

**KEEPING A SECRET!** Montmorency finds the dark past he has tried hard to hide threatening to come to light, and he shudders to think of what would happen if such a thing did come to pass. Already he is looked upon with suspicion!



# Gentleman George!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, in which Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency plays a very prominent part.

**BY OWEN CONQUEST.**

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

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Calling on Huggins!

"Hi, young feller!" Jimmy Silver looked round. Jimmy was not used to being addressed as "young feller," or to answering to the salutation of "Hi!" But Jimmy was always polite, and he looked round with great urbanity. He was leaning on one of the big stone pillars of the gateway at Rookwood, waiting for his chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, who had gone to the village. The Co. had just come in sight, when Jimmy was hailed by the stranger on the road.

Jimmy looked at him—not admiringly.

He was a young man, of slovenly looks, with a discoloured bowler-hat set rakishly on the back of his head. His eyes had red rims, and there was an aroma of mingled rum and tobacco about him that did not strike the Rookwood junior pleasantly.

He looked like a tramp, and a rather unpleasant variety of a tramp, and Jimmy was glad that he had not met him alone in a dark lane.

"Well?" said Jimmy.

"This 'ere's Rookwood School, ain't it?"

The red-eyed man removed a cigarette from his mouth with a dirty finger and thumb, and jerked it towards the grey old buildings.

Jimmy nodded.

"This is Rookwood!" he assented.

"You belong 'ere?"

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver politely, "I belong here. Anything further that you'd care to know?"

"Know young Huggins?"

In the quadrangle, at some distance, Montmorency of the Fourth was sauntering elegantly with his friends—Townsend and Topham.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome came up while Mr. Lurchey was talking.

They stopped.

Jimmy Silver glanced at his chums rather uneasily, and Lovell gave a grunt

and Raby and Newcome coughed. All the Fistical Four knew that Mr. Lurchey was alluding to Montmorency of the Fourth, whom he evidently knew, as Mr. Kettle had known him—as George Huggins.

"Nobody here goes by the name of Huggins," said Raby awkwardly.

"I seen him!" said Mr. Lurchey calmly. "I know he's here, but he don't want to see an old friend. Up in the world he is now—always a bit swanky, George was, even when he was a boy in buttons at the 'All!"

"Wha-at!" ejaculated Lovell.

"If he doesn't want to see you, what the thump have you come to see him for?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver hastily.

He felt he was hearing too much on the subject of Huggins.

Mr. Lurchey winked.

"He's up, and I'm down!" he explained. "Why shouldn't he give a 'elping 'and to an old friend what's down on his luck? I wouldn't 'ave come if he'd answered the letter, and come and seen me. But if he's going to do the ikey, and decline to reckernise an old pal, I'm goin' to roll 'im off his perch a bit—see? I'm arter George—Gentleman George we used to call 'im."

Jimmy Silver frowned.

Montmorency was nothing to him; in fact, he did not like the snob of the Fourth, whose uppish ways had irritated even the equable temper of "Uncle James" of Rookwood. But he felt called upon to stand between the junior and this dingy rascal.

"You won't come in!" he said curtly.

"Won't I?" exclaimed Mr. Lurchey. "Who's going to stop me?"

"Little me!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Look 'ere—"

"Put your hoof inside this gateway," said Jimmy coolly, "and you'll go back into the road on your neck! That's a tip!"

Mr. Lurchey glared at him. Lovell and Raby and Newcome, grinning, lined

up beside Jimmy Silver. The Fistical Four were quite prepared to give Horace Lurchey all he wanted, and a little over.

Just then Montmorency, strolling along with Towny and Topy, came in sight from where Mr. Lurchey stood outside the gates. The eye of Mr. Lurchey was on him at once.

"Why, there's Huggins!" he ejaculated. "You tell me Huggins ain't at this 'ere school, and there he is, as large as life!"

Old Mack came out of his lodge to close the gates. He gave the dingy Mr. Lurchey a look of grim disapproval, and shook his head at the Fistical Four.

"I'm s'prised at you, Master Silver, torkin' to tramps at the school gates!" he said severely. "What would Mr. Dalton say? 'Ere, you travel, you wagrant!"

"I've called 'ere to see a friend!" exclaimed Mr. Lurchey indignantly. "Young 'Uggins—"

"No sich name 'ere!" said Mack. "Git off the grass, afore I help with my boot!"

"Huggins!" roared Mr. Lurchey.

In the distance Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency spun round as that raucous shout reached his ears, and his startled eyes glanced towards the gates.

"I've called to see you, George!" roared Mr. Lurchey.

Montmorency's handsome face became deadly pale.

Old Mack gave Mr. Lurchey a shove, to move him out of the way of the gate, and clanged it shut.

"Now cut, you rotter!" said Jimmy Silver between the bars.

But Mr. Lurchey was not inclined to cut. Horace, as he had said, was a sticker. He put his stubbly face close to the metal bars, and roared:

"George Huggins! Hi, George! Don't you know your old pal 'Orace? Aren't you going to see your old pal 'Orace?"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

## The Order of the Boot!

**C**ECIL CUTHBERT MONTMORENCY was staring towards the gates, with a pallor as of death in his handsome face.

His eyeglass had dropped from his eye. He was quite able to see Mr. Lurchey without the aid of his celebrated monocle.

The hapless youth seemed rooted to the ground, as if Mr. Lurchey had been some grisly spectre that had started up suddenly under his eyes.

Townsend and Topham stared towards the loafer, and then at one another.

Towny and Topy were thunderstruck.

They had pooh-poohed the Huggins story, and had fully accepted Monty's explanation that Sergeant Kettle had been deceived by his chance resemblance to some person of the name of Huggins.

As Montmorency was entered on the school books as Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency, the explanation carried sufficient weight, especially as the sergeant had uttered no word on the subject since. But here was another individual addressing Monty as Huggins. And Monty evidently knew him, and was scared out of his wits at the sight of him. Towny and Topy had much food for thought now.

Townsend touched Montmorency on the arm.

"What's the matter, Monty?" he asked uneasily. "You don't know that horrid blighter, do you?"

"George!" roared Mr. Lurchey. "Look 'ere, you clear off, you ruffian!" exclaimed old Mack. "I'll come out and shift you if you stand yellin' there!"

"Hi, George!" yelled Mr. Lurchey. "George Huggins! Gentleman George!" "Monty!" exclaimed Topham.

Montmorency pulled himself together. He fumbled for his eyeglass with a trembling hand, and turned it upon the dingy figure pressed to the bars of the gate.

"By gad!" His voice was not quite assured, but he was recovering control of himself. "What a merchant! Know who he is, you fellows?"

"Don't you know?" asked Townsend suspiciously.

"I don't know him from Adam, of course."

"Hi, George!" "By gad, he's got an unpleasant voice, whoever he is!" yelled Montmorency. "Let's get out of this! The lower classes aren't pleasant at close quarters."

Monty was evidently quite himself again now.

He turned and strolled away, and Towny and Topy went with him. Monty's aristocratic saunter was changed for a rather quick walk, however, which soon took him out of Mr. Lurchey's range of vision.

"George!" yelled Mr. Lurchey. "Hi, George! Don't you know your old pal 'Orace, what used to clean the boots at the 'All, where you was in buttons?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Lovell.

"Open the gate again, Mack!" said Jimmy Silver. "We'll jolly soon clear that blackguard off!"

"Who's he torkin' to?" inquired the bewildered Mack. "There ain't nobody 'ere named 'Uggins."

"Didn't I see 'im?" roared Mr. Lurchey. "That young covey with the eyeglass, that was 'Uggins."

"You silly owl!" said Mack. "That's Master Montmorency."

"Wot!"

"Montmorency!" said Mack crushingly. "Now clear hoff!"

"Montmorency!" exclaimed Mr. Lurchey. "My eye! So he ain't called

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'Uggins 'ere! 'Ow was a feller to know that?"

"Are you going?" snapped Jimmy Silver.

"No, I ain't going!" retorted Mr. Lurchey. "I've called 'ere to see young 'Uggins, and I don't care whether he calls hisself Montmorency or Montgomery or Marjoribanks, or any other blessed name; I'm goin' to see 'im! I can tell you 'Orace is a sticker."

Bulkeley of the Sixth came along, his attention drawn by this extraordinary wrangle at the school gates.

"What's the trouble, Mack?" he asked quietly.

"This 'ere ruffian won't go!" said the porter. "He's calling names at Master Montmorency!"

"Open the gate!"

Mack flung back the bronze gate with a grin. The stalwart captain of Rookwood was likely to make short work of Mr. Horace Lurchey if he declined to get a move on.

Bulkeley stepped out.

"Time for you to go, my man!" he said.

Mr. Lurchey gave him a glare of defiance.

"This 'ere road belong to you?" he sneered. "I'm staying 'ere as long as I dashed well choose!"

Bulkeley pushed back his cuffs.

"I give you two seconds!" he said.

"You lay a 'and on me—" began Horace Lurchey threateningly.

Bulkeley laid two hands upon him. Mr. Lurchey struck out furiously, and Bulkeley knocked his fist up. Then he swung the dingy loafer round, and planted a heavy boot behind him.

Horace Lurchey fairly flew.

"Goal!" yelled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Lurchey came down on his hands and knees in the dusty road, with a loud roar.

"Now travel!" admonished Bulkeley. "I don't want to handle you, but you can't kick up rows at the school gates. Get along!"

"You young 'ound—"

"Are you going?" exclaimed Bulkeley impatiently.

"Yah! You cheeky young 'ound!" gasped Mr. Lurchey. "Ow! Yow! Yooop! Leave off kicking a bloke! I'm going, ain't I?"

And Mr. Lurchey went.

He departed down the road to Coombe at a trot, anxious to get out of reach of Bulkeley's boot.

Bulkeley turned back into the gateway, and the gates were closed again. Jimmy Silver & Co. walked away to the School House, but the captain of Rookwood stopped to speak to Mack for a few minutes, apparently interested in the amazing visit of Mr. Lurchey, and his still more amazing remarks.

There was a very thoughtful look on Bulkeley's face as he strode away to the School House. He glanced round the quad, but Montmorency and his companions had disappeared. The Rookwood captain went up at once to the Fourth Form passage, and stopped at Study No. 5.

He tapped at the door and entered.

"I want a word with you, Montmorency," said Bulkeley, kindly enough.

"Do you know anything of that blackguard who was yelling at the gates a few minutes ago?"

"Nothin', Bulkeley."

Tom Rawson glanced up from his work for a second, but immediately dropped his eyes again. Montmorency did not look at him.

"You've never seen the man?" asked Bulkeley.

"Never that I remember."

"Why the dickens, then, did he come

to see you, and call you by another name?" said Bulkeley. "It's very odd."

Montmorency shook his head.

"Very odd, and no mistake," he assented calmly. "He addressed me as Huggins, I think—"

"Huggins," said Townsend.

"Oh, Huggins, was it?" drawled Montmorency.

"Yes; same as the sergeant did the day you came, you know," said Townsend.

Bulkeley started.

"Sergeant Kettle did?" he exclaimed.

For an instant there was a savage flash in Montmorency's eyes, as Towny "buted in" with that unfortunate remark.

"But your name is Montmorency!" said Bulkeley. "I don't understand this!"

"Sergeant Kettle thought I looked like somebody he knew named Huggins," Montmorency explained, with an air of boredom. "Apparently this man at the gate knows the same chap, an' took me for him. It's not very flatterin' to me—I really don't like lookin' like a fellow named Huggins."

"Oh, don't be a young ass!" said Bulkeley. "It's rather unfortunate, though. That dingy rascal plainly thought he knew you, and we can't have him hanging round Rookwood, yelling through the gates. Perhaps it would be best to speak to the village policeman on the subject."

Montmorency's lip quivered for a moment.

"I don't suppose he'll turn up again," he remarked. "Just a tramp passin' along the road, I imagine—most likely he'll be miles away to-morrow."

"It's possible," assented Bulkeley thoughtfully. "If he turns up again he can be dealt with."

The Rookwood captain quitted the study. Then Montmorency glanced at Rawson—the junior who knew his secret. But Rawson kept his eyes on his book.

In a few minutes the dandy of Rookwood was chatting cheerily as before, and Townsend and Topham felt their lingering doubts and misgivings dissolving.

But when, a little later, Montmorency lounged out of the study, and the door shut him off from the sight of his chums, the easy indifference dropped from his handsome face like a cloak thrown aside.

That handsome, aristocratic face looked worn, almost haggard, and the eyes had a hunted look.

"What infernal luck!" He muttered the words low. "Kettle knows, and Rawson knows, and now that brute Lurchey!" He gritted his teeth. "But I'll beat them all! I'll play the game out! But—but if they knew—if they knew what Lurchey could tell them—"

At the thought a feeling almost of physical sickness came over the pretender. He leaned on the wall, his face pale, his brow moody.

Tubby Muffin came along the passage. There was no fellow at Rookwood who had been more thoroughly snubbed by the snob of the Fourth than Tubby. But Tubby was prepared to forgive everything at a moment's notice. He paused to speak, with a friendly grin.

"Hallo! Feelin' down, old chap?" he asked sympathetically.

Instantly Montmorency was the cold, impassive, scornful dandy again. He had learned to play his part until it was second nature to him. Or perhaps it was his real nature, for he had been haughty and scornful in the days when, as a page-boy in buttons, his life's ambition had been to become a butler some day.

He turned his eyeglass on Muffin contemptuously.

"I think I've asked you before not to address me, Muffin," he said distinctly. "Do you want to be kicked?"

"Yah!" snorted Tubby Muffin indignantly. "Yah! I heard that chap at the gate—I heard every word! Yah! Huggins!"

And the fat Classical fled just in time to escape a drive from Cecil Cuthbert's elegant boot.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Only Way!

"COME in!" sang out Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four were at prep in the end study, when a tap came at the door. It was Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency, who lounged elegantly in.

Lovell grunted, and went on with his work. He did not like the snob of Rookwood, and made no secret of the fact. Raby and Newcome looked up, and looked down again. But Jimmy Silver, constrained by politeness, gave Cecil Cuthbert a nod.

"Interruptin' you?" asked Montmorency, with a lofty manner that indicated that he did not care whether he was interrupting the juniors or not.

"Well, yes," said Jimmy. "Prep, you know. But cut in if there's anything you want to say."

"I won't keep you long," said Montmorency, leaning in an elegant attitude on the mantelpiece. "It seems that you had some talk with that extraordinary loafer who kicked up a row at the gates an hour or two ago."

"He talked to us," said Jimmy shortly.

"It's rather odd, isn't it?"

"Very," said Jimmy.

"Most unfortunate for me to happen to look like some cad named Huggins," drawled Montmorency. "I suppose it might happen to any chap?"

"I suppose it might."

Jimmy's manner was dry. Ever since the snob of Rookwood had refused to play in the same team with Rawson, the scholarship junior, Jimmy had not taken the trouble to conceal his contempt for the great Monty. And the possibility that the snob was also a pretender of an origin more humble than Rawson's added to his contempt.

"But, to come to business," pursued Montmorency. "It's awkward for me, and I'm thinkin' of takin' measures. That loafer can't be allowed to bother a gentleman like this. I'm thinkin' of speakin' to the police at Coombe about it."

Lovell looked up.

"You can't have a man run in for calling you Huggins," he said, "and you might have to explain why he called you Huggins, if you could."

Montmorency did not heed that remark.

"Have you any idea where the man is to be found, Silver?" he asked. "Is he stoppin' in Coombe, do you know?"

"I should think he was staying at the Bird-in-Hand."

"Where on earth's that?"

"It's the pub you pass as you go into the village."

"Oh, yaas; I think I've noticed it—just the place where such a loafer would put up, I dare say. The police will be able to find him there, and warn him, no doubt."

"No doubt!" assented Jimmy.

"Thanks!"

Montmorency contrived to draw the word "thanks" in a tone that implied that he was not thankful in the least, and sauntered out of the study. Arthur Edward Lovell kicked the door shut after him.

"That fellow gives me a bad taste in the mouth!" he grunted. "I can't stand him! Fancy his hurting poor old Rawson's feelings as he did, and it turns out that he's a sort of manservant himself!"

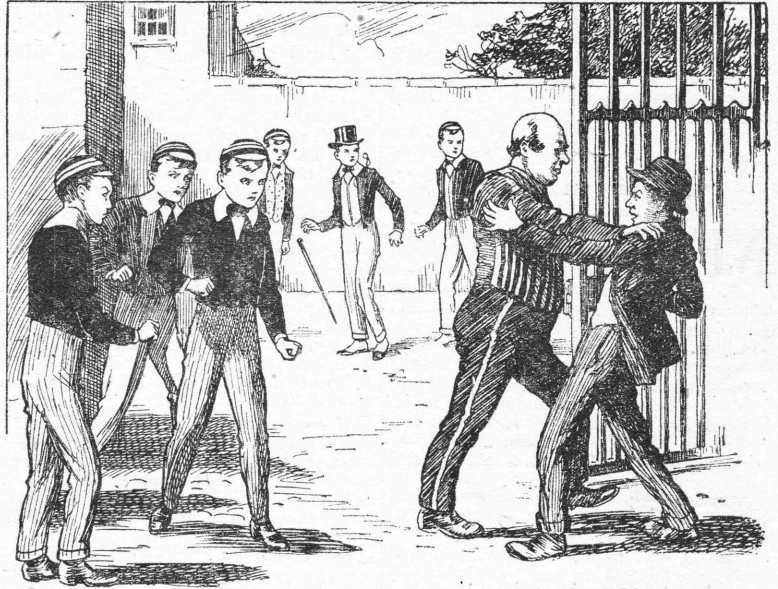
"It's not proved," murmured Jimmy. Snort from Lovell.

"That ruffian knew what he was talking about. It's as plain as anything that the Hugginses have got money from somewhere and changed their name to Montmorency. Not an uncommon thing these days," added Lovell, with another snort. "The sergeant knew him as soon as he clapped eyes on him, and now there's Lurchey."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

In a short time he was in sight of the Bird-in-Hand, the dingy-looking inn that lay back a little from the road on the outskirts of Coombe. It was a place not unknown to some of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood; but Montmorency, so far, had not shared in the escapades of Peele & Co, and the Bird-in-Hand was new territory to him.

Lights were gleaming from the low windows, and the sound of a raucous chorus came from within. Montmorency looked at the place with a black and gloomy brow. He had come there to see Mr. Lurchey—he had to see him. But to penetrate into the dingy, disreputable place was not only distasteful but dangerous for a Rookwood fellow.



**A VISITOR FOR MONTMORENCY!** "I've called to see you, George!" roared Lurchey as he sighted Montmorency. At the sound of that voice the new boy's face became deadly pale. Old Mack gave Mr. Lurchey a shove, to move him out of the gates. (See Chapter 1.)

"Well, it's legal for a chap to change his name if he pays the fee and has it done in order," he remarked.

"I know that. But he's no right to swank and out-Herod Herod with his dashed uppishness!" grunted Lovell. "Swank from a real Montmorency would be dashed bad form, but from a rotten upstart—pah!"

To which Jimmy Silver made no rejoinder. As a matter of fact, he shared the sentiments of his emphatic chum.

Indifferent to the opinion of the end study—outwardly, at least—Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency sauntered down the passage and down the stairs. He exchanged nods with several fellows he was friendly with—Mornington, and Townsend, and Topham, and Smythe of the Shell, and Tracy and Howard—but he did not stop to speak to any of them. The clear summer moonlight in the quadrangle seemed to attract him, and he sauntered out of the house.

Once out of sight of the other fellows, however, he did not saunter. He broke into a run, and reached the school wall. There he pulled a cap out from under his jacket and clapped it on his head. After a quick glance round into the dusky shadows he clambered over the wall.

He dropped into the road, and walked away very quickly.

Keeping in the shadow of the trees by the lane, he hurried on towards the village.

He could not enter openly and ask for the man he sought, but he had to see him. That was imperative, if Horace Lurchey was not to pay another visit to Rookwood, which might have more disastrous results for the pretender.

For a long time he stood, pondering anxiously, and at last he entered the side path that ran by the inn. From some talk he had heard among Peele & Co. he knew of that path, and of a veranda at the back of the house, by way of which the Giddy Goats paid their surreptitious visits. He found himself at the back, and looked up anxiously at a lighted window that glimmered on the shabby veranda.

"Hallo! What are you doin' 'ere?" came a gruff voice, and a heavy hand fell upon Montmorency's shoulder.

He started, his heart throbbing.

It was a stableman who had come suddenly upon him, and was evidently suspicious at finding someone lurking in the dark at the back of the inn. He held Montmorency's shoulder tightly and peered into his face.

"It's all right, my man!" breathed Montmorency.

"Is it? Looking for what you can lay your 'ands on?"

"I—I've called to see a man staying here," said Montmorency hurriedly. "I—I want to go in quietly."

The stableman grinned. By this time he had discerned that Montmorency was

a well-dressed schoolboy, and he thought he understood. He had seen Peele and Smythe about the place before.

There was a glimmer of silver, and the man's manner became respectful at once as a couple of half-crowns were slipped into his hand.

"I catch on, sir," he grinned. "I understand. It's all right, sir, jest as you say. Who might you want to see, sir—Mr 'Ook?"

"No, no; a man named Lurchey. Can you take me in quietly to see him?" whispered Montmorency. "I—I mustn't be seen here, you know."

"I know, sir. You foller me."

With a beating heart Montmorency followed the stableman into the veranda, where a door was tapped and opened. Montmorency blinked into the light of a smoky room.

"Young gentleman to see you, Lurchey," said the man. And he grinned, pushed Montmorency inside, and closed the door after him.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### An Old Pal!

**M**ONTMORENCY caught his breath in the tobacco-laden atmosphere of the room. There had been a time when such an atmosphere was familiar to him, and such dens as the Bird-in-Hand not unfamiliar. But that was in the days before new-found wealth had turned Huggins into Montmorency.

Horace Lurchey was seated at a table, smoking, and playing cards with a fat, red-faced man—Mr. Hook, the bookmaker, though Montmorency did not know him.

Lurchey rose to his feet, startled, and burst into a laugh as he saw the pale-faced junior on the threshold.

"Hallo, George!" he exclaimed jovially. "Come to see your old pal, arter all? Didn't want me to call to-morrow—what?"

"I—I want a word with you," said Montmorency, almost appealingly, and he made a gesture towards Joey Hook.

That fat and ruddy gentleman rose.

"You'll skuse us for a bit, 'Ook?" said Mr. Lurchey. "I've got some business with this young gent."

"If the young gent ever wants to do a bit of business in my line," said Mr. Hook graciously, "I'll be 'appy to oblige him."

And the fat bookmaker quitted the room.

Mr. Lurchey lighted a fresh cigarette, and then stood, with his hands in his trousers-pockets, regarding Montmorency with an insolent grin.

"Ave a smoke, George?" he asked.

"No, no!"

"Given it up?" asked Mr. Lurchey. "You used to 'ave a fag on now and then when you was below stairs at the 'All."

Montmorency winced.

The coarse familiarity of the loafer cut him like a whip, as well as the reminder of early days he would fain have forgotten.

Horace Lurchey chuckled.

"Fancy meeting you up in the world like this 'ere!" he said. "When I saw you in a car with two young gents you could 'ave knocked me down with a feather. You could, reely! 'This is a bit of orlright for me,' I says to myself. 'George is goin' strong,' I says, 'and he won't refuse to 'and out a little to an old pal,' I says. I wrote to you—"

"The letter was sent back to the post-office," said Montmorency. "The name of Huggins is not known at the school."

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"So I found out to-day," assented the grinning rascal. "It's Montmorency now. Ha, ha! You took a whopper while you was about it, George."

"It was my uncle, of course. My uncle's name is Montmorency."

"'Ow much did it cost him?"

Montmorency set his teeth hard. He was longing to plant his clenched fist full in the grinning, insolent face. But he dared not. A few words from Horace Lurchey would have torn to tatters the fabric of pretence and falsehood in which the wretched upstart was clothed as in a garment.

The rascal knew his power, and he was enjoying the situation.

"Who'd have thought it, George?" he went on. "In them days, when you was page at Goby Hall—"

"Hold your tongue!" hissed Montmorency fiercely.

"Page in buttons, you was," pursued Lurchey, unheeding. "And very handsome and nobby you looked in them buttons. You was always turnin' up your nose, even in them days—lookin' down on me, too, though my job was as good as yourn. When old Goby sacked me you was still there, lookin' forward to gettin' a job as under-footman—ha, ha!—when you growed up a bit. 'Ow on earth did it 'appen, George—you turning out like this 'ere? Was there some truth in the yarns you used to spin in the servants'-hall about your rich uncle?"

Montmorency bit his lip till the blood almost came.

If Rookwood fellows should hear the rascal talking like this—if they should learn that Montmorency's haughty manners had first been displayed among the footmen in old Sir Gilbert Goby's mansion—that he had been the dandy of the servants'-hall!

He shuddered.

"My uncle has adopted me," he said at last, in a low voice. "I have taken his name."

"His name! Ha ha!"

"His legal name now, at any rate," said Montmorency fiercely. "You had better be careful, Lurchey. You were kicked out of Goby Hall for stealing, you scoundrel!"

"I served my three months," said Lurchey coolly, "and now I can't get another job without a character, I've dropped on an old pal who's playing the grand duke at a big school. Wot luck for you, 'Ook! 'Ow much do you owe me, George?"

"I owe you nothing, you hound!"

"You want me to drop in at Rookwood, and mention certain things about boys in buttons and servants'-halls?" grinned Lurchey. "Is there a covey there that would speak to you, arter they knew?"

"Plenty!" said Montmorency savagely. "Plenty, if they'd known all along, and if I hadn't taken them in. Plenty, if—if—"

He broke off. It was in his mind that Jimmy Silver & Co., at least, would have thought none the worse of him for his origin, if he had played a straight-forward and manly part.

"If!" mimicked Lurchey. "Why, I know 'ow you has carried on, jest as if I'd seen you at the game. You look like a gentleman, George, but you ain't one by long chalks. They called you Gentleman George at Goby Hall—downstairs. But you was proud in a way that a gentleman ain't; and I'll bet you made 'arf the fellers hate you by puttin' on airs; and if there's any poor beggar down on his luck, you've rubbed it into him—what? Don't I know you?"

The wretched junior winced again. Lurchey indeed did know him.

"Well, what's the figure?" asked Lurchey. "I ain't keen on making visits where I ain't wanted. If I'd known as you hadn't got my letter, I wouldn't 'ave walked up to Rookwood to-day. I'd have given you a chance. You're a snob and a purse-proud upstart, George, but I don't want to 'urt you—not if you treat me decent. What's the figure?"

"A fiver, if you'll clear out and not come back," said Montmorency huskily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Lurchey fairly laid back his head and roared. Montmorency watched him angrily till he had had his laugh out.

"Never knowed you was such a funny cove, George!" gasped Mr. Lurchey, wiping his eyes.

"Look here—"

"Make it a fiver now," said Mr. Lurchey, "and the same every week, and we'll see."

"Do you think I'm made of money, you fool?" exclaimed Montmorency shrilly.

"You look as if you was," answered Mr. Lurchey calmly. "That clobber and gold watchchain never did you in for less'n fifty quid. You're rolling in it, George. You must 'ave been telling the truth at Goby Hall about a rich uncle, when we all thought you was swanking as usual. A fiver a week will keep your old pal a mile off Rookwood."

"I—I'll write to my—my uncle—"

"Oh, do!" said Lurchey. "Write to him as much as you like. 'Til he answers, weep up the fiver every week, unless you want me to drop in at Rookwood and tell 'em about the 'aughty Montmorency washin' plates and touchin' his 'at at Goby 'All. Remember the time when old Sir Gilbert twisted your ear, George, for tellin' lies—"

"Silence!" hissed Montmorency.

"You used to say 'Stow it!' in them days!" grinned Lurchey. "I haven't seen the colour of the fiver yet, George."

Montmorency glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece and started. It was nearly ten—bed-time for the juniors at Rookwood. He took out a handsome Russia-leather pocket-book, and extracted a five-pound note, which he tossed across the table to the grinning rogue opposite.

"I'll see what's to be done," he muttered. "Meanwhile, you keep away and hold your tongue."

"Done—till the next fiver's due!"

Without replying to that, Montmorency turned and hurried from the room, and as he groped his way out of the dark veranda, he heard—without answering—the mocking farewell of Mr. Lurchey:

"Good-night, George! Good-bye, Gentleman George!"

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

##### Painful Prospects!

**M**ONTMORENCY "Mr. Dalton spoke very sharply as a breathless junior came into the School House at Rookwood at a quarter-past ten.

"Yes, sir?"

"What does this mean, Montmorency?" exclaimed the master of the Fourth. "You have been out of gates after lock-up and have remained till after bed-time."

"Yaas."

Two or three of the Sixth were near, and they glanced curiously at Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency as he answered

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**"GENTLEMAN GEORGE!"**

(Continued from page 22.)

his Form master. There was a cool, quiet impertinence in Montmorency's manner—as if he recognised, and wished to emphasise, the difference in social standing between a Montmorency and a mere Form master at a school.

Certainly, no one at that moment could have guessed that the lofty and impertinent youth who "cheeked" his Form master had been addressed only a short time before on equal terms by a character like Mr. Lurchey.

Mr. Dalton coloured a little.

"Where have you been, Montmorency?" he asked very quietly.

"I felt inclined for a stroll, sir."

"Is that all?"

"Naturally, I'm sorry I'm late for dorm," added Montmorency, his tone—as usual—implying that his "sorrow" was only a matter of polite form.

"I shall punish you severely for this

breach of discipline, Montmorency," said Mr. Dalton. "Follow me to my study."

In Mr. Dalton's study the lofty Cecil Cuthbert received four cuts, well laid on, and was dismissed to his dormitory. There was a buzz of voices from a dozen beds as he came into the dorm and turned on the lights.

"Here he is!"

"Been to see Lurchey, Huggins?" squeaked Tubby Muffin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" said Jimmy Silver, glancing at Montmorency's set face. "Can't you see he's been through it? He's been licked. Shut up, all of you!"

"Uncle James' word was law, and Montmorency was suffered to go to bed in peace. But it was a long time before his eyes closed in slumber. He had staved off exposure—for the present, at least—but he had a thorny path to tread at Rookwood; the future was full of uncertainty for "Gentleman George."

THE END.

(You must not miss reading next week's grand long dramatic tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood, entitled "A Rank Outsider!" featuring Montmorency, the snob of the school!")

**"NOT ON THE PROGRAMME!"**

(Continued from page 11.)

School with the first series of daring raids on the peaceful ranchers.

Yells of laughter greeted the actors when they showed up on the stage again, and there was a ripple of laughter all through the remainder of that unfortunate pantomime. Not only the comic business, but all the other business was greeted with merriment.

How they ever got through the performance the performers hardly knew; but they did get through it somehow. And when it was over the audience were still chortling, and they were chortling as they departed. There was no doubt whatever that they had been entertained that evening. So from that point of view, at least, success had attended the Cedar Creek pantomime, in spite of the fact that the principal "turn" was Not on the Programme!

THE END.

(There will be another splendid long complete story of Frank Richards & Co., the cheery chums of Cedar Creek School, entitled "An Editorial Stunt!" next Tuesday.)

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