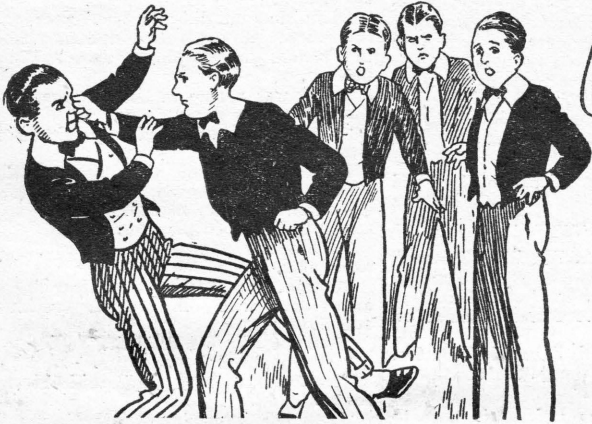


**A HORNET'S NEST!** The snobbish nuts of Rookwood, with Mornington at their head, stir up more trouble than they bargain for when they interfere with Dick Morcom, the "gamekeeper's son."

# The Snobs Catch A Tartar!



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Called Up for Judgment!

"MORCOM!"  
The new boy at Rookwood School, who was addressed by Townsend of the Fourth did not turn his head.

He was standing by the steps of the School House, with his hands in his pockets, looking across the quad.

In the distance, Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth were sauntering under the beeches; and the new junior seemed curiously interested in the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

Perhaps that was why he did not answer to his name when Townsend looked out of the doorway and called to him. At all events, he did not answer; and Towny rapped out his name again irritably.

"Morcom!"  
Still the new junior did not look round.

Townsend emerged from the doorway, came down the steps, and tapped the new Fourth Former on the shoulder sharply.

Then Morcom started a little, and glanced at him.

There was a cheery smile at once on his rather handsome, careless face. Townsend and Topham were his study-mates in Study No. 5, and Morcom was apparently prepared to be quite nice to Towny.

Towny, to judge by his expression, wasn't prepared to be nice at all. His look was lofty, disdainful, not to say contemptuous.

"Hallo, old bean!" said Morcom.  
"You're wanted!" said Townsend curtly.

"Oh dear! Is it the Head?"

"No!" snapped Towny.

"Then who the dickens wants me?"

"We do!" said Townsend grimly.  
"You're wanted in the Common-room, Morcom. Some of the fellows want to talk to you."

"Oh, I'll come!" said the new boy cheerily. "Lead on, Macduff!"

"Follow me!" said Townsend loftily. He led the way into the School House, and Morcom followed him, still with a smile on his handsome face. Cecil Townsend did not deign to utter one word as they made their way to the

junior Common-room. The lofty frown on his face showed that Dick Morcom was not in Towny's good books; and Morcom could not fail to see it. But the fact did not seem to worry him. On the other hand, he seemed rather amused.

"Here they are!" piped, Tubby Muffin, as Townsend came into the Common-room with the new fellow.

There were a good many fellows in the room. There was Topham, Towny's pal; and Peele and Gower and Lattrey; and Muffin and Flynn and Jones minor. There were Smythe and Howard and Tracy and Selwyn, four Shell fellows. There was Tracy minor, of the Second Form. By the window, apart from the rest, lounged Valentine Mornington of the Fourth.

Gower closed the door as soon as the new junior was inside. Morcom looked about him quite coolly.

It was evident, at a glance, that this meeting was a hostile one; but the new fellow was not alarmed.

Townsend pointed to a chair.  
"You can sit down, Morcom," he said.

"Thanks awf'ly!"

Dick Morcom sat down.

He stretched out his very elegantly-trousered legs, with his hands in the pockets of the elegant trousers, and smiled round at the assembly.

"Somethin' on?" he asked.

"Yes," grunted Towny.

"Good! Get on with it."

The juniors sat down in a half-circle facing Morcom. As he sat alone in front of them, the new fellow had to face a regular fire of eyes; but he did not seem at all disconcerted. His self-possession seemed rather to annoy Townsend & Co. They had not expected so much coolness and confidence in a new fellow—especially in a fellow like Dick Morcom.

"Now, we must ask you some things," said Townsend.

"Go ahead!"

"Who are you?"

"Little me!" smiled Morcom. "My name's entered at Rookwood, in the usual way; you've heard me spoken to by Mr. Dalton, in class. I should think that you ought to know who I am by this time."

A Topping Complete Story of  
Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood.

By

OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the popular Rookwood tales appearing in the "Boys' Friend" every week.)

"Are you a gamekeeper's son?"

"Anythin' wrong in bein' a gamekeeper's son?" inquired the new junior.

There was a slight chuckle from Flynn. Townsend gave Flynn a severe look, for interrupting the gravity of the proceedings in this frivolous way. Then he turned his attention to Dick Morcom again.

"Is it true that you are the son of the head gamekeeper at Maybrook House, Morcom?" he demanded.

"I'm certainly not goin' to deny it."

"Your fees are paid here by Lord Maybrook, your father's employer?"

"My fees are paid here by Lord Maybrook, the employer of Richard Morcom, head gamekeeper on the Maybrook estate," said the new junior categorically. "Anythin' more you'd like to know? Shall I describe my honoured parent, and the way he does his hair?"

"You can't carry this off by sheer cheek, Morcom," said Townsend sternly. "On your own confession, you are a rank outsider."

"Hear, hear!"

"Not the sort of fellow who ought to come to Rookwood," continued Townsend. "Now, what the thump do you mean by wedgin' into a school like this?"

"My pater sent me," said Morcom meekly.

"Your what?"

"Pater."

"Do gamekeepers' sons call their fathers pater?" asked Townsend, with deep sarcasm.

"Why not?" said Morcom. "You call your father your pater, don't you? Not much sense in usin' the Latin word instead of the English one; but everybody does it."

"I'm not a gamekeeper's son!" said Townsend contemptuously.

"No," said Morcom innocently. "What does your pater do for a livin', dear boy—keep a pub?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Flynn involuntarily.

Townsend stood petrified. The bare suggestion that his father kept a public-house was enough to petrify him.

"You—you—you unspeakable rotter!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 347.

he gasped at last. "Do I look as if my pater kept a public-house?"

"N-no," assented Morcom, looking at him attentively. "Perhaps not! Book-maker, perhaps?"

"Bub - bub - bookmaker!" stuttered Townsend.

"Yes. Is that it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Flynn!" roared Townsend angrily. "If you want to cackle, you can go and cackle somewhere else, you silly owl!"

"Sure, and is ye're pater really a bookmaker, Towny darling?" asked Flynn.

"You know he isn't!" shrieked Townsend. "You know jolly well that my pater is secretary to an ambassador."

"One of those useless officials they're tryin' to cut down?" asked Morcom.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you toad!" gasped Townsend. "You're not goin' to get out of this by cheekin' your betters! You're a low hound—"

"Eh?"

"You heard what I said!"

"But I don't allow anybody to call me names like that," said Morcom placidly.

"Even a gamekeeper's son may draw a line somewhere, you know. I'm goin' to pull your nose, Towny!"

"Wha-a-at! Stand back, you cad!" yelled Townsend furiously.

He struck out fiercely as the new junior advanced upon him. But his hands were knocked easily aside, and a finger and thumb, that felt like an iron vice, closed on Towny's Greek nose. And Cecil Townsend's next remark was: "Gooooooocooch-gug-gug-gug!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Mornington Loses His Temper!

"**H**A, ha, ha!" Townsend fairly writhed with Morcom's grip on his nose.

He struck out again and again with both hands; but Morcom held him at arm's length, and, with his left, easily warding Towny's wild blows.

"Here, chuck that!" exclaimed Topham, advancing to his chum's aid at last. "Let Towny alone, you cad!"

"Can't Towny look after himself?" asked Morcom. "Fair play, you know. Ain't I here to learn good manners from you merry aristocrats? Fair play's a jewel."

"I'll jolly well punch you—"

Valentine Mornington lounged forward.

"Let Morcom alone, Topham!" he said shortly.

"Are you backin' up that cad, Morny?" exclaimed Topham.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"I wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole," he answered. "But he's entitled to fair play. Leave him alone."

"Look here—" began Smythe of the Shell hotly.

"Oh, rats!" interrupted Mornington "Towny's bigger than Morcom. Let him lick the fellow if he doesn't like his nose pulled."

"Gerrrrrooooooggggh!" spluttered Townsend. "Led go, by dose, you beast! Ow, ow! Ooooooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Morcom released Townsend's unfortunate nose at last, and stepped back, smiling. Towny clasped his nose, which was crimson and painful, with both hands, caressing it tenderly.

"Ta-ta, old beans!" said the new junior. "Cut me dead, if you like—"

THE POPULAR.—No. 347.

freeze me to the marrow with your disdain; but don't call me names, or I shall hurt your noses. Ta-ta!"

Morcom strolled to the door. Gower was standing with his back to it; but something in the new junior's look made Cuthbert Gower step quickly aside, and Morcom left the Common-room unmolested.

He strolled down the corridor, whistling a tune.

He left wrath and dismay behind him, among the knuts, in the Common-room. Townsend, when the first anguish in the nasal apparatus had subsided, squinted anxiously into the glass, to ascertain how much damage had been done. His nose felt as if it had swollen twice its usual size. Fortunately, it hadn't; but it was a burning crimson in hue, and remarkably conspicuous to look at. And it hurt!

"The—the—the awful ruffian!" gasped Townsend. "Jevver hear of such a horrid beast, you fellows? A regular hooligan!"

"It's up to you to lick him, Towny," said Mornington, with great gravity. "You can't possibly look over this!"

"I'm not goin' to soil my hands on the cad!"

"Couldn't possibly!" said Topham. "There's such a thing as a fellow's dignity to consider!"

"Such a thing as a fellow's nose to consider, too, bedad!" remarked Flynn. "He might punch it as well as pull it!"

"I'll take your challenge to him, if you like, Towny," continued Mornington.

"Mind your own bizney, Morny!"

"Certainly, old top! But I really think that if you let the ruffian pull your nose without chastisin' him, he will think that your aristocratic feet are cold, old bean!" And Valentine Mornington, bursting into a laugh, strolled out of the Common-room.

He looked for Morcom in the passages, and found the new junior standing by a window, gazing out into the quadrangle, with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

Mornington joined him at the window. "Is it true, Morcom?" he asked.

"Is what true?" asked the new junior, glancing at him.

"That you're a gamekeeper's son?"

"Everybody seems dashed interested in my father's business!" remarked Morcom. "I'm tired of answerin' questions! What does it matter?"

"Well, it matters," said Mornington. "This isn't exactly the kind of school for a gamekeeper's son to come to. I'm not exactly a snob, but—"

He paused. "You don't look the part. You're pretty well dressed, for one thing; and I remember you had a taxi here from the station. What the thump is Lord Maybrook spendin' his money on a gamekeeper's son for?"

"Might be in return for some service rendered," said Morcom, "and it's Lord Maybrook's bizney, not yours."

"You don't look the part, and you don't talk the part," said Mornington.

"Looks to me as if you're pullin' the fellows' legs, for some sort of a fool joke on them. I don't see the joke myself."

"I don't see that it's your bizney."

Mornington's eyes glinted.

"It's the business of every fellow here if some low cad from a slum is shoved in among them!" he said tartly.

Morcom looked at him steadily.

"Do you want your nose pulled, like Towny's, Mornington?" he asked very quietly.

"You'd find my nose rather hard to pull," sneered Mornington. "You'd be

rather sorry for yourself, I think, if you tried it!"

"I shall try it fast enough if you call me names again!"

"I'll call you any names I please," said Mornington deliberately. "Cad, outsider, and low rotter— Ah, would you!"

Morny's hands went up like lightning as Morcom reached for his nose. A tap on Morcom's own nose drove him back.

"Not so easy!" smiled Mornington.

"Come on, if you want some more, you rotter!"

Dick Morcom did not need a second invitation. He came on with a rush, and in a second the two juniors were fighting fiercely.

There was a step in the passage, and the rustle of a gown.

"Stop this instantly!" exclaimed a sharp voice.

It was Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth. Mornington and Morcom separated at once, breathing hard.

Mr. Dalton eyed them severely.

"What are you fighting about?" he exclaimed.

Morcom was silent; but Mornington answered, with his usual reckless audacity:

"I don't like the cad, sir."

"Mornington!"

"You asked me, sir," said Morny coolly.

"You are impertinent, Mornington!" said Mr. Dalton sternly. "Am I to understand that you have taken a prejudice against Morcom because he belongs to a class poorer than that of most Rookwood boys?"

"Oh, then, it's really true!" ejaculated Mornington. "Yes, sir; I've taken a prejudice against him because he's a rank outsider, sir!"

Mr. Dalton frowned.

"Your answer is impertinent, Mornington, and your conduct foolish and snobbish. You will go into the Form-room at once and write out two hundred lines of Virgil. Let there be no more of this!"

Mornington gave the new junior a look as he was shepherded away to the Form-room by Mr. Dalton. That look told as plainly as words that the affair was not ended, and Morcom understood it.

But it did not seem to trouble him.

He strolled out into the quad, with his hands in his pockets, and a cheery expression on his face. At Rookwood—as would probably have been the case at any public school—the way of a gamekeeper's son was not easy; but, whatever the difficulties in his way, there was no doubt that the new junior had the courage to face them, and even derive some entertainment from them.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Lord Bob Explains!

**J**IMMY SILVER & CO. were chatting under the beeches when Morcom came sauntering along. As it happened, Morcom was the subject of the Fistical Four's discussion, and the discussion suddenly ceased as they saw him.

"Here he comes," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "It's a chance to have it out with him, Jimmy! He's rather avoided us since he's been here."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"We'll have it out with him!" he said. "I can't understand it. And he's got to explain. Here, Morcom!"

Morcom glanced at the Fistical Four and paused. He seemed inclined to avoid the meeting. But there was no possibility of avoiding it, for the Classical



juniors came up and surrounded him while he still hesitated.

Morcom shrugged his shoulders resignedly. He had his own reasons for keeping out of the way of Jimmy Silver & Co. But as they were in the same Form at Rookwood, avoidance was rather a difficult matter.

"Getting on all right at Rookwood—what?" asked Jimmy Silver amiably, by way of a beginning.

"Oh, toppin'!" answered Morcom. "I've just been called up for judgment by Towny & Co., who seem to think that I'm not quite respectable enough to walk on the same merry planet as them. I never realised before how wrong it was to be a gamekeeper's son. If I'm ever born again I shall choose my parents much more carefully."

Jimmy Silver laughed. "The question is, are you a gamekeeper's son, and is your name Morcom?" he said.

"That's the giddy question," said Raby.

"I don't believe a word of it!" added Arthur Newcome emphatically. "Not that I care twopence either way. But it isn't so!"

"I don't quite follow," said Morcom slowly. "Who the thunder do you think I am, then?"

"Lord Robert Egerton, second son of the Marquis of Maybrook," said Jimmy Silver without hesitation.

Morcom laughed. "You'd better tell Towny & Co. that," he answered. "They'd think no end better of me, and I sha'n't have to pull Towny's nose again, perhaps. And it may please Morningson."

"Look here," said Jimmy seriously. "I'll tell you something that happened to us during the vacation, while we were on a bike tour. We stopped at Maybrook, and met Lord Bob Egerton. If you're not like that chap you're his living likeness!"

"You don't say so!"

"I do," said the captain of the Fourth quietly. "We stayed an afternoon with Lord Bob, and he did us well, and showed us over the place, and all that. And we saw a kid there, reading in the park, who, Lord Bob told us, was the nephew of his keeper, Judson, and was going to be sent to school by his father, Lord Maybrook. That kid, I should say, was Morcom, though his name wasn't mentioned. Now, look here! What's the game? Morcom, a gamekeeper's son, was sent to Rookwood by Lord Maybrook. You arrive here in his name. But if you're not Lord Bob Egerton I'll eat my hat! Do you think we don't know you again?"

"Of course we do, you young ass!" said Lovell.

"Now, what have you got to say?" asked Jimmy Silver.

And the Fistical Four fixed their eyes on the new junior with severe inquiry.

Morcom was silent for a minute.

"Sure you know me?" he asked at last.

"Quite!"

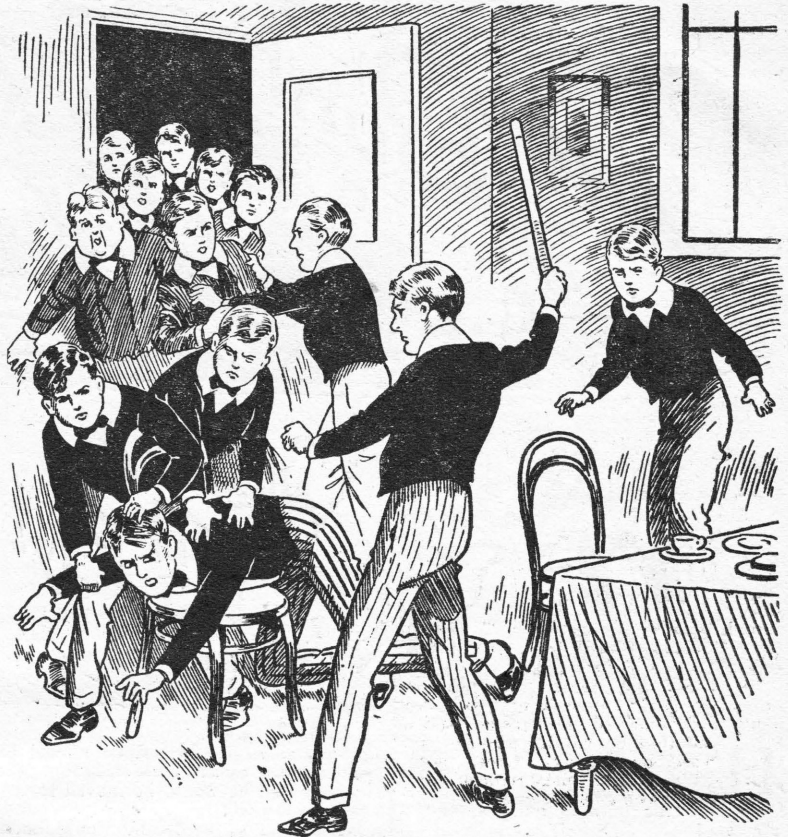
"Accordin' to your yarn, Lord Bob treated you decently."

"First rate!"

"Then you're bound to respect his little secret, if any," said Morcom coolly. "If you think I'm Lord Bob, you're at liberty to think so, but you're not at liberty to say so. I'm not doin' any harm, at any rate. I suppose you don't suspect me of comin' to Rookwood in an assumed name to steal the silver spoons?"

"Ha, ha! No."

"Then the least said the soonest mended," said Morcom.



**THRASHING A CAD.** "If you don't apologise, Morningson," cried Jimmy Silver, "I'll thrash you till you do!" The flogging with the stump, under the staring eyes of half the Fourth, was almost more than pride could bear. "You rotter!" cried Morningson. "I'll smash you for this!" (See Chapter 4.)

"But what does it all mean?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "What the thump are you doing here in Morcom's name, and where is Morcom?"

"Yes, what have you done with the genuine article?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Suppose," said the new junior slowly—"suppose the kid was awfully nervous about comin' to a big public school, fearin' that he might meet a lot of snobs who would look down on him for bein' a gamekeeper's son? Suppose another chap—Lord Bob, for instance—figured it out that he would come here first—as Morcom—and let the kid know later what he had to expect. Suppose Morcom went on a holiday to Cornwall while his pal came along to Rookwood? See anythin' in that?"

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"So that's it!" he exclaimed.

"I'm not sayin' so," said Morcom cheerfully. "I leave it to you. You can suppose anythin' you like, you know. But under the cires, I think you fellows ought to keep your mouths shut—what?"

"We shall do that," said Jimmy, and his chums nodded. "But—but—well, I suppose it's your bizney, Egerton?"

"Morcom, please!"

"Morcom, then," said Jimmy Silver, with a laugh. "But you're looking for a lot of unpleasantness for yourself. There are a good many snobs at Rookwood, and they will turn up their noses at you."

"I'm sure I don't mind!" yawned Morcom. "Let 'em! If they turn 'em up too offensively I shall pull 'em!"

I've started on Towny! Poor old Dick Morcom wouldn't have had the cheek. But I've got no end of cheek. Dick's the best fellow in the world, but I don't think he's quite the fellow to go through what I'm goin' through without turnin' a hair. But I'm rather enjoyin' myself."

"How long is this going on?" demanded Lovell.

"Blessed if I know! Why worry?" said Lord Bob carelessly. "I'm enjoyin' life here, and that's enough."

"Add to your enjoyment, dear man, by coming to tea with us in the end study," said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"Are you sure it won't let your study down in the public estimation, havin' a gamekeeper's son to tea?"

"Ha, ha! We'll chance it."

"Right-ho! I'll come with pleasure."

Morcom strolled into the School House with the Fistical Four. Tubby Muffin met them in the passage, and bestowed a lofty and contemptuous sniff on the new junior.

"I say, Jimmy," called out Muffin, "don't you know that the Fourth are going to bar that fellow?"

"Don't you be a silly young ass. Muffin!" advised the captain of the Fourth.

"Well, I'm barring him. I'm not a snob, I hope?"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Arthur Edward Lovell. "What the merry thump could you have to be snobbish about, Tubby?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not a snob, but I bar the lower

(Continued on page 16.)

## THE SNOBS CATCH A TARTAR!

(Continued from page 13.)

classes at close quarters," said Tubby warmly. "There's a limit in everything. If you have that fellow to tea, Jimmy Silver, you needn't ask me, I can tell you!"

"But I didn't mean to ask you," said Jimmy cheerfully. "You generally come in without being asked, Tubby."

"Won't you ever come if Morcom's there?" asked Raby, grinning.

"No!" sniffed Tubby.

"Then we'll ask Morcom every day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fistical Four went on their way with their new friend, leaving Reginald Muffin sniffing scornfully.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### Morny Wakes Up a Hornets' Nest!

"IT'S all rot, Morny!"

Kit Erroll spoke rather sharply, and there was an uneasy expression on his handsome, grave face.

Mornington was seated on the corner of the table in Study No. 4. He had a look on his face that Erroll knew well—a look that showed Morny was in one of his evil moods. There was a sneer on his well-cut lips as he glanced sarcastically at Erroll.

"What's rot?" he asked.

"This idea of fighting with Morcom! What has the fellow done?"

"Checked me."

"Oh, rot!"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders. "Does that mean that you don't want to take my challenge to him, an' don't want to be my second, Erroll?" he asked, with another sneer. "If it does, I'll find somebody else!"

"I don't see what you've got against the chap."

"He's a low hound, and ought never to have been admitted to this school," said Mornington coolly. "We put up with Rawson; but he keeps himself very quiet, and, anyhow, one Rawson's enough. We can't turn Morcom out of Rookwood, but we can make it dashed unpleasant for him here. I'm going to begin by lickin' him."

"You can't mean that you've joined up with Torny, and Topy, and Gower, and that silly gang of snobs!" exclaimed Erroll impatiently.

"That's exactly what I do mean," answered Mornington with a nod.

"Morny, old man—"

"That'll do, Erroll! Will you back me up, or not?"

"Not in this," said Erroll quietly. "If you're going to join in a silly, rotten persecution, you can't expect me to back you up; and I certainly sha'n't do anything of the kind."

Mornington slid off the table.

"That's enough!" he said.

And without another word he walked out of the study, leaving Erroll with a very troubled expression on his face. But from of old, Erroll knew that it was useless to argue with Mornington when he was in one of his bitter, mocking moods.

Valentine Mornington strolled along the passage and looked into Study No. 5, which Morcom shared with Townsend and Topham—much to their disgust.

THE POPULAR.—No. 347.

Torny and Topy were at tea, but the new junior was not visible.

"Where's your ruffian?" asked Mornington.

"Jimmy Silver seems to have taken the cad up!" snapped Townsend. "They've got him to tea in the end study."

"Thanks! I'm looking for him," explained Mornington. "I'm going to give the cad a lesson for shovin' himself in among his betters!"

Townsend and Topham brightened up wonderfully. They had been discussing Morcom, and they agreed that the "pushin' cad" ought to be soundly thrashed to start with. But there was a difficulty in the way of that; neither Torny nor Topy had any personal desire to undertake the task. Morny's words came very pleasantly to their ears, therefore. Morny was made of sterner stuff than the knuts of the Fourth, and he was a redoubtable fighting-man. Torny and Topy jumped up, prepared to leave their excellent tea unfinished on an occasion like this.

"We'll come with you, old man," said Townsend heartily. He gave his nose a rub. "Let's go and have the cad out."

"Let's!" said Topham cordially.

Mornington smiled and walked on to the end study, with Townsend and Topham at his heels. He thumped on the door and threw it open.

Quite a cheery party was sitting round the tea-table in the end study. The Fistical Four and Morcom seemed to be getting on excellently together. They all glanced up as Mornington strode in, and Townsend and Topham filled the doorway.

"Hallo, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver cordially enough. "Trot in, old top! If you've come to tea, we'll water the tea-leaves again."

"I haven't," said Mornington "I've come to see the cad you've got sitting there—that loafing rotter who ought to have been sent to some reformatory instead of Rookwood!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at Morny. Torny and Topy grinned at one another. Morny was speaking plainly enough to please even the knuts of the Fourth—and rather too plainly to please the Fistical Four.

"Jimmy Silver rose to his feet, his face grim, his lips set.

"Is that how you choose to speak to

a guest in this study, Mornington?" he said. "Are you out of your senses?"

"Not at all! I'm here to see that unspeakable cad—"

"Keep your seat, Morcom," said Jimmy Silver, as the new junior half rose. "You can leave this to me. Morny's insulted you in my study, and he's going to answer for it to me."

The captain of the Fourth came round the table, with a glitter in his eyes that was new there. Seldom had the Rookwood fellows seen Jimmy Silver so angry. For once the good temper for which "Uncle James of Rookwood" was famous, had quite disappeared.

"Put up your hands, Mornington!" rapped out Jimmy.

Valentine Mornington backed a pace. He was not afraid of the captain of the Fourth. Fear, in fact, had been quite left out of Morny's composition. But he was there to fight Dick Morcom, not Jimmy Silver.

"My business is with that rotten cad!" he said.

"Morcom isn't a cad, but you are one—a rotten, slandering, ill-conditioned cad!" said Jimmy Silver forcibly. "You seem to have taken the same line as those brainless snobs, Townsend and Topham—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" ejaculated Townsend.

"You're more to blame because you've got more sense, Mornington," continued Jimmy Silver. "But if Morcom were really a cad, you shouldn't insult him while he's sitting at our table. You'll answer for it!"

"Not to you!" answered Mornington coolly. "I'm goin' to thrash that toad Morcom. I'm lettin' you alone."

And Valentine Mornington put his hands behind him.

"You'll fight me for behaving like a blackguard in my study, or you'll get a ragging!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver savagely.

"Would you mind standin' aside and lettin' me get at that gamekeeper or poacher, or whatever he is?" asked Mornington, with polite mockery.

Jimmy Silver did not answer. He made a sign to his chums, and the Fistical Four made a jump at Mornington all at once. The end study had been insulted; and the end study were quite prepared to wipe out that insult. Morny, in the grasp of the four, pitched headlong on the carpet, with a yell.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Topham.

"Kick those duffers out, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver, as he pinned Valentine Mornington down on the carpet.

"You bet!" grinned Arthur Edward.

Townsend and Topham exchanged a quick glance, and beat a hurried retreat down the passage. They did not wait to be kicked.

Arthur Edward Lovell slammed the door after them, and turned, grinning, towards his chums. Morny, on his back, was struggling furiously in the grasp of three angry juniors. He struggled in vain.

Morcom had sat down again at the tea-table. It was pretty evident from his look that he had no fear of his encounter with Mornington; but in the circumstances he was bound to leave the matter in Jimmy Silver's hands. Jimmy was host, and he was guest; and Lord Bob knew his manners!

"Will you let me go?" panted Mornington, crimson with rage. "I've come here to thrash that cad, and—"

"Stand him up!" said Jimmy Silver.

Mornington was jerked to his feet. He struggled in the grasp of the three juniors. Arthur Edward Lovell came

(Continued on page 26.)

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Still the centurion wavered, and his comrades began to jeer him.

"Porcinus hath lost his strength," mocked one.

"He must have a keen love for the barbarians!" brawled another. "He should have taken service under the standard of Boadicea."

"Remember London!" cried a third, whipping out his sword. "My blade is ready unless he do the deed quickly."

"Hold your tongues, fools!" growled Porcinus, turning angrily on his tormentors. "By Jupiter, it is no love of the barbarians that stays my hand! But this lad hath the limbs and muscles of a gladiator, and, truly, he would make a fine one!"

Just then a man stalked from behind the chariot, where he had evidently heard all of the discussion, to judge from his expression. He was short in stature, and his dress was even plainer than that of the centurion. His face was clean-shaven, and his piercing black eyes and grim-set mouth had the look of one born to command.

Porcinus lowered his sword with a trembling hand, and his comrades exclaimed as in one voice, and in frightened tones:

"Suetonius!"

Harl looked in wonder at the famous and dreaded Roman general, and Suetonius briefly scrutinised the lad with as keen a gaze.

"Truly a well-built barbarian!" he said, sharply and sternly as he turned to the centurion. "I put him in thy charge, Porcinus. See that his life is spared, and that he be safeguarded. He shall figure in my triumph, and thy head shall pay forfeit if he be not ready when I want him."

With this Suetonius strode away as quickly as he had come. With a wild hope of escaping slavery by suicide, Harl looked for a weapon, but before he could reach one the soldiers were upon him, and in a brief time his arms were shackled behind his back.

Porcinus and two companions led the captive into the Roman camp, and the others scattered over the plain to search for more victims.

Only a small force had remained at the camp, and the greater part of the legions were pursuing and slaying the flying remnants of Boadicea's army. It was well into the next day when they returned, and on the following morning the army of Suetonius marched back to the ruins of London.

(There will be another long, thrilling instalment of this serial next week, chums.)

## A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR.

### THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

Just a moment ago I had a caller, a really bright young fellow, who told me he had poetic tendencies. Of course, I could not help his troubles. But he got out that he had a real posh poem about the "Holiday Annual," which started like this: "Attend all ye who list to hear the 'Holiday Annual' praised." I told him firmly and kindly that I did not want anything to-day. The sheer, plain, unblinking fact is that the "Holiday Annual" does not need praise. It can stand on its own giddy pinnacle and meet the four quarters of the world in confidence when they dash up and ask for the new volume, which is the raciest, jolliest, most fascinating book on the market. So don't get forgetting it! The "H. A." is on sale everywhere.

## THE SNOBS CATCH A TARTAR!

(Continued from page 16.)

behind him, and fixed a firm grasp in the back of his collar. His knuckles ground into the back of Mornington's neck.

"Keep quiet, dear boy!" said Lovell. "You rotters!" panted Mornington.

"Now," said Jimmy Silver quietly, "you'll apologise to Morcom."

Mornington burst into an angry, savage laugh.

"That's likely!" "If you don't," said Jimmy Silver quietly, "you'll be made."

"Oh, shut up!" Jimmy's eyes gleamed.

"Lay him across a chair," he said, and he picked up a cricket-stump.

"You—you dare—" gasped Mornington.

"I'm going to lick you with this stump until you apologise to Morcom for your beastly insults," said Jimmy Silver coldly.

"You cheeky rotter—you—" hissed Mornington.

The study door opened, and Tubby Muffin blinked in.

"I say have you got Morn here? Oh, my hat! What are you doing to Morny?"

"Teaching him manners," answered Lovell blandly. "Come in and have a lesson, too, Muffin. Your manners need improving."

"Oh, I say!" gasped Tubby. The fat Classical backed away, but he stood looking in, much interested in the proceedings.

Jimmy Silver took a business-like grip on the stump.

"Are you going to apologise, Mornington?" he asked.

"No!" yelled Morny.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Come along, you fellows!" Tubby Muffin howled along the passage in great excitement. "Morny's being flogged! He, he, he!"

More and more of the Classical Fourth crowded round the doorway. Townsend & Co. were in the rear. Morny had been championing the cause of the knotty crowd in his visit to the end study; but it was noticeable that the knuts showed no desire whatever to rush to the rescue of their champion. Morny was left to deal with the hornets'

nest he had roused. But Kit Erroll, as soon as he knew what was on, came striding through the crowd, and burst into the end study.

He caught Jimmy Silver's arm as another whack was descending.

"Stop that!" exclaimed Erroll hotly.

Jimmy Silver looked at him quietly. He liked and respected Erroll; but he was not to be interfered with just then.

"Stand back, please, Erroll! Mornington came here and insulted Morcom, a guest in this study. He's going to apologise for it. I'm going to lick him till he does!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Kit Erroll, rather to his surprise, found himself well held by the new junior. He struggled to reach his chum's side, but he struggled in vain. The "gamekeeper's son" was fully his match.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Apologising yet, Mornington?"

"No, you rotter!" Mornington choked with fury.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Mornington yelled with pain and fury. There was a laugh in the passage, though some of the fellows were looking serious. Mornington's face was like chalk with rage.

But he would not apologise.

Jimmy Silver raised the stump again, but he hesitated.

"That will do!" he said, at last. "If the cad won't apologise, he's been jolly well licked, at any rate! Chuck him out!"

The captain of the Fourth threw the stump into a corner. Mornington was swept away from the chair, and with a swing, sent stumbling into the passage. The juniors made room for him to tumble.

Newcome closed the door of the end study.

"Trouble to come," he remarked.

"The matter won't end here—if I know Morny!"

"He can have all the trouble he wants!" said Jimmy Silver gruffly.

"More, in fact!" grinned Lovell.

"I can see that I shall be slain as soon as I leave the shelter of this giddy study," remarked Morcom, with a grin. "So shell out a little more of the cake, Silver, old bean!"

And Jimmy Silver laughed, and helped the new junior to cake. There was peace once more in the end study. But it was the calm before the storm—and the storm was not to be long in coming!

(The title of next Tuesday's special story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, is: "Morny Means Business!")

Mornington continues his persecution of the new boy, Morcom.

"IN HIS BROTHER'S PLACE!"

By Frank Richards.

A magnificent, long, complete featuring the popular Chums of Greyfriars.

"IN THE DAYS OF THE GLADIATORS!"

By Alfred Armitage.

Another long, thrilling instalment of our powerful romance of Ancient Britain.

### HOBBIES FOR ALL.

Special articles by our Hobbies Experts on electric railways, autograph collecting, and wrestling.

Your Editor.

### NEXT WEEK'S STORIES!

"THE TYRANT OF THE SCHOOL!"

By Martin Clifford.

A splendid, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co., the chums of St. Jim's.

"THE PERIL OF THE PRAIRIES!"

Another thrilling and dramatic story of Frank Richards' amazing flight from Cedar Creek.

"MORNY MEANS BUSINESS!"

By Owen Conquest.

A stirring, complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, in which