

"THE OUTCAST OF CEDAR CREEK!"

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The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending January 12th, 1918.]

CONDEMNED BY THE SCHOOL!

A MAGNIFICENT NEW LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Lattrey Must Go!

"Morny's coming out of sanny today!"

Jimmy Silver made that remark in the end study.

"Poor old Morny!"

Arthur Edward Lovell spoke with deep feeling.

Lovell had never been very friendly with Mornington of the Fourth.

But even the fellows who liked him least felt a deep sympathy for Valentine Mornington now.

For a week Morny had lain in the school sanatorium, under the doctor's care.

Now he was coming out, to resume his old life in the school, but not under the old conditions.

For he was blind!

The greatest of all misfortunes had fallen upon Mornington, once the dandy of the Fourth.

Henceforward, the sun was blotted out of the sky for Mornington. Daylight and darkness were the same to him.

The thought of it made Jimmy Silver's heart heavy.

"Poor old Morny!" repeated Lovell. "Poor old chap! It will be frightfully rough on him!"

"He's staying at Rookwood, though?" remarked Raby.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"And coming into class?" asked Newcome.

"Yes, so I hear. After all, it's better for him. He would mope himself to death at home, I should think. Better for him to keep up his work as much as he can. We'll all help to see him through."

"Yes, rather!" said the Co. heartily.

"Erroll's sticking to him like a Trojan," said Jimmy. "He hardly closed his eyes the first three days and nights of it. He looked fairly worn out. He's going to look after Morny. He's a good chap!"

"One of the best," said Lovell. "But what about Lattrey? Isn't anything going to be done to Lattrey, for handling Morny like that? He can't stay here; we won't stand him!"

Jimmy Silver's face became grim.

"Of course, he'll have to go," he said. "I hear that Morny's guardian wanted to have him prosecuted."

"Serve him right!"

"Somehow, it fell through. I fancy Morny was against it."

"My hat! Morny used not to be such a forgiving chap."

"Well, it wouldn't do much good now, and it would be a frightful disgrace for the school," said Jimmy slowly. "I suppose Morny thought that out. But—but, of course, we can't stand Lattrey at Rookwood, after what he's done."

"He's got to go," said Raby. "I wonder he hasn't gone already."

There was a tap at the door of the end study.

"Come in!" said Jimmy Silver.

It was Mornington Secundus, of the Second Form, who entered—the fag

who was always called "Erbert" by the Rookwood fellows, his old name in the days when he had been a homeless waif.

The fag's face was pale and troubled.

Little 'Erbert had felt Morny's misfortune heavily.

Indeed, the one-time waif of Rookwood would rather have had the misfortune fall upon himself than upon his cousin, the once superb Morny of the Fourth.

"Hallo, kid!" said Jimmy. "Trot in!"

"Master Morny's comin' out today," said 'Erbert.

"Yes, we know."

"He won't want to see that 'ound Lattrey 'ere, when he comes—leastways, he couldn't see 'im, now he's blind," said 'Erbert, with a catch in his voice. "But Lattrey ought not to be 'ere, ought 'e?"

"No."

"Sir Rupert Staepoole was for prosecutin' 'im," said 'Erbert. "Morny persuaded 'im not. He didn't want the school to be disgraced an' dragged into the newspapers. But everybody said that the 'Ead would turn Lattrey out. He ain't done it."

"I can't understand it," said Jimmy. "Lattrey ought to be sent to a reformatory; but, at any rate, he will have to be expelled from Rookwood. I can't understand the Head not dealing with him yet!"

"Some of the fellers say the 'Ead can't expel 'im," said 'Erbert.

"What rot!"

"Well, that was wot 'appened afore. Even Mr. Bootles thought he was going, when he was in disgrace last time, an' 'is father came to see the 'Ead, and Dr. Chisholm let 'im stay. If the 'Ead's goin' to sack 'im, why ain't 'e done it?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Well, I've been thinking, sir," said 'Erbert. "Master Morny's comin' out of sanny. It's rotten for Lattrey to be 'ere when Master Morny comes back. The 'Ead ain't done anything. S'pose we make Lattrey go, afore Master Morny comes back."

"Oh!"

"He can't be very 'appy 'ere," said 'Erbert. "Nobody speaks to 'im. Even 'is study-mates, Peele and Gower, won't say a word to 'im. But he's sticking 'ere. He ought to go, and the fellers ought to make 'im!"

"Right enough," said Lovell emphatically. "How he's got the nerve to stick here, after what he's done, beats me!"

"The rotter's got nerve enough for anything!" growled Newcome.

"'Erbert's right," said Jimmy Silver slowly. "I can't understand Lattrey still being here, after blinding poor old Morny. He's a dangerous beast! He's got to go! We'll tell him so."

"Hear, hear!"

"You leave it to us, 'Erbert," said Jimmy Silver. "We'll make it plain enough to the cad."

The Fistical Four lost no time. They left the end study at once,



HIS BLIND CHUM!

"By gad!" muttered Mornington. "I'm a fool, Kit—the same old fool—swankin' as usual! I can't walk a yard by myself! By gad, you'd better get me a dog to lead me on a string!"

The 2nd Chapter.

Jimmy Silver's Resolve.

Mark Lattrey was alone in the study.

The outcast of Rookwood was not looking happy.

He had been a good deal of a hermit for the past week.

Frozen silence and scornful looks greeted him when he appeared among his Form-fellows.

Peele and Gower avoided the study, and did their prep in other fellows' quarters.

The black sheep of Rookwood had often been near the limit before. This time he had passed it, and there was no possible forgiveness.

His hatred of Mornington had led him too far. True, he had not foreseen the result of his reckless and brutal act.

He had struck the dandy of the Fourth with a heavy metal candlestick, the first weapon that came to hand, not knowing or caring what injury he might do.

Even his hard heart had felt a twinge of remorse, when he learned that Valentine Mornington had lost his sight as the result of that brutal blow.

But remorse was swallowed up, ere long, in fear for himself.

He had breathed more freely when he found that the law was not to take cognisance of his action.

And since then he had begun to hope that the affair would blow over. He did not fear expulsion from the school. He knew that his father possessed an influence over the Head, which had saved him before.

and Jimmy Silver muttered a few words of instruction to his followers.

The four juniors separated, and called in at the various studies.

There was immediate and unanimous backing for the Fistical Four. Not a fellow in the Classical Fourth dissented.

Van Ryn and Pons and Conroy joined up at once, and Rawson and Oswald and Flynn, and even Townsend and Topham, the nuts of the Fourth.

Other fellows, as soon as they heard what was on, joined the crowd in the passage.

Even Peele & Co., who had been chummy with Lattrey, came to join the party.

Nearly all the Classical Fourth gathered in the passage, under the lead of Jimmy Silver.

Lattrey was to be left in no doubt as to the verdict of the Fourth.

He had to get out of Rookwood, and the whole Classical Fourth were to tell him so.

"Everybody here?" asked Jimmy Silver, looking over the crowd.

"Everybody except Tubby Muffin," said Lovell, with a grin.

"I'm here!" squeaked Tubby, bolting up from the stairs, with a smear of jam on his fat chin.

"Follow your leader!" said Jimmy Silver.

And he strode to Lattrey's study, and thumped hard on the door.

There was no answer from within, but Jimmy did not wait for one.

He hurled the door open, and strode into the study, with his followers crowding at his heels.

He felt certain that it would save him again, and with each passing day that certainty became more assured.

But he had reckoned without the Rookwood fellows.

So far from the thing blowing over, their scorn and detestation of the cad of the Fourth only intensified.

His shamelessness in remaining in the school, after what he had done, added, if possible, to their contempt and disgust.

Lattrey was stretched in the study armchair, smoking a cigarette, when Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived.

He started as the door was thrown open, and took the cigarette from his lips.

The crowd of grim faces in the doorway made him wince.

He rose to his feet, the cigarette in his fingers.

"What do you want, Silver?" he snapped harshly.

"Come in, you fellows!" said Jimmy.

The Fourth-Formers crowded into the study, as many as there was room for.

The rest crowded the doorway and the passage outside.

"We're all here, Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver. "You can see there's the whole Classical Fourth. I'm taking the lead, as captain of the Form, but we're all of one mind."

"You bet!" said Conroy tersely.

"It's a week since you struck Mornington down," went on Jimmy.

"You're still at Rookwood."

"Well?" sneered Lattrey.

(Continued on the next page.)



"I don't know why the Head hasn't kicked you out yet."

"I fancy the Head isn't going to kick me out, either!"

"Then you're thinking of staying in the school?" roared Lovell.

"Certainly!"

"After what you've done?" exclaimed Oswald.

Lattrey set his lips.

"I never meant to hurt Morny," he said. "You know that! I was fighting him, and I—I caught up the candlestick. I never dreamed that he would be so much hurt. You all know that!"

"You didn't know, and didn't care, you cur!" said Van Ryn.

"Morny may get well, too," said Lattrey. "The doctor said the case wasn't absolutely hopeless. It's an injury to the optic nerve, and—"

"There may be a chance of that," said Jimmy Silver. "It's a slim chance, and it doesn't alter what you've done. You've blinded Mornington, and you're not fit to be at Rookwood. You're not fit to go to a reformatory, for that matter; you're not fit to live anywhere outside Prussia. But you've got to get out of Rookwood."

"That's for the Head to decide."

"The Head's a long time making up his mind. Morny's coming back to-day, and you're not going to be here when he comes."

Lattrey shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you mean to say that you won't go?" demanded Jimmy.

"Yes."

"Well, you're going. If you like to go and pack your box, we'll give you time, and then we'll see you off."

"Oh, don't be a fool!" said Lattrey contemptuously. "I'm not going."

"That's done it!" shouted Lovell. "Collar him and kick him out!"

"Hands off!" yelled Lattrey, springing back. "I tell you—Hands off, you fools! I'll shout for help!"

"Shout away, you cad!"

The juniors rushed at Lattrey. He fought savagely as their grasp closed on him. But he was powerless in the grasp of so many hands.

"Have him out!" roared Conroy.

"Kick him out!"

"Shove him along!"

Struggling in the grasp of five or six fellows, Mark Lattrey was whirled through the doorway, into the passage.

"Help!" he shouted. "Help! Bulkeley! Mr. Bootles! Help!"

"Shut up, you rotter!"

"Yank him along!"

"Help!"

In a rush of excited juniors, Lattrey was borne along struggling to the stairs, shrieking for help.

There was a heavy footstep on the stairs, and Bulkeley of the Sixth strode into the Fourth-Form passage.

"Help, Bulkeley!" screamed Lattrey.

"Stop that!" exclaimed the captain of Rookwood angrily. "What are you young sweeps up to?"

There was a roar at once.

"We're turning Lattrey out!"

"He's got to go!"

"Stop, I tell you!" rapped out Bulkeley.

He strode among the juniors, and grasped Lattrey, jerking him away from the hands that clutched him.

The juniors stood round, angry, panting, a good deal like wolves at bay.

They were very much inclined to rush Bulkeley himself. But the captain of Rookwood was very popular, and the habit of discipline was strong.

"Look here, Bulkeley, he's got to go!" shouted Lovell.

"That's not for you to decide," said the prefect gruffly.

"Morny's coming out of sanny to-day; that fellow can't be here when he comes!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "It's not decent."

"I know that as well as you do," growled Bulkeley. "I don't know why he's not turned out yet. But you can depend on it that he will be expelled. There isn't the slightest doubt about that. Do you think the Head can possibly let him stay, you young asses?"

"Why hasn't he gone already, then?" demanded Flynn.

"I don't know," said Bulkeley frankly. "But it's for the Head to decide, not for you. Lattrey, go into your study."

Lattrey, panting, scuttled into his room, followed by furious glances. But not a hand was raised now to touch him.

"Mind, you're to let that young villain alone," said Bulkeley warningly. "I'll look over this, as I understand how you feel about it, but don't let there be any more of it. No rioting here, or you'll hear from me. Lattrey's not to be touched."

And with that, the captain of Rookwood turned and strode away.

The Classical juniors looked at one another.

"I—I suppose we've got to let old Bulkeley have his way!" murmured Raby, rather uncertainly.

"I—I suppose so."

"Why doesn't the Head sack him, if he's going to?" growled Higgs.

"There's something fishy about it," said Oswald. "Lattrey thinks he's not going to be expelled."

Jimmy Silver compressed his lips.

"We'll do as Bulkeley says," he said. "We can't very well do anything else. We'll let him alone. But if he stays here much longer, we'll take the law

into our own hands, and expel him from Rookwood ourselves. If he's here to-morrow, we'll send a round robin to the Head, demanding his expulsion."

"Good egg!"

"And if the Head doesn't do it, we'll do it."

"My hat!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted Lovell. "That's the game!"

And most of the Classical Fourth concurred.

The Head was to be given one more chance to do his obvious duty, and if he did not do it, then the juniors of Rookwood would take the matter into their own hands.

And serious as that step undoubtedly was, it was certain that Jimmy Silver would have plenty of support in taking it.

The 3rd Chapter.
Blind!

"Take my arm, old chap!"

Kit Erroll spoke softly.

The junior by his side was groping strangely, as he moved down the gravel path in the hospital garden.

Erroll's face was kind and tender. The friendship between Mornington and Kit Erroll was deep and sincere, but, in the quiet British way, it was seldom, or never, that either of them showed an outward sign of it.

But Mornington's blindness had altered that.

Now, the once reckless and daring Mornington was as helpless as a child, and he needed all his friend's care. And it was given unstintingly.

Morny, after his week in the sanatorium, looked little different from of old.

There were still traces of the bruises on his face, but his half-closed eyes did not seem at the first glance to be sightless.

It was from his manner that it was evident that he was moving in deep darkness, while the sun shone upon his face.

How Morny would take it was a puzzle to his schoolfellows. He was taking it quietly.

At first there had been misery and wild despair—he had called for death to put him out of his helpless misery. But he had calmed.

There was a reserve of strength and courage in Morny's nature that helped him to bear this most fearful of all misfortunes.

He did not intend to let it knock him over.

In helpless darkness, he was still to some extent the proud old Mornington; he would not "go under." Instead of feebly cursing his fate, he would bear up under it with grim endurance.

His whole proud nature shrank from moving the pity of others. Pity was the worst that he feared.

The sun in the heavens was dark to him, but he was still Mornington, proud and unsubdued.

Erroll watched him anxiously, keeping close to him.

It was like Morny to attempt to walk alone, as soon as he was outside the building.

The gravel crunched under his feet.

"Morny, old fellow—" murmured Erroll.

"Let me alone, Kit. I know this path. Dash it all, a fellow ought to be able to follow a path he knows, with his eyes shut!" said Mornington. "Let me try."

He swung on, followed closely by Erroll.

His chum's arm caught him.

"Don't!" snapped Morny. "I'm going right—Oh, gad!" He stretched out his hand, and touched the bark of the tree before him, into which he would have walked but for Erroll's restraining hand.

He stood quite still for some moments, his face flushing and paling, his breath coming thick.

Erroll watched him, with inexpressible pain in his face.

"By gad!" Mornington spoke at last. "I'm a fool, Kit—the same old fool—swankin', as usual! I can't walk a yard by myself. By gad, you'd better get me a dog to lead me on a string!"

He laughed—a laugh so full of sardonic bitterness, that Erroll shivered to hear it.

"Morny!" he muttered.

"Catch hold of me, Kit—guide me!" said Mornington. "I won't play the fool again!"

Erroll took his arm.

They moved down the path, and Erroll opened the gate into the quadrangle.

"So it's come to this!" said Mornington. "That's the quad we're getting into, Erroll?"

"Yes, Morny."

"There's a beech-tree close—only a yard or two away, I remember."

"It is close by you, Morny."

"An' I can't see it. Kit, old man, will you do me a favour?"

"Anything."

"Lead me down to the river, then, and put me on the landin'-raft, and leave me there."

"Morny, old chap, you don't know how you hurt me, when you talk like that," said Erroll, in a stifled voice. "Don't,

old chap! I know how bad it is! Goodness knows, I know that! But—"

"Only jokin', dear boy," said Mornington lightly. "I'm all right. As soon as I can hobble about with a stick, I sha'n't worry you any more."

"You'll never worry me, Morny."

"You're a good fellow, Kit, but you'll get fed up," grinned the blind junior.

"I should, I know that! After a week or two—"

"I shall not get fed up, Morny," said Erroll quietly. "I don't believe you really think so, either. And I know you'd do as much for me, as I'm going to do for you, old fellow."

"Perhaps."

"I know it! I've got eyes for both of us now," said Erroll cheerfully. "I'm only thankful that I'm here, Morny, and able to look after you. That's the only comfort for me now. This way, old son!"

"Blind!" muttered Mornington, as his chum led his uncertain steps towards the School House. "Blind! I've heard of people, but I've never thought about it. Lots of soldiers have got it—blinded in the trenches—and they haven't got the things I've got to help make up for it. Poor chaps! Poor chaps!"

Erroll's eyes were moist.

Mornington could think of others, as well as himself, while his misfortune lay so heavily upon him.

"By gad!"

That remark came from Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell, as he spotted Erroll and Mornington in the quad.

The dandy of the Shell bore down on them at once.

"Hallo! Out again, Morny!" he exclaimed.

"Is that Smythe?"

"That's it, Morny. How do you feel?" asked Adolphus, scanning Morny's face through his eyeglass. "You look much the same, by gad!"

"I feel much the same."

"No pain, what?"

"Not now."

"That's good! Horrid bad luck!" said Smythe, with rather vague sympathy. "Fairly knocks you on the head, what? Too bad, you know—too bad!"

Mornington's nostrils dilated.

Adolphus meant well. He intended to be kind and sympathetic. But a compassionate tone was not tactful; Adolphus was never celebrated for tact.

Pity from Adolphus Smythe roused all the bitterness in Mornington's breast.

"We're all sorry for you," went on Smythe. "Awfully sorry, you know, by gad, and—and all that! Knocks you out of everythin'. Too rotten! Anythin' a chap can do?"

"Nothing, but shut up and give me a rest!" said Mornington deliberately.

"Wha-a-t?" ejaculated Smythe, taken aback.

"Besides, there's consolation," said Mornington, in the same deliberate tone. "I can't see the sun at noonday; but then, I can't see your face, either, Smythe."

"What?"

"It always worried me," said Mornington.

"B-b-by gad!" gasped Adolphus.

Erroll drew his friend on, and they left Smythe standing in the quad, blinking after them, apparently overcome.

"By gad!" ejaculated Adolphus again, at last. "By gad!"

And that was all he could say. But he resolved not to waste any more sympathy upon Valentine Mornington.

The 4th Chapter.
Face to Face.

Jimmy Silver ran forward, as Erroll came up the steps of the School House with his unseeing chum.

"Hallo, Morny!" said Jimmy heartily. "Glad to see you out again!"

"Thanks!" said Mornington. "Sorry I can't say the same—can't see, you know. Feelin' very sympathetic?"

Jimmy looked at him curiously.

Morny was evidently in a bitter and sardonic mood; he was still the Morny of old. But the blind junior could say what he liked without giving offence.

"Certainly, Morny!" said Jimmy. "No harm in feeling sympathetic, I suppose. But never mind that. You're looking jolly well."

"Oh, good!" said Morny, more agreeably.

"We've been waiting for you," continued Jimmy. "Tea-time, you know. Ready for tea?"

"Oh, yes!"

"There's a spread in the end study—a feast of the gods," said Jimmy impressively. "Everything that's allowed by the merry grub rules. We've had to watch Tubby Muffin like a hawk to keep him from scoffing it."

"Ha, ha!"

Jimmy grinned with satisfaction; he had succeeded in making Morny laugh, at all events.

"You're awfully good!" said Mornington. "I'm afraid I should be a bit too much trouble, though."

It was the touchiness of the blind again. But Jimmy had more tact than Adolphus Smythe of the Shell.

"My dear chap, we sha'n't let you be a trouble," he answered. "We don't stand on ceremony in the end study. Buck up! Lovell's making the cocoa. You don't mind having no tea for tea? Tea's off."

"I'd rather not—"

"Trot along, then," said Jimmy, deaf to Mornington's half-uttered refusal. "I'll get along, and see that the eggs aren't boiled hard. Can't trust Newcome."

Jimmy scudded up the stairs.

"Come on, Morny!" said Erroll.

"Hold on, here's Bootles," said Morny coolly.

Erroll looked at him in astonishment.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, had just stepped out of his study, though how the blind junior knew it was a mystery.

Mornington chuckled. He felt, though

he could not see, the surprise in his chum's face.

"I know his step, you ass," he said. "When you can't use your eyes, your ears get sharper. Isn't it Bootles?"

"Yes, Morny."

"My dear Mornington!" Mr. Bootles came up, rustling and sympathetic. "My dear lad, I am very glad to see you amongst us once more!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"You are feeling well, my dear boy?"

"Rippin', sir!"

"My dear Mornington, I am very, very glad to see that you are not repining," said the master of the Fourth.

"Not at all, sir. The fact is, I'm enjoyin' it."

"What — what?" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.

"It's really quite a novel an' entertainin' experience, sir," said Mornington calmly. "I wouldn't have missed it for worlds!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

He blinked at Mornington over his glasses. Morny was quite grave, and surely he could not be suspected of pulling his Form-master's leg!

Mr. Bootles coughed, and coughed again, very much perplexed. And Mornington went up the staircase with his chum's guiding hand on his arm.

Mornington chuckled when they reached the landing.

"I think old Boots must have been a bit flummoxed, Kit," he murmured.

"He was a bit surprised, at any rate," said Erroll, laughing. "What were you pulling his leg for, you duffer?"

"I don't want his dashed snuffy sympathy!"

Erroll made no reply to that.

"Hallo, Morny! Top of the afternoon to ye!" shouted Flynn from his study doorway.

"Hallo, fathead!" was Morny's reply.

Tubby Muffin came scudding up.

"Morny, old chap! Hallo, Morny!" squeaked Tubby. "I say, Morny, how does it feel to be blind?"

"How does it feel to be a born idiot?" asked Mornington.

"Eh?"

"You answer my question, and I'll answer yours."

"Oh, I say, Morny—"

"Kick him for me, Erroll!"

"Why, you beast," howled Tubby indignantly. "I was going to say I felt jolly sorry for you, and now I won't!"

"Will you kick him, Kit?"

Tubby Muffin scuttled away without waiting to be kicked.

He confided to half the Fourth that Mornington was as big a beast as he had ever been, and that he, Reginald Muffin, wasn't going to bother his head about him, for one.

Mornington halted in the passage as Erroll was leading him to the end study.

"Not there yet, Morny."

"I know that, ass! Is Lattrey still at Rookwood?"

"Ye-es."

"I want to see him—I mean, I want to speak to him," said Mornington, biting his lip hard.

"I—I say—"

"Take me to him, fathead!"

"Oh, all right!"

Erroll knocked at Lattrey's door and opened it.

The cad of the Fourth looked round with a scowl. He had not quite recovered from the severe handling he had received that afternoon at the hands of the Classical Fourth.

He started, however, as he saw Mornington.

"You!" he exclaimed.

"Here I am again!" said Mornington. "You're still here, Lattrey? Feelin' specially proud of your handiwork—what?"

"I'm sorry it turned out like that!" muttered Lattrey. "I never meant it. You should have left me alone. I didn't want to fight you—you know that."

"I'm not sorry I licked you for cracking my head with a stone in a snowball, Lattrey. I've got somethin' to tell you. My guardian wanted to prosecute you for what you've done. I fancy that would have meant a reformatory for you, my pippin. I stopped him."

"Why did you?" sneered Lattrey.

"To save the disgrace to the school," said Mornington. "But you can't stay at Rookwood, Lattrey. Why haven't you gone?"

"I haven't, at any rate!"

"Do you mean to stay?"

"Yes."

"And brazen it out?"

"Put it as you like. I'm not going."

"The Head will turn you out."

"He hasn't done so yet," said Lattrey, shrugging his shoulders.

"Look here," said Mornington quietly. "You're not going to stay at Rookwood, Lattrey. I won't stand that! It rested with me whether you were sent to prison. I've let you off that. But you ought to have decency enough to go."

Lattrey did not answer.

"I won't stand it!" said Mornington between his teeth. "You've blinded me. I'm trying to forgive you for that, though it's hard. But I can't endure you after what you've done; and I won't! I can't understand the Head letting you stay. But you've got to go. I'll see that you do!"

"You'll see?" sneered Lattrey.

Mornington bit his lip till it almost bled.

"No, I can't see!" he said bitterly. "You're right, Lattrey. I'm a helpless log, and you've made me so. I can't touch you. You can stay here to chuckle over what you've done, and I can't prevent you. Get me out of this, Erroll."

Erroll led him from the room and on to the end study.

The cheerful expression was gone from Mornington's face now, and his brow was overcast. In the presence of Lattrey, who had so terribly injured him, he had realised for the first time his utter helplessness.

But in the silence that fell in the end study Morny realised the effect of his gloomy looks, and recalled his resolution. He did not mean to be a wet blanket and an object of pity.

As that thought came into his mind the gloomy frown disappeared from his face as if by magic, and he smiled.

"By gad! I'm sorry I can't see you fellows!" he remarked. "Pass the jam, Kit—and help me with it. I suppose you'll be leavin' me out of the team for the next footer match, Silver?"

Jimmy started.

"I—I suppose so," he said.

"I suppose you'll have to," remarked Mornington. "Football would be a bit difficult for me under the cirs. I'll come down and cheer, however. Fortunately, I haven't lost my voice."

Mornington chatted cheerily during tea, and when he left with Erroll afterwards he left an impression behind him of cheery contentment.

"Morny's standin' it jolly well," Lovell remarked. "Blessed if I thought he'd be so cool about it!"

"He's got lots of pluck," said Jimmy Silver.

And on that point certainly there was no doubt.

The 5th Chapter.
The Whip-hand.

"Lattrey's pater, by Jove!"

It was the following morning, and near time for lessons, when the cab from the station stopped at the School House, and a hard-featured man descended.

The Fistical Four recognised him at once.

They had seen Lattrey's father once before, and they had not liked his looks.

It was known at Rookwood that Lucas Lattrey was the head of a firm of inquiry agents, and was, in fact, a detective—or a spy, as Mornington had preferred to put it.

Jimmy Silver & Co. glanced at him curiously as he passed into the House. Jimmy looked relieved.

"He's come for Lattrey," he said.

"All the better," said Lovell, equally relieved. "I couldn't imagine what the Head was at, letting that rotter hang on here. I suppose he was leaving it till his father could come for him."

"Let's give the cad a hiss as he goes," said Newcome.

"No, no; not with his father."

"Right!" said Newcome at once. "I forgot that. After all, if he goes, that's good enough."

The news spread in the Classical Fourth that Lattrey's father had come, and was in the Head's study. Nobody doubted that Mr. Lattrey had come to fetch his son away from the school, and the relief was general.

That they would not "stand" Mark Lattrey at Rookwood any longer Jimmy Silver & Co. were determined, and if the Head had chosen to let him stay the situation would have been very difficult and awkward.

It was a relief to know that the fellow was going, and that Rookwood was done with him.

As a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver & Co. were taking a little too much for granted, as they would have learned if they could have heard what was passing in Dr. Chisholm's study just then.

The Head of Rookwood rose hurriedly to his feet as Mr. Lattrey was shown in. His face, which the juniors always knew as calm and composed, expressing little of human feeling, was agitated and tense.

Mr. Lattrey wore a grim expression.

"You received my letter?" exclaimed the Head, motioning his visitor to a chair.

"That is why I am here!"

"It is several days since I wrote."

"I am a busy man!"

Dr. Chisholm compressed his lips.

There was an almost brutal terseness in Mr. Lattrey's manner.

"Well, you understand from my letter—"

"That is what I have called to see you about," said Mr. Lattrey quietly. "You tell me that you wish my son to leave Rookwood. You told me so before, and I explained to you that I could not consent. I have only the same answer to make now."

"The case is altered now, Mr. Lattrey," said the Head, in a low, clear voice. "On the previous occasion, your son had been guilty of rascally conduct. I should have sent him away from Rookwood. You held over my head the threat of revealing to the world the disgrace of my younger brother, and covering me with shame. That is what is called blackmail."

"You did not ask me here to tell me that, I presume?"

"No! I wish to tell you that the case is altered—your son, going from bad to worse, has acted in a way that cannot be forgiven. I explained the circumstances in my letter. He has blinded one of his schoolfellows, by a brutal blow struck with a weapon!"

"An accident," said Mr. Lattrey tartly. "I have heard from my son, explaining the matter. He was attacked—"

"A schoolboy fight," said the Head.

"He struck Mornington to protect himself, and there was an unfortunate result—a quite unforeseeable accident."

"No doubt he has told you so," said Dr. Chisholm, his lip curling. "Mark Lattrey is incapable of truth, as he is incapable of honourable conduct of any kind."

"I do not think so!"

"That is my observation, as his head-master. After such an occurrence, Mr. Lattrey, the boy cannot remain in the school. Mornington's guardian was with difficulty dissuaded from prosecuting him. It was Mornington, who suffered by his brutality, who pleaded with Sir Rupert Stapoole not to bring that disgrace upon Rookwood. Sir Rupert will be satisfied, if the boy goes. He must go! You can see that for yourself."

Mr. Lattrey's jaw set squarely. "I can see that I cannot afford to let my son be expelled from a school like Rookwood!" he replied.

"I was weak to allow him to remain before; I reproach myself with it. This time, I cannot allow it."

"You have had my answer."

"I—I need not expel him publicly," faltered the Head. "I can, and will spare you that humiliation. But he must leave."

"He cannot leave!"

"Mr. Lattrey!"

"We may as well speak plainly, sir," said Mr. Lattrey, in his cold, incisive tones. "Expulsion from a school of the standing of Rookwood is a lifelong disgrace. My son could never live it down. I shall not see him begin life handicapped in this manner, while I can prevent it."

"He knew the risk."

"He assures me that it was all an accident."

"Nonsense!"

"Nonsense or not, I accept his statement," exclaimed Mr. Lattrey angrily, "and I repeat, that I will not have my son turned out of this school!"

"It does not rest with you. You will take him away with you, when you go, or I shall direct a prefect to take him to the railway station."

"You mean that?" asked Mr. Lattrey calmly.

"Yes."

"Very well." The detective took up his hat. "Then I need stay no longer. I take it for granted that you have considered all the consequences of your action."

The Head drew a panting breath. "You—you mean that you will proceed to reveal to the public the shameful secret I have guarded so many years, and which you learned in a way no honourable man could have used!" he exclaimed.

"Put it as you like! You are very well aware, Dr. Chisholm, that you could not retain your present post if that secret were known."

"I know it!" muttered the Head.

"If my son leaves Rookwood, you leave Rookwood," said Mr. Lattrey coolly. "If he leaves in disgrace, you leave in disgrace. And—you have a wife—a child—to share your disgrace! Have you thought of them?"

Dr. Chisholm pressed his hand to his brow.

"Heaven knows I have thought of them," he said falteringly. "But—but I must do my duty. And my duty is to compel your son to leave this school, where he is not fit to associate with any of my boys."

"Do your duty, and I will do mine," said Mr. Lattrey. "Good-morning, sir! It is war between us, and you have chosen it."

His hand was on the door, when Dr. Chisholm spoke again.

"Mr. Lattrey!"

The detective turned back.

"Well?"

"You—you are resolved—"

"Quite!"

"You will cover an honourable name with shame if I do not allow a hardened young rascal to remain in the school?"

"My boy, hardened or not, must go to some school. Why not this as well as another?"

"He has narrowly escaped a prosecution, which might have ended in a sentence to a reformatory."

"Well, he has escaped it, as you say; then that point need not be discussed."

"I—I cannot let him stay here—"

"Then all is said."

"Stop!" exclaimed the Head huskily. "You have me in your power, and you know it! If nothing will move you—"

"I have already answered."

"I—I will think what can be done," faltered the Head.

Mr. Lattrey, unmoved, glanced at his watch.

"I am a busy man," he said. "I have a return train to catch. It was only with great difficulty I was able to call here. I must ask for your final decision within five minutes."

He waited, watch in hand.

Dr. Chisholm sat at his desk, a stunned look upon his face.

He knew that he was under the detective's thumb—that he dared not quarrel with him.

He had hoped, vaguely, that even Mr. Lattrey would see that it was impossible for his son to remain at Rookwood School. But at the first sight of the detective's iron face, he had realised that his hope was a delusion.

There was neither understanding nor mercy there.

Mr. Lattrey closed his watch with a snap, and returned it to his pocket.

His steely eyes questioned the Head of Rookwood.

"Well?" he snapped. "Does my son stay or go?"

"I—I—"

"Please answer."

"You—you insist—"

"I have said so."

"Then—then I—I will see what can be done. I—I will let him stay—for the present, at least," muttered the Head.

"Heaven forgive you, Mr. Lattrey, for your wickedness. Go! Your son shall stay!"

"Good-morning, sir!" said Mr. Lattrey calmly.

He quitted the study.

A minute later, the Rookwood fellows saw him step into his cab—alone! He had not even seen his son.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared blankly after the vehicle, as it rolled away.

"He's—he's gone!" said Lovell.

"And Lattrey hasn't!"

Jimmy rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"The rotter must be going!" he said.

"He's bound to go! Anyway, the sentence of the Fourth holds good. If he's still here after dinner, we send a round robin to the Head."

The cab-wheels died away in the distance.

Mark Lattrey, looking from his study window, smiled.

The 6th Chapter. The Round Robin!

Mornington came into the Fourth Form-room, with Erroll's hand on his arm.

The sightless junior was guided to his place by his chum.

So far as possible, Mornington was to participate, as before, in the work of the form.

There was much that he could no longer do; but there was no need for him to give up everything.

All eyes were on Mornington as he sat down. He knew it, though he could not see.

Lattrey glanced at him very curiously.

Mr. Bootles was very kind and considerate to Mornington. So was everyone in the form.

There was a calm and cheerful expression on Morn's face.

Bitter as his affliction was, he would not allow his feelings to appear in his face. And the determined effort to keep up a cheerful countenance, helped him to real cheerfulness.

It was hammering in his mind all the time, that he would not be an object of pity. He was blind—he was almost helpless—but no one should hear him complain.

Only once, a flash of bitter anger passed over his face, as Mr. Bootles spoke to Lattrey by name.

Lattrey was there, within a dozen feet of him—Lattrey, who had struck him down and darkened his eyes, and his life.

Lattrey was still there—still within the walls of Rookwood, in sight of the terrible harm he had done.

Some of the fellows wondered what Lattrey was made of, that he had the nerve to remain.

But it would not be for long. Jimmy Silver was determined on that.

"Go it, Jimmy!"

"I've only a few words to say. You all know what Lattrey of the Fourth has done?"

"Yes, the rotter!"

"Rotten Classical cad!" came from Tommy Cook.

"Shut up, you Modern!"

"Pile in, Jimmy Silver!"

"You all know what he's done. You know that Morn, the fellow he's injured, stood between him and prison. For some reason I don't profess to understand, the Head won't turn him out of the school. The Head's got to turn him out!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I propose that a round robin be sent to the Head, calling upon him to expel Lattrey at once!" pursued Jimmy Silver.

"Bravo!"

"The document will be written out, and signed in the form of a round robin by every chap present. Hands up for the round robin!"

Every hand went up.

"Good!" said Jimmy, jumping down from the chair. "We'll strike while the iron's hot. The Head goes to his study after lunch, and we'll let him have the round robin there, before afternoon lessons!"

"Good egg!"

Jimmy Silver took a pen and a sheet of impot paper.

He chewed the handle of the pen thoughtfully for a few moments, the juniors crowding round him and looking on eagerly.

But the captain of the Fourth was soon at work.

His pen glided rapidly over the paper, and the juniors buzzed approval as they read what he wrote.

"Put it plain enough, Jimmy!" said Lovell.

"Yes, rather!"

"I'm doing it," said Jimmy. "No

secret, so long and so carefully guarded, and the old gentleman's whole nature shrank from the bitter shame of it if all should be dragged out into the light of day.

He was feeling weary and tired as he thought it over, and had sunk into deep and melancholy reflection, when he was aroused by a sudden tap at his study door.

He glanced at the door, and to his astonishment saw that a sheet of paper had been slipped under it into the room.

There was a sound of receding footsteps in the corridor without.

The Head sat for some moments gazing in surprise at the sheet of paper that lay just within the room.

He rose at last, crossed the study, and picked it up.

He started violently as he looked at the thickly-scrawled paper. For this is what he read:

"Sir,—We, the Lower School of Rookwood, consider that Mark Lattrey, of the IVth Form, should not be allowed to remain in the school. We are surprised that he has not been expelled from Rookwood, and we beg to point out that we cannot and will not tolerate him in the school, and we humbly and respectfully call upon you, sir, to send him away at once.

"As witness our signatures:"

Then followed a circle of names, beginning with "J. Silver."

Dr. Chisholm held the paper in his hand, staring at it blankly. At first it was astonishment and dismay that were expressed in his face. But anger soon followed. Kind-hearted man as the Head was, he was severe also, and he had a very strong sense of discipline.

Circumstances had compelled him to

The Head spoke in a tone of cold formality.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Bootles.

"Naturally, having reached this decision, I am not likely to allow myself to be dictated to by the boys of the lower Forms."

"I—I suppose not, sir. But—but the senior boys are also very much astonished that Lattrey has not gone yet."

"The senior boys, I presume, will have sense enough to refrain from questioning the decision of their headmaster."

"I—I presume so."

"The junior boys, apparently, lack that amount of common-sense," said the Head drily. "This must be rectified. Although this document is signed in the form of a round robin, I have little doubt that it is mainly the work of Silver, the head boy in the Fourth, in whose hand the message is written."

"It is possible."

"It is very probable, I think. Under those circumstances, Mr. Bootles, I leave the matter in your hands. You will speak to Silver, and warn him that any further impertinence of this kind will be visited with severe punishment."

"Oh! Very well, sir."

"That is all, Mr. Bootles. Take the paper and destroy it, after you have reprimanded Silver."

"As you wish, sir," said Mr. Bootles, somewhat stiffly.

The Fourth-Form master left the study with the round robin in his hand, and returned to his own quarters.

He passed the Fistical Four in the corridor, and beckoned to Jimmy Silver to follow him.

"Now for the merry verdict!" murmured Lovell.

Jimmy Silver followed the Form-master quietly into his study. He could see that a storm was brewing, and he did not fear it.

If the Head refused the request conveyed in the round robin, it was Jimmy's intention to take larger, and more drastic, measures.

"Ahem!" Mr. Bootles coughed uncomfortably. "Silver, you—you see this—this somewhat extraordinary paper—what, what?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

"It appears to be a—a round robin, I think it is called, Silver."

"Exactly, sir."

"The message is written in your hand, Silver. Dr. Chisholm concludes that you have been the ringleader in this—ahem!—piece of impertinence."

"We're all in it together, sir," said Jimmy firmly.

"Really, Silver—"

"Does Dr. Chisholm refuse our request, sir?"

"Certainly—most certainly!"

"Is Lattrey to stay, sir?" asked Jimmy, very quietly.

"Dr. Chisholm's decision, at present, is that Lattrey is to remain at Rookwood, Silver."

Jimmy compressed his lips.

"This paper," continued Mr. Bootles, "I shall destroy, by the Head's instructions." He tossed it into the fire as he spoke. "Now, Silver, I recognise that feeling has been very much excited in the school by the wickedness of Lattrey's conduct. Doubtless he will be punished. But that is not a matter for you or your schoolfellows to decide. Dr. Chisholm's decision is absolute. I shall not punish you now, Silver, but it must be understood that there is no more of this—this impertinence."

Jimmy did not answer.

"You understand that, Silver?" exclaimed the Fourth-Form master sharply.

"I understand, sir, that Lattrey can't remain at Rookwood!" said Jimmy Silver steadily.

"What, what?"

"Jimmy did not finch.

"The fellows will not stand it, sir!" he said.

Mr. Bootles coughed.

"Silver, I do not wish to cane you. Leave my study at once, and kindly let there be no more of this—this insolence! Not a word more! You may go."

Jimmy Silver left the study.

His face was dark and set as he rejoined his chums.

"Well?" demanded the Co., with one voice.

"Lattrey is to stay!" said Jimmy Silver, between his teeth, his face pale with anger. "That's the Head's decision. And if we say anything more about it, we're to be punished."

"My hat!"

"Why, what a rotten shame!" broke out Lovell furiously. "We're not going to stand it! We won't stand it for a minute!"

"No fear!"

"We're not standing it!" he said.

"We've given the Head a chance to do the right thing. He's refused. We're ordered to put up with that scoundrel in the school as if nothing had happened. We're not going to do it! Lattrey is going to be expelled from Rookwood! The Head won't expel him, and so—he paused a moment—"we're going to expel him!"

"Us?" breathed Lovell.

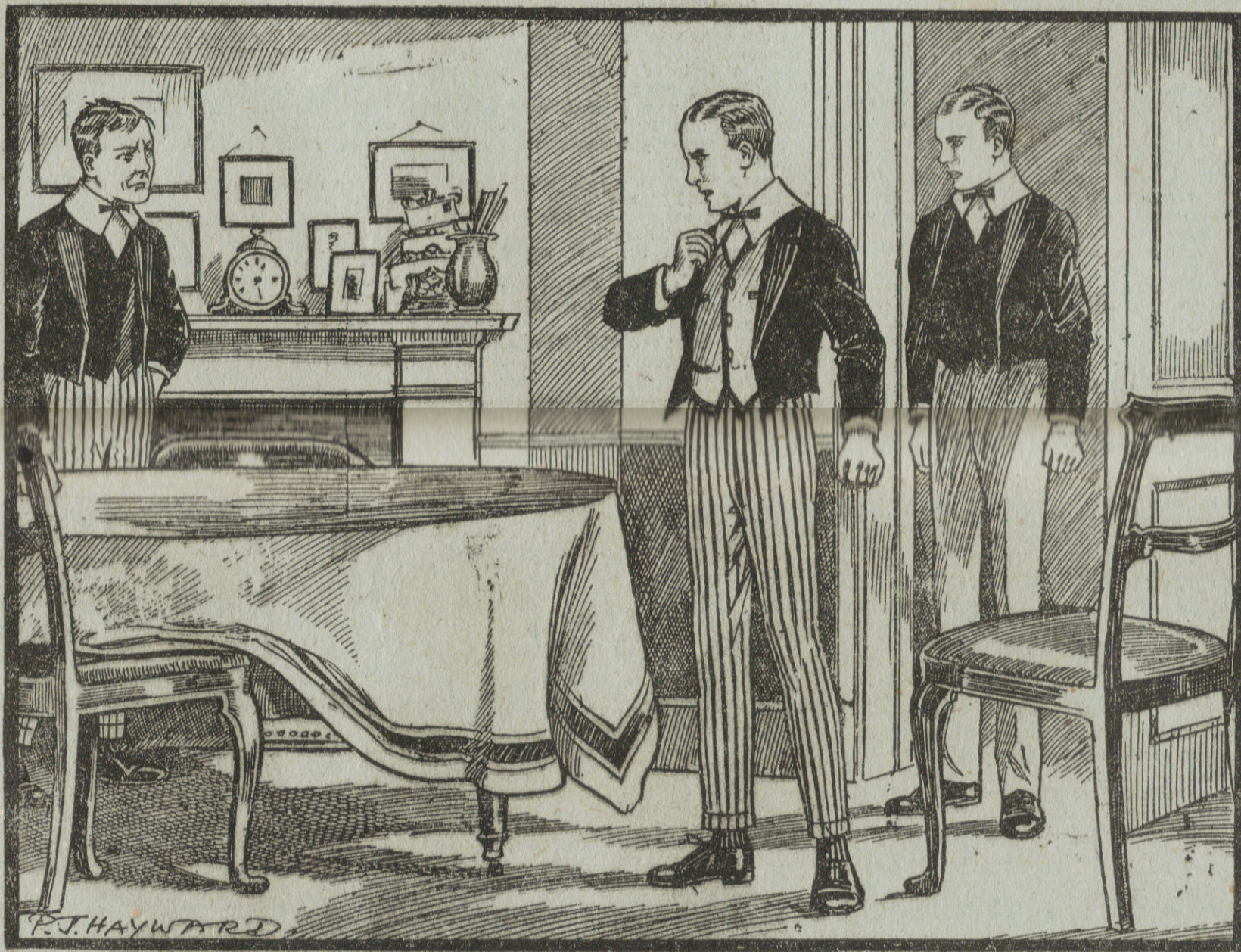
"Us!" said Jimmy Silver steadily.

"He's going, whether the Head likes it or not! Lattrey's going to be expelled from Rookwood by the Lower School!"

"Hear, hear!"

The bell rang, and the Fourth went into their Form-room. Lattrey in class gave Jimmy Silver a vaunting look. He knew what had happened, and he knew that it had failed. But Jimmy Silver & Co. were not yet done with the fellow who was condemned by the school!

THE END.



"I won't stand it!" said Mornington between his teeth. "You've blinded me—I'm trying to forgive you for that, though it's hard. But I can't endure you after what you've done, and I won't. You've got to clear out of Rookwood, and I'll see that you do!"

It was simply inexplicable why the Head did not expel him; but if the Head had forgotten his duty, the school was ready to remind him of it.

After the Fourth were dismissed Jimmy Silver stopped Lattrey in the passage.

"You still here, Lattrey?" he said quietly.

"Looks like it!" sneered Lattrey. "You're not under orders to go?"

"Not at all!"

"The Head hasn't even sent for you?"

"Oh, no!"

"And you intend to stay?"

"Certainly!"

"Then it's time for us to set to work," said Jimmy Silver quietly; and he turned his back on Lattrey.

The latter sauntered out into the quadrangle, still with a sneering smile on his face.

He was not without hopes that the affair would blow over in time and be forgotten.

Mornington might leave, and then he would have a better chance of living down his blackest deed in a rascally career.

At all events, he was resolved to "stick it out."

But Jimmy Silver was resolved, too.

After dinner there was a meeting in the junior Common-room, and it was attended by Moderns as well as Classicals.

Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, were at one with Jimmy Silver in this matter.

Erroll was in the quadrangle with Mornington, but nearly all the rest of the Fourth were present. And a crowd of the Shell, the Third, and the Second had come in to swell the meeting.

Never had the Lower School, Classicals, and Moderns alike, been so unanimous on any subject.

Jimmy Silver mounted on a chair.

"Gentlemen of Rookwood—" he began.

chance of the Head making any mistake about that."

The epistle to the Head was finished at last, and Jimmy Silver signed his name to it first.

The Co. followed; then the three Colonials; then Tommy Dodd and his chums; and then, in order, nearly all the Fourth, the Shell, and the Third, and some of the Second Form.

"Erbert's name, 'Mornington II.," was written with especial emphasis. The names were in a circle round the document, and the paper was covered with the army of signatures.

The round robin was complete at last.

"Now that's got to be 'taken to the Head!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Ahem!"

Smythe & Co. of the Shell sauntered out of the Common-room. They had signed the paper, but they did not want to interview the Head.

"I'll take it!" said Jimmy Silver at last. "I'll slip it under his study door, and tap and—clear."

"Good egg! That's all right!"

And the many signatures on the round robin having been blotted and dried, Jimmy Silver slipped the sheet under his jacket, and made his way to Dr. Chisholm's study.

The 7th Chapter. Coming to a Climax.

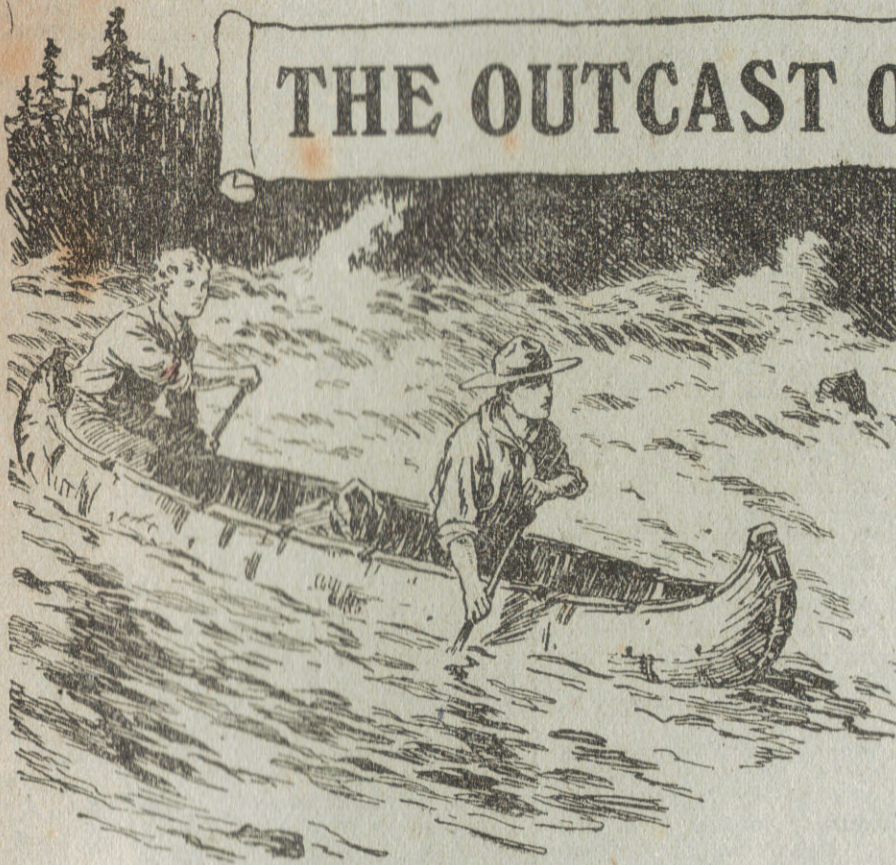
The Head of Rookwood was alone in his study.

He was sitting at his table, his head drooping, his chin resting on his hands. His expression was one of utter dejection.

The Head had a strong sense of duty, and he knew that it was his duty to turn the black sheep of Rookwood out of the school. But—

But he was in the detective's power. Lucas Lattrey knew that miserable old

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The 1st Chapter.

Old Man Gunten Looks In!

"It's Old Man Gunten!" There was a buzz of voices among the fellows standing near the gateway at Cedar Creek School. A buggy came dashing up from the rough trail, towards the school gates, with a fat, hard-featured man at the reins. Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc were in the group, and they looked very curiously at the buggy and its driver. Mr. Gompers Gunten, the Swiss storekeeper of Thompson town, and postmaster of the section, was a quite important personage in the little world of the Thompson valley. He was a hard-fisted man of business, and reputed to be one of the richest men in the section, and not over-scrupulous in his dealings. And he was the father of Kern Gunten, the blackest sheep at the lumber-school of Cedar Creek. The fat storekeeper's face was unusually hard and grim now. He was evidently very angry. He was lashing the horse as he came dashing up, in a way that made Frank Richards' eyes glint as he saw it. The buggy stopped at the school gateway, and Mr. Gunten jumped down. He called to Frank Richards, who happened to be the nearest of the group of Cedar Creek fellows. "Hold my horse, boy!" "What?" "Hold my horse!" Frank Richards did not move. That peremptory order, from a man he hardly knew and did not like, was not likely to be obeyed. Frank simply looked at the Thompson storekeeper. "Do you hear me?" rapped out Mr. Gunten harshly. "Yes, I hear you," assented Frank. "Take the horse, then!" "Did you ever come across the word 'please' in your dictionary, Mr. Gunten?" asked Frank Richards quietly. "What?" "I'll mind your horse if you ask me," said Frank. "I certainly shall not take any orders from you, Mr. Gunten." "Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc smiled. Chunky Todgers burst into a chuckle. Mr. Gunten scowled blackly. "Do you want me to lay my whip round you, you young cub?" he roared. "You'd better not!" said Frank. "What—what?" The fat storekeeper fairly glared at the English schoolboy. But he did not take up his whip. He muttered something under his breath, and threw his reins over a post, and strode in at the gates, without another word. With a quick, angry step, he went towards the log school-house, and disappeared into the porch. "My word! Old Man Gunten's mad!" grinned Eben Hacke. "I've seen him in a tear before, but never quite so mad as this." "Cheeky old duffer!" said Frank Richards indignantly. "Does he think he can order us about, like his Chinese shopman at the store?" "I guess he's found out that he can't," chuckled Bob Lawless. "The old sport has come here to bulldoze Miss Meadows, about his precious son being turned out of the school. I fancy Miss Meadows will give him his change, though." "Gunten doesn't seem to be coming back to the school," Vere Beauclerc remarked. "Miss Meadows won't let him," said Tom Lawrence. "A jolly good thing, too! But Old Man Gunten's wild about it." There was no doubt that Old Man Gunten was "wild." He was breathing wrath as he strode into the porch of the lumber-school, and his glare almost scared Black Sally when she came to see what he wanted. "Is Miss Meadows here?" snapped the storekeeper. "Missy here," said Black Sally. "Loramussy! What de matter, Mass' Gunten?" "Show me in to Miss Meadows." "Loramussy!" gasped Sally. A door on the passage opened, and Miss Meadows looked out of her little study and sitting-room. The face of the Cedar Creek schoolmistress was cold and severe.

"Kindly step in, Mr. Gunten," she said icily. The fat storekeeper tramped into the room. Miss Meadows did not ask him to be seated, and she did not sit down. She stood facing the angry man, with cold calmness. Mr. Gunten was the richest man in Thompson, and what the cattlemen called a "big bug" in his way, but his frown had no terrors for the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek. "You wished to see me?" asked Miss Meadows quietly. Mr. Gunten breathed like a grampus. "Yes!" he snorted. "I came to see you, Miss Meadows, about my son." "I explained the matter fully in my letter to you." "I guess that doesn't go, with me. You said that Kern could not be allowed to return to Cedar Creek School." "Quite so." "Well, I cannot agree to that," Miss Meadows' lips hardened. "I am afraid you have no choice in the matter, Mr. Gunten," she said. "I am headmistress of Cedar Creek, and I cannot allow your son to come to the school any longer." "I guess a Canadian school isn't the property of a paid teacher!" snorted Mr. Gunten. Miss Meadows did not reply to that. "My boy must go to school," continued Mr. Gunten. "There is no other school near my home—and he must come here. You have no right to exclude him." "I should not have done so if I had not the right," said Miss Meadows coldly. "Kern Gunten cannot return here." "What is your complaint against him?" "I have told you. He inserted an advertisement in the 'Thompson Press,' with my name attached, which was intended to cover me with ridicule. In a mean and cowardly manner, he made me believe at first that another boy—Richards—had played that wretched trick. Moreover, I have never been satisfied with him. I have found him gambling, and inducing other boys to gamble with him. That kind of thing cannot be allowed at Cedar Creek." Mr. Gunten grunted. "I guess everybody gambles on the frontier," he said. "Mein Gott! In my native country, Switzerland, I kept a gambling saloon before I emigrated, and Kern was employed in it." "Switzerland is not Canada!" said Miss Meadows drily. "If he has done wrong he can be punished. Perhaps he should not gamble among schoolboys. I will give him the cowhide, if you wish. But he cannot be sent away from school. What is he to do?" "My concern is to see that my school is kept in a proper state of order," said Miss Meadows. "Gunten has deliberately defied all authority. He knew what he was doing." "He will express his sorrow—" "He will speak falsely, as he has done many times before." "You appear to have a bad opinion of my son, Miss Meadows." "I am sorry. But that is so." Mr. Gunten snorted again. He was not accustomed to opposition, and he did not like it. He was surprised, too, and annoyed, to find calm and quiet resistance to his lordly will, in the slim, quiet Canadian girl. "It is a slight to me!" he exclaimed heatedly. "What is this school? A lumber-school of the backwoods! I am the most prominent citizen of Thompson. I may become a member of the Legislature. And you calmly propose to turn my son out of this backwoods school! It is an insult! I shall be laughed at by all Thompson!" "I am sorry; it cannot be helped." "It can, and must be helped!" exclaimed Mr. Gunten. "I am willing to be reasonable. I am rich. If it is a question of compensation—" "It is nothing of the kind," said Miss Meadows, a flush creeping into her cheeks. "You mean that you will not allow Kern to return on any conditions?" "Yes." Another snort! "Well, he must return, Miss Meadows! I am not a man to be trifled with. Kern must and shall return to this school!" And the angry storekeeper emphasised

that statement with a heavy stamp on the floor which almost made Miss Meadows' desk dance.

The 2nd Chapter. The Boot for the Bulldozer.

"By thunder, the old galoot's going it!" "Cheeky old ass!" Outside the lumber schoolhouse the fellows were gathering with excited and angry faces. Mr. Gunten's bull voice could be heard easily outside the house, and, in fact, half-way across the school grounds. The angry storekeeper did not care who heard him. The idea of their schoolmistress being "bulldozed" in her own study by the fat storekeeper from Thompson naturally made the fellows angry. Mr. Gunten might be a most important personage in his own estimation, but the opinion of all Cedar Creek was that he was not worthy to black Miss Meadows' shoes. And Cedar Creek was about right on that point. "Say, let's go in and chuck him out," suggested Eben Hacke. Frank Richards grinned. "Miss Meadows wouldn't like it," he said.

"I repeat, Miss Meadows—" "Neither am I accustomed to raised voices, sir," said the schoolmistress calmly. "This room, sir, is my study, and not the bar-room at Gunten's store." Mr. Gunten almost choked. "Miss Meadows, I repeat that my son must be taken in at this school! There is an appeal from you to the school authorities, and I have influence with them. It would not be difficult for me to have you, Miss Meadows, replaced by another head teacher if I chose!" "You will do as you think best, Mr. Gunten. At present I am mistress here, and I decline to have my authority questioned." "Madam!" "Good-afternoon, sir!" "I am not going yet," said Mr. Gunten, while Black Sally stared at him helplessly. The old negress was quite unable to show out Mr. Gunten if that irascible gentleman refused to go. "I have to take the afternoon class in a few minutes, Mr. Gunten," said Miss Meadows quietly. "Will you oblige me by retiring?" "I guess not." "Then I shall leave you here!" Miss Meadows, at a loss how to deal with her obstreperous visitor, made a movement towards the doorway, where Black Sally stood blinking. The storekeeper stepped to the door, slammed it in Sally's black face, and put his back to it. Miss Meadows started back. The storekeeper was purple with wrath, and so enraged that he did not think or care what he was doing. "Will you allow me to pass, Mr. Gunten?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, her voice trembling with anger. "No, madam, I will not until this matter is settled!" shouted Mr. Gunten. "Are you out of your senses, sir?" exclaimed the schoolmistress, in mingled anger and consternation. "Let me pass at once!" "I will do nothing of the sort!" "You have come here, then, to act like a ruffian!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Put it as you like! I guess—" The door behind Mr. Gunten's broad back was suddenly opened—so suddenly that it crashed on him, and sent him reeling forward towards Miss Meadows. In the doorway there appeared the flushed face of Frank Richards, with Bob Lawless and Beauclerc just behind him, and behind them a crowd of the Cedar Creek fellows. Mr. Gunten spun round, in fury. "Get out!" rapped out Frank Richards. "Richards!" ejaculated Miss Meadows. "Leave him to us, ma'am," said Frank. "Mr. Gunten, Miss Meadows has told you

hands, the prominent citizen of Thompson town was whirled through the doorway. He yelled and spluttered as he was whirled away into the porch, and then out into the open air, heels uppermost. It was like an earthquake to Mr. Gunten. He had supposed that he could bully the schoolmistress, but he had counted without the Canadian schoolboys. They were not in the least disposed to stand by idly while the "foreign trash" bullied Miss Meadows. "Out with him!" roared Bob Lawless. "Hurrah!" "Yank him along!" "Ride him out on a rail!" yelled Eben Hacke. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Pitch him into his buggy!" "Head first! Ha, ha!" In a terrific roar, Mr. Gunten was whirled away to the gates, hardly knowing what was happening to him. He came up to his buggy with a rush, his arms and legs flying wildly, and the spouting schoolboys heaved him into the air, and he landed inside the vehicle with a crash. The horse started and reared. "Cast him loose!" chuckled Lawrence. Frank Richards dragged the reins from the post. He snatched the whip from the buggy at the same time. So far as he could prevent it, the bullying storekeeper was not to be allowed to "take it out" of the horse, as the cruel-natured man certainly would have done. The horse was turned, and sent up the trail at a run. Frank Richards tossed the whip away among the trees. Mr. Gunten was on his back in the buggy, with his legs sprawling over the seat. Only his boots could be seen, as he went down the trail. The horse trotted away, with the reins on his back, and the buggy disappeared round the timber. Mr. Gunten's boots being the last the Cedar Creek fellows saw of him. A roar of laughter followed him as he departed. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Bob Lawless wiped his eyes. "Oh, Jerusalem!" he gasped. "I reckon Old Man Gunten won't come here to bulldoze Miss Meadows again in a hurry!" "Ha, ha, ha!" The school bell began to ring. The schoolboys streamed towards the house, still chortling. Miss Meadows' colour was heightened as she came into the school-room to take her class. Frank Richards & Co. judiciously set the example of being extra quiet and respectful that afternoon. They had chipped in for Miss Meadows' sake, and



"Take him away!" said Miss Meadows. "I've taking him away, missy," replied Black Sam, as he carried Gunten out of the school-room like an infant.

"I guess we shall chip in if he bulldozes Miss Meadows!" exclaimed Bob Lawless indignantly. "The man's a howling cad!" said Beauclerc. "Like father like son!" snorted Chunky Todgers. "Hark! There he goes again!" "Cheeky rotter!" growled Frank Richards. "You hear me, Miss Meadows? Kern must and shall return! I cannot put up with this slight! Punish him if you like, but he must return to this school, and that is settled!" Miss Meadows did not reply. She stepped to the door, and opened it. "Yes, missy?" said Sally, who was in the passage, with a scared expression on her ebony face. "Please show Mr. Gunten out." "Yes, missy." "What?" thundered Mr. Gunten. "My interview with you, Miss Meadows, is not yet over!" "You are mistaken, Mr. Gunten. I have no more time to waste, and this discussion is unprofitable."

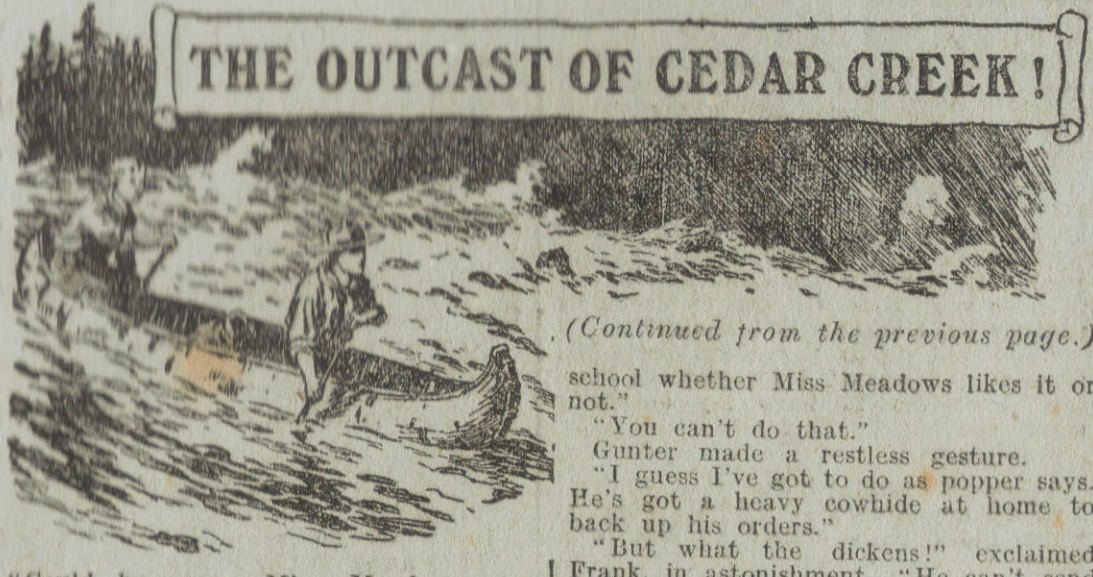
to go. Are you going on your feet, or on your neck?" "Sharp's the word!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Now, then!" "Kick him out!" roared Chunky Todgers. Mr. Gunten, instead of replying to Frank Richards, made a rush at him, lashing out savagely with a heavy fist. He was too enraged to make any other answer. But it was an unfortunate reply, for him. Frank Richards knocked his blow aside, and was upon him like a cat. Bob and Beauclerc were not a second behind. In the grasp of the three schoolboys, the fat storekeeper went to the floor with a crash and a yell. "Hurrah! Out with him!" yelled Tom Lawrence. "Boot him out!" "Fire him!" "Good gracious!" gasped Miss Meadows. A dozen fellows were swarming round Mr. Gunten now. In the clutch of as many pairs of

the schoolmistress could scarcely reprimand them. But it was just as well to be very quiet and orderly afterwards. School passed off that day without the attendance of Kern Gunten. Neither did Mr. Gompers Gunten return. The storekeeper of Thompson had had enough of the Cedar Creek fellows.

The 3rd Chapter. The Outcast.

Bob Lawless was chuckling as he led his pony down the trail after school. Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc wore smiles. The incident of the afternoon had tickled them immensely. The bullying Swiss had learned that he could not carry matters with a high hand at Cedar Creek School, however great a man he might be in his store at Thompson. "The cheeky jay!" said Bob, between two chuckles. "As if we'd stand his bulldozing at Cedar Creek, you know. What a nerve!" "I suppose there's nothing in what he was threatening?" asked Vere Beauclerc,

THE OUTCAST OF CEDAR CREEK!



(Continued from the previous page.)

"Could he cause Miss Meadows any trouble with the school authorities?" Bob shook his head.

"I guess not! That was only bluff, I reckon."

"He's savage enough for anything," remarked Frank Richards. "But I think he was only chewing the rag, as you call it, Bob."

"What do you call it in England?" asked Bob, with a grin.

"Gassing!" said Frank, laughing.

"Well, his gas has been cut off for a bit," said Beauclerc. "I don't see how Miss Meadows could allow Kern Gunten to come back, after what he did."

"And it's a good riddance to bad rubbish!"

"You bet!"

"Hallo, talk of angels!" exclaimed Bob Lawless suddenly.

As the three chums came up to the fork of the trail their eyes fell upon the fellow they had been discussing.

Kern Gunten was standing there, leaning on a tree, and he seemed to be waiting for them.

The Swiss did not look happy.

His heavy face was morose in expression, and he had a generally unquiet and troubled look.

The three chums stopped at the fork of the trail, where Beauclerc usually left his companions to go his different way home.

As they stopped, Kern Gunten came towards them, greeted by rather grim looks.

"Hold on a minute, you chaps," he said.

"Well?"

"Has my popper been to the school this afternoon?"

Bob grinned.

"I guess so."

"What's the verdict, then?"

"You haven't been home since?" asked Bob.

"Nope. I want to know how it turned out before I see my father," said the Swiss. "He's not got a good temper, and he's rather fond of using the cowhide when he's mad. What happened at Cedar Creek?"

Bob Lawless explained.

He did not want to score over the fellow who had been turned out of the school, and he put it as gently as he could.

As a matter of fact, the chums were feeling rather sorry for Gunten.

He was a rogue and a rascal—there was no denying that—and he had played a cruel trick on Miss Meadows, and very nearly succeeded in getting the blame thrown upon Frank Richards' shoulders.

But he was down on his luck now, there was no doubt about that.

Judging by Mr. Gunten's actions at the school, his reception of his son could not have been a pleasant one when he learned that Kern had been turned out of the school.

And it was evident that Kern Gunten was very unwilling to face his father now, after the unsuccessful interview with Miss Meadows.

The Swiss stood with a gloomy face, his hands driven deep into his pockets. Frank Richards & Co. looked, and felt, uncomfortable.

Gunten had brought it all upon himself by his own rascality; but he was hard hit, and he was down on his luck.

"I suppose you fellows are pretty glad I've been turned out?" said Gunten at last, with a sneer.

"Can't say I'm sorry," said Bob Lawless candidly. "Cedar Creek won't be any the worse for missing you. Still, I'm sorry for you personally."

"It doesn't look as if Miss Meadows will let me come back."

"I guess not."

"You really can't expect it, Gunten," said Frank Richards quietly. "You know what you were risking, I suppose?"

"I didn't think I was risking anything," muttered the Swiss.

"No," exclaimed Bob hotly, "because you worked it to get the blame put on Frank Richards!"

"Never mind that now," said Frank. "That's all over. I'm sorry it's happened like this, Gunten, but I don't see that there's anything to be done."

"I guess I don't feel like facing my father," muttered Gunten. "He takes this as a slight to himself. People in Thompson will be chipping him about it. He's not popular. And—and if there's much talk about my gambling, it may do him harm with the mission folks, and he relies on their support when he goes in for the elections. I—I wish I hadn't made that bad break."

The schoolboys were silent.

Gunten's repentance was only too plainly caused by the serious consequences he had to suffer, not by any regret for his wrongdoing.

"You don't think there's any chance for me?" asked Gunten.

"I'm afraid not," said Frank.

"I—I guess the popper will be mad about it. He says that I'm to go to

school whether Miss Meadows likes it or not."

"You can't do that."

Gunten made a restless gesture.

"I guess I've got to do as popper says. He's got a heavy cowhide at home to back up his orders."

"But what the dickens!" exclaimed Frank, in astonishment. "He can't send you to school when the schoolmistress won't admit you!"

"You don't know my father. He's obstinate, and he's not very bright, either. He's a big bug in Thompson and the whole section. A lot of the farmers are in his debt, and they're very civil, and it's got into his head. He fancies he can override everybody and everything, even the law, like a millionaire in an American town. Of course, he can't; he doesn't understand Canada really. But I can't argue with his cowhide!"

"By gum, you've brought a lot of trouble on yourself, Gunten!" said Bob. "I'm blessed if I see any way out for you! But I'm pretty certain Miss Meadows won't let you into the school if you come there again."

"I guess popper will make me come."

Gunten gave the chums a short nod, and strode glumly away.

Frank Richards and his comrades looked at one another curiously.

"Poor brute!" said Vere Beauclerc at last. "He seems to be between the devil and the deep sea. He brought it on himself. Miss Meadows stood a great deal before she turned him out."

"Can't help feeling sorry for him," said Bob, with a rather worried look. "But, all the same, if he was let into the school again, he'd be just as big a rotter as before, only perhaps a bit more cautious about it."

"And if it gets out about his gambling among the fellows, the parents will begin complaining, and it will be awkward for Miss Meadows," remarked Beauclerc. "She can't be expected to take him back."

"So it's the cowhide for Gunten," said Frank.

"Poor brute!"

The chums parted, Beauclerc striding away towards his home, and Frank and Bob trotting off on their ponies to the Lawless Ranch. They were very thoughtful.

The 4th Chapter. Fired Out!

Frank Richards and his chums were thinking of Gunten when they arrived at the lumber school on the following morning.

That even the high-handed and arrogant Gompers Gunten would send his son there, against the express orders of the schoolmistress, seemed incredible.

But Kern Gunten evidently thought so, and they were curious to see what would happen.

Keller, Gunten's chum, met them as they came in at the gate. Keller was looking very serious.

"Have you seen Gunten?" he asked.

"Not since last evening," said Bob Lawless.

"He's coming here to-day," said Keller. "Phew!"

"His father's ordered him to."

"Silly old donkey!" commented Bob. "Well, he is an old chump, and no mistake!" said Keller. "But Gunten dare not disobey him. He'll come right enough. I'm expecting him."

"My hat!" murmured Frank.

Most of the Cedar Creek fellows were on the look-out for Kern Gunten, after that.

And a few minutes before the school-bell rang for lessons the outcast of the lumber school rode up, turned his horse into the corral, and came in.

He was surrounded at once.

"What's this game, Gunten?" asked Eben Hacke.

"You're looking jolly happy!" chortled Chunky Todgers.

"Shut up, Chunky!" muttered Bob.

Kern Gunten was not looking happy, by any means.

His hard and heavy face was troubled and worn in expression.

Evidently his latest interview with his father had been an unpleasant one, and probably the family cowhide had been introduced into the conversation.

"I've come to school!" he said doggedly. "But you don't belong here now," said Dick Dawson.

"Popper says Miss Meadows hasn't any right to turn me out," said Gunten, in a sullen tone. "He's made me come, anyway."

"Well, my hat!" said Frank Richards. "But—but—but you can't come, Gunten. It's all rot!"

"I've got to do as popper says, I guess. He's too hefty with the cowhide for me to argue with him."

The bell rang, and Kern Gunten slipped into the school-room in the crowd of fellows, and took his former place.

There was deep, subdued excitement

among the boys and girls in Miss Meadows' class.

Most of them felt sorry for Gunten, in his peculiar circumstances.

He fully deserved his punishment, but certainly he was in a most unenviable position.

What Miss Meadows would do when she found the Swiss in her class was a very thrilling and interesting question.

Frank Richards had a remembrance of a fellow who had been expelled at his old school in England.

From the decision of the headmaster of St. Kit's there had assuredly been no appeal.

But Cedar Creek was not much like St. Kit's.

Exactly what powers the Canadian schoolmistress possessed, or did not possess, was unknown to her pupils.

But it was impossible that she could allow her decision to be over-ruled by the arrogant storekeeper of Thompson.

Mr. Stimme, the assistant-master, came in, and he caught sight of Gunten in the class, and started.

Mr. Slimme took the younger class, and had nothing to do with the others.

But on his way to his class, he paused, and spoke to the Swiss.

"Gunten!"

"Yes, sir!" said Gunten, very respectfully.

"Has Miss Meadows given you permission to be here?"

"No, sir!"

"Then why are you here, Gunten?"

"My father sent me, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimme. "He went on to his class; it was not his business to deal with Kern Gunten."

That problem was left to the schoolmistress, in whose class he was.

But he glanced round several times at the sullen face of the Swiss, evidently in a perplexed mood.

There was a hush in the class as Miss Meadows came into the school-room.

Expectancy was at its height.

The schoolmistress did not notice Gunten, for the moment, among the crowd of others, and the Swiss made himself as small as possible.

But as she caught sight of him she started abruptly.

"Now for it!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Miss Meadows came towards the desks. Her lips were set, and her eyes were glinting."

"Gunten!"

Gunten stood up.

"You should not be here!" said Miss Meadows sternly.

"My father sent me, ma'am."

"Indeed! Your father has no right, and no authority, to do anything of the kind, Gunten! You will leave the school at once."

There was a breathless pause.

Kern Gunten's hard face paled a little, but he did not move.

"Do you hear me, Gunten?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Kindly obey me, then."

Still the Swiss did not move.

Miss Meadows' eyes were gleaming now. Her authority in the school was at stake, and she could not have given way now, even if she had desired to do so.

"Gunten, leave the school-room at once!"

The Swiss stood as if rooted to the floor, though the colour was changing in his face.

"Will you obey me, Gunten?"

No answer.

"You surely cannot suppose, Gunten, that you can remain here without permission!" said Miss Meadows severely.

"Unless you immediately leave the school-room, I have no alternative but to have you removed by force!"

Gunten licked his dry lips.

"Popper's told me to stay here, Miss Meadows," he muttered.

"Your father has no authority in this school, as you very well know. For the last time, will you leave the school-room, Gunten?"

The Swiss did not answer; but he did not move.

Miss Meadows compressed her lips.

"Todgers!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"Fetch Washington here at once!"

"Ye-es, ma'am!"

Chunky Todgers left the school-room.

Washington, otherwise known as Black Sam, was the handy-man of Cedar Creek School, and performed many duties.

Among his duties, that of "chucker-out," had never yet been included. But the negro servant was the only resource in this case.

Gunten still stood where he was.

It was clear that his fear of his father was greater than his fear of Miss Meadows.

There was a grim silence in the school-room, till Chunky Todgers came back, followed by the burly negro.

"You want me, Miss Meadows," said Black Sam. "Here I is, Missy."

"Gunten is here without permission. Please take him away, and leave him outside the school gates."

"Yes, marm."

Black Sam made towards Gunten, coming among the desks.

The big negro was looking grim.

As a matter of fact, the negro servant had been the victim of more than one ill-natured trick of Gunten's, and he was not sorry to be allowed to "handle" him.

Apart from that, the Swiss' defiance of Miss Meadows was more than enough to make Black Sam angry.

Miss Meadows was little short of a goddess in Sam's simple eyes.

"You come with me, Mass' Gunten," said Sam.

Gunten panted.

"Hands off, you confounded nigger!" he hissed. "Don't you dare to touch me, you black hound!"

Sam grinned, and "touched" Gunten fast enough.

Gunten struck out savagely. He had a good deal of his father's arrogance, and

he was enraged at being handled by a nigger.

But the nigger did not mind. He received a savage blow on the chest from Gunten's fist, without heeding it, probably without feeling it much.

Then his powerful grasp closed on the Swiss, and Gunten was whirled out from the desks.

"Let me go!" shrieked Gunten, struggling fiercely.

"Take him away!" said Miss Meadows.

"I'm taking him, Missy!"

Grasped in the powerful arms of the negro, Gunten was carried out of the school-room like an infant.

He kicked and struggled, but it did not avail him.

The two disappeared from sight, out of the doorway, and Gunten's furious yells were heard dying away in the direction of the gates.

Black Sam deposited him on the trail outside the school gates, with a bump.

"Now, you vamoose, Mass' Gunten," he said. "You come round here agin, and I lay my stable mop round you!"

He went in and closed the gates, and locked them.

Gunten stood in the trail, panting with rage.

In the school-room, lessons commenced. Gunten's place was empty, and it remained empty.

The excited murmur in the class died away.

Miss Meadows was in a somewhat severe mood that morning.

But the Cedar Creek fellows could not help thinking of Gunten, and wondering whether this was the end of his career at the lumber school.

The 5th Chapter. Missing!

There was a rush out of the gates when morning classes were dismissed at Cedar Creek.

The fellows were anxious to see whether Kern Gunten was still hanging about the school.

The Swiss was not to be seen, however.

"I guess he's gone home," remarked Tom Lawrence. "I don't envy him when he got there. But it's his own fault."

But, as it happened, Gunten had not gone home.

Frank Richards & Co. strolled down the creek, and, at some distance from the school, they suddenly spotted Kern Gunten.

The Swiss was standing by a tree, leaning on it, staring at the creek with a morose and gloomy face.

He looked up at the sound of footsteps, and a sneering, sullen expression came over his hard face at the sight of Frank Richards and his chums.

"You've not gone home?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Nope!"

"You're going, I suppose?" asked Frank.

"I guess not."

"Look here, Gunten, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Frank. "What's the good of playing this game? You may be hurt next time Black Sam handles you, if you come into the school again."

"I know that. I'm not coming back to the school," said Gunten. "I knew it wouldn't be any good, but popper was set on it. But I'm not going home. It only means another row, and I've had enough of the cowhide, I reckon."

"What on earth are you going to do, then?" asked Frank.

"I'm going to stick it out in the woods."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I'm not going home to the cowhide," said Gunten sullenly. "Miss Meadows won't let me come back to school, and popper will rage if I go back and tell him. He'll send me again tomorrow. What's the good? Well, I'm not going home. I've got plenty of money, and I'm going to get somebody to take me in. Rube Bailey will take me into his shack if I ask him."

"Rube Bailey—that blessed horse-thief!" exclaimed Bob.

Gunten shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't camp out in winter," he said. "If it was summer, I'd take a trip down the valley, and stay away till my money was spent. I guess I'm not going home, anyway. If popper don't come round and be reasonable, I'm going to light out. I could get a job over the line, in a faro bank."

Keller came along the creek, and started as he saw Gunten.

Frank Richards & Co. walked on, and left the two Swiss together.

"What a kettle of fish!" said Bob Lawless. "Gunten's down on his luck, and no mistake! Poor brute!"

"He can't stay away from home, like this," said Frank Richards uneasily.

"He can't go home if the old man hands out the cowhide at every meeting, I guess."

Frank nodded.

Gunten's position was not a pleasant one, and he wondered how it would all end.

When Cedar Creek turned up for afternoon lessons, Miss Meadows' glance swept sharply over her class.

Frank Richards guessed that she would not have been surprised to see Gunten there again.

But Gunten was not there, and nothing more was seen of him that day at Cedar Creek.

The next morning, as Frank Richards and Bob Lawless trotted up the trail to school, they caught sight of two figures in the wood.

They were Kern Gunten and Rube Bailey—the latter a decidedly shady character, more than suspected in the section of being a horse-thief.

Gunten had a gun under his arm, and was evidently out looking for game with his new acquaintance.

Bob hailed him from the trail.

"Hallo, Gunten!"

The Swiss looked round, and nodded.

"Been home?" asked Frank Richards, drawing rein.

"No."

"I say, won't your people be anxious about you?"

"Let them," said Gunten coolly.

The chums rode on.

Vere Beauclerc joined them on the trail, and they arrived at Cedar Creek School together.

From the direction of Thompson a buggy came in sight.

"Old Man Gunten!" grinned Bob.

It was the Swiss storekeeper again, driving to the school. The juniors watched him curiously.

"Oughtn't we to tell him that we've seen Gunten?" asked Vere Beauclerc.

Bob shook his head.

"He would go after him with the cowhide," he said. "Gunten's a regular worm, but I guess he's had enough cowhide. Let the old jay rip!"

Mr. Gunten left his buggy at the gates and strode in.

Frank Richards & Co. followed him to the school-house, with most of the Cedar Creek fellows.

Miss Meadows was in the school-house porch, and the Thompson storekeeper stopped, and actually raised his Stetson hat, as he saw her.

The schoolmistress gave him the slightest inclination of the head.

"Miss Meadows, is my son here?" exclaimed Mr. Gunten.

Miss Meadows raised her eyebrows.

"No, certainly not."

"I sent him to school yesterday."

"I am aware of that," said Miss Meadows coldly. "I had him removed from the school."

"Has he not returned?"

"He has not."

Mr. Gunten gnawed his thick lip.

"Then what has become of him?" he exclaimed. "He did not come home last night, Miss Meadows."

"Indeed!"

"I—I thought you would have some news of him here!" exclaimed Mr. Gunten. "He did not come home, and I have not seen him this morning."

"I cannot understand why he has not come home, Mr. Gunten. Perhaps it is due to your severity towards him."

"Nonsense! The young rascal—You are sure he is not here?"

"Of course, I am sure!" said Miss Meadows impatiently. "He is not here, and he will not be allowed to enter the precincts of the school again. I have nothing further to say on the subject."

Miss Meadows went back into the house, leaving the fat storekeeper gnawing his lip.

Mr. Gunten stood for some minutes, scowling, evidently at a loss.

Then he strode away towards the gates. He called to Keller as he saw him among the schoolboys.

"You were my son's friend," he said.

"Do you were my son's friend," he said.

"Do you know where he is?"

Keller shook his head.

"Do any of you know?" exclaimed Mr. Gunten.

Frank Richards & Co. did not speak.

"I guess I don't," said Eben Hacke. "Praps he'll turn up to home, Mr. Gunten, if you chuck up lambastin' him. I guess you shouldn't have sent him here, against the schoolmarm's wishes."

"Don't give me any impudence!" rapped out Mr. Gunten.

"Oh, come off!" said Hacke. "You can't sneer a free American with your black looks, Mister Swiss!"

"Nor a Canadian, either," grinned Bob Lawless.

"Git!" advised Hacke.

Mr. Gunten was evidently in need of something, or somebody, to wreak his wrath upon.

He made a sudden cut at Hacke with the whip, and the American schoolboy uttered a wild yell.

"Yooop!"

"Go for him!" shouted Bob Lawless.

Mr. Gunten jumped into the buggy as the schoolboys made an angry rush, and lashed the horse, and went bowling away down the trail. But he did not escape quite scathless.

The schoolboys scooped to the snow beside the trail, scooped it up in hurried handfuls, and pelted the buggy as it went.

Snowballs whizzed into the buggy in volleys, amid loud shouts and laughter, the Cedar Creek fellows pursuing the vehicle along the trail and still pelting.

The storekeeper turned in his seat, and shook his whip furiously at the pursuers.

As he did so a snowball from Frank Richards caught him fairly on the nose, and he collapsed amid his rugs.

"Well hit!" shouted Beauclerc.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

The Cedar Creek fellows rushed on, at top speed, hurling snowballs with deadly aim.

The storekeeper lashed his horse, and the buggy, rocking with its frantic speed, vanished out of range at last.

Bob Lawless chortled breathlessly, as the grinning crowd returned to the school.

"That's enough for Old Man Gunten," he remarked. "I guess he won't visit us again in a hurry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Old Man Gunten" was gone—and the younger Gunten did not reappear.

And though some of the fellows wondered what had become of the Swiss schoolboy, it could not be denied that Cedar Creek School was all the better without him.

THE END.
NEXT MONDAY.
"GUNTEN'S LAST CHANCE!"
By MARTIN OLIFFORD.
DON'T MISS IT!