



Val Mornington on the Downward Path! Indignation of the Rookwood Juniors!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1 1/2

TWELVE PAGES!

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending September 20th, 1919.

Captain And Slacker!



SLACKING! "Morny," said Erroll, "you're cricket captain, and your place is with the team!" "My dear chap, I've raised five quids, and it's burning a hole in my pocket! Go and play cricket while I—" Mornington broke off abruptly and strode on.

**The 1st Chapter.
The Vials of Wrath.**

"He's got to resign!" Arthur Edward Lovell spoke hotly. Jimmy Silver was silent, with a rather troubled wrinkle in his brow; but Raby and Newcome nodded a hearty assent. The Fistical Four were discussing Mornington of the Fourth, the new junior captain of Rookwood; or, rather, three of them were discussing him, and Jimmy Silver was listening patiently.

"If he don't resign," went on Lovell angrily, "he's got to get the order of the sack!" "Hear, hear!" said Newcome. "And the sooner the better!" remarked Raby. "We don't want him to play the fool with any more of our matches!" "What do you think, Jimmy?" demanded Lovell. Jimmy Silver's wrinkle deepened, but he did not answer. "He left us in the lurch over the Bagshot match yesterday," continued Arthur Edward Lovell, with deep

indignation. "Walked off without a word of explanation, and simply cut the match! Is that the right thing for a cricket captain to do?" "Hardly!" said Raby. "When he came in, and we tackled him, he told us to go and eat coke!" said Lovell, breathing hard. "That's all the explanation he's given! The Bagshot fellows were kept waiting, and finally we had to play without Morny, putting in another man at the last minute! And he's captain! I tell you Rookwood won't stand that sort of thing!"

"No fear!" "Morny was elected skipper in your place, Jimmy; and now you've only got to raise your finger to get the captaincy back again," said Lovell. "After all, it really belongs to this study. It's up to you, Jimmy! You've got to put up again, and Morny's got to go!" No answer. "Why don't you speak?" exclaimed the exasperated Lovell. "Don't you agree with what I'm saying, you dumb image?" Jimmy Silver smiled faintly.

"To some extent," he admitted. "Only to some extent!" snorted Lovell. "Yes. I'm not putting up against Morny. The fellows made the change of their own accord—" "If you're going to sulk—" "I'm not sulking, ass! But you can't put in a skipper one day, and drop him the next. Morny's a bit uncertain, but all the fellows knew that before they elected him. They took him with their eyes open. I'm as waxy as you can be about the



Continued
from
the
previous
pages.

CAPTAIN AND SLACKER!

the hall. The three juniors glanced at the paper Morny had pinned up. It ran:

"BICYCLE FOR SALE.

Cost fifteen guineas. Ten pounds cash.—Apply Study No. 4, Fourth Form."

"My hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "Selling your bike, Mornington?" Mornington nodded.

"Yaas, if I can find a purchaser," he answered. "Like to take it on?" "I've got a bike. And I haven't got ten pounds," answered Lovell. "Bother your bike, anyway! I was looking for you, Mornington!"

"Well, here I am!" said the junior captain of Rookwood coolly. "About your playing the goat yesterday!" snorted Lovell. "You deserted us over the match!"

"Yaas?" "Is that what you call playing the game?" demanded Lovell.

"Not at all." "Oh, you admit that!" ejaculated Lovell, rather taken aback.

"Certainly!" "Are you going to resign?" "Oh, no!"

"You're sticking to the captaincy, after what you've done?" "Yaas."

"Well, you'll be turned out!" bawled Lovell.

"My dear man, I'm not deaf!" said Mornington, with polite impertinence. "No need to shout! All the county doesn't want to know."

"Why, you—?" "You can raise the matter in committee, if you like," said Mornington. "Let it rest at that, old top. Ta-ta!"

And Valentine Mornington strolled away, leaving Lovell in a state of almost speechless wrath.

The 2nd Chapter.

The Chance of a Life Time.

"It's risky!" said Adolphus Smythe.

Smythe of the Shell was reclining gracefully in a luxurious armchair in his study, and he made that remark through a cloud of cigarette-smoke.

Howard and Tracy, his chums and study-mates, were smoking cigarettes, too. The Giddy Goats of Rookwood were feeling no end doggish. The door had been carefully locked, however, before the cigarettes were lighted. Doggish as the nuts of Rookwood were, there was a certain amount of fear and trembling associated with their doggishness.

"I don't deny that it's risky," continued Adolphus. "But it's no end sportin'."

"But what's the game?" asked Tracy.

"Roulette!" "Phew!"

"That swindling game they play at casinos on the Continent?" asked Howard.

"That's it." "My hat! It's risky enough. Why, it's against the law in England!"

"This old country is rather slow," yawned Adolphus Smythe. "I had a vac. in Switzerland once with my people, when I was a fag. I remember seein' the punters goin' it in a casino there—a game of the same kind. I'd have tried my luck, but I couldn't do it under the pater's eye. This is really the chance of a lifetime."

Howard and Tracy looked a little uneasy, and Adolphus smiled a superior smile as he noted it.

Adolphus Smythe was a great sportsman—in any sport that was not of a manly character. He had no love for cricket or football, or for rowing or swimming; but a considerable amount of his pocket-money went in backing "gee-gees"—strictly under the rose, of course.

"I got the tip from Joey Hook," he went on. "I was seein' him about a horse. He told me about this man Tickey Tapp."

"Ye gods! What a name!" "I'd heard of him before," said Adolphus. "A chap at St. Jim's

told me about him. He started his precious game near that school once, and got a lot of the fellows there. Made lots of money out of them, I've no doubt. Chap named Merry—you've heard of Tom Merry—took some friends there, and smashed up his game."

"Like his cheek!" said Tracy. "Oh, yes, rather! But he did it. But I dare say Tickey Tapp made more than he lost. Well, the long and short of it is that Tickey Tapp has pitched his giddy tent near Rookwood, and he's open to receive custom. He's got one of those bungalows on the moor—not a mile from Coombe Wood, just off the edge of Coombe Wood, you know. Quite a solitary spot—and the bobbies won't tumble to his game in a month of Sundays."

"The police?" "You see, it's against the law, and the police mop up such places when they get to hear of them. But Tickey Tapp's wide—very wide! He won't get mopped in a hurry."

"You've been there?" asked Tracy. "Not yet; but I'm goin'. I'm takin' you two fellows, if you'll come. Of course, it's risky, and it's got to be kept awfully dark. No good tellin' Peele, or Lattray, or Gower. Can't trust such a secret with those Fourth Form kids. It's strictly among ourselves."

"But, I say—"

"Of course, the risk isn't really so great as long as we're careful," said Smythe. "And it's the chance of a lifetime. Just the same as goin' to Monte Carlo, you know."

"People don't generally bring any money away from Monte Carlo, I believe," remarked Howard.

"People don't generally have any sense or nerve," answered Adolphus sapiently. "I believe there's lots of money to be made at the game, if a fellow keeps his wits about him. As good as backin' horses, anyhow. You watch the run of the numbers, you know, and lay your money accordingly. I'm awfully keen to give it a trial."

"It's frightfully risky. It would mean bein' expelled from Rookwood, if the Head got to know."

"He won't get to know."

"Suppose the police raided the place while we were there?"

"They won't! But Hook tells me that there's a way out, if they did, and we should walk off safely enough."

There was silence in Smythe's study. The thought of the roulette-wheel and the fortune that might be made upon it—perhaps, was a strong attraction to the three young rascals. But they could not help thinking of the risk.

"Any other Rookwood fellows go there?" asked Howard, at last.

"I asked Hook, and he said there were one or two," said Smythe. "He wouldn't give me their names, though. I've got a suspicion that some of the Sixth drop in there in the evenin'—fellows like Carthew and Frampton, I fancy. We're not to go in the evenin'. Tickey Tapp runs his game twice a day, afternoon and evenin'. We're booked for the afternoon."

"In case we see too much, I suppose?"

"Very likely."

There was another pause. Adolphus Smythe finished his cigarette.

"Of course, we shall have to be careful," he said. "We've got to be wary of the beaks. And Morny seems to have taken a leaf out of Jimmy Silver's book, now he's cap-

tain, and he's liable to interfere, if he knew. We won't go there in Etons. We can change our clobber, and nobody there will guess that we belong to Rookwood. It will be quite an adventure, by gad, you know."

"I—I suppose we might win something," murmured Tracy, with a greedy gleam in his eyes.

"I hope so."

"What time do we start?" Adolphus Smythe looked at his big gold watch.

"Any time now," he said. "In fact, the sooner the better, now we've had tea. We sha'n't stay there long."

"I—I say, it might attract attention if we went out in other clobber."

Adolphus smiled his superior smile again.

"We don't," he said. "But you were sayin'—"

"What's the matter with takin' our lounge clothes in a bag, and puttin' them on in the wood? We have to go through the wood to get to the bungalow."

"Oh, that's a good stunt!" "You rely on me for stunts," said Smythe loftily. "I'm rather wide, I think. Now, are you fellows comin'?"

Howard and Tracy exchanged glances, and rose from their seats. There was no doubt that they were coming. The appeal of the green table was too strong to be resisted by Howard and Tracy.

Ten minutes later the nuts of the Shell strolled out of the School House, Smythe carrying a valise in his hand. Jimmy Silver & Co. were chatting on the steps, and they noted the valise.

"Hallo! Goin' off for the week-end?" asked Lovell.

Smythe smiled.

"Merely a little run to Monte Carlo," he answered.

"Eh?" Smythe & Co. walked on, grinning, leaving Arthur Edward Lovell considerably mystified.

Valentine Mornington was heading for the gates, and he turned out into the road at the same time as the nuts of the Shell.

He glanced at them, but walked on, without speaking, towards Coombe.

"Walk a bit slowly," murmured Adolphus. "Let that cad get ahead. We don't want him to spot where we're goin'."

"What-ho!"

The Giddy Goats slacked down, and Mornington disappeared round a turning of the lane ahead.

He was out of sight when the nuts of the Shell came round the turning, much to their satisfaction.

There had been a time when Mornington of the Fourth was a member of the select society of the Rookwood Goats; but that time was past, and especially since he had been elected junior captain, Morny had been heavily down on the "fast set" in the Lower School at Rookwood. He had been, as Adolphus complained, as much a beast as Jimmy Silver himself.

Smythe & Co. turned into the foot-path through the wood, and at a certain point left the path, and followed a scarcely-marked track that led through the wood towards the open heath.

The sight of a Rookwood cap ahead of them on the track startled them suddenly. They could only see the back of a head beneath the cap, but they knew that it was Mornington's.

"That cad again!" muttered

Smythe. "He's goin' to the heath, I suppose. Bother him!"

"Slow down!" said Tracy.

The Shell fellows slowed down once more, and Mornington's head disappeared among the underwood. They changed clothes in a thicket, and went on. It was some time before they came out on the open heath, where it was bordered by Coombe Wood.

At a short distance lay the wooden bungalow, one of several that had been erected on the heath for summer visitors. There was no other building in sight of this one, however. Mr. Tapp had judiciously chosen a very solitary spot for carrying on his precious game. Smythe & Co. were heading for the bungalow, when they spotted a Rookwood junior on the heath. It was Mornington again.

Morny was pacing to and fro, with his hands in his pockets, his eyes fixed on the ground. There was a deep wrinkle in his brow. He glanced up as Smythe & Co. stared at him, and gave a start. Then he strode quickly towards the nuts of the Shell.

"What are you doing here?"

The 3rd Chapter. Nipped in the Bud.

Valentine Mornington rapped out the words sharply, with a glitter in his eyes.

Smythe & Co. stood silent, taken aback.

Morny's eyes scanned them.

The valise was still in Smythe's hand, but it was packed now with the Etons the juniors had worn when they quitted Rookwood. They were clad now in grey lounge clothes, and looked very different. And Morny was far too keen a fellow not to be aware that the change of clothes signified a good deal. Unless the Shell fellows were bound upon some extremely surreptitious expedition, they would certainly not have gone to the trouble of changing their clothes in the wood.

"What are you doing here?"

Mornington's tone was almost fierce.

Smythe pulled himself together. Tickey Tapp's bungalow was in sight, and he wondered uneasily whether the junior skipper guessed his destination. But he told himself that Morny could not possibly know anything about Tickey Tapp and his little game.

"Eh, what are you so jolly curious about, Morny?" yawned Smythe, affecting an ease he was far from feeling.

"Yes, what do you mean, you cheeky ass?" exclaimed Tracy. "I suppose we can take a stroll after lessons if we like?"

"I should think so!" chimed in Howard.

Morny's eyes gleamed at them.

"You've changed your clothes since I saw you leaving Rookwood," he said.

"Can't we change our clobber if we like?"

"What have you done it for?"

"No bizney of yours!" said Smythe. "Still, I don't mind tellin' you that we've put on some old clothes because we're goin' for a ramble on the heath, lookin' at the old quarries."

"Don't tell lies!"

"Wha-at?"

"Do you think you can take me in with a silly yarn like that?" snapped Mornington contemptuously.

Smythe flushed.

"Well, don't ask questions!" he said savagely. "Then you'll get no lies told you, you cheeky, interferin' cad!"

Morny raised his hand.

"You'll go back to Rookwood!" he said.

"We jolly well sha'n't!" exclaimed Smythe hotly. "Who the merry dickens are you to give us orders?"

"I'm junior captain of Rookwood," said Mornington quietly. "I've dropped on you fellows before for playing the goat. Do you think I don't know why you're here?"

"No, you don't!"

"You're goin' to Heath Bungalow!"

Smythe jumped.

"Wha-a-at do you know about Heath Bungalow, hang you?" he ejaculated.

"Well, I know somethin'," said Mornington grimly. "I know that your bookmaker friend Joey Hook goes there, for one thing!"

"I don't know anythin' about it if he does!"

"You're goin' there to gamble!"

"I—I—"

"Oh, don't spin me any more yarns!" snapped Mornington. "I know as much about it as you could tell me!"

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CAPTAIN AND SLACKER!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Morny's chum walked down to the gates and looked into the road, and then strolled in the quadrangle with a thoughtful brow. It was not the first time, of late, that Valentine Mornington had gone out without a word to his best chum; and without a word of explanation when he returned. And Erroll's uneasiness for his chum was deep and increasing.

The 4th Chapter. Trouble for Morny.

Jimmy Silver had much food for thought during the next few days.

He gave a good deal of thought to Mornington; though he did not often speak to him.

The affair of the Bagshot match had blown over. The resentment of the Rookwood juniors had been deep; not only because he had treated the whole matter without a word of explanation, but because he had treated the whole matter with flippant disdain when taxed with his conduct. If Jimmy Silver had chosen to make the

new junior skipper was losing his keenness. He did not turn up regularly for practice as of old, he did not take his former interest in the affairs of the Fourth Form, or of the Lower School generally. He had begun a campaign against the manners and customs of the Giddy Goats; but that had dropped, and Peelo & Co., of the Fourth, went their own shady way without any interference from Morny.

The junior captain was, in fact, slacking down all round. Bulkeley of the Sixth, who had a fatherly eye to keep on the juniors and their affairs, more than once gave Mornington a very expressive look, when he came across him loafing in the quad or about the passages. But as yet Bulkeley had not seen fit to interfere.

The final matches of the season were coming off soon, and if Rookwood Juniors were to wind up cricket with credit, it was very necessary for the junior skipper to put some life into the business. But Valentine Mornington showed no sign of doing so. And Jimmy wondered whether he had been rather too punctilious on a point of honour, and whether he ought not to have pushed Morny aside, for the sake of the school.

It was pretty clear, in fact, to all the juniors interested in the matter, that Mornington had some interest at heart that he did not communicate to the other fellows; that his thoughts were set on matters not

never under any necessity to sell his bike.

He had expensive tastes, but he did not seem to have been gratifying them lately. He was not seen spending money; indeed, of late he had several times taken his tea in hall—another sign of shortness of cash. Erroll would willingly have "stood" tea in the study for both; but Morny's touchy pride would not permit that. And he did not seem so chummy or confidential with Erroll as of old.

Jimmy Silver was not exactly friendly with Mornington; but he had a regard for him, since Morny's reform; and he was very seriously sorry to think of him going on the shady path again, which could only lead him to trouble, and probably to disgrace and disaster. But Morny was not the kind of fellow who could be advised or remonstrated with.

Moreover, if his own chum failed to influence him, it was not likely that Jimmy Silver could succeed in doing so.

So Jimmy held his peace; but he was troubled. With Morny in this peculiar mood, Jimmy was worried about cricket prospects, and he could not help seeing that Morny was not giving much thought to cricket, if any. On Saturday, there was a House match between Moderns and Classics, and Jimmy wondered whether Morny would even take the trouble to be present at it. He felt

with ponderous indignation. "You inform me that you do not care what report your conduct is given to Sir Rupert Stacpoole at the end of the term."

"Well, I don't!"

"Is that dutiful, Mornington?"

Grunt!

"Well, Mornington, if you do not care, I am afraid you must be made to care," said Mr. Bootles sternly.

"I have attempted to appeal to your better feelings. I have failed. Mornington, you will be detained this afternoon, and you will do the work you have neglected under my supervision."

Mornington gave a start. His manner changed at once.

"Oh, sir! I—I—"

"Enough!" said Mr. Bootles majestically.

Valentine Mornington sat in dismay. The juniors supposed that he was thinking of the afternoon's cricket match; but Jimmy Silver had his doubts on that point.

When the Fourth Form were dismissed that morning, the junior captain paused on his way out, and after a moment or two of hesitation, he approached Mr. Bootles' desk. His manner was very submissive now.

"Well, Mornington?" said Mr. Bootles severely.

"I—I am sorry, sir, that I answered you as I did this morning."

"I am glad of that."

"If you would kindly let me off detention this afternoon, sir—"

"I am glad, Mornington, that you have repented of your impertinence," said Mr. Bootles. "That, however, does not alter the fact that you have neglected your work, and that it must be done. I am afraid, Mornington, that I cannot excuse you."

"But, sir—"

"That will do!" said Mr. Bootles, in a tone of finality.

And Valentine Mornington, with a black brow, followed the rest of the juniors from the Form-room.

The 5th Chapter. Given a Chance.

"And that's our skipper!"

Arthur Edward Lovell made that remark in contemptuous and rather loud tones in the corridor as Morny came out.

Mornington gave him a dark look. Lovell went on, unheeding.

"Detained now! And we're playing the Moderns this afternoon! Detained because he hasn't done his prep. Why hasn't he done his prep like any other fellow?"

"He was out till calling-over last evening!" said Tubby Muffin. "I say, Morny, where did you go?"

"There was plenty of time after call-over!" said Lovell. "Other fellows find time to do their prep. Why can't Morny?"

"Mind your own business, Lovell!" snapped Mornington savagely.

Lovell gave him a glare.

"This is my business, and every other fellow's!" he retorted. "If you're skipper you ought to be in the match this afternoon. If you're not in the match you oughtn't to be skipper. And if Jimmy Silver had the sense of a born idiot, he would boost you out of the job you're not fit for."

"Oh, cheese it, old chap!" said Jimmy Silver.

"You know you could do it!" roared Lovell. "Why don't you do it, then?"

"Bow-wow!"

"Not that it makes much difference whether Morny's detained or not," continued Lovell hotly. "He might go out for a walk and forget the match, if he wasn't detained. That's his style as captain!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Mornington.

"Perhaps you'd like to shut me up," suggested Arthur Edward Lovell aggressively.

Mornington clenched his hands.

Lovell followed his example, and there would certainly have been trouble if Jimmy Silver had not intervened, and dragged Lovell away almost by main force. Erroll slipped his arm through Morny's, and led him into the quad.

"What are you chippin' in for?" growled Mornington, though he allowed his chum to lead him away.

"It would do that cheeky fool good to have his mouth shut up for him."

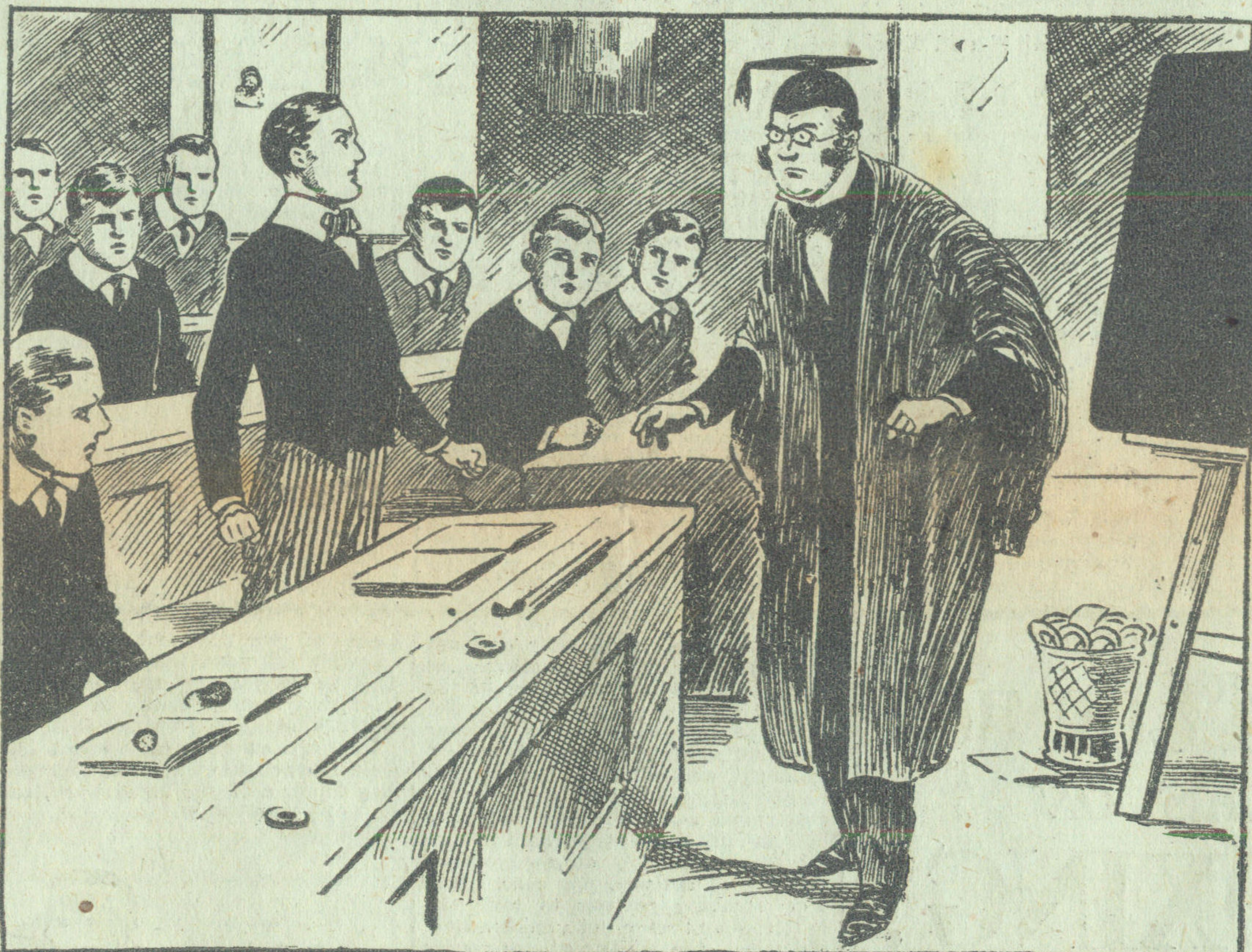
"No good fighting with Lovell, Morny."

"Well, I suppose not; but I feel jolly well inclined to fight him, all the same. Confound his cheek!"

Erroll did not reply, and Mornington jerked his arm away, and gave him a sullen look.

"You agree with him, I dare say?" he sneered.

"Well, you ought to have been



A RECKLESS RETORT!

"The report your uncle will receive at the end of the term will be very unfavourable," said Mr. Bootles. "I don't care!" "What!" Mr. Bootles almost jumped as he heard that disrespectful reply.

least effort, he could, without question, have recaptured the position he had lost. His chums urged him to do so; Arthur Edward Lovell being especially emphatic on the subject. And a good many fellows were of Lovell's opinion.

But Jimmy had marked out the course he intended to follow, and followed it.

The Lower School had chosen their captain, and Jimmy Silver had promised to support him. And Jimmy held to that.

Unless Mornington resigned, Jimmy had no intention of accepting the captaincy, even if it were offered to him. He made it very plain that if there was another election he would not stand as candidate.

The Modern fellows were in favour of another election, in the hope that their leader, Tommy Dodd, would get in. For that very reason the Classics were opposed to it, unless Jimmy would stand; Jimmy Silver being the only Classical candidate who could hope to beat the Moderns and to beat Morny's supporters at the same time.

As Jimmy Silver distinctly refused to move in the matter, the subject dropped after a day or two.

Jimmy felt that he was acting rightly; that he was bound to give Mornington every chance of "making good."

But he was rather exercised in his mind on the subject.

There could be no doubt that the

connected with cricket or the school at all.

His frequent absences from the school after lessons and on half-holidays, and the secrecy that attended them, were a pretty plain proof of that.

And Jimmy could not help wondering whether the dandy of the Fourth was falling into his old ways again.

Morny, in his wealthy days, had been a blade of the blades, and the most reckless fellow that ever entered the gates of Rookwood School. Now, since his fall from fortune, he certainly could not afford to "play the giddy goat," as of old, even if he had the desire. But it was very possible that he might do it without being able to afford it.

If Morny's shady past was being revived, it was a bad look-out in many ways, and he certainly was not fitted to hold the junior captaincy. And that he was hard up was proved by the sale of his bicycle. For several days, Morny's notice had remained on the board, and finally he had parted with his machine to Leggett of the Modern Fourth.

It leaked out that Leggett had given him only seven pounds for it—less than half its value; a proof that Morny was very pushed for money. Why was he so pushed? His allowance from his uncle was not exactly ample, but it was as large as Jimmy Silver's—and Jimmy certainly was

that this state of affairs could not last.

On Saturday morning, Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, was very sharp with Mornington in class. Morny had omitted his prep the evening before—as he had done a good many times lately.

Mr. Bootles had no idea whatever of Morny's preoccupations; his view was that junior schoolboys were at Rookwood to learn—rather a natural view for a Form-master to take. And that especial morning he gave Mornington a very severe lecture on slackness and carelessness.

Mornington listened with the eyes of all the class upon him, some of the Fourth Formers grinning. His cheeks were a little flushed, and there was a sullen expression on his handsome face.

"The report your uncle will receive at the end of the term," Mr. Bootles wound up, "will be very unfavourable indeed, Mornington, if you do not mend your ways."

"I don't care!"

"What!"

Mr. Bootles almost jumped as he heard that disrespectful reply. He came closer to the desk, his eyes gleaming over his spectacles.

The kind little gentleman was not often angry, but he was very angry now.

Erroll gave his chum an anxious look; Morny's eyes were fixed sullenly on his desk.

"Mornington!" said Mr. Bootles,

"And how do you know, hang you?" said Smythe between his teeth.

"Never mind that. Perhaps I've been keepin' my eyes open to prevent silly fools from playin' the goat and gettin' themselves sacked from the school. That's my bizney, as junior captain, you know. You're goin' back to Rookwood at once, all three of you!"

The nuts of Rookwood looked at Mornington as if they could eat him.

This was rather a "facer" at the beginning of their sportive expedition.

"You interferin' cad—" began Tracy.

"That's enough! Are you goin' back?"

"No!" howled Smythe.

"Then you'll be reported to the captain of the school!" said Mornington. "It's my duty to stop you, an' I'm goin' to do it. If you don't go back at once you'll be called upon to explain to Bulkeley—after I've told him all I know about that bungalow!"

Smythe & Co. stood rooted to the ground.

They exchanged glances, and then turned back towards the wood.

There was no help for it.

Mornington, if he knew the character of the place they were intending to visit, was certainly doing his duty as junior captain in keeping them away from it. He was acting as Jimmy Silver would have acted in his place had he still been junior captain; and there was no possibility of resistance. The bare thought of being brought before Bulkeley of the Sixth for inquiry made the nuts feel cold all over.

With bitter looks and deep bitterness in their hearts, they turned back to the wood, and entered the trees. If they had any hope of dodging Mornington and revisiting the spot, it was soon knocked on the head, for Morny followed them to see them through the wood.

Smythe & Co. looked savagely back at him.

"The cad's watching us!" muttered Tracy.

"Another time!" marmured Smythe. "Oh, I'll make that meddlin' cad pay for this somehow!"

"You can change your clobber here," said Mornington.

Without a word, but with black looks, Smythe & Co. changed back into their Etons.

Then they resumed their way.

Valentine Mornington followed them until they crossed the stile into Coombe Lane. Then he turned and went back into the wood, and disappeared.

With feelings almost too deep for words, Smythe & Co. tramped back to Rookwood School.

"How did the cad know?" muttered Smythe again and again.

"How did he know anythin' about Tickey Tapp and his game? He never sees Joey Hook now, that I know of. Hook can't have told him."

"Well, he does know, an' he knows Rookwood fellows go there!" growled Tracy. "He's on the watch there for them, that's plain enough."

"Hang him!"

"We'll go another time, when that cad isn't spyin' round!" said Howard.

And the disconsolate nuts tramped into Rookwood. Lovell caught sight of them as they crossed the quadrangle.

"Hallo! You're soon back from Monte Carlo!" called out Arthur Edward.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Smythe.

Kit Erroll met them as they entered the schoolhouse. He stopped to speak.

"Been out of gates?" he asked.

"Yes," growled Smythe.

"Seen anything of Morny? He seems to have gone out."

"Hang Morny!"

With that polite reply, Smythe & Co. went on, leaving Erroll surprised.

careful, Morny, not to get detained when there's a match on."

"How could I help old Bootles getting his rag out?"

"By doing your prep yesterday," answered Erroll quietly.

"I had other things to think of."

"You can't expect Mr. Bootles to look at it like that."

"Oh, hang Bootles!" said Mornington irritably.

"And what other things, after all, had you to think of?" exclaimed Erroll, speaking warmly for once. "You didn't come into the study at all last evening. I don't see how you could be so very busy mooching about the passages."

"I was thinkin'."

"Of what?"

"Lots of things," answered Mornington sourly. "How to raise the wind was one thing. I'm hard up."

"But you've just sold your bike."

"That thief Leggett gave me only seven quid for it, and it's gone!"

Erroll compressed his lips.

"Better not let the fellows hear you say that you've spent seven pounds in one week, Morny!" he said, in a low voice.

"And why not?" snapped Morny.

"They may begin to make surmises about what you've spent it on."

"That's my business!"

"It's not mine, I suppose," said Erroll, with a sigh. "I'm sorry to see you like this, Morny. But about this afternoon? I dare say Mr. Bootles will let you off, if it's put to him that there's a match on. He doesn't know about that, and he's a kind-hearted man."

"I shall cut detention, anyhow!"

"You can't, and play cricket in sight of Mr. Bootles' window. You would be fetched in by a prefect. But I think Mr. Bootles will let you off if it's put to him. I'll speak to Jimmy Silver if you like, and we'll try."

Mornington opened his lips to speak, but closed them again. There was rather a peculiar glimmer in his eyes as he looked at Erroll.

"You'd like us to try?" asked Erroll.

Mornington nodded.

"Then I'll speak to Jimmy."

And Erroll proceeded to look for Jimmy Silver, leaving Mornington "mooching" under the beeches by himself in a sulky mood.

Erroll found the Fistical Four in the quad, three of them talking wrathfully on the subject of Morny, Jimmy Silver silent and thoughtful. Kit

Erroll explained his idea, and Jimmy nodded assent.

"I dare say Bootles will see reason," he assented. "We'll tackle him after dinner, and we may get Morny off. We certainly want him in the match with Tommy Dodd's crowd."

And after dinner Jimmy and Erroll proceeded together to Mr. Bootles' study.

They found the Fourth Form master in a good temper, under the ameliorating influence of a good dinner. He gave them a gracious glance.

"If you please, sir—" began Jimmy.

"You may proceed, Silver."

"It's about Morny, sir—I mean Mornington."

Mr. Bootles frowned.

"We're playing a cricket-match this afternoon, sir," said Erroll hastily. "Morny is captaining our side against the Moderns."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Bootles drily.

"If you'd be kind enough to let him off detention, sir—"

"H'm!"

"Otherwise it may mean the loss of the match to us, sir," said Erroll meekly. "It means a lot to us, sir."

Mr. Bootles coughed.

"Mornington has been very remiss lately," he said. "He seems, indeed, to be returning to his old ways, when he was the most troublesome boy in my Form. However, I do not wish his punishment to fall upon others. You may tell him that I will give him another chance."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said Erroll gratefully.

"You may tell him, Erroll, that he is excused from detention this afternoon, only on condition that he displays more industry next week," said Mr. Bootles. "If he keeps on as before I shall find it necessary to use very severe measures."

"Yes, sir," faltered Erroll.

The two juniors left Mr. Bootles' study, and Erroll went at once in search of his chum. He found Mornington under the beeches, with a sulky brow.

"It's all right, Morny!" said Erroll cheerfully.

"I'm let off detention?"

"Yes."

"Oh, good! Many thanks."

"It's on condition that you buck up next week, and stick to your work a bit better, old chap."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"Next week can take care of itself,"

he said carelessly. "I'm off for this afternoon, so that's all right!"

"Stumps are pitched at half-past two," said Erroll, rather abruptly. "We may as well get along to the ground."

"No hurry! I'll see you later."

And Mornington lounged away to the schoolhouse, and Erroll, with a rather grim look, was left alone.

The 6th Chapter.
The Downward Path.

"Silver!"

"Hallo, Morny!"

Jimmy Silver had come out of the schoolhouse in flannels, with his bat under his arm. He was looking very cheerful, as he was feeling. Mr. Bootles had let Mornington off, so that matter was settled satisfactorily, and Jimmy hoped that he would put a little heart into the House match.

Jimmy greeted Morny quite cordially.

"Ready for the match, what?" said Mornington.

"Quite ready!"

"I'm goin' to ask you a favour."

"Want me to make a century against the Moderns?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a smile. "Or are you going to ask for the hat trick?"

"I want you to captain the side."

Jimmy started.

"What on earth for? You're playing!"

"As it happens, I'm not!"

Jimmy Silver's lips set.

"Look here, Mornington, this won't do," he said quietly. "Erroll and I went to Mr. Bootles and begged you off—to play cricket. Bootles let you off on the understanding that you were playing."

"I can't help that. I've got an engagement—"

"You had the engagement, I suppose, before I went to Mr. Bootles?"

"Well, yes."

"Then you ought to have told me before I went to him!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver angrily. "You've put me into the position of spoofing him. He only let you off detention to play cricket!"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"I wasn't askin' you for a sermon," he said. "The question is, will you take my place and captain the side? You can easily find another man."

"I can do it easily enough, of course. I captained the side against Bagshot, as you were not here. But if I'm to captain the eleven, I don't see why you were so keen to shove yourself in as junior skipper."

"There are lots of things you don't see," answered Mornington coolly.

Jimmy drew a deep breath.

"Look here, Morny, this is beginning to look a bit too fishy," he said. "I'm beginning to think that you're at your old games again!"

"You're at liberty to think anythin' you please. It's a free country!"

"If you are playing the goat again, and dropping into the Bird in Hand to play billiards with the sharpers there, when you ought to be playing cricket—"

"I'm not!"

"Well, I take your word, of course; but it looks fishy, and the sooner you stop it the better!"

"Thanks! Now, to come back to the point, are you goin' to captain the side, or shall I ask Conroy?"

Jimmy Silver paused.

"Will you tell me what your engagement is?" he asked.

"No."

"It's one that won't bear the light, I'm afraid, Morny."

"So kind of you to take an interest in my doin's," said Mornington, with a yawn. "Does it concern you in any way?"

"It does! If you're really playing the giddy goat, like Smythe and Peele and that crowd, you're not fit to be junior captain of Rookwood, and you know it! And if I believed it, I'd take measures to put you out of the job fast enough!"

"You think you could do it?" sneered Mornington.

"I know I could."

"Well, we're wanderin' from the point. Are you goin' to captain the side against the Moderns?"

"No; not unless you explain candidly why you can't play this afternoon!"

"Then I'll ask Conroy."

Mornington turned on his heel and walked away. It was evident that he did not intend to offer any explanation.

Jimmy Silver joined his chums, on their way to Little Side, with a frowning brow.

"Wherefore that giddy scowl?" asked Raby. "Not been rowing with Morny?"

"No; but he's not playing this afternoon. Conroy's going to captain us!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a loud snort.

"This is getting rich!" he said. "Is he ever going to play cricket again? Why can't he resign, and have done with it?"

Conroy came on the ground with

his chums—Pons and Van Ryn. All three of the Colonials were playing in the Classical team. Conroy had cheerfully taken on the captaincy for the occasion, but there was a buzz of surprise amongst the Classical cricketers when they knew. Kit Erroll looked dismayed.

"Isn't Morny playing, then?" he exclaimed.

"No—some important engagement, he told me," answered the Australian junior carelessly. "I'm putting in Rawson. We shall lick the Moderns all right."

"Not in your lifetime!" grinned Tommy Dodd, as he came along with his merry men.

"Hallo! Where are you off to, Erroll?" called out Conroy.

Erroll glanced back.

"I'm going to speak to Morny—I'll be back in a jiffy!"

"Well, buck up, then; we're going to start."

Kit Erroll hurried off the cricket-field. He met Smythe of the Shell in the quad, talking to his chums. Smythe & Co. were discussing the idea of a visit to Mr. Tickey Tapp's bungalow that afternoon, and debating the pros and cons, when Erroll interrupted them.

"Seen Morny?"

"Isn't he playin' cricket?" asked Smythe.

"No; going out, I think. Haven't you seen him?"

"No; and don't want to!" grunted Adolphus.

Erroll hurried on to the School House.

"So he's cuttin' cricket, an' goin' out!" growled Adolphus Smythe. "I wonder whether he's spyin' round the bungalow again, to catch us trippin'!"

"Shouldn't wonder," said Tracy. "Better cut it for the afternoon. I'm not goin' to run any risks!"

"Same here!" said Howard. "Let's go an' watch the cricket."

Adolphus gave a sniff.

"Bless the cricket! Let's go and get some banker in Peele's study if we can't go to Tapp's!"

"Right-ho!"

And once more giving up their projected visit to Mr. Tickey Tapp, Smythe & Co. made their way to Peele's study, where they were soon deep on banker with Peele and Latrey. Meanwhile, Kit Erroll was looking for Mornington. He hurried down to the gates, and spotted the dandy of the Fourth just starting towards Coombe.

(Continued on page 360.)

BOY McCORMICK TALKS ON BOXING!

Personal Hints from the Light Heavy - Weight Champion of Great Britain.

"BOY" McCORMICK.
Holder of Lord Lonsdale's Championship Belt.

DEFENCE (Continued).

I have read quite a lot of instructive books on boxing, and have found in nearly every case that the writer does not do full justice to the guarding of the body. This is a very valuable feature in boxing, as one blow to the body is just as likely to do more harm than any number of blows to the face.

A left lead to the body can be effectively parried by dropping the right arm, thus cutting it away to your right. A right punch to the body can be avoided in the same manner by using the left arm. Never attempt to guard a body blow upwards; you are running into obvious trouble by so doing.

Another method of dealing with an opponent who is sending out a punch to the lower regions is to draw your body in quickly, at the same time letting fly with a straight left to the face. This, however, requires quickness of eyesight and great forethought, and will come to you later, when you have a firmer grip of the knowledge of boxing.

You will be called upon to use your right arm a great deal in defending yourself from left leads to the face, and by holding the right arm on the slant, as I explained in the first

article, with your elbow down and your glove on a level with your left shoulder, you will find that it will come much easier for you to parry your opponent's hits. Just bring your arm up in the position I have indicated, and you will notice that his blows will glide off your arm, thus removing the painful effect of the old-time square forearm guard.

Anticipation is everything in defence, and as you progress in the noble art, anticipating a blow will come naturally to you. By this I mean that it is possible, by watching your opponent closely for any indication in his expression or attitude that would cause you to believe him about to lead, to get there first by shooting your own left out with force, thus beating him, as it were, at his own game.

Now, it is possible that you may be too late to anticipate his blow with the one I have just described, and here a knowledge of blocking will come in useful. Just block or catch your opponent's arm at the bend with the open part of your glove, and you will have stopped all the power of his punch. He may come in close and draw his arm back to strike; quick as thought you hit him on the shoulder as his blow is travelling forward, and if your punch has landed just on that part of the arm beneath the shoulder, his blow will never get to you, and his arm will suffer a nasty jar.

All these methods of defence will

come to you in time after constant practice, and they are invaluable, as they require next to nothing in the way of exertion on your part, whilst they are very disconcerting to your opponent, and will cause him a tired feeling of wasted energy and physical force. His punch will soon lose its power and snap, and you will have him morally in a beaten condition.

When practising these various methods of defence, you must allow your sparring partner to take the initiative and serve out punishment—if he can—the while you are acting entirely on the defensive, concentrating your mind on eluding his hits. At first, undoubtedly, you will be the recipient of some jogging lefts and rights. This is, however, the only way to learn to defend yourself, and when your defence is perfected, you will be fully compensated for the few knocks you are bound to get in the novice stage.

FEINTING.

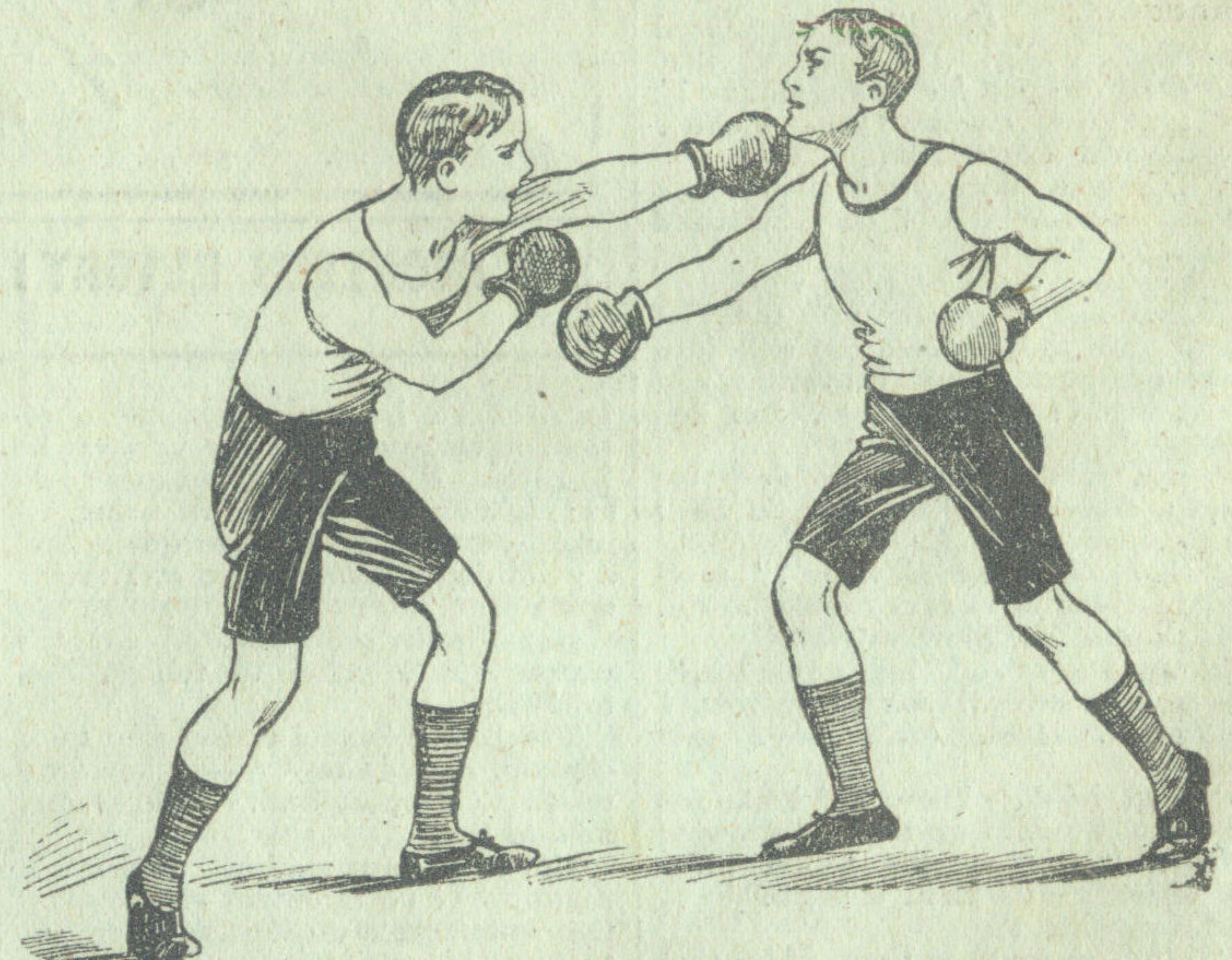
After you have studied and practised carefully the various methods of defence, and providing you have become fairly proficient in this branch of the art, you may next turn your attention to feinting, which means to draw your opponent's guard away from that particular part of the head or body on which you intend to hit.

As an example, make a movement with your right as if you were going to send this hand to the body. Your opponent will have his guard ready for this supposed attack, and will not be prepared for the left to the face that will swiftly follow the feint. You have deceived him as to your ultimate attack, and this word best explains the actual meaning of a feint.

In the case of the left-hand feint, you eventually strike with the right, having first drawn your opponent off his guard with a "bluff" left. Remember your feint must be directed to a different part to which you want to land a telling blow. For instance, feint to the left with the body, and send the right to the face. Feint with the right to the body, and send the left to the face. You may also start out with a left as though you intend to make the body your objective, and when within a few

inches of your opponent, change the direction of your left to his face. This is very deceiving, and is the feint that is used mostly in present-day boxing.

Be very careful you do not lose your balance when feinting, for you may topple a bit too far forward, and



To avoid a low body blow from your opponent, draw in your body quickly, at the same time letting fly with a straight left to the chin. (See accompanying Art. cle.)

then you are likely to receive a nasty jolt for your trouble.

A feint made in a clumsy manner usually brings dire consequences upon the head of the one who feints. Be cautious of your guard on all occasions, and with regard to deceiving your opponent, don't count your chickens before they are hatched. If you are too confident and come in with your guard lowered, it is you who will be the sufferer.

Remember when feinting, to drop or lift your eyes, as the case may be, to the particular part you are feinting. Expression means everything to the successful feinter.

The art of feinting is a valuable

asset to the boxer's make-up, but I should like you to understand that it is really unnecessary, and certainly inadvisable to be continually sending out "spoo" lefts and rights to enable you to land blows. It is a good thing to keep on the move, but it is a fault—and a bad one, too—to be constantly flinging your arms and body about with the idea of deceiving your opponent. A great deal of energy and strength is wasted in this manner, and a boxer, providing he knows his business, would very soon get accustomed to your little ways, and would put a stop to same with a straight left.

Next week I will deal with some favourite blows used in modern boxing.

Boy McCormick



PERILS OF THE PACIFIC!

A Grand Complete Story of
the Chums of Cedar Creek
on Holiday at Pacific Point.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

The Ocean Tramp.

"What about a run down the coast?"

Bob Lawless asked the question.

The chums of Cedar Creek School were seated on a big boulder on the rocky headland at Pacific Point.

The wide Pacific rolled before them, deep blue to the utmost verge of the western horizon.

It was a blazing afternoon in the hot Canadian summer, and the shadow of the big rock close at hand was grateful and comforting to the three schoolboys as they sat and watched the sea.

Down in the bay a brig was at anchor, and a boat had gone off to the lumber hotel.

"A run down the coast!" repeated Frank Richards. "My dear chap, it's too hot for running anywhere."

"Fathead!" was Bob's reply. "I mean a run down the coast in a vessel—on the water."

"Not a bad idea," said Vere Beauclerc. "It's jolly here for our holiday; but I'd like to have a look along the coast, if it could be managed. But how?"

Bob pointed to the brig anchored in the bay.

"That craft is going down to Vancouver," he said. "She's from the ports up north, trading along the coast. Her skipper would give us a passage for a few dollars."

Frank Richards sat upright and looked down at the brig with some interest.

The brig was an old vessel, a good deal in need of new paint, and looked generally the worse for wear and tear. Three or four of the crew could be seen loafing about her deck, and a man was sitting on the bowsprit smoking a pipe, and spitting into the water every other minute.

"It's not a passenger ship!" said Frank.

Bob Lawless laughed.

"No fear! It's a cargo tramp," he answered. "But these craft take passengers when they can get them. Of course, the accommodation's rough and ready. You dig in somewhere aft, and take your chance. You mess with the captain and the mate, and the grub won't remind you of a first-class hotel at Vancouver or Toronto. But you see something of ship life, and you see the coast and the sea, and—and it's a jolly good idea to go, I guess."

"Which means that you've made up your mind, and we'd better see about booking our passage," said Frank Richards, laughing.

Bob Lawless rose from the boulder, grinning.

"You've hit it!" he said. "But only if you'd care to go—"

"Oh, I'd like it all right!"

"Same here," said Beauclerc. "We've only been on the sea in a boat and a canoe so far. It will be simply ripping to have a run in a sea-going vessel. If it's rough and ready that won't hurt us. We're not soft."

"Then it's a cinch?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes!"

"Yes, rather."

"Come on, then!"

And the chums of Cedar Creek started along the headland for the lumber hotel, where they were staying for their summer holidays.

"We shall have to ask Mr. Hichens," remarked Bob. "We're sort of in his charge here. But I guess that will be all right."

The three schoolboys arrived at the lumber hotel, and found a stranger there, seated on the piazza. From his seafaring attire they guessed that he was the skipper of the brig. He was a big, lanky, loose-jointed man, with

a little grey beard like a goat, and very sharp, grey eyes. He was smoking a big Mexican cheroot, blowing out great clouds of smoke, and expectorating every minute or two, not wholly to the comfort of the other hotel visitors, who were taking it easy on the piazza.

"That's the johnny, I suppose!" murmured Frank Richards.

"You bet!"

"Let's tackle him, then!"

"Come on!" answered Bob.

The three chums mounted the piazza, and saluted the sea captain politely. He blinked at them through the smoke of the Mexican cheroot.

"Good-afternoon, captain!" said Bob Lawless cheerily.

"Arternoon!" was the skipper's laconic reply.

"Your ship in the bay?"

"My brig."

long mile from their home in the Thompson Valley. Mr. Hichens looked thoughtful when they explained their intentions.

"Waal, I guess you won't come to any harm," he remarked. "I know Captain Finn; he's a good man. You'll land at Vancouver, and come back up the coast. None of your games, you know. You're not to go on to California."

"We'd like to," said Bob, smiling. "But we won't. We'll be back in a few days, Mr. Hichens—sooner than you want to see us, in fact!"

"Waal, you'd better pack your truck!" said Mr. Hichens.

And the schoolboys, much delighted with the prospect before them, hurried to their room to pack their "truck."

The "truck" did not amount to much. A couple of bags containing



THE UPPER HAND!

Benedetto's eyes gleamed as he beheld the three schoolboys, whose startled faces looked from the companion. "You there!" he snapped. "Tumble up! You'll come in useful—I shall be short-handed!"

"Looking for passengers?"

"Nope!"

Bob Lawless coughed. The American skipper was evidently a man of few words. He stared past the schoolboys, and continued to blow out smoke in great volumes.

"Could you give us a passage down to Vancouver?" asked Bob, coming to the point.

"Yep!"

"Good!" said Frank Richards.

"When do you sail?" asked Bob.

"When the water's aboard."

"When will that be?"

"I guess half an hour."

"Then we'd better get our bags," remarked Beauclerc.

"Hold on a minute! What's the charge, captain?"

The big man reflected. He blew out smoke for a minute or two, and then answered:

"Twenty dollars a man, all found!"

"Done!" said Bob.

"Be ready for the boat!" said the skipper briefly. "I guess the Ocean Queen don't wait for any galoot!"

"Right-ho!"

The chums of Cedar Creek went into the hotel and sought Mr. Bill Hichens, the proprietor. They were more or less in charge of Mr. Hichens during their holiday at Pacific Point, many a

all that the chums thought they would need for a few days at sea.

They were waiting for the boat on the shingle by the time the long-limbed skipper came down from the hotel.

A couple of dago-seamen were in the boat, with several big kegs that had been filled with water at the creek behind the lumber hotel.

"Tumble in!" said Captain Finn. The schoolboys "tumbled" in, and the captain sat down in the stern, and the two dagoes pulled off.

A few minutes later Frank Richards & Co. were climbing the side of the Ocean Queen, and in a quarter of an hour more the anchor was up, and the brig was rolling out of the bay.

The 2nd Chapter.

Life on the Ocean Wave.

Frank Richards & Co. remained on deck, looking about them with much interest as the Ocean Queen rolled out into the Pacific.

"Rolled" was the right word. The old brig thumped her way through the water, and the chums could see that in rough weather she would be a far from happy home. But at present the Pacific was smooth and smiling, and a gentle breeze off the shore filled the patched old brown sails.

There were seven men to the crew, as well as the captain and the mate. Four of them were dagoes—seamen of Latin race. The boatswain and two of the foremast hands were American.

The cargo tramp was not exactly cleanly, as the chums soon observed.

Mops and holystones would have improved its appearance considerably, to say nothing of fresh paint. There were several casks and packing-cases about the decks, and a coop of fowls, who cackled and clattered incessantly as the brig "walloped" out into deep water.

The brown old sails were so patched that they looked like containing more patches than original canvas. Captain Finn was owner as well as skipper, and whatever profits he made by coast trading, he evidently did not expend much of them on the adornment of his brig.

Frank Richards & Co. went below at last, shown to their quarters by a Chinaman, who was cook and cabin-boy. The chums of Cedar Creek had expected it rough on the coasting-tramp, and they found that they would have to rough it, beyond the shadow of a doubt. The companion-ladder led into a dusky region, where there was an old table with the fragments of a meal still adorning it, and a stuffy smell; and from this cabin the "state-rooms" opened. There were four of them—two belonging to the skipper and mate, and the other two were at the service of the passengers. One of them contained two bunks. All of them were filled with cargo—trading "notions" of various kinds, which the Chinaman shifted out to make room for them.

He left a great deal of dust behind, and plenty of smell, which he did not seem to think mattered at all.

Frank Richards looked round the tiny cabins, and whistled.

Bob Lawless made a grimace.

"I reckoned we should have to rough it," he remarked.

was one thing, but sleeping with cockroaches was quite another.

"I guess this place is a bit stuffy," remarked Bob Lawless, when the Chinese had departed with his mop and bucket. "It's making me feel quite queer."

"Same here!" said Frank. "I was just going to say the same," remarked Beauclerc. "I've got quite a queer feeling inside."

"Better get back on deck."

The chums went up the companion, where the fresh sea breeze made them feel a little better. But they soon discovered that it was not wholly the stuffiness of the regions below that made them feel queer.

"You're looking quite pale, Frank," Bob Lawless remarked suddenly.

Frank breathed rather hard. "I'm feeling a bit rotten," he answered. "I—I think this 'blessed old tub is rolling a lot.'"

The old brute seems to be playing pitch and toss with the Pacific," grunted Bob. "I—I feel— Oh!"

Bob made a rush for the taffrail. His chums joined him there a few minutes later.

The next hour was not enjoyable to the chums of Cedar Creek. Their desire for travel on the ocean wave was dead and gone, and they would have given all the gold-mines in British Columbia to have their feet set upon the firm dry land of the Thompson Valley once more. They were in the throes of misery when Wun Pang came along.

"Mass' Finn sayee dinnee!" he said.

"Go away!" said Frank Richards faintly.

"Nicey dinnee!" said Wun Pang.

"Nicey loast pork—"

"Go away!"

"Sheer off, you horrid heathen!" groaned Bob Lawless.

"Nicey fattee pork—"

"Kill him!" murmured Frank Richards. "Pitch him into the sea! Ow!"

"Nicey gleasy pork—"

"Grooooh!"

"Ooooooh!"

Wun Pang grinned and retired, leaving the chums of Cedar Creek in their anguish. And Frank Richards & Co. did not join Captain Finn at dinner.

The 3rd Chapter.

Picked up at Sea.

Bump!

"Yoooop!"

Frank Richards started and awoke. It was morning, and the sun was streaming down on the wide Pacific. There was not much sun or air in the little state-room Frank was sharing with his Canadian cousin.

But Frank woke up feeling quite well.

The deadly seasickness had passed off overnight, and the terrible uncertainty he had felt inwardly was over.

"Hallo! What's the row, Bob?" he asked drowsily, as he listened to the disturbance in the bunk below.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"What the dickens—"

"Oh dear!" Bob Lawless rubbed his head. "There was a cockroach on my neck when I woke up—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I jumped, and banged my head! Ow!"

Frank Richards turned out of his bunk hastily.

The massacre of the cockroaches by the Chinese had cleared the state-room the previous day. Now the cockroaches had returned, and there were dozens of them. Frank Richards grabbed at his clothes, and cockroaches fell out of them as he did so.

"Oh dear! Oh crumbs!" he gasped. "Is this a life on the ocean wave? Give me dry land!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Bob and Frank shook out their clothes very carefully before they put them on. Then they emerged from the state-room, and found Vere Beauclerc already in the main cabin.

"Found any roaches?" asked Frank.

Beauclerc made a grimace.

"About a hundred!" he answered.

Wun Pang came up grinning.

"Bleakfast?" he asked.

"You haven't killed all the roaches, you heathen!" said Bob sternly.

"No can. Plantee muchee loaches in hold, comee back allee samee," said Wun Pang.

"We shall have to get used to them," said Bob, as cheerfully as he could. "Never mind. Think what it must be like in the fore-castle, and thank your stars you're not sailing before the mast."

The keen air of the sea had given the chums of Cedar Creek a good appetite, especially as they had eaten nothing, as yet, since coming aboard the Ocean-Queen. Wun Pang set out

invigorated by the dollar, Wun Pang started work on the state-rooms, and they were considerably benefited by his efforts. There was a holocaust of cockroaches, and the chums hoped to see no more of them. Roughing it,



PERILS OF THE PACIFIC!

(Continued from the previous
page.)

Changed as it was by privation and suffering, Frank Richards recognised it. He had seen that swarthy Italian face before, and learned to know it well.

"By gum, I've seen him—"

muttered Bob.

And Vere Beauclerc said

quietly:

"Benedetto!"

The 4th Chapter.

The Mutineer!

"Benedetto!"

Frank Richards & Co. repeated the name as the captain picked up the wretched, shrunken form in his powerful arms and carried the castaway below.

Mr. Bunce glanced at them.

"You've seen the man before?" he asked.

"I guess so!" answered Bob Lawless. "He's an Italian seaman named Benedetto, and he's wanted by the law for mutiny."

"Sure?"

"Quite sure!"

"Oh Jerusalem!" said the mate.

Captain Finn was busy below with the wretched man for some time, the mate taking his watch on deck. The skipper came up the companion at last.

"I reckon he'll pull through," said the skipper to Mr. Bunce. "He's come round. Says his name is Piccini, and he's the survivor of an Italian steamer that went down with all hands in the storm a few days since. I reckon he's had a bad time."

Frank Richards & Co. exchanged glances. It was clearly their duty to tell the skipper what they knew of the castaway; Benedetto was too dangerous a man to go unwatched.

"The youngsters say that they've seen him before, sir," said Mr. Bunce.

"I guess that's so, captain," said Bob Lawless. "He's a dangerous man, and a mutineer. You ought to know, I guess."

"Hey—what's that?" ejaculated Captain Finn.

Bob Lawless explained.

"He was a seaman on a schooner called the Eliza Smith that was wrecked at Pacific Point in the storm," he said. "He was the ring-leader of a mutiny, and he's being hunted by the Mounted Police ashore. He stole that boat from a fisherman at Pacific Point and fled to sea. I suppose he's been drifting about since—it's two days since he disappeared."

"Sure of that?"

"I'd know him anywhere, and so would my friends."

"Spin me the whole yarn."

Bob Lawless told the story of the encounter with the mutineer, the skipper listening attentively.

He blew out a big cloud of smoke when the Canadian schoolboy had finished.

"I guess I'm glad you've told me," he remarked. "Mister Benedetto will go ashore in irons at Vancouver. There was a rifle in the boat, Mr. Bunce?"

"Yep, and a belt of cartridges," said the mate. "I've brought them aboard, sir."

"You can cast off the boat."

The brig had resumed her southward course, and the captain paced the afterdeck for some time in deep thought, smoking hard; evidently thinking of what Bob Lawless had told him.

He went below at last. The castaway was lying on a mattress on the floor of the cabin, eating from a bowl of soup brought him by Wun Pang. He was already looking much better. His dark eyes fixed on the captain at once as he approached.

Captain Finn stood looking at him for some moments in silence. Then he spoke abruptly.

"You told me your name was Piccini?"

"Si, signor."

"Of the steamer Marco Polo, Leghorn?"

"Si, signor."

"Your name isn't Benedetto by any chance?"

The Italian started violently. A glitter shot into his black eyes.

"No, signor," he muttered.

"You didn't sail on the Eliza Smith?"

The dusky seaman panted.

"Who told you?" he muttered.

Captain Finn called up the companion.

"Step down here, you youngsters," he said.

Frank Richards & Co. came down into the cabin. Benedetto started again as he saw them, and set his white teeth. At the sight of the chums of Cedar Creek he understood that further deception was futile.

"You know these young gents, I guess?" remarked the skipper of the Ocean Queen grimly.

The Italian did not reply, but his black eyes glittered at the schoolboys.

"You know us, Benedetto," said Frank Richards. "We saved your life after the storm at Pacific Point."

"You—here!" muttered Benedetto.

"I guess it's a clear case," said Captain Finn. "As soon as you're better, my man, you're going into irons; and in a couple of days you'll be landed at Vancouver and handed over to the police. And if you give any trouble on board my vessel—"

The skipper paused, and drew a revolver from his hip-pocket, and held it up for the Italian to see. "Look at that! Any of your tricks on my ship, and I'll lay you out as dead as a cockroach. Keep that in mind, Mister Benedetto!"

The captain replaced his revolver, and returned to the deck, followed by Frank Richards & Co.

Benedetto was left to his thoughts, which were probably not pleasant ones.

When the chums came down a little later, Benedetto was still stretched on the mattress, and he looked weaker than when they had seen him before. He called to them in a faint voice.

"Signorini!"

"Hallo!" answered Bob Lawless; and the schoolboys approached the castaway.

"Signorini!" said the Italian faintly. "It is true that you saved my life after the wreck of the schooner, and I—I attacked you afterwards. Now that I am dying, I ask your pardon."

Frank started.

"Dying!" he exclaimed.

"Presto, presto!" muttered Benedetto. "I have been without food—without water—in the blaze of the sun. I feel that I am sinking. I shall not see another sun rise."

"It's not so bad as that, I hope?"

said Vere Beauclerc, with some compassion.

"I feel that it is so, signor. It matters little; but I ask your pardon before I die."

"Of course, we forgive you!" said Frank Richards. "But keep your pecker up, Benedetto; you'll pull round."

The Italian shook his head feebly, and sank back on the mattress. The chums of Cedar Creek ate their dinner in silence, in a rather sombre mood. Desperado as Benedetto undoubtedly was, stained with many a crime, they could not help feeling compassion for him now. When they returned to the desk, Bob Lawless informed the skipper of what the Italian had said.

Captain Finn shrugged his shoulders.

"He's been through enough to kill many a man," he said. "I guess it's all the better for him if he pegs out here. There's a rope waiting for him on dry land, I calculate."

"I—I suppose so," said Bob.

Frank Richards & Co. looked at the Italian again before they turned in for the night. He was lying silently on the mattress, breathing faintly, and certainly looked in a serious condition. He glanced up at them, and smiled faintly.

"Addio, signorini!" he muttered. "I shall not see you again! Ahime! E giusto-e! Giusto! Addio!"

The Italian closed his eyes, and the chums went to their state-rooms in a subdued mood.

The 5th Chapter.

A Merciless Mutineer.

Frank Richards opened his eyes. He had awakened suddenly; he could not tell why.

In the lower bunk Bob Lawless was sleeping soundly. It was warm and stuffy in the state-room; only a breath of air came in from the sea at the open porthole.

Frank lay with open eyes, wondering what had awakened him. From the captain's room he thought he heard a slight sound.

He listened.

Again there came a slight sound, and he started into broad wakefulness. For, faint as it was, he thought he distinguished the sound of a groan.

"My hat! What—"

Frank slipped from the bunk.

His movement awakened Bob Lawless, who opened his eyes, and blinked at his chum in the gloom.

"Hallo! Wharrer marrer?" murmured Bob sleepily.

"I heard somebody groan, Bob."

"Benedetto, I suppose."

"Yes, perhaps! But I thought it came from the captain's room."

"More likely the Italian. If he's in pain, we ought to see to him, I guess. I'll come."

Bob slipped from his bunk, and the chums dressed quickly. Again there was a sound, and both of them were sure that it was a faint groan.

Frank Richards slid back the door of the state-room, and put out his head. As a rule, there was a swinging lamp in the main cabin, but it was extinguished now, and all was dark.

"Got a match, Bob?"

"I guess so."

Bob Lawless struck a match. The chums glanced towards the mattress which the Italian had occupied. To their amazement, it was empty. Benedetto was no longer there.

"Where—?" began Bob blankly.

"Hark!"

The door of the skipper's state-room was partly open; and this time there was no mistaking the faint groan that proceeded thence. The match went out, and Bob Lawless struck another.

He lighted the lamp, and Frank opened the skipper's door. The light from the main cabin glimmered into the little room.

A sharp exclamation left Frank's lips.

Captain Finn was lying in his bunk, his face deadly white, and a splash of blood across it. The crimson oozed down from under his thick hair. He was unconscious, but at intervals a moan escaped him.

The skipper of the Ocean Queen had been stunned by a terrible blow on the head, dealt apparently while he was sleeping.

"Frank—What—"

"Look!" muttered Frank.

"Good heavens!"

The schoolboys gazed at the fearful scene in horror. Bob Lawless caught his chum by the arm.

"Benedetto!" he muttered. "That awful villain—"

"But—but he was dying! He said—"

"Fooling us!" said Bob fiercely.

"Fooling us, to get a chance for this! Oh, the villain!"

"The awful rotter!" muttered Frank.

"Let's wake the Cherub!"

They hurried to Beauclerc's state-room. In a minute Beauclerc was wide awake and dressing, while his chums explained in breathless whispers.

"Where is he?" muttered Beauclerc.

"Better warn Mr. Bunce," said Bob, in a whisper.

"But where—"

The chums moved towards the companion-way. The Italian was not below; but he could scarcely have got to the deck without being seen by the watch. Where was he? What was he doing?

Even as they wondered, the Italian stepped from the companion, almost within touch of them.

The schoolboys started back.

Benedetto was still pale and worn-looking, but he had evidently recovered very considerably. His movements were lithe and tigerish, and there was a glitter in his black eyes. His right hand held a revolver, which the chums recognised as the captain's. And the revolver was levelled at them.

"Silence!" said Benedetto.

A mocking grin came over the Italian's dusky face.

"You understand?" he said. "I am not to be taken into Vancouver to be hanged—not quite, signorini. You have seen il capitano?"

"Yes," muttered Frank.

"You, and he, believed I was dying!" Benedetto grinned. "But I shall not die just yet, signorini."

"You scoundrel!" muttered Bob.

"You saved my life after the wreck," said Benedetto. "I will spare your lives for that—if you make no resistance. Lift a finger, and I will shoot you dead. You know me! Go into the captain's room."

"But—"

"Obey me!"

The trigger moved a little, and the chums of Cedar Creek backed into the captain's state-room. There was no help for it.

"You should not have awakened," grinned Benedetto. "I was in the companion, and I saw the light, and came back. You will not give the alarm, signorini. Silence, on your lives!"

He slid the door shut on the schoolboys.

They were left alone, in darkness, with the injured man in the bunk, from whom low moans escaped at intervals.

There was a sudden sound in the main cabin.

"You dago! Whattée you wantee? Oh!"

Crash!

There was a door between, but the chums knew what had happened, as

well as if they had seen it. Wun Pang had come upon the Italian, and the butt-end of the revolver had stricken him down.

Silence followed.

"We can't stop here," muttered Bob, resolutely. "Goodness knows what that villain intends, but we've got to warn the others. I'm going to chance his revolver."

"Same here!" said Frank.

Bob slid back the door. The main cabin was in darkness; the Italian had put out the lamp. The schoolboys stumbled over something on the floor. It was Wun Pang, lying senseless where he had been stricken down. They groped their way towards the companion ladder.

They were careful to be silent. At any moment they expected to hear the ring of the revolver. Bob Lawless led the way into the companionway. Overhead, the hatch was open, and a square of starlight showed. But the starlight was broken by a crouching form.

Benedetto was there, crouching just below the level of the deck. He was waiting and watching. Wild as his scheme seemed, there could be no doubt that the ruffian intended to attack the watch on deck, and was waiting for a favourable opportunity.

The risk of giving the alarm was terrible. Bob knew that the first shout would probably be answered by a bullet from the ruffian crouching at the top of the ladder in the companionway. But to allow the watch on deck to be taken by surprise by the murderous ruffian was impossible.

"Danger! Mutiny!"

Bob Lawless' heart beat as he shouted.

There was a muttered foreign oath above, but the Italian did not turn. Instead of that, he sprang out on the deck.

Crack!

The revolver rang out sharply, and the shot was followed by a cry and a fall on the planks.

"Come on!" muttered Bob.

The schoolboys rushed up the companion-ladder.

There was a buzz of startled and excited voices on deck. Bright, clear starlight glimmered over the brig and the calm sea. On the after-deck lay Mr. Bunce, the mate, groaning feebly. He had fallen to the bullet from the mutineer's revolver.

"Hands up!" rapped out Benedetto.

He made a threatening motion with the revolver.

A marlinespike came whizzing through the air towards him. Benedetto dodged the missile and fired in return. A seaman dropped to the deck, groaned, and lay still.

The three other seamen put up their hands promptly enough.

"One of you to the wheel—sharp!" rapped out Benedetto.

The seamen stared at him. In the surprise of the unexpected attack the helmsman had abandoned the wheel. Benedetto made another threatening movement with the revolver, and the seaman went back to his post.

"Keep your hands up, you others!" snapped Benedetto. "I am master of the ship now! Remember that!"

"You durned dago—!" began one of the seamen.

Crack!

The seaman rolled over with a bullet in his shoulder.

The other man kept silent, and kept his hands up, though his eyes were gleaming. The watch below were turning out of the forecabin—three dagoes. They put up their hands promptly enough at the sight of the revolver.

"Helmsman!" rapped out Benedetto.

The man glared at him. The revolver swung round towards him, and the helmsman gasped.

"Ay, ay!"

"Hard a-port!"

Benedetto rapped out orders to the amazed crew. Two men, as well as the mate, lay wounded on the deck, and one was at the wheel. There were only four to obey the new captain's orders. But they obeyed promptly enough, in fear of their lives. Benedetto's eyes glittered at the three schoolboys whose startled faces looked from the companionway.

"You there!" he snapped. "Tumble up and lend a hand! You'll come in useful—I shall be short-handed." He grinned. "Tumble up! Tumble up! Do you hear me?"

Frank Richards & Co. turned out on deck. There was bitter wrath in their breasts; but for the time, the Italian was master of the situation.

The chums of Cedar Creek lent what aid they could to the crew. Benedetto, on the after-deck, watched with glittering eyes and ready revolver. The mutineer was master of the Ocean Queen!

**CAPTAIN AND
SLACKER!**

(Continued from page 352.)

"Morny!" called out Erroll.

Valentine Mornington looked round.

His brow darkened at the sight of Erroll; and he quickened his pace. But the next moment he stopped, as his chum came running after him in the road.

"Well, what is it?" asked Mornington curtly. "You ought to be on the cricket-ground!"

"I know that; I'm afraid I'm keeping the fellows waiting—"

"Well, don't keep them waiting any longer."

"Where are you going, Morny?"

"What does it matter?"

"Won't you come back with me?"

asked Erroll, in a low, earnest voice.

"Morny, old man, I'm not a fool—I've seen things, though I haven't told you so. I know what you're going to do; that list of numbers I saw in the study was enough for me."

"I didn't know you were so well up in roulette—a stodgy old fogey like you, Erroll!"

"I've had some experiences you haven't had, Morny," answered Erroll quietly. "My past isn't quite

the same as yours; and I've seen things I should have been the better for not seeing. Morny, old chap, you're playing the fool, and you know it. You're cricket captain, and your place is in the field with us. Come back!"

"Too late; I've asked Conroy—"

"I'll stand out and give you my place, then—"

Mornington burst into a laugh.

"Many thanks; but I've got an engagement. Hallo! There's Jimmy Silver looking for you."

"Erroll!" shouted Jimmy Silver from the gates. "Conroy wants to know whether you're playing or not."

"Yes, yes—"

"Then come along, you ass!"

"Cut along, old chap!" said Mornington.

"I'll see you later. My dear chap, I've raised five quids, and it's burnin' a hole in my pocket. You shouldn't have chummed with me, old scout. I warned you, you know. Go and play cricket, while I—"

He broke off abruptly. "Good-bye!"

"Morny!" said Erroll miserably.

Mornington strode on.

Erroll stood looking after him for a moment or two, in doubt; then, as Jimmy Silver called to him again, he turned back. Without a word, he hurried to the cricket-ground with Jimmy Silver. His face was full of trouble—and Jimmy Silver's of anger.

Mornington strode on, with a knitted brow.

His chum's voice was still ringing in his ears—and in his heart. As he reached the footpath in the wood, Mornington paused.

For several minutes he stood there, undecided, a struggle in his breast. Once he made a step in the direction of Rookwood; but he stopped again. Then, with a sudden movement, as if flinging all thought to the winds, he plunged into the wood.

(Next week's grand story of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled, "Saved by his Chum!" By Owen Conquest. Order your BOYS' FRIEND in advance.)

THE END.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of the BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4."



Readers of the BOYS' FRIEND are invited to contribute short original paragraphs of general interest for publication on this page. Cash prizes of five shillings and half-a-crown, according to merit, will be awarded to the senders of all paragraphs published.

**NEXT MONDAY'S
PROGRAMME.**

A long, magnificent, complete school story of Jimmy Silver & Co. appears with the next issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. Valentine Mornington is fast falling back into his old habits, and things are looking very black, when Kit Erroll, his faithful chum, comes to the rescue. This story is full of interest from start to finish, and none of my readers should miss

"SAVED BY HIS CHUM!"

By Owen Conquest.

There is another splendid, complete story of Frank Richards & Co. next Monday, which is very powerfully written. Benedetto is master of the Ocean Queen, and the three school-boys are in his hands. What transpires, and how the Italian desperado disappears, I will leave to my chums when they read:

"ON THE HIGH SEAS!"

By Martin Clifford.

The next instalment of our grand adventure serial fully keeps up its reputation of being the finest story ever written for the "Green 'Un." Ghost Island is full of mystery, and our friends of the Bombay Castle pass through a heap of exciting times with the savages. Be sure and read:

"SKULL ISLAND!"

By Duncan Storm.

I am sure that all my chums will find the next instalment of our grand, sporting school story entralling from beginning to end. Strange developments take place at the school, very cleverly penned by Mr. A. S. Hardy in

"THE SPORTS OF ST. CLIVE'S!"

"Boy" McCormick once more obliges us with a very instructive article on self-defence. This week he deals with the scientific placing of blows. His knowledge comes straight from the root of experience, and is well worth studying. Readers have written to me from all over the country expressing their thanks for such a splendid series of articles as those now appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND.

Last, but not least, comes the poem penned by the Rookwood Rhymester in his usual flowing style.

Edward Hanson forms the subject of his rhyme in No. 15 of his "Personalities" series.

NIGHT RIDING.

Night riding in summer is very enjoyable, for the air seems cool and full of fragrance, the wind dies away, and the cycle runs almost without effort on your part, especially if in good condition. Try cycling at night with a bright front light, and see how enjoyable it really is. Very likely you will say to yourself it is ridiculous to go riding at night, as all is dark

and there is not much to be seen, but once it is tried you will certainly want to try it again. Above all, keep your cycle in good condition and well oiled.—Sent by Frank Leg, 46, Bell Lane, Hendon, to whom I have sent the sum of 2s. 6d.

A SPLENDID RECORD.

Having read a letter from a London correspondent in the BOYS' FRIEND, No. 945, I should like to speak of my own chum, who enlisted at the age of fifteen on February 7th, 1915. After a period of six months in England he was sent to France with the Buffs. He spent his sixteenth birthday in France, and at the age of seventeen he had been wounded three times. He was discharged in 1917 on account of his age. He rejoined at eighteen, and was killed in Russia.

A. Ruck, 61, High Street, Chatham, sent in this stirring account of his chum's splendid patriotism, and I have much pleasure in awarding him a prize of 5s.

THE JAMAICA STAMP.

Stamp-collecting may be viewed from all manner of points. It is a learned business, for the study of stamps leads one into all kinds of subjects. Or it may be just a hobby, and a very interesting one, too, which gives tremendous pleasure to its votaries.

But, of course, a stamp is far more than a dainty little engraving showing a crowned head, or a president, or a goddess, or a scene from the capital of the country to which it belongs. The stamp really concentrates in itself the history of the place it comes from.

I was thinking of this the other day, when a letter from Jamaica came into my hands. It bore a handsome green three-halfpenny stamp with a wonderful bit of landscape depicted in the middle. It struck me how easy it is to take some really quite wonderful and imaginative things for granted—the career of that stamp, for example, the kind of scenery it had been through, the happy-faced black fellows who had helped to carry the letter it had franked, the busy tableau of Kingston, Jamaica, where the barefooted yam-seller strolls past the houses with their open windows, calling out her wares, the white place of Jamaica's capital, the green blinds, and the old parts of the city where something of the ancient Spanish element lingers yet. It is the same with every stamp. The sight of a matter-of-fact British stamp must cause pleasurable sensations to the fellow who is far away.

I always look with the keenest interest at the American stamps, the classic alignments of the Head of the State, or the stamps of the Swiss Confederation, as well as the handsome stamps of the French Republic.

A stamp-album is so much crystallised history and geography, science,

art, and pretty well everything else, all complete in such a small space. It may take a lifetime to get to the limits of the subject, and when you reach them you find you have a long way further to go, and there is no time. It is like that with every branch of learning. But it is just as well to begin to know something of stamps. You are acquiring simultaneously a lot of other knowledge, and it is learning that comes easily and pleasantly. So good luck to the philatelists!

BEING MISERABLE.

What to say to anyone who is always miserable is a problem. There are such. It is not a pose. Such sufferers are as a rule highly strung, and the events of the world play on their temperaments like the wind does on the telegraph-wires on a lonely country road—at least you hear it there—or the bow on the violin strings.

But the music is sad enough in these cases to which I am referring.

The happy-go-lucky world sets all that sort of thing down to morbidity, shrugs its broad shoulders pityingly, and goes on its way. But real sympathy is called for. I am thinking at the moment of a good fellow who tells me he is afraid his colleagues laugh at him behind his back because he is physically weak. I do not believe it for a moment.

His pals at his workshop are far more likely to be setting the man in question down as a real decent sort, for I can read between the lines of his lengthy letter clearly enough to see that he puts himself out to oblige, and the world appreciates that method of carrying on. My friend is afraid of getting deformed because of the nature of his work. A little exercise with dumb-bells will prevent such a disaster.

He is afraid of losing the friendship of the girl he admires. Well, a little discreet reserve and temporary holding off will soon show him how the land lies. He is to blame, for he has his own dignity as a man to consider, if he continues to hope for anything which can never be his.

He speaks as though he is afraid of many things. I am a sceptic in these instances. In other words, I do not believe in him altogether—that is the fear part of the business. He has let his imagination run away with him, and the two of them have had some hard going across the hills and valleys, so to speak.

If my chum were ever in a really tight place I have a very shrewd suspicion he would come out of it like a hero. He thinks a lot, but not quite in the right way. Think! Rather! Everybody ought to think a bit more. It is a route to happiness of the better sort, but self and despondent considerations want dismissal promptly. Life is serious enough in all conscience, with plenty of rainy days and scores of doubts, but have you noticed that at the darkest times there is a whisper in the heart that things are not quite altogether bad?

It is like the sunshine breaking through the clouds.

CLOTHES.

It is a jolly little subject, and has interested everybody from the earliest ages—ever since the gay old days when the smartly-painted ancient Briton was ever so particular about the manner in which the blue woad was laid on by his barber. Of late I have been simply deluged with letters from girl readers who say the ladies of Cliff House and the other schools do not dress in an up-to-date manner. One correspondent was quite annoyed with me because I said that feminine fashions changed very rapidly. Well, they do. But we can leave that side of the matter to look after itself. It will.

I was thinking of the clothes as worn by fellows to-day. There are all kinds of suggestions floating round that men should dress in colours. I don't fancy they will. A man prefers to take things easily, unless he is a dandy, and a dandy is a creature apart.

The ordinary fellow wants to be neat, but not gaudy, in his attire, as old Polonius pointed out in that long speech of his when Laertes was waiting with his kitbag packed to go aboard the lugger.

I am sorry all the same when I see a chap who makes a pose of shabbiness. "They say that shabbiness is the livery of learning, but there is a shabbiness—and shabbiness. The uncleaned boots, the unwashed neck, and the dirty collar are an offence. The worn coat does not matter a row of beans. It is respectable. Here again you want the happy medium—nothing fussy like one finds with the fellow in the rhyme:

"There was a young man at the Cape
Who always wore trousers of crape.When they said: 'Don't they
tear?'He replied: 'Here and there,
But they keep a most beautiful
shape!'"

Of course, the fellow who is always anxious about the shape of his nether garments has little time for other and more serious things. I am inclined to fancy, too, that he has a thin time, for his fashionable clothes cut him off a lot of pleasure. He might spoil the suit, you know!

THE GREAT UNSAID.

What a treat it is to "tell off" some chap who has acted scurvily, to explain to him as coolly as possible what you really think of him? You want to call him a mumskull and a knave, as well as a merchant of meanness and underhand actions. You feel that you would really enjoy doing it. Say it is Brown—he has said many things about you behind your back—ay, and things which were not true. He might have done you a good turn when you were hard pressed. It would have cost him nothing. Not that that mattered. Things ought to cost something. Good actions should be estimated in

thousands of pounds to show the world how valuable they are. But to return to that mealy-mouthed, arrogant, incompetent, utterly selfish ass, Brown.

He had said in your days of prosperity that he would help you. You had only got to ring him up; he would be there. Well, the day of adversity came along. Good old Adversity! He is styled as a bed-maker, or something of the kind; it doesn't signify. You know Brown knows you are down on your luck. Does he stand by his word? Not a bit of it. He offers some well-meant (?) advice. He is sorry for you, and then he bids you good-day, and goes off to talk to Smith about how dashed sorry he is you are down and out. And then you feel that Brown ought to be rolled into the deepest, dirtiest ditch that ever caused a horse to shy. You could say things. This is where my tip comes in. Don't say them; it isn't really worth while. Unluckily for the world there are droves of Browns—the talky-talk friends who fail to come up to the scratch when wanted. It is best to pity him, and then slip off your coat and put your shoulder to the wheel which is stuck in the rut.

The fellow who relies on promises given in this style has banked at the wrong house. The individual who will really help is usually silent on the subject until the pinch comes to his friend. Then that man is there. That's all. It isn't worth while quarrelling. Hot air supplies no margarine. Angry words may seem soothing, but they represent so much good energy wasted. My notion is that what is needed is a trifle more discrimination in the choosing of friends. You can be amused with the society of the palaver and promise party, but if you are taken in by him you are the blameworthy person.

Indifference is the best lesson for the shallow-pated vapourer whose promises are of the pie-crust description, and he should be left severely alone.

FRETWORK.

Some of my friends want to know if there is money to be made out of this hobby. Without a doubt there is. Of course, the business of designing useful articles by this attractive process wants learning, but to the handy fellow there are no insuperable difficulties. He should apply to such a firm as Gamage, Holborn, for an outfit—it will not cost him much—and a handbook to the business. After that he would do well to look occasionally at the columns of the weekly paper, the "Bazaar," which has a special corner for the benefit of fretworkers.

Your Editor