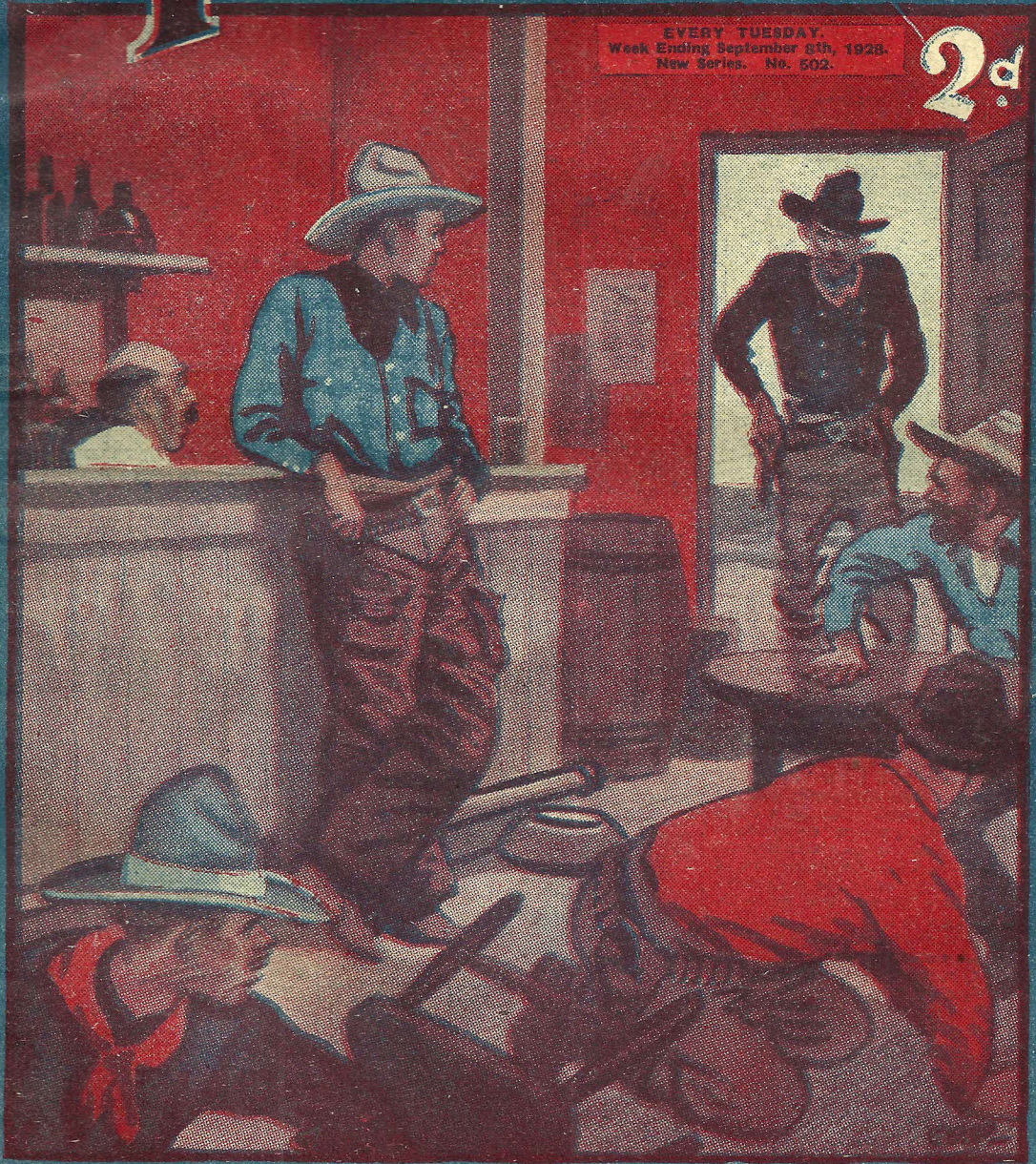


X HUNDREDS of **SIX SHILLING ANNUALS FREE!** See inside X

The POPULAR

EVERY TUESDAY.
Week Ending September 5th, 1928.
New Series. No. 502.

2d



THE RIO KID DEFIES THE GUNMAN!

As the figure of the notorious gunman appeared in the doorway of the Saloon, there was a stampede for cover. But the Rio Kid did not move; his hand was close to his gun-holster ready to draw.

(See the Roaring Western Tale inside.)

STRANDED!

According to Arthur Edward Lovell, nothing can go wrong with his motor-scooter that he cannot repair. But when he is put to the test, poor old Arthur Edward finds himself well in the soup!



RUNNING REPAIRS!

A ROUSING LONG COMPLETE TALE OF THE HOLIDAY ADVENTURES OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. OF ROOKWOOD.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritans!

SOMEBODY in trouble!" remarked Jimmy Silver. The Rookwood cyclists slowed down.

If somebody was in trouble, the Fistical Four of Rookwood were quite prepared to lend a helping hand. And evidently somebody was in trouble on that sunny country road in Dorsetshire—quite bad trouble.

There was a deep, wide ditch along one side of the road. Two wheels of a caravan, painted red and yellow, were deeply embedded in the ditch. The other two wheels were still on the road. A horse, released from the traces, was contentedly cropping grass across the way.

Three fellows had hold of the caravan. They were tugging.

Their efforts, apparently, were directed towards tugging the van back into the road. They hadn't the slightest chance of succeeding. They could not shift the tilted van half an inch. But they deserved credit for the beef they were putting into it.

They tugged, and their faces were crimson, and the sweat ran down their features.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome put on their brakes and slowed. Arthur Edward Lovell shut off the "juice" of the motor-scooter. The Rookwood cyclists halted.

As they did so the three caravanners ceased their frantic efforts, stepped back from the van, and mopped their streaming faces with their handkerchiefs. It was quite a warm afternoon, and the three caravanners looked extremely warm. Tugging at an immobile caravan was strenuous exercise. "You can't move it, of course!"

One of the caravanners—a hefty fellow with rugged features—was the speaker. He spoke in accents of con-

tempt. The other two caravanners glared at him.

"We've done our best, Coker!" "Fat lot of good your best is, Potter! I wonder what your worst would be like?"

"Well, you haven't shifted it, have you?" bawled the third caravanner in rather excited tones.

"Don't yell at me, Greene!" "Look here, Coker—"

"Better shut up!" said Coker. "You're wasting your breath, and you'll need it all before we get the caravan out of that ditch!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. smiled. The names they heard were familiar to them. They had seen these fellows before. They recognised them as Coker and Potter and Greene, three fellows who belonged to the Fifth Form at Greyfriars. Jimmy Silver & Co. did not exactly know them, but they had seen them before.

"We'd better pile in and help, you chaps," murmured Jimmy. "Those fellows look as if they'll be scrapping soon."

Coker of Greyfriars looked round as he became aware that there were spectators on the scene. He frowned at the four Rookwood juniors.

"What the thump do you want?" he demanded.

"Eh? Nothing," answered Jimmy Silver mildly.

"Take it and go, then!"

"Wrap it up for us!" suggested Raby humorously.

"For goodness' sake, Coker, try to be civil!" exclaimed Potter. "These chaps may lend us a hand with the van!"

"Just what we were going to offer," said Jimmy Silver. "If you want help, here we are, ready and willing."

Coker gave the juniors a disparaging look.

"You wouldn't be much good," he said.

"Oh, very well! We'll get on, then,"

said Jimmy cheerfully. "Come along, old beans!"

He put his hand on his machine again. "I say, stop, you chaps!" exclaimed Greene. "Do lend us a hand! Never mind Coker. He can't help his manners!"

"What's that?" roared Coker.

"Are we sticking in this ditch all day, and all night, too, because you can't be civil to chaps who are willing to help?" bawled Greene.

"I've told you already not to yell at me, Greene!"

Coker looked at the Rookwooders again.

"I've seen you before somewhere," he said. "I believe you're some fags who came over from Rookwood to play cricket with the Greyfriars fags. Isn't that so?"

"Something like it," said Jimmy Silver. "Now, then, let's all get hold, and we'll have your jolly old van out."

The Fistical Four came along to help.

"The van wants shoving up from the other side," said Coker. "You fags get down into the ditch, will you, and shove?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. blinked.

In the ditch there was about a foot of water, and under the water five or six inches of thick mud, at the least. Getting into the ditch was not an attractive prospect.

"I think we'd rather tug from this side," said Jimmy dryly.

"It's not a question of what you'd rather, but of what's necessary," explained Coker. "Get into the ditch!"

"I'll see you blowed first!" said Arthur Edward Lovell forcibly.

"What?" roared Coker.

"Blowed!"

"Do you want a thick ear, you cheeky fag?"

"Don't mind him, you chaps!" implored Greene. "You just tug away, and we'll get the beastly thing out! We've been at it for over two hours already. Don't leave us in the lurch!"

"Shut up, Greene!" said Coker.

"I've already told you and Potter to get into the ditch and shove, and you're funky of it. You can see as well as I can that it's the only way."

"Why can't you get into the ditch and shove, then?" asked Newcome.

Coker stared at him.

"I?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, you!"

"If that's meant for check, I don't

want any more of it!" said Coker. "I'm not likely to plunk knee-deep into mud, I suppose. But we'll try it on this side. Pull away!"

Seven pairs of hands were grasping the tilted van now. The three Fifth-Formers of Greyfriars and the four Fourth-Formers of Rookwood put all their beef into it, and the van shifted.

"It's coming!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Pull away!" gasped Raby.

Up came the van, inch by inch. The wheels sucked out of the mud, and slowly, inch by inch, the vehicle began to right. It was, unfortunately, just then that a fly settled on Horace Coker's nose. It was equally unfortunate that Horace Coker unthinkingly let go his grasp to brush the fly off.

The combined strength of seven had just shifted the van. The strength of six was not equal to the task.

"Look out!" roared Potter. "Hold on!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"She's going!"

She went!

Back toppled the van, the two wheels plunging deeper than ever into soft mud. The vehicle tilted over farther towards the hedge beyond the ditch. The rescue-party let go, and stepped back, panting. They looked at Coker expressively. Coker looked at them.

"Well," he said, "you've done it now!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Stranded!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. did not answer Horace Coker. They really felt that there was no adequate answer to be made.

Potter and Greene, giving the job up in despair, sat down on a grassy bank across the road and mopped their brows. The van had settled too deep now for even the seven to think of dragging it out. Nothing but a couple of stout horses traced to the van could rescue it now from its resting-place.

"Of all the silly owls!" said Coker in measured tones. "Of course, it's my own fault for letting you clumsy young duffers touch the van at all! I see that!"

"It was you let go!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell. "We'd nearly got the thing out when you let go!"

"Don't be cheeky!"

Coker crossed the road to his comrades. He gave them a withering stare of contempt as they sat and mopped their perspiring brows.

"Sticking there for good?" he inquired sarcastically.

"We're done!" growled Potter.

"One more effort, with you fellows down in the ditch showing the van up, and—"

"Oh rats!"

"Why I ever came out caravanning with a pair of lazy slackers is a mystery to me!" said Coker. "My good nature, I suppose. We're told we ought to suffer fools gladly; but I must say you fellows try my patience a lot. After getting the van into the ditch—"

"Who got it into the ditch?" shrieked Potter. "You were driving!"

"Don't rave at me, Potter. Try to keep your temper, and keep cool, as I'm doing. Little things like this are to be expected on a caravan tour."

"With you driving—yes!" said Greene.

"Shut up, Greene! The van won't come out now," said Coker. "We're only a few miles from Dorchester. We can easily get a motor or a horse to come and tow the van out. I'll cut off

into the town at once. I suppose even you fellows are able to look after the van while I'm gone?"

Coker turned his back on his followers and walked over to Jimmy Silver & Co. Having done all they could—in vain—the Rookwooders were preparing to depart.

"Hold on!" said Coker.

"Yes. Anything more we can do?" asked Jimmy Silver politely.

"I've got to get into Dorchester, to get help to get that van out," explained Coker. "It's really lucky you stopped here with that motor-scooter. Is it in good order?"

"Eh? Yes. Quite!"

"Good! Lend it to me."

"Lend it to you?" repeated Arthur Edward Lovell, staring at Coker as if he could hardly believe his ears—as, indeed, he hardly could.

"Yes. It will serve my turn," said Coker, taking hold of the petrol jigger. "I shall be back in a couple of hours."

"In a kik-kik-couple of hours!" stuttered Lovell.

"Yes. Stand clear!"

Had Jimmy Silver & Co. belonged to Greyfriars they would have known all about Horace Coker and his lofty, commanding ways. As they belonged to Rookwood, and had only a passing acquaintance with Coker, he came as rather a surprise to them. They blinked at him.

"We've got to get on our way, Coker," said Jimmy Silver, as soon as he recovered his breath. "We're due at Wareham to-night."

"You can't ride that scooter!" hooted Lovell.

"Well, it's a bit absurd to be riding a scooter like a kid," conceded Coker.

"I'd rather it were a motor-bike. But it's a case of any port in a storm, you see. I've got no time to waste, that's how it is. Stand clear! Do you want to be run over?"

"We're not lending you that scooter!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "You see, we can't hang up here for a couple of hours!"

"You can!" said Coker cheerily.

"You see, I want to borrow this scooter, and that settles it. I don't know what your Fifth Form are like at Rookwood; but they must be a lot of spooneys, to judge by the cheek of you kids. If you were at Greyfriars I'd jolly soon teach you not to argue with seniors, by Jove! Now, stand clear and shut up!"

Coker turned on the petrol, and the motor-scooter began chugging.

Potter and Greene looked on and exchanged glances and shrugged their shoulders. They were used to Horace Coker and his high-handed ways. But Jimmy Silver & Co. weren't. Coker, indeed, wanted some getting used to.

The Rookwood fellows simply blinked at Coker, scarcely believing their ears and their eyes. But as Coker put a heavy foot on the scooter and lifted himself into the roomy old saddle, with the machine chug-chugging away at a great rate, Jimmy Silver & Co. realised that it wasn't a joke, and wasn't a dream or a vision; but that this burly Greyfriars fellow actually was bagging the motor-scooter under their very eyes, regardless of refusal.

And Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed on Coker.

Coker was starting. The scooter had already a little pace on it when the Fistical Four collared Coker.

They collared him by a shoulder, an arm, an ear, and a neck. Each of the Rookwood juniors got a hold somewhere.

There was a roar from Coker. The

scooter swayed wildly in the road. A motorist coming by at a good rate yelled words full of ferocity at the group round the scooter. They did not heed him. Jimmy Silver & Co. dragged at Coker. Coker clung to the scooter's handlebars and strove to keep a steady seat.

"Let go!" bawled Coker. "Do you want an accident? Let go! What's this silly game? Leggo!"

With a combined effort the Fistical Four dragged Coker over. He left the saddle of the motor-scooter with a jerk, like a fruit plucked from a tree.

The scooter ran on.

It ran for some yards up the road, then took a list to port, and crashed over with a terrific crash.

Coker was on the ground, struggling and roaring. Arthur Edward Lovell had him by both ears now and he was banging Coker's head on the hard earth. Rap! Rap! Rap-rap-rap! Rap! Rap! One might have supposed that Lovell was trying to send a message in the Morse code through the solid earth to the Antipodes. A series of fiendish yells resounded from Horace Coker.

Still with the four grasping him, he struggled up.

"Potter! Greene! Bear a hand!" he roared.

Potter and Greene stared at him stonily. They were not in the least disposed to bear a hand. They were tired, for one thing, and they were fed up with Coker, for another. They gave no heed; and Coker, struggling valiantly and heftily, collapsed again under the odds, and went down to the earth. Then Lovell recommenced the Morse code with Coker's head.

"Ow, ow, ow! Stoppit!" shrieked Coker. "I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! Ow! Wow! Whooop!"

"I think that will do!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Don't bust his napper, Lovell. There's nothing in it, but don't bust it. Let's look at the jigger."

Leaving Coker for dead, as it were, the Fistical Four hurried after the collapsed scooter and picked it up. Its busy chugging had ceased. Something seemed to have gone wrong with the works. During the tour of the Rookwood cyclists the motor-scooter had had a good deal of hard usage, and had borne it nobly. But the last straw had broken the camel's back, as it were. The scooter was out of action now.

Arthur Edward Lovell propped it up on its leg by the roadside and looked at it, almost with tears in his eyes. Lovell had grown fond of that scooter, and he felt its injuries almost as if they were his own.

"Well, it won't go!" said Raby.

"We're stranded here, then," said Newcome.

"I can do running repairs, of course," said Lovell rather loftily.

"Hem!"

"If you fellows think I can't do running repairs—"

"Oh, go ahead!" said Jimmy Silver resignedly. "Get on with it, and we'll go and kick Coker."

"Good!"

Arthur Edward Lovell devoted his affectionate attention to the motor-scooter. Lovell's confidence in himself was unbounded. He had no doubt that he could put in the necessary repairs, and make the scooter a going concern again. His comrades had doubts on the subject. Their view was that they were stranded until they could get hold of a motor mechanic. In the circumstances, kicking Coker seemed an excellent idea, as well as an attractive one.

Horace Coker was sprawling breathlessly in the road, quite winded by his

struggle with the Rookwooders, and in a dazed and dizzy state. He was apparently trying to get his second wind. But he found breath enough to roar as the three juniors commenced operations.

"Oh, stoppit! Why, I'll smash you!" roared Coker. "What the thump—Oh, my hat! Oh! Ah! Oooooop!"

"Give him jip!"

"There, you cheeky ass!"

"There, you swanking dummy!"

Coker struggled to his feet. It had never occurred to Coker that the time would come when he, Horace Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, would dodge away from fags—mere fags of a Lower Form in another school. But the time had come now. Coker was quite "done," and, instead of falling on the Rookwooders and strewing the road with their shattered remains, he dodged away, and was only too glad to escape. He was quite thankful that they did not follow him up. Thus were the mighty fallen.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Running Repairs!

A RTHUR EDWARD LOVELL was busy.

On the stretch of grass by the side of the country road he had the motor-scooter on its beam ends, and for some time he had been industriously detaching one part from another.

Lovell's idea was to do the thing thoroughly.

There was no doubt that his method was thorough. The motor-scooter was getting dismantled with extreme thoroughness. Whether Lovell would ever succeed in getting it together again was another matter. It was easier to dismantle than to assemble. This, however, had not yet occurred to Arthur Edward.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome watched him for a little while, perhaps nourishing a faint hope that Lovell, according to his own statement, was capable of executing running repairs. But the more he progressed with his repairs, the stronger grew their doubts that the motor-scooter would ever be in a state again for scooting. There had been something wrong with the works to begin with, and now their opinion was that there were a good many things wrong with the works.

Lovell had taken off his jacket and hat and waistcoat, and rolled up his sleeves. That gave him a thorough workmanlike feeling. Besides, it was hot, and he was putting plenty of energy into his work. He was getting oily and greasy, oilier and greasier every minute. But he laboured on regardless.

"How long do you think it will take, old man?" asked Raby at last.

"Can't tell you yet," said Lovell, without looking up. "You fellows had better take a stroll."

"Can't we help?" asked Newcome. "You'd be more trouble than you'd be worth, old chap. You can look for my spanner if you like."

The three juniors looked for the spanner. It was not to be seen.

Lovell knitted his brows.

"One of you must have moved that spanner!" he exclaimed. "I had it here a minute ago."

"Haven't touched it, old bean."

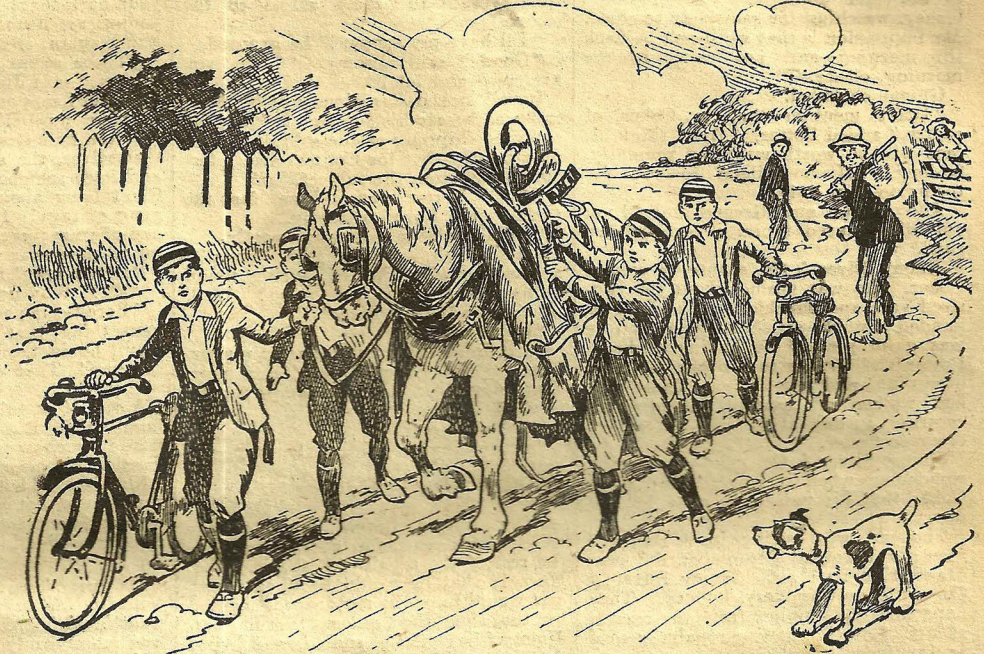
"Well, where is it, then?" demanded Lovell. He stared round him. "Where's that spanner? Where's that

Running repairs seemed to have a somewhat exasperating effect on Lovell's temper. His comrades wisely left him. It really was not safe to be too near Lovell when he was engaged on running repairs.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In Camp!

"**W**HERE will you have it?" Coker's powerful voice asked that question, and he addressed Potter and Greene. Coker's rugged brow was full



A MOURNFUL PROCESSION! Everybody Jimmy Silver & Co. passed on the road watched them till they were out of sight. The procession of Rookwooders created intense interest among the native population of Dorsetshire. (See Chapter. 5.)

dashed spanner? Where's that beastly spanner? Where's that rotten spanner? Where's that blighted spanner?"

Lovell's adjectives were growing in intensity as he inquired after the spanner.

"Blest if I can see it anywhere!" said Jimmy.

"Of course you can't! You wouldn't!" said Lovell. "Do you ever see anything? Where's that blinking spanner? Where's that—"

He jumped up, exasperated, to hunt for the elusive spanner.

"There it is!"

"Eh? Where?"

"You were sitting on it."

"Oh!"

"Anything else we can look for?" inquired Newcome, with a touch of sarcasm.

Arthur Edward Lovell snorted. "You can jolly well clear off, and not interrupt a chap at his work!" he snapped. "How's a chap to do running repairs with three silly owls grinning at him like Cheshire cheeses—I mean Cheshire cats? For goodness' sake, take a walk!"

"Come on, chappies!" said Jimmy Silver, smiling. "We've got to find a camp, anyhow."

"We're not camping here!" exclaimed Lovell. "We're going on to Wareham to-night, you ass!"

"After you've done the running repairs?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Then we'll look for a camp."

"Fathead!"

of wrath. Apparently he had recovered somewhat from the effects of his tussle with the Rookwooders, and was his old truculent self again.

Jimmy Silver & Co. glanced towards the happy caravanners. The wreck of the caravan and the mishap to the motor-scooter had stranded both parties in the same spot. It looked as if both would have to make up their minds to make a night of it by that country road in Dorset.

"I'm fed-up with your slacking!" went on Coker's powerful voice. "One of you has got to go into Dorchester and get a motor, or a horse, or anything you like, to yank that dashed van out of that dashed ditch! I'll give you a minute."

"Look here, Coker!"

Coker pushed back his cuffs.

Potter and Greene eyed him and backed away.

"We'll both go," said Potter suddenly. "All right!"

"We can't walk a dozen miles, Potter!" howled Greene.

"Oh, there's some place nearer than Dorchester!" said Potter. "Come on, old man! I want a rest from Coker, anyhow!"

Greene grumbled, but he followed Potter. Coker gave a snort. Potter and Greene passed the smiling Rookwooders, who were sitting on the grassy bank, and paused.

"You seem to be stranded as well as us," remarked Potter.

"We are—we is!" agreed Jimmy.

"If you like to scalp Coker, or lynch him, or anything like that, we don't mind!"

"Ha, ha! Thanks!"

"The silly owl thinks Dorchester is just round the corner!" said Potter. "He doesn't believe in maps. But there's a village about a mile away, and we're going there. We're going to stop the night at the inn there—see?"

"Oh, jolly good!" said Greene.

"Coker thinks we shall be back in an hour or so with something or other to tow his jolly old van out of the ditch," said Potter. "It may amuse you to see him doing the 'Sister-Anne' bizney, watching for somebody to come. My impression is that we shan't be back till morning—and not early in the morning, either."

Greene chuckled.

"Don't mention that to Coker, of course," added Potter. "But I think his face will be worth watching presently. So-long! Much obliged to you for trying to help us!"

And Potter and Greene walked on and disappeared round a bend of the road.

Jimmy Silver & Co. glanced across at Coker, who was nosing about the cap-sized van, and chuckled. Coker's high-handed methods satisfied Coker, and he was quite pleased at having reduced Potter and Greene to a proper state of discipline and obedience. That they had walked off without intending to return that day at all did not as yet occur to Coker.

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned cheerily, wondering when it would dawn upon Coker that his pals were gone for the day.

The sun was setting in a rich red glow; a beautiful September day was drawing to its close. Jimmy Silver & Co. were getting very hungry. They unpacked the supplies from the carrier at last. Lovell's running repairs seemed as far from completion as ever—or a little farther. It was clear that the Rookwooders had to camp for the night by the roadside, and they made up their minds to it. Fortunately, as they had intended to camp out that night, there was a good supply of provisions in the scooter's carrier.

Jimmy Silver set up the spirit-stove and filled the kettle from the water-bottle and put it on. Raby set up the paraffin-cooker and greased a frying-pan. Newcome chipped potatoes and cut the sausages. Horace Coker, tramping up and down across the road, eyed them rather savagely. As the sausages and chips began to cook and send forth a savoury odour Coker grew more and more savage. He was ravenously hungry himself by this time, and the scent of sosses and chips was tantalising.

More than once Horace Coker came over towards the Rookwood camp, but paused and turned back again. The lofty Horace would not ask a favour of the Rookwood fags. Probably he would have taken the drastic steps of raiding their supper, but that was not practicable. Jimmy Silver called to Lovell when all was ready.

"Give it a rest now, Lovell! Come and have supper!"

"I've got to get this job done!" said Lovell doggedly.

"Life's too short, old man!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, finish after supper!" said Jimmy hastily.

"Rats!"

Lovell went on with his job. He had just screwed on a nut and given it a

last finishing twist with the spanner to his clothes seemed to indicate that he had found refuge for the night in a barn. He made it indubitably secure, and discovered that it was the wrong nut. And now he was wrestling with it to get it off again. This kind of thing occurred quite frequently when Arthur Edward was on running repairs.

The three juniors had their supper, considerably keeping Arthur Edward's hot for him on the stove. Shadows were lengthening now, and even Lovell realised that he would not get his repairs finished in time to take the road again that night. He rose at last with a sort of concentrated look on his smudgy face and came across to the camp.

"I'll have my supper!" he grunted.

"Good!" said Jimmy. "Here you are, nice and hot!"

Lovell looked suspiciously at his comrades as he ate his supper. Perhaps he expected chipping on the subject of running repairs, but the Co. mercifully forbore to mention the subject.

"We'd better camp here for the night," said Lovell abruptly.

"Think so?" said Jimmy sweetly.

"After all, what's the hurry?" argued Lovell. "We're touring round to see the country, aren't we? Well, we can see it from here."

"Quite so."

"I'll finish those repairs after supper. I've got the hang of the thing now. You fellows can hold the lamps for me to work by."

"Oh, my hat!"

"If you're not willing to help—"

bawled Lovell.

"Oh, all right! Anything for a quiet life!"

After supper Lovell, much to the relief of his comrades, decided to leave the rest of the repairs till the morning. He said that he would be up at dawn and would have the motor-scooter going by the time the others turned out. Jimmy Silver & Co. smiled, and hoped that he would. It was quite dark now, and a crescent moon was coming out with a silvery glimmer from behind the hills.

Jimmy Silver & Co. sorted out their ground-sheets and rugs and turned in. Through the silence of the summer night they heard the steady pacing of Horace Coker, waiting and watching the road for the help that did not come. And when Newcome playfully called out: "Sister Anne—Sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?" Coker disdained to answer. He was still waiting and watching when Jimmy Silver & Co. went to sleep.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were up with the sun. Arthur Edward Lovell got busy on the scooter while his comrades got the breakfast ready. Lovell restarted after the interval, so to speak, with great energy. He ate a hasty breakfast while he worked. His look was quite sanguine, and his comrades almost hoped that he would succeed in getting the engine together again.

"We'll give him a couple of hours," Jimmy Silver remarked to Raby and Newcome. "If he does it in the time, well and good. But we're jolly well not putting in the rest of the vacation here while Lovell plays at shops with those bits and pieces!"

"No jolly fear!" agreed Raby and Newcome.

Horace Coker was not to be seen. The red-and-yellow caravan still lay tilted in the roadside ditch, and seemed a little deeper down than the day before. The juniors wondered what had become of Coker. But a little later he appeared through a gap in a hedge. A considerably quantity of hay sticking to

his clothes seemed to indicate that he had found refuge for the night in a barn.

His rugged face was decidedly cross in expression. He looked up and down the road savagely, and then came over to the Rookwooders.

"Seen those silly owls about?" he asked.

"We've seen only one silly owl this morning," answered Jimmy cheerily.

"Potter or Greene?"

"Neither. Coker!"

"You cheeky young scoundrel!" roared Coker. "I don't want any of your back-chat! I suppose that clumsy young ass isn't getting that scooter going again, is he?"

"There seems a slight doubt on the subject," said Jimmy, with a smile.

"Then I suppose I'd better borrow one of your push-bikes!" growled Coker.

"Potter and Greene seem to have lost themselves, the silly asses! I must go and fetch somebody to get that van out. Can't hang about here all day with a gang of fags! I dare say I could ride one of your jiggers if I shove the saddle up as high as it will go. I'll try."

"Better not," murmured Jimmy.

"Eh? Why not?"

"Because if you handle our bikes, the next thing that will happen is that you'll be in the ditch along with your caravan! That won't improve matters, will it?"

A case of assault and battery appeared imminent. But Horace Coker contrived somehow to restrain his righteous wrath. He measured the Rookwooders with his eye, but he seemed to realise that it was not good enough. Perhaps a reminiscent ache or two in his bullet head reminded him of his experiences of the day before.

He turned away with a grunt, and went to his caravan. He seemed to want breakfast, but the door of the van was more firmly stuck than ever now, and it resisted all Coker's infuriated efforts to get it open. He gave it up at last.

Where Potter and Greene could possibly be was a mystery to Coker. As a matter of fact, they were just then sitting down to a comfortable breakfast at an inn about a mile away. They had arranged with the innkeeper to send a man back with them, with a couple of horses, to drag the caravan out. But they were in no hurry to start. Coker's company, fascinating as it doubtless was, seemed to have palled on his comrades a little. Potter and Greene were not in the least disposed to hurry over their breakfast.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

"I'M fed-up!" said Lovell in concentrated tones.

"Same here!" murmured Raby.

"How's a fellow to do running repairs without a proper tool outfit?" demanded Lovell.

"Echo answers — 'how'!" agreed Newcome.

"Mind, I can repair the jigger all right," said Lovell. "If you fellows think I can't do running repairs—"

Lovell paused, like Brutus, for a reply. But his chums were very careful not to reply. Lovell paused in vain.

"It's merely a question of time," he went on. "I can do it on my head—quite easily, in fact. But, on reflection, I think it would save time if we got the machine to a garage."

"I think it might!" agreed Jimmy Silver blandly.

Lovell looked at him suspiciously.

"Mind, I'm quite willing to do the repairs," he said. "I told you when we started on this trip that I should take the scooter in hand, and do all the running repairs that might be needed. I keep to that. But if you fellows are keen to get on, it might save time—a little time—if we got it to a garage."

"Let's!" said Newcome.

"But how?" asked Raby. "We can't carry that dashed heavy old thing on our jiggers, and it won't wheel now."

"We can pack it on a horse," said Lovell.

"What horse?"

"Coker's horse."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver heartily. "That giddy old gee-gee can carry it all right. It was Coker who busted the scooter, so he can't grumble. And if he does, it doesn't matter, anyhow."

The caravan horse was resting in the grass, blinking contentedly in the morn-

He sat there, dazed and dizzy, and blinked at the Rookwooders.

They gave him no further heed.

Packing the disabled scooter on the broad back of the caravan-horse was not an easy task, and it required all Jimmy Silver & Co.'s attention, so naturally they had none to waste on Coker. They put on the ground-sheets first, to save the horse's back, and then the rugs, and then the scooter. They tied it here, and they tied it there, but it still looked a little uncertain; and they decided to walk on either side of the horse and hold it on.

Coker watched them blankly.

The Rookwooders were ready to start at last. It was quite a procession. Lovell wheeled a push-bike with one hand and led the horse with the other. Jimmy Silver walked on the port side, and Raby on the starboard side, holding the load on the horse, to save it from toppling either way. Newcome brought up the rear, wheeling a bike with either hand.

Jimmy Silver. "Can you fix it up for us?"

The man rubbed his nose again. "Well, I'll try, sir," he said. "I'll do my best! You never know what you can do till you try, do you, sir?" said the mechanic brightly.

And the hapless scooter was taken into the garage.

"Did Coker lend you that horse?" asked Greene, as Jimmy Silver & Co. were leaving the garage.

"Oh, yes?" said Jimmy. "We persuaded him!"

"Blessed if I know how you did it, then!" said Potter. "How the thump did you persuade him?"

"We tied him to a wheel of the caravan."

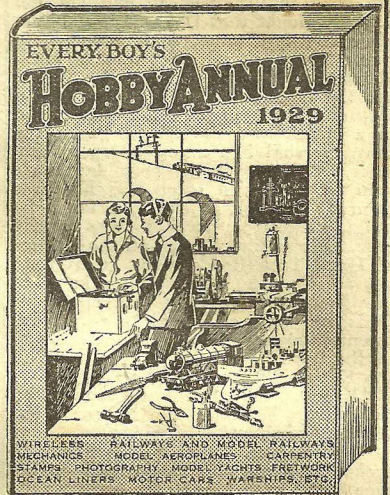
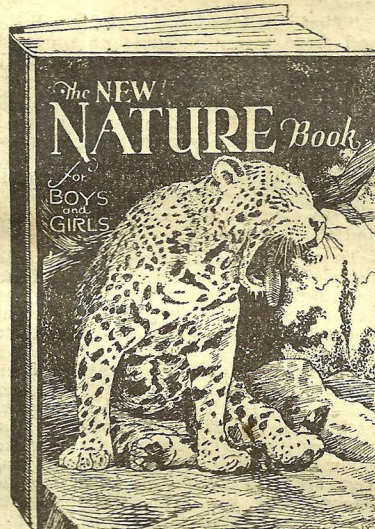
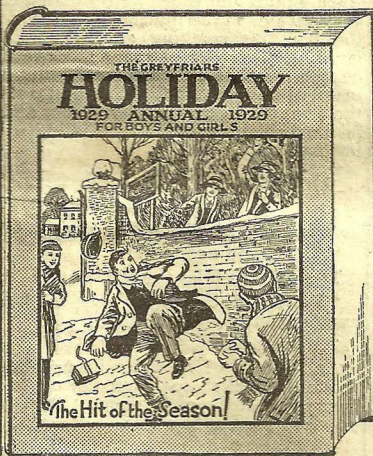
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter. "Did you leave him like that?"

"Just like that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can take your gee-geo back!" said Jimmy. "Give Coker our love, and tell him we've done with it! Ta-ta!"

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ing sunlight. Jimmy Silver unfastened the tether from the peg. Horace Coker, who had strolled down the road, came back to his caravan in time to see the Rookwooders taking possession of his horse. He ran up breathlessly.

"What are you doing with that horse?" he bawled.

"Borrowing it, old bean!"

"B-b-bub-borrowing it?"

"Yes—same as you did with the bike!"

"You—you—you let that horse alone!" shrieked Coker.

"Keep smiling, old man! You shall have it back!" said Jimmy soothingly.

"You—you—you young scoundrels!" gasped Coker. "I—I—I—I'll—"

Words failed Coker. Forgetful of the undoubted fact that he was no match for the Fistical Four of Rookwood, he rushed upon Jimmy Silver & Co., hitting out right and left.

For five minutes after that Jimmy Silver & Co. were busy. So was Coker!

At the end of five minutes Horace Coker was reposing against one of the slanting wheels of his caravan, with his wrists tied to the spokes.

Coker watched them go.

They were out of his sight soon, but they did not go unwatched. Everybody they passed on the road watched them till they were out of sight. The procession seemed to create intense interest among the native population of that part of Dorsetshire.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were quite glad when they arrived in the village after a mile's slow and painful progress. They were still gladder to see the welcome word "Garage" over a building there.

They stopped.

Two fellows came sauntering out of the village inn as they halted and stopped to look on.

"Hallo! Home they brought the warrior dead!" chuckled Potter.

"Why, that's our horse!" exclaimed Greene.

A mechanic in overalls came out of the garage. The scooter was handed over to him. He looked at it, and rubbed his nose, and looked at it again.

"Been under a wagon?" he asked.

"Hem! No! Just a tumble—but it's had some repairs since then," said

Come on, you chaps! I dare say we can get some lunch at the inn, and beds for the night, while the scooter is recovering from Lovell's running repairs."

Jimmy Silver & Co. spent three days in that pleasant Dorsetshire village. Each morning they paid a visit to the garage to inquire how the motor-scooter was getting on. The gentleman in overalls seemed very dubious at first, but he grew more hopeful with the passage of time. And at last—though it seemed too good to be true—the motor-scooter was restored to them in all its pristine glory.

By then Coker and his caravan were long gone on their way, and Jimmy Silver & Co. did not see any more of them.

And, at last, the Rookwood rambles shook the dust of that Dorsetshire village from their feet, and went on their way.

THE END.

("THE CHALET IN THE WOODS!" is the title of next week's rousing long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, on holiday.)

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