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Week Ending September 6th, 1924.



How Don Darrel Made His Dramatic Announcement to the Football Crowd!

(A th-illing incident from Victor Nelson's topping footer story inside.)

HERE'S ANOTHER STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL



The 1st Chapter.

No Shelter!

"Ow! It's wet!" Raby made that remark-really quite a superfluous remark in the circumstances.

Jimmy Silver & Co. knew that it was wet.

The delightful uncertainty of the British climate had been exemplified once more.

The Rookwood cyclists had pedalled merrily on their way under a blazing August sun that afternoon. They were thinking of camp and supper when the rain came on.

It came on quite suddenly. "Only a shower, you know," Arthur Edward Lovell had remarked. Lovell rather prided himself on being knowing on the subject of the weather.

"Looks like lasting!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

Lovell shook his head.

"Oh, rot!" he said reassuringly. Nevertheless it lasted. Now it had lasted half an hour, and the downpour was growing steadily heavier. The Fistical Four of Rookwood were drenched, and they were not feeling cheerful. A cycling tour in the summer holidays was a ripping idea, but they realised that it had its drawbacks. Wet and draggled they pushed on wearily through mud and slush, with the rain falling steadily on their devoted heads.

As the proverb declares, it never rains but it pours. Jimmy Silver & Co., at that inauspicious juncture, were far from shelter. They were somewhere in Somerset, but exactly where they were not certain. They were following a path across a tract of moorland, and every moment they hoped to see the lights of a village glimmering through the rainy dark.

But no lights glimmered. All was larkness and gloom and rain and damp and mud. It really was discouraging, even to four fellows accustomed to keeping a stiff upper lip in times of trouble. Even Jimmy Silver forgot his favourite maxim of "Keep smiling!" Certainly he was not smiling now.

"Ow! It's wet!" repeated Raby lismally.

"I'm soaked!" mumbled Newcome.

"There ought to be a dashed village or something in this dashed place!" growled Lovell. "A dashed farmhouse at least! It's like a dashed desert! Might as well be in the dashed Wild West!" Arthur Edward Lovell seemed to find solace in dashes. "According to the dashed map, there's a dashed village on this dashed moor, but I'm dashed if I can see any sign of it!"

"No blessed shelter of any sort!" said Jimmy Silver, staring round into the gloom. "We can't camp about here—that's a cert. We must keep

"Blow it!" growled Lovell. Lovell was mounted on the motorscooter, Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome were driving at muddy manded Lovell. pedals with tired and muddy legs. Really, they had more cause of complaint than Lovell had. But Arthur Edward seemed to take the sudden change in the weather as a personal

affront to himself. "There's a light!" exclaimed

Jimmy Silver suddenly. "Oh, good!"

like corn in Egypt in one of the lean | Lovell.

the eyes of the tired and troubled | don't want to know! Get away from Rookwooders.

It gleamed through the rain and darkness across the moor-a clear and steady light, evidently burning in a window. It came from the left of the track, and was at a good distance, but the juniors turned towards it at once. The machines bumped on the rough moor till the juniors found a narrow path that led towards the light. Lovell rode ahead, with the motor-scooter chug-chugging, and his three comrades trailed behind on their push-bikes.

The light grew clearer.

It was a powerful light, and looked like an electric light-though it was rather unexpected to find electric lighting in that remote countryside. And there was no other light-not a glimmer or a gleam. Clearly it was not a village that the juniors were approaching. It was some isolated. building on the moor, probably a holiday bungalow.

Dimly at last the Fourth-Formers of Rookwood made out the building -a rather extensive bungalow, with a large ill-kept garden and sheds and outhouses. The light, more powerful than ever now that they were close to it, came from a large window, which was covered by a white curtain apparently of muslin.

Through the dropping rain came a sound from the building-an echoing sound of knocking.

Knock, knock, knock! Jimmy Silver & Co. had, the impression for a moment or two that some stranded wayfarer like themselves was knocking at the door of the lonely bungalow to seek shelter from the weather. But they very quickly realised that the knocking

came from within the building. Somebody there was using a hammer. Knock, knock, knock!

"Here we are!" gasped Lovell. He jumped off the motor-scooter and leaned it against the wooden porch outside the bungalow door. His comrades followed his example, and they gladly gathered in the shelter of the porch. It was something to be out of the rain. From within the building the hammering went on steadily.

"Better bang at the door," said Lovell. "Whoever it is that lives here, he can't refuse us shelter. Bound to let us camp in one of the sheds at least when he sees that we're not tramps."

"Yes, rather!" There was a knocker on the door, and Lovell proceeded to bang with

The hammering in the house ceased.

But no one came to the door. Bang, bang! went the knocker.

There was a sound of footsteps at last. Shuffling footsteps, as of feet in loose slippers, approached the door from within, but it did not open.

"Who's there?" called out a sharp, angry voice.

"Can't you open the door?" de-

"Certainly not. Who are you?" "We're cyclists caught in the rain," called out Jimmy Silver. "Will you give us shelter?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Go away at once. I've had tramps about here before, and things stolen. Clear off!"

my house, that's all!"

The shuffling footsteps receded within.

"Well, of all the inhospitable beasts!" growled Newcome. "Cheeky rotter!" exclaimed Lovell. "Taking us for tramps, by

Jimmy Silver grinned faintly. "Well, he can't see us," he said. "He may be afraid to open the door

in a lonely place like this. Bother!" "Are we going on in this thumping rain?" growled Raby.

drenching the already drenched juniors, swamping their muddy machines. All round them was darkness, with here and there a weeping tree looming shadowy in the gloom. Not a glimmer of a light was to be seen, save that one powerful light that shone brightly from the bungalow window.

"The rotter!" muttered Jimmy. Jimmy was prepared to make allowances. The building was a lonely one—the solitary resident might not care to open his door to strangers on a dark night. He might have had trouble with tramps already-perhaps robbery-perhaps with violence. But at least he could have given the stranded, soaked schoolboys the hospitality of a shed for the night. Even if they had been tramps, he might have taken the risk of that.

"We're not going!" said Lovell, between his teeth. "We're justified | we go!" he said. in butting into one of the sheds. Justified or not, I'm jolly well going to get out of this rain!"

"Shouldn't wonder if they're all locked," said Raby dismally. "We'd better hop it, perhaps. Oh, it's wet!" "I'm going to see."

Leaving the scooter leaning on the porch, Lovell fumbled in his pocket for his electric lamp.

"What about the dog, though?" muttered Newcome.

"Four of us can handle a dog -and that rotter, too, if he comes out!" said Lovell. "Besides, I don't believe there is a dog. We should have heard him before this."

Lovell left his comrades, and went round the bungalow to the sheds; the doors of all of them were locked. Lovell examined one after another, and not a door opened. Doubtless the man of the bungalow had found it necessary to be on his guard against pilfering tramps.

HOLLING CONTRACTIONS

Peering in at the window Lovell saw a large wooden box about six feet in length and strangely like a coffin lying on the floor, whilst kneeling beside it nailing down the lid was a flerce looking black-bearded man.

"We're jolly well not!" exclaimed Lovell angrily. And he started with the knocker again.

The shuffling footsteps came back

to the door. "Are you still there, you tramping

scoundrels?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look here-" roared Lovell. "Get out of it, or I'll set the dog on you!" shouted the man in the bungalow angrily.

"Can we camp in one of the sheds?" called out Jimmy Silver. "No!"

"You're a rotter, whoever you are!" yelled Lovell. "I'd jolly well punch your nose if I could get at

"Get out!" snapped the voice within. "I give you one minute to clear, before I turn the bulldog loose." "Phew!" murmured Raby.

don't want an argument with a bulldog, you fellows. Let's cut." The Fistical Four, with feelings too deep for words, backed out of the

porch into the rain.

The 2nd Chapter. The Mystery.

But at a short distance from the back door was a large thick oak-tree, with branches so thick that it made a shelter. Lovell observed it, and came back to his comrades with the news.

"Can't get under a giddy roof anywhere," he said. "But there's a big tree. Come on."

"Oh, all right!"

The juniors wheeled their machines away, through the wet and draggled garden. Whether they were walking on grass plots or flower-beds they could not see, in the rain and shadows; and they did not care very much. They wheeled under the thick, spreading branches of the oak, and the rain ceased to beat on them. Only a few drops came spattering through the heavy foliage above.

There was no light at the back of the bungalow, and in the gloom they | the "tramps" had gone on their way could scarcely see the building. The long ago. machines were stacked against the trunk of the oak, and the Rook- as he watched through the window. wooders wrung the water out of their | What was contained in that boxclothes as well as they could.

Three of the party did their best to its size and shape? bear their misfortunes with philoso. years, came that gleam of light to "I don't know what you are, and rain came down hard and steady, were. He was very wrathful and (Continued overleaf.)

indignant, and found relief in telling his comrades what he would like to do to the gentleman in the bungalow. Punching that gentleman's nose was only an item in the list.

"Oh, give us a rest, old chap!" said Raby at last. "We're as wet as you are, you know. This isn't our lucky evening."

"I'm soaked!" hooted Lovell. "We're not quite dry," Laid New-

"My clobber's spoiled." "Ours isn't improved."

"Oh, don't argue, Newcome!"
"Br-r-r-r!"

"Keep smiling, old chaps," said Jimmy Silver, with an effort at cheerfulness. "I believe the rain is easing off. We shall be able to get on the

road again soon." Lovell snorted. "I want to punch that rotter before

"My dear man, you can't go around punching householders because they don't take strangers in to roost," said Jimmy, laughing. "Anyhow, we're roosting under his tree."

Knock, knock, knock! Through the gloom the hammering sound came from the bungalow

again. "What the thump is the man up to?" muttered Lovell. "Sounds as if

he were nailing a coffin." "No bizney of ours."

"I don't know about that," said Lovell sharply.

"Eh! What does it matter to us?" demanded Jimmy.

"It's jolly suspicious, to my mind!" growled Lovell. "I'm jolly well going to see what he's at. Here's a man in a lonely bungalow, afraid to let a chap into his house—and he's hammering up something at night. I call it suspicious."

"Hem!" Lovell grunted, and moved out from under the oak-tree. Possibly his extreme discomfort, and his resentment of the bungalow man's inhospitality, made him welcome suspicion. Certainly, just then, Arthur Edward Lovell was prepared to believe the very worst of the man who had left the Rookwooders out in the rain. And a remembrance lurked in his mind of something he had read in the newspapers recently of a

bungalow crime. Lovell would not have been pleased exactly to discover that the inhospitable bungalow-dweller was nailing up a dead body in a coffin. But undoubtedly he would have been very keen to bring the police down. on the place, given just cause.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome grinned, as Lovell went out into the rain. They did not share his suspicions, and he was welcome to make his investigations entirely on his own.

Lovell skirted the building, and came round under the front windows again. There were two front windows, but only one was lightedthe same window from which the bright light shone, which had drawn the wandering Rookwooders to the

Lovell trod softly under that window.

The muslin curtain within covered the glass, but it gave little obstruction to a view of the room.

The light, bright as it was, was not after all electric. Lovell saw a large petrol lamp standing on a bracket, shedding a brilliant illumination over what was apparently the sitting-room of the bungalow.

A gate-legged table had been closed and pulled aside. Almost in the middle of the room, a large wooden box lie on the floor-a box six feet in length, and nearly two in width-strangely suggestive of a coffin.

The occupant of the bungalow was kneeling beside it, nailing on the

Knock, knock, knock!

Lovell scanned the man. He was a portly man of middle age, with a thick, fierce-looking beard, and sunken eyes under shaggy brows. He wore a shabby dressing-gown and loose slippers. He was intent upon his task, and evidently giving no thought to the incident of the Rookwooders. Doubtless he supposed that

Lovell's heart beat a little faster

so strangely suggestive of a coffin in

It was not an ordinary packing-case phy. It was, as Jimmy remarked, -he could see that. It was strongly all in the day's work. But Arthur | made of a good wood, and clamped Jimmy Silver breathed hard and Edward Lovell did not cease to with iron at the corners. And the Like a plank to a drowning man, "We're not tramps!" roared deep. He had seldom or never felt grumble and grouse. Lovell was wet bearded man was nailing on the lid quite so angry as he felt now. The and wretched, as the other fellows with a meticulous care that no one



Publishea

see the inside of that box."

I suppose."

that's that."

scoundrel-"

scoundrel?"

"That what?"

hanging about."

"But how?" howled Jimmy, grow-

ing a little exasperated. "The man

won't let you into the house to see it,

Lovell darkly. "I've made up my

mind, and you fellows can talk silly

rot till you're black in the face, and

it won't make any difference. So

mined mood. Opposition always had

the effect of confirming Lovell in any

opinion he had formed.

"That scoundrel--"

let's get going, anyhow."

Lovell was evidently in a deter-

"We can't do anything now," he

added. "I must have time to think

over this. Let's get out before that

"How do you know he's a

"I've got jolly good reason to

believe that he's not only a scoundrel,

but a criminal. Let's get out before

the villain finds that we've been

"Oh. my hat!" said Jimmy. "Well,

The rain was still falling lightly,

but the worst of it was over. The

machines out from under the oak-

tree. There was a light at a

thickly-curtained window at the back

of the bungalow now-doubtless a

bed-room. As they came round the

building they discerned that the

brilliant light no longer shone at the

front window. The petrol lamp had

been extinguished, and the man-

scoundrel, criminal, or whatever he

machines back to the road, and

mounted and rode on their way. The

rain fell more and more lightly, and

stars came out twinkling in the sky.

Eagerly the cyclists looked for the

lights of a village. They did not

feel like camping out that night; they

wanted a village inn, and they wanted

it badly. They wanted to clean off

the wet and mud and sit down to a

comfortable meal under a sound roof;

and that happy prospect entirely filled

the minds of three of the party. Only

Lovell had other thoughts in his

mind-thoughts of the possibility of

a dreadful crime to which he held the

Jimmy suddenly.

running with rain.

supper.

"Hallo! Here we are!" exclaimed

A turn of the road, past a bunch of

dripping trees, brought the juniors

into a village street scarce half a mile

from the lonely bungalow. Lights

gleamed from the diamond-paned

windows of an old inn, with a sign-

board creaking on a tree in front of

it, and an ancient horse-trough over-

"Oh, good luck!" exclaimed Raby.

With great relief the muddy juniors

dismounted at the village inn. A fat

and comfortable innkeeper with

ruddy cheeks greeted them, and

assured them that there was ample

accommodation for man and beast.

The machines were wheeled away to

a stable, where an ostler agreed to

clean them for a moderate tip; and

then Jimmy Silver & Co. repaired to

two double-bedded rooms, where they

dried themselves and changed their

stantial supper-cold beef and ham

and other substantial things; and

even Lovell forgot, for the moment,

the bungalow and his dark suspicions,

as he tucked into that welcome

discuss his theory of a bungalow

crime. On the other hand, his com-

rades weren't. They had had a tiring

day, and they wanted to go to bed.

had put out the candle. Lovell came

After supper Lovell was prepared to

Then they came down to a sub-

clothes, greatly to their comfort.

Jimmy Silver & Co. wheeled their

was-had apparently gone to bed.

"There are ways and means," said

was likely to bestow on a mere packing-case.

What was in it?

Visions of mysterious murders and bungalow crimes floated through Lovell's mind as he watched.

His heart thumped. What was in that box-that coffin?

Was it a-body? It was a terrible thought, and yet it did not seem improbable. To Lovell's mind, the man's conduct had been that of a man who feared the sight of strangers. The arrival of the juniors had interrupted the man in his strange task. He had driven them from his door with savage inhospitality, and returned to his mysterious task, believing that they were gone. What was he nailing up in that coffin-shaped box with such sedulous care?

Knock, knock, knock!

The man rose from his task at last, as Lovell stood breathlessly watching in the rain outside the window.

He threw the hammer into a toolbox that lay open on the table, and crossed to a sideboard.

There he poured out a liberal dose from a bottle of spirits into a glass, and splashed soda into it from a siphon. Lovell smiled grimly. Rookwood cyclists wheeled their Doubtless the villain needed to keep up his courage with strong stimulants if he had just nailed up in the box the body of a murdered victim.

Having finished the spirits, the bearded man came across to the window.

Lovell leaped back at once.

The man was not likely to see him through the glass, with the darkness behind him. But Lovell was taking n) risks.

He hurried away to rejoin his comrades under the oak-tree in the garden, his heart thumping with excitement.

The 3rd Chapter. Lovell Means Business!

" Well?"

"Any jolly old bodies about?" "Manslaughter or murder?"

. With those frivolous questions, Lovell's chums greeted him, as he came groping back under the big Obviously, Jimmy Silver & Co. did not take Lovell's dark suspicions seriously. Indeed, he seemed to have enlivened them a little.

"Don't talk like funny asses," said Lovell. "Something's going on in that bungalow-something frightfully suspicious."

"Body in a trunk, and all that?" yawned Newcome.

"I shouldn't wonder." "Oh, my hat!"

"You fellows heard him hammering," said Lovell. "What do you think he was doing?"

"Mending his boots?" hazarded Raby.

"He was nailing up a box-a box the size and about the shape of a coffin," said Lovell impressively.

"Phew!" "The rain's easing off," said "There's a star or two coming out, too. We'd better be getting on."

"You don't seem interested," said Lovell sarcastically.

"Not very," admitted Jimmy. "I'd like to punch the man's nose before we go; but he's not likely to open his door to have his nose

punched. Let's get going." "My belief is that there's something jolly wrong going on here," said Lovell. "I want to know what

he was nailing up in that box." "He's not likely to tell you, even if you ask him-especially if it's a

body!" chuckled Raby. "I'm going to know, all the same," And they went. said Lovell determinedly. "I'm not | Lovell sniffed, and went, too. He going to take the risk of being shared Jimmy Silver's room, and witness to a crime and saying nothing | after they had turned in and Jimmy about it."

"My dear man, it's all right," said | to the subject again. For a good ten Jimmy Silver. "Perhaps he's got a minutes, sitting up in bed, he

propounded his suspicions and his theories, rather glad that Jimmy did not interrupt him with any frivolous remarks.

"Well, what do you think now, Jimmy?" asked Lovell, when he had finished.

There was no reply. "You agree that we'd better look into it, Jimmy?"

No answer. "Jimmy!" howled Lovell.

"Eh? What?" came a drowsy voice from Jimmy Silver's bed. "Did you call, Lovell?"

"You silly ass! Haven't you heard what I've been saying to you?" hooted Lovell.

"Eh? Have you been saying any-

"You-you-you silly ass!" "I've been asleep, old chap. Good-

"Look here, Jimmy-"

"Goo'-nigh'!" "You fathead!"

No answer.

Arthur Edward Lovell snorted, and laid his own head on the pillow. The mystery of the bungalow evidently had to stand over till the morrow.

> The 4th Chapter. The Suspicious Mr. Smith.

Bright and sunny, the August morning smiled on Jimmy Silver & Co. when they came out of the inn.

"We can't very well start this morning," said Lovell soberly.

"Oh, my hat! Something wrong with the petrol jigger?" asked New-

"Of course not. I'm looking after it. Nothing likely to be wrong with it when it's in my care."

come.

"Then why can't we start this

morning?" "There's that bungalow affair--" "What bungalow affair?" asked

Raby, apparently having forgotten the weird and mysterious episode of the lonely bungalow.

Lovell gave him a withering look. "If there's been a crime, we're not going on and leaving it undetected," he said.

"Oh, rot!" "You can call it rot if you like," said Lovell with calmness. "I don't. If there's a body nailed up in that box the police are going to know about it, and that johnny with the

whiskers is going to be arrested." "Oh dear!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

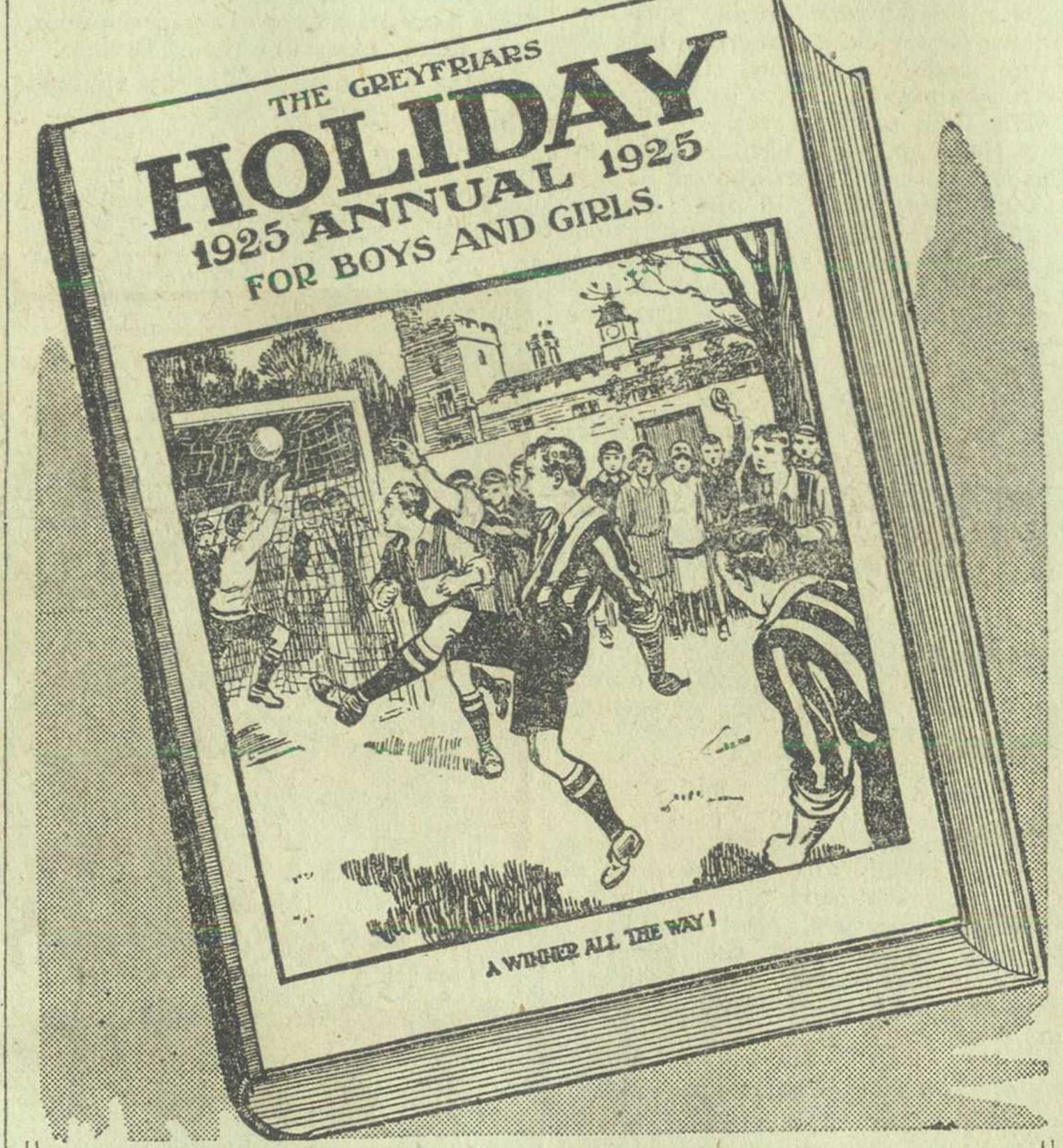
Lovell's tone was final. Only too well did his chums know that when Arthur Edward Lovell talked in that tone he was beyond argument.

"Look here!" said Raby restively. "You're an ass, Lovell! We're not hanging about here all day because you fancy things. It's not reason-

"You can keep on if you like, and

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The rain was a thing of the past. It had vanished with the night, and all was sunny and cheerful.

The Rookwooders breakfasted at a table under a spreading beech-tree

in the inn garden. They were in great spirits.

Twelve hours or so before they had wondered what on earth had made them think of spending the summer vacation on such a fatheaded stunt as a cycling tour. Now they felt that in planning a cycling tour for the summer vacation they had displayed great judgment and perspicacity.

Breakfast was ample and good, and the Rookwooders enjoyed it. From the inn garden, with its old trees and flower-beds gay with roses and geraniums and Michaelmas daisies, they had a view of the glorious Somerset hills against a sky of cloudless blue.

"We'll get off quick after brekker," remarked Raby. "We'll be in Devonshire to-day."

"Good!" said Newcome. "Devon, glorious Devon!" sang Jimmy Silver cheerily. "We're really having a jolly good time, come to think of it!" "Yes, rather!"

go to Devonshire or Cornwall or Jericho!" said Lovell stolidly. "I'm going to see whether a crime has been committed at the bungalow." "But look here, old chap--"

urged Jimmy Silver.

"Rats!" Lovell, having finished his breakfast, rose from the table and strolled away down the garden with his hands in his pockets.

Evidently he had made up his

The other three fellows looked at one another in exasperation and annoyance.

"Let's get on and leave him to it!" growled Raby.

"Let's!" grunted Newcome.

Jimmy Silver shook his head. "We can't desert old Lovell-especially when he's just going to make a fool of himself," he said. "That's the kind of occasion when a fellow's pals ought to stick to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After all, it won't do us any harm to hang on here for a while," said the captain of the Rookwood Fourth. "It's a lovely old village, and the scenery is top-notch—and the grub here is jolly good!"

"Something in that," agreed Raby. "Let's take it easy to-day, anyhow, and give old Lovell his head. He's going to put his silly foot in it, and we shall be wanted to get him out of mischief again."

Jimmy Silver & Co. devoted their attention to a dish of rosy apples to wind up the ample breakfast while they waited for Arthur Edward

Lovell to rejoin them. But Lovell did not reappear, and they finished the apples and quitted the table under the tree at last.

They walked round to the stable to look at the machines, and found them nicely cleaned, and the motorscooter newly swept and garnished. The sight of the machines tempted them to get on the road again, but it was settled that they were to give Lovell his head-for a time at least.

What Lovell's plans were-if he had made any-they could not even guess. Even had a crime been committed at the lonely bungalow they did not see how a Rookwood Schoolboy was to investigate it and bring it home to the culprit. And to call in the police because a man in a bungalow had been seen nailing up a big box seemed a little too "thick" even for Arthur Edward Lovell to think

Jimmy and Raby and Newcome strolled in the old sweet-scented garden and chatted to the innkeeper, whom they found attending to his cabbages in the kitchen garden. They learned from him that the village was called Sibley-by-the-Hill, and was a dozen miles or so from Taunton, and was rich in local legends of Monmouth's rebellion.

To the Rookwood juniors the Duke of Monmouth's ill-fated rebellion against James II. was wholly a matter of "history class," and it had hardly occurred to them that there were people in existence among whom the story was handed down from father to son.

But Mr. Purkiss, the innkeeper, whose grandfather's great-grandfather had fought at Sedgemoor, in the gallant ill-fated army of the rebels, was full of the subject. His ancestor had been executed by Judge Jeffreys, and his ancestor's sword still hung in an old room in the inn, and he took the juniors into the inn to show them the relic of ancient days.

In Somersetshire, almost more than in any other shire of Old England, the sons of the soil cling to their old homesteads, and it is not uncommon to find a yeoman holding the land that was held by his ancestors under the Tudors, and even the Plantagenets. A Purkiss had kept the Golden Cow Inn when the Duke of Monmouth's men came marching that way in those dim old days, and the stout-hearted innkeeper had laid aside apron and pewter-pot to take up his old sword and march with the rebels. On that very tree where the signboard now creaked the poor man had been hanged by Judge Jeffreys before the eyes of his trembling wife and children, and the wicked judge had revelled in the inn afterwards with his crew of drunken attorneys till he went on his way to carry death and sorrow into other unhappy homes.

Jimmy Silver & Co., after their chat with the innkeeper, strolled into the village to look for Lovell. They wondered what had become of him, and surmised rather uneasily that he might have gone to the bungalow. They came back to the inn for midday dinner, and were relieved to find Arthur Edward there.

Lovell was looking very thoughtful and serious. Apparently he had been making his investigations, but he was not interested in the local lore concerning the Monmouth rebellion. His powerful intellect was concentrated on the mystery of the bunga-

He was very silent during dinner, to which he did ample justice, his morning's work having given him a good appetite. After dinner he led his comrades into the garden to talk where no other ears could overhear.

"I've been making inquiries round about," he announced.

"Well?" yawned Raby.

"I find that there are a good many holiday bungalows in these parts between here and Taunton," said Lovell. "The one we saw last night is called Sibley Moor Bungalow."

"Anything suspicious in that?" asked Newcome innocently.

Lovell glared. "It was put up by the local builder

and let furnished," he said. "It's generally taken in the summer by visitors from London."

"London," said Raby solemnly, "is said to be a very wicked city. But I

Make sure you read the splendid series of racing stories now appearing in our famous companion paper the "Gem" Library. Out on Wednesday.

suppose the johnny with the whiskers isn't going to be found guilty of murder simply because he comes from London?"

"That," said Newcome, with equal solemnity, "can only be considered circumstantial evidence."

Lovell breathed hard. "If you fellows can't be serious

for-" he said. "Well, it's a bit hard to keep serious when you get on to these weird stunts, old chap. But go on

with it," said Jimmy Silver. "The bung was taken this summer by a man named Smith."

"I've heard that name before," remarked Raby thoughtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Will you let a fellow speak?" roared Lovell. "It was taken by a man named Smith-Phidias Smith."

"My hat! What a giddy Christian name!" said Newcome. "Wasn't Phidias a giddy old Greek sculptor in ancient times?"

"His name is Phidias Smith," went on Lovell, unheeding. "I've had a talk with the builder—a cheery old johnny. He says that Smith is an artist of some kind. Of course, the man would have to pretend to be something."

"He might have to be really something," murmured Raby. "There are artists in existence, you know."

"He lives quite alone at the bungalow," went on Lovell. "Lots of the local johnnies have jawed about it. Not a servant in the place. He has visitors from London, that's all. The idea is that he has to be quite undisturbed for his artistic work, whatever it is. Packing-cases come down by railway, and the local carrier takes them to the bungalow. They are generally very heavy. He's mean. He never tips the carrier."

"Perhaps he doesn't make a lot of money by art," suggested Jimmy. "I believe it's not considered a royal road to fortune."

"His meals are taken to him by an old woman who lives in a cottage on the moor," went on Lovell. "She goes in for an hour or two every morning to sweep and dust. But there's one room she's never allowed to enter. It's called the studio."

"He doesn't want her to sweep and dust newly-painted pictures perhaps." suggested Raby. "It might make them too Impressionist while the paint was wet."

Lovell did not heed.

"He doesn't seem to be a painter. He's never seen out sketching. Probably that's only a yarn, to cover up what he really is."

"And what's that?"

"I don't know yet. But I'm going to know."

"Might be a poet," suggested Newcome. "That would account for his whiskers, and for his dressing-

gown being ragged." "You can be as funny as you like," said Lovell savagely. "But I'm not going to be an accessory after the fact if the man's committed a crime. I'm going to know what he was nailing up in that box last night. I've learned all I can about him, and now I've got to get a look into that box."

"Perhaps he's a giddy archæologist," suggested Jimmy Silver. "The innkeeper has been telling us that they dig up relics of the Monmouth rebellion about here-old swords and pikes and breastplates, and things. Collectors come after them sometimes. Perhaps Mr. Phidias Smith is in that line."

Lovell started a little.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Raby. "That's, it, most likely. He was packing a packing-case full of giddy old relics."

The three juniors chuckled. Really, it seemed a more probable theory to them than a dead body.

But Lovell shook his head. "It will be settled when I see the

inside of that box," he said. "But you can't see it!" exclaimed

Jimmy Silver. "Are you thinking of burgling the man's house?" "Yes, if necessary."

"Oh! My only Uncle John!" "I shall use strategy, if possible," said Lovell. "The man goes out sometimes. He feeds in the bungalow, but he goes over to old Mrs. Kiffin's cottage for tea in the afternoon. That will be my chance. If you fellows don't care to risk it, you can keep clear. I'm going to the bungalow."

"But-" "I'm going!"

"You can't do it!" yelled Raby angrily.

"I'm going to!" "Look here, Lovell--"

"I'm going!" And Arthur Edward Lovell went. The 5th Chapter. Shadowed!

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

They were quite dismayed. Lovell's investigations in the village did not matter very much. He was only likely to be considered an inquisitive fellow by the people of whom he made his inquiries. But entering a house without permission was quite a different matter, and a much more serious matter.

If Lovell's suspicions of Mr. Smith were well founded, all well and good. Undoubtedly he would receive great credit for having unearthed a mysterious bungalow crime. But ifas seemed much more probable to his comrades-his suspicions were illfounded-

"The awful ass!" said Raby. "The blithering chump!" groaned

Newcome. "Why, the man can have him locked up if he goes butting into his house."

"And there's no stopping him!" sighed Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy looked after Lovell. That determined youth was striding away down the village street, towards the road over the moor. Evidently he was resolved to go, if he had to go alone. But, more than ever, Jimmy | served, after a pause.

gown, which he was still wearing, though it was afternoon.

he wore long, was untidy. His feet shuffled about with his hands in his pockets.

"Slovenly sort of johnny, and no mistake," remarked Newcome.

"Jolly artistic, at any rate," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Looks as if he's just been hooked out of a back street in Chelsea."

us in, and show us the body in the box?" asked Raby.

Lovell did not deign to answer that question.

He continued to watch the bungalow and the bearded man with intent

"You can see that he's jolly uneasy about something," Lovell ob-



Knock! knock! knock! Arthur Edward Lovell worked hard by the glimmering ray of the torch. He drove the chisel under the nailed lid of the coffin-like box, and at last wrenched it open.

Silver felt that Lovell could not be left to his own devices now. Hitherto his comrades had looked upon his proceedings with a humorous eye; but there was no doubt that the matter was getting serious now.

"We'd better go after him," said

Jimmy Silver at last. And the three Fourth-Formers of

followed Lovell.

Arthur Edward Lovell did not glance back. Apparently he did not care whether his chums backed him up or not. Lovell was on his "dignity," and he did not slacken or glance round, even when he heard the footsteps of the three close behind.

"We're coming, old bean," said Jimmy Silver as he joined Arthur

Edward. "You can come if you like," said Lovell stiffly. "But it's all rot, you know!" urged

Raby. "That will do!"

"Look here, Lovell--"

"Oh, cheese it!" Raby breathed hard and relapsed into silence. At that point Lovell's chums were rather undecided whether to give him his head or to collar him and give him a Rookwood bumping.

Fortunately they decided to give him his head. So the Fistical Four walked on together towards the bungalow, from

the door of which they had been so inhospitably rejected the previous night.

They sighted the building at a distance. It was quite a lonely place, only the chimneys of one or two other buildings showing across the wide moor in the far distance. The nearest habitation was a little redroofed cottage, from which a column of smoke was rising from the chimney -doubtless the cottage where Mr. Phidias Smith obtained his food supplies.

Lovell seemed right on that point, as his comrades could not help noticing. The bearded man shifted and lounged about the porch, every now and then stopping and staring towards the road, which was some thirty yards from the bungalow gate. He seemed like a man who was in expectation of an arrival, and was Rookwood left the inn garden and growing nervy and savage because the expected person did not come.

"Waiting for somebody, I suppose!" said Raby.

"Or watching to see whether the police are getting after him," said Lovell.

"Hem!" "Hallo! My hat! He's coming here!" ejaculated Newcome.

The bearded gentleman suddenly

Actual Photos of Players who are appearing with new clubs this season! The first of these superb 4-page art supplements is FREE with this week's FOOTBALL FAVOURITE (on sale Wednesday, September 3rd); the others will be given in following issues. Give a regular

Every Wednesday

"There he is!" murmured Lovell. | gave up lounging and shifting about, | after a long ramble. But the summer The man of the bungalow was in and started down the weedy path to dusk was deepening into night, and view. Jimmy Silver & Co. stopped | the bungalow gate. He opened the in the cover of a clump of trees by little crazy wooden gate and came out, the roadside, and looked at him. He and came up the path on the moor was lounging by the porch of the towards the road. His shabby dressbungalow, smoking a pipe, his hands | ing-gown fluttered about him in the in the pockets of his shabby dressing- summer breeze. As he came nearer the juniors could see that his face was angry and frowning.

His fierce beard was untrimmed; "He will see us, as soon as he he was hatless, and his hair, which gets into the road," remarked Jimmy Silver. "Better sit down, as if we were in large, loose slippers, one of were just taking a rest by the roadwhich occasionally slipped off as he | side-we don't want his Whiskers to know that we've been watching

"And quick," said Lovell. "Don't put him on his guard."

The Fistical Four sat in the grass under the roadside trees, and New- strode on towards the village. come thoughtfully extracted a packet of toffee from his pocket and passed | "Gone to tell the carrier to come to-"Are we going to ask him to let | it round. By the time the bearded | morrow, most likely." gentleman came up to the road the schoolboys had a very innocent look of wayfarers who had sat down to rest in the shade.

As he had not, of course, seen them the previous night, when he had turned them from his door, they had no fear that he would recognise

them. The man did not immediately notice them now. He stood in the road and stared away in the direction of the village, as if in angry and

annoyed expectation. But there was nothing to be seen on the white dusty road. Then his glance fell on the juniors, and he came towards them. Arthur Edward Lovell breathed hard. He

was wondering whether the man suspected that he was being shadowedsuspected that he was suspected, in fact! But there was nothing in Mr. Phidias Smith's manner to indicate that that was the case.

"Have you seen the carrier's cart on the road?" he asked abruptly. "The-the carrier's cart!" ejacu-

lated Lovell, taking aback by that unexpected query.

"Yes. He was due here an hour ago," muttered Mr. Smith. "Confound him-drinking at some inn, suppose, instead of attending to business. Confound the man!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. suppressed a grin. Lovell's investigations, they remembered, had revealed the fact that Mr. Smith never tipped the carrier. Possibly that accounted for the fact that the carrier had not turned up on this occasion when expected.

"You have not seen him?" snapped

Mr. Smith. "No."

The bearded gentleman gave an angry grunt, and turned away. After scanning the road savagely for a few minutes, he walked back to the bungalow, went in, and closed the door.

Lovell looked meaningly at his

comrades.

"The carrier's to take that box away, of course," he said. "Lucky he hasn't turned up, as it happens. Now we've got to wait till the coast's clear-he goes to tea soon."

The juniors settled down to wait. But Mr. Smith's usual habits inquiries at Sibley, he was aware that seemed to be changed that day. He did not go to Mrs. Kiffin's cottage to his tea-but several times the juniors saw him staring from a window, or the doorway, and guessed that he was impatiently looking for the carrier.

"He's missing his tea, because he doesn't want to miss the carrier," grinned Newcome. "That does for your stunt, Lovell."

"It doesn't!" grunted Lovell. "How long are we going to hang on here?" asked Newcome.

"I'm going to hang on till he gets out of the bung." "Oh dear!"

"We'll take a stroll," said Jimmy. "Do-and the sooner the better." Jimmy Silver & Co. walked away, leaving Lovell on the watch. Their stroll lasted a considerable time-in fact, the summer dusk was falling when they came back after a long ramble. They found Arthur Edward Lovell still sitting under the trees by the roadside, with one eye on the lonely bungalow. He looked tired,

but was apparently still determined. "Not fed-up yet?" asked Raby.

Grunt! "Has the johnny gone out?"

"Well, it's about time we got back to the inn for supper," suggested Jimmy Silver.

"You can go if you like." "Look here, Lovell, come along with---"

"Rats!" "Oh dear!" sighed Jimmy Silver. The juniors sat down in the grass; they were not averse to a rest |

they were getting hungry. No light glimmered from the bungalow-but about a quarter of an hour later the door suddenly opened, and the bearded gentleman came out. There was just light enough to see himno longer clad in slippers and dressing-gown, but quite respectably dressed, though still he did not wear a hat. He came with quick strides towards the road.

"Cover!" breathed Lovell. "He will get suspicious if he sees us here

The juniors backed among the trees, trusting to the gloom to hide them. Mr. Phidias Smith did not once glance in their direction. He

"Well, he's gone," said Raby.

"I don't care why he's gone," said Lovell. "This is my chance. I'm going in. Wait for me here-no need for you fellows to butt in."

"Lovell, old man-"

"Rats!"

And Arthur Edward Lovell started for the lonely bungalow, leaving his chums waiting for him in a decidedly anxious and worried frame of mind.

The 6th Chapter. The Discovery!

"Oh, ripping!"

Lovell's eyes glimmered with satisfaction. Really, luck was his way! In the darkness of the bungalow porch he had groped over the front

door. And the door-handle turned, and the door opened to his hand! Evidently, in his disturbed frame of mind, Mr. Smith had forgotten to lock the door after him. No

doubt the failure of the carrier to arrive had disturbed and irritated a gentleman with a well-developed artistic temperament, unused to bearing the smaller troubles of existence with equanimity.

Lovell, with his dark suspicions stronger than ever, was quite prepared to go any length to obtain a sight of the mysterious contents of the wooden box. But undoubtedly he was relieved to find the door unlocked. Even so, he hesitated a moment or two, with the open door in his hand, before he entered. It came into his mind that what he was doing was legal trespass, at leastthat if Mr. Smith was only some queer character, and nothing worse, there was no justification for these proceedings. But his hesitation was only momentary. The mystery of the box had to be investigated, and by this time Lovell was assured that it contained some secret of crime. At all events, the matter would soon be put to the test.

The Rookwood junior stepped into the dark passage, or hall, and closed the door after him.

Then he stood listening for a minute or two, his heart beating

From what he had learned in his Mr. Smith lived alone at the bungalow; and as the man was gone. the house was indubitably empty. But he listened for several minutes to make sure, his nerves tingling eerily in the darkness, the solitude, and the silence-and with the thought of what the mysterious box

might contain! He fumbled in his pocket for his electric torch at last, and turned on the light. It gave him a surreptitious, burglarious feeling, to be creeping through the dark house, with the light gleaming before him; but he shook it off.

He opened the door of the room in which he had seen the bearded man nailing up the box the night before.

Remembering that the curtains at the window were of thin muslin. Lovell was careful not to flash his light in that direction. He backed towards the window, shading the light as much as he could, and looked for the box.

There it was-almost where he had seen the man nailing it up. A sheet of rough packing-canvas had been thrown over it. Lovell jerked the canvas aside, and the wooden box was revealed, so eerily suggestive of a coffin that Lovell shuddered a

He put down his light, and felt over the box. The lid had been nailed down very securely. He tried to lift the box; but it was too heavy for him. He could only shift it a few inches on the floor. Evidently what it contained was very heavy.

(Continued on page 160.)

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"LOVELL THE SLEUTH!"

Mr. Owen Conquest, as usual, has a topping tale to tell in our next Monday's issue. It has to do with the remarkable mystery upon which the Rookwood chums tumbled in the course of their jaunt in the wilderness. In the coming yarn Lovell thinks he has a chance to cut a dash, as the saying is, and win some always useful fame as a detective. Some fellows are born to be detectives-at least, it looks like it-and been far afield this summer picking some are not. I shall leave you to judge in which category the self- information seemed complete before. complacent Lovell ought to be He gives you the benefit of all the convince people that he really is a on. His trenchant contribution in our top-sawyer genius. Jimmy Silver & | new number wants beating. Co. have their own private and separate opinions concerning this matter. The new tale illuminates the variegated character of the surprising fellow whom Jimmy Silver at odd, fretful moments calls a dummy.

"THE NEW HAND!"

But the really biggest thing planned for next Monday is this magnificent story. It is the first of a bright new series by that Pasha of Many Tales, the always new and infallibly lively Sidney Drew. Mr. Drew introduces a new boy character into his famous company of cheery adventurers, and, as a result, life aboard the yacht Lord of the Deep becomes more lively still. You might do me a favour by spreading the glad news. The coming yarn hits the target with a resounding smack. In other words, Sidney Drew scores his goals with punctuality and despatch. Gan Waga has figured in lots of grand tales, but he is seen to even better advantage in the new series. The fat Eskimo is as mirthful as a spring chicken, and just as funny as can be. Look out for a very pleasant and invigorating treat! Of the individual hinted at in the title it would ill become me to say more

than that he is a new hand, and worthy of the unaparalleled honour of joining up with the gay company of characters this author has rendered famous.

"THE MYSTERY RIDER!"

Three cheers for that out-and-out sportsman, Kid McBride! You will find this hero in the thrilling story appearing next week. There will be no difficulty about spotting him in the crowd. He stands out in vivid fashion as an intrepid horseman and a real all-in, ready-for-anything fighter, never at a loss. There is a rare snap about the new yarn, so don't miss it.

"THE TEAM THAT COULDN'T PLAY!"

When Don Darrel and "Bulldog" Holdfast fill the chief roles one is sure of a rattling narrative, and you will get it in next Monday's number of the "B. F." Mr. Victor Nelson has a magic touch, and he knows football from A to Z. His theme this time is extra brilliant. You will appreciate this story.

TRAINING TIPS AND TOUCHLINE

Mr. Percy Longhurst and "Goalie" will be fitly represented in our next issue. Mr. Longhurst has up more facts, though his stock of placed. He has the bump of confi- new sound ideas. "Goalie," like the dence, and sometimes he manages to celebrated Felix, keeps on keeping

MY LETTER BAG.

From Kimberley, South Africa, I that the return of the Duke and Rollo Dayton is right welcome. Another overseas supporter, writing from Adelaide, tells me a lot of interesting things about the Boys' FRIEND, which he has read since No. 1. This correspondent says that he is one of many readers, now in their forties, who have stuck to the old paper from the start. And I venture to think they will remain firm to the end of this chapter and the start of a fresh one. With its picture of the old days, the letter before me has a reminder of Charles Hawtrey's book, "The Truth at Last." As with the volume by the prince of actors, I find the impressions of a true sportsman. My chum in Australia mentions the late S. Clarke Hook. No tribute was better earned. I like, too, the reference to Duncan Storm, Owen Conquest, and other writers, and had I but a column to spare I would carry the tale a bit further, with, I feel certain, interesting results for a myriad of friends up and down the world.

Your Editor. FRIEND of it!)

(Continued from page 156.)

COUNTY!

"If you really wish it, Harry," shot

back Jim. The club-rooms were deserted. One could not even see a servant about up here. Harry and Jim passed together

from the club-rooms to the corridor that leads to the offices. There was silence everywhere. The

clerks had gone. Secretary Marsden was not about. The corridor rang to their echoing tread. Ahead of them was Christopher

Harlow's room, with the word "Private" painted upon it.

Harry hesitated, paused, looked at Jim, and the boy noticed that his lips were twitching nervously.

"Jim?" "Yes, Harry?"

"It's an odd thing, but suddenly a strange feeling has come over me. feel half afraid. As I turned into the corridor I got a sudden idea that there was something wrong. It's in the air, the feel, of this place."

Jim was amazed. "But, of course, it's all nonsense!" Harry stuttered. "I am behaving like a child. Old enough to know better. And, besides, I had better have it out with Harlow now."

He strode forward, and opening the door of the room, looked in. It was empty. Harlow was not there.

Nelson, uttering a cry of surprise, turned to Jim.

"Harlow isn't here, Jim. He must have gone on to the club, and yet, he does not leave the door unlocked as a rule."

Nelson peered at the empty office, and was about to turn away and close the door, when, happening to glance at the wall, he saw that the door of i the great iron safe was standing slightly ajar. There was a key in the

Careless of Harlow, anyway. Nelson stepped forward, and, moving a chair, saw that the floor was strewn with papers and documents that were littered everywhere.

"Here, Jim-quick! There's been foul play! I'm sure of it!"

Jim sprang into the room. Nelson rounded the table that occupied the centre of the floor. Then a choking cry broke in his throat.

"Good heavens! Harlow! And he's been murdered!"

Jim sprang to Nelson's side, and, staring past him, peered upon the get word from a reader to the effect | body of Harlow, which lay stretched half upon the carpet, half upon the parquet flooring of the surround.

Harlow lay with his head twisted oddly, on one side his arms were stretched out, and in the right-hand one he held firmly still a walking-stick that had been broken in the middle.

Blood was oozing from a wound in the head. His face looked healthy and warm enough in colour, but the eyes were closed. Harlow's clothing was disarranged, as if somebody had been going through his pockets.

Harry, seizing a water-bottle that stood upon a table near by, dashed some of its contents into Harlow's face. Then, bending near the chairman of the County Cricket Club, he raised up gently his head.

And as he did so Harlow opened his eyes, stared up in horror, recognised Harry Nelson, and choked.

"It was Digby Quail, the scoundrel!" he gurgled. "He robbed and assaulted me!"

(You must not miss the long instalment of this splendid cricket story next week! Order your Boys' FRIEND now, and thus make sure

THE MYSTERY OF THE LONELY

(Continued from page 151.)

BUNGALOW!

The box had to be opened, and Lovell could not stand on ceremony with ft. There was only one way; and he looked round for the toolbox he had noticed the previous night. He selected a hammer and a cold chisel, and started to prise up the nailed lid.

Knock! Knock! Knock! From where they waited by the dark roadside, Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome heard that dull knocking, and they knew that their venturesome comrade was at work. That knowledge only increased their anxiety and uneasiness. They did not suppose that Lovell would discover a crime-but they feared very much that somebody would discover Lovell!

Heedless of such considerations, Lovell worked hard by the glimmering ray of the electric torch. Knock! Knock! Knock! Knock! The chisel was driven under the nailed lid at last, and Lovell wrenched. But he found that he had to drive in the chisel in several places, and wrench and wrench again before the carefully nailed lid showed signs of yielding.

It yielded at last. Lovell was tired and a little breathless, and his heart was thumping. With a prolonged was open.

He turned the light on it.

Thick straw packing was revealed. Under that packing was the mysterious object-whatever it wasthat the bearded man had nailed up so carefully.

Lovell stretched out his hand-and paused. A feeling of horror was upon him. What was it that his fingers were to touch when he thrust them through the packed straw? Now that he was upon the very verge of discovery, he felt a sickening repugnance. But he braced himself, set his teeth, and thrust his hand, searching, into the packingstraw.

The next moment a cry rang through the deserted bungalow-a cry of horror from Lovell as he leaped back and staggered away from the box. That cry was torn from him by utter horror. For as he groped in the box, under the straw, his groping fingers had passed over the features of a face, stonecold, icy to the touch!

THE END.

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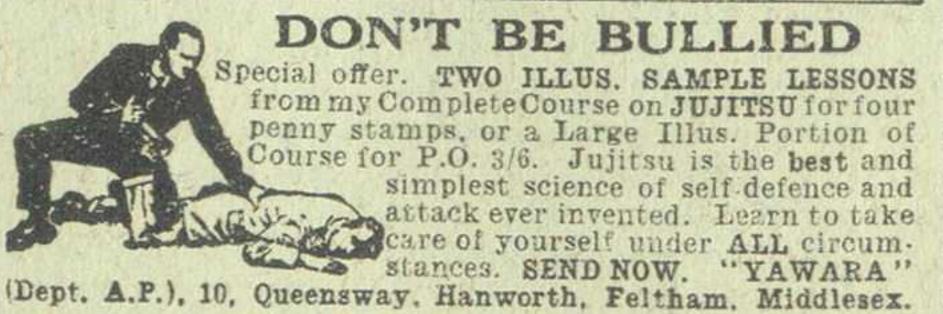
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