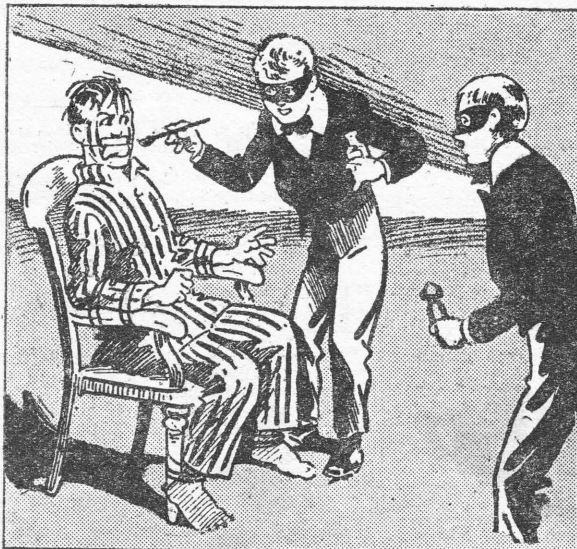


WAR AGAINST THE BULLY!

Jimmy Silver & Co. have stood the tyrannical rule of the Bully of the Sixth far too long, and it is no great surprise to their form-fellows when they rebel. Mark Carthew is made to suffer for his many sins!



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Warned!

TAP! "Who's there?" growled Knowles of the Sixth.

Knowles' study door was locked. There were four Sixth-Formers in the study—Knowles and Frampton and Catesby of the Modern Side, and Carthew of the Classical Sixth. And as the four "sportsmen" of Rookwood had met for a little game of poker, it was very necessary for the door to be locked.

Even Mr. Manders, with whom Knowles was a favourite, would have been surprised and shocked and exceedingly wrathful if he had known how his favourite prefect was occupied just then.

On such occasions it was Knowles' cautious habit to lock his door, and it was not likely to be opened until cards and cigarettes had been swept out of sight.

So when the tap came at the study door Cecil Knowles only growled out:

"Who's there?" instead of "Come in!" There was no answer to the question from outside.

Knowles & Co. removed their cigarettes from their mouths with a touch of trepidation.

It was always possible that Mr. Manders might drop in unexpectedly, and such possibilities gave a certain thrill to the "sportive" life of a "sportsman" at Rookwood School.

"Hallo! Somebody's slippin' a letter under the door!" ejaculated Frampton.

"What the thump!" muttered Knowles.

The four seniors stared in astonishment at an envelope that came sliding under the door.

There was a footstep outside, and then silence.

"My hat!" murmured Carthew.

Knowles rose to his feet.

"Some joke of the fags, I suppose," he said, knitting his brows. "I'll—"

"Don't open the door!" exclaimed Catesby hastily. And he waved his hand to the cards and smokes on the table. "Get that little lot out of sight first. If somebody was passing and—"

"Only a fag!" said Carthew.

"We don't want a fag to see this turn-out," said Catesby dryly. "Keep the door shut, Knowles!"

Knowles nodded.

Without opening the door, he stooped and picked up the envelope that lay just inside and glanced at it.

"It's addressed to you, Carthew," he said, "and us, too, apparently. What the thump does it mean?"

He held up the envelope for his companions to look.

It was addressed in Roman capitals with a brush, evidently for the purpose of concealing the "fist" of the writer.

The address was "Carthew & Co."

"Some fag's cheek!" growled Catesby.

"Dodd or Doyle, perhaps. They may guess that a little game's going on here—they're rather sharp young rascals—and that we wouldn't open the door in a hurry—"

"Open the letter!" said Carthew.

Knowles slit the envelope.

A small sheet of cardboard was inside, and upon it was traced a message in capitals with a brush and Indian ink.

Carthew gritted his teeth as he saw it. He had seen that kind of message before, and he had half-expected it. But it was new to the Modern Sixth-Formers. The message ran:

"BULLIES! BEWARE! THE HOUR IS AT HAND!"

By order,
THE ROOKWOOD SECRET SOCIETY."

"What thunderin' idiot—!" began Frampton, in amazement.

Knowles blinked at the card.

"I—I suppose it's a joke of some kid who's been to the pictures, and got them on the brain," he said. "I'll find out who did this and skin him! Dodd or Cook or Doyle, I dare say!"

Carthew bit his lip hard.

"You've seen nothin' of that kind before?" he asked.

"Nothin'. Have you?"

"Yes."

"Oh, this comes from the Classical side, then?" exclaimed Knowles.

"I believe so, though some of the Modern fags may be in it," said Carthew. "I've had half a dozen notices like that in my study over in the School House."

"Oh gad! And who's done it?"

"I don't know. It's some kid working a sort of cinema stunt on us, of course. There's no such thing as a Rookwood Secret Society," said Carthew. "I suspected Jimmy Silver at first—"

"Just the fellow!"

"Only one of the cards was put in my study while I was interviewing him in his study—"

"Oh!"

"I don't know what it is. Of course, it can't go any further than this," said Carthew. "There's nothin' in the threat."

Knowles laughed.

"I don't think the Rookwood Secret Society, whoever he is, would care to try to handle the Sixth!" he remarked.

"Of course not. Only—only it's a beastly worry," said Carthew. "This sort of thing gets on a fellow's nerves in the long run."

The Painted Prefect!

A Splendid Long Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Chums of Rookwood.

By Owen Conquest.

(Author of the famous tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Boys' Friend" every Monday.)

I wish we'd seen the young cad who put that under the door."

"Too late now!" said Knowles carelessly. "Let's have our game!"

He tossed the warning of the Rookwood Secret Society into the fire, and the three Modern seniors dismissed the matter from their minds for the present.

Mark Carthew did not find it so easy to dismiss it.

It was, as he had said, getting on his nerves. The persecution of the so-called Secret Society was beginning to harass him.

He was the most unpopular prefect at Rookwood, and most of the Lower School had long scores against him for bullying. His methods had made him so many enemies, in fact, that it was simply not possible for him to guess the identity of the author of these mysterious missives. It might have been any one of the fifty or sixty fellows.

"Play up, Carthew!"

"Oh, all right!" grunted the Classical prefect.

The game of poker went on.

Carthew dismissed the Rookwood Secret Society from his mind at last in the interest of the game.

For half an hour nothing was heard in Knowles' study but the patter of the cards and a few remarks in connection with the game, and the occasional scratch of a match to light a cigarette. Four faces bent greedily over the cards in unhealthy excitement, looking strangely old for their years.

Carthew was the first to "quit."

He rose to his feet with a sullen brow, his supply of cash having passed over to Knowles & Co.—chiefly to Knowles. Cecil Knowles was a great expert in card games, and his successes did not always endear him to his "sportive" associates.

"Chuckin' it, old bean?" asked Knowles blandly.

"Yes; I've some work to do in my study."

"Right-ho!"

Knowles rose and unlocked the door, opening it wide enough for Carthew to pass out, and then closing it again. The three Modern seniors resumed their game. Mark Carthew went down the passage, and scowled at Tommy Dodd & Co. on the stairs, for no reason excepting that he was feeling sulky and "down" and the three Tommies looked very cheery. Then he walked out of Mr. Manders' house into the quadrangle.

There was a mist from the sea in the old quad of Rookwood, and the ancient beeches were hidden from sight. Carthew strode along without a pause, however. Nothing was further from his mind than the thought of danger. He was taken utterly

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by surprise when there came a sudden rush of feet in the gloom, and he was seized on all sides, and came down on his back with a crash.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. In Mysterious Hands!

"O H!" Carthew spluttered as he came down.

Four pairs of hands were upon him, gripping him tight, and he had simply no chance of resistance.

A knee was jammed on his chest as he sprawled on his back. Both his wrists were intently gripped.

"What—what—a—at—" spluttered Carthew.

"Silence!"

Carthew opened his mouth to shout.

"Groooogh!" he spluttered.

Something was thrust into his mouth to silence him. From its taste, he guessed that it was an oily rag picked up in the bike-shed.

It effectually silenced him.

His intended shout spluttered away into a gurgle.

He struggled, but in vain. He felt a cord being looped over his wrists, and resisted furiously; but the cord was looped on and drawn tight. Then his ankles were shackled with another cord, with a length of about a dozen inches between his feet to give him just freedom to shuffle along. Then he was dragged to his feet.

"March!"

It was a deep bass voice that spoke, but Carthew knew that it was the disguised voice of a junior.

He could not make out his assailants, but their height told him that they were members of some Form below the Fifth.

Back of them had his face covered with a cardboard mask, fastened with a string at the back of the head—a complete disguise.

Eye-holes were cut in the masks, and through them the eyes looked with a glittering effect.

Carthew, bound and helpless, and gripped by four pairs of hands, glared helplessly at his captors.

"March!" repeated the deep voice.

"You young hounds—" he mumbled under the gag.

"Kick him!"

The order was promptly obeyed.

One of the masked assailants stepped back, and landed with his boot on Carthew with a loud thud.

The Classical prefect spluttered and staggered.

"Now march!"

"I—groogh—I—grrrrrrh!"

"Kick him again!"

Thud!

"Grr-r-r-r-rh!"

Carthew decided to march. Evidently he was in the hands of the Amalekites, and there was no mercy for him. He marched.

Carthew guessed by this time that it was the "secret society" of Rookwood that was dealing with him.

His surmise that the mysterious messages came from one junior, who was playing a trick on him learned from the "picture," was evidently ill-founded.

There were four at least of the Rookwooders in this affair—that was clear. He wondered if there were more.

The secret society led him away from the lighted windows into the darkness of the quadrangle.

They passed under the old beeches, and Carthew found himself bumped up against a damp tree-trunk.

Here he made another attempt at resistance, and the chief rapped out his order again:

"Kick him!"

Thud! came a boot.

Carthew gurgled, and ceased to resist.

A cord was run round the tree, and tied to the prefect's wrists on either side of the trunk.

Then the captors stepped back, and a chuckle was audible from under the cardboard masks.

Carthew stood against the tree, a helpless, dumb prisoner, and glared at the quartette.

He had a strong suspicion that they were Jimmy Silver & Co., the Fistical Four of the Classical Fourth; but there was nothing to give a clue to their identity.

"Carthew!" said the deep voice.

Gurgle!

THE POPULAR.—No. 312.

"Do you know in whose hands you are?"

"Gurgle!"

"You are in the hands of the Secret Society of Rookwood."

"Gurgle!"

"You are being addressed by the Grand Master."

"Gurgle!"

"You have received warnings from us, and you have not mended your ways," went on the deep bass voice. "You have been warned that the hour is at hand. Now the blow will fall!"

"Hear, hear!" came in a murmur.

"Silence!" said the deep voice of the Grand Master. "Leave the talking to me, Carthew, are you sorry that you are a bully?"

"Gurgle!"

"Are you sorry you are a crawling cad?" Carthew spluttered helplessly under the gag. The taste of that rag was horrid, and it prevented speech. He could not tell the Grand Master of the Rookwood Secret Society that he was sorry. As a matter of fact, he wasn't sorry; he was only furious.

"Remove the gag," said the Grand Master. "Even this base knave shall not be executed without speaking in his own defence. Carthew, if you try to call out your nose will be pinched!"

Carthew shivered as the edges of a pair of pincers closed lightly on his nose.

They were metal pincers from some school-boy's carpentry chest, and if they closed hard the result would be so painful that Carthew did not care to contemplate it.

He did not call out as the gag was removed.

He understood now that his assailants were in deadly earnest, secure in the fact that their identity was unknown, and could not even be guessed with any certainty.

"Now, Carthew, speak in a low voice, or I shall have to twist the tip of your nose off!"

"You young sweep!" panted Carthew.

"That is not the way to address the Grand Master of the Rookwood Secret Society."

"You cheeky little rotter!" gasped Carthew.

"I know you, Jimmy Silver! I'll have you up before the Head for this!"

"Your observations are quite irrelevant, Carthew."

"You—you—"

"Are you sorry for being a beastly bully?"

"I'll smash you!"

"Will you undertake to mend your ways, and in a manner likely to win the approval of the Lower School?"

"I—I—I—I'll slaughter you!"

"The prisoner is quite unrepentant," said the Grand Master calmly. "Brothers, proceed with the paint, and replace the gag."

The oil-rag was jammed into Carthew's mouth again. He tried to shut his jaws to keep it out, but a warning pressure from the pincers caused him to open them again in a hurry. He was duly gagged.

Then there was a smell of paint.

A wet brush dabbed on Carthew's face, and made him shudder with the contact.

His horrified eyes discerned a paint-can, just uncovered from the newspaper in which it had been wrapped. It was one of old Mack's paint-cans from the woodshed, and it contained a green paint of a racous hue, the green paint with which old Mack was in the habit of touching up fences. It was thick, and it was oily, and Carthew shuddered in every nerve as it was laddled upon his face.

He gurgled painfully.

He could not speak through the gag, but he contrived to mumble out a curse, which was answered by a dab of the paint-brush.

One dab of paint in his mouth, along with the oily rag, was enough for Mark Carthew. He did not curse any more.

The paint was laid on his face with a generous hand. How long it was likely to take Carthew to get that paint off again was a dreadful problem, which his mind hardly dared to grapple with.

The painter proceeded industriously with his task, not forgetting the prefect's ears and neck, and giving his hair a dab or two.

In a few minutes Carthew's infuriated countenance was streaming with vivid green paint.

"That will do, Brothers!" said the Grand Master. "Depart!"

Three of the dim figures vanished in the mist.

The Grand Master remained.

He struck a match and contemplated Carthew's face for a moment, and chuckled.

Carthew's eyes blazed at him from the green paint.

As the masked junior chuckled, his mouth opened, and his mouth was not covered by the cardboard mask.

Carthew noted that there was a black space where a tooth should have been.

The match went out.

But Carthew was almost consoled for his disaster by the discovery he had made.

A junior with a front tooth missing would not be difficult to search out at Rookwood.

Vengeance at least was certain now.

"Now I leave you to meditate upon your sins, Carthew," said the deep voice of the Grand Master. "You can toot now as much as you like."

He jerked the gag from Carthew's mouth, and vanished in the darkness under the beeches.

And the moment his mouth was free Carthew yelled for help.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Painted Prefect!

"H A, ha, ha!"

"What the merry dickens—"

"Green as grass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter, and Rookwood fellows rushed from all sides to see the extraordinary sight.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came in from the dusky quad, leading a remarkable figure.

Bulkeley was looking astonished. Carthew's aspect undoubtedly was astonishing.

His yells for help had soon been heard, and the captain of Rookwood had hurried out into the quad to discover what was the matter.

He discovered Carthew tied to a beech, streaming with paint, and yelling.

Bulkeley of the Sixth was not smiling as he led Carthew in. This outrage upon a prefect was a serious matter in his eyes. But the crowd in the house simply howled.

Carthew stamped away furiously towards the Head's study.

He was not exactly in a proper state to present himself before the august Head of Rookwood, but he did not care for that.

He wanted Dr. Chisholm to see exactly the extent of the fearful outrage that had been perpetrated.

"The Head will get a shock," murmured Mornington, as the painted prefect disappeared, leaving a trail of spots of green paint behind him.

The Fistical Four went along to Study No. 3, which belonged to Conroy, Pons, and Van Ryn, the three Colonials. Sounds of merriment in the study greeted them as they opened the door. Putty of the Fourth was there. He was lying at full length on the table, kicking up his heels in an ecstasy of enjoyment. Conroy, Pons, and Van Ryn were chortling in chorus.

"Je triumph, tu triumphe, nous triumpheons!" chanted Putty of the Fourth.

"Je rejoice, tu rejoices, nous rejoicoins! Je cheer, tu cheer, nous cheerons!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Putty, you ass—" began Jimmy Silver.

Putty sat up.

"Is it thou, O James?" he inquired. "Have you come to laugh with us? Go it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, there's going to be an awful row!" grinned Lovell.

"Did you note his complexion?" queried Putty. "Did you observe the bloom on the rye? Have you ever seen anybody look so green?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's got a clue!" chanted Putty. "He knows who did it because he saw that he had a front tooth missing. Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Conroy.

"Bift, I say—" began Raby seriously.

Putty held up a tiny object—a fragment of black elastic. It belonged to the property-box of the Classical Players of Rookwood. The Fistical Four burst into a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, the dear youth never tumbled that he was allowed to see it on purpose!" sobbed Putty. "He's goin' to search Rookwood for a kid with a front tooth missin'. Let's hope he'll find one. Kids with front teeth missin' aren't really common here. Never seen one at Rookwood myself. But let's wish Carthew success."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The voice of Bulkeley of the Sixth shouted in the passage:

"All the Lower School into Hall at once!"

"Hallo! Assembling the giddy school!" said

Arthur Edward Lovell. "Is it on account of Carthew? That looks as if the Head is taking it seriously."

"It's for Carthew to pick out the chap with a front tooth missin'!" chortled Putty. "Ha, ha, ha!"

In hilarious spirits the chums of the Fourth made their way, with a crowd of other fellows, into Big Hall.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Nobody Guilty!**

JIMMY SILVER & CO. were feeling hilarious when they arrived in Big Hall. But they adopted expressions of extreme gravity as they took their places in the ranks of the Classical Fourth there.

Privately, in the Fourth Form passage, it might be a laughing matter, but it was no laughing matter in the presence of the Head, for nothing could be more certain than that the delinquents would be soundly flogged if they were discovered. Quite possibly they might be expelled from Rookwood. From that point of view the painting of Mark Carthew was a serious matter enough.

taking the affair very seriously indeed. Carthew followed him in. The bully of the Sixth had cleaned off the paint—as well as he could. But oily paint is not easy to clean off, and very visible traces of green showed about Carthew's ears and under his hair. His face was crimson with scrubbing and rubbing. But for the presence of the Head a ripple of laughter would have greeted Carthew. As it was, there was a murmur, which the prefects silenced at once.

"Boys!"
The Head's voice was deep and stern.

Deep silence reigned. Even Putty of the Fourth realised that it was no laughing matter now.

"Boys, an unprecedented outrage has been committed within the walls of Rookwood. A prefect of the Sixth Form has been seized, tied to a tree, and outrageously smothered with a very offensive paint. This unparalleled outrage has been committed by four boys belonging to this school. I need not say that their punishment will be drastic—exceedingly drastic. No doubt they are well aware of that."

"Very good. The boy in question may now step forward," said the Head. "He must be aware now that he cannot hope to escape detection."

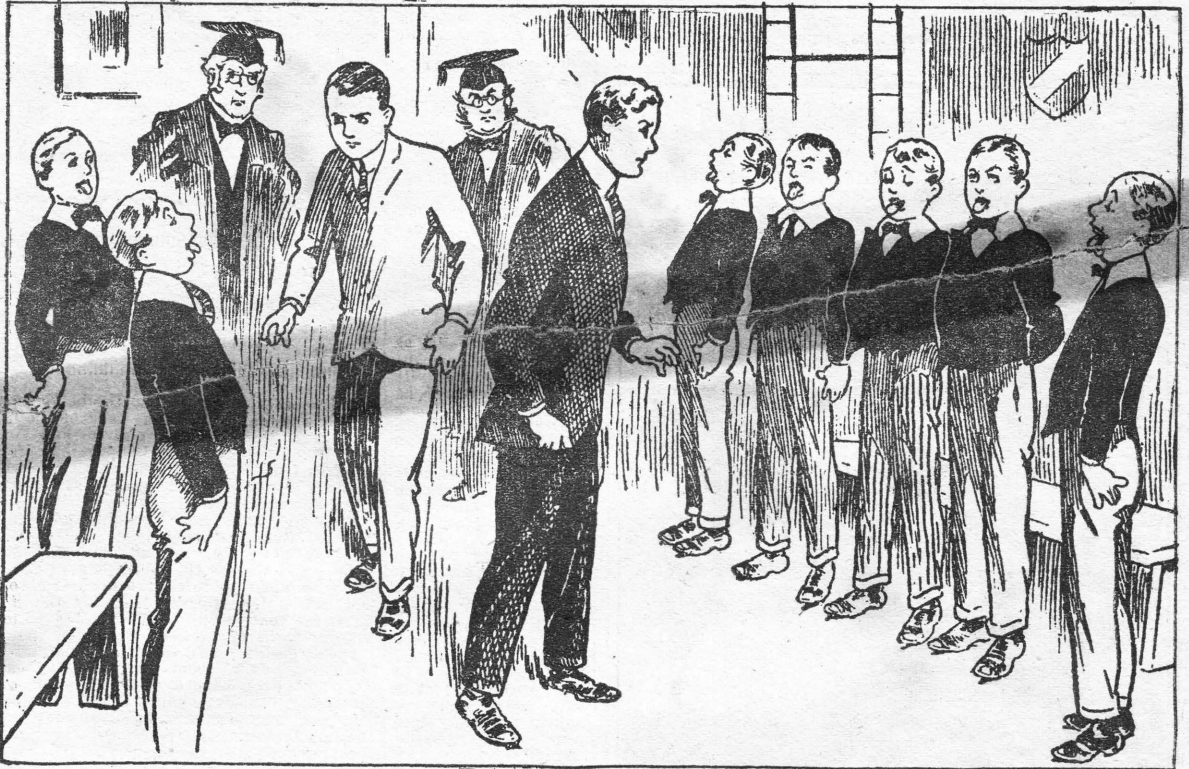
Still no one stepped forward. The Head frowned.

"Bulkeley, the prefects will now examine all the juniors, and bring forward any boy who has lost a front tooth."

Bulkeley and the other prefects "got busy" at once. They passed up and down the ranks of the juniors, examining every fellow in turn. The juniors were told to open their mouths, and some not only opened their mouths but put their tongues out, and there was a good deal of suppressed merriment, in spite of the majestic presence of the Head.

The examination took a considerable time. Every boy in the Hall had to be looked at in turn, for that missing tooth was exceedingly hard to find. When Bulkeley of the Sixth came up the Hall towards the Head at last, he came alone, to meet the coldly surprised glance of Dr. Chisholm.

"Well, Bulkeley, where is the boy?"
"He is not here, sir."



LOOKING FOR THE CULPRIT! "Bulkeley, the prefects will now examine all the juniors and bring forward any boy who has lost a front tooth," said the Head. Bulkeley and the prefects passed up and down the ranks of the juniors, examining every fellow in turn. The juniors were told to open their mouths, and some put out their tongues. (See Chapter 4.)

All the Lower School of Rookwood came into Hall and took their places. A good many of the Sixth and Fifth turned up as well. The prefects were all there to keep order, and Hansom & Co. of the Fifth came in out of curiosity.

Modern as well as Classical juniors were gathered there in numerous array.

"What's the thunderin' row? Anybody know?" asked Smythe of the Shell.

"Assault on a prefect," said Tracy.

"Oh, good!" said Adolphus Smythe. "I hope they thumped him well."

Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern Fourth looked inquiringly at Jimmy Silver. They knew what had happened, and they were thinking of the Fistical Four.

Jimmy smiled and shook his head.

"Queer how fellows seem to think it's us when there's any kicking over the traces," remarked Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Queer, isn't it?" smiled Jimmy Silver.

"Here comes the Head!" said Oswald.

"Silence!"—from the prefects.

There was silence and deep gravity as the Head of Rookwood entered. Dr. Chisholm's face was stern and severe. Evidently he was

"Oh lor!" gasped Tubby Muffin involuntarily.

"The perpetrators of this unheard-of outrage will now step forward!"

No one stepped forward.

As Morny remarked afterwards, in his slangy way, it was not surprising that there were no takers.

"The prospect of exceedingly drastic punishment really was not attractive."

The Head waited a full minute, doubtless to give the hapless delinquents time to step forward and face the exceedingly drastic punishment. Then he went on, in a deeply rumbling voice:

"The heinous perpetrators of this outrage cannot hope to escape punishment. One of them, at least, can be identified, and he will be instantly expelled from the school unless he names his associates. Carthew, you informed me in my study that one of the boys who assaulted you had a front tooth missing, by which you could identify him with certainty."

"Yes, sir, I—"

"You adhere to that statement?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Is every boy belonging to the Lower School of Rookwood present?"

"Every one, sir. The roll has been called."

"Every boy answered to his name?"

"Yes, sir."

"No one has since left the Hall?"

"No one, sir. The doors have been closed."

"Do you mean to tell me, Bulkeley, that there is no junior at Rookwood at all with a front tooth missing?"

"Not one, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

Carthew blinked.

He was even more surprised than the Head. Certainly such a thing as a missing front tooth could not be overlooked in a search—it was sufficient to mark out the Grand Master of the Secret Society among his fellows. Carthew wondered whether he was dreaming. No one at Rookwood with a missing front tooth! Who, then, was the Grand Master of the Secret Society? Not a Rookwooder at all? But—

The Head was speaking.

"Carthew!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped the dazed prefect. "You hear what Bulkeley says. If your statement is correct— You still assure me that it is correct?"

"Certainly! I'm certain—quite certain!" stammered Carthew.

"Then all the boys present are cleared!" said the Head. "Amazing as it seems, the assault was plainly committed from someone from outside—someone who does not belong to Rookwood School at all! I am glad of it. I am very glad indeed that it has been proved that no Rookwood boy was guilty of this act of hoodlignism."

"B-b-but, sir—" gasped Carthew.

"Well?"

"I'm certain it was a Rookwooder! I—"

"You are certainly mistaken on that point, Carthew, from your own evidence." Dr. Chisholm raised his hand. "The school is dismissed!"

And the Rookwooders crowded out of Big Hall.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
In the Dead of Night!

M IDNIGHT!
Carthew of the Sixth sat up in bed suddenly.
Perhaps it was the twelve heavy strokes from the clock-tower that had awakened him. Or was it—

He felt safe enough, even from the Rookwood Secret Society. He had taken care to turn the key in his lock before going to bed.

And yet—
"Wake!"

It was a deep voice in the darkness of his room.

Carthew trembled.

Well enough he knew the bass voice assumed by the Grand Master of the Rookwood Secret Society.

A glitter of light shone through the gloom as an electric torch was turned suddenly on. The light blazed in Carthew's face, dazzling him.

"One cry, and your nose is pinched!" said the deep voice.

Carthew blinked dazedly.

There were six figures—not four this time—by his bedside; six figures, fully dressed, whose faces were covered by cardboard masks.

One of them held a pair of pincers. Carthew's glance passed them wildly to the door. It was closed, and he had left it locked. How had they entered through a locked door? Somehow, the lock had been forced from the outside. Carthew did not cry out. The six intruders were ready to leap on him, as he could see, and the pincers were ready for his unhappy nose. He sat and blinked at them.

his apprehensive nose had deceived him. It was a bottle of marking-ink that the Grand Master produced from his pocket. Carthew could see the label on the bottle—"Indelible." He wriggled spasmodically.

The Grand Master removed the cork, and dipped a brush into the bottle. Then quietly, methodically, mercilessly, he proceeded to paint zebra-like stripes on Carthew's face, from the forehead downwards. One of the masked intruders held the electric torch turned on, while the Grand Master painted. The work was done in silence—a terrifying silence.

In five minutes the bottle was empty, and Carthew's aspect had become startlingly original. Through his stripes he glared at the masked avengers.

"Caitiff!" said the Grand Master, when he had finished. "Scallywag! This ink is indelible—warranted not to wash out! You are marked—marked as a victim of the R.S.S. Brothers, the deed is dood—I mean, done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush!"

The Grand Master jerked the blankets from the bed, and draped them round Carthew. He did not want the hapless victim of the R.S.S. to catch cold, apparently. Then the light was turned off. With straining ears, Carthew heard the masked intruders stealing softly from the study, and he heard the door close gently after them. Then silence.

And the bully of Rookwood waited for dawn!

THE END.

(Look out for another topping long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, next Tuesday.)

"SAVED FROM THE STAKE!"
(Continued from page 6.)

and the other prisoners, and the bootleggers passed the dark hours in handcuffs. The Kootenays had almost cleared off, but squaws and papooses peered at the red-coated troopers from among the lodges.

In the early dawn Sergeant Lasalle prepared to take the trail.

A sobered and very repentant and apprehensive Thunder Cloud came up to the sergeant at dawn, full of apologies and excuses. It was, as the hapless chief pointed out with many gestures, the fire-water that had caused the trouble. But for the fire-water his young men would never have lifted a finger to harm the little white chiefs.

The sergeants talked to the old chieftain in stern tones for about ten minutes, and Thunder Cloud cringed away when he had finished. All that remained of the fire-water was carefully collected and poured away, and the jars broken.

Then the troopers mounted, with the chums of Cedar Creek and the prisoners, and rode out of the village.

They left a very dejected tribe behind them. Thunder Cloud and his braves had a bad headache all round, added to an apprehension of what might happen to them later.

Glad enough were Frank Richards & Co. to turn their backs on the Indian village, where they had passed through such terrible peril. Glad, too, were the chums to see Hiram Hook riding, tied to his horse, en route for trial and prison. The bootlegger gave them savage looks during the day's ride without detracting from their satisfaction.

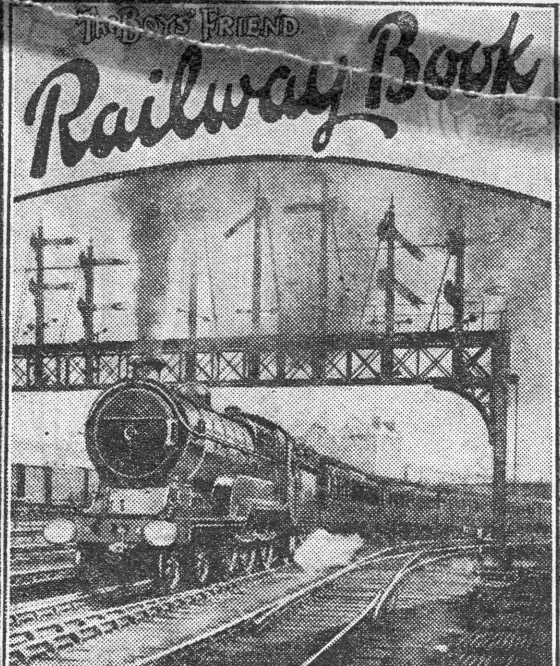
Late in the afternoon the chums parted with the Mounted Police, who rode on to Thompson with their prisoners, while Frank Richards & Co. headed for home. Needless to say, their reappearance gave great relief and joy. And now that they were safe out of the perils that had fallen upon them so thick and fast, the chums were not sorry for their adventure. They had gone through a terrible experience, but they had the satisfaction of knowing that they had very materially assisted the Canadian troopers in rounding up the bootleggers.

THE END.

(Don't miss reading "Standing by Hopkins!"—next week's long dramatic story of the chums of the Canadian Lumber School.)

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"Get out of bed—in silence!"

"I—I—"

"Obey!"

Carthew obeyed.

"Seize him!"

The grasp of the six was laid on Carthew. In the daytime the proceedings might have seemed absurd and cinematographic; but at midnight's solemn hour the effect was quite different. Carthew was trembling.

He did not resist as the six seized him; he did not cry out. He knew that even if he awakened the house the intruders would have ample time to deal with him before help could come. And he shuddered at the thought of the iron grip of the pincers on his nose.

"You know who we are!" said the deep voice.

"N-n-no!" stammered Carthew.

"We are the Secret Society of Rookwood! We have come here to deal with you! You have been guilty of bullying again since your last punishment!"

"You—you young villain!" breathed Carthew.

"Gag him!"

Carthew opened his mouth, but the pincers were too close. He shut it again—silently—on the gag that was thrust between his teeth. One of the masked intruders wound a length of twine round his head, knotting it securely to keep the gag in place.

"Sit down!"

Carthew was hustled towards his arm-chair.

He made a movement as if to resist as a cord was looped round his legs. But pincers tapped his nose, and he desisted. His legs were tied to the legs of the chair, his wrists to its arms. His apprehensive nose was already aware of the smell of paint. But he was mistaken,