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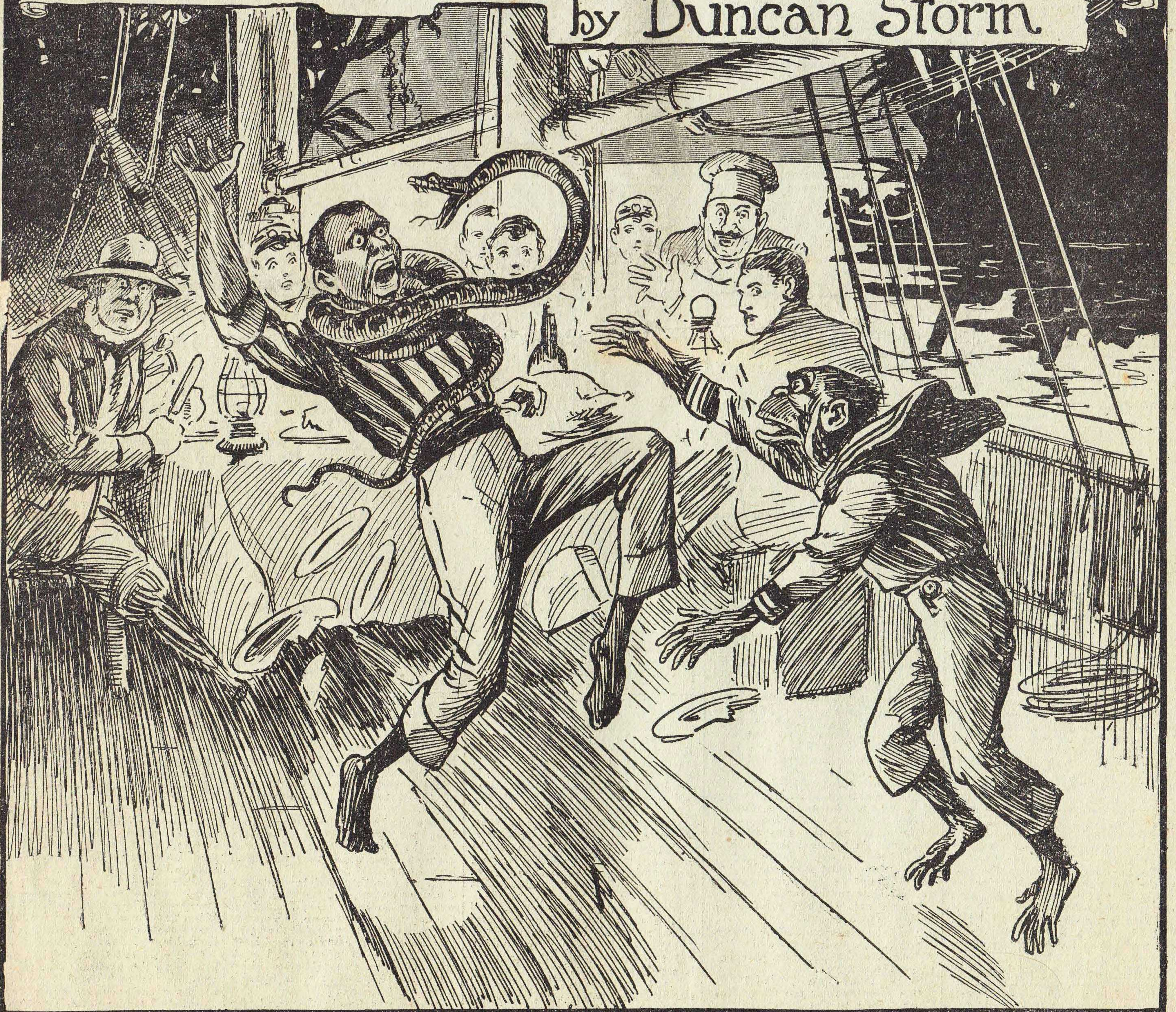
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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending June 25th, 1921.

THE ADVENTURES OF JIM HANDYMAN

by Duncan Storm



THE TERROR OF THE JUNGLE!

No sooner was the warning out of Captain Lee's mouth than there was a slithering sound from the darkness, and a huge black snake fell around Sleepy's shoulders. The negro gave a yell of terror as the deadly reptile tightened its coils about his neck and, lifting its ugly black, hissing head, prepared to strike at his forehead!

if turns out that he's a sort of a manservant himself!"

"It's not proved," murmured Jimmy.

Snort from Lovell.

"That ruffian knew what he was talking about! It's as plain as anything that the Hugginses have got money from somewhere, and changed their name to Montmorency. Not an uncommon thing these days," added Lovell, with another snort. "The sergeant knew him as soon as he clapped eyes on him, and now there's Lurchey."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Well, it's legal for a chap to change his name if he pays the fee and has it done in order," he remarked.

"I know that! But he's no right to swank, and out-herod Herod with his dashed uppishness!" grunted Lovell. "Swank from a real Montmorency would be dashed bad form, but from a rotten upstart—pah!"

To which Jimmy Silver made no rejoinder. As a matter of fact, he shared the sentiments of his emphatic chum.

Indifferent to the opinion of the end study—outwardly, at least—Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency sauntered down the passage and down the stairs. He exchanged nods with several fellows he was friendly with—Mornington, and Townsend, and Topham, and Smythe of the Shell, and Tracy and Howard—but he did not stop to speak to any of them. The clear summer moonlight in the quadrangle seemed to attract him, and he sauntered out of the house.

Once out of sight of the other fellows, however, he did not saunter. He broke into a run and reached the school wall. There he pulled a cap out from under his jacket and clapped it on his head. After a quick glance round into the dusky shadows, he clambered over the wall.

It was a rather serious matter for a Rookwood junior to break bounds after lock-up, but Montmorency did not seem to give that a thought. From calling-over to bed-time he was not likely to be missed. And even if his excursion was to be discovered, its object was not likely to be guessed—by the Head or the masters, at least.

He dropped into the road, and walked away very quickly.

Keeping in the shadow of the trees by the lane, he hurried on towards the village.

In a short time he was in sight of the Bird-in-Hand, the dingy-looking inn that lay back a little from the road on the outskirts of Coombe. It was a place not unknown to some of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood; but Montmorency so far had not shared in the escapades of Peele & Co., and the Bird-in-Hand was new territory to him.

Lights were gleaming from the low windows, and the sound of a raucous chorus came from within. Montmorency looked at the place with a black and gloomy brow. He had come there to see Mr. Lurchey—he had to see him. But to penetrate into the dingy, disreputable place was not only distasteful, but dangerous for a Rookwood fellow. He could not enter openly and ask for the man he sought, but he had to see him. That was imperative, if Horace Lurchey was not to pay another visit to Rookwood, which might have more disastrous results for the pretender.

For a long time he stood, pondering anxiously, and at last he entered the side path that ran by the inn. From some talk he had heard among Peele & Co., he knew of that path, and of a veranda at the back of the house by way of which the Giddy Goats paid their surreptitious visits. He found himself at the back, and looked up anxiously at a lighted window that glimmered on the shabby veranda.

"Hallo! What are you doin' 'ere?" came a gruff voice, and a heavy hand fell upon Montmorency's shoulder.

He started, his heart throbbing.

It was a stableman who had come suddenly upon him, and was evidently suspicious at finding someone lurking in the dark at the back of the inn. He held Montmorency's shoulder tightly and peered into his face.

"It's all right, my man!" breathed Montmorency.

"Is it? Looking for what you can lay your 'ands on?"

"I—I've called to see a man staying here," said Montmorency hurriedly. "I—I want to go in quietly."

The stableman grinned. By this time he had discerned that Montmorency was a well-dressed schoolboy, and he thought he understood. He had seen Peele and Smythe about the place before.

There was a glimmer of silver, and the man's manner became respectful at once as a couple of half-crowns were slipped into his hand.

"I catch on, sir," he grinned. "I

understand. It's all right, sir, jest as you say. Who might you want to see, sir—Mr. 'Ook?"

"No, no; a man named Lurchey. Can you take me in quietly to see him?" whispered Montmorency. "I—I mustn't be seen here, you know."

"I know, sir. You foller me."

With a beating heart, Montmorency followed the stableman into the veranda, where a door was tapped and opened. Montmorency blinked into the light of a smoky room.

"Young gentleman to see you, Lurchey," said the man; and he grinned, pushed Montmorency inside, and closed the door after him.

**The 4th Chapter.
An Old Pal!**

Montmorency caught his breath in the tobacco-laden atmosphere of the room. There had been a time when such an atmosphere was familiar to him, and such dens as the Bird-in-Hand not unfamiliar. But that was in the days before new-found wealth had turned Huggins into Montmorency.

Horace Lurchey was seated at a table, smoking, and playing cards with a fat, red-faced man—Mr. Hook, the bookmaker, though Montmorency did not know him.

Lurchey rose to his feet, startled, and burst into a laugh as he saw the pale-faced junior on the threshold.

"Hallo, George!" he exclaimed jovially. "Come to see your old pal,

post-office," said Montmorency.

"The name of Huggins is not known at the school."

"So I found out to-day," assented the grinning rascal. "It's Montmorency now. Ha, ha! You took a whopper while you was about it, George."

"It was my uncle, of course. My uncle's name is Montmorency."

"Ow much did it cost him?"

Montmorency set his teeth hard. He was longing to plant his clenched fist full in the grinning, insolent face. But he dared not. A few words from Horace Lurchey would have torn to tatters the fabric of pretence and falsehood in which the wretched upstart was clothed as in a garment.

The rascal knew his power, and he was enjoying the situation.

"Who'd have thought it, George?" he went on. "In them days when you was page at Goby Hall—"

"Hold your tongue!" hissed Montmorency fiercely.

"Page in buttons you was," pursued Lurchey, unheeding. "And very handsome and nobby you looked in them buttons. You was always turnin' up your nose, even in them days—lookin' down on me, too, though my job was as good as yourn. When old Goby sacked me, you was still there, lookin' forward to gettin' a job as under-footman—ha, ha!—when you growed up a bit. 'Ow on earth did it 'appen, George—you turning out like this 'ere? Was

He shuddered.

"My uncle has adopted me," he said at last, in a low voice. "I have taken his name."

"His name? Ha, ha!"

"His legal name now, at any rate," said Montmorency fiercely. "You had better be careful, Lurchey. You were kicked out of Goby Hall for stealing, you scoundrel!"

"I served my three months," said Lurchey coolly, "and now I can't get another job without a character, I've dropped on an old pal who's playing the grand duke at a big school. Wot luck for 'Orace! 'Ow much do you owe me, George?"

"I owe you nothin', you hound!"

"You want me to drop in at Rookwood, and mention certain things about boys in buttons and servants' halls?" grinned Lurchey. "Is there a covey there that would speak to you, arter they knew?"

"Plenty!" said Montmorency savagely. "Plenty, if they'd known all along, and I hadn't taken them in. Plenty, if—if—"

He broke off. It was in his mind that Jimmy Silver & Co., at least, would have thought none the worse of him for his origin, if he had played a straightforward and manly part. That was all they would have cared about. But he had alienated them by what? By assuming a snobbish pride that would have been contemptible in a grandee of the bluest blood, and was ludicrous, as

"Do you think I'm made of money, you fool?" exclaimed Montmorency shrilly.

"You look as if you was," answered Mr. Lurchey calmly. "That clobber and gold watchchain never did you in for less'n fifty quid. You're rolling in it, George. You must 'ave been telling the truth at Goby Hall about a rich uncle, when we all thought you was swanking as usual. A fiver a week will keep your old pal a mile off Rookwood."

"I—I'll write to my—my uncle—"

"Oh, do!" said Lurchey. "Write to him as much as you like. Until he answers, keep up the fiver every week, unless you want me to drop in at Rookwood and tell 'em about the 'aughty Montmorency washin' plates and touchin' his 'at at Goby 'All. Remember the time when old Sir Gilbert twisted your ear, George, for tellin' lies—"

"Silence!" hissed Montmorency.

"You used to say 'Stow it!' in them days," grinned Lurchey. "I haven't seen the colour of the fiver yet, George."

Montmorency glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece and started. It was nearly ten—bed-time for the juniors at Rookwood. He took out a handsome Russia-leather pocket-book, and extracted a five-pound note, which he tossed across the table to the grinning rogue opposite.

"I'll see what's to be done!" he muttered. "Meanwhile, you keep away and hold your tongue!"

"Done—till the next fiver's due!"

Without replying to that, Montmorency turned and hurried from the room, and as he groped his way out of the dark veranda, he heard—without answering—the mocking farewell of Mr. Lurchey:

"Good-night, George! Good-bye, Gentleman George!"

**The 5th Chapter.
Painful Prospects!**

"Montmorency!"

Mr. Dalton spoke very sharply as a breathless junior came into the School House at Rookwood at a quarter past ten.

"Yes, sir?"

"What does this mean, Montmorency?" exclaimed the master of the Fourth. "You have been out of gates after lock-up and have remained till after bed-time."

"Yaas."

Two or three of the Sixth were near, and they glanced curiously at Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency as he answered his Form-master. There was a cool, quiet impertinence in Montmorency's manner—as if he recognised, and wished to emphasise, the difference in social standing between a Montmorency and a mere Form-master at a school.

Certainly, no one at that moment could have guessed that the lofty and impertinent youth who "cheeked" his Form-master, had been addressed only a short time before on equal terms by a character like Mr. Lurchey.

Mr. Dalton coloured a little.

"Where have you been, Montmorency?" he asked very quietly.

"I felt inclined for a stroll, sir."

"Is that all?"

"Naturally. I'm sorry I'm late for dorm," added Montmorency, his tone—as usual—implying that his "sorrow" was only a matter of polite form.

"I shall punish you severely for this breach of discipline, Montmorency," said Mr. Dalton. "Follow me to my study."

In Mr. Dalton's study the lofty Cecil Cuthbert received four cuts, well laid on, and was dismissed to his dormitory. There was a buzz of voices from a dozen beds as he came into the dorm and turned on the light.

"Here he is!"

"Been to see Lurchey, Huggins?" squeaked Tubby Muffin.

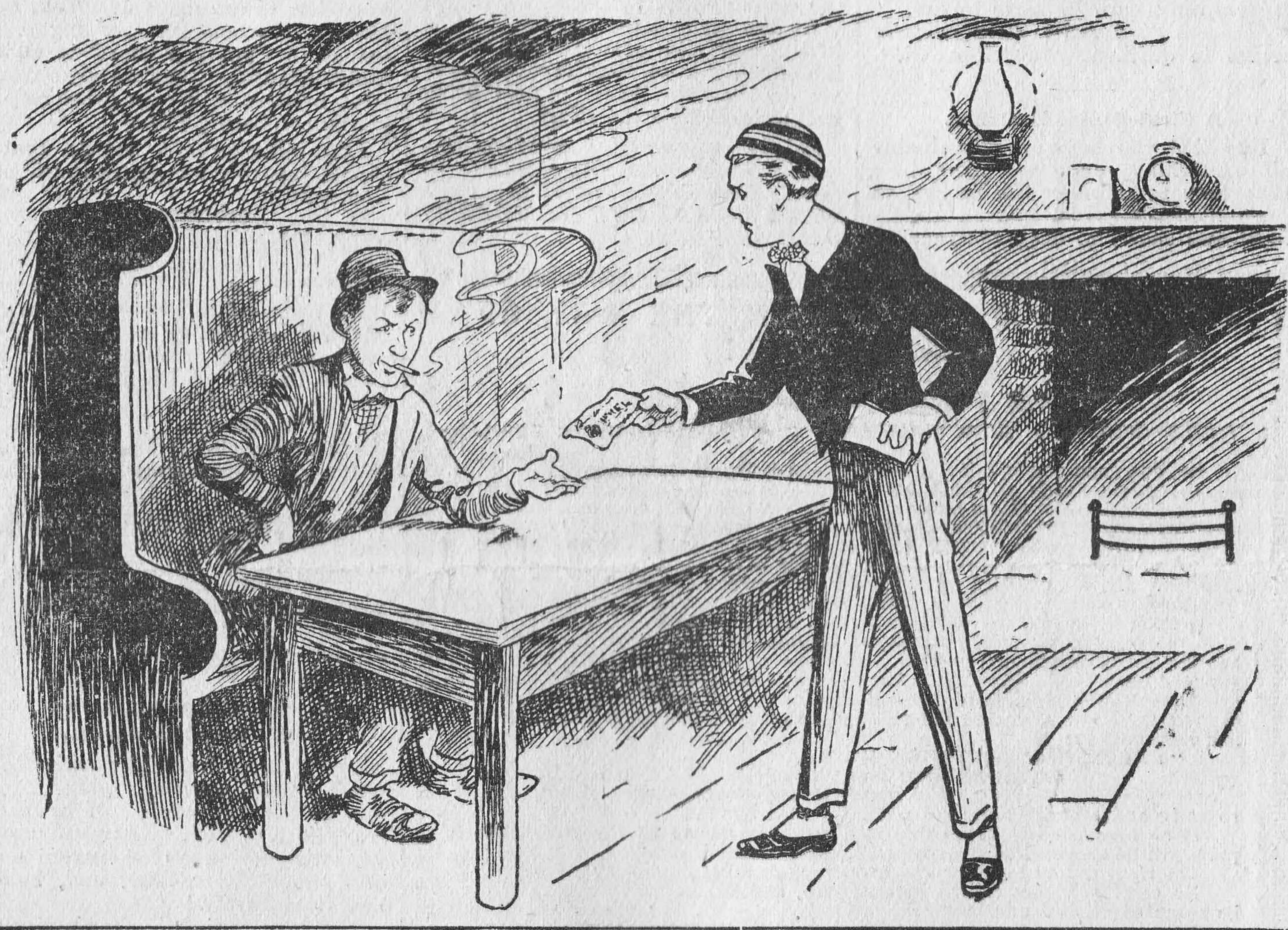
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" said Jimmy Silver, glancing at Montmorency's set face. "Can't you see he's been through it? He's been licked. Shut up, all of you!"

"Uncle James'" word was law, and Montmorency was suffered to go to bed in peace. But it was a long time before his eyes closed in slumber. He had staved off exposure—for the present, at least—but he had a thorny path to tread at Rookwood; the future was full of uncertainty for "Gentleman George."

THE END.

("Living a Lie!" is a long complete Rookwood story in next Monday's Boys' Friend. There is also a long complete Jimmy Silver yarn in the "Popular" each week. Order next Friday's copy TO-DAY!)



THE PRICE OF SILENCE! "Silence!" hissed Montmorency fiercely. "You used to say 'Stow it!' in them days at the 'All, George,'" grinned Lurchey. "I haven't seen the colour of that fiver yet." The junior extracted a five-pound note from his pocket-book and tossed it across the table to the grinning rogue opposite.

arter all? Didn't want me to call to-morrow—what?"

"I—I want a word with you," said Montmorency, almost appealingly, and he made a gesture towards Joey Hook.

That fat and ruddy gentleman rose.

"You'll skuse us for a bit, 'Ook?" said Mr. Lurchey. "I've got some business with this young gent."

"If the young gent ever wants to do a bit of business in my line," said Mr. Hook graciously, "I'll be 'appy to oblige him."

And the fat bookmaker quitted the room.

Mr. Lurchey lighted a fresh cigarette, and then stood, with his hands in his trousers-pockets, regarding Montmorency with an insolent grin.

"Ave a smoke, George?" he asked.

"No, no!"

"Given it up?" asked Mr. Lurchey. "You used to 'ave a fag on now and then when you was below stairs at the 'All."

Montmorency winced.

The coarse familiarity of the loafer cut him like a whip, as well as the reminder of early days he would fain have forgotten.

Horace Lurchey chuckled.

"Fancy meeting you up in the world like this 'ere!" he said.

"When I saw you in a car with two young gents, you could 'ave knocked me down with a feather. You could reely! 'This is a bit of orlight for me, I says to myself. 'George is goin' strong, I says, 'and he won't refuse to 'and out a little to an old pal, I says. I wrote to you—"

"The letter was sent back to the

there some truth in the yarns you used to spin in the servants'-hall about your rich uncle?"

Montmorency bit his lip till the blood almost came.

If Rookwood fellows should hear the rascal talking like this—if they should learn that Montmorency's haughty manners had first been displayed among the footmen in old Sir Gilbert Goby's mansion—that he had been the dandy of the servants'-hall!



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well as contemptible, in the presumptuous upstart.

"If!" mimicked Lurchey. "Why, I know 'ow you has carried on, jest as if I'd seen you at the game. You look like a gentleman, George, but you ain't one by long chalks. They called you Gentleman George at Goby Hall—downstairs. But you was proud in a way that a gentleman ain't; and I'll bet you've made 'arf the fellers hate you by puttin' on airs; and if there's any poor beggar down on his luck, you've rubbed it into him—what? Don't I know you?"

The wretched junior winced again. Lurchey indeed did know him.

"Well, what's the figure?" asked Lurchey. "I ain't keen on making visits where I ain't wanted. If I'd known as you hadn't got my letter, I wouldn't 'ave walked up to Rookwood to-day. I'd have given you a chance. You're a snob and a purse-proud upstart, George, but I don't want to 'urt you—not if you treat me decent. What's the figure?"

"A fiver, if you'll clear out and not come back," said Montmorency huskily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Lurchey fairly laid back his head and roared. Montmorency watched him angrily till he had had his laugh out.

"Never knowed you was such a funny cove, George!" gasped Mr. Lurchey, wiping his eyes.

"Look here—"

"Make it a fiver now," said Mr. Lurchey, "and the same every week, and we'll see."

