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The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

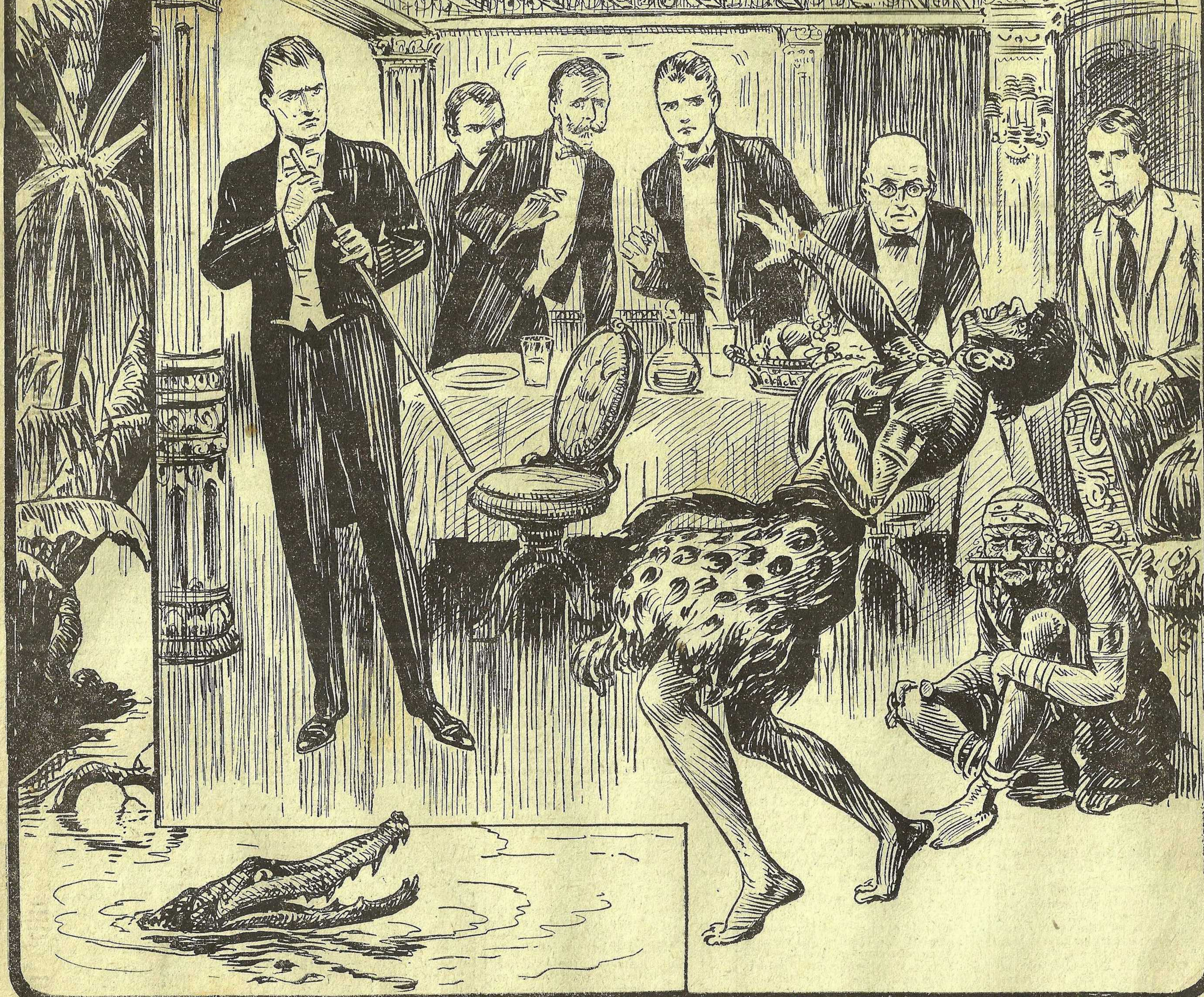
No. 1,266. Vol. XXVI. New Series.]

SIXTEEN BIG PAGES.

[Week Ending September 12th, 1925.]

The City of Ghosts!

by SIDNEY DREW



THE SUPREME TEST FOR THE WITCH-DOCTOR!

Ferrers Lord deliberately aimed the blow-pipe at the witch-doctor's grandson. "There is a test for you!" he said quietly.

(A tense moment from the thrilling new adventure story in this issue.)

AN AMAZING STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. ON HOLIDAY!

The Haunted Yacht!



By OWEN CONQUEST.

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

Strange happenings take place aboard the Silver Cloud!

The 1st Chapter.

The Mystery of the Night!

"Chuck it!" snapped Lovell.
 "That's all very well—"
 "Chuck it!"
 "Look here, Lovell—"
 "I've said chuck it and I mean chuck it!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell. "If a fellow's word isn't good enough for you, you can go and eat coke! Anyhow, chuck it!"
 And Arthur Edward Lovell shoved his hands deep into his pockets, swung round, and tramped across the deck of the Silver Cloud, frowning darkly.

He planted himself at the rail and stood staring landward, apparently deeply interested in the summit of Snaefell against the blue summer sky. Captain Muffin's yacht was lying in the bay at Douglas, Isle of Man, that bright summer morning, and so far as the surroundings were concerned all was calm and bright.

But on board the yacht there was trouble.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome looked expressively after Lovell as he tramped away.

It was not a new thing for Arthur Edward Lovell to be offended. It was, in fact, quite an old thing. Any fellow who chummed with Lovell had to take it as part of the regular routine.

Trifles light as air were often sufficient to throw Arthur Edward into a state of lofty and unapproachable dignity. On such occasions his friends had to wait for him to come round.

But this time it was not a trifle. The episode of the previous night had to be considered and settled somehow, and it was impossible to "chuck it" as Lovell directed.

There had been trouble more than once during the summer cruise of the Silver Cloud. Captain Montague Muffin had packed his yacht with "paying guests" not wisely, but too well.

Jimmy Silver & Co. and Mornington pulled together as cordially on the cruise as in the old House at Rookwood School. They contrived to keep the peace with Smythe and Howard and Tracy of the Rookwood Shell. They found it more difficult to keep on amicable terms with Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, the Highcliffe fellows, and they had had serious disagreement with Ulick Lee, the only adult passenger on the yacht.

yacht's company agreed that it was the limit.

Who had done it?
 The Highcliffians were convinced that Lovell had done it. Smythe & Co. shared their opinion. Captain Muffin was pretty certain of it. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome could not help thinking it probable. For if Lovell had not done it, who had?

Somebody had.
 Only too obviously somebody had, for that sunny morning Ponsonby of Highcliffe was still cleaning off traces of the clinging paint, in a state of fury to which words could not have given expression.

Captain Muffin came across to the worried three as Lovell stamped angrily away and stood staring at Snaefell.

The skipper's fat face was very grim.

Montague Muffin was not happy that morning.

This disagreement among his paying guests meant that some of them had to go, and Montague Muffin did not want to lose his paying guests. It was rather too late in the season to think of filling their places with new paying guests. Although the fat little gentleman loved to consider himself a sea captain, his profession was that of a boarding-house keeper, and it was as a boarding-house keeper that he felt on this subject.

"This won't do, young gentlemen," said Captain Muffin, blinking at Jimmy Silver with the fat blink which was so like his nephew, Tubby Muffin.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Jimmy. "Lovell says positively that he never touched Ponsonby last night."

"Then who did?" grunted Captain Muffin.

"Lovell says he was fast asleep, and was woke up by Ponsonby screeching, same as we were," said Raby.

"After all, Lovell's word is good enough," said Newcome. "If he'd done it he would say so."

"That's so," agreed Jimmy.

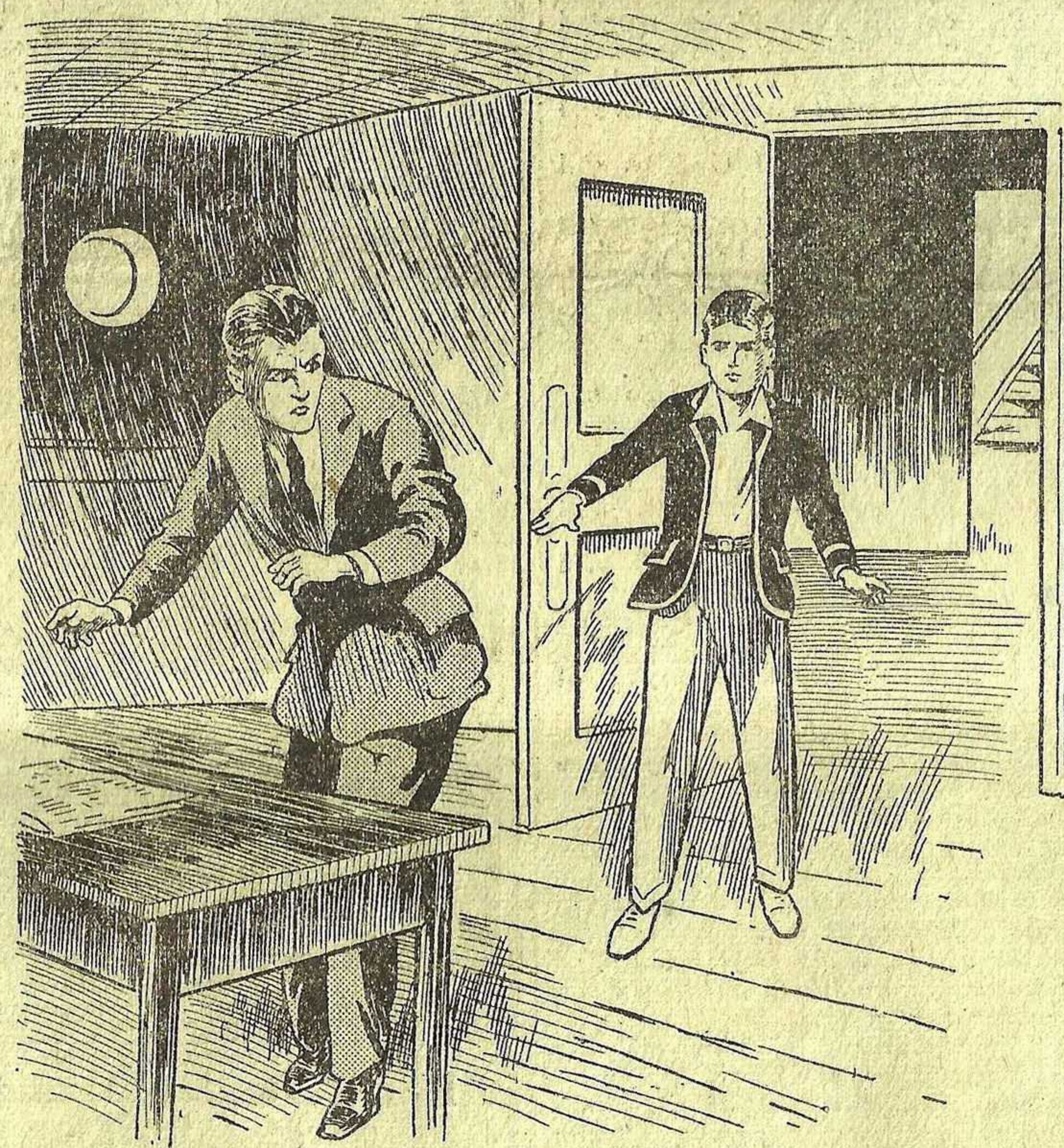
But Jimmy was puzzled and perplexed. Lovell's word was as good as gold, of course. He was rather reckless and headstrong, and he might have swamped Ponsonby with paint, thinking it good for the swanking dandy of Highcliffe School. But, then, he would never have denied what he had done. At least, his chums could not believe that he would have denied it. And yet—somebody had done it.

"That's all very well," said Captain Muffin gruffly. "Who was it, then? You young fellows did not do it—"

"We were asleep."
 "My nephew Reginald certainly did not. He did not even wake up while the row was going on."

"No, it wasn't Tubby."
 "Smythe and Howard and Tracy are friends of Master Ponsonby's. They could not have ragged him."
 "No," agreed Jimmy.

"And Mornington—"
 "Count me out!" drawled Valentine Mornington. "Not guilty, my lord!"



VERY SUSPICIOUS! With a sudden movement, Mornington threw open the door of Jimmy Silver's room. There was a startled exclamation as Ulick Lee spun round to face him. "Hallo, bumped into the wrong room?" yawned Mornington. "Seen anythin' of Jimmy's 'Daily Mail'? I'm after it."

"Well, then, I suppose I am not to suspect the steward or one of the hands or my mate—Mr. Punter?" exclaimed Captain Muffin.

"Of course not," said Jimmy Silver.

"There's nobody else, then—"
 "You've another passenger, you know," said Mornington. "Perhaps Mr. Lee was in a larky humour last night."

Captain Muffin made an impatient gesture.

"Mr. Lee wouldn't be likely to play a silly schoolboy trick on a schoolboy, I suppose? Nonsense!"

"I stand corrected," said Morny meekly.

"Besides, he shares my nephew's state-room, and both of them slept through the disturbance," said the captain.

"Tubby Muffin would sleep through a giddy thunderstorm," agreed Mornington. "In fact, he has slept through two or three on this cruise. By the same giddy token, he wouldn't wake up if Mr. Lee got out in the night."

"Mr. Lee did nothing of the kind!" snapped Captain Muffin.

"Ridiculous suggestions like that don't do any good! It was a schoolboy trick and it was played by a schoolboy! Everybody seems fairly clear of it excepting Lovell! I never really expected him to deny it!"

"But he does," said Jimmy, "and we take Lovell's word. It's possible that one of Pon's own friends may have got fed-up with him and given him a ragging, guessing that it would be put down to old Lovell, in the circumstances."

Captain Muffin caressed his double chin thoughtfully.

"I suppose it's possible," he assented.

Really, Captain Muffin thought it quite possible. Ponsonby of Highcliffe was a fellow with whom anyone might have got fed-up—even a pal.

"Well, something's got to be settled," he said. "Master Ponsonby is convinced that it was Lovell. He has demanded that the aggressor shall be sent out of the yacht, and if Lovell attacked him in that way I can't very well refuse. This kind of thing can't go on, of course."

"Well, it makes a summer cruise a bit too exciting, there's no doubt about that," agreed Jimmy.

"I think Lovell ought to own up and go ashore here," said Captain Muffin, with a nod towards the crowded beach of Douglas. "After what's happened, he ought to step out and let us finish the cruise without any more trouble on board. In fact, that's what I've decided upon."

Three Rookwood juniors looked warlike at once.

"The balance of Lovell's fees for the cruise will be returned to him," added Captain Muffin with a visible

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Captain Muffin grinned faintly, and walked away, still thoughtful.

Really, it was a perplexing problem for the proprietor of the floating boarding-house.

Matters had reached such a point that he could not keep all the paying-guests he had crowded on board his craft, and, as a business man, he realised that it was better to lose three than to lose five. And undoubtedly he did not like Ponsonby, whose superior airs had roused his ire many a time. Lovell, with all his hot-headedness and recklessness, was a good-natured fellow, and could be civil and tolerant; but the superb Pon never even pretended to regard Montague Muffin as anything but a boarding-house keeper who was putting on airs.

Captain Muffin thought the matter over. But, as a matter of fact, his fat mind was already made up; the fees of five were greater than the fees of three.

The 2nd Chapter.

Pride Goes Before a Fall!

"You rotter!"
 That was Ponsonby's greeting to Arthur Edward Lovell, as he came up on the deck of the Silver Cloud.

Gadsby and Monson, who were with their leader, gave the Rookwooder glances of animosity.

The varied passengers of the Silver Cloud had begun to pull together fairly well, but the happening of the night had stopped all that, with a sudden stop. It was quite certain now that Rookwooders and Highcliffians could not remain long on the same vessel without coming to blows.

Lovell flushed red.

But for once Arthur Edward seemed in a patient and reasonable mood. Perhaps he realised that Pon's view, though mistaken, was a natural one for Pon to take. For Lovell himself was quite puzzled as to the identity of the unknown ragger.

"Look here, Ponsonby," said Lovell, quite earnestly. "I never touched you last night. I never dreamed of painting you—"

"It's a lie!"

"A rotten lie!" growled Gadsby.

"What's the good of spinnin' a yarn like that, when we know you did it?" demanded Monson savagely.

Lovell's colour deepened.

"I give you my word," he said. "We've had our rows, but that had blown over, and I wasn't feeling unfriendly at all when we turned in last night. Even if I had been, I wouldn't have smothered a fellow with paint."

"You smothered that man Lee one night," sneered Gadsby.

"That was different. He bagged my cabin, and you fellows agreed that it was all right to make him sit up till he gave it back to me," said Lovell. "I never touched you, and I give you my word of honour."

"Then who did?" jeered Ponsonby.

"I can't guess."

"Well, I can—you did!" said the dandy of Highcliffe. "I don't value your word a snap of the fingers. I know you did it! And if Captain Muffin don't turn you off the yacht we three are goin'!"

Lovell breathed hard.

"You can do as you choose," he said. "I don't blame you for suspecting me in the first place, but now I've given you my word—"

"Hang your word!"

"You rotter!" burst out Lovell furiously. Arthur Edward's patience was never to be relied on for very long, and really he was very much provoked.

"I never touched you last night, but I'll touch you fast enough this morning, if you can't be civil, you Highcliffe cad!"

And Lovell clenched his hands, his eyes glittering.

"Chuck that!" exclaimed Smythe of the Shell, pushing forward.

"You've done enough of your dashed hooliganism, Lovell!"

"Quite enough!" said Tracy and Howard together.

Lovell's eyes turned on them with a blaze.

Smythe & Co. backed away a little. But Adolphus Smythe, feeling that it was up to him to back up his superb friend Ponsonby, stuck to his guns.

"You jolly well know you did, and we all know," he said. "Your own pals think the same, too."

"Do you?" shouted Lovell, with a glare at Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Fathead!" said Jimmy.
 "They jolly well do!" said Smythe.
 "So does Morny. Don't you, Morny?"

(Continued overleaf.)

Simply top-hole!—"A Rascal Trapped!" Next Monday's stunning holiday adventure of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School!

The Haunted Yacht!



(Continued from previous page.)

Valentine Mornington laughed. "No!" he answered. "So far from thinkin' that Lovell did it, dear man, I jolly well know he didn't!"

"What rot!"

"And how do you know?" demanded Tracy. "Perhaps you did it yourself?"

"Never thought of it," yawned Morny. "Besides, in my opinion, Pon didn't need the paint—he's green enough already!"

Ponsonby gritted his teeth. "You can deny it till you're black in the face, you cad!" he said, with a stare of concentrated rage at Lovell. "But we all know you did it, and the captain knows. Captain Muffin can't run a show like this with a dashed ruffian on board who smothered fellows with paint when they're asleep in their bunks. You're for the shore!"

"I've told you—"

"Rats!"

"If my word isn't good enough for you," said Lovell, breathing hard. "It's good enough for us, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver. "I know you didn't do it, if you say you didn't, though it beats me who did. Ponsonby's a bit ratty now, but later on—"

"Later on I shall think the same as I think now," sneered Ponsonby. "I won't stay an hour on this yacht if Lovell stays. I've told Muffin that, and I mean it. So you can pack your traps, Lovell."

"Lots of your sort ashore there," said Gadsby, with a nod towards the beach. "You'll enjoy yourself."

Evidently it had not even crossed Ponsonby's lofty mind that if anyone had to go it might be his lordly self.

There was rather a surprise in store for the dandy of Highcliffe.

"I'm fed-up with this," said Lovell. "You can think what you like, Ponsonby, but if you say again that I'm a liar I'll knock you right across the deck!"

"Liar!" said Ponsonby at once. That was more than enough for Lovell.

He rushed right at the dandy of Highcliffe, throwing aside the detaining hand stretched out by Jimmy Silver.

Ponsonby, for once, was not averse to a scrap. He was in such a rage that he forgot his last licking, and forgot his usual deep concern for his good looks.

His hands went up at once, and in a second the two juniors were fighting fiercely.

"Stop that!" roared Captain Muffin.

The combatants heard him, but they heeded not. They hammered at one another furiously.

Crash!

Lovell's foot slipped on the deck, and he went down as Pon's knuckles landed on his nose.

"Bravo!" chirruped Smythe. Lovell lay and gasped for a moment. Then he was upon his feet, his face flaming, and rushing on Ponsonby again.

But the fat figure of Captain Montague Muffin interposed.

"Stand back!" he snapped.

"Rats! I—"

"Chuck it, Lovell!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver; and he grasped his angry chum by the shoulders and fairly hauled him back.

"I'm going to smash him!" roared Lovell.

"Chuck it, I tell you!"

"Wait till you get ashore!" sneered Gadsby. "Plenty of places ashore where you can kick up a shindy!"

"Jimmy, if you don't let go—"

"Well, I jolly well won't!" said Uncle James of Rookwood cheerfully. "Give it a miss, old man! Punching noses won't settle this matter!"

"Order! Do you hear?" rapped out Captain Muffin.

Raby and Newcome interposed to keep Lovell from renewing the combat. The incensed Arthur Edward had to content himself with dabbing his nose, which was streaming red.

Ponsonby gave him a mocking grin. He had had rather the better of the brief scrap, and he was rather glad to have so many peacemakers interposing between him and the enraged Lovell.

"You'll soon get into a shindy ashore!" he said. "Lots of trippers there to row with! Captain Muffin, the sooner that hooligan is off the yacht the better!"

"The fact is—" Montague Muffin. "I'm bound to take Mr. to lose the three Highcliffians, little as he liked them. But he was quite certain that he did not want to lose Jimmy Silver & Co."

"Oh, cut that out!" interrupted Ponsonby. "Shove the ruffian off the yacht and let's get clear of him! If his friends go with him, so much the better!"

"Hear, hear!" said Gadsby and Monson.

"The fact is," repeated Captain Muffin, "I'm bound to take Mr. Lovell's word that he had nothing to do with what happened last night. It's a mysterious affair, but his word is good enough for me."

"Do you mean to say he's not goin'?"

"Just so—not unless he chooses. Mr. Lovell has booked the whole trip, along with his friends, and I—"

"If he doesn't go, I go!" said Ponsonby threateningly.

"Dear me!" said Captain Muffin.

"Eh?"

"I shall be sorry to lose you, of course, Master Ponsonby."

Ponsonby stared at the fat captain. The expression on his face caused a general grin.

Captain Muffin grinned, too. He was sorry to lose any of his paying guests before the end of the cruise, but there was some satisfaction in thus deflating, as it were, the lofty swank of the dandy of Highcliffe.

Ponsonby breathed hard, with a crimson face.

"You fat scoundrel!" he said.

"What?" roared Captain Muffin.

"You dashed, cheeky lodgin'-house keeper!" shouted Ponsonby. "You dare to show off your dashed impudence to a gentleman!"

Captain Muffin's fat face was purple.

"You—you—you insolent young cub!" he exclaimed. "You're going! I'm sorry I ever let such a young blackguard step aboard my yacht!"

"Your yacht!" jeered Ponsonby. "A dashed old tub, bought cheap at a sale, that belonged to a convict before he went to prison—with a relation of the convict on board at this minute! If I'd known what it was like you wouldn't have got me here—nor my friends, either! You a yachtsman! Keepin' a cook-shop in Wapping is more in your line!"

Captain Muffin seemed to find some difficulty in breathing.

"I give you ten minutes to get ashore!" he gasped. "Do you hear, you young cub? Ten minutes! If you're on board my ship later than that I'll have you chucked over the side!"

And Captain Muffin stamped away in a towering rage. Ponsonby said no more. It was borne in upon his mind that a few words more, and the enraged skipper of the Silver Cloud might have dropped him bodily into Douglas Bay.

"Let's get out!" muttered Gadsby uneasily.

"Let's!" murmured Monson.

And the three Highcliffians lost no time. Smythe & Co. helped them pack for departure.

But Adolphus Smythe did not seem so grieved as might have been expected at the loss of his superb friend Pon.

Possibly, at such close quarters on the yacht, even Adolphus had found Pon's lofty swank a little wearing.

The ten minutes proved enough for the three.

When the ten minutes had elapsed Ponsonby & Co. had elapsed, also, so to speak, and their feet trod no longer the deck of the Silver Cloud.

Ulick Lee stood by the rail, watching them as they went, and Morny, who was watching Ulick, detected the mocking smile that crossed his lips. And Mornington smiled, too.

To Mornington, at least, it was no mystery who had caused the trouble which had led to the departure of three of the Silver Cloud's

Home Rule here. And the cats and dogs, or something, don't have any tails. I forget whether it's cats or dogs, or it might be the rabbits—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't say for certain," confessed Lovell. "But I know there's some blessed critter in this island without any tail. They don't pay taxes, either."

"The tailless cats don't?" asked Newcome.

"You ass! I mean, the inhabitants! It's like the Channel Islands—self-government and no meddling from Whitehall," said Lovell. "Jolly good system, I should think, for the people who live here. Affairs here are run by a dumpster—unless he's a deemster—and there's a House of Locks—"

"Do you mean Keys?"

"Well, it may be a House of Keys," admitted Lovell. "It's a long time since I've read anything about it. They run the show

own jolly old country. After all, the English are the only race that knows how to govern. Any other country, in our place, would have mopped up this island, abolished its independence, and made it a part of the home country. And then, instead of being a loyal and contented part of the United Kingdom, it would have been seething with rebellion, and a standing danger in war-time. Letting people alone is a wonderful system in government, and the English are the only race that have learned how to do it. Continental politicians haven't even begun to learn it yet."

"Good old England!" said Jimmy Silver, with a smile. "So we have still something to pat ourselves on the back for!"

"The Manx language is dying out, because the people find English more useful," went on Mornington. "But if the Germans, for instance, had this island, they'd force the people to talk German, and make savage laws against speaking Manx at all. And what would be the result? Every chap with a backbone in him would keep on speaking Manx; it would be a point of honour with every Manxman to keep it up, and it would last for ever. Lettin' people alone is a wonderful system; and if the British Empire ever goes to pot, it will be because the politicians take to meddlin' too much. The best thing a Government can do is to do next to nothin'—the less it does, the better Government it is!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Lovell.

"We read in our history books at school," continued Morny, "that the Roman Empire was smashed up by the invasions of the barbarians. That's the kind of stuff you read in history books! The Roman Empire went to pieces because the government got too much power, and used it. The people didn't keep the barbarians out, because they were thoroughly fed-up with their own government, and wanted to see it smashed. They preferred barbarian kings to their own meddlin' politicians. And they were jolly well in the right, too; it was a change for the better."

"You'd better put that in your next history paper at Rookwood!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"There's a good many people of the same way of thinkin' in these days," said Mornington. "And the barbarians are still in existence—only it's called Bolshevism now. And I can tell you that wherever Bolshevism gets a footin' in any country it's because the people are fed-up with meddlin' and swindlin' politicians, and are ready to try anythin' for a change. Governments want watchin', and sittin' on; and the harder you sit on 'em, and the more you keep them from meddlin', the better it is for them and everybody concerned."

"A Daniel come to judgment!" said Jimmy Silver laughing. "Now I think we'd better run ashore and have a look at this shining example of the beneficence of British rule."

"Let's!" said Tubby Muffin. "I say, you can get a jolly good feed there, I can tell you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's lots of time," said Raby. "They're tinkering with the engines again, so we may get a few days here."

The fair island, bright in the summer sunshine, looked very attractive, and from the yacht the Rookwooders could see the "front" swarming with holiday-makers.

The Fistical Four prepared to go ashore, and Tubby Muffin went with them. Smythe & Co. were already gone.

Mornington called to Ulick Lee, who was smoking a cigar in a deck-chair, and idly looking away towards the blue hills.

"Goin' ashore, Mr. Lee?"

The young man shook his head.

"No."

"It's a place worth visitin', you know," said Morny.

Lee shrugged his shoulders. "Of course, we're rather juvenile company for you," said Morny. "But we'd be glad if you'd join us, Mr. Lee."

"Thank you; I'm staying on board!" said Lee.

Lovell knitted his brows.

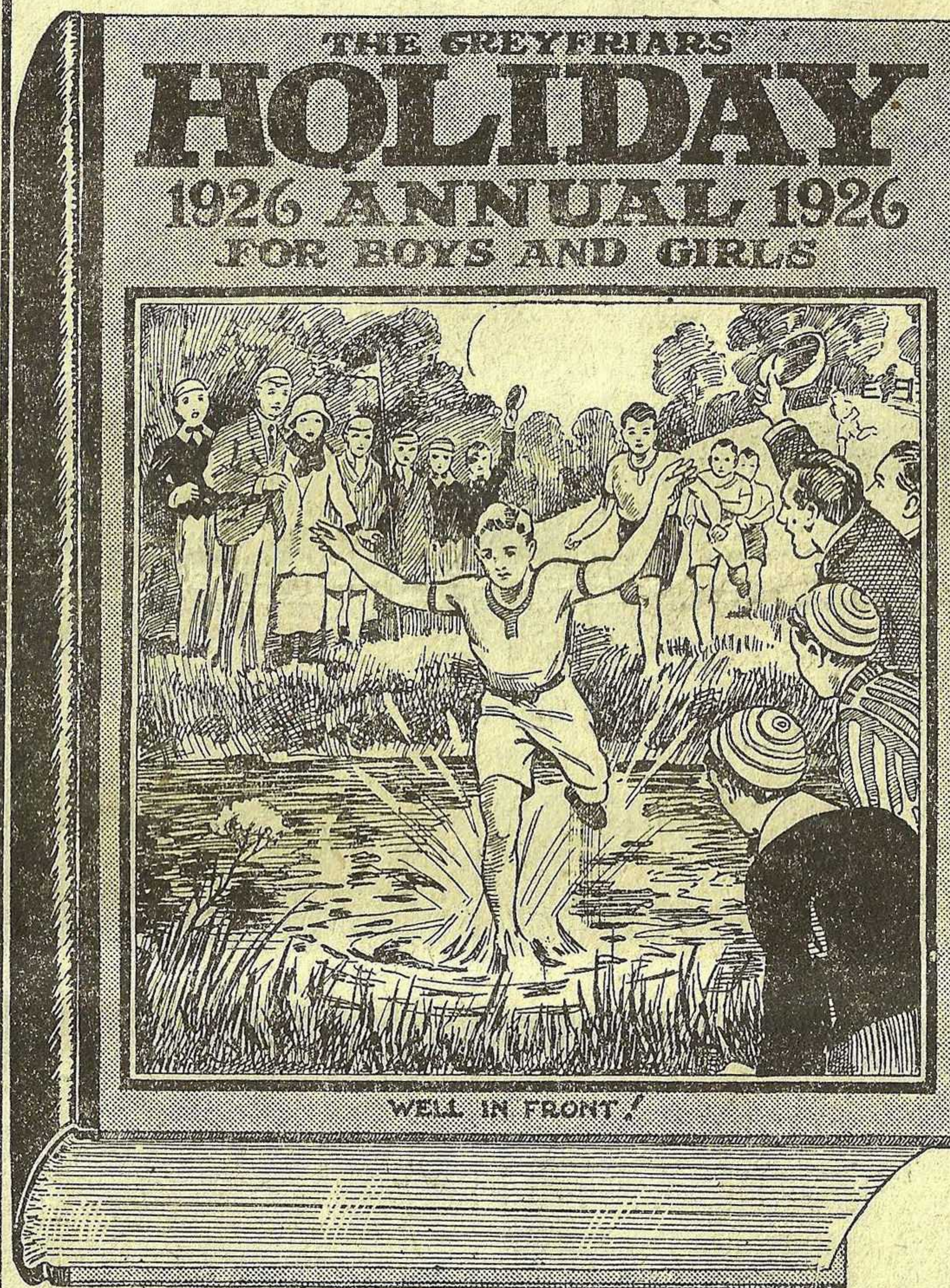
The juniors hailed a boat, for a pull round the bay before going ashore, and as the boatman pushed off from the yacht, Lovell gave Mornington a rather expressive look.

"You ass!" he said.

"What's bitin' you now?" asked Morny.

"We don't want that cad Lee—the rotter who bagged my cabin, and

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passengers. Morny's opinion on that subject was fixed.

The 3rd Chapter. In the Isle of Man!

"A run ashore—what?" asked Tubby Muffin brightly.

"Are we staying long enough?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"So Uncle Monty says."

"Well, it's a good chance to see something of the giddy Isle of Man!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell. "I read a book about it once by a celebrated chap whose name was Hall-stand, or something. Or was it Cane-chair? I know it was something like that—"

"Do you happen to mean Hall Caine, by any chance?" inquired Morny sarcastically.

"Possibly. It was something like it, anyhow," said Lovell. "The book was about a sort of official called a 'dumpster'—"

"Do you mean a 'deemster'?"

"Well, I shouldn't wonder. I know it was something," assented Lovell. "This little island has Home Rule, you know—only, they don't call it

locally and manage their own affairs, just like a little kingdom. In fact, it was a kingdom once, and the royal rights belonged to the Duke of something or other; but he was bought out for I forget how much in the reign of—of—of Thingummybob. Since then the island has been part of the Kingdom of Great Britain, but it's run independently by a what-do-you-call-it and a House of something or other. See?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned.

It was Arthur Edward Lovell's way to impart information, but the facts stored in his memory were often in a rather hazy state. Really, it did not add much to the knowledge of his chums to learn that the Isle of Man was run by what-do-you-call-it, assisted by a House of something or other.

"They've got a language of their own, too," went on Lovell. "It's called Manx, but they don't speak it much now."

Mornington glanced towards the crowded shore.

"It's worth while passin' a holiday in the Isle of Man," he remarked. "It's a lesson about our

whom we had to rag into giving it up!" grunted Lovell.

"Not at all!" assented Mornington. "But, you see, I knew he wouldn't come. I only wanted to make sure."

"What rot! How could you know?" grunted Lovell.

Morny tapped his forehead.

"Brains!" he explained. "I know it doesn't seem quite fair, Lovell; but when brains were handed out they gave me your lot as well as my own. That accounts for the intellectual difference between us, old bean."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Lovell.

Mornington smiled, and settled down comfortably. The boat pulled on over the shining waters of Douglas Bay.

"Look here, Morny," said Raby. "How the thump did you know that Lee wouldn't go ashore—if you did know it?"

"Because this is a chance for him, with all the passengers out of the yacht," said Morny coolly. "He's got rid of three for good—Ponsonby & Co. Now he's rid of us temporarily. As soon as we're quite clear he will go rootin' round our state-rooms."

"Rot!" said Lovell.

Morny laughed.

"You really think it was Lee who played that green paint trick on Ponsonby last night?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a very attentive look at the dandy of the Fourth.

"I know it was."

"And why should he?" demanded Lovell.

Morny gave Arthur Edward a compassionate look.

"What's the good of explainin' to you, old bean? I can't put it in words of one syllable."

"Look here—"

"Oh, cut out the gammon!" said Newcome. "Tell us what you mean, Morny."

"I've told you already. Lee is the nephew of Griffin Lee, who hid the stolen diamonds somewhere, that were never found. He bagged Lovell's cabin to search it—and drew a blank. I warned you that somethin' would happen to shift some of the Silver Cloud passengers out of the yacht, to give him room for more searchin'. Well, it happened last night."

"Bosh!" said Lovell.

"There was nothin' to point to Lee, and it's no good my sayin' anythin' without any evidence. But it was Lee who did it, for the reason I've given. After it happened it was bound to be fixed on some of our crowd, and either we or the High-cliffians had to go. Lee didn't care which. Now there's more room on the yacht Lee will get a room to himself, which will give him more freedom of movement—though, of course, he could depend on Tubby snorin' through anythin'."

Jimmy Silver grinned. Tubby Muffin, with his head on a cushion, was dozing while the boat glided over the sunny bay, and his musical snore mingled with the grind of the oars in the rowlocks. Certainly, if Lee had engaged in any nocturnal prowlings on the Silver Cloud, he had been in little danger of detection from the fat Classical of Rookwood who shared his room.

"My idea is, as I've told you, that Ulick Lee believes that his jolly old uncle hid the diamonds on the yacht," said Morny. "That's why he's there at all, as a giddy payin' guest—otherwise I'm fairly sure he wouldn't be livin' a life on the ocean wave with a crowd of schoolboys. He wants a free hand for searchin', and the crowd was too big for him. He's played a cunning game, and shifted out three of the passengers. My belief is that somethin' will happen again, and more will follow; there's too many on board to suit him. Unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless he happens on the hidden loot while we're ashore to-day," said Morny. "If he does, he'll clear off the Silver Cloud himself as soon as he jolly well can!"

"Is this where we say 'Marvellous!' Mr. Sherlock Holmes?" asked Lovell sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time will show!" yawned Mornington. "It's a rather interestin' matter to me; Lee's made the trip quite an entertainin' one for little me. Hallo, there's an island of sorts—looks like a rook in chess. Tell us all about it, Lovell, from your immense stores of knowledge."

And the topic of Ulick Lee dropped, while Lovell proceeded to explain, readily but a little vaguely, that the Thingummy was a what-do-

you-call-it, which was put up by somebody-or-other, he forgot exactly when and why.

The 4th Chapter. Morny Makes Sure.

Jimmy Silver & Co. enjoyed their day in the Isle of Man.

Douglas they found to be an extremely jolly place, crowded with people mainly from the North of England, all in good humour and bent on having a good time.

Judging by the cheery faces, everybody was having a good time, and enjoying it thoroughly.

Tubby Muffin's prediction was fulfilled; the Rookwooders found that they could get a ripping "feed" ashore. That was the beginning and end of delight for Reginald Muffin, and as he was still going strong long after the Co. had finished, they left him to his happiness.

Tubby's intention was to take a long, long nap on the sands after his inner Tubby was satisfied; but Jimmy Silver & Co. were looking for something more strenuous.

They went off cheerily to Douglas Head; and after that on the tram to Ramsey, and Laxey where they strolled in the Glen Gardens and inspected the famous "Mining Wheel." There was still time for a run up Snaefell; and then the Rookwooders came back, tired but cheery, to Douglas, where they picked up Tubby Muffin again.

longer, old bean, and don't go to sleep standin' up, like a horse."

"Oh! Yes! Right!" Jimmy suppressed another yawn, as Mornington shut the door.

"Well, he's been rootin' in this room," said Morny.

"Has he? How do you know?"

"I keep my cabin trunk under the bunk, as you see. It's been shifted out while we were in Douglas."

Jimmy blinked at it.

"It's still there," he said.

"I know it is, fathead, but it's been moved."

"Blessed if I know how even Sherlock Holmes or Ferrers Locke would spot that," said Jimmy. "What is it—finger-prints or cigarette-ash, or—"

"Fathead! Do you see that stuff sticking to the trunk?"

Jimmy blinked again.

"Looks like seccotine, dried," he said.

"That's what it is. Before I left I ran a streak of seccotine down the side of the trunk to the floor, and saw it dry hard. The trunk couldn't be moved without breaking it. It's broken."

"Oh!"

"You see, anybody rooting through the room would be bound to move the trunk, searchin' in every corner," said Morny, with a grin.

"Well, that trunk has been moved."

"Perhaps the steward—"

"Perhaps your grandmother!"



OLD FOES! In a second Lovell and Ponsonby were fighting fiercely. "Stop that!" roared Captain Muffin. The combatants heard him, but they heeded not. They hammered at one another furiously. Crash! Lovell's foot slipped on the deck, and he went down as Pon's knuckles landed on his nose.

Then there was supper, over which Tubby's fat face expanded with happy smiles, like unto a full moon. Then a saunter in the midst of merry crowds on the "front"; and at quite a late hour, the Rookwooders returned to the Silver Cloud where Tubby Muffin had to be helped aboard in a snoring state.

Smythe & Co. were already back, and in their bunks. Jimmy Silver & Co. were tired, after a long and well-filled day, and ready to turn in.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome turned in at once; as for Reginald Muffin, he dropped into his bunk and snored, without even taking his boots off.

Mornington, who seemed quite alert even at that late hour after a long day, slipped his arm through Jimmy Silver's. He drew Jimmy into his room.

"Sleepy?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver grinned, and rubbed his eyes.

"Well, a little," he admitted.

"I'm ready to turn in. What's on, Morny?"

"I told you that that merchant Lee would go rootin' about our rooms while we were ashore."

"Yaw-aw-aw—"

"You yawnin' ass!"

"I mean, so you did, old chap," said Jimmy manfully, suppressing his yawns. He was not very much interested, just then, in the cracksman's nephew. "I remember you did! What about it?"

Mornington grinned.

"Prop your eyes open a minute

Ulick Lee has been searchin' the room while we were away: the other rooms, too, most likely. Risky enough in the daytime—but impossible at night, with us here. But he wasn't losin' the chance. Do you see?"

"I—I see," assented Jimmy Silver, rather dubiously however.

"If he's had luck, he will clear tomorrow," said Mornington. "If he hasn't, he will keep on the Silver Cloud; and he won't get a chance like this again in a hurry, and he will try to clear off more of the jolly payin' guests to get a free run. That's how I map it out. See?"

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw!"

"Oh, go to bed!"

And Jimmy Silver grinned sleepily, and went to bed.

The next morning, however, Jimmy Silver was alert enough, and at breakfast he remembered what Mornington had told him, and glanced several times rather curiously at Ulick Lee.

The cracksman's nephew did not seem to be in very cheery spirits. His brow was thoughtful and frowning, and he had very little to say; he seemed to have dropped his usual custom of making himself genial to the general company.

Jimmy could not help wondering if his mood was due to disappointment in the search which, according to Mornington, he was carrying on surreptitiously on board the yacht that had once been his uncle's.

After breakfast, Ulick Lee walked the deck with bent brows, chewing

a cigar. The Silver Cloud was not going on from Douglas till the afternoon, and Smythe & Co. went ashore, and the Fistical Four followed their example. But Valentine Mornington disposed himself in a deck chair, with a rather amused eye on Ulick Lee, who was pacing or, rather, prowling, the deck. Captain Muffin was ashore, on business probably connected with provisions, and Mr. Punter had gone with him, and, except for two or three hands, only the steward remained, and he was busy in his room.

More than once Ulick Lee glanced at Mornington, reclining in his deck chair, with a covert, watchful look.

The Rookwood junior knew, or at least believed that he knew, what was passing in Lee's mind; and he was not surprised when the young man came over to him at last.

"You're not going ashore with your friends, then?" said Lee.

"Not this time."

"Rather a waste of time, hanging about the yacht while she's in harbour, what?" said Lee.

"Just what you're doin' yourself, you know," smiled Mornington.

Lee smiled genially.

"I'm not a schoolboy," he said.

"I should have thought that a schoolboy would be glad of a run ashore in a holiday resort."

"Oh, we had a rippin' run yesterday," said Mornington carelessly.

"I'm takin' a rest."

"Then you're not going?"

"No."

from Jimmy Silver's room caught his ear. The door was closed; and Morny grinned at it, greatly entertained.

With a sudden movement, he opened the door wide.

There was a startled exclamation, as Ulick Lee spun round to face him. For a second, the man's face was convulsed with rage. But his self-control was great; the expression was fleeting; it vanished almost before Mornington noted it.

"Hallo, bumped into the wrong room?" yawned Mornington. "Seen anythin' of Jimmy's 'Daily Mail'?"

Lee drew a quick, hard breath.

"That's what I came for," he said. "I thought young Silver wouldn't mind my borrowin' his paper."

"Of course he wouldn't," assented Mornington genially. "If he's left it here, we'll whack it out, what?"

"Quite!" said Lee, smiling.

The "Daily Mail," however, was not found in the state-room, and Ulick Lee very soon returned to the deck.

Mornington laughed softly.

He had proof now, if he wanted it—the proof that he had stayed on board that morning to obtain. Certainly Ulick Lee had not waited for Morny to fall asleep in his deck-chair, and then crept quietly below, in order to borrow a newspaper. He had made one more attempt to carry on his search—the search that presented so many, and almost insuperable, difficulties, while the Silver Cloud was crowded with paying guests.

Mornington returned to the deck and the deck-chair; but he did not doze again. He knew that Lee was not to be caught twice in the same manner. While he looked idly at a book, he kept a watchful eye occasionally on the man pacing the deck, and he was aware that Lee gave him keen scrutinising looks from under his knitted brows. And it came into Mornington's keen mind that Ulick Lee suspected him—suspected him of suspicion.

That night, when the Silver Cloud was at sea again, Morny fastened his door when he went to his bunk. And in the dead of night he lifted his head in his bunk and listened to the faint sound of a hand groping over the door outside, and smiled in the darkness. Ulick Lee was the nephew of a desperate cracksman now in prison, and, to Morny's mind, as desperate a rascal as his uncle; but he had met his match, in a Fourth Form junior of Rookwood School.

The 5th Chapter.

The Hand of the Enemy.

Jimmy Silver stirred uneasily. He was dreaming in his bunk, while the yacht throbbed over the starlit waters of the Irish Sea. The Silver Cloud was gliding at a leisurely rate through the summer night. In the morning, the juniors expected to see the hills of Cumberland rising against the blue sky, and then it was Captain Muffin's intention to run along the coast down to Blackpool. That was a programme quite pleasing to his passengers, all of whom liked the idea of giving Blackpool a call.

Jimmy Silver, however, was dreaming neither of Manxland, which was left behind, nor of Blackpool, which lay ahead. His dreams went back to Rookwood School, where he fancied himself once more ragging with Hansom of the Fifth. Hansom of the Fifth had collared him, and Jimmy was struggling, and calling to his comrades for rescue; but, as generally happens in a nightmare, it seemed impossible to utter a word. He called for rescue, but knew that his calling was inaudible; and all the time, Hansom of the Fifth was gripping him harder and harder. And then, in a change of the dreaming vision, it seemed that it was not the Rookwood Fifth Former after all, but some dim black shape that was gripping him, and the grip was on his throat, and it was a grip hard as steel, cold as ice.

Terror was a new feeling for Jimmy Silver, even in the grip of a nightmare. But he was conscious of terror now.

He stirred in his sleep; he was struggling with that uncanny grip; and with a sudden convulsive shock, he awakened.

He awakened thoroughly; the mists of sleep were gone in an instant. But the grip on his throat was not gone.

With a wild thumping at his heart, Jimmy realised that it was real—that a black shape hung over him in the dimness of the little state-room, gripping him.

(Continued on page 176.)

THE HAUNTED YACHT!

(Continued from page 167.)

He lay helpless and quivering for some seconds; but even in the horror of those seconds it was in his mind, clearly, that the grip on his throat was not a murderous one; it was hard and cruel, but it was not compressed to do him real injury. Had this unseen assailant chosen, nothing would have been easier than to snap the thread of the junior's life at that moment; but that was not the intention.

What did it mean?
Jimmy made an effort to rise, to throw off the grip, staring wildly and dazedly at the shadow in the gloom.

The grip relaxed; the cold gripping hand vanished. A shadow moved and disappeared. Jimmy knew that the vaguely-seen assailant was gone.

He lay and panted, his nerves utterly shaken. Who, what, had played that frightful trick on him in the silence of the night? What lunatic had stolen into his room, and wakened him from sleep with a grasp on his throat, giving him a shock that might have frightened a weak-nerved fellow into a fit? Was there some madman on board the Silver Cloud?

In the bunk below, he could hear the quiet, steady breathing of Arthur Newcome. Newcome had not been awakened; the shadowy figure had come and gone too silently for that.

With his brain in a whirl, Jimmy lay gasping in his bunk, and he felt over his throat with his fingers. It was sore to the touch where the iron grasp had been laid. It was no dream—that amazing, unnerving thing really had happened.

He leaned over the bunk.
"Newcome, old man!"
"Hallo, Jimmy!" came a drowsy voice from below. "That you?"
"Wake up, old chap," said Jimmy huskily. "Wake up! I—I—I've had a shock."

Newcome sat up.
"What's the row?" he asked.
"You didn't hear anybody come into the cabin?" whispered Jimmy Silver, peering down at him.

"Eh? No! What?"
"Somebody has been here, and he—whoever he was—collared me by the throat while I was asleep," said Jimmy. "It was some idiot playing a trick to frighten me, I suppose."

"Jimmy, old man, you're dreaming. Ponsobny's not on the yacht, and even Pon wouldn't play a mad trick like that."

"Somebody has."
"Must have been dreaming!" said Newcome. "Dash it all, Jimmy, I should have heard it if anybody—Did you see him?"

"Just a black shadow," said Jimmy, with a shudder. "It—it was horrible. It wasn't a dream, old man—my throat feels it now. It was a fiendish trick to scare me and—and—I think I can guess who did it! Mornington was right—it's a trick to make us fed-up with the yacht."

"But I say—"
Newcome was interrupted.
Through the quiet of the summer night there came a sudden fearful shriek.

"Great Scott! What?"
Jimmy Silver rolled out of his bunk.
"That villain—some other chap!" he panted. "Come on, Newcome—if we can catch that scoundrel—"

Jimmy Silver darted out into the dim light of the swinging lamp.
Shriek after shriek rang through the Silver Cloud, and they came from

the state-room occupied by Adolphus Smythe and Howard the Shell.
Jimmy raced towards the room.

It was clear in his mind what had happened; the same cowardly attack that had been made upon him had been made upon Adolphus Smythe; and the Shell fellow's nerves were not in the same good condition as Jimmy Silver's. What had given Jimmy a deep and painful shock, had frightened Adolphus almost out of his senses.

Jimmy tore open the door.
"Smythe!"
"Keep off!" shrieked Smythe. "Help! Help! Help!"

"It's nightmare or somethin'!" panted Howard. "I can't do anything with him! He's frightened—"

Shriek, from Adolphus! He crouched as far as he could in the corner, almost gibbering with terror.
"Smythe!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Smythe, old man, we're your friends here! Pull yourself together!"

"What's this row?" came Captain Muffin's angry voice. "Some more of your schoolboy tricks, what? If Lovell—"

"Oh, chuck that!" came Lovell's voice. "Something's wrong with Smythe. Get a light. What's the matter, Smythe?"

Jimmy Silver caught Adolphus by the arm, and the Shell fellow, babbling with affright, leaned on him, shuddering. He had seemed too terrified at first to recognise the Rookwooders; but he was recovering a little now. His face was chalky pale, his eyes dilated.

"Silver! Hold on to me!" he moaned. "Keep it off—keep it off!"
"Keep what off, old fellow?"
"That—that thing!" gasped Adolphus, shuddering violently. "It had me by the throat! It woke me up! Oh, gad!"

He gave a groan of horror.
"Nightmare!" said Captain Muffin, eyeing him scoffingly. "You had too much supper, Master Smythe!"
"It wasn't, I tell you! It was real!"

"Nonsense!"
"Have you any eyes, by any chance, captain?" asked Valentine Mornington's silky voice.
Morny had come out of his room, cool and alert.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the captain testily.
"Look at Smythe's throttle," said the dandy of the Fourth. "You can see finger-marks there, if you look!"
"Good heavens!" muttered Captain Muffin blankly. "It—it looks—Come, come, have you been larking, Master Howard?"

"I!" exclaimed Howard angrily. "Think I'd collar a chap by the throat in his sleep for a lark?"
"Well, it looks as if somebody did."

"It wasn't Howard," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "The same thing happened to me only a few minutes before I heard Smythe yelling."

"You!" exclaimed Montague Muffin.
"I fancy my throat is marked like Smythe's. It feels like it," said Jimmy.

"Good heavens!" repeated Montague Muffin. "I can't understand this! It's a mad, dangerous trick to play—if it was you, Master Lovell."

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" interrupted Lovell, without ceremony.
"It was the same chap who gave Ponsobny the green paint the other

night," drawled Mornington. "It's getting rather thicker than paint, that's all."

"What? Who do you mean, then?"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders, and did not answer. But his eyes met Jimmy Silver's, and Jimmy understood. Ulick Lee had not come on the scene; but they were assured that he was not still asleep, like Tubby Muffin. He had his own reasons for keeping in his room, and they knew it now—knew it as well as if they had watched him creeping out to do his dastardly trickery, and creeping back again to concealment.

"Pull yourself together, Smythe," said Allan Tracy. "It was only a trick, the chap, whoever he was, never meant to hurt you."

Smythe nodded, still shivering.
"That's so," agreed Mornington. "The chap, whoever he was, mayn't be any too good for it, but he wouldn't like to have a fellow's life on his hands—not so long as they make good hempen rope, at all events. You're more frightened than hurt, Smythe, old bean."

"Get back to bed and fasten your door," said Captain Muffin, quite amazed and nonplussed by the strange alarm.

"No more bed for me," said Smythe, with a shudder. "I'm staying awake so long as I stay on this yacht—which won't be longer than I can help. You've got some dangerous lunatic on board, Captain Muffin, and I'm going ashore as soon as I can see land. I'm staying up the rest of the night, with a light, too."

Captain Muffin grunted and turned away.
"We'll stay up with you, Smythe," said Lovell.

"Thanks, old chap," said Smythe gratefully. "After that, I daren't be alone. I tell you, it was awful! There's some lunatic on board. That's the only way of explainin' it—a sane fellow wouldn't play such awful tricks! By gad, I shan't recover from this for weeks!"

And Adolphus Smythe did not close his eyes again that night; nor, indeed, as long as he remained one of the paying guests of the Silver Cloud.

The next morning the Silver Cloud put in at Fleetwood; and there, Adolphus Smythe, Howard, and Tracy went ashore, glad to get their feet on dry land again. No inducement would have made them put in another night on the yacht, with land in reach. Captain Muffin watched them depart, with a gloomy brow—his summer cruise was not turning out the success it had promised to be—in a few days he had lost half his paying guests; and he wondered whether any more members of the Silver Cloud's company would be following this example.

But Jimmy Silver & Co., and Morny had no intention of going; they were still on board, as the yacht glided towards Blackpool. The secret enemy had succeeded—in part; twice he had succeeded, and half the passengers of the Silver Cloud were gone. And the juniors knew that he was not finished yet—there was more to come.

But they were determined that, in the Fourth Formers of Rookwood, he should meet his match, and a little over; and for the present they kept their own counsel—and a very wary eye open for the secret enemy.

THE END.

(One long thrill—"A Rascal Trapped!" Next Monday's long story of the chums of Rookwood School on holiday. Be sure you read it, chums! Order your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND in advance and thus make certain of securing 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.

"THE CITY OF GHOSTS!"

For long past I have been the recipient—I would say the lucky recipient—of requests for another good yarn by Sidney Drew. Mr. Drew shares in this chunk of good fortune. This week just such a tale as has been asked for starts in the pages of the BOYS' FRIEND, and to use the phrase of our old friend, the cheery tub orator, I venture to assert the story will knock spots off all past records. Sidney Drew is an author second to none, take it from me. He has dived deep—gone off the deep end very literally—into a lot of good and jolly mysteries. He sees things other people do not see until these matters are pointed out, and this talent is in evidence in the new serial about Ferrers Lord, Gan Waga, Prince Ching Lung, Val Hilton, and the rest of the company. By the way, a newcomer has joined up with the ship's company. This thrice welcome little stranger is the boy from Wales' rugged mountains. His name is David Ap Rees, and in all common fairness one may say that the fresh arrival plays up in good style to the requirements of his job as a representative of Gallant Little Wales. Only yesterday I had an enthusiastic letter about Mr. Drew. It was a long shot from Australia, and the writer asked for Gan. Now that the Eskimo is on the menu again my overseas chum, and everyone else, will be satisfied. Read the opening chapters, and pass your copy on.

SPECIAL NEXT MONDAY.

There are good things galore in our next, including a rattling yarn by Duncan Storm called "The Drums of Kali!" with the trumps of the Bombay Castle all as lively as crickets. Of course, there will be a grand carry-on of Sidney Drew's thrilling serial, and likewise a footer tale by Arthur S. Hardy, tense, dramatic, and with a startling climax. It is "The Luck of the Toss!" You can guess in part what Mr. Hardy will make of that theme. As for Jimmy Silver & Co. aboard the Silver Cloud, we have them in "A Rascal Trapped!" The yarn makes an extra silver lining to the cloud, as it were. It is a ripping story. Our programme for next Monday is rounded off with a gripping instalment of "Knights of the Wheel!"

A TOPPING SURPRISE.

Just half a minute, and I will tell you about this surprise. But first there is another point about the next issue. "Goalie" contributes a top-notch article of football chat and news. Goalie's gossip is no ordinary sort of gossip, for our great footer expert moves behind the scenes and hears things. Like the good man he is, he is always ready to let others benefit by his special knowledge. Now for the surprise. A great new story will start in two weeks' time.

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"

The jolliest, cheeriest, most fascinating book of the season is now on sale, price six humble "bobs." That pans out at the modest figure of a tanner per month for a volume which will keep you amused for a year or more.

"EXPELLED!"

If you want—and I know you do want—a rousing, long, complete yarn of Rookwood School, rise up early in the morning and tell the newsagent that you must have No. 12 of the "Schoolboys' Own Library." It contains the above-named tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. No. 11, too, is not to be missed.

LETTERS TO HAND.

It is not often that I give a paragraph to the subject of my post-bag, but I am doing it this week, and it should be of interest, for things one fellow wants to know have a way of interesting the next man. An editor is supposed to know most things, say knotty little points concerning the metric system. What is a metric ton? That is one query. And then the questions about celebrated people—where they were born, and what they did. I welcome all these letters, and send replies at once, but as regards some requests, it stands to reason that I cannot gratify every wish in the very next issue. You don't skip round like a giddy magician with an enchanted wand, even if you do chance to be an editor. What I like hugely—and this is a friendly hint to some of my faraway friends—is a chatty communication about the history of the BOYS' FRIEND, and what it has done in its long career of success. Some of my Australian chums know all about it, or nearly. I shall write to them for a few memory refreshers whenever I start a chronicle of the old "Green 'Un." Such a history would have a big appeal, I know. We should hear of the men who earned world-wide fame by their bright and bracing yarns in the B.F. of years ago. By the way, some of these authors are hard at it now. Take the case of Sidney Drew. He dashed into my room the other day looking as skittish as a grasshopper, and younger even than when he turned out his first great story of the "Lord of the Deep." And that was not yesterday!

BIG BROTHERS IN AUSTRALIA.

As I anticipated, the fascinating article which appeared in the last issue of the BOYS' FRIEND about "Big Brothers in Australia," has attracted widespread attention. It is a scheme which will appeal to all fellows who intend starting life in the great Dominion, for by its means they will always have a trustworthy pal to whom to appeal. Any readers who are desirous of learning more about the matter should write to Mr. Richard Linton, c/o Australia House, Strand, London, W.C.

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