

HOMeward BOUND! One last adventure, and then the Rookwood Chums bid farewell to their cowpuncher pals of Windy River, and turn their faces towards England, and their old school!

GOOD-BYE TO



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Boy from Texas!

"IT'S been jolly!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell.

"No end jolly!" agreed Jimmy Silver.

"Ripping!" said Raby.

"Top-hole!" declared Newcome.

The Fistical Four of Rookwood did not always agree upon all points, but they were quite unanimous now.

"All the same," went on Lovell, "I shall be glad to see old Rookwood again!"

"Yes, rather!"

The Rookwood juniors were standing on the veranda of the ranch-house at Windy River, looking out over the wide prairie. Their stay in Canada was coming to an end now, and though they looked forward to seeing Rookwood School again and all the fellows there, they were sorry to bid farewell to the scenes that had grown familiar to them.

Over by the corral Skitter Dick was rubbing down a horse. Pete Peters, the foreman of the ranch, was standing in the doorway of his cabin, smoking a pipe. Baldy, the cook, was washing up in the cookhouse, with a musical clink of pots and pans, and the autumn sun shining on his bald head. In the distance cattle grazed on the plains. Far off, the Windy River wound like a streak of silver.

"We'll come over again some day—if Mr. Smedley isn't fed-up with us," remarked Raby.

"You bet!" said Lovell.

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"Only a week more," said Jimmy Silver, "and then we get on the cars at Calgary and say good-bye to Alberta. We'll have some yarns to spin in the studios at Rookwood, anyway."

Hudson Smedley stepped out on to veranda. The big Canadian rancher nodded to the Rookwooders.

"You youngsters care to ride to Kicking Mule this morning?" he asked.

"Anywhere you like," said Jimmy, with a smile.

"I think I told you I was expecting a visitor at the ranch," said Hudson Smedley. "Mr. Lick, from Texas. He's at Kicking Mule now, and will be coming over to-day. I should ride over to meet him, but I guess I've got rather important business at the Sunset Ranch. If you young fellows care to go—"

"Yes, rather!"

"Likely enough you'll meet him on the trail if he started early. If not, you'll inquire for him at the Post Hotel at Kicking Mule. He's a stranger in this part of Canada, and a guide may be useful to him. I guess you know your way about the prairie by this time, and won't lose yourselves or Mr. Lick."

"No fear!" said Lovell.

"He will drive over from Kicking Mule, so you'd better hail any buggy you pass on the trail."

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. descended the steps of the veranda and walked over to the corral.

It was a bright autumn morning—cold, but fine—and the chums of Rookwood were prepared to enjoy a gallop over the prairie trails. They led out

their horses and saddled up. Then they mounted and rode out on the prairie trail.

It was many a long mile from Windy River to Kicking Mule, and Jimmy Silver & Co. rode at a gallop. They were rather curious to see Mr. Lick, of Texas.

Mr. Lincoln Polk Lick was said to be a millionaire. He had started life as a cowboy on a Texas ranch, and now he was the owner of tens of thousands of acres in that State, with ranching interests in Wyoming, California, and Canada. His visit to Windy River probably meant that he was extending his interests to Alberta, and his arrival had caused some excitement among the innumerable dealers in "real estate" in that growing province. A millionaire with money to burn was a great prize to the enterprising gentlemen who lived by selling "town lots to tenderfeet."

"Hallo! There's a giddy stranger on the trail!" remarked Lovell, when the chums of Rookwood had passed the ford at Coyote Creek, some fifteen miles from the Windy River Ranch.

"It's not Lincoln P. Lick!" said Jimmy Silver, with a smile.

Evidently it was not.

A boy of about Jimmy's own age was sitting his horse at a short distance from the creek, looking about him with a very keen pair of eyes under the shade of a Stetson hat.

At this point several trails, marked by the hoofs of horses and cattle, branched off—one to Kicking Mule, another to Mosquito, another to Windy River.

Signposts were quite unknown on the

A GRAND, LONG COMPLETE STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., OF ROOKWOOD, AND THEIR LAST THRILLING DAYS OUT WEST.

CANADA!

By
OWEN
CONQUEST



Alberta trails, and the young stranger was apparently at a loss.

The four juniors rode on towards him, and he observed them keenly as they rode up. They observed him also.

He was a sturdy fellow, with a bronzed face and bony cheeks. His nose was sharp and prominent, his eyes remarkably keen. He would not have been called handsome even by a foud parent, but he certainly looked like a fellow who could take care of himself.

"Say, you guys!"

The young stranger called out to the Rookwood juniors as they came up, with a slight nasal twang in his speech. Jimmy Silver decided at once that he did not belong to Canada.

"Hallo!" replied Jimmy.

"You 'uns belong hereabouts?"

"More or less," answered Jimmy.

"Lost your way?"

"I guess I ain't lost it," replied the other cautiously. "Texas Lick ain't the galoot to lose his way on the prairie."

"Texas Lick!" repeated Jimmy.

"I guess that's my name."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What's the matter with it?" demanded Lick warmly.

"Oh, nothing!" said Jimmy Silver blandly. "I thought Texas was the name of a State—"

"Yep. I guess I was raised in that State, and named after it," said young Lick. "I guess it lays over anything on this side of the border. You 'uns ever heard of Windy River?"

"Just a few," said Lovell. "We've come from there."

"Oh, that's real good! Then you can tell me which of these pesky trails leads to Windy River. I guess I hired this gee at Kicking Mule, and started out to get in ahead of the popper. I've been a good hour here, waiting for some galoot to show up, and I reckon the popper will soon be along. It will be one on me if I don't get in first, after leaving him hanging up at Kicking Mule!"

"Is Mr. Linco-n P. Lick your father?" ask Jimmy.

"Sure!"

"Mr. Smedley sent us to meet him on the trail and guide him," said Jimmy.

"I guess you won't have far to go.

He was scheduled to start an hour after I lit out." Master Texas Lick turned in his saddle and stared back along the trail. "Thunder! I reckon that's the popper in the buggy, and he's coming along hell-for-leather, and no mistake!"

The juniors followed Lick's glance along the trail to Kicking Mule. From that direction a buggy had appeared in sight, coming towards them at a rattling speed. A man in a Stetson hat, with a brown beard, held the reins, and it could be seen that he was tugging at them. From the distance the thudding of furious hoofs reached the ears of the juniors.

"That horse is running away!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "By gum, there will be trouble if he isn't stopped before he reaches the creek."

Texas Lick's face set hard.

The buggy was bumping over the rough prairie trail, threatening to upset at every stride of the excited horse. And it was clear that the horse was quite out of control. One of the reins, as the juniors could see now, was broken. It had snapped under the strain. The horse tore on madly towards the creek, the buggy rocking behind him.

Jimmy Silver jerked his lasso free from his saddle.

"Clear off the trail, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "I'm going to rope him in. It's the only chance."

Texas Lick pushed his horse towards Jimmy.

"Give me that rope."

"Keep back!" snapped Jimmy.

"Give me that rope, I tell you!" roared Lick. "I guess I can handle a rope better'n you. I was raised in Texas."

Jimmy Silver did not heed.

He rode to meet the oncoming buggy, the lasso in his hand. Jimmy Silver had acquired great skill in the use of the lasso during his stay at the Windy River Ranch. He held the coiled rope ready for a cast, his eyes on the oncoming horse. The runaway was tearing on straight for the creek.

"You hear me yaup?" shouted Lick.

He gave his horse a touch of the spur, and rode at Jimmy Silver.

Before Jimmy could guess his inten-

tion, Texas Lick was close beside him, and had grasped the coiled lasso.

"Let go!" panted Jimmy.

"You pesky guy, give me the rope!"

"I tell you—"

With his free hand the Texan struck Jimmy Silver on the chest, so suddenly and forcibly, that the Rookwood junior reeled out of the saddle.

He let go the rope as he fell, and Texas Lick rode on with the lasso in his hand, leaving Jimmy Silver sprawling in the grass.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Roped In!

JIMMY SILVER sat up dazedly. Lick was riding away up the trail with the speed of the wind, as if designing to meet the runaway face to face. Jimmy sat and stared blankly after him.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Lovell.

All four of the Rookwood juniors watched Lick.

Only a couple of dozen yards in front of the tearing horse and vehicle, Lick wheeled aside from the trail, and dragged in his horse, his right arm shooting up, the coiled rope in his hand.

An instant more, and the runaway horse was tearing past him, and in that instant the lasso flew.

The loop descended upon the runaway horse's tossing head, and slid over the neck.

The Rookwooders, as they saw the success of the cast, looked to see the runaway dragged to a halt.

But Lick, letting the rope run, rode with the runaway, keeping pace, and putting a gradual pull on the lasso.

The man in the buggy hardly looked at him; he was holding on to the seat now to keep himself from being tossed bodily out of the rocking vehicle.

Closer to the creek, and to the staring Rookwooders the runaway swept.

Jimmy Silver scrambled to his feet.

In his anxiety for the fate of the man in the buggy, he forgot to be angry at his unceremonious handling by Texas Lick.

He stood holding his horse and staring on breathlessly.

The Rookwooders wondered for a minute why Lick did not haul in the lasso; but they quickly divined his reason. A sudden stopping of the careering horse would have wrecked the buggy, going over the rough trail at such a terrific speed.

Lick, riding after the runaway, was putting gradually a harder and harder pull on the stretched rope, and the horse insensibly diminished its mad pace under the gathering strain.

But the muddy slope down to the creek was terribly close now. Jimmy Silver & Co., helpless to interfere, looked on with beating hearts.

Lick's face was set and hard, and quite cool. Almost on the very edge of the creek he gave the taut rope a sharp jerk, and dragged the runaway round.

The buggy whirled round after it on the trail, but the speed was so reduced by this time that it turned in safety.

Then Lick, gathering in the rope, rode up to the runaway's head and secured him.

The buggy came to a halt.

Lick looked round.

"I guess you 'uns can hold this animal!" he called out.

Arthur Edward Lovell took charge of the horse's head at once. The runaway was subdued now, standing

trembling, with the sweat pouring down its limbs.

Texas looked at the brown-bearded man in the buggy and grinned.

"Close call for you, popper," he said.

"I guess so!" said Mr. Lincoln P. Lick. "The gol-darned reins broke, I guess, after this hyer gol-darned critter was skeered and tuck to its heels. I guess I was going to lambaste you, Texas, for vamoosing without leave this morning."

"Oh, can it, popper!" said Lick.

"Waal, I won't lambaste you now, anyhow!" said Mr. Lick.

"I guess you wouldn't, anyway," said young Lick independently. "Don't you give me any guff, popper."

Mr. Lick did not appear to be offended by this reply from his hopeful son. He laughed.

"That hoss safe now?" he asked.

"I guess so."

"Then you get the reins fixed, Texas."

"I'll sure fix them."

Texas Lick proceeded to examine the broken reins and splice them. Mr. Lick turned his attention to the Rookwood juniors.

Mr. Lick was a rather bulky gentleman, with a bronzed, bearded face. He was dressed in "store" clothes, only his Stetson hat being reminiscent of the one-time cowboy. He had very keen eyes, like his hopeful son. Jimmy Silver raised his hat as he met the glances of the Texas rancher.

"Mr. Smedley sent us to meet you, Mr. Lick," he said. "We're going to guide you to Windy River."

"I guess I'd have found the way, but I'm real glad to see you," said Mr. Lick cordially. "You belong to the ranch?"

"No; we're visitors from England; we're going home next week," said Jimmy.

"Going back to school," added Lovell.

"School!" repeated Mr. Lick, seeming to regard the Rookwooders with a new interest. "You're schoolboys?"

"Yes."

"I reckoned you was tenderfeet," assented Mr. Lick, with a nod.

"We're not exactly tenderfeet," said Arthur Edward Lovell stiffly. "We know our way about in Canada."

"No offence," said Lincoln P. Lick. "I could see you was from the Old Country, that's all. How long's that going to take you, Texas?"

"Five minutes, I guess."

"Hustle, then; time's money," said Mr. Lick.

"All the quicker if you don't give me any chin-wag, popper!"

The Rookwood juniors looked rather curiously at Mr. Lick, wondering how he relished being addressed in this style by his son. But Mr. Lick, of Texas, seemed to be used to it.

"I guess I'll take the cowhide to you some day, Texas," he said, quite good-humouredly.

"Oh, guff!" said Texas.

And he did not even look up from his occupation as he answered his father.

"So you're at school in England, you uns?" went on Mr. Lick, to the juniors of Rookwood. "What school might it be—Eton?"

"No; Rookwood."

"I guess I ain't exactly heard of Rookwood," said Mr. Lick, thoughtfully. "Where might it be?"

"It's in Hampshire," said Jimmy Silver.

"Hampshire?" repeated Mr. Lick.

"Yes."

"Where's that?"

"Wha-a-at?"

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"In the Old Country, I s'pose?" said Mr. Lick.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver, almost overcome. "Hampshire is a county in England, Mr. Lick—in the south of England!"

"I guessed it might be," assented Mr. Lick. "Nothing to be surprised at, bub. I allow you wouldn't know the names of all the counties in Texas."

"Of course not!"

"Waal, then, how should a Texas galoot know the names of all the counties in England?" asked Mr. Lick.

"H'm! Quite so!" assented Jimmy Silver.

"Big school?" asked Mr. Lick, taking what seemed to Jimmy an unaccountable interest in the matter, while Texas Lick repaired the reins.

"Fairly," answered Jimmy Silver. "About two hundred fellows. It's not one of the biggest public schools—only the best, as it happens."

Lovell and Baby and Newcome nodded assent to that. Rookwood School certainly was not the biggest public school in England. But it was the best. All Rookwooders, past and present, were agreed upon that.

"Public school?" repeated Mr. Lick.

"It's a public school?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then I guess that ain't what I'm looking for," said Lincoln P. Lick, with emphasis. "If you want a public school you can't lay over the public schools in the United States. But I reckon I'm after suthing a bit more special for my boy."

Texas Lick looked up at that.

"You're making a jay of yourself, popper," he said. "English public schools ain't the same as in the States."

"What do you know about it, you young guy?"

"More than you do, popper, just a few." Texas Lick bestowed a momentary attention on the Rookwooders. "The National Schools in the United States are called public schools," he explained. And then he devoted his attention again to splicing the reins.

"Oh, I see. This hyer Rookwood you speak of ain't a national school?" asked Mr. Lick.

"Not exactly," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "It's what we call a public school—a boarding-school."

"Lords, and so on?" asked Mr. Lick, with interest.

"Ha, ha! I don't think we have any lords at Rookwood—not last term, at any rate. But they might blow in any day."

"I guess I'll get you to tell me some more about this hyer Rookwood," said the ranch millionaire. "You finished, Texas?"

"Jest finished."

"Then let's get a hustle on."

Mr. Lick gathered up his mended reins.

"Straight on, sir!" said Jimmy Silver. "If you trust the horse—"

"I guess I can handle him now!"

And the Texas millionaire drove on. Ten minutes before, Mr. Lincoln P. Lick had been in imminent danger of a broken neck, and he had certainly had a very narrow escape. But the incident passed from his mind. He drove on at a good rate towards the distant ranch, the buggy bumping on the rough trail, and the Rookwooders and Texas Lick rode behind.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bumptious!

JIMMY SILVER looked rather grimly at Texas Lick.

There was no doubt that the young Texan had handled Jimmy's lasso extremely well, and saved his

father from serious injury, perhaps from death. But that did not alter the fact that he had grabbed the rope from Jimmy, knocking the Rookwooder out of his saddle for the purpose. Jimmy expected the American to offer some apology, or at least to express a hope that he hadn't hurt him. But Texas Lick seemed to attach no importance whatever to the occurrence. Indeed, he seemed to have forgotten it.

Jimmy, who had several bruises from the fall, naturally did not forget it so easily. He did not want to quarrel with Master Lick; but he did want to impress on that breezy youth's mind the fact that Rookwood fellows could not be handled so cavalierly. He rode by the side of Master Lick and spoke to him.

"You pushed me off my horse, Lick," he said.

Lick nodded.

"Sure!" he assented.

"You might say you were sorry!" suggested Jimmy.

"I might!" assented Lick. "But it wouldn't be true. I ain't sorry!"

"What?"

"I guess I told you to give me the rope. I had to have it."

"It didn't occur to you that I could have handled it as well as you did?" asked Jimmy sarcastically.

"Not much! You, a gol-darned tenderfoot from the Old Country," said Texas Lick derisively. "You make me smile! I guess I was born to the lasso. And you ain't the first tenderfoot I've handled, not by a jugful!"

Jimmy Silver looked at him.

"It seems that you're going to be a guest at the ranch, and Mr. Smedley is my cousin," he said. "I can't very well pick a row with you, Lick. But if it wasn't for that, I'd mop you off that horse, and wipe up the ground with you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Texas Lick.

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Jimmy Silver angrily.

"Ha, ha! Why, you guy, you wouldn't last me two shakes of a coyote's tail," said Texas Lick. "I've whopped galoots twice your heft, down in Texas. I guess there isn't a critter in Canada that I couldn't whop!"

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Oh, you make me tired," said Texas Lick. "There isn't a son of John Bull that I couldn't whop, if I set my hand to it, and don't you forget it. You galoots allow you can scrap. Pick out your best man, and see me make shavings of him before you can say 'no sugar in mine!'"

Jimmy Silver breathed hard. He was strongly tempted to take the Texan at his word. But he remembered that Mr. Lick and his son were guests of Hudson Smedley, and he restrained his wrath.

"Come on, you fellows," he said.

And the Fistical Four rode on a little faster, to relieve themselves of the company of Master Lick. Texas Lick rode after them, chuckling.

No more remarks were exchanged between Lick and the Rookwooders till Windy River Ranch came in sight. Texas Lick glanced over the ranch-house and the corral and the buildings, with a keen, appraising eye.

"This hyer Windy River?" he asked.

"Yes," said Newcome shortly.

"I guess you could put the whole shebang into the corral at Lick Ranch in Texas, and never notice it was there."

"Rats!"

Hudson Smedley came out to meet Mr. Lick, as the Texan descended from the buggy. Lick senior and junior went into the ranch-house with the Canadian rancher.

Jimmy Silver & Co. walked their horses to the corral.

"What do you think of that merchant, Jimmy?" asked Lovell.

"I think that a jolly good hiding would do him a lot of good," answered Jimmy Silver; "and I think he'd get it if he wasn't a guest here."

"I never wanted to punch a chap's head so much," said Lovell, with a frown. "I suppose Mr. Smedley wouldn't like a chap to punch the cheeky cad's head."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Not likely! We'd better try to keep clear of him."

But that did not prove to be so easy. The Rookwooders went into the ranch-house to dinner, and Mr. and Master Lick were at the table. Lincoln P. Lick was discussing ranching with Hudson Smedley. It appeared that he was visiting Alberta to get first-hand information before investing any of his innumerable dollars in that province. But after a time he switched off ranching as a topic, and asked the juniors questions about their school in England. Why that subject interested Mr. Lick, Jimmy Silver & Co. could not guess; but evidently it did interest him.

He wanted to know all about Rookwood—its size, its numbers, its age, its history, its situation. He was interested to learn that its headmaster, Dr. Chisholm, was a Doctor of Divinity; he even inquired into the curriculum. Mr. Smedley was as surprised as the juniors by his thirst for knowledge on a subject that could scarcely be supposed to interest a Texas rancher. But Lincoln P. Lick enlightened his hearers at last.

"I guess that will suit Texas!" he said.

"Texas?" repeated Mr. Smedley.

"My boy Texas."

"Oh!"

"I guess I've planned for a long time to send him to a tip-top school in the Old Country for a few years," explained Mr. Lick. "Now, I never had much school, Readin' and writin' was about all I ever roped in. That ain't stopped me from becoming the biggest ranch-owner in Texas, and I guess it won't stop me from becoming the biggest ranch-owner in Canada if I set my mind on it. I reckon I generally get what I want, though I never knew a word of Latin or Greek, and don't even know the names

of the counties in England." He grinned at Jimmy Silver. "All the same, my boy Texas is goin' to have the best. It's you for Rookwood School, Texas."

"Can it, popper!"

"Don't you want to go?" exclaimed Mr. Lick, glaring across the table at his son.

Lick grinned derisively.

"No fear! No Old Country on my plate. I was raised on a ranch, and I guess I ain't gone on school. All very well for these tenderfeet. Not good enough for me."

Politeness to Mr. Lick held the Rookwood junior silent. But they longed to tell Master Lick just what they thought of him, and of his fitness for Rookwood School.

"I guess I mean it," said Mr. Lick. "I'm going to fix it up, Texas, and you're going to toe the line."

"I guess not," said Texas.

"And if you give me any more guff, I'll borrow a cowhide from Mr. Smedley and I'll arn you!" exclaimed Mr. Lick.

"Can it!" answered his dutiful son.

"You boys would like to show Mr. Lick's son round the ranch, I think," remarked Hudson Smedley, dinner being over.

As a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver & Co. had no desire whatever to show Mr. Lick's son round the ranch. But they politely assented, and left the ranch-house with Texas Lick, leaving Mr. Lick and the rancher deep in discussion, amid a cloud of cigar-smoke.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Fight!

TEXAS LICK walked round the ranch with the air of a fellow to whom the whole place belonged. He expressed opinions freely on all he saw, and most of his opinions were disparaging. Nothing he had seen in Canada, apparently, was equal to what he had seen in the United States, and he held the opinion that the

Old Country was undoubtedly an inferior edition of Canada. His self-satisfaction was really remarkable. He was greatly amused by his father's "stunt," as he called it, of sending him to Rookwood, and he cheerfully informed the Rookwooders that he wouldn't be found dead at Rookwood. No considerations of mere politeness prevented Master Lick from expressing his opinions. Arthur Edward Lovell burst out at last:

"Look here, you young ass, if you think that you could shove in at a school like Rookwood, it only shows that you don't know what you're talking about. You wouldn't be admitted there."

Lick looked at him.

"Why not?" he asked, quite cheerfully.

"You're not good enough."

"And you'd jolly soon be put in your place, in a school like Rookwood," said Raby. "You'd have the cheek taken out of you pretty fast."

"I guess the popper could buy up Rookwood, lock, stock, and barrel, and never miss the money," said Lick.

"Only Rookwood doesn't happen to be for sale," said Jimmy Silver. "There are some things that even dollars can't buy."

"I reckon I'd go to Rookwood if I got-darned well chose!" retorted Lick.

"Rats!"

"The popper's set on it," said Lick thoughtfully. "I don't take any nonsense from the popper; but I don't mind letting him have his way sometimes. I guess I'll go to Rookwood to please him."

"Well, my hat!" said Lovell.

"If I don't like it, I shall jest clear," went on Lick. "No harra in giving it



SAVING THE RUNAWAY! The Texas boy made his cast, and the lasso dropped over the neck of the runaway horse. But Lick, letting the rope run, rode with the racing buggy, keeping pace, and putting a gradual pull on the lasso. Closer to the creek they swept!

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a trial. Can't be much of a place if it turns out green tenderfeet like you 'uns."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Lovell. "I jolly well wish you weren't a guest here. I'd punch your cheeky head."

"I've told you not to let that worry you," said Lick cheerily. "Look here, young Silver, you ain't pleased with the way I shoved you off'n your boss. Come round the corral and be whopped. I won't hurt you much—just knock the stuffing out of you!"

Jimmy Silver breathed hard and deep. It was a great temptation to knock some of the conceit out of this Western youth.

But he shook his head.

"Better not," he said. "Mr. Smedley—"

"Oh, bother Mr. Smedley! Is it a case of cold feet?" asked Texas Lick. "I guess that's about the size of it."

Lovell was red with wrath.

"Look here, Jimmy, if you don't lick this cheeky cad I'm going to!" he bawled.

He made a stride towards the bumptious youth from Texas. Jimmy Silver caught his arm and pulled him back.

"Hold on, Lovell—"

"I'm going to thrash him!" shouted Lovell.

"Leave it to me!" said Jimmy.

"Well, get a move on, then!" growled Lovell. "I'm not going to stand any more of his cheek, I can tell you."

Jimmy Silver led the way round the corral fence, out of sight of the windows of the ranch-house. He did not want Mr. Smedley or his guest to witness what was on.

"You cut up to my room for the boxing-gloves, Raby," he said. "Right-ho!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Texas Lick. "You afraid of getting hurt? Don't I keep on telling you I won't hurt you much?"

Jimmy Silver crimsoned.

"Never mind the gloves, then," he said. He threw off his jacket. "Ready? Will you have rounds?"

"Nope! I guess I want only one round to make shavings of you."

"Then come on!"

Texas Lick was not slow to come on. With all his bumptiousness he certainly did not lack courage. He came on at once, with bony fists thrashing about.

Lovell & Co. stood looking on. Three or four of the Windy River cowpunchers strolled round the corral to look on, too. They had heard the disparaging opinions loudly expressed by Master Lick, and they hoped to see him soundly "whopped" by Jimmy Silver.

It was probable that Master Lick had seen a great deal of scrapping at home in Texas, but it must have been in a rough-and-ready style, for certainly he displayed no great knowledge of the noble art of boxing. He depended on quickness, sheer strength, and a grim endurance of punishment.

In those qualities Jimmy Silver was at least his equal, and as a boxer the chief of the Fistical Four of Rookwood was leagues ahead of the Texan.

Texas Lick's attack was headlong and hard to stop, and Jimmy Silver gave a good deal of ground at first. The Texan grinned as he followed him up, pressing harder and harder.

But there came a change all of a sudden.

Jimmy Silver closed in—how the Texan did not even know—and his right came home on Lick's jaw, followed by his left in Lick's eye, and the youth from Texas went to the grass with a crash.

"Man down!" grinned Lovell.

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"I guess that was some sock-dolager!" ejaculated Skitter Dick.

Jimmy Silver stood, a little breathless, and waited for his opponent to rise. Lick sat up.

He put one hand to his jaw and the other to his eye. He seemed to be in a state of great astonishment.

"Waal, search me!" he ejaculated.

Lovell gave the Texan a hand up, helping him to his feet. Lick stood unsteadily on his "pins."

"Had enough?" smiled Lovell.

Arthur Edward was in quite a good humour now.

"Nope!" gasped Lick. "I—I guess I'm going on as long as I can stand. I'm sure not going to be whopped by a son of John Bull—not if this hyer critter knows it. Come on, you galoot!"

He came on breathlessly, and Jimmy Silver had to put his hands up. From that point he played with his adversary, tapping and rapping him here and there, while the Rookwooders and the cowpunchers looked on and grinned. Texas Lick went down again at last, and sat in the grass gasping for breath.

"That all right?" asked Jimmy, with a smile.

"Oh, gee-whiz!" groaned Texas Lick. Skitter Dick picked him up and set him on his feet. He leaned against the corral fence, panting. Lovell helped Jimmy Silver on with his jacket. It was evident that the fight was over now, and equally evident that its result was a matter of great astonishment to Texas Lick.

For several minutes the Texan leaned on the corral fence, gasping. He detached himself from the fence at last, with a feeble grin on his damaged face.

"You're some fighting-man, young Silver," he said. "I never reckoned you had it in you. Put it there!"

He held out his hand to Jimmy.

"You're a sportsman," said Jimmy Silver, and he shook hands cheerfully enough with the bumptious youth from Texas, who certainly looked anything but bumptious now.

"You've done me," said Lick. "I guess I'll give you another trial when we get to Rookwood."

"When?" murmured Lovell.

"But I sure give you best now." Lick blinked round him dizzily. "I guess I want to bathe my face before the popper sees me. Oh, gee-whiz! I reckon I look some guy!"

"This way," said Jimmy.

And the heir of the ranch millionaire was led away to repair damages.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Bound for Rookwood!

ALL Windy River turned out in great style to see the Rookwood juniors off the following week. Lincoln P. Lick and his hopeful son had departed after a couple of days' stay, and Jimmy Silver did not expect ever to see either of them again. In fact, during the last few days at the ranch he forgot their existence, only reminded occasionally of it by a lump that Texas Lick's bony fist had left on his chin. The last days at the ranch were busy ones. The chums of Rookwood rode over all the old ground, said innumerable good-byes to all sorts of people, and felt all the time a queer mixture of regret and anticipation—regret at leaving the Canadian ranch, and the hearty, friendly outfit, and anticipation of seeing Rookwood School again and their old friends there.

When the last day came the four juniors mounted their horses to ride to Kicking Mule. Most of the baggage had already been sent on by the post-

wagon. Hudson Smedley was to accompany them on their journey back across Eastern Canada. Now that the round up was over the rancher was able to get away for a week. But as far as Coyote Creek, on the way to Kicking Mule, nearly the whole outfit rode.

Baldy, the cook, shook hands with Jimmy Silver—a rather greasy hand-shake, which Jimmy did not mind in the east—and Pete Peters gave him a grip that nearly doubled him up. Then the crowd of cowpunchers rode off with the departing guests. At Coyote Creek the enormous escort halted, and, amid the cracking of stock-whips and revolvers, and the shouting of farewells, Jimmy Silver & Co. and the rancher trotted on to Kicking Mule.

It was at Red Deer that the horses were left, and the travellers boarded the cars, which carried them down to Calgary.

In that city a halt was made for a couple of days. Hudson Smedley had business there, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were glad to roam round the Canadian city and see the sights. And there it was that they were reminded of the existence of Texas Lick.

The chums of Rookwood were strolling past the Regina Hotel on Main Street when Jimmy Silver, much to his astonishment, suddenly felt his hat detached from his head.

He stood bareheaded and amazed.

"What the thumg—" he ejaculated.

"Hallo, where's your hat?" exclaimed Lovell.

"It's gone!"

"But what—" Oh crumbs!" yelled Lovell, as his own hat was suddenly detached in the same way.

The juniors halted in an astonishing group. Some of the passers-by looked on and grinned, and there was a howl of laughter from the wooden veranda of the Regina.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked up.

The well-known keen face and prominent sharp nose of Texas Lick appeared over the rail of the veranda. He grinned down at the Rookwood chums.

"Hallo, you 'uns!" he called out.

"Lost your Stetsons?"

"Yes, what—"

The Texas youth had a long stock-whip under his arm. Suddenly the whip circled, the long thong curled in the air, and Raby's hat was jerked off. The end of the thong had curled round it and caught it away—a well-known cowpuncher trick, but which the Rookwooders were not prepared for in the streets of Calgary.

"Here—what—I say—" howled Raby.

There was a shout of laughter from the veranda. A score of people were lounging there, and they were watching the scene with great amusement.

"Look here, you cheeky ass—" shouted Lovell.

The long stock-whip curled again. Newcome guessed what was coming, and jumped away. But he did not escape. The stock-whip jerked the hat from his head and floated it away, to land in the traffic in the middle of Main Street.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Texas Lick.

"Here, let's get after those blessed hats!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

All four of the Rookwooders were longing to punch Texas Lick, but it was evident that they could not wander about Calgary in a hatless state. They made a rush into the street to rescue the hats from the hoofs of horses and the wheels of motor-cars. By the time the Stetsons were recovered they were considerably dusty and dirty and

rumpled, and the chums of Rookwood were flushed and breathless.

"Now let's go back to that show and rag him!" exclaimed Lovell breathlessly.

"Oh, let him rip!" said Jimmy Silver. "I dare say it was only his idea of a joke. Let's get on."

Lovell granted, but he acquiesced. Texas Lick was left to enjoy his little joke unpunished.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not see him again at Calgary, and once more they forgot the youth from Texas when they boarded the East-bound cars, and the Canadian Pacific express roared away with them by Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

It was too late in the season for the St. Lawrence route home, and Hudson Smedley conducted his proteges to New York from the steamer. On the big liner the Canadian rancher bade them farewell, promising to look them up when he came "home" the following year.

Once more the Atlantic rolled under Jimmy Silver & Co., and their faces were set towards their native land.

"Not long before we're at Rookwood now," Arthur Edward Lovell remarked, as the chums walked on deck the second day out. "By the way, do you remember that that cheeky kid, Lick, told us he was coming to Rookwood? Like his cheek!"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Not likely!" he said. "We shall never have the pleasure—or otherwise—of seeing him again! So, upon the whole, I'm rather glad we didn't punch his head at Calgary."

"Great Scott!" yelled Raby suddenly.

"What—"

"Look!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Walking the deck, only a dozen paces away, was a sturdy, bony youth, with a sharp, bronzed face and keen eyes. Only the Stetson hat remained of the garb they had last seen Texas Lick wearing; but it was Texas Lick. The chums of Rookwood stared at him.

Lick came across to them, grinning.

"You 'uns hyer?" he said.

"And you?" said Jimmy Silver.

"Going hum to school?"

"We're going home to school," said Lovell. "And what the thump are you doing on a ship bound for England, young Lick?"

"I'm going to school, too!"

"Not Rookwood?" yelled Newcome.

"Yep, little old Rookwood."

"Gammon!"

"I guess it's all fixed," said Texas Lick. "The popper was set on it, and I reckoned I'd please him—all the more because you guys said I couldn't go if I liked. Savvy?"

"But—" said Jimmy Silver.

"I guess the popper fixed it by cable. It's all O.K."

And Texas Lick grinned.

"Is your father on board?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"The popper? Nope! I guess the popper is too busy to spare time for a voyage across the pond."

"But you're in charge of somebody, I suppose?"

Texas Lick sniffed.

"I guess not. An Amurrican kid rising fifteen is able to trot across a pond without being taken care of, I guess."

Jimmy Silver & Co. had been carefully placed in the captain's charge by Hudson Smedley. Apparently Texas Lick was able to look after himself without elder assistance.

"And you're really going to Rookwood School?" asked Raby.

"Yep! I get a few days in London, and then you'll see me at your old show. Say, did you guys get your hats back in Calgary? Ha, ha, ha!"

Texas Lick walked away chuckling.

Lovell gave a grunt.

"So that wild and woolly hoodlum is going to be landed on us at Rookwood," he said. "Well, if he comes into the Fourth Form we'll jolly well teach him manners!"

"We will!" agreed his comrades.

On the voyage home the chums of Rookwood saw a lot of Texas Lick.

He honoured them with a good share of his company, and talked incessantly, chiefly about himself and about the immense superiority of all things American over all things British. He asked them many questions about Rookwood and the fellows there, and expressed a frank and good-humoured contempt for everything he learned about that ancient and honourable seat of learning.

How he would get on at Rookwood was a rather interesting puzzle to Jimmy Silver & Co. Certainly he would be a great deal like a square peg in a round hole. Rookwood School and a Texas ranch were whole worlds asunder.

But the lively youth from Texas was evidently not a whit dismayed at the prospect of finding himself alone in a strange world, amid people and manners and customs that were wholly new to him.

(Continued on page 27.)

BRITISH
AND
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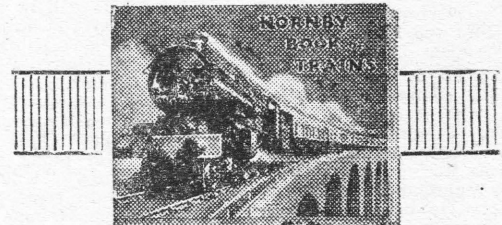


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"GOOD-BYE TO CANADA!"

(Continued from page 21.)

A crowd of friends awaited Jimmy Silver & Co. when they landed at last. They lost sight of Texas Lick; but later, in the train for London, they came on him.

"Hyer, you guys!" said Texas Lick. "Hallo!"

"Do you 'uns call this hyer a railroad?"

"No," said Jimmy, with a smile; "we call it a railway!"

Texas Lick snorted.

"I guess I shall have to learn a noo language hyer. But do you 'uns really travel on an institution like this? Isn't there anybody in this old island that knows anything about building cars? Search me! I guess I'd never have believed in railroads like this if I hadn't seen the thing with my own eyes. I

guess the popper will figure it out that I'm pulling his leg when I write home about it. There isn't a ten-cent township in the back-blocks of Texas that wouldn't serap a railroad like this."

And Texas Lick snorted again with supreme contempt.

A few days later Jimmy Silver & Co. met again, at Lancham Junction; from their homes, to take the train to Coombe and Rookwood. The ranch in Canada, their life on the prairies of Alberta, lay far behind them now. They were Rookwooders once more, and keen to see their old school and to play their old part in the football field. They crowded into the stuffy little carriage on the local train in great spirits.

"Here we are again!" said Arthur Edward Lovell cheerily as the train crawled into sight of Coombe. "There's the jolly old porter! He doesn't look a day older. He always looked a hundred."

"Jolly glad to be back again!" said Raby.

"Yes, rather! It was ripping in Canada," said Jimmy Silver, "but I'm jolly glad to be back! Hallo, there's a lot of fellows on the platform!"

The train stopped, and in a few moments more Jimmy Silver & Co. were in the midst of a crowd of Rookwooders. THE END.

(After their many and varied adventures in Canada, Jimmy Silver & Co. arrive back at Rookwood School again, full of enthusiasm for the new winter term. Next week's story of the cheery Fistical Four is entitled: "The Boy From Texas!")

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