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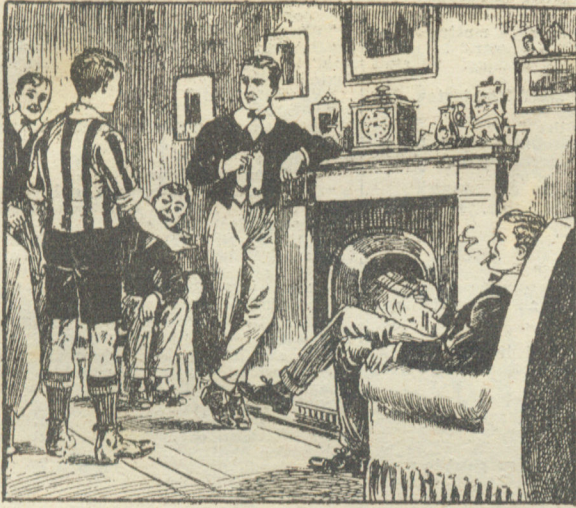
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GRAND CINEMA SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



P.-C. TOZER MAKES A HASTY DESCENT FROM THE LADDER!

(An Exciting Incident in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



MORNY'S MINOR!

By OWEN CONQUEST

A MAGNIFICENT LONG COMPLETE STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Chance for Mornington.

JIMMY SILVER, the captain of the Rookwood Fourth, paused outside Study No. 4.

Jimmy hesitated there. As a rule, there wasn't much hesitation about Jimmy Silver. He generally knew exactly what he wanted, and went straight to the point. But he was hesitating now, and, having raised his hand to tap at the door of No. 4, he let it drop to his side again.

A buzz of voices came from the study. It was Mornington's study, and Peels and Gower, Townsend and Topham, the Nuts of the Fourth, were there with Morny.

They seemed to be in high spirits that afternoon, to judge by the cheery buzz of voices.

"Rippin'!" Townsend was saying. "Just like one of your toppin' ideas, Morny!"

"When's the car comin'?" asked Peels. "It will be ready for us at half-past two." It was Mornington's voice. "We're goin' to walk down the road to it; it won't do to have it come up to the school."

"Why not?" asked Topham. Mornington laughed. "Old Bootles was jawin' me last time about havin' a car out for pleasure so often."

"What rot!" "Absolute rot, old fellow! But a chap can't argue with his Form-master."

Jimmy Silver's face set a little. He made a movement away from the door, apparently giving up his intention of entering the study.

Then he changed his mind again, and came back, and, without any more hesitation, knocked at the door.

"Come in!" called out Mornington's voice. Jimmy Silver entered.

There was a haze of cigarette-smoke in the study. Mornington & Co. were smoking while they chatted.

The Nuts of Rookwood stared at Jimmy Silver. The captain of the Fourth was a very infrequent visitor to that study.

"Hallo!" said Mornington, in surprise. The dandy of the Fourth was still looking somewhat pale from his recent illness. But the cigarette between his well-cut lips showed that he was quite the old Morny again.

Jimmy frowned, and coughed a little. The smoky atmosphere of the study was not pleasant to his healthy lungs.

"Squat down!" said Mornington, with unaccustomed cordiality in his manner. "I came in to speak to you, Mornington," said Jimmy.

"Well, go ahead!" Jimmy paused. The Nuts regarded him curiously. Jimmy Silver had always been on the worst of terms with Mornington.

"Well," said Jimmy at last, "I don't want to preach to you, Mornington. But you showed when you pulled Miss Dolly out of the fire that you're not something jolly decent in you, and I think it's a pity you should waste your time playing the giddy goat with these silly asses."

"Thanks!" yawned Peels. "Much obliged!" grinned Townsend.

Jimmy Silver went on, unheeding.

"I'm speaking seriously, Mornington," he said. "You're flit for something better than smoking and slacking, and you've proved it. Everybody's willing to give you a chance. Why not take it?"

Mornington laughed. "I believe you're in earnest," he said, "and I think you mean well. But it's no good, old scout—I'm a bad egg. I'll take up cricket like a shot, if you like. But no sermons."

"I don't think I'm the chap to sermonise," said Jimmy.

"I mean, if I'm in the Form team, I shall go on as usual, without bein' preached at."

Jimmy shook his head. "You wouldn't be preached at," he said.

"But, of course, you'd have to chuck smoking, and all that."

"Nothin' doin'!" "Well, I thought I ought to speak to you," said Jimmy. "You're too good a chap to go to the dogs, in some ways. But I suppose I'm a fool for my pains."

"Has that only just dawned on you?" grinned Topham.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I'll tell you what, Silver," said Mornington, "I'm willin' to bury the hatchet if you are. Come along with us this afternoon. Give Good Little George a rest, and come an' have a merry time."

"What do you call a merry time?" asked Jimmy.

"A rippin' run in a car, an' a feed at the Ship Inn—first-class feed, ordered all ready in advance—a hundred up in the billiard-room, and a little game with some sportin' fellows we're goin' to meet there. What do you say?"

Jimmy's brows knitted. "The Ship's out of bounds," he said.

"All the more fun, you know."

"That kind of fun isn't my kind," said Jimmy drily. "Thanks all the same, but you can leave me out. Ta-ta!"

Jimmy left the study. He left the Nuts grinning.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for their chum in the end study. They grinned as Jimmy came in with knitted brows.

"Well, did Morny fold you to his manly bosom and weep?" asked Lovell.

"Oh, rats!" said Jimmy crossly. "Let's get down to the cricket, and don't jaw!"

And the Fistical Four went down to the cricket—three of them grinning, and Jimmy Silver was frowning. It was evident that Jimmy Silver's kindly impulse had been useless, and that the dandy of Rookwood was not to be plucked like a brand from the burning.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Change in the Programme.

THE Nuts of Rookwood sauntered down the lane towards Coombe, and turned off at the cross-roads. There a big, handsome motor-car was waiting, with a chauffeur standing by it, who touched his cap very respectfully to Mornington.

The Nuts surveyed the car with admiration.

It was a very big and expensive car. Mornington did everything in style.

"All ready, sir!" said the chauffeur.

Mornington nodded, and stepped into the car.

There was ample room for the whole party. The chauffeur took his seat, and the car moved away up the lane.

Mornington passed his cigarette-case round, and the Nuts of Rookwood lighted up, with great enjoyment.

"Let her rip!" he called out to the chauffeur.

The big car buzzed along the road at a great speed.

In those quiet lanes there were no watchful eyes to note the excess of speed, and the chauffeur obeyed Morny's instructions, and let her "rip."

"We'll have a run for an hour, and get into the Ship about half-past four," remarked Mornington.

"Good idea!" The car turned out of the lane into the road that lay across the wide expanse of heath between Coombe and the sea.

It was a sunny afternoon, and from the high road over the heath the juniors could catch glimpses of the distant Channel.

It was a very enjoyable ride, and Morny's chums were exceedingly glad that Morny had recovered, and was out of the sanatorium at last.

"By gad, this is like old times!" said Morny.

"The rippin' old times!" said Peels. "The merry old times!" grinned Townsend.

"Hallo! What the merry thunder is he slackin' up for?"

"There was a jamming of brakes, and the car slowed down."

"Buck up!" rapped out Mornington. The chauffeur looked round.

"Somebody in the road, sir."

"Hang him! Run him down if he won't clear!"

The juniors looked ahead at the figure in the road.

It was that of a boy, about thirteen years of age, in shabby, almost ragged clothes. He was coming along towards the car slowly, and limping as he walked, looking as if he were in the last stages of exhaustion.

His eyes were on the ground as he plodded wearily along, and he did not seem to see the big car bearing down on him or to hear the hooter.

"Toot, toot, toot!" "Confounded check!" growled Topham. "Some rotten beggar takin' up the road and stoppin' a gentleman's car, by gad!"

"Run the cad down!" growled Peels. The chauffeur, however, was not inclined to run the lad down. The road was narrow, and the boy was plodding down the middle of it. He heard the hoot of the motor at last, and looked up.

Then he stepped aside. The car glided on, and the juniors stared at the ragged chap angrily as they passed. Mornington's eyes dwelt on him curiously. The boy's face was white and pinched, the eyes deep-set and hollow. There was

suffering in the pale face. Even the careless eyes of the Nuts of Rookwood could read there the signs of bitter want.

"You ragged cad, why can't you get out of the way?" hooted Peele as they passed.

The lad made no reply, staring dully as the car swept by.

Mornington glanced back.

The boy remained standing where he was for a few moments, and then sank down on the grass by the roadside.

A curiously thoughtful expression came over Mornington's face as he sat down again, and blew out a cloud of smoke from his cigarette.

"It's a queer world," said Mornington meditatively. "Why the merry dickens should we be hummin' along in a big car, and that kid trampin' along on his uppers, without a meal inside him!"

"Get out and give him a fiver!" sneered Peele.

"What a rippin' idea!" chuckled Townsend. "Hallo! What are you up to now, Mornny?" Mornington had called to the chauffeur to stop.

The car slowed down.

"Yes, sir?" said the driver, looking round.

"Turn back," said Mornington.

"Yes, sir!"

"Go back to where that kid is. I want to speak to him."

"Yes, sir."

The car backed and turned in the road. Mornington's companions stared at him in utter astonishment.

"What on earth's the little game?" exclaimed Gower.

"I'm goin' to speak to that kid."

"What for?"

"To ask him if he's hungry."

"What the dickens does it matter to you?"

"Nothin'."

"Look here, we're wastin' time," growled Townsend angrily.

"Well, what did we come out for?" asked Mornington. "We're not specially bent on improvin' the shinin' hour, I suppose. May as well waste time one way as another."

The Nuts exchanged angry glances, but it was evidently useless to remonstrate with Mornington. The dandy of the Fourth intended to have his way—as he usually did. There was a sulky silence in the car as it swept back along the road over the heath.

"There's the beastly little bounder!" snapped Townsend.

Mornington nodded.

The boy was still by the roadside, lying very still in the grass. He had not moved since the car passed before.

The car halted. Mornington jumped out and ran to the boy, and bent over him.

"He's fainted," he said.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritan.

THE little fellow's eyes opened as Mornington raised him in his arms. He blinked strangely and dazedly at the handsome, well-dressed Rookwood fellow standing there.

Townsend & Co. looked on surlily from the car.

"They felt that they were wasting time. The merry meeting at the Ship was being put off on account of Mornington's amazing interest in this ragged, starving vagrant. The Nuts felt that they were being treated very inconsiderately, and they were indignant."

"By gad, he's touchin' him—actually touchin' the dirty little beast!" said Peele, in utter disgust and contempt.

"Wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole!" growled Topham.

Mornington was a dandy and a nut of the first water. He was the most elegantly dressed fellow at Rookwood, and probably spent more on his clothes than any three fellows even in the upper Forms. But he did not seem to mind touching the dusty, way-worn vagrant, from the mere idea of which his nutty comrades shrank in disgust. One elegant arm was passed round the little fellow's shoulders, supporting him as he sat on the grass.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Mornington, and his tone was quite kindly.

The lad stared at him dazedly.

"I come over bad," he murmured. "It's all right, sir."

"You're not ill?"

"No, sir."

"What the thunder does it matter if he's ill?" muttered Peele.

"Where are you goin'?" asked Mornington.

"I—I don't know."

"Where do you live?"

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"Nowhere, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you haven't a home?" asked Mornington, staring at the white, drawn face.

"I ain't got nothin', sir," muttered the vagrant. "But I ain't a beggar," he added quickly, his pale cheeks flushing. "I ain't asking for nothin'."

"You're on tramp?" asked Mornington.

"Yes, sir?"

"But where do you live?"

"I used to live with Bill Murphy till he went to the war," muttered the lad. "He's been killed."

"Was he your father?"

"Oh, no! I ain't got a father. He give me a 'ome."

"What's your name?"

"'Erbert."

"And any other name?"

"Ain't got one."

"Come, you've got a surname!" said Mornington.

'Erbert shook his head.

"I ain't. I been called 'Erbert Murphy, 'cause that was ole Bill's name. But I ain't got a name."

"My hat!"

"Precious little beast!" said Townsend.

"Do get into the car, Mornny."

"Oh, shut up!"

"Look here, how long are we goin' to waste time while you're talking to that little toad?" demanded Townsend angrily.

Mornington did not reply.

"So you're name's Herbert, and you've got no other name," he remarked, "and you've got no home. Where did you live before you were with Bill Murphy?"

"I dunno. I was left on the common at Rookham arter some gipsies 'ad been there," said 'Erbert. "I ain't a gipsy, though. Ole Bill thought p'raps I'd been stolen. I dunno. He give me a 'ome; he was a good sort. Then he went for a soldier, and they killed 'im."

"And where were you left?"

"Ole Bill got me a job afore he left, at Biggs' farm," said the lad wearily. "I worked there till two weeks ago. Then I up an' checked Master Alf 'cause he laid the cart-whip round me, and ole Biggs gave me the sack."

"Poor little beggar!"

The lad grinned faintly.

"How long since you've had your last meal?" asked Mornington.

'Erbert hesitated.

"Now, then, answer me!"

"Yesterday morning, sir."

"My hat!"

"Are you coming, Mornington?"

"Yes, I'm comin'," said Mornington coolly.

"Come on, kid. Can you walk?"

"I'm all right, sir."

The lad staggered. But weakness overcame him, and he would have pitched over in the grass but for Mornington's sustaining arm. The poor little fellow had evidently been at the end of his strength when he fell by the roadside.

"Lean on me," said Mornington.

"I—I say, where you takin' me, sir?"

"Get into the car."

'Erbert's eyes opened wide in amazement. There was a howl of indignant wrath from the Nuts in the car.

"Mornny!"

"You silly ass!"

"You're bringin' that filthy little beast in here?"

"Are you off your rocker?"

"Lemme go, sir," stammered 'Erbert. "The gentlemen don't want the likes of me in that there car, sir—"

"Get in!" rapped out Mornington.

'Erbert had no choice about the matter. Mornington fairly lifted him into the car. Towny & Co., with horror and disgust in their faces shrank the furthest possible away from him.

The Nuts were crimson with indignation. That this wretched, dirty, famished outcast should be brought between the wind and their nobility, so to speak, was a shocking outrage. But Mornington did not seem to mind their feelings on the subject. Indeed, it was probable that his peculiar humour was tickled by the horrified disgust of Towny & Co., and that he enjoyed it.

"What are you goin' to do with the little beast?" hissed Townsend. "Are you bringin' that horrid bounder along with us?"

"Why not?"

"Why not?" yelled Townsend. "Are you dotty? Do you think I'm goin' to be seen with him?"

"Just as you like," said Mornington coolly.

"Sorry to lose your charmin' company, Towny, but you can step out if you like."

"Me—step out!" stuttered Townsend. "Where are you goin' to take him, Mornny?" stammered Peele.

"Rookwood!"

"What!" yelled the Nuts in amazed chorus. "He's hungry, and he's goin' to be fed. I'm goin' to take him to the school," said Mornington coolly.

"You silly idiot!"

"Thanks!"

"What about our afternoon out?" demanded Gower warmly.

"That's off."

"Off!" stuttered Gower.

"Somethin' more important on hand, dear boy. Chauffeur, get to Rookwood School as quick as you can, please!"

"Suttinly, sir!" gasped the chauffeur.

The driver had looked on at Mornny's proceedings with wide, staring eyes. But there was a new respect in his manner as he replied to the dandy of Rookwood.

Apparently the chauffeur did not disapprove of Mornny's remarkable proceedings.

The car buzzed away down the road. 'Erbert sat in a corner, the Nuts shrinking away from all contact with him. And they eyed Mornington as if they would eat him. This was the end of their joy-ride—this was their afternoon out! They simmered with indignation and fury.

But Mornington was quite unmoved. There was a grin on his handsome face as the car started for Rookwood.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mornington Astonishes the Natives.

'ERBERT sat in the corner, leaning back exhaustedly on the soft cushions. He looked like a fellow in a dream.

What the young 'toff' was doing this for him was to 'Erbert a deep and strange mystery. But he was conscious of feeling very comfortable, and the prospect of a meal was extremely attractive.

Townsend & Co. sat savage and sullen. Mornington regarded them with a smile.

"Sorry to bust up your little outhin'," he remarked. "It's a pity. But feedin' the hungry an' takin' care of the homeless is more important than playin' billiards, isn't it?"

"You silly fool!" said Townsend, in concentrated tones. "What are you playin' the fool like this for? You don't dare to take that ragged scarecrow to Rookwood, an' you know it!"

"I'm takin' him there!"

"You don't dare!" howled Townsend.

"What'll the Head say to your bringin' him in?"

Mornington chuckled.

"The Head can't say anythin'," he replied. "He jolly well will!"

"He can't. Don't you remember the sermon he preached us on Sunday?"

"I never listen to his sermons!" growled Townsend. "Rotten enough to have to attend chapel without listenin' to the sermon!"

"Well, I remember it," said Mornington calmly. "Long jaw about feedin' the hungry, an' carin' for the sick and unhappy, an' the rest of it. If the Head says anythin' about my bringin' this kid in, I'll quote his own sermon to him. It will be a lark to watch his face!"

"Oh," said Townsend, "if you're doin' it to rag the Head—"

"Not exactly," said Mornington. "Still, it will be a lark to rag the Head. When I sling his own gas at him he can't say anythin'!"

"He'll jolly well do somethin'—flog you most likely!"

"Flog me for actin' on his own sermon?" grinned Mornington. "My dear man, he can't do it!"

"You wouldn't have the cheek, anyway!"

"You'll see!"

Mornington chuckled gleefully, evidently delighted at the prospect of retorting upon the reverend Head of Rookwood his own sermon. Logically, the Head would not have a leg to stand upon. But the juniors did not believe that the Head would bother about logic when he saw that dusty and ragged ragamuffin brought into the select precincts of Rookwood School.

Mornington's cheek simply astounded them. It was the sheer audacity of the thing, probably, that appealed to Mornington's reckless nature more than anything else. But certainly the black sheep of Rookwood must have felt a kindly and charitable impulse in the first place.

The car stopped at the gates, and Mornington, helping 'Erbert out of the car, dismissed the chauffeur.

"Wait till he's spotted, that's all," said Topham, as Mornington led his queer protege in at the gates.



Bulkeley stared frowningly into the study. His eyes almost bulged out at the sight of 'Erbert. "What— Who's that?" he ejaculated. "Morny's friend," said Jimmy Silver. (See page 16.)

"Gather round, an' screen him," said Mornington.

"I'll see you blowed first!"

"Where are you goin' to take him to feed him?" demanded Topham.

"My study, of course!"

"My study!" howled Peele. "It's my study, too, you roiter!"

"Well, your study, then!"

"You're goin' to take that dirty ragamuffin into my study! You cheeky cad—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Ere, wot's this?" exclaimed old Mack, the porter, coming out of his lodge as 'Erbert was piloted in at the gates. "Get hout of this, young 'un! You ain't allowed in 'ere!"

"I'll trouble you to be civil to my friend, Mack!" said Mornington.

"Hey?"

"His friend!" stammered Townsend. "His friend! Oh, by gad!"

"Beggars ain't allowed in 'ere, Master Mornington!"

"I ain't a beggar!" flashed out 'Erbert.

"The young gent 'ave asked me to come 'ere!"

"Well, you can get hout!"

"Shut up, Mack!" said Mornington coolly.

"Come on, Herbert—I mean, 'Erbert! My mistake!"

"Look 'ere, Master Mornington—" protested the scandalised porter.

"Bow-wow!"

Headless of old Mack, Mornington led 'Erbert into the quadrangle. The nuts did not gather round to screen him, as Morny had requested. They did not intend to be seen in company with Morny's "friend."

Mornington did not seem ashamed of his friend, however.

He took his arm, and walked him across

the quad as calmly as if 'Erbert had been a viscount at least.

There was a regular howl of amazement from the fellows who saw them.

So ragged and forlorn a figure as 'Erbert's had seldom or ever been seen within the select precincts of the quadrangle of Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were on the steps of the School House when Morny and his new friend came up. The Fistical Four had finished cricket practice, and were chatting before tea.

At the sight of 'Erbert walking arm-in-arm with the aristocratic Mornington the Fistical Four wondered whether they were dreaming.

"What—what—what is it?" stammered Lovell.

"Great Scott!"

"Who's your friend, Mornington?" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"My brother 'Erbert," said Mornington coolly.

"Your brother!" yelled Raby.

"Yaas!"

"Gammon, you ass!"

"I'm surprised at you, Raby," said Mornington calmly. "Didn't you hear the Head tell us last Sunday that we were all brothers? I hope you weren't asleep during the sermon!"

"You funny ass!" gasped Raby.

"My brother's hard up, and I'm takin' him in hand," said Mornington, evidently enjoying the astonishment he was causing. "I hope Bootles won't spot him before I've given him some tea. Still, I shall insist upon keepin' him here for a bit."

"You—you'll insist?"

"Certainly!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Mornington minor, bedad!" grinned Flynn. "Oh, what larks! But it's a broth av a boy ye are, Morny, and I take back some of the things I've thought about ye!"

"Get round and screen him a bit," said Jimmy. "Better get him to the study without being seen if possible."

"Thanks!" said Mornington. "My pals are too aristocratic to come near him!"

"We're not!" grinned Jimmy. "Come on!"

The Fistical Four, entering into the spirit of the thing, crowded round 'Erbert, to keep him out of sight as much as possible as he was taken into the house. Flynn and Oswald and Rawson joined in. In the midst of a crowd of juniors the little ragamuffin was rushed into the house at a good speed, up the stairs to the Fourth Form passage.

Fortunately, Mr. Bootles was in his study, and there were no prefects on the scene.

'Erbert was safely conveyed to Study No. 4. The news of Morny's "hatest" spread like wildfire through the school, and excited keen interest among both Moderns and Classics.

It caused great surprise that the black sheep of the Fourth should ever have troubled his head about a hungry vagrant. But it raised him in the estimation of most of the fellows. And his cool audacity in bringing a tramp to tea in a Rookwood study made the juniors gasp.

The Head of Rookwood was a kind-hearted gentleman, but he could hardly be expected to approve of visitors of that kind in a junior study. The fellows wondered what he would say if he knew—or, rather, when he knew—for 'Erbert's presence was not likely to remain undiscovered long. And the general impression was that Mornington would be in hot water.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

'Erbert in Clover.

"SQUAT down!" said Mornington. 'Erbert hesitated as the dandy of Rookwood pointed to a comfortable armchair.

"Sit down, kid!" said Jimmy Silver. "You look tired."

"I—I ain't clean enough to sit in that there chair, sir!" stammered 'Erbert.

"Rot!" said Mornington. "Do as you're told!"

"Yes, sir."

'Erbert sat down.

"Well, this is a go!" murmured Lovell. "Can we help you in any way, Morny?"

Lovell had quite melted towards the black sheep of the Fourth. He began to agree with Jimmy Silver's opinion that the dandy of Rookwood could not be a bad fellow in the main.

"You can help me entertain my guest, if you like," said Mornington. "I hardly think my study-mates will come and help."

"Ha, ha! I think not!"

"Hungry, kid?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, sir."

"He hasn't eaten since yesterday," remarked Mornington. "Look after him while I cut down to the tuckshop, will you?"

"Any old thing!"

Mornington hurried out of the study. The Fistical Four looked at 'Erbert, and looked at one another.

"Well, this beats the band!" said Raby. "Fancy Morny!" gasped Newcome.

Jimmy Silver rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "It's jolly decent of Morny," he said. "He went out on the spree like a shady rotter, and seems to have chucked it up to play the good Samaritan. I must say it's an improvement."

"But what'll the Head say?" ejaculated Lovell. "I hope Morny won't get into a row for this."

"I'm afraid he will. Hallo, kid! What are you shifting for?"

'Erbert had risen to his feet.

"I think I'd better go, young gents!" he stammered.

"Wait for Morny. You haven't had your tea yet."

"I—I don't want that young gent to git inter trouble over me, sir!" stammered 'Erbert. "I—I oughtn't to 'ave come 'ere!"

"Sit down!" said Jimmy kindly, pushing him into the chair again. "That's all right. We'll stand by Morny."

'Erbert submitted, but there was a look of concern upon his dusty face. And his concern for his benefactor made the juniors feel very kindly towards him. 'Erbert was badly in need of a wash, but evidently his heart was in the right place.

While Mornington was gone for tuck the juniors busied themselves setting the table for tea. 'Erbert sat in the comfortable armchair, and watched them dazedly. Juniors came along the passage grinning, to peep in at Mornington's astonishing guest. Most of them had a kindly nod and smile for the unfortunate little fellow; there were few, after all, of Townsend's sort at Rookwood.

There was a sudden call from the passage, from Tubby Muffin of the Fourth.

"Look out! Here comes Bulkeley!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came striding along the passage. The captain of Rookwood had evidently heard of 'Erbert already. Peele and Gower followed him, their faces red with anger. 'Erbert was in their study—their sacred quarters—and they intended to have him turned out forthwith.

The prefect stared frowningly into the study. His eyes almost bulged out at the sight of 'Erbert.

"What—Who's that?" he ejaculated.

"Morny's friend," said Jimmy Silver.

"What!"

"He—he's come in to tea!"

"That's the beast!" howled Peele. "That's the filthy brute Morny's brought into my study, Bulkeley! How can I have my tea in the study with that horrid little beast there?"

"You can have your tea in Hall!" suggested Lovell.

"You cheeky rotter—"

"I ain't doin' no 'arm 'ere, sir!" said 'Erbert, blinking at the big Sixth-Former. "The young gent asked me to come in fur something to eat, and werry kind of 'im it was, too!"

"Oh!" said Bulkeley.

The prefect seemed puzzled.

"Turn him out, Bulkeley!" urged Gower. Mornington came into the study, with a big parcel under his arm. He set it down on

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the table, and nodded coolly to the captain of Rookwood.

"You brought that young shaver in here, Mornington?" exclaimed the prefect.

"Yaas!"

"Blessed if I know what to do about it!" said Bulkeley. "If the kid's hungry he ought to be fed! But—but—"

"Not in our study!" howled Peele.

"You could have taken him to the kitchen, Mornington."

"Take my brother to the kitchen!" exclaimed Mornington.

"What do you mean? That kid's not your brother!"

"Yaas, he is—the Head said so last Sunday!"

"Cheese it, you ass!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley frowned.

"If you dare, to make fun of the Head, Mornington—"

"I'm not makin' fun of him, unless takin' his sermon seriously is makin' fun of him," said Mornington, with perfect coolness. "I suppose the Head wasn't rottin', was he?"

Bulkeley seemed nonplussed. So far as argument went Mornington had the best of the matter.

"I'll speak to Mr. Bootles," said the prefect at last.

And he went out of the study.

"Look here—" exclaimed Peele and Gower together.

But Bulkeley went down the passage without heeding them.

Mornington grinned.

"Fairly put the lid on him!" he remarked. "I'll sling the Head's sermon at all of 'em—and the Head himself, too! Now, then, 'Erbert, are you ready?"

"Wot to, sir!" said 'Erbert emphatically.

Peele and Gower shook their fists into the study, and retired. Nothing would have induced them to come in to tea while 'Erbert was there. But Jimmy Silver & Co. preferred their room to their company, as a matter of fact.

The chums of the Fourth busied themselves attending to 'Erbert's wants.

There was no doubt that the little ragamuffin was hungry.

He travelled through cold beef and ham and tongue and pickles at a great rate. Then he started on a big cake, and there was not much of the cake left when he had finished.

Even in his more prosperous days 'Erbert had probably never had such good fare. And a day's fasting had given him an appetite that Tubby Muffin might have envied.

He did full justice to the good things the juniors pressed upon him, and seemed not to observe that a crowd had gathered in the passage to watch him eat.

'Erbert's table manners had left something to be desired. He used his knife to convey food to his mouth, and helped with his fingers.

But his kind hosts did not mind.

The chief thing was to fill the hungry ragamuffin with good food, and that purpose was thoroughly effected.

'Erbert leaned back in his chair at last, completely satisfied, with an expression of almost beatific happiness upon his grubby face.

"Prime!" he ejaculated.

"Another tart, 'Erbert?" asked Mornington.

'Erbert shook his head slowly and regretfully.

"No, thanks, sir! I couldn't 'old any more!"

"Better shove some things in his pockets," suggested Lovell. "He'll get hungry again. And we'll have a whip round to raise some tin for him—what!"

"Jolly good idea!" said Jimmy Silver heartily.

"That's all right!" said Mornington coolly. "I've got lots of tin, and I'm lookin' after him. He's got to have some new clothes before he goes on his travels again."

"Good man!"

"Mine would be a bit too big for him," said Mornington thoughtfully. "Some kid in the Third would be about the size. There's young Wegg. Call him in."

Wegg of the Third was grinning into the study, watching 'Erbert.

"Come in, Wegg?" called out Jimmy Silver.

The fag came grinning in.

"We want some clobber for my minor," explained Mornington. "Do you feel inclined to do a good and charitable deed by handin' him a suit of your clothes, Wegg?"

"No fear!" said Wegg promptly.

"Well, sell your oldest suit," said Mornington. "I'll pay you anything you like."

Wegg promptly closed with that generous offer.

"Done!" he said. "Take 'em to the Fourth Form dormitory, and I'll bring the kid there."

"Right you are!"

Wegg of the Third hurried away.

"Oh, I say, sir," murmured 'Erbert. "You're awfully good to me!"

"I'm a good chap," said Mornington calmly. "My goodness has often astonished my friends!"

'Erbert blinked at him. He was deeply grateful to the dandy of Rookwood; but certainly he did not know what to make of him.

"Here comes Bootles," murmured Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four looked a little alarmed as the Form-master stepped in, rustling. Mornington faced him with perfect calmness.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Morny's Resolve.

M R. BOOTLES blinked at 'Erbert over his spectacles, and blinked at the Fourth-Formers. Evidently Mr. Bootles was what the juniors would have called "flabbergasted."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. "I—I—I— Bless my soul, this is the boy, I presume. Mornington, you have—er—done a very extraordinary thing in introducing such an excessively dirty boy into the school!"

"The Head told me, to sir."

Mr. Bootles started.

"Dr. Chisholm told you to, Mornington?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bless my soul! I was not aware of that! I trust you are speaking the truth, Mornington?"

"Honest Injun, sir!"

"When did the Head tell you, Mornington?"

"Last Sunday, sir."

The Fistical Four exchanged glances. Whether Mornington was speaking seriously or whether he was being guilty of astounding impudence they could hardly tell. The Head certainly meant his boys to take his Sunday morning sermons seriously. But—

"The—the Head told you last Sunday to— to bring this ragged urchin into the school to-day?" said Mr. Bootles dazedly.

"He wasn't referin' to Herbert especially, sir. He told us it was our duty to care for others less fortunate than ourselves—his very words, sir—and to feed the hungry, an' clothe the poor, an' all that, sir. So I'm doin' it."

"But—but the Head scarcely meant—ahem!—he was, in fact, speaking generally—he did not intend you to introduce ragged vagrants into the school, Mornington. However, I should be sorry to check a kind and charitable impulse," added Mr. Bootles kindly. "As you have brought the boy here, you may provide him with what he needs, and kindly see him safe off the premises when you have finished! I hardly suspected you, Mornington, of so much kindness of heart. It is an agreeable surprise to me, though—though you have certainly chosen a very peculiar method of exercising your—ahem!—philanthropy. It would be advisable, perhaps, to let the boy wash before he takes his departure."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Bootles rustled away, still flabbergasted.

Mornington grinned cheerfully.

"I knew I should floor him with the Head's sermon," he remarked. "It fairly takes the wind out of their sails, you see."

"Look here, I don't like you making fun of the Head's sermon!" said Jimmy Silver bluntly. "It's rotten bad taste, if not worse!"

"But I'm not making fun of it—wouldn't dream of such a thing. I'm takin' the old johnnie seriously," said Mornington coolly.

"Now, 'Erbert."

"Yessir?"

"Feel better?"

"Ever so much, sir!" said 'Erbert, with a sigh of contentment. "I won't never forget this, sir! You're a brick, sir, like Bill Murphy!"

"Thanks!" said Mornington. "I'm awfully flattered, though I never had the pleasure of knowin' Mr. William Murphy. As a matter of fact, I fancy Bill Murphy was worth about a hundred of me, as he went out and died for his country, and I should think twice before I did anythin' of the sort! What are you goin' to do when you leave here, 'Erbert?"

"Look for a 'aystack, sir."
 "What the merry dickens do you want with a haystack?"
 'Erbert grinned.
 "Sleep under it, sir."
 "Dash it all," said Jimmy Silver uneasily, "it's going to rain to-night. It's coming on already."

"I'm used to it, sir," said 'Erbert simply.
 "Laying up rheumatism for your old age," remarked Mornington. "I suppose lots of the poor do that."

"Course they does, sir."
 The dandy of the Fourth was silent, his brows knitted, plunged in thought.

Jimmy Silver & Co. watched him in silent amazement. This strange development in Mornington's character simply astounded them. His rescue of Miss Dolly from the fire had been a surprise. But this was amazing. Who would have thought that the hardy, reckless blackguard of the Fourth would have cared twopence whether a ragged little urchin starved or not? Jimmy Silver was really concerned about the little vagrant. But Mornington!

The dandy of the Fourth broke the silence at last.

"He's not goin' out into the rain," he said deliberately, "and he's not goin' to the workhouse. The chap who looked after him has been killed, and in common decency the kid ought to be looked after."

"That's right enough," said Jimmy heartily. "But—"

"There's only one thing to be done."
 "And what's that?"
 "He's goin' to stay here."

The Fistical Four stared.
 "Stay here!" murmured Lovell. "At Rookwood!"

Mornington nodded emphatically.
 "Yaas. After all, we owe Bill Murphy somethin' for fightin' the Huns for us. We should look pretty queer if they had let the Germans through. That kid's goin' to stay here."

"Oh, my hat!"
 "I'm goin' to take him to the Head," said Mornington, rising.

"Great pip! Let him have a wash first!"
 "And get him into Weggy's old clobber!" exclaimed Raby.

"I'm goin' to. Come on, kid! You 'chaps can come and lend me a hand; he may want scrubbin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 'Erbert, with a dazed look in his face, was marched off to the Fourth Form dormitory. And for the next half-hour or so Mornington and the Fistical Four were very busy, but the result of their labour was quite sufficient to compensate them for the trouble they had taken.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Home for 'Erbert.

"COME in!"

Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, glanced up as Mornington of the Fourth entered his study, followed by a lad a couple of years younger. The Head glanced at the second comer curiously.

He was puzzled. So far as he was aware, there was no new boy due at Rookwood.

Mornington's companion did not bear the remotest resemblance to the ragged, dusty outcast who had been picked up on Coombe Heath.

A bath and a thorough scrubbing had worked wonders. Clean from head to foot, with his hair nicely brushed, 'Erbert looked very different. Weggy's Etons did not fit him exactly, but they were a remarkable change from his rags.

In his new guise 'Erbert would have passed muster quite well among the fags of Rookwood. Indeed, he was at the present moment a good deal neater and tidier than Weggy of the Third ever was.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Who is this?"
 "Herbert, sir."

"I do not quite understand, Mornington. Herbert whom?"

Mornington proceeded to explain.

"Ah, this is the lad!" said the Head, surveying 'Erbert's burning face. "Mr. Bootles mentioned you—ahem!—very extraordinary proceeding to me, Mornington. I am glad to see," added the Head sternly, "that my sermon had so very much effect upon you, Mornington."

The junior coloured.
 Under the Head's stern gaze he did not

venture to speak in the flippant manner he had adopted towards Mr. Bootles. It was not safe to jest with the Head.

And Mornington, indeed, was not in his usual flippant mood. Something deep and earnest had been stirred in his strange, wayward nature.

"This boy does not quite bear out Mr. Bootles' description," said the Head, as Mornington did not reply.

"We've looked after him a bit, sir."

"I understand. I congratulate you, Mornington; you have risen very considerably in my estimation by this kindly action," said the Head.

Evidently Townsend had been mistaken as to the Head's view of the matter. Astonishing as it would have seemed to the worthy Towner, the Head was quite in earnest in his Sunday morning sermon.

"Thank you, sir!" stammered Mornington. "I—I know it was a bit unusual, sir—"

"I am sorry that such kind actions are unusual," said the Head quietly. "But why have you brought this lad to me, Mornington?"

"I—I—I want to ask you somethin', sir. The kid's an orphan; he hasn't any people, and he was looked after by a chap who's been killed at the Front. Under the circumstances, sir, I—I—I—"

"You may speak quite freely, Mornington," said the Head kindly.

"Well, sir, can he stay here?"

The Head started.
 "Here!" he said.

"He's got no home, sir. His guardian was killed fightin' for us. He can't be sent out in the rain. I'd pay anythin'—"

The Head made a gesture.

"It is a very strange request, Mornington. But I am glad to hear you make it. I certainly think that something should be done for the lad. I will think over the matter. Meanwhile, I will ask the housekeeper to provide a room, and, for the present, until something can be done, he will have shelter, and food at Rookwood."

"Thank you, sir!" said Mornington. "I know it's a cheek—"

"Not at all, Mornington. I have not forgotten that you saved my little daughter's life, and I should not refuse any reasonable request you might make. In the present case, Mornington, your kindness of heart towards this unfortunate boy pleases me very much, and I trust I shall not be found wanting in taking my share in the charitable action. You may take the boy to the housekeeper's room, and tell Mrs. Wade I wish to speak to her."

"Thank you, sir! Come on, 'Erbert!"

"Oh, my eye!" murmured 'Erbert.

He followed Mornington from the study like a fellow in a dream. All the happenings of that afternoon seemed like a dream to 'Erbert. But he was in clover at last; and if it was a dream, it was a very pleasant one.

Jimmy Silver & Co. heard with much satisfaction that the little ragamuffin was to have the shelter of the roof of Rookwood until something could be done for him.

Towny and his Nutty friends snorted when they heard it. They found it hard to forgive Mornington for that afternoon's doings. But as Mornington did not care a solitary rap whether they forgave him or not they came round.

When Jimmy Silver passed Study No. 4 after prep there was a whiff of cigarette-smoke from the keyhole, and Morny's voice was heard within:

"Your deal, Towny."

Jimmy Silver passed on. Mornington was the same old Morny, that was evident—the same shady black sheep that he had always been. But Jimmy felt, somehow, that there was at bottom more of good than of evil in his strange character, and he felt kindly enough towards the fellow who had rescued from misery and want the little ragamuffin whom the juniors called "Mornington minor."

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "TUBBY'S TRIAL!" Order your copy EARLY.)

GOOD STORIES!

YOU CAN NEVER TELL!

It showed that Mr. Harry Hawkins possessed a spirit of pushfulness when he added to his business as vendor of vegetables the making and selling of pork-sausages.

Into the ingredients or merits of the sausages let us not enter, nor did Hawkins commit himself regarding the quality of his wares in the notice he painted outside his shop:

"Pork Sausages. Our Own Make!"

But former purchasers in the locality had emphatic opinions on the subject. One morning, very early, the maker of breakfast delicacies found, to his astonishment, the sign altered to:

"Pork Sausages. Our Own Moke!"

NOT ALWAYS!

Agent (to crowd): "Ladies and gentlemen, this liquid will remove stains from anything!"

Interested Onlooker: "I know something it won't shift."

Agent: "All right! Out with it, my friend!"

Onlooker: "Why, remove Staines out of Middlesex!"

A TALE OF LETTERS!

Which letters are the hardest workers?—The bees (B's).

Which are the most extensive letters?—The seas (C's).

Which letters are the most fond of comfort?—The ease (E's).

Which are the noisiest letters?—The jays (J's).

Which are the longest letters?—The eels (L's).

Which are the poorest letters?—The owes (O's).

Which are the most sensible letters?—The wise (Y's).

TWO TONGUE TWISTERS!

A tutor who tutored the flute,
 Tried to teach two young tooters to toot,
 Said the two to the tutor:

"Is it harder to toot,
 Or to tutor two tooters to toot?"

There was a young fellow named Tate,
 Who went out to dine at 8.8.

But I will not relate
 What this fellow named Tate
 And his tete-a-tete ate at 8.8.

DO YOU KNOW THESE?

Question: What is better than presence of mind in a railway accident?

Answer: Absence of body.

Question: Why is an egg like a colt?

Answer: Because it is not fit for use until it is broken.

Question: Why is it dangerous to take a nap in the train?

Answer: Because the train invariably runs over sleepers.

Question: Why is a balloon similar to a policeman?

Answer: Because they both take people up.

Question: Why is a newspaper like an army?

Answer: Because it has leaders, columns, and reviews.

REFLECTION ON AUNTIE'S MANNERS!

She was a very pretty little girl, with eyes of blue and hair of gold, but she didn't like soap and water very much, because it was so wet, she said.

One day she went to tea with her auntie, and her hands were just a shade grubbier than usual. You see she had been trying to make marbles from some soft asphalt that the road-makers had left over.

"Effie," said her aunt, "how dirty your hands are! What would you say if auntie came to table with hands like that?"

"Oh," said the little lady of the golden locks, "I'd be too polite to say anything about it!"

Then auntie changed the subject.

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