

The BOYS' FRIEND ^{1d}/₂

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE "PENNY POPULAR." **WAR TIME PRICE**

No. 881. Vol. XVIII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 27th, 1918.

THE SCHOOLBOY INVESTORS!

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

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Jimmy Silver's Wheeze.

"I think—"
Jimmy Silver paused, and frowned portentously.

It was not the first time that Jimmy had paused.

He was standing by the window in the end study at Rookwood, his eyes fixed on his chums—Lovell, Raby, and Newcome—who were seated at the table, turning out lines at the greatest possible speed.

Jimmy Silver's remark was addressed to Lovell & Co.

Apparently Lovell and his chums did not hear—or, at least, did not want to hear.

"I think—" began Jimmy, in a louder voice.

Still there was no reply. Jimmy gave his chums a wrathful look.

"Lovell!" he exclaimed. Arthur Edward Lovell raised his head slowly.

"What the dickens is up with you, Jimmy?" he asked.

"I spoke to you."

"My hat!" said Lovell. "I thought you were trying to make enough row to wake the dead!"

Jimmy Silver snorted.

"Don't talk rot!" he said reprovingly. "Now, I think—"

"You're quite welcome to!" remarked Arthur Edward casually.

"What do you mean?"

"You said you think."

"I know I did."

"Well, I don't mind you, thinking, Jimmy, old son," said Lovell, with a grin. "but I do wish you'd be a sport, and think quietly. I want to get my lines done, and—"

"Look here, you silly chump," roared Jimmy impatiently, "I think

"Oh, dear!" sighed Lovell. "There he goes again!"

"I think—"

"For goodness' sake change the record, Jimmy!" urged Lovell.

"We've had all that before, and—"

"Look here, Lovell—"

"Look here, Jimmy—"

"Shut up, you chaps!" growled Newcome, dipping his pen viciously into the ink-well. "you're as bad as a couple of cats squabbling together!"

"There you are, Jimmy!" said Lovell loftily. "Even Newcome can't stand your gas. If you want something to do, you'd far better help me with these beastly lines than to talk a lot of rot!"

"Oh, you ass!" snorted Jimmy Silver forcibly. "It ain't rot! I think—"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Lovell snorted most expressively, and then turned to his lines.

It was pretty evident that Arthur Edward did not want to hear what the Classical captain thought.

For a few moments complete silence reigned in the study.

Lovell & Co. pegged away furiously at their lines, whilst Jimmy Silver glared.

Jimmy glared for quite a long time, but at length, however, he turned on his heel and strode towards the door.

"All right!" he said meaningly.

"If you fellows refuse to back up my wheeze, I'll get Tommy Dodd & Co. to help me."

"Eh? What's that?" exclaimed Lovell quickly.

"I'm going over to the Modern side to ask Tommy Dodd to back up my wheeze," said Jimmy Silver calmly.

"You'll do nothing of the kind!"

"But I can't work the giddy wheeze all on my own," said Jimmy Silver. "You fellows won't back me up, so—"

"Who said we wouldn't back you up?" asked Raby, showing some interest at last. "You haven't explained the wheeze, and—"

"Well, I like that!" said Jimmy Silver. "Every time I've tried to explain things Lovell's butted in like a blessed nannygoat. Of course, I'd much rather have the assistance of you chaps, but if the worst comes to the worst, I can always rely upon Tommy Dodd to—"

"Cut the cackle, for goodness' sake, Jimmy!" urged Lovell disgruntledly.

"Let's hear the wheeze, and then we'll tell you whether we'll back you up."

"Oh, good!" said Jimmy. "Now, I think—"

"Thinking again."

"Shut up, Lovell!" snapped Jimmy Silver irritably.

"Yes, keep quiet for a bit, Lovell, old scout!" urged Newcome. "We might just as well let Jimmy run on. The sooner he's got it off his chest the better."

"Oh, you asses!" snorted Jimmy. "Hanged if I don't feel inclined to get the Moderns to back me up, after all."

"Don't talk rot, Jimmy!" exclaimed Newcome, who was not at all keen on his leader taking his wheezes over to the rival side. "Get on with it!"

"Well, I think we ought to do something to help carry on the war," said Jimmy Silver, in measured tones. "You see—"

"Aren't we doing something?" asked Lovell. "Aren't we going without sugar and tea? Aren't we growing potatoes on the school allotments? And haven't we given up study feeds for the duration?"

"Oh, yes," agreed Jimmy Silver. "But, after all said and done, that ain't much. Everybody's doing that, and—"

"We can't join the Army; we're too young."

"Quite so," said Jimmy. "I wasn't suggesting that. I was thinking—"

"Not of joining the special constables?"



TUBBY MUFFIN GETS IN THE WAY!

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jimmy. "We're too young for that, too. All the same, there's still a way in which we can help. To carry on the war, aeroplanes and guns are wanted, shells have to be made, ships and Tanks are needed in great numbers, and—"

"We know that."

"All these things have to be bought and paid for."

"We know that, too."

"Well, that's just where we can help."

Lovell looked at his chum questioningly.

"You're not thinking of buying a Tank, I suppose?" he asked.

"No," replied Jimmy, with a grin. "But there's no reason why we shouldn't help."

"Well, I've got sixpence," said Lovell. "I don't know what part of a Tank that will buy. You might be able to get a few screws."

"Quite so," said Jimmy, as though he approved of Lovell's offer.

Lovell looked surprised.

"I suppose you don't suggest that I buy the screws, and post them on to the War Office?" he asked.

"Not at all; but the money might be sent."

"What! Sixpence?"

"Yes, fathhead," responded Jimmy Silver, "if it was sent with a thousand or so other sixpences."

"I'm afraid I don't catch on," said Lovell.

"Neither do I," said Newcome and Raby.

"I suppose you've all heard of War Savings Certificates?" asked Jimmy.

"What! Those things you buy from the Post Office for fifteen-and-six, and get a pound for at the end of five years?"

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver. "It's a jolly good investment. Suppose a chap buys a dozen. The Government has the use of over nine pounds of

his money, and in five years he gets nearly three pounds for lending it."

"H'm!"

"Now, my idea," went on Jimmy Silver fervently, "is for every fellow at Rookwood to take up one or more of these War Savings Certificates."

"How many fellows do you think will plank down fifteen-and-six all at once?"

"I'm not suggesting that they pay it all at once," said Jimmy Silver. "My idea is for the fellows to pay so much a week—say, a shilling, or two shillings."

"And buy the certificates when they've paid sufficient money?"

"No; the certificates will be bought first."

"Who the dickens is going to pay for them?"

"The Head."

"My hat!"

Lovell & Co. were struck spell-bound at their leader's amazing suggestion.

For a moment or two neither of them spoke.

Then Lovell broke the silence.

"But he may have to pay out two or three hundred pounds," he said.

"Quite so."

"Supposing some of the fellows refuse to pay up all their instalments?"

"They'll be made to."

"How?"

"That's where little us will come in," said Jimmy cheerily. "We shall be responsible to the Head, and will have to see that the money is paid regularly."

"Supposing the Head refuses to have anything to do with the wheeze?" asked Newcome.

"He won't," declared Jimmy Silver. "We're going to talk to him like a Dutch uncle. We're going to show him that we're patriotic to the finger-tips. We're going to tell him that we don't intend to sheathe the sword until—"

"We've heard all that sort of thing before," interrupted Lovell.

"Well, come along, then," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm going to fix things up with the Head now."

And Jimmy Silver marched out of the study, followed at length by his amazed chums.

The 2nd Chapter. The Head Approves.

Tap!

Jimmy Silver knocked softly on the door of Dr. Chisholm's study.

"Come in!" sang out the Head. The Classical captain opened the door slowly, and entered.

He drew back quickly as he observed that the Head was in conversation with Mr. Bootles, the Fourth Form master.

"Come in, Silver!" said Dr. Chisholm, beckoning to the juniors to step forward. "What is it you wish to see me about?"

"We—we've been thinking, sir—"

—began Jimmy Silver, and then he paused.

The Head gave him a sharp look.

"Well?" he said.

"We've been thinking that—that—"

—began Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, sir," chimed in Lovell. "we've been thinking—"

—and then Arthur Edward Lovell paused.

Dr. Chisholm frowned.

"Dear me!" he said. "I trust you boys do not mean to be impudent, but your tone certainly suggests that—"

"No, no, sir!" said Jimmy Silver promptly, flushing to the roots of his hair. "We've been thinking that—that we all ought to do our utmost to help carry on the war."

Dr. Chisholm nodded his head in approval.

(Continued on the next page.)



"We've grown potatoes on the school allotments," went on Jimmy Silver, gaining confidence. "We've cut down our food allowance to the very minimum, and—"

"I sincerely trust you are not asking for special recognition, Silver?" asked the Head quietly.

"Not at all, sir!" replied Jimmy Silver promptly. "All we have done we have done willingly, and—and— But we think we might do more, sir."

"I am very pleased to hear that, Silver!" said Dr. Chisholm. "If you would care to cultivate still more ground, I will certainly consider the advisability of extending the school allotments."

"Oh, no, sir! I mean, we would be glad if you would, sir," said Jimmy haltingly. "But—but that is not exactly what I meant."

"Indeed?"

"We thought we might help our country still further by lending our money," said Jimmy Silver. "Money is needed just as much as anything for carrying on the war."

"That is so."

"Are you thinking of buying National War Bonds, Silver?" asked Mr. Bootles, who was highly elated to think that Jimmy Silver had stepped forward with such a suggestion.

"N-n-no, sir," replied Jimmy Silver. "We were thinking chiefly of War Savings Certificates. You see, the fellows would have to pay the money out of their allowances."

"Quite so."

"Very few juniors could afford to invest in War Bonds," went on Jimmy eagerly. "My idea is for everybody to save, say, a shilling or two shillings every week."

"And buy the certificates as soon as they have saved sufficient money?" asked the Head.

"No, sir," replied Jimmy. "We thought it would be best to buy the certificates first. You see, some fellows might discontinue paying, but if the certificates had been bought for them, they would have to pay whether they wanted to or not."

"Of course."

"But who is going to buy the certificates, Silver?" asked Dr. Chisholm. "Have you received a promise from anybody?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know of anybody who would be likely to assist you in this scheme?"

"Yes, sir."

The Head rose from his seat. "Very well, Silver," he said kindly. "If you will consult this gentleman, and communicate his decision to me, I shall be very pleased to give you permission to go on with the scheme. I certainly think it is a very good one. What is your opinion, Mr. Bootles?"

"I consider that Silver is to be congratulated on having thought of it, Dr. Chisholm," said Mr. Bootles, with an approving glance at the Classical captain. "The scheme has its advantages in that it encourages thrift, and also gives the boys a chance of showing their patriotism towards their country."

"Yes, that is so," agreed the Head. He turned towards the juniors. "As soon as you have arranged about the purchasing of the certificates, Silver," he said, "come and see me again. We will talk the matter over, and possibly I may be able to give you some advice."

"Ye-es, sir," faltered Jimmy Silver. "You may go," said the Head quietly. But the Fistical Four did not move.

Jimmy Silver shifted his feet uneasily, and stared at Lovell. Lovell did the same, and looked at Newcome.

There was a look of helplessness on each of the juniors' faces that completely puzzled Dr. Chisholm.

He glanced at the juniors critically. "Is there anything else you wish to mention, Silver?" he asked.

"Ye-es, sir," stammered Jimmy. "I—I've been thinking about the gentleman who might be persuaded to buy the certificates."

"You will write to him, I presume?"

"Ahem!"

"Would you prefer me to write—"

"No, no, sir!"

The Head frowned slightly. He was getting rather impatient at Jimmy Silver's indirect remarks.

"Then you had better write yourself, Silver," he said.

"Yes, sir; but—but—"

"Well?"

"I—I—I hardly think it would be the thing to send a letter after—after—"

Once again Jimmy paused. He did not suffer generally from nervousness, but on this occasion Jimmy was certainly exhibiting signs of this complaint.

Jimmy was not quite sure how the Head would take his proposition. Hence the reason for his hesitancy.

"Dear me!" said Dr. Chisholm, with an irritable gesture. "Your scheme appears to be confronted with difficulties. Perhaps you will be good enough to give me the name of the gentleman whom you think will purchase the certificates for you. Do I know him?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Then who is he?"

"You, sir!"

It was out at last.

The Head started back at Jimmy Silver's statement, but next moment a pleasant smile hovered over his face.

The Fistical Four gazed at one another sheepishly.

"You suggest then that I purchase the certificates, Silver?" asked Dr. Chisholm.

"Yes, sir. We thought that you might assist us," said Jimmy Silver. "Of course, we could buy all the certificates as soon as the money was subscribed. But—but if the fellows had to pay you, there would not be so much chance of their refusing to pay their instalments."

The Head smiled good-naturedly. "Very well," he said. "But how do you propose carrying out the scheme?"

"My idea is for all of us to canvass the fellows," explained Jimmy Silver, "and to secure their first instalments. We should in this way discover the exact number of certificates that would be needed."

"But in regard to collecting future instalments—"

"Oh, we should collect them all right, sir!" said Jimmy Silver quickly. "We should make a point of securing the money whenever it was due."

The Head looked questioningly at Mr. Bootles.

"What do you think, Mr. Bootles?" he asked.

"I consider that Silver and his friends are well fitted to carry out the scheme," said Mr. Bootles. "They are trustworthy lads, and, in my opinion, can be relied upon to carry the idea through successfully."

"Very good," said Dr. Chisholm. "You may proceed with the scheme, Silver. Immediately you have obtained the first instalments and the names of the juniors who wish to buy the War Savings Certificates, report to me, and I will arrange about the procuring of the certificates."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You may go!"

And the Fistical Four went, highly elated at the success of their venture.

The 3rd Chapter.

Smythe & Co. are Persuaded.

"By gad! You fellows seen the notice on the board?"

Thus Adolphus Smythe, the dandy of the Shell, to his chums Townsend, Topham, and Howard.

"No," replied Townsend. "What's it all about?"

"A dashed meeting," said Adolphus, with a sniff.

"What's it for? To discuss cricket?"

"By gad, no!" drawled the dandy. "That ass Silver put the notice up. It's about some silly patriotic meeting or somethin'. Hanged if I'm goin'!"

"What's Silver got to do with patriotic meetings?" asked Townsend curiously.

"No good askin' me, dear boy," replied Smythe. "You'd better come along and see the notice for yourself."

The nuts of the Fourth walked into the hall, and found a large crowd of juniors surrounding the notice-board.

On the board, written in large letters, was the following notice:

"GREAT PATRIOTIC MEETING!"

To be Held in the Common-Room at three o'clock sharp.

"DO YOUR BIT TO SMASH THE HUN!"

Great Speech by James Silver, Esq.,

"HOW TO MAKE MONEY!"

"By gad!" exclaimed Townsend, in surprise. "What does Silver know about making money, I should like to know? And what's makin' money to do with smashin' the dashed Hun?"

"Better turn up at the meeting, Towny, and learn for yourself," advised Pons, the Canadian junior.

"You won't find me there!" declared Townsend firmly.

"Nor me, by gad!" drawled Adolphus Smythe. "I don't want to listen to any of that ass Silver's silly rot! Like his dashed impudence to call such a meetin'!"

"Cheeky cad!" said Howard. "They won't see me there!"

"Sure?"

Howard turned round quickly, to find Valentine Mornington standing at his elbow, a sardonic smile on his face.

"What's it to do with you, Morny?" he asked curtly.

"Everything, dear boy!" said Mornington. "I happen to be backing up Silver in this affair."

"More fool you!"

"Not at all, dear boy," said Mornington. "It's everybody's duty to attend a patriotic meeting. A chap who stays away is nothing more nor less than a Bolo!"

"Oh, rats!" sneered Howard. "It's a thundering lot of silly rot! I suppose Silver's going to suggest that we all join the Volunteers, or take up allotment digging as a hobby."

"You needn't look scared, Howard; you silly ass!" laughed Mornington. "It's something much better than that—something you'll simply revel in, seeing what a patriotic young Britisher you are, by gad!"

"Oh, bosh!" said Howard, with a sniff. "You're getting thundering patriotic all of a sudden!"

"Remarkable, isn't it, dear boy?" said

Mornington, his mouth still curved in that sardonic grin that seemed almost inseparable from him.

"Too remarkable to last, I should think!" chimed in Townsend.

"Yaas; I can't fancy Morny bein' patriotic for long," remarked Adolphus Smythe. "But if the silly ass wants to go to the dashed meetin', let him go! They won't get me there!"

"Nor me, either!" said Townsend. "No fear!"

"You chaps are jolly sure you aren't going to the meeting, by gad!" said Mornington.

"Of course we are!"

"Suppose you wouldn't like to bet me you don't go?" asked Morny.

"Thought you'd given up bettin', Morny?" said Townsend.

"So I have, dear boy," said Mornington. "I'd forgotten for the moment. Suppose we make it two black eyes, then."

"Don't talk rot, Morny!"

"It ain't rot, dear boy!" said Morny calmly. "I'll bet each of you a couple of black eyes that you go to the meeting. If you don't go, then you can each dole me out a couple of black eyes. On the other hand, if you go I shall have the pleasure of making the presentation to you. Going to take it on, Smythe?"

Adolphus Smythe sniffed disdainfully. "I wish you wouldn't talk such utter nonsense, Morny!" he said. "If I say I'm not going to the dashed meetin', you can take it from me that I'm not."

"But supposing you're persuaded against your will, Smythe?"

"Nobody could persuade me, dear boy!"

"Sure?"

"Positive!"

Mornington frowned seriously. "Suppose I try and persuade you, Smythe?" he said.

"You're welcome to try, dear boy!" drawled Adolphus carelessly.

"Thanks!" Mornington glanced over his shoulder to where a dozen juniors were standing in front of the notice.

**BUY
WAR SAVINGS
CERTIFICATES—**



**—AND HELP TO
CARRY ON THE
WAR!**

"You fellows game to try a little gentle persuasion with these asses?" he asked.

The juniors—amongst whom were Dick Oswald, Rawson, Tommy Dodd & Co., and the Colonial Co., turned round quickly.

One or two of them were trying their very utmost not to laugh, but this fact was quite lost upon the four dandies.

"What's the trouble?" asked Dick Oswald, his face as serious as a judge.

"You fellows are going to Silver's meeting, I suppose?" remarked Mornington casually.

"What-ho!"

"So am I," said Mornington. "But these silly asses"—he pointed to the four dandies—"say they aren't going."

"Rotters!"

"I've betted Smythe two black eyes that I persuade him to go!" said Mornington blandly. "D'you think I can manage it?"

"It all depends."

"Well, will you help me to persuade them?"

"Oh, rather!"

"Then pile in!"

Before the four dandies quite realised what was happening the twelve juniors had flung themselves forward and made the nuts prisoners.

"By gad!" exclaimed Adolphus Smythe, struggling in the grip of Dick Oswald and Conroy. "What's the dashed game?"

"We're just persuading you, dear boy," said Mornington, grinning.

"Don't talk rot! I—"

"Silver thought he'd have some little trouble with you," said Mornington, "so we hit upon this little wheeze for getting you to the meeting."

"I'm not goin'!"

"You are!"

"I—Ow! Yow! Take your beastly fist away, Morny, you rotter!" roared Adolphus, as Mornington's hand approached perilously near his nose.

"But I've won the bet!"

"I—"

"Play the game, Smythe, dear boy!"

said Mornington. "I've won the bet all right, and I'm entitled to give you a couple of black eyes."

"Yow! Yaroooogh! Stoppit! Yow!"

"Shut up that row, Smythe, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Morny. "Anybody would think I was going to hurt you, by gad!"

"Well, take your fist away, you beastly cad!"

"Perhaps I'd better," said Mornington mildly. "It's time for the meeting. Mustn't miss it, you know!"

"I'm not goin' to the dashed meetin'!" roared Adolphus.

"Your mistake, Smythe; you are! Up with 'em, you fellows!"

And, very much against their wills, the four dandies were marched towards the Common-room.

Three juniors took charge of one dandy—two took his hands, whilst the other kept tight hold on his feet.

Mornington marched ahead of the procession.

And it was in this manner that the dandies, yelling frantically at the tops of their voices, entered the Common-room.

Most of the juniors were already there as Mornington entered, followed by the strange procession.

A rousing cheer rent the air at sight of the nuts of the Fourth.

"Hurrah!"

"Well played, Morny!" shouted Jimmy Silver from the end of the room. "Dump 'em down in the corner, and lock the door!"

"All serene?"

Smythe & Co. were promptly dumped down, and Jimmy Silver mounted upon a chair to address the meeting.

The 4th Chapter.

The Meeting.

"Gentlemen—" began Jimmy Silver. "I say, Silver—" sang out Tommy Dodd, of the Modern Side.

"Order!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Silver!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "What do you want, Dobby?" asked Jimmy Silver, looking down on the leader of the Modern side. "Don't you know it's rude to interrupt the speaker?"

"Rats! I was going to suggest—"

"Suggestions aren't wanted just yet."

"But I was going to suggest that I addressed the meeting!" yelled Tommy excitedly. "You see—"

"I see a fat-headed Modern before me," said Jimmy Silver, with cutting sarcasm, "and the sooner he shuts up the better."

"But I say—"

"Shut up, Dobby!"

"Yes, knock off, Dobby, you silly ass!" shouted several Classical juniors. "Let Jimmy Silver get on with the washing!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Silver, you Classical duffer!" belted Tommy Dodd. "I—Ow! Yow! Grooogh!"

Kit Erroll had jabbed his elbow into Tommy Dodd's open mouth, with disastrous results to the Modern junior.

"Now shut up, you Modern bouncer!" roared Erroll. "You can say all you want to say when Silver's finished. This is Silver's wheeze, so it's only right he should have first shout!"

"Oh, all right," said Tommy Dodd resignedly, seeing the force of Kit Erroll's argument.

"Gentlemen," began Jimmy Silver once again. "I have summoned you all here this afternoon to discuss a very important matter. I do not intend to talk to a great length—"

"We don't intend to let you!"

"I will say what I want to say in the smallest possible number of words," went on Jimmy fervently. "To begin with, I need only remind you that we are still at firm grips with the unspeakable Hun. The Hun has committed outrages beyond imagination. He has got to be licked—to be soundly thrashed!"

"What-ho!"

"The boys at the Front are giving their lives every day for the sake of the cause, whilst we remain at home doing—"

"Well, you're doing a lot of jawing!" said Tommy Cook. "I don't know that that helps on the war!"

"Shut up, you Modern duffer!"

"Gentlemen," continued Jimmy Silver. "we who remain at home are doing very little. We're going without food, we're growing as many vegetables as we can, but we're doing little else. We can do more—we must do more!"

As though to emphasise his remark, Jimmy Silver brought his fist down with tremendous force in front of him.

His fist happened to come into contact with the fat head of Tubby Muffin, and next instant there was a loud squeal from the fat junior.

"Ow! Yow! My head! Yaroooogh!"

"Sorry, Muffin!" said Jimmy Silver apologetically. "I didn't know your napper was in the way. But it don't matter. There ain't much in it to hurt!"

"Yow! My head's broken!" shrieked Tubby Muffin, clapping his head with his two hands. "Yow-ow-ow!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Ow! Yow-ow-ow! Yaroooogh!" shrieked Tubby Muffin.

"Shut up, Muffin!" ordered Conroy, the Australian. "How the dickens can we hear the speaker when you're squealing like a stuck pig. If you don't shut up quickly, I'll give you another to keep that company."

Tubby Muffin promptly subsided.

The prospect of another blow like the one Jimmy Silver had accidentally given him did not appeal to him in the least.

"Gentlemen," went on Jimmy Silver, "we must do more to help carry on the war. We can't go and fight; we're too young. We can't go into munition factories, as we don't understand the work. But there is still something we can do. We can give our money—I mean, lend our money—to the Government."

"Eh?" The interrogation came in a roar from a number of throats.

"Allow me to explain," continued Jimmy. "I have no doubt you are all aware that it is possible to purchase a War Savings Certificate for fifteen shillings and sixpence. At the end of five years this certificate will be worth a pound. Thus you will gain four-and-sixpence on one certificate."

Jimmy Silver paused to take breath.

"Now," he went on, with added enthusiasm, "a scheme has been devised whereby every fellow here can help his country, and, moreover, help himself, too. The Head has very kindly consented to purchase a large number of War Savings Certificates on behalf of the school. The idea is for every fellow to buy these certificates by means of weekly instalments."

"Jolly good idea!" shouted Lacy, the Modern, who had not been let into the wheeze.

"Supposing you take out two certificates," said Jimmy Silver, by way of explanation, "all you will have to do is to pay two shillings a week for about fifteen weeks, and the certificates will be yours. In five years' time you will make four-and-sixpence on each certificate."

"By gad! Who do you think is goin' to wait five years for a measly four-and-six?" asked Adolphus Smythe.

"Hallo! You still here, Smythe?" said Jimmy Silver, with a grin.

"You know I'm here," said Smythe abruptly. "You can see, can't you?"

"Well, I can see some silly ass over there sheltering behind a monocle," retorted Jimmy Silver, with heavy sarcasm. "I suppose it's you, isn't it, Smythe?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Got you there, Smythe, by Jove!" said Conroy.

"By gad! The cheeky cad!" gasped Adolphus. "The chap deserves a good licking."

"Can't stop for it now, Smythe," said Jimmy Silver. "We've got more important business on hand. Now, then, gentlemen, my friend Arthur Edward Lovell is waiting to take the names of those of you who intend to take out War Savings Certificates. All you have to do is to state the number of certificates you require, hand in the first weekly instalment, and the certificate will be handed to you as soon as possible."

"Roll up, gentlemen!" shouted Lovell, in stentorian tones.

And the gentlemen rolled up.

The 5th Chapter.

The Nuts' Refusal.

"How many did you say you'd have, Dobby?" asked Lovell, pencilling away for all he was worth.

"You can put me down for

Tubby Muffin adopted a thoughtful air. "Supposing I decide to take out ten certificates," he said.

"Phew! You might as well have a hundred while you're about it!"

"I couldn't afford a hundred," said the fat junior. "But supposing I take ten, can I have the four-and-sixpences in advance?"

"When do you want 'em?"

"Suppose we say at the end of the week," said Tubby Muffin, quite unconscious of the grinning faces around him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better go on supposing!" said Lovell, with emphasis. "You're dead of the mark there."

"What about next week?"

"Nothing doing."

"The week after?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Tubby Muffin knew that Albert Edward Lovell's expressive snort meant finality, and he glared at him with wrathful indignation.

"All right," he said disagreeably, "you can keep your blessed certificates! I won't have any of 'em!"

"Put Muffin down for one," said Jimmy Silver.

"I won't have one, I tell you!" roared the fat junior.

"No choice in the matter, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "You must have one. We can't have anybody standing out of this."

"I won't pay!"

"We'll see about that!" said Jimmy Silver promptly. "Next, please! What about you, Leggett?"

"Oh, I—I—I can't afford any!" said the cad of the Modern Fourth.

"Nonsense!" snapped Jimmy Silver. "You can afford a bob a week."

"I can't!"

"Put Leggett down for one," said Jimmy Silver.

"Right-ho!"

"Look here, Silver," said Leggett politely, "I'll tell you what I will do! I'll canvass the lower Forms for you, if you like."

Jimmy started. It was unlike Leggett to make a generous offer of this sort.

"You'll canvass the lower Forms?" he said.

"Yes."

"What do you want for it?"

"Well, I suppose you'll pay me commission," said the cad of the Fourth calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I jolly well won't!" declared Jimmy firmly. "If you were a patriot you'd do the job for nothing, and, what's more, you'd take out some certificates yourself."

"I can't afford it, I tell you."

"Piffle! Shove Leggett down for one!"

"I—"

"Anybody else, Lovell?" asked Jimmy Silver, turning his back on the cad of the Fourth.

"What about Clarence Cuffy?"

"Oh, yes; I'd forgotten about him!" said Jimmy Silver. "Cuffy, where are you?"

"Here I am, James," said the duffer of Rookwood stepping from behind a group of juniors.

"What do you mean by hiding your light under a bushel when you're wanted?" asked Jimmy Silver humourously.

Clarence Cuffy looked round him in amazement.

"I'm not aware that I had any light with me to hide," said the duffer simply. "Of course, my dear James, if you think—"

"Not at all," said Jimmy Silver quickly. "Now, about these War Savings Certificates. How many can we put you down for?"

Clarence Cuffy hesitated for a moment.

"Well, my dear James, I have been turning the matter over very carefully in my mind," he said meekly.

"Can't you decide upon how many to take?" asked Lovell.

"It isn't that, my dear Arthur," said Clarence simply. "I have been wondering whether it is really wise to buy these certificates with one's money. You see, at Gander's Green, I was always taught to look after my money, and not to throw it away in a rash manner."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Look here, Cuffy," said Jimmy Silver, growing impatient. "You don't want the beastly Hun to win, do you?"

"No, my dear James," said Clarence, in a slightly louder voice. "I should strongly disapprove of the Hun being allowed to emerge victorious from the war."

"Well, then," said Jimmy Silver, with emphasis, "if the Hun is going to be whacked, money has got to be obtained to buy all the aeroplanes, and guns, and Tanks, and other things."

"Quite so, my dear James."

"If you can help the Government to bring the war to a successful conclusion by investing our money in War Savings Certificates, it's up to us to do so."

Clarence Cuffy remained deep in thought.

Suddenly he looked up.

"I believe you're right, James," he said quietly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I'm right," said Jimmy firmly. "Now, how many certificates are you going to take?"

"I—I—I say, my dear James, are you really sure that the Government will use the money in an advantageous manner?" asked the duffer.

"Rather!" responded Jimmy Silver. "It'll help to buy a tank or an aeroplane."

"You don't think they'll spend it all on that awful red tape one hears such a lot about in connection with Government departments?" asked the duffer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you fathead!" sighed Jimmy Silver. "Don't you know what that red tape is?"

"You see—"

"Oh, hang! We can't argue that matter out, Cuffy."

"Well, can you promise me, my dear James?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Very well," said Clarence Cuffy, feeling in his pocket for his money. "I will take two, then."

"Two for Clarence Cuffy!" sang out Jimmy Silver. "Now, there remains Smythe and Howard and Townsend and Topham. What are you asses going to do?"

"Nothin', dear boy," said Adolphus Smythe.

"Don't be such a pro-German, Smythey."

"I'm nothin' of the kind!" exclaimed the dandy angrily. "I refuse to be called a pro-German!"

"Well, take out some certificates, then," said Jimmy promptly.

"I refuse to do so on principle!" declared Adolphus.

"What principle?"

"By gad!" exclaimed Smythe. "That's no business of yours, Silver! Don't be so inquisitive. I refuse to join in your rotten scheme, and that's an end of it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"D'you mean to say you won't help your country to win the war?"

"I shall do just as I like!" snapped Adolphus.

"That's right, Smythe, old chap!" said Townsend congratulatingly. "Tell the silly ass off!"

"Yaas," said Adolphus boldly, "I absolutely refuse to tolerate the cad's nonsense. It's like your sauce, Silver, to keep us shut up in here all this time!"

"Serves you right, you unpatriotic bounders!" said Jimmy Silver hotly. "But we won't detain you any longer. You can clear as soon as you like. I'm disgusted with you all! Let 'em clear out, Morny!"

"All right," said Mornington. And, opening the door, he permitted the nuts to pass into the corridor.

more instalments to be paid," said Jimmy Silver.

"But—"

"Smythe & Co. haven't paid up yet."

"They won't."

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"They're going to be made to," he said. "We shall have to devise some scheme for getting them in."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mornington. "I guess you can leave that to me."

The juniors looked at Mornington questioningly.

"What—?" began Arthur Edward Lovell.

"I reckon I've hit upon a top-hole wheeze," broke in Mornington. "Listen for a moment, and I'll explain it to you."

The juniors were all attention at once, and they listened intently whilst Mornington acquainted them with his scheme.

Morny spoke in a whisper in case of listeners in the passage, but at length there was a roar from the juniors.

"Bravo, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver praisingly.

"You think it will work?"

"Rather!"

"When are you going to work the wheeze, Morny, old scout?" asked Lovell.

"After tea."

"Good!"

The six juniors departed from the Common-room, and wended their way to the end study.

Mornington and Erroll stayed to tea with the Fistical Four.

It was a very frugal meal, but in their enthusiasm for their scheme the juniors hardly noticed the absence of such things as tea, butter, and sugar.

As soon as the meal was over, the

his reformation, Mornington had given the nuts a wide berth.

The news that the Classical chums had gone out without Mornington was a great shock to Smythe & Co.

"By gad!" said Adolphus Smythe. "You'll say next that you've chucked up Jimmy Silver and his dashed set."

"Suppose I have?" said Mornington non-committally.

"My hat!" gasped Townsend, in surprise. "Wonders will never cease. I never did think that Morny would remain a good little Georgie for long."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mornington, as though he were in agreement with Townsend. "You don't know me, Torny. Did you think I'd ever forget the times we used to have—cards and smokes and all that?"

"By gad, Morny!" said Adolphus Smythe. "You don't mean to say you want to have them over again—what?"

"Well, a game of cards makes a change, doesn't it?"

"By gad!"

"I suppose you chaps aren't playing this evening?" asked Mornington.

"Well, we were discussing the matter when you came in, dear boy," said Smythe, with sudden politeness. "Thinkin' of joinin' us—what?"

"I might."

"Oh, good!" said Smythe, rising from his chair. "Get out the cards, Torny. Come on, Morny, old man; here's a chair."

Mornington hesitated.

"What's the matter?" asked Smythe. "You aren't afraid of Jimmy Silver and his set chippin' in, are you? If they've gone out, they won't be back yet awhile."

"Why not adjourn to the woods?" asked Mornington. "It keeps light till late now, and—"

an instant he had grabbed hold of all the money on the improvised table.

"Now I've caught yer!" he said, wagging a finger at the amazed nuts.

"By gad!" exclaimed Adolphus Smythe. "I—"

"You need not argue with me, Master Smythe," said the constable in a deep voice. "I've caught yer in the werry act, and I'm goin' to 'ave no mercy on yer."

"Oh, I say!" said Townsend nervously. "Don't be such a rotter, Boggs! You've got our money—"

"Yus, and I'm goin' to keep it!" said the man in blue. "It will do for me to buy War Savings Certificates with. I've been wantin' to buy some for a long time. On second thoughts, I'm not so sure as I'll report yer."

"By gad!" said Adolphus Smythe, his face brightening up. "That's rippin' of you, Boggs, old man! Of course, we don't mind you buying War Savings Certificates with the money, do we, you fellows?"

"Not at all!" replied the other nuts, only too pleased at being able to escape from their position by payment of money. "You're sure you don't mind?" asked the man in blue.

"No fear!" replied Smythe promptly. "Here, Boggs, old man—he drew a pound-note from his pocket—"take this!"

"Certainly, Master Smythe!" said the constable. "I shall be able to buy another certificate with that."

"Do, by all means!"

"You young gents are really too kind," said the man in blue. "I'm extremely obliged to you. I'll bid you good-day."

"Good-day!" replied the nuts, with extreme politeness.

And a moment later the constable had disappeared from view.

He broke into a run at length, and drew up before five Rookwood juniors who were standing by the side of an old elm-tree.

"Did it work?" asked Lovell anxiously.

"Like a charm!" replied the constable. "Couldn't have been better."

"Good!" said Lovell. "Get those things off as soon as you can. We don't want Smythe & Co. to spot you."

"No fear!"

The constable removed his clothes with great rapidity, and soon P.-c. Boggs had disappeared from the view of the juniors, to reveal Jimmy Silver in his Etons.

Jimmy had disguised himself well to resemble P.-c. Boggs of the local Force—too well, in fact, for the nuts of Rookwood.



A rousing cheer rent the air as the strange procession entered the Common-room. "Well played, Morny!" sang out Jimmy Silver. "Dump 'em down in the corner, and lock the door!"

The 6th Chapter.

Mornington Knows What To Do.

Jimmy Silver's scheme had met with considerable success.

With the exception of Smythe & Co., every fellow had taken out one or more certificates.

Certainly Tubby Muffin and Leggett had not done so willingly, but Jimmy Silver was determined that they should not stay out of the scheme.

The method he had adopted had certainly been somewhat high-handed, but Jimmy consoled himself with the fact that for the honour of the Fourth it had to be done.

There might be some difficulty in extracting the weekly subscriptions from the recalcitrant juniors, but Jimmy never met his troubles half way.

He felt confident of dealing with the objectors when occasion arose.

With Smythe & Co., the position was different.

They had firmly refused to have anything to do with the scheme.

But they were to be made to. How, Jimmy Silver had not yet decided. Nevertheless, he was resolved to make it his bounden duty to devise a scheme whereby the nuts would be compelled to fall in line with the other juniors.

Most of the fellows had by this time left the Common-room. Only the Fistical Four, and Mornington and Erroll remained.

Jimmy Silver gathered up the money he had received.

"Better lock this up in the study," he said wisely.

"Why not take it straight to the Head?" asked Lovell.

"Because, my son, there are still four

Fistical Four left the end study with grins on their faces.

Mornington remained alone.

Five minutes later, when the Fistical Four were strolling towards the woods, Morny departed from the end study.

The expression of his face underwent a complete change. He looked morose and miserable, and fed up with things generally.

But Mornington was not in the least fed up. He had merely altered the expression on his face for an express purpose.

He strolled along to Study No. 5, which was shared by Townsend and Topham.

He opened the door, and observed, to his satisfaction, that there were four juniors in the study—Townsend and Topham of the Fourth, and Smythe and Howard of the Shell.

The nuts looked at him crossly.

"By gad! What do you want, Morny?" drawled Adolphus. "You're lookin' dashed well fed up."

"I expect it's through gazing at your face too long, Smythey," said Mornington, with a faint smile.

"Cheeky cad!" said Adolphus resentfully. "If you've come here to be insultin'—"

"Not at all, dear boy. Just thought I'd pop in, and see how you were gettin' on."

"By gad!" said Adolphus. "Have all your dashed pals deserted you?"

"They've gone out."

"By gad! What about Erroll?"

"He's gone out, too," said Mornington glumly.

"Didn't they want you with them?"

"No."

The nuts stared at Mornington in amazement.

At one time they had numbered Morny amongst their acquaintances, but since

"Oh, all right!" said Smythe quickly. "It's all the same to us. Possibly it might be advisable. Bootles has had his eye on us lately, and there's no knowing when he may come prowling round."

"Come on, then!"

The four nuts and Mornington left the school, and soon they were sitting in a quiet part of the woods, a part which Smythe & Co. knew only too well was rarely visited by the village people.

Mornington entered into the game with considerable enthusiasm.

Smythe & Co. were amazed at the sudden change in Morny, but they were delighted beyond measure at having lured him, as they thought, back into his old ways.

The nuts were using the stump of an old tree as a table. For the sake of convenience they kept their money in front of them.

Mornington grinned as he noticed the pile of silver and coppers in front of the nuts.

Smythe & Co. observed the grin, but they took little notice of it, thinking that Mornington's expression was due to his enthusiasm for the game.

Money changed hands with great frequency, and soon the game was in full swing.

Smythe & Co. were getting quite excited, and thus they did not hear a rustling in the undergrowth at their rear.

Next instant, however, they uttered low exclamations, for from the trees which sheltered them from the view of on-lookers there suddenly emerged a portly policeman.

"P.-c. Boggs!" gasped Adolphus, his face changing colour.

The constable sprang forward, and in

Later that evening Jimmy Silver posted one of the fellows who had paid their first instalments for War Savings Certificates. Amongst the names were those of Smythe and Howard and Townsend and Topham.

The nuts saw the list and gasped.

"By gad!" exclaimed Smythe, with indignation. "The cheeky cad to put my name down! I haven't paid for any dashed certificates!"

"You have, Smythey," said Jimmy Silver blandly.

The dandy turned round quickly.

"I haven't, I tell you! I—"

"Why, don't you remember giving me a pound note this afternoon?" asked Jimmy Silver. "You told me I could buy a War Savings Certificate with it, and you raised no objection to my doing the same with the other money I took from you."

"I—I—I—" stammered Adolphus Smythe, turning pale.

The other nuts changed colour, too. Light was beginning to dawn on them.

"You don't mean to say—" began Townsend haltingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jimmy Silver. "Fancy you not recognisin' me as P.-c. Boggs! I shall begin to think soon that I'm a good actor!"

"You—you—"

"I wasn't the only one who took you in, though," said Jimmy Silver. "Mornington did you down properly. But never mind. It was for your own good. Your money will be well invested, and you ought to be jolly glad that we've taken so much trouble to help you."

Smythe & Co. were not glad. They were extremely indignant at having been tricked so cleverly.

But the indignation of the nuts, however, did not trouble Jimmy Silver & Co. in the least. Their scheme had proved a great success; and when at length they received the congratulations of the Head they felt that they had made a good start as Schoolboy Investors.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"A BLOW FOR BULKELEY!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

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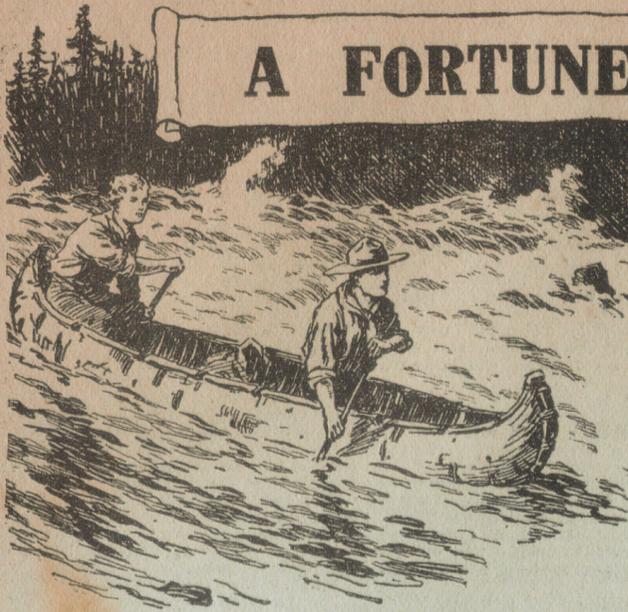
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The 1st Chapter. By Luck and Pluck!

Clatter, clatter!
"Look out!" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc.
Frank Richards and his chums were riding on the trail to Cedar Creek School in the sunny spring morning.
The three were about to turn out of the forest bridle-path into the broad Thompson trail, when the sudden clatter of hoof-beats startled them.
Barely six yards ahead of them a horse dashed by at tearing speed, with head tossing wildly and reins flying loose.
A girl was clinging to the saddle, and for a moment her white, terrified face was turned towards the chums as she flashed by.
"Molly Lawrence!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.
"After him!" shouted Frank Richards.
The runaway horse was thundering on towards Cedar Creek, and the three chums, as they rode in pursuit, expected every moment to see the girl tossed from the animal's back into the grass on the trail.
The three spurred on at desperate speed.
Vere Beauclerc's splendid black horse drew rapidly ahead of his chums' ponies. Swiftly as the runaway was galloping, Beauclerc overhauled him fast.
Frank and Bob were hopelessly behind. Thud, thud, thud!
Beauclerc, with his handsome face hard-set, was riding as if for his life.
Closer and closer he drew to the flying heels of the runaway, till he grew gradually abreast.
Molly Lawrence's terrified eyes were upon him.
She tried to speak, but no words came. Cedar Creek School was in sight now, far ahead, with a group of fellows standing at the gate.
Towards the school the two horses thundered on.
"Hold on!" panted Beauclerc.
He rode close beside the runaway, and caught the flying reins.
It was a difficult feat to perform, with both the horses in violent motion, but Beauclerc's hand was quick and his eye was sure.
His grip on the rein slackened down the runaway, but to stop him was impossible.
Beauclerc rode on, fast, keeping pace with the frantic animal, but gradually pulling him in.
The pace slackened at last.
Within a few yards of the gates of Cedar Creek School Beauclerc succeeded at last in halting the runaway.
The animal came to a halt, steaming and panting.
"Safe now, Miss Lawrence!" said Beauclerc breathlessly.
He slid to the ground, still holding the reins of the runaway.
He changed his grasp to the bit.
"Oh!" panted Molly.
"All serene now," said Beauclerc, with a smile. "Let me help you down."
"Mind he doesn't get loose again!"
"That's all right; he's quiet enough now."
Still keeping a grip on the bit, Beauclerc helped the trembling girl down to the trail.
There was a clatter on the hard earth as Frank Richards and Bob Lawless dashed up and jumped down.
"You've done it, Cherub!" exclaimed Bob.
"Yes, it's all serene."
The girl looked back anxiously along the trail.
"My brother—"
Tom Lawrence came in sight. He rode up and dismounted, gasping for breath.
"Thank goodness you're all right, Molly!" he exclaimed. "I guess I thought you were a gone coon."
"I—I thought so, too!" stammered Molly. "I should have been but for Beauclerc. He stopped my horse."
"Good old Cherub!" said Tom Lawrence gratefully. "As for that heathen, I'll skin him!"
"Yen Chin, do you mean?" asked Frank Richards.
"Yes; the young idiot scared the gee by letting off his silly crackers on the trail!" growled Lawrence. "One of his blessed Chinese jokes! I'll joke him!"
"Look after Molly!" murmured Bob.
Poor Molly was white as a sheet, and almost fainting.
Her brother caught her by the arm, forgetting all about Yen Chin for the moment.

"Come on, Moll!" he said. "Will you look after the hosses, you chaps?"
"You bet!"
Lawrence led his sister into the school-house, leaning heavily on his arm.
The Cedar Creek fellows surrounded the chums.
Eben Hacke clapped Beauclerc on the shoulder in great admiration.
"You can ride, some!" he said. "I guess I never saw anything neater. I'd have bet a hundred-dollar bill to a glass-eye that you'd be over together, and down in a heap, when you caught those reins."
"Lucky it turned out better than that!" said Beauclerc, with a smile.
"I guess it was neat!" said Hacke. "I guess you can ride!"
"First-rate!" declared Chunky Todgers. "I guess I didn't think you had it in you, Cherub!"
"Thank you, Chunky!"
"Fathead!" said Bob Lawless. "The Cherub could ride anybody's head off here! I'll talk to that heathen when he comes in."
The chums put up the horses in the corral, and Tom Lawrence met them at the gates as they went into the school-ground.
Lawrence's face was grim.
"How's Molly?" asked Frank.
"Oh, Molly's all right now!" answered Lawrence. "She's sitting down in Miss Meadows' room; only a bit white. I've brought out a trail-rop to talk to that heathen. Here he comes!"
Little Yen Chin, the Chinese, was trotting towards the school.
As he jumped off his horse Tom Lawrence strode towards him.
Yen Chin dodged round the horse.
He did not like the look of the coiled trail-rop in the Canadian schoolboy's hand.
"Whattée mattee?" he demanded.
"Come here, you heathen! I'm going to give you something for frightening Molly's horse!"
"Only little jokee!" pleaded Yen Chin.
"You young ass!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "Don't you know that Molly might have broken her neck?"
"Me velly solly."
"She jolly well would have, if the Cherub hadn't been so hefty!" said Hacke.
"No whackee!" roared Yen Chin, as Lawrence pursued him round the standing horse and grasped him by the collar. "Pool lil' Chinee velly solly!"
"I guess I'll make you sorrier!" said Lawrence grimly.
Whack, whack, whack!
Yen Chin roared.
"You stoppee! No whackee! Hurtee pool lil' Chinee!"
Whack, whack, whack!
"That's enough, Lawrence!" said Beauclerc, catching Tom's arm.
Lawrence gave him a grim look for a moment, and then he nodded and released the "Chow" of Cedar Creek.
Yen Chin dodged away, howling.
But as soon as he reached a safe distance he turned round, placed his thumb to his little nose and extended his fingers.
"Lawrence great fool!" he called out. "You go chippee-chippe. Yah!"
And with that defiance Yen Chin promptly disappeared into the lumber school, and took refuge in the school-room.
His horse was left on the trail, and Frank Richards led it into the corral.
The bell was ringing for lessons when the three chums came up to the school-house.
Molly Lawrence was in the porch, still looking a little pale.
"All right now, Molly?" asked Bob cheerily.
"Yes," faltered Molly. "I—I was a little frightened. Thank you so much, Beauclerc!"
"Not at all, Miss Lawrence!" said Beauclerc, with a smile. "It was lucky we came up the trail just then."
Bob Lawless gave his English chum a rather droll look as they went into the school-room together.
"Miss Lawrence" was rather a stately form of address for the lumber school, but the Cherub had his own little manners and customs.
Molly's eyes dwelt for some moments on Beauclerc, and she smiled.
Vere Beauclerc had always been much admired by the feminine element in the lumber school, and now he was a hero—in Molly's eyes, at least.

The 2nd Chapter. Strange News!

There was some buzzing and whispering in Miss Meadows' class in the log school-room that morning.
Most of it was round Tom Lawrence and his sister.
Frank Richards caught, once or twice, the name of Mr. Trevelyan, the new master at Cedar Creek.
He wondered what the subject was.
Frank Richards was a good deal interested in the new master, as were his chums.
Mr. Trevelyan had not yet taken up his duties in the school, being still indisposed owing to a fall from horseback; at all events, that was what the school was given to understand.
But there were a good many of the fellows who grinned over Mr. Trevelyan's "indisposition," and opined that he was "soft," and laying up for nothing, or next to nothing.
When the school was dismissed, Frank Richards & Co. looked for Lawrence.
It was evident that Tom and Molly knew something or other in the way of news, regarding Mr. Trevelyan, and they were curious to know what it was.
They found Lawrence and his sister the

"He's come into a fortune!" exclaimed Beauclerc breathlessly.
"Yes; uncle said so," said Molly Lawrence. "He asked us whether Mr. Trevelyan was here, and told us to tell him he was coming over to-day to see him about it. A relation of his has died in England, and Mr. Trevelyan has inherited a title and estates."
"My hat!"
"A title!" exclaimed Eben Hacke. "Only think! Fancy a master here being a nobleman in disguise—eh?"
"Not a nobleman," said Molly. "A baronet."
"Then he'll be Sir Philip!" exclaimed Bob.
"Yes."
"Well, that takes the cake!"
"I guess it does," said Dick Dawson; "and I reckon Trevelyan won't trouble us here much. He'll be off as soon as he gets well. Perhaps he'll get well now."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Here comes uncle!" exclaimed Lawrence.
Mr. Henderson, the sheriff of Thompson, a big, bluff, bearded Canadian, dismounted at the gates, and came striding in.
His niece and nephew ran to him at once.
The Cedar Creek fellows were left in a buzz of excitement.
Tom led Mr. Henderson away to the new master's cabin, and some of the fellows had a glimpse of Mr. Trevelyan's tall figure and gleaming eyeglass, as he admitted the sheriff.
"Come with me, you fellows," said Beauclerc, in a low voice to his chums. The three chums left the chatting crowd.
Beauclerc's face was very grave and thoughtful.
Out of hearing of the schoolboys, he stopped, and looked at Frank and Bob.
"What do you think of that?" he asked quietly.
"I guess it beats me," said Bob.
"You remember what I told you," said Beauclerc, in the same quiet tone. "I saw Mr. Trevelyan last week, in the hands of Frisco Jo and his gang, and I told you I did not believe that the man here was the same man. I believed the real Mr. Trevelyan was kidnapped by those rustlers, and this man came here in his name. I know it seemed steep—my father thought so—it seemed so unlikely a man would play such a game to bag a teacher's salary at a frontier school. But now the cat's out of the bag!"
"It does look like it, by Jove!" said Frank Richards. "There's the motive, anyway."
"I knew he must have some axe to

this morning, Beauclerc," said the sheriff kindly. "You are a plucky lad, and no mistake. It isn't everybody who could stop a runaway horse as you did. Give me your tin!"
The burly sheriff gave Beauclerc a grip of the hand that made him wince.
"It was nothing, sir," said Beauclerc.
"I guess it was a good deal to Molly, and to her people," said Mr. Henderson, with a smile.
"Is it true about Mr. Trevelyan, sir?" asked Frank Richards.
"Oh, you've heard young Tom talking, eh?" The sheriff laughed. "Yes, my boys, you've got a real live baronet in your school—heir of Sir Gwynne Trevelyan. I've had inquiries sent to me, and I've just broken the news to him."
"Rather a leg up for the galoot, sir," said Bob.
"I guess so. You'll want a new master here before long," said the sheriff. "Mr. Trevelyan will be going back to England."
"Without taking up his duties here at all?" asked Beauclerc.
"I guess so."
The sheriff nodded to the boys, and went out to his horse.
Vere Beauclerc compressed his lips.
"I knew the man was no teacher," he said. "He's been shamming ill, to keep out of the school-room. I guessed that. But I fancy there will be a spoke put in his wheel."
Frank Richards & Co. had plenty of food for thought that afternoon, and they certainly were not thinking wholly of their lessons.

The 3rd Chapter. The Remittance-Man's Resolve.

"He's quiet enough now, Molly."
"I'm not going to ride him."
"But I tell you he's all right."
"Stuff!" said Molly decidedly.
Frank Richards & Co. heard that argument proceeding as they led their horses from the corral for the ride home after lessons that day.
Tom Lawrence was holding his horse and his sister's, but Molly declined to trust herself to the animal again.
"I'll hold him all the way," offered Lawrence.
"That would make him worse."
"Now, look here, Molly—" urged Tom.
"I'm not going to ride!"
"How are you going to get home, then?" demanded her brother.
"You take the horses, and I'll go in the canoe," said Molly.
"Bet you you'll go over the rapids, if you do," grunted Tom Lawrence. "Girls can't manage canoes."
"Stuff!"



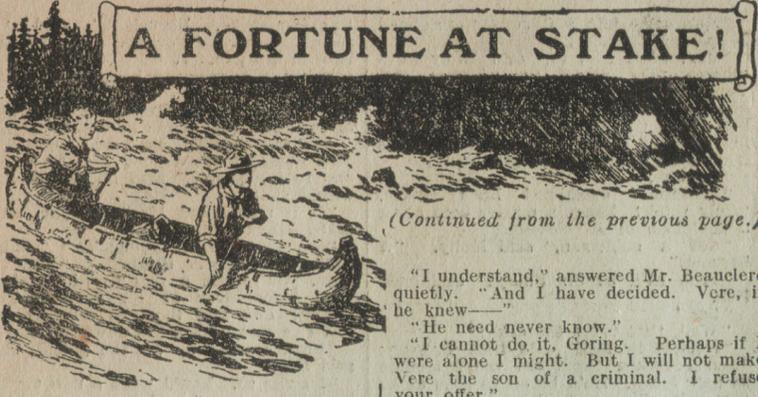
Vere Beauclerc reeled in the doorway. "Father!" he panted. But there was no voice to answer that cry from the stricken heart of the remittance-man's son.

centre of a little crowd in the playground.
"Well, it beats the bull deck!" Eben Hacke was saying, as they came up.
"It beats the dizzy Dutch, if it's true!" said Chunky Todgers. "But is it a sure cinch, Lawrence?"
"You bet!" answered Lawrence.
"What's the news?" inquired Bob Lawless. "Something about Trevelyan?"
"Yes, I got it from my Uncle Henderson," said Lawrence. "It's true enough. Mr. Henderson is coming over here to see Mr. Trevelyan about it."
"But what is it?" exclaimed Frank Richards.
Vere Beauclerc did not speak, but his face was very keen.
"Molly and I have been staying at uncle's," explained Lawrence. "This morning Uncle Henderson asked us about Mr. Trevelyan. Somebody had written to him, as sheriff of Thompson, you know. Mr. Trevelyan's being hunted for—"
"Hunted for?" exclaimed Frank.
"Ha, ha! I don't mean that he's done anything wrong. I mean he's being looked for, because he's come into a fortune in England."
"Great Scott!"
Frank Richards & Co. exchanged startled glances.

grind, though I couldn't guess what it was," said Beauclerc. "Now it comes out that Philip Trevelyan is heir to a fortune in England. That makes it clear. I am sure—I was sure before—that the real man is being kept a prisoner somewhere in the woods by Frisco Jo, and that the man here is a swindler and impostor."
"Phew!"
"But your popper, Cherub," said Bob. "He saw Trevelyan the other day, and talked with him. What did he think?"
Beauclerc's face clouded.
"I can't understand that," he confessed. "My father called on him specially to size him up, and he's never said a word about it. I asked him, and he would not tell me, he simply ordered me to let the matter drop."
"Well, by gum!" ejaculated Bob, in astonishment.
"But it's clear to me now," continued Beauclerc. "I shall speak to my father about it again, and then to the sheriff."
"I guess that's the proper caper," agreed Bob. "It does begin to look as if you were right, Cherub."
The chums looked for Mr. Henderson when he left the new master's cabin. The sheriff stopped to speak to them.
"My nephew's told me what you did

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Lawless. "Molly can manage a canoe all right, Tommy."
"The gee's quiet enough," growled Lawrence. "It was only that Chinese imp letting off crackers under his nose that startled him."
"All the same, I'm not going to ride," said Molly, with feminine determination. "You hustle off, Tom, and I'll be home before you, anyway."
"Oh, all right!"
Tom Lawrence rode away, leading his sister's horse.
"Can we help you launch the canoe, Miss Lawrence?" asked Beauclerc.
Molly smiled.
"You can, if you like," she replied graciously.
The three chums ran the little birch bark canoe into the creek, and saw Molly off.
Despite Tom's brotherly misgivings, Molly handled the little craft with a masterly hand.
She nodded to the schoolboys on the bank, and they raised their Stetson hats politely, as the canoe shot out into the creek, and Molly paddled away.
As they returned to their horses Mr. Trevelyan came out at the gates.

A FORTUNE AT STAKE!



(Continued from the previous page.)

The tall, athletic-looking man was limping a little. He had limped ever since his fall, which had prevented him from entering upon the duties he had come to Cedar Creek to perform.

His eyeglass—the only eyeglass in the Thompson Valley—gleamed at the three schoolboys as he nodded affably to them. "Ah! I was looking for you, Beauclerc," he said, in a genial tone.

"Yes, sir?" said Beauclerc quietly. His manner was cold and reserved, and showed no appreciation of the new master's geniality.

Thinking of the man as he did, it was difficult for Vere Beauclerc to keep up even civility towards him.

Mr. Trevelyan's eyes dwelt upon him sharply for a moment.

"Your father called upon me the other day, Beauclerc," he remarked. "I should like to return his call, if you will show me the way to your home."

"Very well, sir."

"Is it too far to walk?"

"It's several miles, sir."

"Then I will borrow a horse. Please wait for me!"

"Very well."

The chums exchanged glances as the new master went in at the gates.

He came out again, mounted, and rode away down the trail with the three.

The schoolboys were silent during the ride.

They could not help wondering whether Mr. Trevelyan's visit to the shack where the remittance-man lived had anything to do with the news he had received from the sheriff that morning.

At the fork of the trail the chums parted as usual, Frank Richards and Bob trotting on towards the Lawless Ranch, while Beauclerc and the new master rode by the branch trail towards Cedar Camp.

Beauclerc did not speak, and Mr. Trevelyan was equally taciturn.

The shack came in sight.

Mr. Beauclerc, the remittance-man of Cedar Camp, was smoking on the bench outside his cabin as they came up.

There was an expression of gloomy thought upon Lascelles Beauclerc's face, an expression Vere had often seen there during the past few days—since, in fact, the remittance-man had called upon the new master at the school.

Mr. Beauclerc rose, starting a little at the sight of the master.

Mr. Trevelyan saluted him politely.

"I have taken the freedom of returning your call, Mr. Beauclerc," he said. "I quite expected to see you at the school again, after our pleasant chat."

The remittance-man coloured, and glanced uneasily at his son.

Beauclerc went into the shack.

"Why have you come here, man?" muttered Mr. Beauclerc, as his son disappeared.

The new master looked at him sharply.

"Because I haven't heard from you," he answered. "I must have your decision now. Come a little way into the wood, in case the boy should hear. He knows nothing?"

"I have told him nothing, of course."

"It seems to me that he is suspicious."

Mr. Beauclerc made no answer to that.

He followed the new master, as the latter led his horse down the trail.

From the door of the shack Vere Beauclerc glanced after them anxiously.

The two men stopped under a tree, far out of hearing from the shack.

Trevelyan, resting one hand upon his saddle, stood looking at the remittance-man, whose face was dark and moody.

The remittance-man raised his eyes.

"I've decided," he said.

"To go with me?"

"No."

Mr. Trevelyan drew a quick breath.

"You are against me, then?"

"Yes."

"Listen to me, Beauclerc," said the new master, in a low, even tone. "News has come that Philip Trevelyan is wanted in England. The sheriff of Thompson brought me the news this morning. I told you it might come any day—and now it has come."

"Well?"

"Well," said the new master savagely, "you know how matters stand. I have been accepted as Philip Trevelyan here. No one doubts me. You are the only man in Canada who knows that I am Gerard Goring, and that Philip Trevelyan has been kidnapped. If you hold your tongue, you stand in with me to share the fortune left by old Sir Gwynne. You must be mad if you think of refusing!"

"It was a temptation," said the remittance-man quietly—"it was a terrible temptation, Gerard Goring. But I've thought it out. For my son's sake—"

"For your son's sake, you had better think it out again!" sneered Gerard Goring. "What is he now—a pauper's son? He will be a rich man's son, if you are not blind to your own interests!"

"I know! But—"

"Be sensible, man! Do you understand what you are losing?"

Molly's face paled a little as she saw him.

He had not seen her, as his back was partly turned, and instantly the girl guided her drifting canoe into a mass of thickets that grew out into the stream.

She did not want to catch the sight of the ruffian, who was quite capable of robbing her of the canoe, and leaving her to make her way on foot through the heavy woods.

She stopped the canoe in the midst of the thickets, where they grew in the water, holding on to a hanging branch to keep it steady.

Her breath was coming quickly as she listened for the sound of Frisco Jo's paddle.

She intended to give the rustler plenty of time to get ahead of her before she resumed her way to Cedar Creek.

But, to her alarm, the sound of the Mexican's paddle was closer at hand.

Her heart throbbed with the fear that the ruffian had seen her, and was following her into the thickets.

But the sound of paddling ceased a few yards distant.

The Mexican's canoe had stopped by the bank, but she could not see him, close as he was, owing to the impenetrable barrier of trees and thickets between.

But she could hear his movements and the sounds he made as he tied a rope to a branch.

Then she heard his heavy steps plunging up the bank.

The girl remained quite silent, hardly daring to breathe.

The footsteps had halted, still within hearing.

On the fresh air there came to her the scent of a strong Mexican cigar.

"Frisco Jo had halted on the bank in the thick timber, and was smoking there—evidently while he waited.

What the ruffian could be waiting for in that lonely spot was a mystery—unless it was for some associate with whom he was engaged upon one of his rascally enterprises.

Molly was as quiet as a "coon" when the hunter is by.

There was no sound save the lapping of the water round the canoe and the trunks.

Suddenly there came heavy footsteps in the underbrush.

The voice of the Mexican was heard.

"Muy bien! You are here, senior?"

"Yes. Have I kept you waiting, Jo?"

Molly started.

She had heard that voice somewhere, though she could not recall where.

It was not a voice she knew familiarly, but she was sure that she had heard it before.

Possibly someone she had heard speaking in the street of Thompson.

"It is no matter, senior," said the Mexican. "What is the news? Euchre Dick brought me your message last night."

"Work to be done, my friend, this morning."

"The remittance-man?"

"Exactly."

"It would be safer by night, senior."

"At night his son is at home, and that would mean two instead of one, Jo."

"True!"

"Besides, the place is lonely—more than a mile from the camp. You will have no difficulty—"

"If he should resist—"

"He will not resist if you take him by surprise. Take Euchre Dick and Black Rube with you, and tackle him suddenly. Have the waggon on the trail road, and keep him under the sacks till you are out of the settlements."

"It is simple enough, senior."

Molly Lawrence's eyes were wide open. Well she knew who the "remittance-man" was whom they were speaking of—Vere Beauclerc's father!

The girl's face was white with horror. This was why Frisco Jo was waiting at that solitary rendezvous.

It was a plot against Beauclerc's father—why, the girl could not fathom. And who was the other man, whose voice was not unknown to her? She could not guess. Silent and terrified, the girl sat in the canoe, holding on to a branch to keep the little craft from drifting.

"But why, senior?" the Mexican was saying. "You have seen the man, then?"

"I saw him yesterday."

"And he refuses?"

"Yes."

"Ah! He is a fool!"

"He is a fool who must not be allowed to chatter his folly, Jo."

"Frisco Jo laughed softly.

"You are right, senior."

"Lose no time. His son will have started for school by this time, and the sooner it is over the better. I have brought you a horse. Leave your canoe here, and ride at once to Cedar Camp and get Euchre Dick and Rube, and the waggon. The sooner it is done the better."

"Rely upon me, senior."

"Do not hurt him, if you can help it. We do not want to put our necks into the rope, Jo."

"Carambo! Trust me for that, senior. But a blow from a pistol-butt, if he is troublesome—that will not matter."

There was a rustling in the wood as the two rascals moved away from the spot.

Molly Lawrence sat still in the canoe, hardly breathing.

She could scarcely believe what she had heard.

It seemed that she must have allowed her imagination to play a trick, as she sat there in the midst of the silent thickets.

The sounds died away.

"Frisco Jo and his unknown confederate were gone."

Molly moved at last.

With trembling hands she pushed the canoe out into the creek again.

As she came out into the stream she caught sight of the Mexican's canoe tied up among the bushes.

That was evidence enough of the reality of what she had heard, if she needed it.

The girl's brain was almost in a whirl. Beauclerc's father—the father of the boy who had saved her life only the previous day—was in danger.

Even now the ruffians were on the way to the lonely shack by the creek.

And Beauclerc?

The remittance-man's son was on the way to school with his chums, never dreaming of his father's peril.

Molly drove her paddle into the rippling water.

She had only one thought now—to hurry to Cedar Creek school, and warn Beauclerc of his father's danger—warn him in time.

She was not far from the school, and she would meet Beauclerc the moment he arrived, and then a rapid ride—

There was a chance yet that the remittance-man might be saved.

Molly's paddle flashed like lightning as she drove the birch-bark canoe onward.

The school came in sight at last.

Few of the fellows had arrived so early, but Harold Hopkins was on the bank, and he ran to help her in with the canoe.

As he pulled it into the rushes, Molly sprang ashore, throwing down the paddle.

"Early this morning, miss," grinned Hopkins.

Molly did not answer.

She ran breathlessly past the school-boy, leaving him blinking after her in astonishment.

"My 'at!" murmured Hopkins.

Mr. Slimmey, the assistant-master, was standing in the gateway, looking out.

In her agitation, the girl caught him by the sleeve.

"Has Beauclerc come yet?" she panted.

"I think not," said Mr. Slimmey, in his deliberate way. "In fact, I am sure not."

Molly ran on up the trail without another word.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the surprised Mr. Slimmey.

Molly ran on.

The 5th Chapter.
Too Late!

"Hallo!"

"Something's up!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

Frank and Bob and Vere Beauclerc were riding up the trail to the school in the sunny morning when they caught sight of Molly Lawrence running towards them from the direction of the school.

The girl, panting, stopped and held up her hand, and the three schoolboys halted at once.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Bob, as they jumped down from their horses.

Molly could not speak. Her breath came almost in sobs, and she reeled from sheer fatigue.

Vere Beauclerc caught her quickly.

"What is it?" he exclaimed.

"I—I—" Molly panted. "I—I came to warn you!"

"To warn me?" repeated Beauclerc, in amazement.

"Your father!" sobbed Molly.

"Get your breath, old girl!" said Bob Lawless encouragingly. "Has somebody been frightening you?"

"No, no! Frisco Jo—"

Molly tried to collect herself. She caught Beauclerc's arm.

"Your father?" she gasped.

"My father is all right," said Beauclerc, in wonder. "I left him at the shack as usual this morning, Miss Lawrence—not more than half an hour ago."

"They would be there by then; perhaps they even watched you leave!" panted the girl. "Your father is in danger."

"In danger! How?"

"Frisco Jo—they are going to attack him—at the shack—"

"By gum!" exclaimed Bob.

"How do you know, Miss Lawrence?" asked Vere Beauclerc very quietly.

Molly panted out her story.

The chums of Cedar Creek listened with blank astonishment.

"Frisco Jo!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "That's the ruffian you saw in the wood, Beau—the man who was kidnapping—"

"Who was the man with him, Molly?" asked Bob Lawless eagerly.

The girl shook her head.

"I don't know. I didn't see him; I only heard his voice. I thought I had heard it before, but I wasn't sure. Beauclerc, your father—"

Vere Beauclerc was already springing for his horse.

His face was pale.

He did not need telling more. He guessed who Frisco Jo's unknown companion had been.

Much that had puzzled him before was clear to him now.

His father's silence after the visit to the new master at the school, and his troubled mood since, and Mr. Trevelyan's visit the previous day, when he had been careful to take the remittance-man out of his son's hearing—it was all pieced together now.

The new master was the swindler and impostor the boy believed. And the remittance-man knew it, and he was to be silenced.

Beauclerc did not think it out. It came through his mind like a flash of lightning.

He bounded upon his horse.

Without a look at his chums, without a word even to Molly, he drove his black horse up the trail at a furious gallop.

"Cherub!" panted Bob.

Beauclerc did not look back.

He had never used the whip upon Demon before, but he was using it now.

The black horse, startled, bounded forward like an arrow, and, with a thunder of mad hoofs, disappeared up the trail.

"Good heavens!" panted Frank Richards.

Molly caught his arm.

"Go with him—go with him! He is going into danger! They may—"

"We're going!" said Bob.

The chums sprang upon their ponies.

There was no time to think of school or anything else now. They galloped after their chum, and vanished from Molly's eyes through the timber.

The girl stood panting for breath in the trail, her colour coming and going.

Thud, thud, thud!

Vere Beauclerc was riding like the wind. The hard trail thundered back the crash of the hoofs as he rode.

His father!

Only so short a time ago he had left him, and Lascelles Beauclerc had called a cheery good-bye to his son.

Vere remembered that, even as he had left, he had sighted a waggon in the distance on the prairie trail.

Had the ruffians been waiting for his departure? It was only too probable.

The remittance-man, alone in the shack, unsuspecting, would be taken utterly by surprise.

What would happen to him?

For Lascelles Beauclerc was not the man to yield tamely to an attack.

And if he resisted—and he would resist—what then, with such unscrupulous ruffians as Frisco Jo and Euchre Dick?

Euchre Dick had been an associate of the remittance-man in his wild days—but not of late. And Vere knew he resented the reform of the waster of Cedar Camp.

The ruffians would show no mercy. In the heat of the struggle what terrible deed might not be done?

Vere almost cried aloud with agony at the thought.

A fearful picture was glimmering before his mind—of the remittance-man stretched in his blood upon the floor of the cabin, lifeless!

He clenched his teeth, and drove the horse madly on.

Frank and Bob were riding hard, but they were left far behind.

Never had Vere Beauclerc ridden as he was riding now.

The splendid black horse was covering the ground with flashing speed.

Over rough hillocks and gopher-holes, dodging hanging boughs by a hair's-breadth, the schoolboy rode with white, set face and burning eyes.

Thud, thud, thud!

His father—where was his father?

The shack came in sight at last, and his eyes searched it yet from the distance. He almost sobbed with relief as he saw that it lay quiet and undisturbed, as he had left it. There was no sign of a commotion of any kind.

Had the danger not yet fallen, or had the ruffians been there, and had they gone?

He dashed madly up to the shack, and flung himself from his horse.

The black horse stood panting, trembling in every limb.

Beauclerc rushed into the shack, calling:

"Father! Father!"

He stopped, frozen with horror.

The shack was empty.

But on every side there were signs of a struggle.

The table was overturned, the rough log stools lay in disorder about the room. Broken crockery lay about the floor.

At Beauclerc's feet was the remittance-man's pipe, with the stem broken.

A fierce struggle had taken place in the shack—fierce and furious—in the room now so silent and desolate.

Beauclerc reeled in the doorway.

"Father!" he panted.

But there was no voice to answer that cry from the stricken heart of the remittance-man's son.

Lascelles Beauclerc was gone.

Vere staggered from the shack.

With a clatter of hoofs Frank Richards and Bob rode up, and jumped from their horses. Frank caught Beauclerc by the arm.

"Your father—"

Beauclerc groaned.

"He is gone!"

"Gone?"

Beauclerc leaned heavily on