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# The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

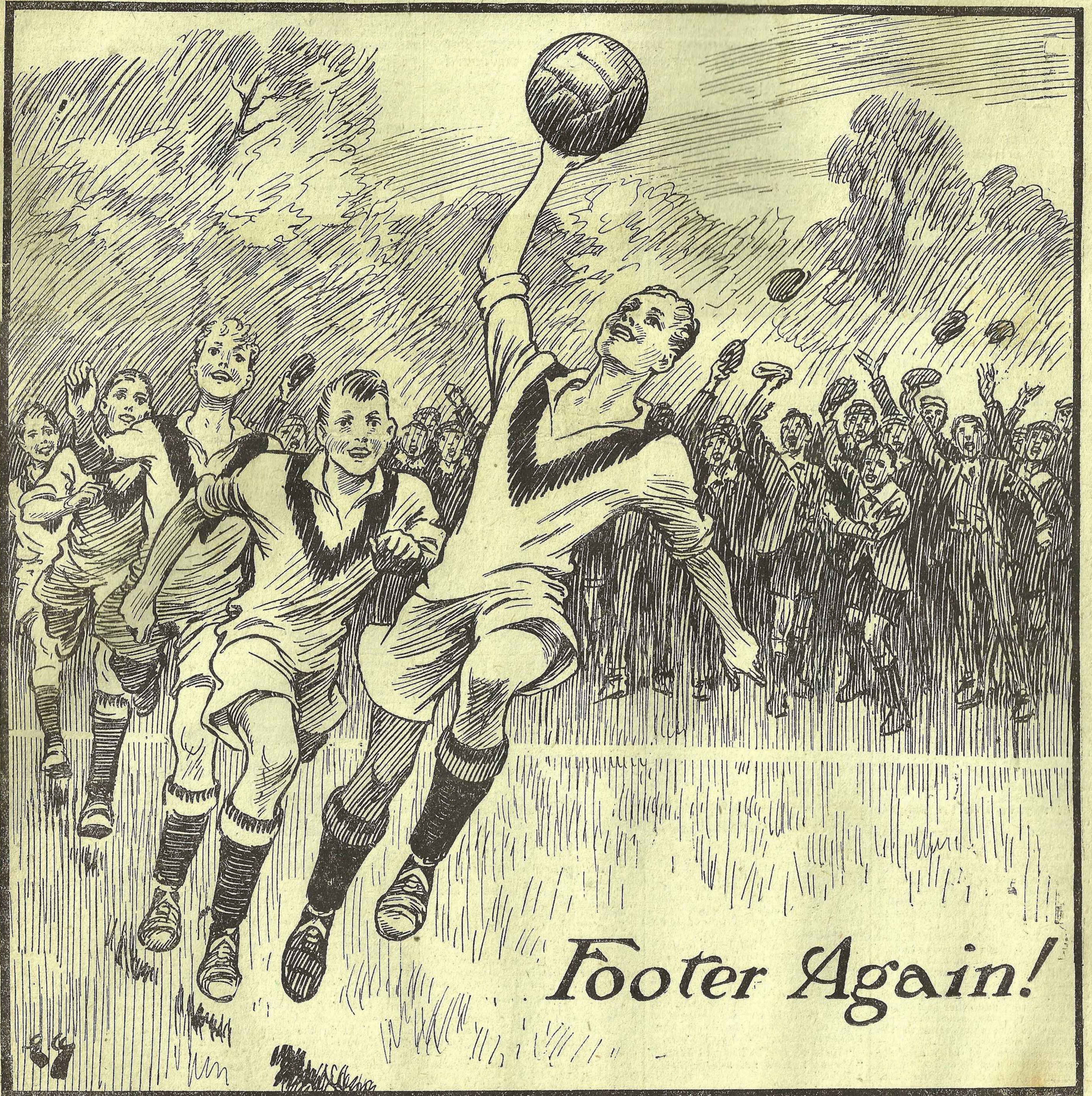
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[Week Ending September 5th, 1925.]

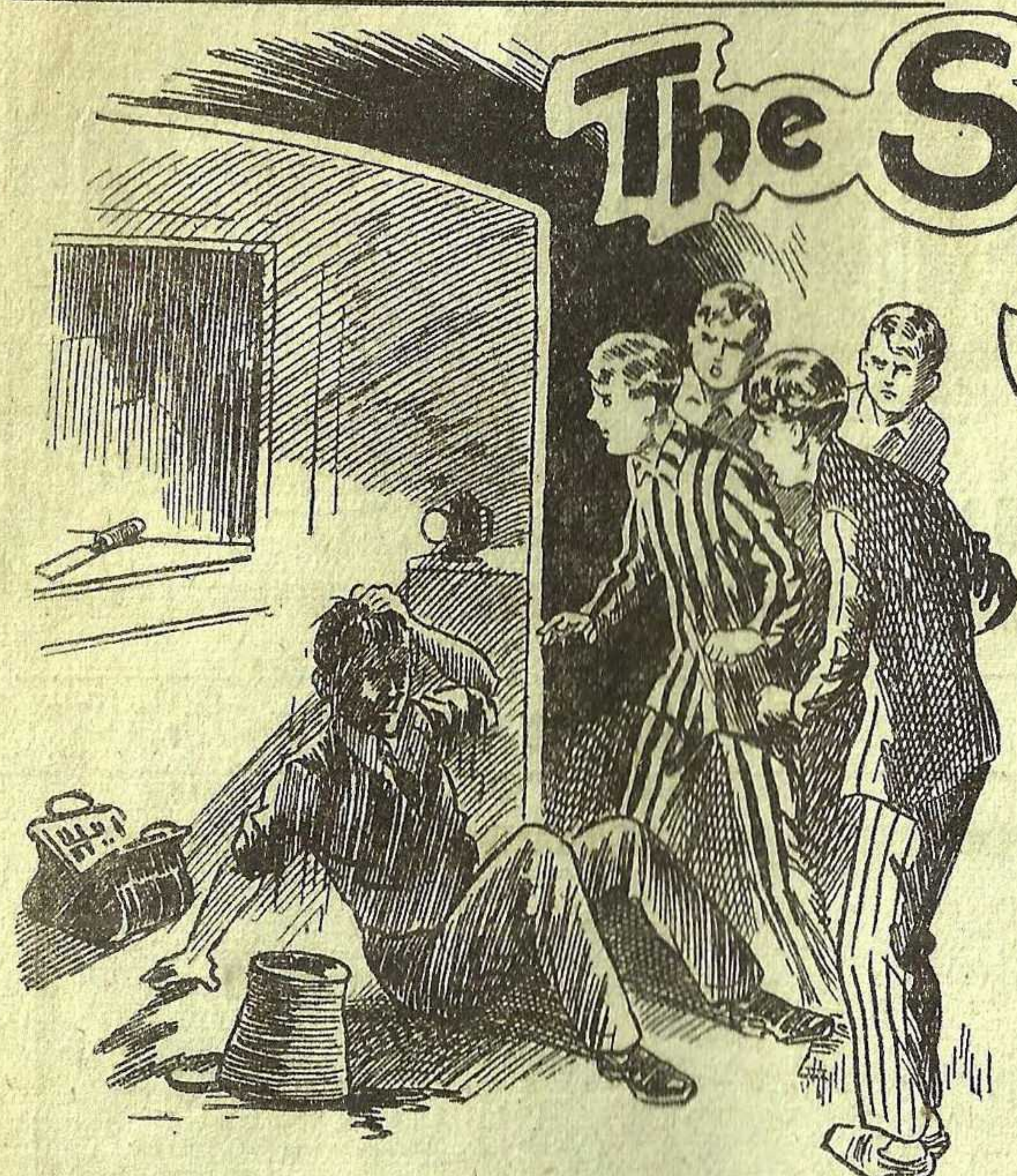


*Footer Again!*

“THE SECRET OF THE SILVER CLOUD!”

A TIP-TOP STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL ON HOLIDAY INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE.

**SIMPLY SUPERB—THIS LATEST ADVENTURE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL, ON HOLIDAY!**



# The Secret of the Silver Cloud!

By **OWEN CONQUEST.**

*(Author of the tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")*

**Jimmy Silver & Co. make things hot for the new paying guest on board the Silver Cloud!**

## The 1st Chapter. Four on the War-path!

"Quiet!"

It was Arthur Edward Lovell, of course, who spoke.

It was necessary, in the circumstances, to be quiet, and Jimmy Silver, and Raby and Newcome, were very quiet indeed. But Arthur Edward Lovell felt bound to give directions.

Without directions given by Arthur Edward, any enterprise was almost foredoomed to failure. At all events, so it seemed to Arthur Edward.

So, although Jimmy and Raby and Newcome were scarcely breathing, Lovell adjured them in a thrilling whisper, to be quiet.

Three juniors breathed hard.

"Quiet!" repeated Lovell.

His whisper, which was of the stage variety, was quite audible, had there been ears to hear.

"Shurrup!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

"Quiet, old chap!" said Lovell.

Fortunately, the passengers of the Silver Cloud were asleep, and Lovell's thrilling whispers passed unheard and unheeded.

The hour was late.

The yacht Silver Cloud was gliding at a leisurely rate over the waters of the Irish Sea.

Captain Muffin was on deck, on duty, and not bestowing a thought upon his "paying guests."

Those guests were either asleep in their bunks, or ought to have been so. Most of them were. Smythe and Howard and Tracy, of the Rookwood Shell, slept soundly; Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, the Highcliffe fellows were safe in the arms of Morpheus. Tubby Muffin was undoubtedly sleeping—his deep and echoing snore, heard far and wide, testified to the fact. Valentine Mornington was also asleep; in fact, among the passengers of the Silver Cloud only the Fistical Four seemed to be stirring.

At that hour of the night Jimmy Silver & Co. would, in the normal course of things, have been buried in balmy slumber.

But they were on the war-path now.

Hence the necessity for caution, and hence Lovell's deep-toned warning to his comrades to be quiet.

The four Rookwooders had crept out of their rooms, in their pyjamas and soft slippers. They were creeping along to the state-room occupied by Ulick Lee, the latest addition to Captain Muffin's list of paying guests. Lovell had a fire-bucket in his hand, which was supposed to contain water, for use in case of fire. It did not contain water now. It contained a weird mixture made up of ink, paint, oil, coffee-grounds, vinegar, syrup, and other ingredients—a horrid mixture, much more unpleasant to the touch and to the smell than ordinary H<sub>2</sub>O.

That mixture had been carefully concocted for the benefit of Ulick Lee, paying guest on board the Silver Cloud.

It was to be swamped over Ulick Lee as he lay sleeping peacefully in his bunk—Lovell's bunk, properly speaking. For Lovell had been turned out of his state-room on account of the latest comer, a rather

high-handed proceeding, the Rookwooders considered, on the part of Captain Muffin, who really was not playing the game in handing over Lovell's room to a more favoured paying guest.

The fellow who had bagged Lovell's state-room was not to enjoy the possession of the same, so Jimmy Silver & Co. had determined. And it was absolutely certain that Ulick Lee would find no enjoyment in getting that horrid mixture swamped over him.

In getting the Rookwooders' "rag" out, as Lovell expressed it, Ulick Lee had waked up the wrong passengers, as it were.

Having "squared" the matter with the captain, Lee apparently considered the affair settled.

He was now to learn that it was far from settled.

In fact, the matter, so far from being at an end, as Lee supposed, was only at the beginning.

If the application of the mixture decided Lee to clear out of Lovell's cabin, well and good. If not, further measures would have to be taken, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were prepared to take them. So long as Lee had Lovell's room they were on the war-path, and they were prepared to keep up the game as long as the interloper did.

The four juniors crept quietly along to Lee's door.

"Quiet!"

For the third time Lovell impressed upon his comrades the need for caution.

"Shut up, for goodness' sake!" hissed Raby. "If you wake him up, Lovell—"

"Quiet, Raby!"

"If you wake him—" breathed Newcome.

"Don't talk now, Newcome, old chap. He may hear you."

"Mayn't he hear you, Lovell?" inquired Jimmy Silver with deep sarcasm.

"Don't be an ass, old chap. Quiet, I say!"

Lovell moved on towards the door of the state-room.

There was a hissing whisper from Raby.

"Don't bump that bucket against me, you ass!"

"Quiet!"

"You've slopped that muck over my pyjamas!" said Raby in a voice of suppressed and condensed ferocity.

"I wish you wouldn't bump against it, Raby. You've made me upset some of it now, and I wanted it all for that cad Lee."

Raby clenched his hands convulsively in the dark. He was very near to spoiling the whole expedition by punching Arthur Edward Lovell hard. Really, Lovell was asking for it, though he was quite unconscious of the fact. It was not uncommon for Arthur Edward Lovell to have this exasperating effect on his pals.

"Here we are!" whispered Jimmy. "My hat! He's not asleep—there's a light!"

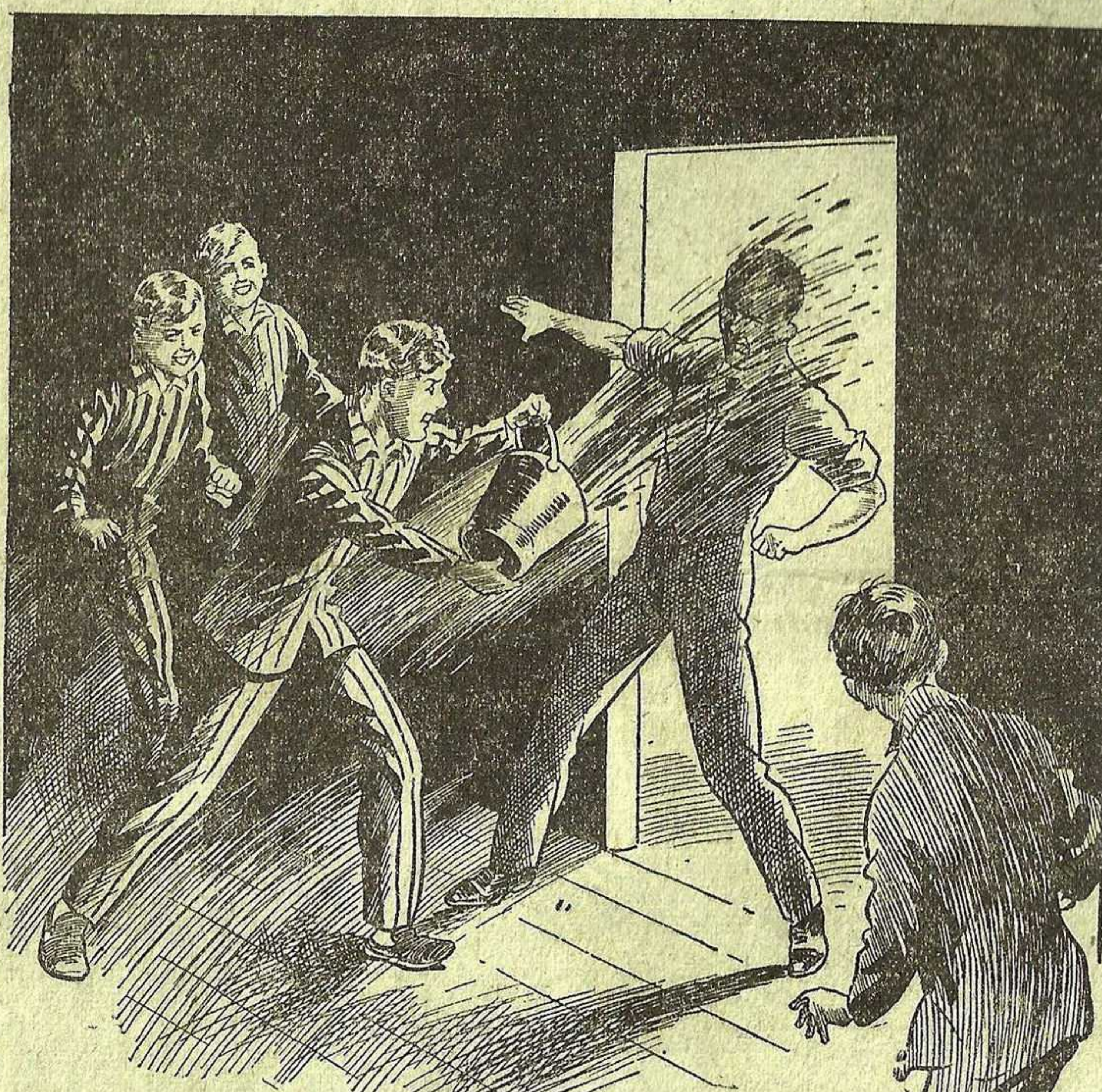
"Blow him!"

The juniors paused outside Ulick Lee's door.

The swing-jamp which should have illuminated the cuddy of the Silver Cloud had been carefully extinguished. The Fistical Four were in

the dark. And so they were able to detect the glimmer of light that came from beneath the door of Lee's cabin.

The obnoxious passenger, apparently, had not yet turned in, which was odd enough for it was nearly



**INTO THE TRAP! Swoooosh! Lee's face vanished from sight and recognition under the swamping mixture. He staggered back with a muffled howl. "Groooogh!" "Got him!" gasped Lovell.**

two in the morning. That he was in his room was certain, for the juniors, now they were close to the door, could hear faint movements.

"Oh, rotten!" breathed Newcome.

"I—I suppose we can't tackle the cad if he's awake?"

"I'm going to!" said Lovell determinedly. "I'm not turning out of bed for nothing. I'd rather wake him up with this stuff, but he's going to have it, anyhow!"

"But—"

"Don't jaw, old chap! You open the door, Jimmy, and I'll jump in and biff it over him before he knows what's happening."

"Oh, all right!"

Jimmy Silver turned the handle of the door softly.

But the door did not open.

It was either locked or bolted. At all events it was fast.

"Buck up, you ass!" whispered Lovell.

"It's locked!"

"What rot! As if a man would lock himself in a tiny cabin no bigger than a blinking travelling trunk! Open it!"

"Try yourself, fathead!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"I'm holding this dashed bucket!"

"Hark! He's heard us!"

There was a quick movement in the cabin. Softly as Jimmy had turned the knob, it had been detected. A startled voice was heard from within:

"Who is there? What is it?"

A brilliant wheeze flashed into Lovell's brain.

"Fire!" he called out.

"What?"

"Fire! Fire!"

There was the snap of a key, and the state-room door flew open.

Ulick Lee stood there in the light with a startled face.

Only for a second, however, was that startled face visible.

Swoooosh!

The next second, Lee's face vanished from sight and recognition under the swamping mixture.

He staggered back, with a muffled howl.

"Groooogh!"

"Got him!" gasped Lovell.

"Ooooooch!"

Crash!

The fire-bucket landed on Lee's head, bonneting him. The remnants of the horrid mixture swamped his hair, and ran down his neck.

Ulick Lee, gurgling horribly, collapsed, and sat down on the planks, in flowing mixture, with a heavy bump. And there was a breathless roar from the Rookwooders as they stared at the extraordinary sight.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## The 2nd Chapter. Mysterious!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The raid had been a success. It had not been carried out exactly according to plan, but it was an eminent success. The cheeky fellow who

Lee's occupation in the dead of night, when he supposed that all the other passengers of the Silver Cloud were sleeping, was simply amazing. The juniors might have supposed that he was unable to sleep, and had turned on a light to read. But obviously he had not been reading. Why he had stripped the bunk, why he had taken tools from a bag, was a strange mystery—but there was no doubt about the fact.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver blankly.

"What on earth's this game?" said Raby.

"Groooogh-oooh-oooooch!" Lee was still gurgling and gurgling, as he sat wallowing in the streaming mixture.

"Hallo, you chaps!" Valentine Mornington came along from his room. "What is it? I heard some ass yellin' fire."

Lovell chuckled.

"That was to get that cad to open the door," he said. "He had it locked, for some reason. What game has he been up to, I wonder?"

Mornington stared into the room. He burst into a roar at the sight of the streaming figure on the floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lee staggered up.

"You young scoundrels!" he panted.

"Go it!" grinned Lovell.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Lee, dabbing at his face. "You—you—"

"Sorry you bagged my cabin?" inquired Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Under the sticky coating of horrid mixture, Ulick Lee's face was convulsed with rage. He glared at the grinning juniors, and made a spring towards them, and the Fistical Four and Mornington closed up to receive him outside the door. Lee was not pleasant to touch in his present state, but the Rookwooders were prepared to touch him—hard—if he came to close quarters.

Probably Lee realised that the odds were too heavy. He stopped, and stared round the little state-room, as if in search of a weapon.

The glimmer of the chisel in the bunk caught his eye. He sprang towards it, and caught it up, and turned on the juniors again, his eyes gleaming.

"Here, look out!" yelled Raby.

The Rookwooders jumped back in a hurry.

"You scoundrel!" roared Mornington. "Mind what you're at!"

A chisel in the hands of a reckless man was a rather dangerous weapon. And Ulick Lee seemed utterly reckless at that moment in his blind rage. He came springing out of the state-room at the Rookwooders and they backed quickly—very quickly—and retreated round the cuddy table in a startled crowd.

Jimmy Silver grabbed up a cane that belonged to Ponsonby of Highcliffe. It had a heavy metal head, and Jimmy swung it into the air.

"Stand back, Lee!" he rapped out. "My hat! If you come any nearer with that chisel, I'll send you spinning!"

"You dashed villain!" roared Lovell.

Lee came springing on, and Jimmy lashed at him with the heavy head of the cane, catching his lifted arm on the elbow.

There was a yell of pain from Ulick Lee, and the chisel went clattering to the floor.

Morny picked it up instantly. Lee nursed his damaged elbow with his left hand, panting with pain.

"What's all this row?" Captain Muffin, fat and bustling, came hurrying down the companion. "What the thump—"

He stared blankly at Lee.

"Look at me!" yelled Lee savagely. "Those young scoundrels have done this!"

"Great Scott! Silver—"

"I did it!" hooted Lovell. "And I'll jolly well do it again if the cad keeps my cabin, so you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Captain Muffin!"

"You young sweep!" gasped the fat skipper. "I gave Mr. Lee that cabin—"

"Like your cheek!"

"What?"

"Your thumping cheek!" hooted Lovell. "And I can jolly well tell you that I'm going to have my cabin back, or that cad will get something of this sort every day we're on the Silver Cloud!"

"You won't be on the Silver Cloud long at that rate, Master Lovell!"

"Rats!"

"What?" yelled Montague Muffin. "Do you understand you're speaking to the captain of this ship?"

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"Some ship, and some captain!" grinned Mornington.

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned. The fat self-importance of Montague Muffin, the boarding-house keeper, who fancied himself as a sea-going skipper, had always entertained them. They did not mind playing up to Montague Muffin's little weakness, as a rule, but there was a limit. When it came to giving a fellow's cabin away to a new passenger, Montague Muffin had to be reminded that he was not, after all, an autocratic sea-captain, but a boarding-house keeper, who had entered into a contract.

"Can it!" snapped Lovell. "I've paid for my room, and I'm going to have my room. If that cad's paid more to bag it, that's no bizney of mine. I know I'm going to make him tired of it."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Raby.

Ulick Lee was still nursing his injured elbow. He gave the juniors and the captain a black look, and stamped back to his room and closed the door.

Captain Muffin eyed the chums of Rookwood rather dubiously. As a matter of fact, he bore a strong resemblance, not only in looks, to his podgy nephew, Tubby Muffin, of the Rookwood Fourth. He was fat and good-natured, and a little unscrupulous, but good nature predominated. He had not been able to resist Ulick Lee's bribe, and so had assigned him Lovell's cabin, but his fat conscience was not wholly at ease on the subject. Had no trouble resulted, he would have been satisfied. But it was clear now that there was going to be trouble.

"Look here, this won't do!" he said at last.

"It won't!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "Turn that fellow out of Lovell's cabin, and that will do."

"I can't do that."

"Then you can expect some more entertainments of this kind," said the captain of the Rookwood Fourth. "He's not going to be allowed to keep it. We're on the giddy war-path."

"Do you want me to shove the lot of you ashore when we get to the Isle of Man?" demanded Captain Muffin.

"Yes—if you like to hand back what we've paid for the cruise," snorted Lovell. "You can chuck it, Mr. Muffin. You don't mean to shell out, and we shall refuse to go ashore unless you do—see? And there's enough of us to put you ashore if we choose, and if you're cheeky we'll jolly well do it."

"What?" gasped Montague Muffin.

"You can't handle Rookwood," snapped Lovell. "Play the game, old bean, and we'll play up on our side."

"Hear, hear!" said Mornington.

"I—I—"

Mornington held up the chisel.

"Your precious passenger was going for us with this," he said. "The man's a criminal. Everybody on board knows that he is the nephew of Griffin Lee, the cracksmen, who's in prison; and what's happened now proves that he's a chip of the old block. The best thing you can do is to put Ulick Lee ashore at the first stop."

Captain Muffin stared at the chisel. Then, without another word, he returned to the deck.

The Rookwood party, in point of fact, were rather more than Montague Muffin knew how to handle.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"A win for little us," he said. "Let's get back to bed. We'll give Lee a chance to think it over; if he clears out of Lovell's cabin tomorrow, well and good. If he doesn't—"

"If he doesn't, he'll get some more," said Lovell.

"More and more and more!" grinned Raby.

And the chums of Rookwood returned to bed—what time Ulick Lee was busy with the mixture.

Highcliffe fellows, came up, and they were grinning, too. The steward was grinning, and Mr. Punter, the mate, was grinning. The incident of the night before seemed to have caused general hilarity on the Silver Cloud.

Rookwood "rags" were a rather unexpected development on the cruise; certainly Captain Muffin had not expected the Fourth-Formers of Rookwood to take the law into their own hands as they had done.

If he had known Jimmy Silver & Co. better, he might have expected it. He was getting to know them now.

Generally the Fistical Four and Morny were on rather distant terms with Smythe & Co., and distinctly unfriendly with Ponsonby's crowd. But now, on this special morning unusual amity reigned. The unpopularity of Ulick Lee was a sort of bond of union among the schoolboys.

Lee came up to breakfast with a scowl on his face.

He gave Lovell a grim stare; and, knowing the man's savage temper as they did now, the juniors would not have been surprised had it broken out. But Lee kept it in control, and, apart from scowling, gave the Rookwooders no heed.

It was noticeable that Captain Muffin was a little curt with the latest addition to his number of paying guests.

The incident of the chisel had probably made the fat skipper a

"chip of the old block." It was borne in upon the minds of Jimmy Silver & Co. that they had been misled by their desire to give a fellow fair play, and that Lee was, in point of fact, a dangerous character.

Something of the same thought, was working in Montague Muffin's fat mind that morning.

He gave Lee more than one doubtful and curious glance; and once or twice seemed on the point of speaking to him, but refrained. If he was thinking of asking Lee to step ashore when the yacht reached the Isle of Man, there was a difficulty in the path. He could not turn out his paying guest without handing back the sum Lee had paid for the cruise; which Captain Muffin was extremely reluctant to do. On that point, Captain Muffin forgot entirely that he was a sea-captain, and was wholly and solely boarding-house keeper.

Lee very soon withdrew from the smiling breakfast-party and strolled away by himself, smoking a cigar forward.

A general grin followed him.

"The dear man's got the mixture off!" grinned Mornington. "It must have kept him busy for some time last night."

"I heard him at it!" chuckled Adolphus Smythe. "Washin' and washin' and scrubbin' and scrubbin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serve him jolly well right," said Gadsby. "Baggin' a fellow's cabin behind his back is a dirty trick."

burgle on board, it really would look suspicious."

"But there isn't!" said Tracy.

"Some of us have got some rather expensive jewellery, you know," said Adolphus Smythe, with a glance of pride at his glittering cuff-links.

"But he wouldn't need a cracksmen's outfit to get at your cuff-links and Gaddy's enormous gold watch," remarked Mornington.

"The man ought to be put ashore," said Ponsonby. "Old Muffin ought never to have let him come aboard; and after this he ought to clear."

And for once the Rookwood fellows were quite in agreement with the dandy of Highcliffe.

After breakfast, Valentine Mornington strolled along to speak to the skipper. Captain Muffin, with a telescope under his arm, was feeling—and hoped that he was looking—the complete yachtman. For the moment, the boarding-house keeper had disappeared.

"Your friend Lee looks rather cross this mornin', captain!" remarked Mornington.

"Lee is no friend of mine," said Montague Muffin, rather stiffly. "He is simply a paying guest."

"Oh, quite! I've been thinkin' about this, you know," said Morny. "This chap Lee used to cruise with his uncle, when the jolly old cracksmen was owner of the yacht, what?" Captain Muffin nodded.

"Perhaps he has a fancy for

The Fistical Four stared at Mornington. They had been looking away towards the island of Anglesey, on the starboard quarter. Now they left Anglesey unregarded, and bestowed their surprised attention on Morny.

"My dear Watson——" repeated Mornington.

"Is that a joke?" asked Jimmy Silver, nonplussed.

"Not at all."

"Then what the merry thump are you driving at?" inquired Arthur Edward Lovell. "Who the dickens is Watson? There's no Watson here."

"For the moment, my dear man, you are all Watsons," explained Mornington airily, "and I am Sherlock Holmes. You must have heard of Sherlock Holmes, a celebrated detective of fiction——"

"You silly owl, of course we've heard of Sherlock Holmes," said Newcome. "What do you mean, if you mean anything?"

"Sherlock Holmes had a faithful retainer named Watson," went on Morny imperturbably. "When his powerful brain was workin', he used to bore Watson with his theories, just as I'm goin' to bore you chaps now. So now listen to me, my dear Watson—or, to be more exact, my dear Watsons."

"Fathead!"

"Watson never called Sherlock Holmes a fathead—he must have been a great man at resistin' temptation," said Mornington. "Watson used to preserve a respectful silence till it was time to say 'Marvellous!' and then he said 'Marvellous!' Follow his lead, dear men. Now, about this jolly old cracksmen we're cruisin' with——"

"Hold on, Morny," said Jimmy Silver gravely. "Remember that Ulick Lee was left out at his uncle's trial; nothing could be brought up against him. And a man's innocent till he's found guilty, you know."

"My dear Watson——"

"Oh, don't be an ass, old chap!"

"My dear Watson, it is not yet time to say 'Marvellous,' so chuck it while Sherlock Holmes is speakin'. About this jolly old cracksmen we're cruisin' with, I fancy I've got on to the why and the wherefore. I knew all the time that he wasn't baggin' Lovell's room simply because it happened to be the most comfy one. Pon tried that on, but Lee isn't a duffer like Pon—he's a bad egg, but he's no fool. I knew that he must have some special reason for doin' such a thing, and when I saw those tools in the room last night, it flashed into my mind, my dear Watson."

"Did you think he wanted to burgle the room, when there was nothing left in it to burgle?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell, with deep sarcasm.

"Precisely, my dear Watson."

"Eh?"

"Follow my line of reasonin', my dear Watson," said Mornington calmly. "This giddy old tub, politely called a yacht, belonged to Griffin Lee, gentleman cracksmen. In the days when he was only gentleman, and hadn't been spotted as cracksmen, he cruised around in her—and it doesn't need a brain-wave to put us on to the undoubted fact that he used the yacht to get away with the loot sometimes, after crackin' a crib. No doubt it came in very handy sometimes."

"That's likely enough," said Jimmy Silver. "But——"

"Griffin Lee was nabbed finally over the affair of somebody's diamonds—they got Lee, but they never got the diamonds."

"What about it?" asked Lovell.

"It was all in the papers—everybody knows the stolen diamonds are still missing, and there's a big reward offered for them. What about it?"

"They're hidden somewhere, of course," said Morny.

"Did you work that out in your head, Mr. Sherlock Holmes?" asked Raby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

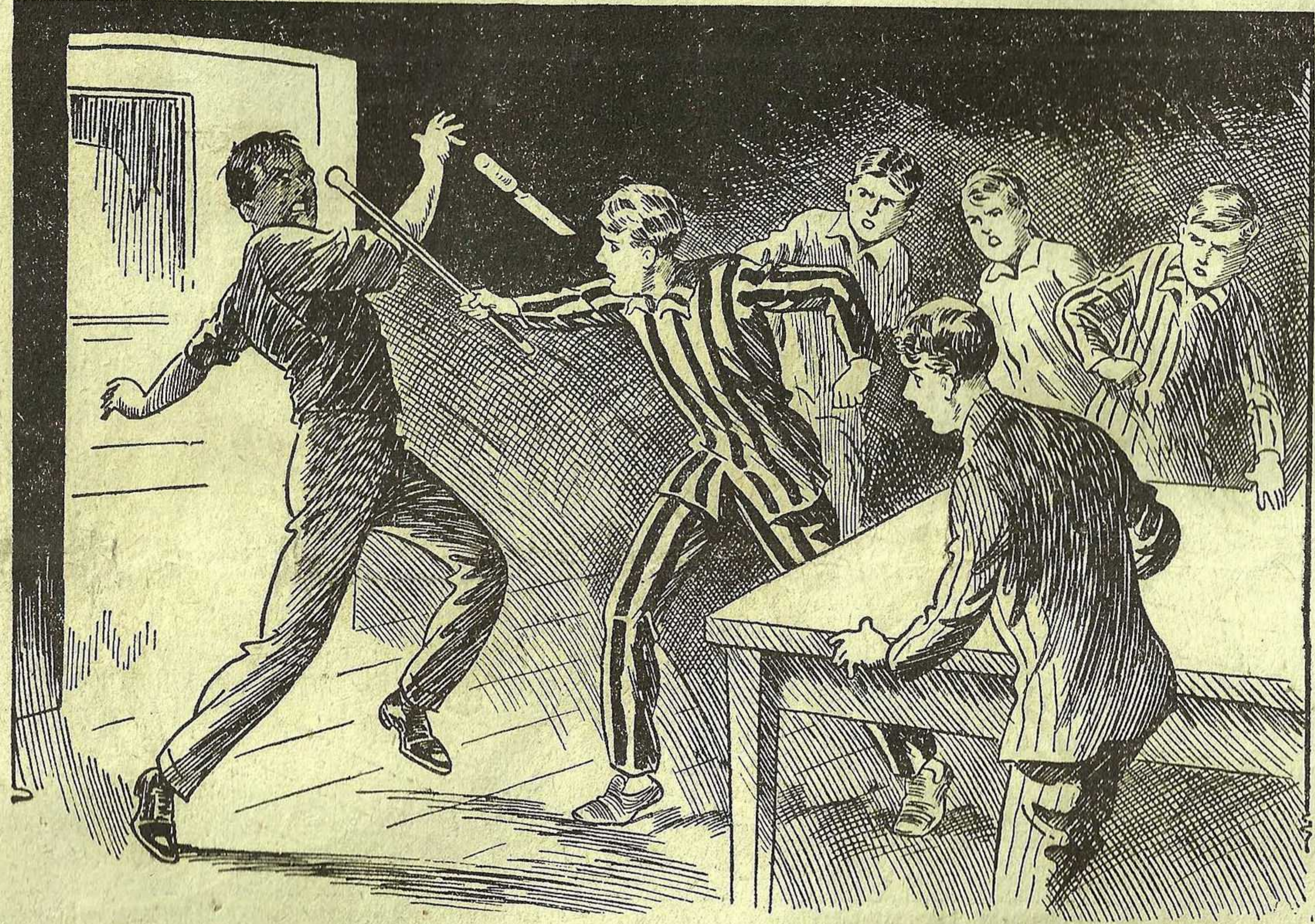
"The question arises, where are they hidden?" went on Mornington.

"Chap who could spot that little secret could finger a thousand pounds' reward," said Newcome.

"Oh!" ejaculated Lovell. "You think Lee knows? You think his uncle let him into it?"

"No jolly fear! Lee doesn't know. Griffin Lee was too downy a bird to let him or anybody else into the secret. Those diamonds were tucked away somewhere—and then came old Lee's arrest. He refused to say a word about the stones, and I think got a stiffer sentence in consequence; but no doubt he expected the jolly,

*(Continued overleaf.)*



**A RASCAL AT BAY!** "You dashed villain!" roared Lovell. Lee came springing on, and Jimmy Silver lashed at him with the heavy head of the cane, catching his lifted arm on the elbow. There was a yell of pain from Ulick Lee, and the chisel went clattering to the floor.

little uneasy. He had begun to doubt his wisdom in having accepted Ulick Lee as a "guest" on the yacht.

He had known, as all the passengers knew, that Lee was the nephew of the notorious Griffin Lee, gentleman cracksmen, lately consigned to a convict prison, and at one time owner of the Silver Cloud.

The fat skipper, taking the view that the sins of the fathers should not be visited upon the children, or those of the uncles upon the nephews, had felt that it was only fair play to treat Ulick Lee as if his undesirable uncle had never existed.

That view Jimmy Silver & Co. had shared; they had, in fact, made it a point to be very civil to Lee, in order to show that they did not count it against him that he had a disreputable relation.

But the late happenings had quite changed their view.

In return for their friendly civility, Lee had bagged Lovell's cabin, obviously by "tipping" the skipper, who on that occasion had acted more in his original character of boarding-house keeper, than in his new role of sea-captain.

And the incident of the chisel put the lid on, so to speak. The man was, as Morny had said, a criminal. He had lived in association with his cracksmen uncle; but had escaped prosecution at the trial for lack of any evidence against him. But that outbreak of murderous temper was a pretty plain indication that he was a

Cecil Ponsonby made a grimace. Pon had made an attempt to bag Lovell's state-room, which was the best on the yacht, on coming aboard. He had failed; and in view of Lee's experience after succeeding, Pon was rather glad that he had failed.

"Cheeky cad, you know," said Monson. "First come first served! Lovell bagged that cabin at the beginnin'. Fancy goin' for a fellow with a chisel, too!"

"What the thump was he doin' with a chisel?" asked Ponsonby. "Fellows don't usually bring a carpenter's outfit on a summer cruise."

"Goodness knows," said Raby. "He had a lot of tools there—a whole bag of them."

"What on earth for?"

"Give it up—but he had."

"What sort of tools?" asked Ponsonby, with a stare. "We know that his uncle, who's in prison now, was a cracksmen. Did the dear man come on board to burgle our trunks?" Jimmy Silver laughed.

"It's jolly odd," he said. "He had a lot of tools—chisels and screwdrivers and things—I didn't notice specially. He hadn't gone to bed, though what he was up to is a giddy mystery. If there was anything to

Lovell's room, because it was his old room when the yacht belonged to his uncle. Is that it?"

Morny asked the question carelessly, but his eyes were very keenly on Montague Muffin's fat face.

The skipper shook his head.

"No," he answered. "Of course, I don't know much about what went on, on the Silver Cloud, when it belonged to Mr. Griffin Lee. But I believe Lovell's room was occupied by Mr. Griffin Lee himself. He slept in the cabin that I use now, as he was his own skipper; but Lovell's room was used as a sort of office—he used to do a lot of business, and he had a desk there, and a lot of papers. I had the bunk put in after buying the yacht at the sale."

"Then why is Lee so jolly keen on it?" yawned Morny.

"It happens to be the largest of the state-rooms."

"And he's kickin' up all this bother to get a little more room to stretch his weary limbs?" smiled Morny.

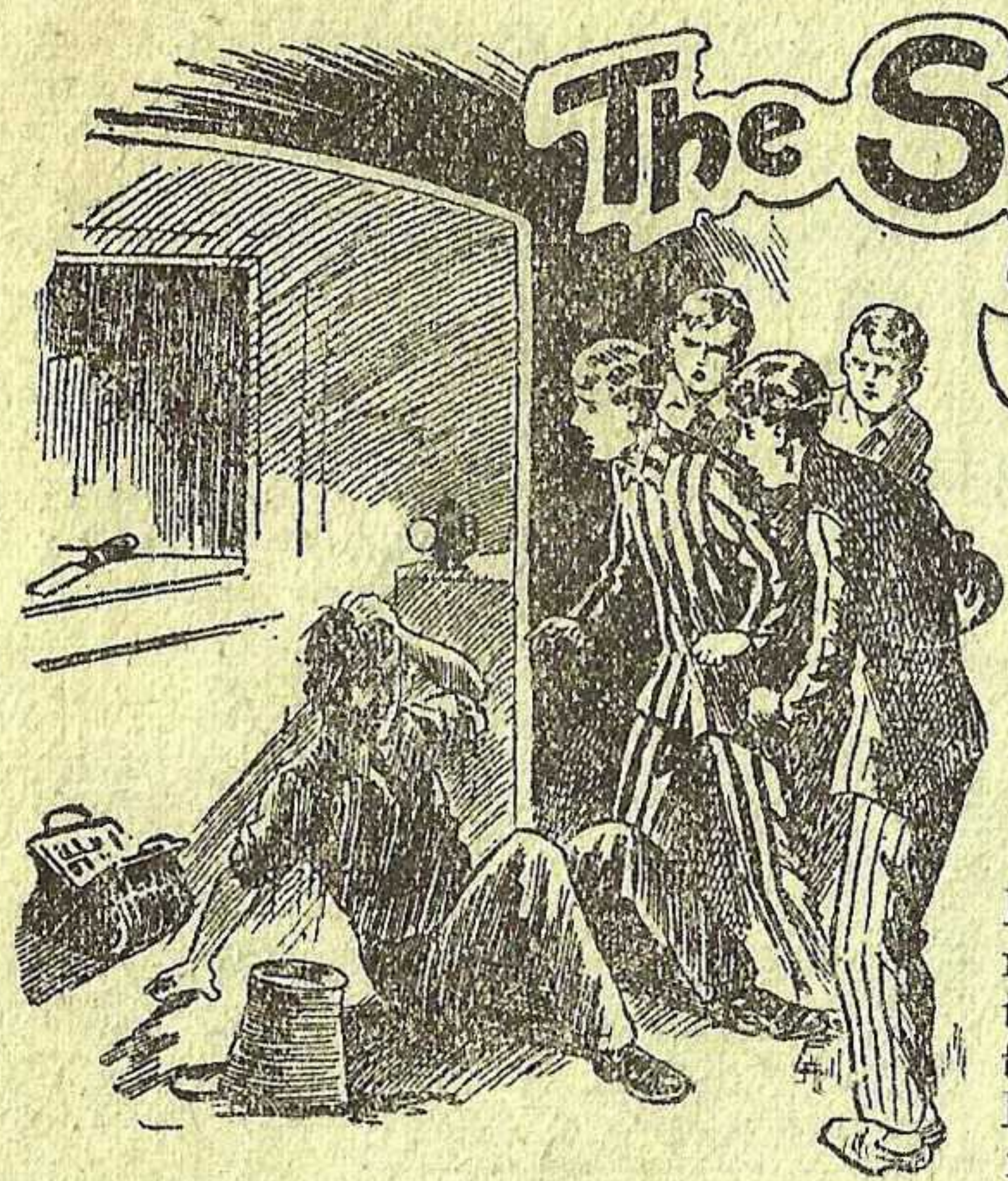
"I suppose so."

Valentine Mornington strolled away, and joined Jimmy Silver & Co., with a very thoughtful expression on his face. There were strange thoughts working in Morny's active mind.

**The 4th Chapter.**  
**Sherlock Holmes—Mornington.**  
"My dear Watson——"  
"Eh?"

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# The Secret of the Silver Cloud!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Look here—"

"That room, where Griffin Lee kept his desk and his papers, and most likely his burgling outfit, was the likeliest room; it was the place to make a beginnin'." So Ulick shifts Lovell out and bags the room. That, my dear Watson, was his reason."

Mornington paused and looked at the Fistical Four. His manner was serious now.

"That's why he stayed up late at night, and we caught him at it," he said. "That's why he brought a set of tools. You fellows wondered what he was up to in the middle of the night. Naturally, he couldn't do his merry searchin' in the middle of a buzzin' crowd in the daytime. Every night, old beans, I fancy he has been at work, searching for that giddy hiding-place where the shiners are blushin' unseen. In his place, I

old diamonds to compensate him for all that when he came out of prison. In the meantime, I rather fancy that his dutiful nephew is lookin' for them."

"For the reward?" asked Lovell. Mornington laughed. "Possibly! But I think if Ulick Lee's fingers ever get on the stones, they'll stick."

"Oh!" Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath. "Morny! You think Griffin Lee hid the stolen diamonds somewhere on this yacht!"

"Good for you, my dear Watson! Very meritorious indeed! I see that you have not studied my methods wholly in vain, my dear Watson!" said Sherlock Holmes-Mornington gravely.

"Oh, no gammon!" said Lovell. "Look here, do you think the police didn't think of that, and search the dashed yacht from end to end, up and down and round about? I'll bet you there isn't an inch of the craft that the bobbies haven't been over with a microscope."

"Naturally," assented Mornington.

"Well, then—" "Well, fathead, if Griffin Lee chucked the stones on to his yacht, he didn't arrange them on the cabin skylight to catch the sun. Neither did he stick them up in a row over the dining-table. There would be some jolly clever hiding-place for them, covered up so jolly cleverly, that it never got spotted. And Ulick Lee, knowing the careful habits of his respectable uncle, provided himself with tools when he came on this cruise, knowin' that he would have to cut pretty deep to find the diamonds."

"Oh, my hat!" "Picture the good young man's position!" yawned Morny. "He knows nunky had the shiners—I believe cracksmen call them shiners—and he guessed that nunky had a safe deposit sort of thing hidden away somewhere on his jolly old yacht. What would he do? If he was a good young man, shocked at his naughty uncle, he would keep clear of the whole affair—he wouldn't like holiday cruisin' on a yacht with a lot of fellows who knew his history, either. But if he was hand-in-glove with the old boy, and a chip of the old block, he would think it rather a waste to leave the shiners there till nunky came out of the stone jug. I really think he would be uncharitable enough to bag the shiners for himself, if he could, and leave nunky to whistle when he emerged from retirement. But the yacht was sold—and most likely the poor young gent hadn't the cash to buy it—he was only a hanger-on at the cracksman game, and probably hadn't made a fortune. See?"

"Not quite," said Lovell. "You wouldn't," agreed Morny. "I'll try to put it into words of one syllable, old bean."

"Look here—" "Chuck it, Lovell!" said Jimmy Silver. "Let Morny rip on. This is getting jolly interesting." "Then the young man learns that the yacht, which was sold, had also been bought—a natural sequel," said Morny. "Bought by an extensive gentleman named Muffin, who proposed to turn it into a sort of floatin' boardin'-house for payin' guests for a summer cruise. He puts his name down as a payin' guest, and there you are."

"But—" "That sees him on board the yacht, where he wanted to get. But where is he goin' to look for the giddy shiners, with the whole vessel to choose from? There was one room that nunky used as an office for business, and that room has been turned into a state-room, now occupied by our esteemed and intelligent friend Lovell."

Jimmy looked at him. "Then why do you think Lee wanted your room?" he asked. "It's the best state-room, that's why. Same reason that Pon wanted it, and I want it myself." Jimmy laughed. "Well, time will show," he said. "Depend on it, Morny's off-side," said Arthur Edward Lovell confidently. "You can take my word for that." Whereat Arthur Edward's chums smiled. If Arthur Edward was of opinion that Mornington was off-side, the probability was that Mornington was on-side. That seemed extremely probable to Lovell's chums.

### The 5th Chapter.

#### What Next?

"Master Lovell!" Captain Muffin spoke rather stiffly. He had not forgotten Lovell's rather disrespectful remarks of the night before; neither had Arthur Edward made any attempt since to propitiate the fat little skipper. Lovell's opinion was that giving his cabin to Ulick Lee was a dirty trick, and he did not conceal his opinion; rather did he state it in a loud voice up and down the Silver Cloud, for all the yacht's company to hear.

It was really rather uncomfortable for Montague Muffin, who was good-natured, and wished to treat all his

rupted Lovell. "You can't do Rookwood in the eye like that." "I—" "Nothing doing!" "For goodness' sake, Lovell, let the captain speak!" said Jimmy Silver. Snort from Lovell. "I was going to say," hooted Captain Muffin, "that you are welcome to go back to your old cabin as soon as you like." "Eh?" "Mr. Lee has spoken to me on the subject. He says he did not realise that there would be so much ill-feeling on the subject; and, in the circumstances, he is quite willing to go back to his bunk in Reginald's cabin, and let you have your room. The steward is removing his things now."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "He's had enough of the mixture in one dose—what?" Captain Muffin grinned faintly. Probably his opinion on that point coincided with Lovell's.

"Well, the matter's settled now, and I hope there will be no more disputing," he said. "None at all, so far as we're concerned," said Jimmy Silver at once. "We couldn't let Lovell be done by that fellow; but if he yields the point we're satisfied." "Quite!" said Lovell, laughing. "All clear, then," said the captain, and he rolled away, evidently glad

because he doesn't want any more, but because he's had time to search it now, and he's finished."

"Phew!" murmured Raby. Lovell sniffed. He was by no means inclined to believe that anything but his own drastic measures had driven out the interloper.

"Bosh!" said Arthur Edward. Morny smiled and made no rejoinder. Perhaps he did not think it worth while to argue with the emphatic Arthur Edward.

"And now, I suppose, he will search another cabin—what?" grinned Lovell. "He bunks with Tubby Muffin; he'll search that room next."

"He's done that already," said Mornington. "Tubby sleeps like a porpoise, and I've no doubt that Lee has done all the searching he wants in that room while Tubby was snoring."

"Easy enough, if he wanted to," said Raby. "Tubby wouldn't wake up for anything short of a hurricane."

"And next, please?" grinned Lovell. "Is he going to make a round of the rooms, shifting out one fellow after another, same as he did me?"

"I dare say he would, if he could; but that's not practicable," said Mornington. "But he isn't done yet, if he came on board to discover where his uncle hid the diamonds—as I think likely."

"Then what will he do?" demanded Lovell.

"Better ask him!" yawned Mornington.

"You don't think we've seen the end of it yet, then, Morny?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow.

"Not if I've hit on the facts, my dear Watson! Something will happen—what, I don't know, as I don't happen to be inside Ulick Lee's brainbox. But he will find some trick to serve his turn—if I'm not mistaken."

"But you are, you know!" Lovell pointed out.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

The discussion dropped, but the matter did not leave Jimmy Silver's mind. If there was anything in Morny's theory, Ulick Lee was a "bad hat" like his uncle, and he was on board the Silver Cloud with the sole object of searching for the stolen diamonds. In that case, doubtless, he had finished his search of Lovell's room, the likeliest spot for the secret hiding-place; but as the likeliest spot had been drawn blank, he would have to extend his search to spots less likely. In a crowded space like the quarters on the yacht, such a task was not easy; except at night, fellows were butting into one another any minute, and at night all the state-rooms were occupied. If Ulick Lee intended to search them, therefore, he had to first get rid of the occupants.

It seemed, therefore, that Morny's theory must soon be put to the test. It only remained to see whether anything happened to cause any of the Silver Cloud guests to vacate their quarters, and whether such a happening could be traced to Ulick Lee.

That was quite an interesting question, and if the answer should be, so to speak, in the affirmative, Jimmy felt that he would be driven to the conclusion that Morny had hit on the truth regarding the cracksman's nephew.

That evening, when Captain Muffin brought the gramophone on deck, and the instrument was discoursing sweet music, Ulick Lee joined the other guests with a cheery smile on his face.

He spoke a civil word or two to the Rookwooders, and they answered civilly enough, and all, apparently, was calm and bright.

Lovell was not a fellow to bear malice; and Lee having done the right thing, as he considered it, Arthur Edward was prepared to forget offences and take the young man's civility at its face value.

So were his comrades, for that matter; but Valentine Mornington had rather a mocking look in his eyes as he watched Lee making himself generally agreeable.

His view was, that Lee realised that his unpopularity made his task on the Silver Cloud a harder one, and he was going to work to dispel it, now that he had no further use for Lovell's state-room, and there was consequently nothing further to dispute about.

It was quite a merry evening on the Silver Cloud, as the yacht glided over the moonlit waters of the Irish Sea; even Ponsonby unbothered from his usual lofty superiority and

(Continued on page 160.)



**CAPTAIN MUFFIN INTERVENES!** Ponsonby grasped Lovell and hugged him, and they struggled—and in the struggle a good deal of the green paint was transferred. "Ow! Ooooh! Gooogh! Gerroff!" roared Lovell. "You rotter!" panted Ponsonby. Captain Muffin rushed forward, and grasped the two juniors and dragged them apart by main force. "Stop that!" he snapped angrily.

should think that special room the likeliest place, and so did he. Lovell had to be shifted for that reason."

"Blessed if I don't think there's something in it," said Newcome; and Lovell nodded slowly.

"Oh, lots!" said Morny. "Lots and lots! You see, my dear Watson, my theory covers the facts. Nothin' else does."

"Dash it all, if that's the case, the fellow is a dashed criminal, like his uncle," said Raby.

"Precisely." "What are we going to do about it, then?"

"Nothin', except keep an eye on Ulick. If he spots the shiners, we spot him. No end of a lark."

Jimmy Silver laughed. "Well, as a matter of fact, there's nothing we can do or say," he remarked. "It sounds jolly clever, the way you've worked it out, Morny; but it may be all moonshine, with nothing in it."

"You don't think so, though," said Mornington shrewdly; and he strolled away along the deck.

He left the Fistical Four with a good deal of food for thought. Arthur Edward Lovell, after deep cogitation, shook his head, dismissing the theory. Perhaps he did not care to play up in the character of Watson to Morny's Sherlock Holmes; and perhaps he did not think much of any theory that was not promulgated by Arthur Edward Lovell himself.

"All bunkum, you chaps!" said Lovell.

paying guests well, with a due regard to business considerations.

All that day Ulick Lee had not addressed a word to the Rookwood juniors; it might almost have been supposed that he had forgotten the episode of the mixture.

It was pretty certain, however, that he had not forgotten, and very probable that he looked forward to the coming night with some misgivings. The chums of Rookwood had made it clear that he was not going to occupy Lovell's cabin in peace.

"Master Lovell, a word with you, please."

"Go ahead!" said Lovell coolly.

Captain Muffin being a man who had played him, in his opinion, a dirty trick, Lovell had no politeness to waste on him; he talked to him as he would have talked to an unscrupulous boarding-house keeper who had inserted unjustified items in the bill. If Captain Muffin wanted to be treated as a sea-captain he had to play the part—that was how Arthur Edward Lovell looked at it. Montague Muffin frowned.

But his fat frown only made the Fistical Four smile. "About your cabin—" said the skipper.

"What about it?" grinned Lovell. "No good asking us to let up on that cad, because we're going to give him jip till he clears out of my quarters."

"I was going to say—" "No good saying anything, Mr. Muffin. We mean business," inter-

rupted Lovell. "You can't do Rookwood in the eye like that." "I—" "Nothing doing!" "For goodness' sake, Lovell, let the captain speak!" said Jimmy Silver. Snort from Lovell. "I was going to say," hooted Captain Muffin, "that you are welcome to go back to your old cabin as soon as you like." "Eh?" "Mr. Lee has spoken to me on the subject. He says he did not realise that there would be so much ill-feeling on the subject; and, in the circumstances, he is quite willing to go back to his bunk in Reginald's cabin, and let you have your room. The steward is removing his things now."

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# THE SECRET OF THE SILVER CLOUD!

By Owen Conquest.

(Continued from page 148.)

became genial, and Monson and Gaddy followed his example, and Adolphus Smythe was quite genial, too. Captain Muffin beamed with a fat smile on his paying guests, glad to see that all the rather discordant elements of his party were now in concord.

It was at a rather late hour that the passengers of the Silver Cloud went to their state-rooms.

Jimmy Silver was asleep almost as soon as his head touched the pillow, his last waking thought being that it was a good thing that the trouble with Ulick Lee was over, and that it was not necessary to turn out of his bunk that night to go on the war-path again.

But, as it happened, Jimmy was destined to turn out, all the same.

He woke up quite suddenly. Loud yells were ringing through the quiet of the night—yells of alarm and anxiety.

“Oh! Ow! Whoop! Groogh! Oh, you awful rotter! Help!”

“My hat! That’s the Pon’s voice!” ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

He sat up in his bunk. He was not particularly interested in Cecil Ponsonby, though that lofty youth had been, of late, much more civil than of yore. But if there was anything serious the matter he was ready to turn out.

“What’s the row, Pon?” came Gadsby’s voice.

“Oh! Ow! Grooogh! Help!” “Get a light!” came a yell in Monson’s voice. “We’re smothered! Those Rookwood cads— Oh!”

Jimmy Silver jumped out.

All the Rookwoods were turning out now, as well as the alarmed Highcliffians. They crowded out of their rooms.

A startling sight met their eyes.

Ponsonby and Monson had emerged from the room they shared, and their aspect was quite alarming.

Both of them were smothered with green paint.

Paint smothered their faces, their hair, their pyjamas, and streamed down from them on to the planks.

“Great Scott!” yelled Lovell.

“What’s happened?”

“Somebody’s borrowed a can of paint to decorate those chaps!” grinned Mornington. “Whose jolly old lark is this?”

Captain Muffin came tramping out of his room, half-dressed. He stared at the streaming Highcliffians.

“Is this another of your rags, as you call them?” he roared, with a glare at Jimmy Silver & Co.

“Eh? No!” gasped Jimmy. “I know nothing about it.”

“Same here,” said Lovell. “I was woke up a minute ago—”

“It’s a lie!” yelled Ponsonby furiously. “This is one of your rotten Rookwood japes! You cad!”

“I don’t know anything about it!” hooted Lovell. “I’ve only just turned out of bed.”

“It’s a lie!” screamed Monson.

“You Highcliffe rotter—”

“You Rookwood cad—”

“I’ll jolly well—”

“I’ll smash you for this!” roared Ponsonby. “If you didn’t do it, you rotter, who did? Somebody crept into our room and up-ended a can of paint over us in the dark! Who did it?”

“How should I know?” hooted Lovell.

Captain Muffin’s fat face was dark with anger. The incident of the previous night had been passed over; but this was a more serious thing—

there was no excuse for this. Obviously, life on board the Silver Cloud was going to be intolerable for Captain Muffin’s paying guests if this kind of thing was to happen in the night.

“Calm yourself, Master Ponsonby,” said the fat skipper. “We’ll go into this. You did not see who came into your room?”

Ponsonby dabbed wildly at clinging paint.

“I couldn’t see in the dark, could I? I was woke up by the paint streaming over my face! Grooogh!”

“We never did it,” said Newcome.

“It’s a filthy trick! We know nothing about it.”

“Nothing at all,” said Raby.

Captain Muffin eyed them. All the passengers had turned out, excepting Ulick Lee and Tubby Muffin, who shared one of the rooms.

Tubby’s hefty snore could still be heard; the commotion had not awakened Tubby.

Adolphus Smythe and Howard and Tracy were staring at the painted Highcliffians with dazed stares; Gadsby blinked at them bewilderedly.

Obviously, it was not Ponsonby’s own friends who had played this ghastly trick, and it was scarcely possible to suppose that it was the steward or one of the hands. There remained only Jimmy Silver & Co. to be suspected.

The chums of Rookwood realised that, and three of them looked at Arthur Edward Lovell rather uncertainly.

Lovell had had a fight with Ponsonby since the cruise started, and

he had been ragged one night by the Highcliffians. That had blown over, and the party had become on more or less friendly terms since. But if Lovell had not done this, who had? Captain Muffin had little doubt. He pointed an accusing finger at Arthur Edward Lovell.

“You young rascal!” he exclaimed.

Lovell glared. “I tell you I know nothing about it!” he roared.

“Then who did it?” demanded Captain Muffin.

“I don’t know, and don’t care!” hooted Lovell. “I know I didn’t.”

“Nonsense!” Lovell, old man!” murmured Raby.

“Can’t you fellows take my word?” roared Lovell, in great wrath.

“I tell you I never touched them! Why should I?”

“Because we ragged you one night, you cad!” hooted Ponsonby.

“Nothin’ like this—no decent fellow would play a trick like this! Oh, you rotter! By gad, you shall have some of the paint!”

“Here, you keep off!” yelled Lovell, in alarm, as the dandy of Highcliffe rushed on him.

But Ponsonby did not keep off. He was fully convinced that it was Lovell who was the guilty party.

He grasped Arthur Edward and hugged him, and they struggled, and in the struggle a good deal of the green paint was transferred.

“Ow! Oooch! Goooogh! Ger-roff!” roared Lovell.

“You rotter—” Captain Muffin rushed forward and grasped the two juniors, and dragged them apart by main force.

“Stop that!” he snapped angrily. Ponsonby panted.

“I’m fed-up with this!” he yelled. “Captain Muffin, if that Rookwood cad isn’t sent away from the yacht, I and my friends go ashore to-morrow!”

And Cecil Ponsonby stamped furiously away to clean himself, followed by his friends.

Valentine Mornington tapped Jimmy Silver on the arm as Jimmy was going back to his room. He grinned.

“It’s happened!” he murmured.

“Eh—what?”

“Something’s happened to make some of the passengers of the Silver Cloud clear out of their quarters.”

“Oh my hat!” Mornington laughed, and went back to his room, leaving Jimmy Silver staring after him blankly.

THE END.

(You must not miss “The Haunted Yacht!” next Monday’s grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. on holiday. Order your copy of the Boys’ FRIEND from your newsagent right away, and thus make certain of obtaining it!)

# IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers upon any subject. Address your letters to: Editor, “Boys’ Friend,” The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

## INTERESTING ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Out this week, the new volume of the “Holiday Annual!” That is the great fact of the moment. The new issue of this magnificent “Annual” beats the band, Banagher, and every conceivable record for thoroughgoing attractiveness. In one way it will make you feel sorry for the people who scraped along in the back ages before the “Holiday Annual” came as a boon and a blessing. Once again it will be found to be the boom boon. It is a grand cheer-up book, full of liveliness, mirth, adventure, and slap-up articles about hobbies and other vastly entertaining things. When in doubt, get the “H.A.,” or, even if you are not in doubt, make sure of a copy. Rookwood is to the fore, ditto Greyfriars and St. Jim’s. But if I started talking of the programme of good features my Chat would overlap the limit, and it won’t do. We can sympathise deeply with people in the past who never had such a treat, but anybody can secure the “Annual” now, price six shillings, and worth it, every farthing!

## SIDNEY DREW AND OTHERS.

Next Monday we have the first instalment of Mr. Drew’s new serial, “The City of Ghosts,” a most praiseworthy and efficient yarn of the s.s. Lord of the Deep, which is off on a cruise which will make history. They are a tidy lot of sportsmen aboard, with Prince Ching Lung, lordly and always welcome Val Hilton, that bright young personality Gan Waga, and the rest of the gamsome crowd. I must draw your attention, too, to Arthur S. Hardy’s footer tale, “Signed On!” which is brilliant, and also to “The Mystery of the Air Express,” by Francis Warwick. This is another yarn of the Hon. John Searlett, the millionaire detective, and his assistant, young Jimmy West, of the watchful eye and the ventriloquial habit. The following week the “Glory Hole Gang” reappears. Just jot that down. Meantime Rookwood is all at sea on the jolly old tub, the Silver Cloud. Monday’s yarn bears the title of “The Haunted Yacht.” There is an undercurrent to this holiday trip, and some strange things happen. I must cut short some of my other news, but it is all good, and the whole bill will be in your hands on Monday. Our next issue will have a shrewd informing footer article by “Goalie.” “Knights of the Wheel” will be carried another exciting stage. You must also note the sensational Rookwood story in No. 12 of the “Schoolboys’ Own Library.” The new issues, Nos. 11 and 12, are published on Friday, and No. 12 contains “Expelled,” a drama of Jimmy Silver’s school.

writer says that tortoises do not eat insects, and the real fact is that both land and water varieties are in the main vegetarians. When the tortoise is not entering for races with hares and so forth, his penchant is to loaf in the sun. He is partial to tender young lettuces, and has not much objection to asparagus in season, or juicy beans. He is really meant for a warm climate. In this country he likes to snuggle into the interior of the rubbish-heap, and hide when winter comes. There he waits until the spring brings the sun again. I have known tortoises which were really cheery, companionable sort of fellows; but, though they would do a more or less brisk canter across the lawn after likely food, they always made it perfectly clear that they disliked overmuch attention. The tortoise is a reserved fellow, and requires much time to himself for cogitation.

## DIFFICULT—RATHER!

Always willing to oblige as one may be, yet there are times when one is plainly stumped. A constant correspondent, whose letters are as welcome as the flowers in May, so he need not think otherwise, sends me a bit of flimsy paper on which there is some vague writing. My chum asks me to decipher the scerced. Part of the message appeared to be Dutch, here and there a stray French word had sort of happened along; in the middle of the sheet there was a big piece altogether missing. I wrapped a wet towel round my head and sat down to it; but, after careful inspection, I had to give the whole thing up. I only hope the writing is not the key to the hiding-place of a secret treasure. If so, it looks to me as though the concealed fortune will remain where it is.

## PLAIN WRITING.

This is, as a rule, just as important as plain speaking. I mean by that proper plain speaking. Some folks say they are speaking plainly when they are only trying to be rude, and asking for trouble. But to say what you mean in few words is admirable. So is writing legibly, above all, the signature. You remember the remark in a public office: “So this is your signature, sir? Will you now be good enough to write your name?” It is a terrible business this of the slovenly signature. It indicates clumsiness in some cases, rank conceit in others. You cannot expect everybody to know your name, and how can a stranger read a quaint, squirming scrawl which seems to have no sort of beginning, and a wind-up suggestive of a spider having a kick-off at the local web-spinners’ match?

## WANTS TO GO HOPPING.

C. Brown works in a Midland city and he asks me whether he could spend a week’s holiday in the hop fields earning a bit of hard cash and enjoying the fresh air. It is a bit late for making arrangements, but if he acts at once he would most likely get such a holiday job.

Your Editor.

## STORIES OF SPORT, SCHOOL, AND ADVENTURE.

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