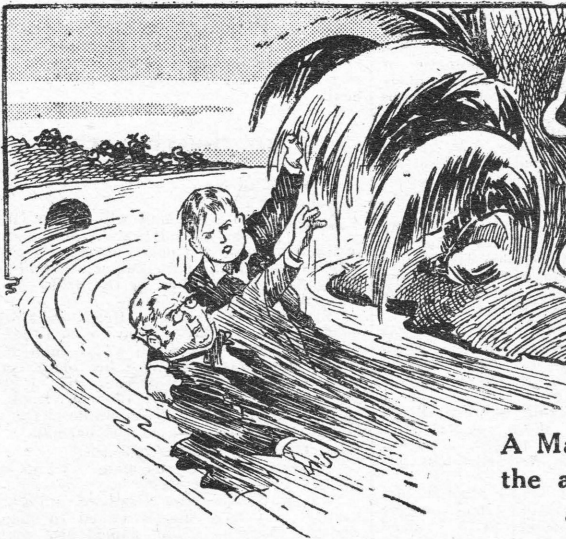


MORNINGTON'S REVENGE—THE TRAGEDY—A GALLANT RESCUE!

The struggle between Dr. Chisholm and Mornington, the expelled junior, has lasted a long time, and bitter has been the fight. At last arrives the great climax to the long series of amazing adventures—but the end comes as a great surprise to everyone, even to Morny himself!



Morny Makes Amends!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story dealing with the amazing adventures of VAL MORNINGTON and Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the famous Tales of "The Chums of Rookwood," appearing in the "BOYS' FRIEND" every Monday.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Music Hath Charms!

IT started suddenly. Rookwood School was at lessons. In the Fourth Form room, Mr. Bootles was busy in his class.

Erroll of the Fourth had stood up to construe. His construe was not quite up to the mark, though as a rule he was one of Mr. Bootles' best pupils. But poor Erroll was thinking of his absent chum Mornington, whose place in the Fourth was empty, and his work had fallen off very much of late.

Mr. Bootles had opened his mouth to make some remarks on Erroll's construe; and Lovell whispered to Jimmy Silver that Erroll was going through it. But Mr. Bootles' remarks were never made.

For just then the music started suddenly.

Through the open windows of the Form-room—wide open in the warm summer morning—the strains floated in from the quadrangle.

It was the grind of a barrel-organ that smote abruptly upon the ears of master and pupils.

The tune it was playing was an ancient one, and had reference to a Mr. William Bailey, who, apparently, was far from home.

Mr. Bootles jumped, and then stood rooted to the floor, as if thunderstruck. Erroll's voice faltered and stopped.

Jimmy Silver looked at his chums, aghast. Two or three of the juniors broke into a chuckle.

A hurdy-gurdy grinding under the Form-room windows was a new experience at Rookwood.

Certainly it was Mack 'the porter's duty to see that no such itinerant music-merchant gained admittance into the sacred precincts of the school. Equally certainly, old Mack had failed in his duty that morning. For there the hurdy-gurdy was grinding!

"Is it Morny?"

That was the question in every mind in the Fourth Form room.

But the question answered itself. They knew it was Morny; that it must be Morny. Certainly no common or garden organ-grinder would have wheeled his machine into the school quad in the hope of gathering coppers there. The utmost he could have expected was the order of the boot. But Morny, the amateur organist, was not so keen on gathering coppers, as on exasperating the headmaster who had expelled

him from Rookwood. And this purpose could be effected thoroughly by grinding the hurdy-gurdy under the Form-room windows.

Gr-r-r-whirr-r-r-r! Yowl-owl-owl! "Bless my soul!" murmured the dazed Mr. Bootles.

He stirred at last, and started for the door. As he rustled into the corridor, he almost ran into Mr. Greely, of the Fifth, and Mr. Bohun, of the Third, bound on the same errand—to interview the organ-grinder. In the Fourth Form room there was a hortle loud and long.

"Morny again!" howled Arthur Edward Lovell. "Morny, of course! And here!"

"Here, under our merry windows!" chuckled George Raby. "What next?" "Let's see if it's Morny!" said Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Bootles being out of the Form-room, the juniors left their seats and crowded up to the windows.

The windows were crammed. Every eye was fixed upon the figure outside, standing by the barrel-organ industriously turning the handle.

It was, of course, Valentine Mornington, lately of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood School, now an outcast and a lodger at the Bird-in-Hand Inn at Coombe.

Mornington was looking very shabby; quite a contrast to the one-time dandy of Rookwood.

But his handsome, reckless face was the same as ever.

He glanced up at the faces crammng the windows, and nodded and winked. But the industrious handle never ceased. The strains of "Bill Bailey" rang through Rookwood, from the painful beginning to the bitter end, and then the amateur organist started again.

"The awful nerve!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Hallo! There's old Mack coming after him!"

Old Mack was ambling up from the direction of the gates. Morny had found the gates unlocked, and Mack elsewhere, when he gained admittance. But the strains of music drew Mack to the spot, and he was coming up with wrath in his visage.

But before he arrived, Mr. Bootles and Mr. Greely and Mr. Bohun came bursting out of the School House.

They bore down on the organist in threatening array.

"Boy!" shouted Mr. Greely.

"Cease that noise!" shrieked Mr. Bohun.

"Wretched boy!" gasped Mr. Bootles.

"Have you no—no sense of shame—of—of decency? Wretched youth!"

"Good-mornin', sir!" said the organist cheerily.

"Cease—"

"Stop!"

"Go!"

Valentine Mornington, still turning the handle, pointed to the placard on the barrel-organ with his free hand. It was a new placard, with letters of great size daubed on it in red. It ran:

"SPARE A COPPER FOR AN OLD
ROOKWOODER!"

"'Ere, you git out of this 'ere, you young rip!" panted Mr. Mack, arriving in a state of breathless fluster.

"Eject him, Mack!" gasped Mr. Bohun.

"Turn him out!" boomed Mr. Greely.

"Go it, Morny!" howled Putty Grace from the window; and the juniors roared with laughter.

Mr. Bootles spun round.

"Go back! Go back from the windows at once! Take your places! How dare you! Bless my soul!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. drew back obediently from the windows; but the next moment they were there again. They simply could not help looking on at the extraordinary scene now being enacted in the quadrangle of Rookwood. The three masters were almost dancing round the organ, in their wrath and excitement; but they checked themselves as an awe-inspiring figure emerged from the House: It was the Head!

Dr. Chisholm, deep in the mysteries of Greek with the Sixth Form, had been drawn forth by the strains of "Bill Bailey."

His face was a study.

Valentine Mornington did not seem abashed.

"Boy!" said Dr. Chisholm.

"Sir!"

"How—how dare you?"

"Don't you care for music, sir?" asked Mornington innocently. "I've got a jazz I can play you, sir, if you'd prefer it."

"Go!"

"But I haven't collected any coppers yet, sir!"

"Mack!" thundered the Head.

"Yessir!"

"Remove that boy and his instrument! If either enters the gates again, I shall discharge you!"

"Tain't my fault, sir! I never knowed he—"

"Remove him!"

"Yessir!"

Old Mack closed in on the organist. The strains of music came to a sudden stop as he grasped the organist by the shoulder.

"Come along, Master Morny—I mean, you young raskil!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington stood with his hands in his pockets, and old Mack was constrained to pick up the handles of the organ and wheel it away to the gates. Mornington, with a cool grin, extended his hat towards the Head.

"Spare a copper, sir?" he said.

"Go!"

"Not a stiver, sir, for an old Rookwood down on his luck?" asked Mornington. "This is a rather hard life, sir, for a public school chap. I've been accustomed to better things!"

"If—if you do not depart at once, I—I shall forget myself, and—and strike you, you wretched boy!" stuttered the Head.

"Dear old bean, keep your wool on!"

"I—I—"

Dr. Chisholm made a stride towards the expelled junior, his face crimson with anger.

Mornington backed away, smiling.

The Head's "rag" was out with a vengeance. He had more than achieved his object in paying that morning visit to Rookwood.

"Ta, ha, old top!" he said. "I'll see you again later. Keep smiling!"

And Mornington strolled away to the gates to take possession of his instrument of fortune, which old Mack trundled out into the road. The Head stared after him blankly, and then turning, disappeared quickly into the House.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Head's Problem!

"H A, HA, HA!"
The Fourth Form room echoed with merriment as Mr. Bootles came back, looking very disturbed and flustered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared.

Morny's astounding impudence struck them as funny, though it did not have that effect on the Head or his staff.

The expelled junior was still making his presence felt at Rookwood School. Since his expulsion Valentine Mornington had certainly been the most talked of fellow in Rookwood.

Mr. Bootles raised his hand angrily as he strode in, and the laughter died away.

"Silence! What does this unseemly disturbance mean?" rapped out the Form master. "Silence, I say, or the whole class shall be detained this afternoon."

That was enough. That afternoon was a half-holiday, and nobody wanted detention. But it was with difficulty that the juniors composed themselves to a proper gravity. Mr. Bootles' dark frowns could not repress the smiles that continually broke out on their faces during the remainder of morning lessons.

When the class was dismissed at last it was a chuckling crowd of juniors that swarmed out into the quad.

Erroll was the only fellow in the Fourth who was looking grave. Arthur Edward Lovell slapped him on the shoulder.

"What are you looking like a graven image for, fathead?" inquired Arthur Edward.

"Why don't you grin?"

Erroll smiled faintly.

"It really isn't a laughing matter," he said.

"Most of the fellows seem to think that it is!" said Jimmy Silver, with a smile.

"But it isn't! Morny ought not to be checking the Head like this—"

"True, O king!" said Lovell. "He oughtn't. But it's funny to watch the Head's face when Morny's cheeking him, all the same."

"It makes it hopeless to think of Morny ever coming back to Rookwood," said Erroll, with a sigh.

"Not much chance of that, in any case!" said Newcome. "Morny's taking it out of the Head like this because he knows he can't come back. But bringing his hurdy-gurdy inside the school is really the limit. Mack will get the boot if Morny gets in again."

"He won't have a chance again," said Jimmy Silver. "His hurdy-gurdy is only a

THE POPULAR.—No. 238.

stunt. He will be thinking of something new soon. It looks as if he's set out to worry the Head into a fit. I wonder what the beak will do?"

Most of the Rookwooders were wondering what Dr. Chisholm would do. Perhaps the Head himself was wondering.

This state of affairs could not be suffered to continue. Yet how it was to be ended was a problem.

Morny's guardian refused to take any steps in the matter unless the expelled junior should return home and apologise for his conduct—which Morny was not likely to do. And nobody else had any legal control over the reckless fellow.

On rare occasions culprits had been expelled from Rookwood before, but an expelled fellow generally slunk quietly away, ashamed to be seen, and ashamed to revisit the scene of his humiliation.

It was quite otherwise with Morny.

True, it was for no shameful act that he had been expelled. It was for being in-subordinate and unmanageable. He was to blame, but he had committed no crime that should have made him ashamed to look his old schoolfellows in the face.

That made a difference, and his view was that he had been treated harshly, which entitled him to "get his own back" on the Head, which undoubtedly he was doing in a very effective way.

All Coombe was talking of the Rookwooder who had come down to playing a hurdy-gurdy for a living. Indeed, the Head was in constant terror that it might get into the papers.

It would have been a deadly blow to him if Rookwood and its affairs had become a theme of public comment, to be chatted and joked about in buses and trains.

Yet Mornington was not to be got rid of. The Head had succeeded in inducing Mr. Bandy, the grocer, to sack him. But instead of clearing off, the reckless fellow had hired the barrel-organ, with which he perambulated Coombe and the neighbourhood, and probably he made a good thing of it, too, and earned his daily bread thereby.

The placard on the organ attracted much comment and sympathy from the simple country-folk. And the Head, though he reigned supreme within the walls of Rookwood, had no more power outside the gates than the smallest fag in the Second Form. There was no law or influence by which he could exclude the expelled junior from the vicinity.

"The Head's in a rare wax!" Tubby Muffin confided to Jimmy Silver & Co. that afternoon. "Trotting up and down his study like a wild lion in a cage, you know! He's been ragging Bootles."

"How do you know?" grunted Jimmy.

Tubby chuckled.

"I saw Bootles coming away from his study looking as if he'd been bitten," he explained. "The Head's taking it out of everybody who comes near him. I heard Catesby say he was awfully rough on the Sixth this morning, after Morny came here. He jawed Bulkeley in class—the captain, you know. I wonder Bulkeley stood it."

"Well, a chap has to stand the Head!" remarked Lovell. "I'm rather glad I'm not in the Sixth at present."

"Same here!" chortled Tubby Muffin. "And I say it's a good wheeze to keep out of the Head's way, and not come near him in the passages. He might start on anybody."

Jimmy Silver grinned. He could not help wondering what the august Head of Rookwood would have thought if he had heard that. But Reginald Muffin's remark was undoubtedly well-founded.

The dispute with Mornington was telling on the Head's nerves, and his temper was growing very tart and uncertain. His staff had much to bear with, and the Sixth Form were not enjoying life these days.

Early that afternoon, when Jimmy Silver & Co. were going down to the cricket-ground, the Head was observed crossing to the gates, and Tubby Muffin scudded after the Fistical Four to Little Side with the news.

"I say, Jimmy—I—I say—" panted Tubby.

"Well, what is it now?" grunted the captain of the Fourth.

"The beak's gone to see Morny."

"What?"

"He's gone to the Bird-in-Hand!" chirruped Tubby Muffin. "Out of bounds, you know, for Rookwood! I say, the Head ought to give himself a licking for going out of bounds! He, he, he!"

"How do you know he's gone?" demanded Lovell.

"I heard him say to Bootles—" "Oh, dry up!" said Jimmy. "You're always hearing something that doesn't concern you."

"But, I say, the Head said—" "Rats!"

"He didn't say rats, you ass; the Head wouldn't! He said—"

But the Fistical Four did not stay to hear what the Head had said. They went to the cricket, leaving Tubby Muffin to impart the rest of his news to anyone who cared to hear.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Ordered to Quit!

"EXCUSE me—"

"My eye!"
The gentleman who was washing glasses behind the bar of the Bird-in-Hand jumped, and nearly dropped a glass.

It was the Head of Rookwood who had suddenly dawned upon him in the dusky bar.

He blinked at Dr. Chisholm.

"Excuse me," said the Head, in a very quiet voice. "I have called to inquire—"

The barman winked at a fat man in a corner, who was smoking a big black cigar, and washing down the flavour with a glass of spirits. It was Mr. Joseph Hook, a sporting gentleman of disreputable character. Mr. Hook winked back at the barman.

Dr. Chisholm coloured painfully.

"Yessir," said the barman. "You was saying, sir—whisky, sir?"

"No, no!" said the Head of Rookwood hastily. "I have merely called to inquire whether there is a boy named Mornington staying at this inn."

"Ho!" said the barman.

"I wish to see him," said the Head.

Another wink passed from the gentleman behind the bar to Mr. Hook in the corner.

"Know where the young feller is, Mr. Hook?" asked the barman.

"Knockin' the balls about, I believe," answered Joey Hook. "You'll find 'im in the billiards-room, sir."

"Thank you very much!" faltered the Head.

"Not at all, sir," said Mr. Hook politely. "Always pleased to oblige a gent like you, sir! If you'd care to take somethin'—"

"Thank you, no!" gasped the Head.

And he beat a hurried retreat.

As he retreated the sound of chuckling followed him from the dusky bar. Apparently, Mr. Hook and the barman saw something amusing in the Head and his visit.

The sound of clacking balls guided Dr. Chisholm to the billiards-room. His colour was high as he entered that apartment. He was glad to see that it had only one occupant. The solitary occupant was Valentine Mornington, who was knocking the balls about idly.

The outcast of Rookwood glanced round, and started as he saw the Head. He dropped the butt of the cue to the floor, and stood staring at Dr. Chisholm, too surprised to speak.

"I have called to see you, Mornington," said the Head in a deep voice.

Morny recovered himself at once.

"Thank you, sir! That's kind of you!" he said. "You're welcome, for old acquaintance sake!"

The Head bit his lip.

"Won't you sit down?" asked Mornington cordially. "Shall I call for some refreshments?"

"Certainly not!"

"Very well, sir. Care for a hundred up?"

"Wretched boy—"

"Not at all, sir. Enjoyin' life, I assure you," said Mornington cheerily. "It's a bit hard work, trundling round an organ, but I make a livin'. Lots of kind people take compassion on a public school chap reduced to organ-grindin' for his daily bread. It's really better than grindin' Latin in school, with a peppery headmaster always ready to drop on a fellow—what?"

"Mornington, I am going to make an appeal to you—"

"You want me to come back to Rookwood, sir?"

"No, sir; I do not want you to come back to Rookwood!" thundered the Head. "Under no circumstances whatever shall you ever enter the gates of Rookwood again!"

"My mistake, sir!" said Mornington blandly. "I might come back if you asked me nicely."

"I am going to make an appeal to your

better feelings, if you possess any!" said the Head in a gasping voice. "This course of conduct on your part, Mornington, is disgraceful!"

"Opinions may differ on that point," answered the junior. "If you were my headmaster, sir, I should be bound to respect your opinion. As you're not, I'm entitled to regard you as an interfering old gentleman!"

"Wha-at!"

"And to advise you to mind your own business, sir!"

Dr. Chisholm breathed hard.

"It is your duty to return to—"

"School?"

"No; to your guardian."

"My dear guardian bores me, sir, and my cousins at home are simply intolerable! I prefer organ-grinding!"

"If you must prefer this disreputable career, Mornington, can you not have the decency to take yourself into another district, and not make the name of your old school a byword of scorn?"

"No fear!" answered Mornington coolly. "You kicked me out of Rookwood, and I don't think I deserved it. I'm goin' to haunt Rookwood! You won't get rid of me in a hurry, sir!"

"You will not be allowed to continue—"

"I don't see how you are goin' to stop me!" interrupted Mornington. "I'm earnin' an honest livin', and turned the age when the School Board inspector can worry me. I really don't see what you are goin' to do, sir."

"You refuse to go?"

"You bet!"

For a moment they looked at one another, the headmaster and the expelled junior, with cool defiance in the latter's face, grim wrath in the former's.

Then Dr. Chisholm, without another word, left the billiards-room.

Mornington winked at the ceiling, and returned to knocking the ivory balls about.

But his face grew serious.

Cool and self-reliant as he was, and determined to continue upon the peculiar course he had marked out for himself, Mornington was not satisfied. Since leaving Rookwood he had had plenty of time for reflection, and he realised quite clearly that he had made a fool of himself—that he had given up what was good for what was not so good. His recklessness had led him too far, and, defiant as he was, he had the penalty to pay. Defiance and cool insolence could not alter the fact that he was an outcast, going from bad to worse.

There was a surprise in store for him, too. He found soon that the Head had not exhausted the arrows in his quiver. From the dirty window of the billiards-room Morny watched the old gentleman pass down the street again. A few minutes later the red-faced barman came into the billiards-room with a grin on his face.

"It's outside for you, young man!" he remarked.

Morny looked at him.

"What does that mean?" he inquired.

"Landlord wants your room."

"Rot! There's two or three garrets empty as well as mine."

"Landlord wants it, all the same, and you're to go to-day!" answered the man coolly. "You've got till six to remove your traps; if they're there later than that they're to be put in the street, that's all!"

And the man lounged back to his bar.

"I suppose the Head of Rookwood has tipped your landlord to do this!" said Mornington bitterly.

He received no reply. But he did not need one. It was easy enough to see that the Head had interviewed the landlord of the Bird-in-Hand, and that he had induced him to turn the lodger out—a few pounds in hand were worth more to the innkeeper than the few shillings Morny paid for his wretched garret.

That afternoon Valentine Mornington stood in the street again, with a bag in his hand, containing his worldly possessions. He was homeless once more; but there was a bitter, determined expression on his face. Once more the Head had made a move that he could not counter; but Rookwood was not done with the expelled junior yet.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In Camp!

"SOME blessed gypsy camp!" said Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Cheek to camp here, in sight of our boathouse!" remarked Newcome.

"My dear chap," said Jimmy Silver



THE TRAGEDY! Mornington sprang forward, butting at the Head. He hooked his leg in Dr. Chisholm's, and tore himself loose as the cane swished through the air. The Head of Rookwood staggered back in the rushes on the river's margin, struggling to regain his balance. But he slipped in the mud, and the next moment there was a splash. (See chapter 5.)

tolerantly, "it's public land along the river, and anybody can camp there. Picnickers and caravanners haunt the place. Let 'em rip!"

"They'll rip anyway, whether we let 'em or not." Newcome remarked, "so we may as well let 'em."

Those observations were made by the Fistical Four of Rookwood, as they strolled down to the river after cricket.

From the trees by the river a thin column of smoke was rising, showing that someone had lighted a camp-fire on the bank.

The weather was too warm for a fire to be wanted for its heat, so it was pretty clear that cooking was going on.

The juniors turned into the path by the river to have a look at the camp, which was much nearer the school than was generally the case with caravan campers. Indeed, the column of smoke might have been seen, and doubtless was seen, from the quadrangle.

A cheery fire crackled away, fed by branches and twigs, and over it three sticks were erected, from which swung a pot, in gipsy style.

But it was not a gipsy who tended the fire.

As the Fistical Four came in sight of the solitary camper, one amazed exclamation burst from all four of them at once.

"Morny!"

The camper looked up and smiled and waved his hand to the chums of the Fourth. They came up, gazing at him blankly.

"Where's your hurdy-gurdy?" asked Newcome, with a grin.

"I've dropped that stunt for a bit," drawled Mornington. "Wheelin' it about is rather heavy work. I'm campin' out here."

"Here!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"The dear old beak dropped in at the Bird-in-Hand to-day, an' got me turned out," explained Mornington. "I've decided on campin' life for a bit. The weather's splendid for it. I bought a few things in the village an' ambled along here. Hallo, here's Muffin!"

Tubby Muffin came out of the trees, and stood transfixed, staring at the camp and the camper.

For some moments Muffin was nonplussed,

and then the explanation dawned upon him, and he gave a fat chortle.

Without approaching nearer to the camp, Tubby started off for the school as fast as his fat little legs would carry him—to bear the startling news.

"I suppose I shall have half Rookwood here in ten minutes," remarked Mornington, with a grin.

"Which is what you want, I believe!" grunted Arthur Edward Lovell.

"I don't deny it, old top. I'm goin' to turn the Head's hair white for kickin' me out of Rookwood," said Mornington coolly. "I'll go back if he asks me nicely—"

"I can see him doing it!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, unless he does, I'm going to haunt him. You fellows care to have tea with me? I'm brewing some coffee in that pot, and I've got a cake and some sandwiches. Lots, in fact; and I'm glad of company."

The Fistical Four exchanged smiling glances.

Morny's endless "stunts" were entertaining, from the junior point of view, at least, and they could not help admiring the outcast junior's determination. "No surrender" was evidently Morny's motto.

They accepted Mornington's invitation to tea, and sat down on the green bank of the river, under the setting sun. The coffee Morny was brewing was not, perhaps, quite perfect, but the Fourth-Formers were not very particular. They enjoyed their tea, and long before it was over there were fresh arrivals on the scene.

Tubby Muffin had spread the news.

Rookwood juniors came from far and near to see the camp, and to stare at the camper and chortle. Peele remarked that it was another pull for the Head's nose, as certainly it was. Hansom and Talboys of the Fifth came along, and advised Morny to clear off, and as he declined, they seemed disposed to help him shift. But the Fistical Four chipped in promptly, with a dozen more juniors, and the Fifth-Formers were chased away with ignominy.

It was different when Carthew of the Sixth

arrived on the scene. Carthew was a prefect, and, as such, was not to be handled by the juniors—unless they were prepared for trouble with the Head. And Carthew ordered Morny to quit at once.

Mornington eyed him coolly, and did not even answer. He sipped the tin cup of hot coffee in his hand as if Carthew had not spoken.

"Do you hear me?" snapped Carthew. "You've no right to interfere, Carthew," said Erroll mildly. "Anyone can camp on this land."

"Take fifty lines, Erroll, for checking a prefect."

Erroll bit his lip hard.

"Now, Mornington, you're to go!" said Carthew, coming closer to the outcast of Rookwood. "The Head won't allow you to plant yourself down so close to the school, and you know it! Will you go?"

Mornington smiled.

"Fine weather for campin', isn't it?" he observed.

"What?"

"Lucky it doesn't look like rain, or I should need a tent or somethin'."

There was a chuckle from the onlookers, and Carthew's face reddened angrily.

"I don't want any of your impudence, Mornington!" he bawled. "You're to clear out of here at once, or I shall shift you!"

"I can't afford a tent at present," went on Mornington imperturbably. "I've got a couple of rugs, that's all."

"For the last time, Mornington, will—"

"There'll be a moon, too—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carthew strode right at the outcast junior, his hands raised to grasp him.

Swoosh!

Mornington jerked his hand forward, and the contents of the coffee-cup shot full into the Rookwood prefect's face.

Carthew staggered back with a wild howl. "Yurrggggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Mornington rose quickly to his feet, and picked up a thick cudgel that lay in the grass at his side. He stood on the defensive as Carthew gouged coffee from his eyes and nose.

"You—you—I'll—I'll—" spluttered Carthew. He sprang savagely at the outcast of Rookwood.

He sprang back again faster still as Morny's cudgel lashed at him. Mark Carthew would have received a very unpleasant knock if he had not escaped that blow.

"You—you young ruffian!" he panted.

"Better mind your own business," suggested Mornington calmly. "I've got this cudgel to deal with any tramps who may interfere. I'm quite ready to crack your head, Carthew, if you want it cracked. You've only to come on!"

Carthew evidently did not want his head cracked, for he did not come on. It was clear enough that Valentine Mornington was in deadly earnest. The prefect stood furious and perplexed for a minute or so, while the crowd of juniors looked on, grinning.

"Here comes Bulkeley!" murmured Lovell. The captain of Rookwood came striding on the scene. Carthew turned to him at once.

"Help me to clear this young scoundrel off, Bulkeley," he said. "The Head won't allow him to stay here."

"Hum!" said Bulkeley, in perplexity. "I don't think we have a right to clear anybody off this ground, Carthew. You'd better go, Mornington."

"Thanks; I'm stayin'!"

"Will you help me clear him off, Bulkeley?" demanded Carthew savagely.

The Rookwood captain shook his head.

"We've no right—"

"Oh, hang that! I shall report this to the Head, then."

"You can do as you like about that," said Bulkeley shortly; and Carthew tramped angrily away towards the school.

"You ought not to be here, Mornington," said Bulkeley, turning to the outcast junior again, with a frown.

"Sorry I don't agree, old top!"

"You fags can clear off!" said Bulkeley, taking no further notice of Morny. "Now, then, get back to the school, the lot of you! You know the Head's forbidden you to speak to Mornington."

"I say, Bulkeley—" began Jimmy Silver. "That's enough! Get a move on!"

The juniors reluctantly retired from the spot, and Bulkeley followed them, shepherding them all back into the gates of Rook-

wood. Valentine Mornington shrugged his shoulders, and sat down again to finish his coffee.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Heart of a Hero!

"IMPOSSIBLE!"

"It's true, sir! He's there!"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm.

The Head of Rookwood looked so angry that Carthew half regretted coming to his study with the news. In the Head's present state of irritable nerves, there was no telling upon whom his wrath might turn.

"You should have sent him away, Carthew!" snapped the Head.

"I tried, sir; but he had a cudgel—"

"Nonsense!"

"Bulkeley refused to help me—"

"You may go, Carthew!"

Carthew went, rather glad to escape from the Head's presence just then. Dr. Chisholm, giving him no further thought, strode to and fro in his study with corrugated brow.

This was the last straw—the expelled junior camping in the open air almost at the gates of Rookwood. It was not to be borne.

After some minutes of agitated reflection, the Head selected a cane. He had just taken it in hand, when there was a tap at the door, and it opened to admit Mr. Bootles. The Fourth Form master looked very agitated.

"Dr. Chisholm, are you aware—"

"I am aware that that insolent boy has posted himself almost at the school gates,

Another FOUR LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL TALES

Next Week!

Mr. Bootles! I am going to send him away."

"That is the difficulty, sir. It appears that he has camped on public land, and cannot be interfered with—"

"Nonsense!"

The Head made a gesture, and Mr. Bootles was silent. Dr. Chisholm strode from the study, cane in hand. There was an expression of grim determination on his face. Fags who sighted him in the corridor scudded off and vanished round corners. There were many glances turned upon him as he strode away to the gates; but his path was avoided, as if it were the path of a devouring lion.

Headless of the glances, if he was aware of them, the Head strode on, and trod the path down to the river. His eyes glittered at the sight of the thin column of smoke rising from the bank, and his grip tightened upon the cane.

He came rustling up to the camp with a brow like thunder.

Mornington was at the river side, drawing a can of water from the stream. He straightened up at the sight of the Head. His cudgel lay in the grass near the camp-fire, and the Head was between him and it. The Head sighted him, and came directly towards him.

"Mornington!"

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Mornington coolly, with one eye on the Head's cane.

"Nice day, sir!"

"You have camped here!"

"Yes, sir!" said Morny. "I've left my lodgin's at the Bird-in-land, sir! Some interferin' old johnny got me turned out of there!"

"You will not be allowed to remain here." "I don't see how you are goin' to prevent it, sir," answered Mornington. "Anybody can camp on common land."

"I shall not allow it!"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"Will you go?"

"No!"

"Then you will take the consequences, Mornington."

And the exasperated Head strode right at the junior, with the cane uplifted. It came down on Mornington's shoulder with a sounding thwack, and the outcast of Rookwood gave a yell. Then he sprang forward, butting at his assailant, and the Head grasped him by the collar with one hand, while the other wielded the cane. Mornington struggled furiously, and hooked his leg in the Head's, and tore himself loose as Dr. Chisholm staggered.

He sprang away panting, and the headmaster of Rookwood reeled in the rushes on the river's margin, struggling to recover his balance. But he struggled in vain, and the next moment there was a loud splash.

"Oh, gad!" gasped Mornington.

He sprang forward as the Head splashed bodily into the river. The cane flew into the rushes, and the headmaster went completely under. He came up a dozen feet from the bank, struggling with the current.

Morny stared at him blankly for a second. The Head could swim, but he was a poor swimmer, and he was old, and the current was strong. It was borne in upon the junior's startled mind that he was looking upon what was probably to be a tragedy!

That thought was enough for Mornington. He threw off his cap, put his hands together, and dived into the river.

The Head, resisting feebly, was swept out into the middle of the river by the current, going under again.

Mornington had to swim hard and strong to reach him at all, but fortunately he reached him.

"Hold up, sir!" he panted.

His grasp was on the Head, dragging him up as he was going under for the third time. Swimming strongly, he supported the exhausted old gentleman.

It was all he could do; the Head was helpless now, and, cumbered by him, Morny had no chance of getting to the bank. He could only support his burden and go with the current. Twice he made a fierce effort to get shoreward, but the river was too strong for him.

His eyes swept the banks despairingly. But the banks were clear of any human form; the Rookwood fellows had been ordered away from the river, since Morny had camped there.

Fortunately, Valentine Mornington was a strong swimmer, or he would have gone down to death with the headmaster in the depths. But all he could do was to keep afloat with his burden; and, unless help came, that could not last long. And there was no sign of help.

But his face lightened suddenly with hope. Ahead of him, the river made a bend, with a racing current; and a point of land that jutted out at the curve was crowned with willows, and a long branch hung drooping over the water. With a great effort, Morny steered himself to pass under the overhanging branch, and caught it with one hand as he passed beneath.

The river tore at him from below, but he held on grimly.

The Head's eyes met his.

"Can you reach up and get hold, sir?" breathed Mornington. "It's the only chance."

Dr. Chisholm did not speak, but he understood. The branch, dragged down by Morny's weight, was within his reach, and he caught it with both hands, and held on. There was an ominous crack along the branch. It was long and slender, and the weight was breaking it down.

Morny's heart throbbled. The promise of safety was false after all; the branch was breaking under his grasp.

"Mornington!" The Head's voice was a husky whisper. "My dear, brave boy, I forgive you all. Heaven help us now!"

Crack, crack!

"Hold on, sir!" said Mornington quietly. "The branch will hold one, and help must come if you hold on. I'm sorry I've played the goat, sir, and given you so much trouble. I'm goin' to take my chance now." He let go the branch.

"Mornington!" panted the Head.

But Valentine Mornington was gone, swept away round the bend of the river by the fierce current, and in a moment he had vanished from Dr. Chisholm's sight. Holding on to the creaking, swaying branch, the headmaster of Rookwood gazed dazedly over the swirling, shimmering waters, in the sinking light of the sunset. Mornington was gone to his death.

"Help!"

For a quarter of an hour the half-unconscious man clung to the branch, crying

faintly for the help that did not come. It was death to let go, and his strength was exhausted. He could scarcely keep his hold upon the swaying, creaking branch, with the river tearing at him like a wild animal hungry for its prey.

But help was coming at last. A farmer's dog was barking by the clump of willows, and the farmer came through the trees, and shouted to the exhausted man. The Head called back feebly.

"Hold on, sir! I'm coming!" To the big, sturdy farmer it was not a difficult task. Holding to the branch, he plunged neck-deep in the water and waded out. He was out of his depth before he reached the Head, but he grasped him, and bore him shoreward. Even for the powerful man it was a struggle then; but he came into the willows at last, and dragged the headmaster ashore breathlessly. It was an insensible man that he landed in the willows. When Dr. Chisholm's eyes opened he was lying in the farmhouse, and his first question was of Mornington. But of Mornington nothing was known, and the Head groaned in bitterness of spirit. Was that the end of Mornington's rebellion? Had the wiful, headstrong, but true-hearted boy gone to his death in the depths of the river, gone to his death in the effort to save the headmaster who had expelled him?

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

All's Well That Ends Well!

AND Mornington? When he let go the branch, and the swirling current tore him away, Morny had no hope of escape. The act was the last reckless act of his reckless young life. It was in keeping with his character to give his life for the headmaster he had defied. But though there was no hope in his breast, he was still fighting for his life, and long after the river had swept him from Dr. Chisholm's sight, he was still resisting his fate. Once he came near the bank, but a whirling eddy tore him away again, and the current sped him on, his senses failing him now. Twice he had been under, and dimly, dazedly, he knew that the end was near.

And then came a sudden shock and an exclamation, and Mornington, as in a dream, felt himself grasped by the collar and drawn from the cruel waters.

He was too far gone to see clearly, or to think clearly; but he realised that he had been dragged into a punt, and that a face was bending over him. He heard, without understanding, a voice that spoke. The sky and the trees danced before his closing eyes.

Then he knew no more. His eyes opened. He was lying in the punt in a pool of water, but the punt was moored to the bank now. A round, ruddy face looked at him, the face of Mr. Boggs, the village policeman of Coombe. Mornington blinked at him dizzily.

"Comin' to, sir?" said Mr. Boggs. "Bless your 'cart, sir, you give me a start, bugin' into my punt like that there! Lucky for you, sir, I was doin' a bit o' fishin' arter dooty, sir! Feel better now, Master Mornington? I'm jest goin' to get you to the school—"

Mornington tried to speak. His voice came in a faint whisper.

"Not to the school. I don't belong to Rookwood now—"

"I'll 'ave to take you somewheres!" said Mr. Boggs. "I can get Mr. 'Uggins' trap at the farm yonder, you see, and— My eye! Bless if he ain't orf ag'in!"

Mornington did not know what happened next. He had sunk into a deep insensibility, and he did not know how a crowd of anxious faces gathered round him at Rookwood when the cheerful Mr. Boggs drove him in in Huggins' trap. That day and that night he lay unconscious, while all Rookwood waited in deep anxiety for news of his recovery.

Dr. Chisholm's face was the first that Valentine Mornington saw when his eyes opened in the morning sunshine. His gaze turned dazedly round him from the white pillow.

"Lie still, my boy!" It was the Head's voice. It sounded far away in Mornington's ears, though the Head was at his bedside. "Quiet!"

"Is—that the Head?"

"Yes."

"Where am I, then?" "In the sanatorium at Rookwood, my dear boy. The doctor is here. You must not speak now."

There was another blank to Mornington. But in the afternoon he was sufficiently recovered to speak and to take refreshment. Kit Erroll was by his bedside then.

Morny stretched out a feeble hand to his old chum.

"Have I been ill?" he asked. "Just a little, old fellow. You mustn't talk much," said Erroll. "Dear old fellow, all Rookwood's talking about you!"

"I've given 'em somethin' to talk about lately," murmured Mornington, with the ghost of his old smile.

"I mean about your rescuing the Head Dr. Chisholm thought at first you had been drowned. When he came back to Rookwood you were still missing, and then Bogg-brought you in."

"He picked me up in his punt. First time old Boggs has done anythin' useful in his life. Lucky he was there! I say, how long before I can get out of this?" muttered Mornington. "I never meant to come here. You see, I couldn't help myself—"

"You old fathhead!" said Erroll, smiling. "You're at Rookwood now; Head's said so. After what you've done, do you think he would let you go? Don't you understand that the whole school's proud of you, you duffer, and the Head as much as anybody? You're going to make a fresh start at Rookwood, Morny."

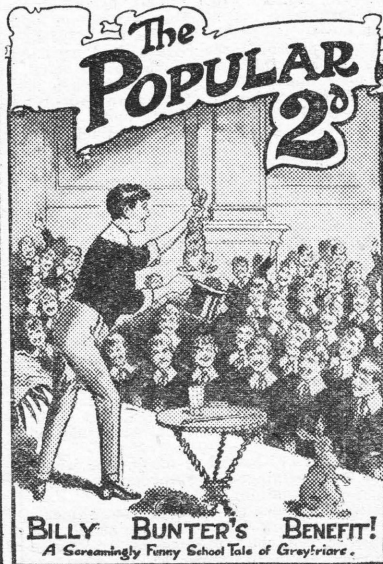
Mornington lay silent. "Your guardian's coming," said Erroll. "The Head sent for him, and he's anxious about you. Everybody's been anxious. But it's all right now. You're booked for sanny for a week, the doctor says. That won't hurt you, and then you'll be back in the Fourth Form."

"Oh gad!" murmured Mornington. His pale face had brightened. He was glad to be back at Rookwood, glad that it was all over. And as he lay in the shaded room, Mornington, during the following days, made resolutions for the future, which afterwards he did his best to keep.

It was a great day at Rookwood when Mornington left the sanatorium. Jimmy Silver & Co., and most of the Fourth, came in a body to march him in triumph to the School House, and the celebration that followed was quite tremendous, in honour of the expelled junior who had come back to the old school!

(Look out for "PUTTY'S GREAT IDEA!" by Owen Conquest, next week's grand, long, complete story of the chums of Rookwood School.)

THIS IS NEXT WEEK'S GRAND COVER!



A big budget of fiction for you all next Tuesday.

Next Week's Bumper Programme of Stories!

"BILLY BUNTER'S BENEFIT!"
By Frank Richards.

POOR old Bunter is found in desperate straits next week, right at the end of his tether, in fact. He puts his hard financial case before Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove, and those good fellows realise something has got to be done about it. The matter is urgent, so they decide to organise a special Bunter Benefit Concert. There is a grand rally, and we get a yarn which is ditto. The story is crammed with fun and high spirits.

"WANTED—A HERO!"

Who saved Peckover? This is not a conundrum with coupons. It is simply the problem which faced the master of Hillcrest. He is saved from the clutches of a gang of desperate ruffians. But who did the deed? Was it Chunky? Had the gay little Chinese a hand in the game? All that you will discover in our next Cedar Creek tale. Todgers and the Celestial rush in claims for the reward, which is just what they would do. But doubts are felt. Doubts are traitors, we know—sometimes, not always.

"THE GIPSY'S WARNING!"
By Martin Clifford.

Miss Priscilla Fawcett is an extremely credulous old lady. She pays a visit to St. Jim's, and while the Shell leader is out for a walk with his loving guardian they meet a gipsy woman. The latter wants to tell Tom Merry's fortune, but because she is not well enough paid for the job, she spins a terrible story about a dim, mysterious danger which hangs over Tom. Miss Priscilla may be economical about paying gipsies for their fairy-tales, but she will stick at nothing to protect her nephew. The steps she takes to ward off the peril are interesting, and there is a big sensation at St. Jim's in consequence.

"PUTTY'S GREAT IDEA!"
By Owen Conquest.

Putty has been struck with many most remarkable ideas, but nothing to equal the present one. The amazing humorist of Rookwood thought his latest wheeze would bring him no end of credit and kudos, etc., but disillusionment is his sorrowful portion, and he wishes he hadn't started on the business when the giddy ructions begin. For details look out for the splendid number of the "Popular," out on Tuesday morning.

"UNDER NELSON'S FLAG!"
By Henry St. John.

Another batch of desperate adventures and thrilling situations will be found in the new instalment. Jasper Hamlyn and his comrades have some rare brushes with the French, and the Rattlesnake is right in the thick of the fighting. There is more, too, concerning that strange personality, the able seaman, Locke, whose life is a mystery of the deepest.

GRAND CRICKET WEEK NUMBER.

Bunter's "Weekly" is always in the forefront. The next issue is a jolly cricket budget, all bright as a summer morning, and right on the wicket. This season Bunter has taken to the great game with enthusiasm, and is often seen discussing points—and cake—in the refreshment-tent.

Your Editor.