

# THE MYSTERIOUS LORD BOB!

Robert Egerton—whilst on holidays. When they take leave of him the Fistical Four do not guess that they will come face to face with Lord Bob again—at Rookwood, under another name!



# The Boy Who Borrowed A Name!

A Stirring, Long Complete Story, dealing with the end of Jimmy Silver & Co.'s holidays, and their return to Rookwood.

By  
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## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver & Co., Meet his Lordship!

**P**HIP! Phip!

"Ow!"

"Wow!"

Jimmy Silver clapped his hand to his nose. A moment later Arthur Edward Lovell smacked his chin.

They uttered startled ejaculations almost at the same moment.

Something had smitten them suddenly. It felt like the sting of a wasp; but it wasn't that. But it was something.

The Fistical Four of Rookwood were lurching on bread and cheese by the wayside. It was the last day of their holiday cycling trip. On the morrow they were to return to their homes, preparatory to rejoining Rookwood School for the new term. They were enjoying their last camping lunch, lying at ease on a grassy bank that bordered a shady wood. And then suddenly Jimmy Silver and Lovell felt those sudden stings, and clapped their hands to their nose and chin respectively.

"Ow! I'm hit!"

"Stuff! There's nothing that could—Yoooop!" yelled Newcome, jumping to his feet. "Oh! Ow! I've got it in the ear! Is it a wasp?"

"It's not a wasp!" roared Lovell, scrambling to his feet. "It's pea-shooting. Some silly owl is potting at us with a pea-shooter! Where is he? I'll scalp him!"

The Fistical Four were all on their feet now, in great wrath. They glared round in search of the unseen assailant.

"Here he is!" roared Lovell.

They came upon him quite suddenly—a lad of about their own age, in brown Norfolks, with a merry, smiling face, and a pea-shooter in his hand. He was rather a handsome fellow, with pleasant features. But though he looked pleasant enough, the Fistical Four were not feeling pleasant at that moment; and they rushed on him, and collared him.

"Now, you funny ass—"

"Bump him!" roared Raby.

"What-ho!"

"Here, let go!" shouted the youth in Norfolks. "Only a joke, you know, and—"

"All serene," said Jimmy Silver. "You've had your little joke, and now we're going to have ours! Bump him!"

"Oh gad! Oh crikey!"

The youth in Norfolks yelled loudly as he was bumped in Rookwood style. His pea-shooter went one way and his cap another as he struggled in the grasp of the four.

"Give him another!"

"Ow! Help!"

There was a rustle in the wood, and a man in keeper's garb, with a gun under his arm, rushed on the scene.

"Stop that, you young rascals!" he shouted, evidently in great wrath. "How dare you touch his lordship! Stop that at once!"

And as the Fistical Four did not heed, the burly keeper shouldered them roughly off their gasping victim.

"Bump him, too!" shouted Lovell angrily. "We'll give him beans, and his blessed lordship beans! I'll lordship him!"

"Yes, rather! Cheeky ass—"

The youth in Norfolks scrambled up, panting.

"Hold on, you fellows," he exclaimed, breathlessly. "It's all right, you—"

"Is it?" snapped Lovell.

"Stand back, Judson!" said the boy in Norfolks. "It's all right, my man. You fellows keep off. I apologise for pea-shooting you, if you don't like it. There!"

The Fistical Four, who were greatly inclined to tackle the burly keeper and bump him, too, held back. The keeper looked rather surly.

"Have they hurt you, Lord Robert?" he asked.

"No; it's all right. You can cut, Judson."

"Yes, my lord!"

Judson retired through the wood again, though evidently not quite willing to leave his boyish lordship unprotected.

Lord Robert turned to the Fistical Four, with a frank smile on his good-looking face.

"I'm awfully sorry, you fellows," he said in quite an engaging way. "I spotted you lazing in the grass there, and couldn't resist the temptation to touch you up with my pea-shooter. But it was rather cheeky of me, and I apologise."

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"All serene," he answered. "No harm done. Sorry we bumped you, if you come to that."

"Sorry—more or less!" murmured Lovell.

"Then it's all serene. You mustn't mind Judson. He's keeping a fatherly eye on me while the pater is away. You fellows camping out?"

"Yes. Biking and camping," said Jimmy. "We were having lunch when you started up with your blessed pea-shooter."

"You're camping on my pater's land," remarked the other, as he glanced at the four bicycles stacked against a tree.

"We'll jolly soon get off it, if you like," said Lovell rather gruffly.

"Don't be huffy, dear boy. You can camp anywhere you like. I was just mentionin' the fact, that's all. I was goin' to hint politely that you could ask me to lunch, if you liked."

Jimmy laughed.

"It's only bread and cheese and ginger-beer," he said. "But you're more than welcome. There's lots, such as it is."

"Quite welcome," said Lovell mollified. "You seem a decent sort of ass, though you're rather too handy with your dashed pea-shooter. Come and sit down!"

"Do!" said Raby and Newcome together.

Thus invited on all sides, the boy in Norfolk joined the campers, and sat down in the grass, and was soon tucking into the bread and cheese and ginger-beer with a healthy appetite.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Lord Bob at Home!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. were soon chatting away very cheerily with their new acquaintance. They liked him at once, and it was evident that Lord Robert—whoever Lord Robert was—liked their company. The keeper had addressed him as "Lord Robert" and "your lordship," and the curiosity of the Fistical Four was excited a little. Lovell, who was rather given to directness of speech, asked him bluntly who he was, after a little talk. And the youth in Norfolk was not at all reticent.

"My name's Bob Egerton," he said. "And yours?"

Jimmy Silver introduced himself and his comrades.

"But that keeper chap called you 'your lordship'!" persisted Lovell. "Are you a lord?"

The youth in Norfolk grinned. "Quite so!" he answered. "If you want a full introduction, you have the honour—more or less—of meetin' Lord Robert Egerton, second son of the Marquis of Maybrook. Feel any better?"

The Rookwood juniors chuckled. "So your pater's a real live marquis?" said Raby.

"That's so." "Then your elder brother's a lord," said Newcome.

Newcome had titled connections, and was well up in these matters.

"Yes; Lord Mountwood," said Egerton. "Mountwood's a village near here, and the second title is taken from it. He's at Oxford now. I say, this is toppin' tuck."

"Glad you like it, Lord Robert!" grinned Lovell.

"Offener called Lord Bob, though I rather like 'Bob' better," said the youth in Norfolk. "Shell out some more cheese!"

The five lunched together very amicably.

Lord Bob rose at last, and brushed the crumbs from his clothes.

"Like to see the show, you fellows?" he asked.

"The show?" repeated Jimmy.

"The house, I mean—giddy old historic mansion!" said Lord Bob. "Public admitted to the picture-gallery and reception-rooms on Fridays—tip to the butler. To-day isn't Friday, luckily; if you'd care to see the sights I'll show you round, and stand some tea in my den. Pd be glad of your company."

The Fistical Four exchanged glances.

"You're awfully good!" said Jimmy Silver. "We'll be glad!"

"Come on, then!"

The remains of the lunch were packed in wallets on the bikes.

"Leave your jiggers there, if you like, and we'll go through the wood," said Lord Bob. "They're safe enough. I'll tell Judson to keep an eye on them. This way!"

The Fistical Four accompanied their new friend into the shady wood. They followed a footpath under ancient beeches.

In a deep and shady nook of the wood a little way from the footpath, a boy lay, resting on one elbow, reading a book that lay in the grass.

He did not hear the juniors pass, and

did not look up, and Jimmy Silver & Co. saw only the back of his head. But Lord Bob hailed him in passing.

"Hallo, old kid!" The reading-boy started, and looked round.

He had a rather pale, thoughtful face, which lighted up with a smile as he saw Egerton.

"Diggin' into merry old Virgil?" called out Lord Bob.

"Yes," said the boy, smiling again. "Chuck it up, and come along!"

"If you don't mind, I'd rather—"

Lord Bob laughed. "Right-ho, old swot! Go it!"

And he walked on with the Rookwood juniors, leaving the student to his book.

"Relation of yours?" asked Lovell.

"Not exactly!" grinned Lord Bob. "He's Judson's nephew."

"Oh!"

"Awfully clever young beggar!" said Lord Bob. "Beats me hollow at books. I made the pater let him whack out my tutor with me, and the tutor-man thinks much more of him than he does of me. Fairly gobbles up the classics. He's goin' to a big school—the pater's seein' him through."

"That's jolly good of your pater!" said Jimmy Silver.

"The pater thinks a lot of him because he fished my elder brother out of the river once," said Lord Bob.

"Knocked on the head my only chance of ever becomin' a merry marquis!"

He chuckled. "But I've forgiven him, and I like him no end. Here we are!

This, ladies and gentlemen," said Lord Bob, evidently in imitation of the

butler's manner in showing visitors round on public days, "this is the famous park of Maybrook House, containing umpteen hundred acres. The very ancient oak which you see yonder is said to have hidden Charles the Second when escaping from the Roundhead soldiers. The beeches were planted by the sixth Lord Maybrook in the reign of George the First. I forget the rest!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. laughed. From the park their guide led them on, and they viewed extensive lawns, and a long terrace adorned with statues, and entered a towering mansion by a french window from the terrace.

Maybrook House, as they could see, was one of the "stately homes of England." In a special oaken hall they stopped to look at the ancient armour, worn in old days by historic Egertons.

"You'd rather cut the picture-gallery, wouldn't you?" asked Lord Bob. "It's big, and no end of a bore."

"No fear; let's see the lot!" said Lovell.

"Come on, then!"

The Rookwood juniors "did" the picture-gallery, and then the library, where a bald and dusty-looking old gentleman was unearthed—evidently the marquis' librarian. Then the rooms of state, and the room where Queen Elizabeth had slept, and the secret chamber where Charles the Second had lain hidden while the Roundheads were searching for him. And then Lord Bob led them to his own special den, having ordered tea to be sent up there.

Lord Bob's "den" was about six times the size of the end study at Rookwood, with wide windows looking over the park, and walls adorned with guns and hunting-prints. The fortunate youth was evidently a fellow to be envied, and the Rookwooders liked him all the more for the total absence of anything like "swank" about him. His frank manner and his friendship for the gamekeeper's nephew, showed that the marquis' son was anything but a snob.

The Fistical Four enjoyed their tea in Lord Bob's den, and his youthful lordship evidently enjoyed their company. The chums of Rookwood were quite sorry when the time came to go.

Lord Bob walked back with them to their camp in the lane, and said good-bye there. He waved his hand as the Fistical Four mounted their bicycles and rode away.

"Well, we've had a ripping afternoon!" Jimmy Silver remarked, as the chums pedalled away under the setting sun. "I'm glad we met that chap. Seems no end of a good sort."

"First-rate!" said Lovell. "I wish we were going to see him again."

"Not likely!" smiled Jimmy. "We haven't any marquises on our visiting-list. But I'm glad we've met him."

And Jimmy Silver rode on, little dreaming how soon, and under what peculiar circumstances, he was to meet Lord Robert Egerton again!

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Lord Bob has a Brain-Wave!

FEELEIN' down, Dick?"

It was Lord Bob who spoke, a few days later. He stood on a railway-platform, near a pile of baggage, and with him was the thoughtful-looking youth who had been studying Virgil in the wood on the afternoon of the Rookwooders' visit to Maybrook House.

Dick Morecom smiled rather faintly.

"Yes," he confessed. "I oughtn't to, sir—"

"I think I've told you before," said Lord Bob, "that if you call me 'sir,' Dick, I shall punch your nose! We're pals, aren't we?"

"Yes, sir—I mean Bob," said Dick Morecom.

"You want to go to Rookwood?" asked Egerton.

"Yes—oh, yes! But—but—"

"You're feelin' nervous?"

"Yes."

"I understand," said Lord Bob sympathetically.

"It's awfully kind of your father to see me through like this!" said the boy. "I'm grateful, Bob. But—but, after all, I'm only a—a— My father was a gamekeeper, like my uncle. I'm not the sort of fellow that goes to a school like Rookwood. Of course, it may be all right. But—but I'm rather frightened at the idea of going to a big public school—all by myself, too!"

Lord Bob nodded.

Dick Morecom was plucky, as he had shown on the occasion when he had plunged into deep waters to save his master's eldest son. In danger, he would have been cool and collected enough. But it was not danger that was to be faced now—it was the terror of the unknown.

The quiet, modest, studious boy shrank from what might be before him—from possible snubs and slights, from the contempt and scorn he might encounter at the hands of fellows more fortunately placed than himself.

If it came to fighting, the gamekeeper's son could hold his own easily enough. But what was his defence against fellows who might sneer and avoid him and despise him, because he was not a gentleman's son? He had no defence.

That was what was weighing on the mind of Dick Morecom, and Lord Bob, in spite of his happy-go-lucky carelessness, understood his feelings, and sympathised with them.



"You remember those fellows the other day, Dick?" said Lord Bob suddenly.

"Yes."

"They were public school chaps. I never thought of askin' about their school; but it would be somethin' like Rookwood, most likely. If you meet fellows like that you'll be all right."

"But shall I?" said Dick wistfully.

"Most likely."

"There—there are several other sorts, too. But—but it's wrong of me to talk like this," said Morcom, with an effort. "I'm going to face it somehow. Though I—I feel more inclined to run away."

Lord Bob knitted his brows.

"I wish you could have seen Rookwood before goin' there," he said slowly. "I—I wish I was goin' there myself. I'd see you through all right, Dick. But the pater won't send me to school. He wants to keep me with that stuffy old tutor for another year. But dash it all, Dick, I don't like your goin' off like this! It's rotten!"

Dick Morcom tried to smile.

"It'll be all right," he said. "Don't think about it, old chap. I'll pull through. I don't want you to be worrying about me while you're on your holiday in Cornwall."

"But that's just what I shall be doin'!" said Lord Bob. "I know there's goin' to be some difficulties ahead for you. I don't know how bad they may be. I wish I did. I wish I could go for a few days to Rookwood in your place, Dick, and see what it was like, and put you up to some tips."

Morcom laughed.

"I wish you could," he said. "But that's not possible."

Lord Bob knitted his brows yet more deeply. He was thinking hard, and there was a glimmer in his kind blue eyes.

"Look here, Dick!" he exclaimed suddenly. "I've got an idea."

"Yes?" Dick Morcom tried to speak cheerfully, but his despondency was too much for him. He could not.

"Why shouldn't I go?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Think it out!" said Lord Bob, his eyes dancing. "It would be no end of a lark!"

"But what—what—" stammered the gamekeeper's son.

"Lend me your merry ears, Dicky, my pippin. You've never been seen at Rookwood yet. They don't know you from Adam or Job. Likewise, my noble self has never been seen there. Suppose I bagged your baggage and your name and dropped in at Rookwood as Dick Morcom?"

Morcom gasped. He stared blankly at Lord Robert Egerton, whose blue eyes were dancing with merriment.

"Isn't it a corkin' stunt?" his lordship demanded.

"But—but—"

"I'm booked for a month in Cornwall, with my cheery old granduncle, the rector," said Lord Bob. "Suppose I write to him that I can't come, but would be jolly glad if he'd put up my friend Dick Morcom for a few weeks. He knows you, and he'd do it like a



**A RUSH FOR THE NEW BOY!** Jimmy Silver & Co. caught sight of Lord Bob as he left the station, and they made a rush through the crowd towards him. The Fistical Four did not heed the shouts of protest as they swarmed through the crowd. They wanted to speak to Lord Bob very urgently. (See Chapter 4.)

shot. That settles you. Then I hop along to Rookwood—"

"But—" gasped Dick.

"I go through it instead of you," resumed Lord Bob. "I'm tougher than you. I can stand it. If there's merry snobs there who turn up their noses at a gamekeeper's son it won't hurt me. Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—"

"Cut out the 'buts,'" said Lord Bob. "I'm goin' to do it! I shall see exactly what Rookwood is like, and I'll put you up to it. You'll be all right down in Cornwall. You can mug up your merry classics down by the sad sea waves and enjoy yourself in your own way. And I shall have a few weeks at a public school, which is just what I want—my way of enjoyin' myself, you know. Catch on?"

"But—but your father?" stammered Morcom.

"The pater won't know—till afterwards. Then he'll only chuckle. He can see a joke."

"But—"

"No harm in it," said Lord Bob. "You simply lend me your name and bags. I shall be Dick Morcom for a few weeks. When it comes out, I shall own up that it was my doin'. The Head won't be able to cane me because I sha'n't belong to the school. See? Besides, they forgive a lot to the sons of

merry marquises," added Lord Bob shrewdly. "Marquises' sons don't grow on every bush. It's a go, Dick!"

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Back to School!

"HERE we are again!" bawled Arthur Edward Lovell. There was a crowd at Latham Junction that sunny September day.

Rookwood School was gathering again after the summer holidays, and the Fistical Four met on the platform at the junction with smiling faces and cheery greetings.

Tubby Muffin rushed up to Jimmy Silver at once.

"So jolly glad to see you, Jimmy!" cooed Tubby. "Can you lend me half-a-crown to tip a porter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Same old fat Tubby, what?" roared Lovell, clapping Reginald Muffin on the back with a clap that made him stagger. "Yaroooh!" gasped Tubby.

"Hallo, here's Mornington! How do you do, Morny? And Erroll—same old sobersides, what? And the giddy Colonials!" Lovell bawled a greeting across the crowded platform to Conroy, Van Ryn, and Pons, the Colonial Co., and they shouted back merrily. "Hallo,

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## "THE BOY WHO BORROWED A NAME!"

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here's Bulkeley! Glad to see you again, Bulkeley, old pippin!"

And Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, nodded and smiled, and did not box Lovell's ears for calling him an "old pippin." Much was excused on the first day of the term.

Tommy Dodd & Co., the Modern crowd, came shoving along, and hustled the Fistical Four aside, at which, of course, a crowd of Classics rallied, and charged Tommy Dodd & Co., and scattered them. Smythe of the Shell, parading the platform in a nobby dust-coat and a gleaming topper, was caught between the contending factions, and rolled over, and when he emerged from the scrum Smythe's nobby dust-coat was more dust than coat, and his shining topper looked like a concertina. And the things that Adolphus Smythe said were "frequent and painful and free." Bulkeley and Neville and Knowles and Frampton, came along to restore order, using their walking-canes as they used their ashplants at Rookwood in similar circumstances. Then as the train came in and stopped there was a rush for seats.

Jimmy Silver & Co. bagged a carriage, and held it against any Moderns who attempted to enter; but they let in Morny and Erroll, and Oswald and Flynn, and Putty Grace and Tubby Muffin, and Peele and Gower, and Townsend and Topham. And as the carriage was supposed to seat six, it was fairly full when the door was jammed shut. But the train was crowded from end to end, and there were plenty left on the platform. But though two or three porters were chanting in a sort of chorus "Second train for Coombe in five minutes," everybody wanted to go by the first train, or thought he did. Whence there arose much scuffling and yelling and protesting, and some damage to top-hats. But the Rookwooders enjoyed it all. They felt entitled to "let themselves go" a little on that day of all days. They hadn't quite got over the holiday spirit yet.

"I say, Jimmy," remarked Newcome, as he wedged into a third part of a seat. "I've seen a chap we know."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I've seen about two hundred we know," he answered. "About a hundred have wanted to get into this carriage."

"I don't mean a Rookwood chap," said Newcome. "Member the fellow we met in the vac—"

"We met fifty fellows in the vac!"

"I mean the merry marquis' son."

"Oh, that chap!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver with interest. "What was his name—Egerton—"

"That's it! He's here!" said Newcome.

"Not in this giddy carriage," said Lovell, looking round.

"I saw him on the platform," said Newcome. "I'd have spoken, only the crowd separated us. Wonder what he's doing at Latcham?"

"Going to Rookwood perhaps!" said Raby.

"By Jove! I hope so," said Jimmy Silver. "I'd jolly well like him in the Classical Fourth. Hallo! Talk of angels!"

Jimmy Silver was standing with his

back to the door; partly to keep out newcomers, partly because every seat in the carriage was overfull already. A hand tried the door, and Jimmy turned his head to deny admission, and found himself looking into the startled face of Lord Bob.

"Hallo, old top!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Hallo! You!" ejaculated Egerton.

"Little me! Squeeze up, you fellows, somehow; we've got to find room for this merchant!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Right-ho!"

To Jimmy Silver's surprise, however, Lord Bob hurried along the train, looking for another carriage.

"This way!" shouted Jimmy from the window. "We'll make room for you."

But the marquis' son did not look back.

He did not succeed in obtaining a seat in another carriage, however. The train was already overcrowded, and the porters were shutting the doors, and pushing back the too-eager passengers.

When the train glided out of the station, Jimmy Silver saw the marquis' son standing amid the crowd left on the platform, and waved his hand to him in farewell.

The train rushed onward to Coombe, the local station for Rookwood, with a merry chorus ringing out of every carriage. To judge by the way they "carried on," the Rookwooders were not sorry to be returning to the old school. But it was, as a matter of fact, the last hour of freedom; as soon as they arrived at the school, the rule of masters and prefects recommenced, and the exuberant juniors had to fall back into their places, and toe the line. So they made the most of what remained of the holiday; and it was a merry crowd that swarmed out of the train at Coombe.

"Let's rush the Moderns for the first brake," suggested Arthur Edward Lovell, as they alighted.

"Hold on!" said Jimmy Silver. "That chap Egerton must be coming on to Coombe, as he wanted to get into this train. If we hang on a few minutes we shall see him again."

Lovell nodded.

"Oh, all right! I'd like to see him!"

"Same here!" assented Raby.

So the Fistical Four drew aside from the crowd, and let the mob of Rookwooders stream past them out of the station. For once, the end study was not conspicuous in a struggle for the brakes. All four of the chums were quite eager to meet again the fellow who had entertained them at Maybrook House, and to whom they had taken a liking. As he was in Etons, and was catching the school train, it seemed possible that he was coming on to Rookwood, and in that case, Jimmy Silver & Co. were prepared to repay his hospitality in the holidays by taking him under their experienced wing, and seeing him through his debut at the school.

"Jolly if he's coming to Rookwood," said Lovell heartily. "He never mentioned it to us—"

"Well, we didn't mention Rookwood to him," said Jimmy Silver. "The subject didn't come up. Hallo! There's the train!"

The second train from Latcham Junction was signalled. Coombe platform was cleared now, excepting for the Fistical Four and the station officials. Half a dozen brakes had already driven off with crowds of Rookwooders. As the train came in, Jimmy Silver & Co. watched the line of carriage windows for the face of Lord Bob.

The train stopped, doors were flung open all along its length, and a fresh crowd of Rookwood fellows swarmed out. In that swarming crowd it was not easy to spot one especial fellow; but Jimmy Silver suddenly caught sight of Lord Bob,

making for the exit with a bag in his hand, and a rug over his arm.

"There he is!"

The four juniors made a rush, and there was a roar of protest from the fellows they rushed among.

"Where are you runnin' to?" yelled Tracy of the Shell, as he sat down suddenly on the platform.

"Order!" roared Hansom of the Fifth. "Collar those fags!" raved Carthew of the Sixth.

But the Fistical Four did not heed. They wanted to speak to Lord Bob, and they rushed and shoved and elbowed on. But in spite of their efforts, the fellow they sought had disappeared before they could get clear of the crowd.

"We'll find him outside!" gasped Newcome.

The Fistical Four ran out of the station. There were a good many fellows outside; but Lord Bob Egerton was not to be seen among them. Jimmy Silver called to Snooks of the Second.

"Seen a chap come out, Snooks—not a Rookwood chap—with a rug on his arm, and a bag—"

"I saw him," said Snooks. "The cheery cad banged me with his bag, because I chucked an orange at him!"

"You young sweep! Where did he go?"

"Took a taxi," said Snooks. "Taxi over here from Rookham looking for a customer, and the cad bagged it!"

"What rotten luck!" said Lovell. "I suppose you didn't hear him tell the driver where to go?"

"Yes, I did," answered the fag.

"Where, then?"

"Rookwood!" answered Snooks.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver,

"Then he's really coming to our school! That settles it!"

"Good egg!" said Lovell.

And Jimmy Silver & Co. started for Rookwood, very pleased at the idea of greeting Lord Bob as a schoolfellow at that ancient foundation.

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

#### The New Boy at Rookwood!

**F**IRST day of term at Rookwood was naturally a busy day. There were countless old acquaintances to be greeted; certificates of health to be handed over, night-bags to be lost and found, and lost again; notes to be compared concerning the holidays; masters to be greeted with serious respect in the face, and a grin up the sleeve, as it were; in fact, the occupations of the first day of term were practically endless. So it was not surprising that Jimmy Silver & Co., keen as they were to meet their friend again, rather forgot his existence for a time, when they found themselves plunged into the stream of Rookwood life once more.

It was not till after tea in Hall—everybody had tea in Hall on the first day of term—that Jimmy Silver was suddenly reminded of Lord Bob's existence, by catching sight of his handsome face a good distance down the long table.

He was too far off for speech; the presence of Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, made it impossible to hail him in a loud shout. So Jimmy left him till after tea, and devoted himself to the meal.

The new junior was gone from Hall, however, before Jimmy looked for him, and the chums of the Fourth repaired to the end study, to put it to rights, as they called it.

"I wonder what study he'll be put into!" Lovell remarked suddenly, after

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nailing up a new picture he had brought for the adornment of the study.

"Who—oh, that chap Egerton!" said Jimmy Silver. "Well, I like him no end—but we don't want five in this study. Let's hope he'll be put with some decent chaps; in fact, let's go and look for him. I dare say he's sorted himself out by this time!"

The Fistical Four left the end study, and inquired along the passage for new fellows. They hoped that Lord Bob would be in the Classical Fourth, though, much as they liked him, they did not want to be crowded in their own special study.

"There's one new kid in our crowd," Mornington told them. "Chap named Morcom, I hear."

"Morcom!" repeated Jimmy Silver. "That's not the man we want! Sure there's no others?"

"I heard Mr. Dalton mention him. He ought to know."

"Rotten!" said Lovell, as they walked on. "Then he's not in the Classical Fourth at all."

"Too old for the Third, unless he's a duffer," said Raby. "Might be in the Shell; or—they may have made him a Modern."

"Let's make sure, though," said the captain of the Fourth. "It mayn't be so bad as that."

And the Fistical Four went down the big staircase to pursue their inquiries. And then suddenly they caught sight of the fellow they were looking for over the banisters. He was standing in the lower hall, in talk with Mr. Dalton, the Fourth Form-master.

"There he is," murmured Lovell. "Hang on, and we'll rope him in as soon as Dalton's done with him."

The Fistical Four waited on the staircase, looking over the massive oaken banisters. Mr. Dalton's voice came to them as he addressed the new junior. Lord Bob stood respectfully at attention.

"Your study will be No. 5. Your study mates will be Townsend and Topham. Rawson, who also occupies the study, will not be returning for a week or two."

"Yes, sir."  
"Ah, here is Townsend! I say, Townsend!"

Towny of the Fourth came across the hall as his Form-master called to him.

"Townsend, this is Morcom, the new boy in the Classical Fourth. He will

be in your study. Kindly show him to his quarters."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Townsend. The new junior followed Townsend up the staircase, directly towards the Fistical Four.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stood dumbfounded.

They had heard every word, and it had taken their breath away. This fellow whom they knew as Lord Robert Egerton, otherwise Lord Bob, was addressed by the Fourth Form-master as "Morcom," and answered to the name.

What did it mean? What could it mean?

The new junior caught sight of the four as he came up and started violently. But he recovered himself in a second, and went on with Townsend, giving no sign of recognition after that first surprised start. Jimmy Silver made a stride after him, and caught him by the arm. Jimmy did not like mysteries, and he meant to know what was the meaning of this one, and to know at once.

"Hold on a minute, new kid!" said Jimmy Silver. "What's your name?"

"Morcom."

"Not Egerton?" stuttered Jimmy.

The new junior raised his eyebrows. "I don't quite follow," he said. "My name's entered on the school books. You can read it there, if you like."

"But—but—" Jimmy Silver was fairly dumbfounded. "Aren't you the chap we—we met at Maybrook—"

"You might have seen me at Maybrook. My uncle is head gamekeeper at Maybrook House."

"My hat!"

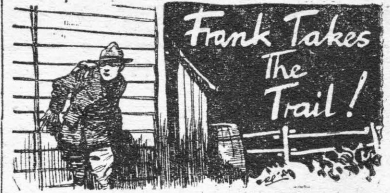
"What's that?" ejaculated the surprised Townsend. He gave the new junior one incredulous glance, and then turned and walked away. The knut of the Fourth certainly didn't intend to show a gamekeeper's nephew to his study.

"But—but—" stammered Jimmy Silver.

Morcom—if he was Morcom—nodded to him coolly, and went on up the stairs. And Jimmy Silver & Co., dumbfounded, stared at one another blankly. Words failed them in their utter amazement.

THE END.

(There are some thrilling adventures in store for Lord Robert Egerton, chums. Don't miss next week's rattling fine yarn, entitled: "The Snobs Catch a Tartar!" by Owen Conquest.)



(Continued from page 10.)

of the ranch. He thought he caught the mention of his own name, and, hidden in shadow as he was, his cheeks flushed scarlet. The ranchmen knew, then—his supposed shame would be the talk of the ranch on the morrow, as it would be the talk of the backwoods school! He could not be gone too soon—or too far!

The horsemen jingled by without seeing the slight form that stood close in the tree's shadow. They disappeared in the direction of the ranch.

Frank Richards stepped out of the shadow and trod the trail again—over rugged prairie, through long, tough grass. He seemed insensible to fatigue.

He was far from the ranch now—beyond the bounds of the extensive ranch-lands that belonged to his uncle.

In the hazy distance far ahead lay the camp of Silver Creek, where he hoped to get a lift in the post-wagon to carry him farther yet. Over the mountain tops to the east came a faint rosy flush. It cleared and grew redder as a new day dawned upon the west.

He was weary now. But he tramped on mechanically. He knew that he would be pursued and sought—that swift horsemen would be riding on his track as soon as the new day revealed that he was gone.

He stopped at last, by a clump of trees on the slope of a hillside. He would gladly have gone on, but his limbs ached with fatigue. He turned into the trees, and in the most secluded spot he threw himself down in the thickets to rest. His eyes closed almost instantly, and he slept as soundly and peacefully as in his room at the ranch, while overhead the sun climbed higher and higher, and the green prairies woke to a new day.

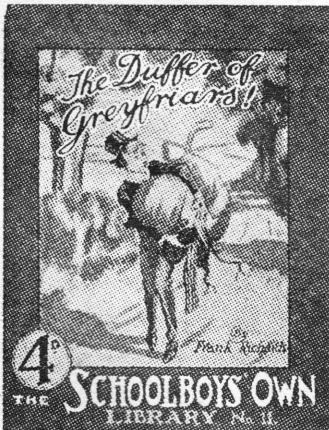
THE END.

(You must not miss reading next week's topping yarn of the chums of Cedar Creek, entitled: "The Run-away!" You will enjoy it.)

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