rang on the junior's cheek like a pistol-shot. Erroll staggered back with a startled cry, and fell in the quad.

Valentine Mornington stood for a moment, with a hateful smile on his lips, looking down at Erroll, and then he strode into the School House.

Erroll rose dazedly to his feet. He put his hand to his cheek, and stood still looking dazed, staring after Mornington as the latter disappeared into the house. Then, compressing his lips hard, Kit Erroll hurried down to the gates and joined the cricketers on their way to the station.

### The 4th Chapter.

#### A Surprise for Jimmy Silver!

Jimmy Silver sank back breathlessly in the carriage as the express rushed out of Latcham.

wondered whether he was dreaming. He had come home tortured with fear and anxiety, to find his father on a bed of sickness, and it was his father who opened the door to him, obviously in his usual health.

The reaction was too much for Jimmy.

He gave a choked cry and staggered, and would have fallen had not his father's arm caught him.

Mr. Silver's face was startled and anxious.

"Jimmy, what is the matter?"

Jimmy tried to speak, but he could not. The tears were running fast down his face.

His father drew him gently into the house and into the study that opened from the hall. Jimmy sank into a chair, feeling utterly weak and overcome.

"Now, my dear boy, what is the matter?" said Mr. Silver gravely.

"I received your telegram, and was very surprised to receive it. Why have you come home, Jimmy?"

"Father!" panted Jimmy.

"What has happened at Rookwood? Is there some trouble at the school?"

"Father, are you well?"

"Certainly."

"You have not been ill?"

"No."

Jimmy passed a hand over his dazed brow.

"Is Phyllis here?" he asked.

"No; she has not been here since the last holidays."

"Then—then it beats me!"

Jimmy Silver snatched the crumpled telegram from his pocket, and handed it to his father.

He was quick to recover himself now. There had been a mistake—or a deception. But his father was well. That hurried journey of fear had been for nothing.

"Or sent someone?" said his father.

Jimmy wrinkled his brows. It came back into his mind that Mornington had been missing after the Form licking the previous evening. He remembered how Erroll had been seeking him. It had struck him then that the reckless scapegrace of Rookwood had gone out of bounds. Was it possible that Mornington—

He remembered the attack on Oswald, who had Morny's place in the team. That was not much better than this trick and as for an agent, Morny could have found one easily enough. He had old acquaintances at the Bird-in-Hand, at Coombe. Had Mornington played this cruel trick on him, in revenge for being dropped from the team?

Jimmy Silver's eyes blazed at the thought.

Was it possible?

Mr. Silver was watching his son's face attentively. Jimmy flushed a little under the old gentleman's glance. If it was indeed Mornington who had descended to this business, Jimmy meant to reckon with him, with his own hands. But to hint such a suspicion was impossible without the fullest proof. And there was no proof, only dark surmise, only his knowledge of Mornington's reckless, passionate temper.

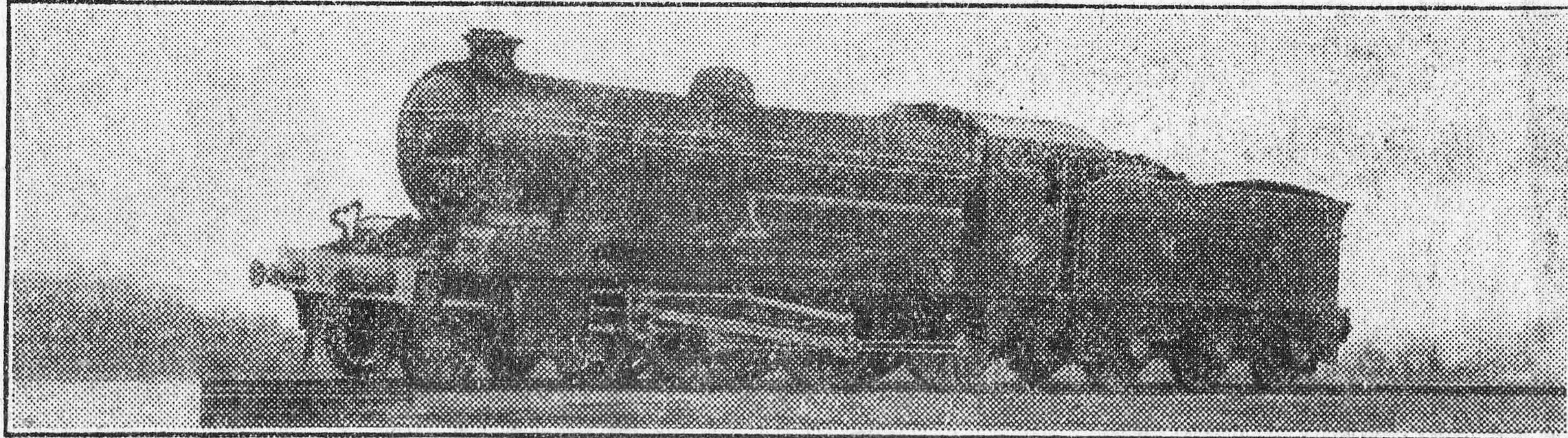
"Well, Jimmy?" said Mr. Silver.

"If it was a Rookwood fellow, father; if it was—"

Jimmy stammered. "I hope it couldn't have been. But if it was I'll find out. I—I don't care so much for the cricket match now—now it's all right at home, dad. But if there's a chance of getting to St. Jim's—"

"I am afraid not, my boy. Your friends must have left the school fairly early."

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probably guessed what the ill-assorted chums had been discussing. They walked on towards the gates, Lovell shrugging his shoulders expressively. Erroll turned an almost beseeching look on his chum.

"I must get off now, Morny—we're walking to the station, you know. You ought to be in the Form-room. Mr. Dalton—"

"Hang Mr. Dalton!"

"Well, good-bye, Morny!"

"Hold on a minute," said Mornington, his eyes glittering. "There's still time, Erroll. I was determined to play in the St. Jim's match, in spite of Jimmy Silver. You know how I dealt with Oswald? Well, I failed in that. But I expected you to play me when you had to take Jimmy Silver's place as skipper."

"You -- expected --" muttered Erroll with a startled look.

"Yes."

"But you couldn't have known—you couldn't have foreseen—"

"That black suspicion came into Erroll's mind," Morny!"

"Never mind that!" interrupted Mornington. "You've got the chance now to do me justice—your pal! Will you play me in the St. Jim's match? There's still time!"

"I can't!"

"Then what I've done I've done for nothin'!" said Mornington between his teeth.

"What have you done?"

"Nothin' that I choose to explain to you, Kit Erroll."

"Mornington!"

Mr. Dalton appeared in the School House doorway. "You are late for classes. Come, come, my boy!"

The Fourth Form master turned back into the house, supposing that Mornington was lingering over his good-bye to his chum, little dreaming of the rage and bitterness that ran riot in Mornington's breast at that moment.

"Cut off, Morny!" muttered Erroll. Oswald passed on his way to the gates with Van Ryn, giving Morny a rather grim look as he passed. Erroll made a movement to follow them.

"So that's the end!" said Mornington, almost choking. "All for nothin'! I'm left out of the team

He had caught the train with some minutes to spare, and left his bike at the station. For some time he sat breathing hard, while the express rattled and thumped on its rapid way.

The journey was a long one, and it seemed to lengthen out before the anxious schoolboy.

A dozen times at least he read and re-read the telegram, and every time its significance seemed to grow more terrible, more fatal. Unless his father's state was very serious, he would not have been called away from school suddenly like this without any previous warning.

And the illness must have been very sudden. The last letter from home, only a few days before, had contained no mention of it. The torturing thought came into his mind that it was more than serious—that perhaps he would even be too late. He tried to drive the thought away, but it recurred, and would recur.

He changed trains twice, almost like a fellow in a dream. It seemed to him that ages had elapsed before he stepped out at last at Denewood, the station for the Priory.

He hurried out of the station, and looked round for a conveyance, not doubting that the car would have been sent for him. But there was no sign of a vehicle waiting.

It was a surprise. He knew that his reply telegram must have been received. There was no vehicle available but the old hack that stood by the Red Cow, and Jimmy, without stopping to think the matter out, jumped into it, and urged the driver to get on speed. But it was a slow journey over the mile of country lane to the Priory.

His home at last!

Jimmy jumped out of the hack, raced up the drive, and reached the door, which opened as he reached it.

It was opened by a grave-looking gentleman, who had evidently seen Jimmy's breathless arrival from a window, and had come out to open the door to him.

At the sight of him Jimmy gave a suffocated cry.

"Father!"

"Jimmy, my boy!"

For a second or two Jimmy Silver

Mr. Silver read the telegram with the greatest astonishment, and a deep frown came over his brow.

"You received this at Rookwood?" he asked.

"Yes. And I came—"

"A wicked, foolish trick!" said Mr. Silver. "It was not sent by Phyllis. It was not sent from here. My dear boy, you must have been startled when I opened the door to you."

Mr. Silver understood now, and his face became soft for a moment. "My dear boy, I have never been better in my life. This is some silly practical joke!"

Jimmy clenched his hands, almost convulsively.

"I want to get hold of that practical joker, then!" he said between his teeth.

His father examined the telegram.

"Handed in at Denewood this morning," he said. "It was sent from the local post-office here by someone who knows our affairs, or he could not have used the name of Phyllis. I shall give information regarding this at the post-office, Jimmy, and the matter will be inquired into, and the scoundrel found and punished, whoever he is. But what can have been the object of such a trick I cannot imagine. And to-day, I think, was the cricket match you have told me so much about at St. Jim's. You are missing it."

"I wasn't likely to think much about a cricket match, dad, when I—I thought—"

Jimmy stopped, with a catch in his voice. "Thank goodness you're all right, and it's only a trick!" But his father's words had brought the St. Jim's match back to Jimmy's mind, and he rose to his feet. "I—I wonder if there's time to—"

Mr. Silver looked very thoughtful.

"This wretched trick has kept you away from the match, Jimmy?"

"Yes, father."

"That might be the motive, yet how could anyone at Rookwood contrive to have a telegram sent from this place, so many miles from the school?"

Jimmy started.

"My hat! But it's impossible, father. Nobody from Rookwood could have come over here so early."

"Soon after I did."

"Then they must have reached St. Jim's before you reached home, Jimmy, as it is nearer to the school. You could not get there before the afternoon."

Jimmy drew a deep breath. He had had a heavy blow, but he mustered up his fortitude to stand it. It was no use crying over spilt milk. The game must have started at St. Jim's already.

"Can't be helped, dad," said Jimmy, with a faint smile. "I hope they'll pull it off without me. It's a good team, and Erroll's a good skipper."

Jimmy's heart was heavy, but he smiled. After all, his father was well. He was let off with the fright, so to speak, and that was a consolation for everything.

But as he sat at a late lunch that day at his home Jimmy's thoughts were with the Rookwood cricketers at St. Jim's, and never had he found it so difficult to live up to his own maxim, and "keep smiling."

### The 5th Chapter. Under Suspicion!

Valentine Mornington sauntered in the quadrangle at Rookwood, with his hands in his pockets, whistling softly under his breath.

Lessons had long been over. It was a half-holiday, and the Rookwooders had dispersed in various directions. Some of the fellows had taken train to St. Jim's to see the finish of the cricket match. Mornington was not one of them.

Mornington thought he knew the result of that match in advance. Rookwood had lost their best bowler, as well as himself, and Kit Erroll was not likely to be at the top of his form that day. Mornington's lip curled with cynical bitterness at that thought. There was no remorse, no relenting, in his hard heart. Remorse, repentance would come, perhaps. There was good in Mornington as well as evil—more good than evil—but so long as he was under the sway of his present mood

(Continued on page 564.)



# POLRUAN'S QUEST!

By MAURICE EVERARD,

(Continued from page 557.)

unfolded before his startled eyes, the old sailor saw once again the truth of the ancient adage that even the most carefully-planned practical joke will sometimes go awry, and plunge both the originator and the victim into disaster.

The very mention of the whip-ray, that scourge of the deep, more ferocious than the shark, more devilish than the cuttle-fish, sent a shiver of apprehension down Joe's spine. In the cold, clear light of the moon, bathing the gently heaving surface with myriad dancing silver points, he made out the black form of Pieface alternately diving and swimming to avoid the long, straight rushes of the sea monster.

Grantley was already in the water, cleaving the oily swell as straight as an arrow from a bow, the open clasp-knife gripped between his teeth. Lawless, in the shadow of the deck-house, was fast stripping himself of all encumbrances. Ten seconds later he, too, had cleared the deck-rail, and was swimming strongly away from his friend so as to approach the whip-ray from behind.

"Look out for its tail!" he shouted, when within thirty yards of Pieface. "Don't lose your head. Dive whenever it makes for you!"

From the yacht's side a thunderous report echoed, as Joe, taking swift aim, fired a couple of shots from a long-barrelled pistol. They went true to their mark, and striking home in the white side of the fish, dyed the surrounding water with blood. The effect on the whip-ray was electrical. Its snout rose a couple of feet clear of the water. It went down, giving a momentary glimpse of a long sword-like tail, the point of which rested on the surface. Then it shot backwards, the slender blade missing Pieface only by inches.

Joe knew as well as Grantley and Lawless that one prick from the needle-point of that tail meant a swift and agonising end. There is no poison in the sea or out of it quite so deadly and rapid in its action as that thrown out by the whip-ray when it strikes its prey.

The three-handed contest now took a really dangerous turn. Lawless had come up beside the nigger, and shouldering his way between him and the ray, struck fiercely home with his long knife. At each blow the steel sank to the hilt and was drawn out reeking. But the wounds seemed to have little effect on the monster, who turned in a narrow circle and came nose on towards its adversary.

The manœuvre, however, gave Tremorne the chance to pump in a couple more shots, and though they missed Grantley by barely a yard, they reached their mark, one of them completely shattering the ray's right eye.

Grantley saw the advantage, and called to Lawless to approach him.

"Keep on its right all the time, and look out for that tail!" he said.

Lawless engaged a second time, and succeeded in ripping the soft body from the throat to the snout. In withdrawing his knife, however, the fish made a snap at his arm, missed his wrist, but closed upon the blade. Though the loss of the weapon was a severe blow to the legionary, it served a good purpose, for the snap of the jaws so completely transfixed the clasp-knife that the monster's mouth was held half-open.

"We shall win yet!" cried Grantley. But before the words had been spoken the brute rolled in a red-flecked froth, and striking backwards, the sword tail rasped along the side of his singlet. By a miracle it missed his flesh.

A rifle had now been brought up, and as the combatants had drawn closer in, Joe was able to take aim with more certainty. One after another he discharged every chamber of the magazine. Six of the seven shots were effective, and, with his head blown to pulp the whip-ray was now at a great disadvantage. It still continued the fight, however, following its foes by the slight noise made as they swam in different directions.

Once it was within a yard of Grantley, but he dived, and coming up directly underneath, drove his long knife well into the belly. The terrible wound, almost a yard in length, was not sufficient to close the contest, and for a third time the deadly tail came into action. Like a flash of light it streamed towards Lawless, but just as quickly the long boat, fully manned, and dashing forward under the impetus of five pairs of arms, came alongside and received the thrust. The needle-like point sank home in the straking, and the whip-ray, momentarily held, was at their mercy. A skilful throw from a heaving-line made it fast. Enmeshed in turn after turn the monster could only struggle feebly, while willing hands were outstretched to help Lawless, Grantley, and Pieface inboard. "We've got it!" shouted Grantley,

standing up and waving his arm. "Shall we bring it in?"

"Bet your life I want to see it!" Joe sang out, setting down his gun. Then, under his breath, "And I'll keep that tail as a reminder not to play practical jokes again."

There was great excitement aboard as the boat, with its tremendous burden, was slowly raised, and the Wellin davits were swung in. Later, when the fish was quite dead, tackle was rigged, and the cumbersome brute was weighed. It turned the scale at just over half a ton. The "whip," which Joe cut off, was a fearsome object despite its relatively small size, being only about nine inches long, but with small teeth or barbs along each edge.

"Doan think I likeum your deck-rail stunt," muttered Pie, as he wiped the water out of his eyes.

"No," agreed Joe penitently. "And all things considered, I don't think very much of it, either. However, perhaps it's taught us all a lesson, and there we'll let the matter

however, just as strangely by sea as by land, and, seeing that wireless and telegraphy can beat us at every turn, Bastwick may get on our trail much sooner than we anticipate. What I propose to do, therefore, is to repaint the yacht and alter her appearance generally at the first possible moment. Between now and touching Colombo, I want you boys to work out a few ideas."

This gave them all something to think about, and at Dick's suggestion it was resolved to dispense with the superstructure which had carried the aeroplane in the Bargasso, to erect temporary deck-houses of lath and canvas suitably painted, and to add a second funnel.

Accordingly, when Colombo was reached, and they learned the good news that the Audacious, under Bastwick's orders, had left nearly three weeks before, paint brushes, wood, and canvas were bought, and taken secretly to the ship. She cleared from Colombo, ostensibly for Fremantle, but instead of heading south for the equator, she steamed due east for the Nicobar Islands. Under the lee of one of the numerous coral atolls she lay up a whole fortnight, and in that time such a transformation was wrought that no one would have recognised the Enchantress which had left Colombo ten days before.

As soon as the work was finished Joe summoned Lawless and Grantley to his cabin, where the three chums were already gathered, and told them of his intentions.

"You've proved your mettle, and have served us well," he said. "I've talked the matter over with my owners—these young gentlemen here"—indicating the two Polruans—"and they are willing to change their plans, which included a round-the-world tour, and to take you right through the China Sea to Tonquin. At the first big port we touch you'll be able to learn the whereabouts of the Foreign Legion, and wherever it may be we'll land you there."

Grantley and Lawless were profuse in their thanks over this unexpected good fortune, for, above all, they were soldiers to the backbone, and the wish nearest their hearts was to be in the thick of the fighting, which they knew was taking place in Annam. On the last day of the month the stark head of Cape Romania was passed on the star-board quarter, and the yacht ploughed steadily forward, nosing her way north into the terrible China Sea.

(Another long instalment of this magnificent story will appear in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. A photo of Jim Higgins will also be given!)

# LEFT BEHIND!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Continued from page 360.)

of reckless bitterness there was no repentance.

It was in the summer dusk that the cricketers arrived from St. Jim's, and Mornington watched them come in. They did not look like a victorious team. Kit Erroll glanced at his whitewash chum, and flushed, but walked on to the School House without speaking. He had not forgotten the scene in the quad. Neither had Morny forgotten it.

"How did it go?" asked Mornington, addressing the cricketers generally.

Arthur Edward Lovell grunted. "St. Jim's won by thirty runs, if you want to know."

"Dear me!" smiled Mornington. "What a pity you left out your best man?"

"Couldn't help leaving out Jimmy, as he had to go home."

"I wasn't thinkin' of the estimable Silver, dear boy."

"No," said Lovell, with a snort. "You were thinking of your estimable self and of the duck's eggs and muffed catches you might have put in."

And Lovell snorted again contemptuously, and tramped on. Valentine Mornington shrugged his slim shoulders, and smiled. It was a little later that Jimmy Silver arrived in the end study.

"We—" began Lovell.

"I know," said Jimmy, with a nod. "I heard it from Tubby Muffin as I came in. Hard luck!"

"Your father?" asked Lovell.

"All serene. He hasn't been ill," said Jimmy quietly. "The telegram was a trick to keep me away from the cricket match."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Lovell. "Then who—what—"

"But it came from your home," muttered Raby. "Why should anybody there—"

"It came from the post-office at home," said Jimmy. "But it was a put-up job by somebody who wanted to keep me away from the match. Somebody at Rookwood"—Jimmy's jaw set grimly—"somebody I'm going to find and reckon with."

There was a silence in the end study. But one name was in the minds of the chums of the Fourth, one name, and that name was Valentine Mornington!

THE END.

(There will be another splendid story of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Also a photo of Jim Higgins!)

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end. Now get you off to your galley, my lad. After you're dressed we'll celebrate in right royal style!"

Certainly, after this day of excitement, there was no further slackness aboard the Enchantress. Not a day passed but the boys kept themselves in perfect trim, either by physical exercises or by courses of seamanship under Joe's instruction.

A week before reaching Colombo Joe called a council of war, and outlined a plan which, for some while, had been forming in his astute brain. He said:

"It's more'n likely when we get to Ceylon we shall find our ruse has worked, and that, as a result of the faked cable sent from Cape Town, the Audacious will have steamed west for South America. News travels,

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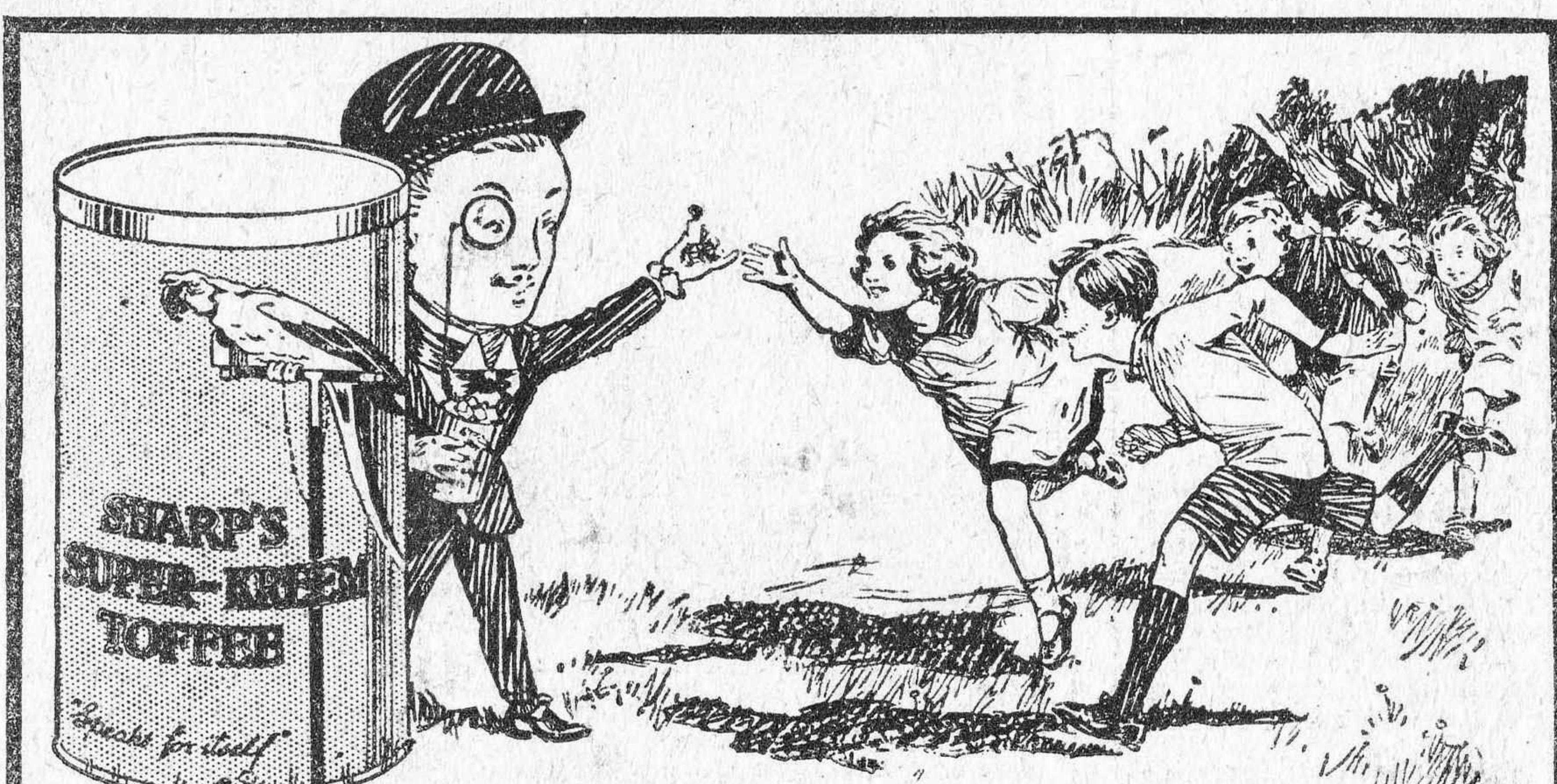
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