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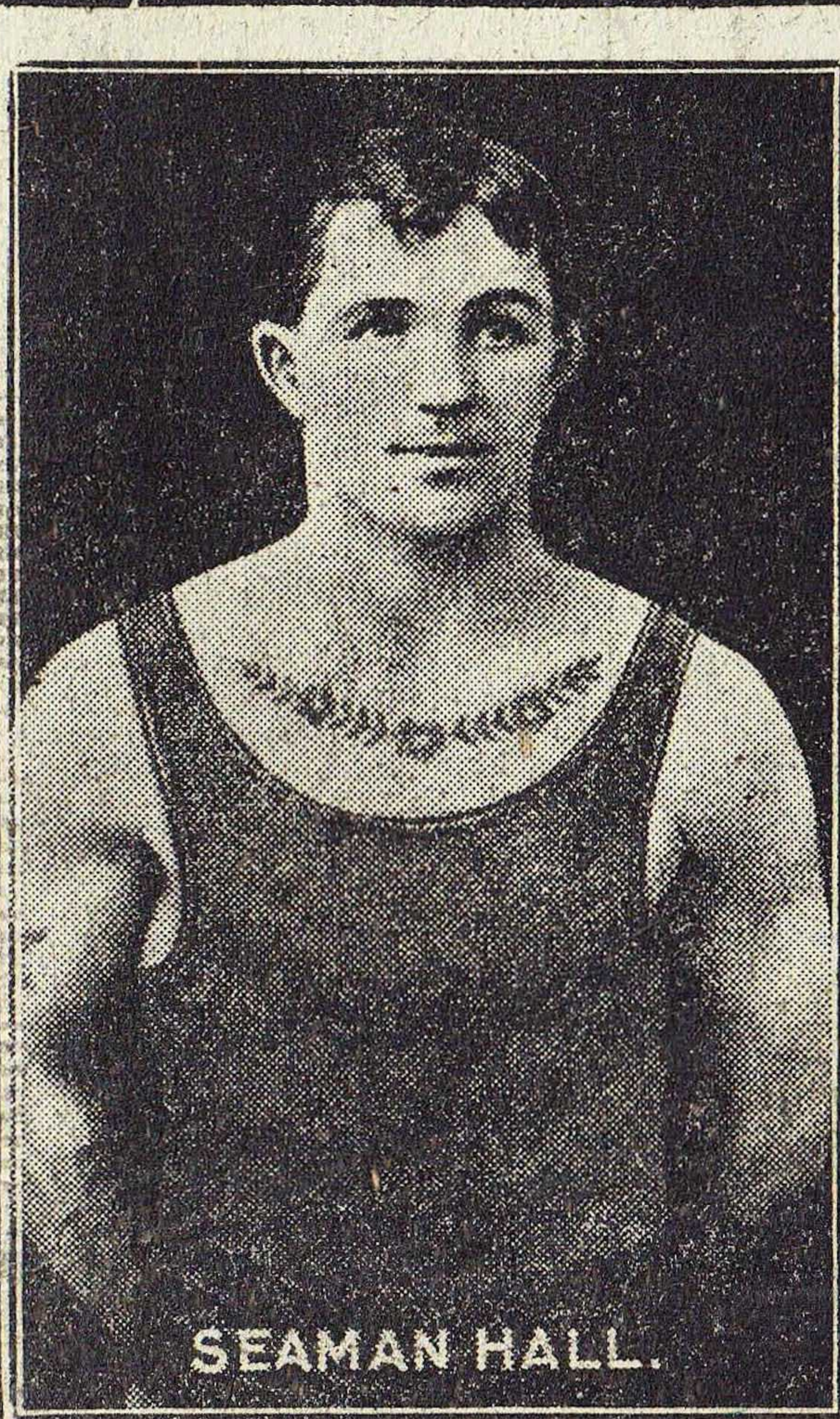
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No. 1,097.]

THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending June 17th, 1922.



SEAMAN HALL.



The American Champion!

A RIGHT ROYAL GREETING FOR THE BOXING CHAMPION!

(An incident in the magnificent story of the Clean-Sport Crusaders!)

Another Adventure of Jimmy Silver & Co. and Valentine Mornington at Rookwood School.



The 1st Chapter. Barred!

Mr. Richard Dalton, the master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, stood at his study window and looked out into the quadrangle. He was frowning. Richard Dalton—more familiarly known to his pupils as "Dicky"—was not given to frowning. Generally his handsome face was cheery and good-humoured. He was liked by all the Fourth—even Tubby Muffin admitted that he was not a "beast"; or, at all events, a lesser beast than other beasts. Even Peele & Co., the slackers of the Form, did not really dislike him. Jimmy Silver & Co. regarded him as the ideal Form-master, and they would have done anything—even detention tasks—for Dicky Dalton.

But it was upon Jimmy Silver & Co. that Mr. Dalton was looking now, and frowning.

He frowned, and shook his head. Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome were coming along in a cheery, chatting crowd. From the opposite direction came Valentine Mornington of the Classical Fourth.

The Fistical Four certainly saw Mornington. He was coming directly towards them on the gravel path.

But to judge by their looks, the space in front of them might have been entirely unoccupied.

They walked on unseeing. Mornington moved into the middle of the path, interrupting the route of the Fistical Four.

Still they did not see him. They separated—Jimmy Silver and Lovell to the right, Raby and Newcome to the left—and walked past Mornington, still without seeing him.

Mornington turned his head, and cast a black and bitter look after them, before he resumed his way.

The Fistical Four did not dream of turning their heads; they walked on in utter unconsciousness of Mornington.

It was this little scene that called the frown to the brow of Richard Dalton. Evidently there was a rift in the lute in the Fourth Form, Mornington—hitherto a rather important member of that important Form—having been cut dead in the quad by four of the leading spirits of the Fourth.

Mr. Dalton, still frowning, let his glance linger on Mornington as the ostracised junior moved on slowly. Ahead of him, under the old beeches, Kit Erroll could be seen. Erroll was Morny's closest chum—or had been so until of late. But as Valentine Mornington came near him, Kit Erroll turned at right angles to his former course, and walked away under the trees, obviously to avoid Morny.

Mr. Dalton's frown deepened. There was trouble in the Fourth; and, as a dutiful Form-master, he was bound to take an interest in it. Still his glance followed Mornington. Tubby Muffin rolled into view from the direction of the tuckshop, and grinned as he saw Morny. Tubby proceeded to cut Morny, as the other fellows had done—but not quietly and unostentatiously, as they had done. There never was anything quiet or unostentatious about Reginald Muffin. Tubby rolled quite near Morny, and turned up his fat little nose, and twisted his wide mouth into a sneer of ineffable scorn, conveying by that look the most superlative and crushing contempt. The effect was spoiled by Tubby

Not Wanted!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

coming too near. His sneering lip and turned-up nose were put within reach of the cut junior. Mornington suddenly reached out, and his finger and thumb closed like a vice on the little fat nose.

All the lofty scorn vanished out of Reginald Muffin's face as that grip descended on his nose. An expression of the deepest anguish replaced it, and Tubby gave a howl that reached Mr. Dalton's ears, even at the distance of his study window from the scene.

"Owwwwwwwwww!" Mornington, with a grim smile, tightened the grip of finger and thumb. The water rushed into Tubby's eyes.

"Wowwwwwwwww!" Then Mornington released Tubby's nose, and strolled on, leaving Tubby clapping the damaged proboscis with both hands, and wailing.

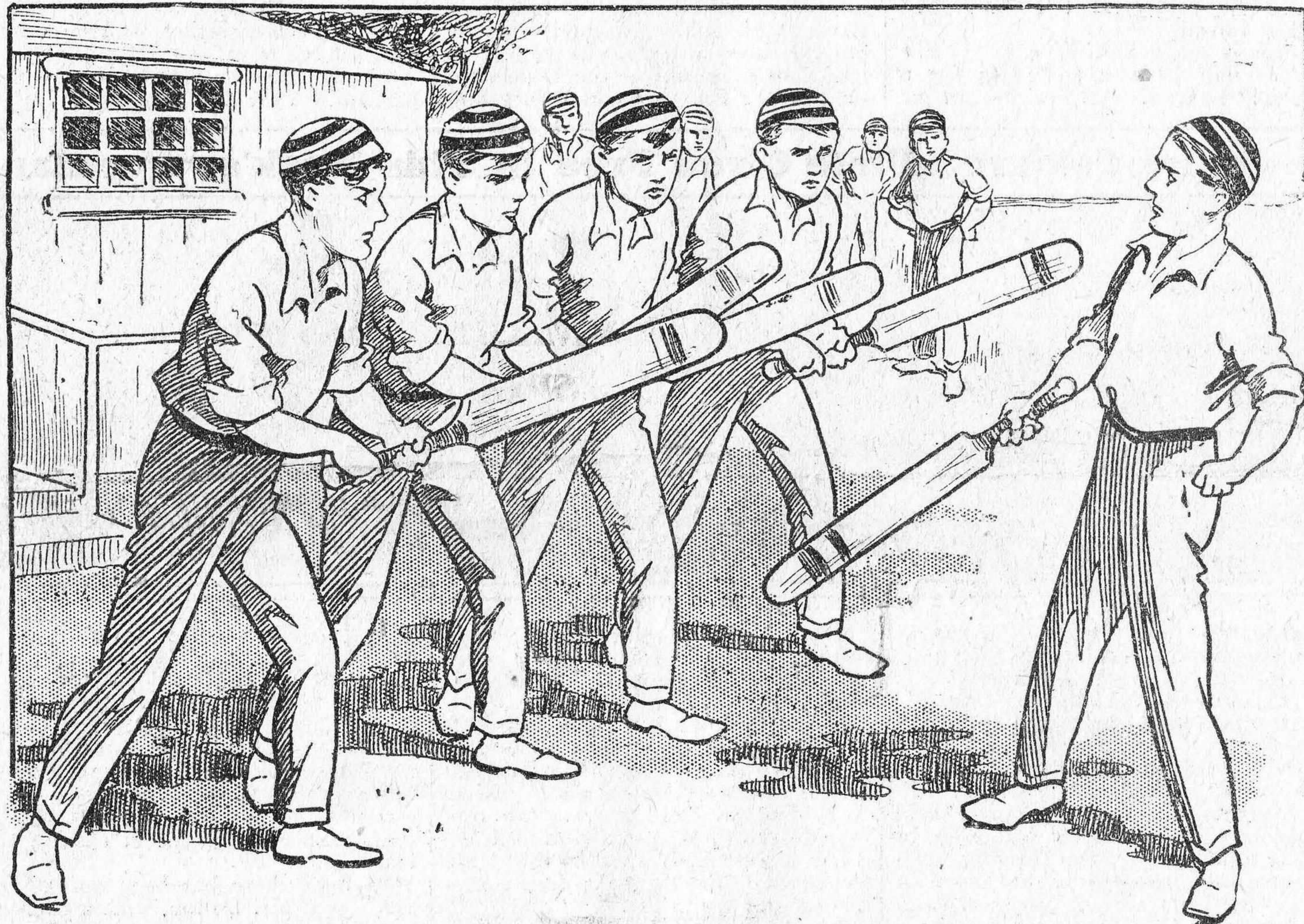
Mr. Dalton's glance followed Mornington. The barred junior was holding his head high, and his face was

was a little crowding at one end, to give room for leaving Mornington isolated in his place.

In the Form-room, and out of it, Valentine Mornington was isolated—barred by the Fourth. Even his best chum, his own familiar friend, had turned against him with the rest.

That such a situation must have been bitterly humiliating to a proud fellow like Mornington, Mr. Dalton knew; but there was no sign of it in Morny's face. His look was calm and careless; he did not even seem to notice that he was avoided.

During afternoon classes, Mr. Dalton was not thinking wholly about the Form lessons. He took a kind interest in his boys, and he wanted, if he could, to learn what was wrong, and to help set matters right. But he knew that he had to proceed with circumspection. A schoolboy questioned by a master was only too apt to close up like an oyster, if he regarded that master as stepping outside his own province.



CHARGE! As Mornington came up to the pavilion several of the juniors marched on him in a body, with their cricket bats up like bayonets at the charge!

calm and unmoved. But his outbreak of temper with regard to Muffin showed that he was not so unmoved as he would have liked to appear. Three Modern juniors—Dodd and Cook and Doyle—met him on the path. They did not sneer as Muffin had done; they ignored Mornington in the style of Jimmy Silver & Co.

Mr. Dalton saw Mornington pause and swing round towards them, as if to speak. The three Tommies accelerated their pace a little, leaving Morny to speak to the desert air, if he spoke at all.

Then Valentine Mornington passed out of his Form-master's sight, and Mr. Dalton turned from the study window, frowning. There was evidently something wrong—something very wrong—in the Fourth Form, and Richard Dalton determined to make a judicious inquiry into it.

Quite unaware of the interest their Form-master was taking in their proceedings, Jimmy Silver & Co. came cheerily into the Form-room about half an hour later, for afternoon classes. Mr. Dalton was already at his desk, and, mindful of what he had seen in the quad, his glance was very keenly on the juniors.

Mornington came in with the rest; but it was plain that he was with them, but not of them, so to speak.

Kit Erroll sat in his accustomed place next to Morny, but he had moved further along the form. There

"I think not, sir."
"You have quarrelled, somehow, with the rest of the Form?" Silence.
"You do not wish to confide in me, Mornington?"
"No, sir."
Mr. Dalton coughed again.
"You may go, Mornington."
"Thank you, sir!"
Valentine Mornington walked out of the Form-room, and walked through a crowd of juniors in the corridor, with his head held high. Not a word was spoken to him as he passed.

The 2nd Chapter. Cut at Cricket!

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a short, one of his ways of expressing his feelings when he was ireful.

"Here comes that rotter!" he said. Whereat Jimmy Silver frowned.

Most of the Classical Fourth had gathered on Little Side for an hour at the nets before tea. Jimmy Silver was keeping his cricketers up to the mark for the matches that were coming along.

The defeat at St. Jim's was a worry on Uncle James' mind. The fact that it had been owing largely to Mornington helped to keep up the feeling against Morny in the Fourth. While the memory of it was fresh in their minds, and of the false telegram that had called Jimmy Silver away from the match, the Rookwood cricketers were not likely to forgive the offender.

Mornington, with his bat under his arm, came on the junior cricket-

"What's this game?" he asked, with a bitter look at the batsmen. "I've come down to cricket practice." No answer. The juniors were not to be drawn into speaking to the fellow who was barred by the Form. But they advanced on him in grim silence, with the bats at the charge. Mornington backed farther away, and then, with a black look, he swept up his own bat.

"Stand back," he said, between his teeth, "or—"

The array of levelled bats came on. Mornington crashed his own willow down on them with a terrific crash.

"Ow!" roared Lovell, whose arm was badly jarred by the shock.

Bump!
Conroy's bat bumped on Mornington's chest, and the dandy of the Fourth staggered back. He swung up his bat again in both hands, and just in time Jimmy Silver grabbed his arm and dragged the bat away. Morny turned on him like a flash, hitting out. The captain of the Fourth guarded the blow, and stepped back, cool and contemptuous.

"Get on with it!" grinned Oswald. The array of bats advanced on Mornington again, driving him back. He would have been driven off the field in a few minutes more, but he turned his head and shouted to the captain of Rookwood.

"Bulkeley!"
"Hallo!" Bulkeley of the Sixth looked round. "What's the matter there? No ragging here, you young sweeps!"

"I've come down for practice," said Mornington coolly. "Am I to be allowed to stay or not?"

"Eh? Of course!" said Bulkeley, with a stare. "What's the row? Put those bats down! Do you hear?"

The bats were lowered. The captain of the school had to be obeyed.

"Now, then, what's the trouble?" demanded the prefect, looking round at the crowd of lowering faces.

"We're not going to practise with Mornington!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell.

"You young ass! Why not?"
"He's in Coventry!" said several voices.

"Oh, he's in Coventry, is he?" grunted Bulkeley. "You fags are always up to some game or other."

"It isn't a game!" bawled Lovell, much incensed at hearing the solemn decision of the Fourth referred to in that contemptuous manner.

"Don't yell at me, Lovell, unless you want a licking," said Bulkeley gruffly. "What's Mornington done, to be sent to Coventry, you precious young duffers?"

"He's sent to Coventry, anyhow!" said Lovell.

"Well, you can play what games you like in the Fourth Form passage," said Bulkeley, with a grin; "but this is cricket. Mornington's got to turn up to practice like the rest. Let him alone!"

"Then I'm going off!" snorted Lovell.

"You're not going off, Lovell! No slacking while I'm in charge."

"I don't want to slack!" howled Lovell, still more incensed at that imputation. "It's not that at all. You know I'm not a slacker, Bulkeley. But that cad—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bulkeley impatiently. "You were as thick as thieves a few days ago, and you'll be as thick as thieves again in a few more days. I've no time for your fag nonsense. Get to it!"

Mornington smiled, a smile that had an extremely irritating effect on the Fourth-Formers. There was an angry squeak from Tubby Muffin.

"Look here, you fellows! If Morny brings a prefect into it, we ought to tell what he's done. He's asked for it."

"Shut up, Muffin!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, he shouldn't bring a prefect into it!" howled Muffin. "If he brings in Bulkeley we ought to tell Bulkeley about the—"

Tubby Muffin was put to silence by a sudden jab in his fat ribs, which reduced him to a sitting posture and breathless silence at the same time.

"What's this? What's all this?" exclaimed Bulkeley.

"Nothing," said Jimmy Silver. "If we've got to practise with Mornington we'll do it if you say so, Bulkeley. But we sha'n't speak to him!"

"Too much speaking here already!" snapped the Rookwood captain. "I'd like to see something done, and less said. Suppose you all shut up for a bit?"

Bulkeley was evidently cross. He was giving an hour of his valuable time to the instruction of the juniors, and naturally he did not want that valuable time wasted in what he regarded as "fag ragging." Bulkeley being apparently quite unaware of

(Continued overleaf.)

NEXT MONDAY'S
FREE BOXING PHOTO
IS OF
BUGLER LAKE,
Bantam-Weight Champion
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the importance of a decision reached in solemn conclave by the Fourth Form. To the high and mighty Sixth-Former it was "fag ragging," merely that and nothing more!

So Mornington took his place among the cricketers with a curl of the lip. The angry Fourth had to contain their resentment as best they could. As nobody would bowl to Mornington, or bat to his bowling, Morny's triumph seemed likely to be an empty one. But again Bulkeley interposed, as he saw how matters stood.

"Get to the wicket, Silver! Mornington, take the ball. Chuck the ball to Mornington, Van Ryn!"

The South African junior tossed the ball to Morny, who caught it. Jimmy Silver, slowly and reluctantly, went to the wicket. He did not want to bat to the barred junior, but the authority of the head of the games was paramount. But Jimmy's idea was that though you could take a horse to the water the said horse could not be made to drink; and he proceeded to act upon that principle. Morny sent down a ball that knocked out the middle stump with ease. Some of the onlookers grinned. Jimmy Silver was not defending the sticks.

"Do you call that batting, Silver?" demanded the irritated coach. "Why on earth did you swipe to leg?"

"You—you see—"

"I see that my hair will be turned grey in teaching you fags to know one end of the bat from the other! For goodness' sake show that you know how to hold a bat, at least!" snapped Bulkeley.

The Rookwood captain stared round.

"Send that ball in! Where's that ball?"

The ball was not to be seen. That was accounted for by the fact that Higgs of the Fourth had sat on it—trying to look as if he were simply taking a little rest on the turf. Unfortunately for Higgs, Bulkeley's eyes were of the sharpest. He made a stride to Higgs, and lifted him from the hidden ball by the simple process of jabbing his foot in Higgs' ribs. There was a roar from Higgs as he rolled over, and Bulkeley picked up the ball.

"If there's any more of this fooling somebody will get a licking!" exclaimed the captain of Rookwood angrily. He tossed the ball to Mornington, with a frowning brow.

Morny bowled again, and again the wicket fell unresistingly.

"My only hat!" roared Bulkeley. "I will get a fag of the Second Form to coach you after this, Silver! Call yourself a cricketer? Try again, Mornington, and for mercy's sake, Silver, try to stand at the wicket a little less like a sack of coke!"

Mornington's eyes were glittering. He saw more than Bulkeley saw, and he knew that he was to have the pleasure of bowling to an undefended wicket, so long as he bowled at all. That was very good practice in its way, but it was not what Mornington wanted. The grinning faces of the Fourth-Formers, and Jimmy Silver's contemptuous indifference, roused Mornington to the passionate anger that had so often been his undoing. The ball came down, not at the wicket this time. It broke from the pitch like a bullet, and crashed on Jimmy Silver's shoulder, and sent him spinning, to crash on the ground at full length.

The 3rd Chapter. Tea in the End Study!

"Foul play!" roared Lovell. Raby ran to Jimmy Silver, and the other fellows crowded round. Jimmy's hand flew to his shoulder, and his face was contracted with pain. He was on his feet in a few seconds, however, with Raby's help.

Mornington stood very quiet at his end. The moment he had done that passionate, malicious action, he had been sorry that he did it—he was neither cruel nor malicious by nature. But his perverse pride upheld him, and banished any outward sign of repentance; he looked on at the scene with cool indifference; indeed, with a faintly mocking smile on his face. Bulkeley hurried to Jimmy Silver.

"That was a bad knock," he said, with real concern. "Are you hurt?"

It was rather a superfluous question. Jimmy obviously was hurt. His face had become quite pale.

"Just a bruise, I think," he said, as coolly as he could. "I—I think I'll get off, Bulkeley."

"Do, and rub your shoulder at once with Elliman's." You'll have it pretty stiff otherwise."

Raby and Newcome went with Jimmy. He leaned rather heavily on Raby's arm. Arthur Edward Lovell remained, to deal with Mornington. He came across to the bowler, his fists clenched, and his eyes ablaze. There was hardly a fellow on the field who

did not believe that Mornington had deliberately inflicted that injury on the captain of the Fourth. Lovell intended to call him to account at once, forgetful of Bulkeley and of cricket. The Rookwood captain shouted to him.

"Lovell! What are you up to?"

"I'm going to thrash that cur!" shouted back Lovell.

"Stop!"

Lovell did not stop. He was too enraged even to heed Bulkeley. But as he reached Morny, Bulkeley reached him, caught him by the collar, and swung him back.

"I don't know what your row with Mornington is," said the Sixth-Former, "but you're to keep your ragging off the cricket ground."

"I'm going to thrash him!" panted Lovell. "He's hurt Jimmy—"

"That was an accident!"

"Ask him if it was an accident!" howled Lovell. "Look at the cad's grinning face! He did it on purpose, because he's cut by the Form for playing a dirty trick like a treacherous Hun!"

"Nonsense!" said Bulkeley. "Accidents will happen! I refuse to believe anything of the kind. There's been enough jaw! Get on with the cricket. Time's up soon."

"Well, it can wait!" said Lovell, with a vengeful look at Mornington—a remark that the worried captain of Rookwood affected not to hear.

The practice went on; but Lovell got away as soon as he could, and repaired to the end study in the Fourth. He found Jimmy Silver there, with his shoulder bare, and Raby rubbing it with embrocation. There was a black bruise forming.

"Feels pretty bad, I suppose?" asked Lovell.

Jimmy made a grimace.

"I shall have a stiff arm for a week!" he said. "No cricket for me

"Trot in," said Jimmy, and he was about to add "fathhead," when he recognised Mr. Richard Dalton in the doorway, and jumped up respectfully instead.

Mr. Dalton came in, with a nod and a smile.

"Don't let me disturb you, my boys," he said. "You are just going to have your tea, I think?"

"We were, sir!" stammered Jimmy.

"I wonder whether you would let me ask myself to tea in your study?" suggested Richard Dalton, with a cheery smile.

"Oh, sir!"

"Welcome as—as—as anything, sir."

There was no doubt of the juniors' pleasure in welcoming their distinguished guest. It glowed in their faces, and was plainly sincere; and it was pleasant enough to Mr. Dalton. Jimmy jumped to pull the best chair to the table for him, and gave a sudden yelp of pain. He had forgotten for the moment his damaged arm.

"Ow!"

Mr. Dalton looked rather surprised, and Jimmy coloured, as he took the chair with his other hand and pulled it to the table. Raby hastily added tea to the pot, and Newcome, slipping ostentatiously out of the study, tore along to Study No. 6 to borrow a cake from Oswald—providentially remembering that he had seen Dick Oswald bring in a cake for tea.

Mr. Dalton sat down, carefully and tactfully refraining from observing that Raby was secretly, though quite plainly, giving the spoons a rub on a duster, which added to their brightness even while it imparted to them a flavour of ink. Neither did he observe how a plate was placed to cover up a splash on the tablecloth, or how the cup that was before him

forgotten. A terrible twinge reminded him, and he yelped, and put down the tea-pot hurriedly—so hurriedly that a stream ran from the spout over the cake.

"Clumsy!" said Raby, forgetting the distinguished presence.

Mr. Dalton looked at Jimmy.

"Have you hurt your arm, Silver?" he inquired.

Jimmy was crimson.

"A—a bit of a knock on the cricket field, sir," he stammered.

"Nothing much!"

To his great relief, Mr. Dalton inquired no further, only expressing his sympathy.

The Form-master began to talk cricket, with reference to some coming junior matches—which he knew all about. The three juniors agreed that their Form-master was a really brilliant conversationalist. He talked about matters that interested them, and let them have their say as well—an example that many other Form-masters might have followed with advantage. Somehow or other—the juniors did not quite know how—the talk came round to Valentine Mornington—a subject they would gladly have avoided. Mr. Dalton had noted, it appeared, that Mornington had not been included in the junior eleven for the late match with St. Jim's. The juniors were quite flattered by Mr. Dalton's interest in their sporting pursuits; but the topic was a thorny one.

"Morny was off colour," Jimmy explained. "He'd been swotting for the Head's Latin prize, and chucking cricket, so—" Jimmy hesitated, and coloured. "Morny can't do two things at a time," he explained, lamely. "He let everything slide when he was swotting, and he went right off his form, so—"

"Mornington is a little impetuous, perhaps," said Mr. Dalton, with a

in deadly strife, trampling and struggling and punching furiously. George Raby hastily shut the study door.

"Only some chaps doing some boxing," he said, with great presence of mind. "Really, they— they oughtn't to box in the passage, only they don't know you're here, sir."

"I am not here as a master, but as a guest," said Mr. Dalton, with a smile. "Boxing in the passage is not quite in accordance with our rules, but we must not be too critical. May I have another cup of tea?"

And three anxious juniors supplied Mr. Dalton with tea and sugar and milk while the "boxing" went on in the passage—with a din and an energy that were seldom or never put into boxing.

The 4th Chapter. Unexpected!

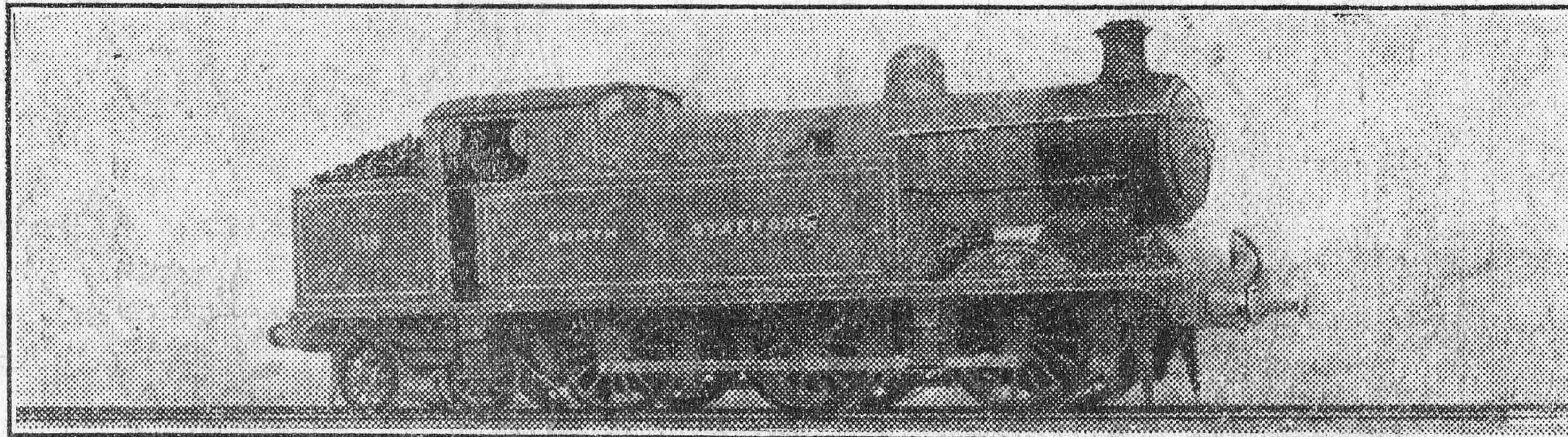
Mr. Dalton sipped his tea with a smiling face, apparently oblivious of the din from the passage outside. He was so much at his ease that Jimmy and Raby recovered some of their equanimity, in spite of the stress of the curious circumstances. They were glad when Mr. Dalton went on talking, hoping that it would take his thoughts from the extremely energetic boxing that was going on a little farther down the passage.

Bump!

Somebody was down, and Jimmy could only hope it was Valentine Mornington. Then the scuffling and trampling were resumed. Jimmy gave one ear to it, and the other to Richard Dalton.

"Now, as a matter of fact," said Mr. Dalton, with a winning smile, "I have noticed that Mornington seems to be on ill terms with some of the Fourth Form, and I am very sorry to see it."

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—I shall have to keep you fellows up to the mark instead. I believe that awful cad biffed me on purpose."

"I know he did!" snorted Lovell. "And he's going to have a thrashing for it!"

"There isn't much punch left in this arm," said Jimmy ruefully.

"Plenty left in mine, though," said Lovell. "Jevver hear of such a thorough-going rotter—forging telegrams, and then bashing a chap with a cricket-ball! Might have got it on your napper! By Jove, I'm simply aching to get my hands on him!"

For once Jimmy Silver did not say nay to his impetuous chum. Kind and forgiving as Uncle James of Rookwood was, he could not help agreeing that Mornington wanted a thrashing, and wanted it bad. Perhaps he had a lingering doubt as to whether Arthur Edward was equal to the task he had set himself; but he would not have hinted that doubt to his chum for worlds. Certainly, whatever the result of the combat, Morny would get severe punishment in the course of it; there was no doubt about that.

Lovell moved about the study like a restless lion, while Raby and Newcome attended to Jimmy's arm. Jimmy replaced his jacket at last, and bore the pain as stoically as he could. Lovell opened the door.

"I'm going to wait for him in his study," he said. "You fellows have your tea—don't wait for me. I'm not going to miss him."

"Leave it till after tea," suggested Newcome.

"No fear. I'm going to nail him the minute he comes in."

And Arthur Edward Lovell, still in a towering rage, went along the passage to Study No. 4, to wait there for Mornington to return to his quarters. When he returned, there was to be a battle royal on the spot.

The three juniors prepared tea—or, rather, Raby and Newcome did, and Jimmy watched them. His arm and shoulder ached terribly, and he was not feeling inclined for any exertion. The trio were about to begin tea, when there was a tap at the half-open door of the end study.

was slipped away and replaced by one with a handle. He seemed equally blind when Newcome strolled into the study with exaggerated carelessness of manner, and a big bulge under his jacket. Newcome came to a halt before the study cupboard, and turned round with a cake on a plate—just as if he had produced it from the cupboard—and just as if the Fistical Four always had cakes in the study cupboard on the chance of their Form-master coming to tea.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were delighted with the honour done them, but a little confused in their state of unpreparedness for the honour; but Mr. Dalton's utter unconsciousness of the by-play in the study soon put them at their ease. Observant as Mr. Dalton was in the Form-room, he seemed the most unobservant of men in the study; and he was deeply occupied in cutting the cake for the juniors, when Jimmy Silver, catching Newcome's eye, pointed to the sugar-basin, which was empty, and then indicated the door—and Newcome strolled out carelessly and returned with borrowed sugar—which again he produced as if from the study cupboard.

All these little preliminaries over, the tea-party settled down. Mr. Dalton declared, when an anxious inquiry was made, that his tea was delicious—which, if strictly veracious, indicated a curious taste on Mr. Dalton's part, as Raby had put in twice too much tea, and both Raby and Newcome had sugared it, each putting in three lumps.

"Lovell still at the cricket?" asked Mr. Dalton.

"Nunno!" Jimmy Silver hesitated. It was quite impossible to explain Arthur Edward's engagement, which kept him away from the tea table in the end study. "He—he's gone to see a chap—"

"Waiting for a chap to come in, in his study. I think," said Newcome.

"Mr. Dalton's cup's empty!" said Raby.

Jimmy Silver picked up the tea-pot, unthinkingly using the damaged arm, which he had again momentarily

kind smile. "I believe he is—or was—a great friend of this study."

"Well, we—we—he—he—" said Jimmy, lucidly. He wished Mr. Dalton would talk about something else, and he was beginning to suspect that the Form-master had discovered that Morny was in Coventry, and that that was why he had done the end study the unexpected honour of coming to tea.

"I hope there has been no falling out," said Mr. Dalton, with a charming smile.

The juniors were silent and uncomfortable. Mr. Dalton drank his second cup of tea with an air of satisfaction. He quite realised how much discomfort he was inflicting on his hapless hosts, but he wanted to get at the facts regarding the split in the Fourth.

"So there has been some little trouble; what?" said Mr. Dalton, looking up over his tea-cup.

"Yes—s!" stammered Jimmy.

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

Jimmy Silver was saved from the difficulty with which that remark confronted him, by the sound of a terrific crash in the passage.

It sounded as if someone had landed on his back on the passage floor, and the juniors in the end study had no doubt that it was so. They realised that Mornington had come in, and found Arthur Edward Lovell waiting for him. Lovell, waiting in Study No. 4, had not seen Mr. Dalton arrive in the Fourth-Form precincts, and he was going ahead.

Jimmy and Raby and Newcome exchanged startled glances.

"Dear me! Has someone fallen down?" said Mr. Dalton.

"I—I'll see, sir!" gasped Raby.

He jumped to the study door and opened it a couple of inches. That gave him a view of the passage—and did not give the guest a view. One glance showed Raby that someone had, indeed, fallen down. It was Mornington—and, as Lovell was standing over him with clenched fists, the cause of Morny's fall was quite apparent. He scrambled up as Raby stared out, and hurled himself upon Lovell, and the two foemen closed

"Oh!" murmured Jimmy, while Newcome and Raby coloured and coughed.

"You see, breaches of this kind are liable to deepen, in the course of time," said Mr. Dalton. "and they might interfere with the cricket—which we should all be anxious to avoid."

"Oh, yes! Cer—certainly!" stammered Jimmy.

"It was thoughtless of Mornington, to neglect cricket practice, but that can be remedied," said Mr. Dalton.

"Indeed, I think I saw him going down to the cricket this afternoon."

"Yes—he—he was there!" murmured Newcome. "Oh! Oh, yes!"

"If ill-feeling is kept up, it will make matters difficult in the coming fixtures, won't it?" said Mr. Dalton. "Mornington is a good bat, I believe, and an excellent bowler. You can't afford to leave him out of the eleven too long, Silver. Can you?"

"I—I—" mumbled Jimmy.

"Perhaps it is a question of dignity, and neither side in this little dispute is willing to say the first word?" suggested Mr. Dalton. "Perhaps I could help you there."

"You, sir!" stammered Jimmy.

"Little me, as you would say in the Fourth!" The juniors smiled.

"You see," continued Mr. Dalton, "I want you to regard me, on this occasion, as a sort of old chum, rather than as a Form-master. Can't you, on these lines, tell me what is the matter, and why Mornington seems to be 'sent to Coventry' by the Fourth?"

The hapless juniors were silent. It was evident that Mr. Dalton supposed the cause of the trouble was some schoolboy quarrel, and had not the faintest suspicion that Morny had transgressed in a serious way that could not possibly be overlooked. Mr. Dalton's eyes roved from Jimmy to Raby, and then to Newcome, and then back to Jimmy Silver.

Crash! came from the passage. Bump! Scuffle! Scuffle! Tramp! Mr. Dalton seemed deaf, though his entertainers were only too conscious of the fearful din.

(Continued on page 588.)

POLRUAN'S QUEST!

By MAURICE EVERARD.

(Continued from page 581.)

from which jumping-off-ground plans for recovering the buried hoard were quite easy of accomplishment.

On the thirteenth day after their landing they turned their backs on all that remained of the Enchantress, and, thankful for having successfully outwitted Bastwick and his accomplices, they turned their faces north, well satisfied with the successful conclusion to their adventure.

The Start of a Great Adventure!

The task which faced Joe Tremorne was no light one. With the wreck of the ship, which had left him and his companions stranded on the shores of Indo-China, he was faced with the necessity for a long and arduous march through a country which, according to the scanty information he possessed, literally swarmed with foes.

In all, the party numbered nineteen—the skipper, the two Polruans, Rawson, Pieface, Grantley, Lawless, and Mactavish, five stokers and firemen, and six members of the crew of the Enchantress.

Neither Joe nor the two young soldiers of fortune, whose one great desire in life was to rejoin their comrades of the Foreign Legion, the jumping-off-ground for which was Haiphong, had ever had experience of travelling in the wilds of Indo-China. But, as men of the world, they knew enough to realise that the presence of white men, even for so innocent a purpose as to cross from the point where their vessel had been wrecked to the nearest port, would not lightly be tolerated by people who for centuries have striven to keep the European from their shores.

Accordingly, preparations were made on quite a lavish scale. The wreck having been denuded of everything portable in the way of provisions, arms, ammunition, vessels for carrying water—though an observation taken from the nearest hill showed that the strip of land between the mountains and the sea consisted of an alluvial plain, dotted here and there with dense stretches of undergrowth, and intersected by numerous narrow waterways—sleeping-bags, and tent equipment and camp outfits, Joe divided his little force into three parties. The foremost, under the leadership of Lawless, who had done pioneer work in the back-blocks of the Never Never, the next under himself, his immediate followers consisting of Dick Polruan, his cousin Frank, and Harry Rawson. Mactavish the engineer, and Pieface, who had the rear was to be brought up by the yacht's crew, in charge of Grantley.

"There's no telling what sort of a reception we may meet with, and that being so, every man jacks is to march with his full equipment under loaded arms," was the order issued an hour before the time fixed for the start of the great adventure.

To march a distance of several hundreds of miles through dense tropical undergrowth and over blazing, sun-baked plains is no light undertaking, especially when one considers that hostile natives are not the only forces to be contended with. The risk of fever from the miasmatic vapours that always rise from mangrove swamps, the peril of wild beasts, and the difficulty of being so far removed from the haunts of civilised men, were only a few of the troubles which might arise before Haiphong was reached.

There was something more, however, behind the desire to get to a coast town of some size, where a fresh ship could be chartered to return to the site of the wreck of the Enchantress, and to recover the hoard of gold and silver hidden near by. Joe and the Polruans had given their word to see Lawless and Grantley safely reunited to the Foreign Legion, which they believed, at this very moment, to be engaged in fierce fighting in the interior.

"I guess that's going to be my first job," the sailor remarked, a few moments before the party was due to start on its long trek. "When I took you two young gentlemen aboard my ship at Cape Town I promised to see you safely linked up with your regiment, and, by gosh, if it's in the power of mortal man to keep his word I mean to stick to mine!"

Grantley and Lawless, browned by tropic suns, and hard as nails after several weeks of hard work at sea, smiled gratefully at the sailor's assurance. Though they had enjoyed their intimate association with Tremorne and the Polruans, they asked nothing more of life than to be plunged, as soon as possible, into the midst of the arduous fighting in which they knew their brother Legionaries to be engaged.

And yet, had they but known, adventures, far more startling and thrilling than could ever have been experienced in the most dangerous military operations, were already near at hand.

As yet neither of them had ever seen an Annamese—little men of a deep copper colour, not physically strong, yet possessed of great courage and daring, seeing that they will not hesitate to attack a tiger or panther, with which the forests abound, with no better weapons than poisoned arrows or an ancient match-lock gun.

It was these very poisoned arrows which might be shot at them from any tree that Joe Tremorne was most afraid of.

"Don't forget," he said, addressing them, as the column formed up in marching order, "to keep your optics open for natives. It's pretty hard to distinguish most of them from monkeys; but if you see a shrivelled-up, repulsive-looking creature, with a flat nose, receding forehead, high

cheekbones, slit eyes, and an enormous mouth, you'll know you're looking at—"

"Joe Tremorne," said Dick Polruan, in an audible whisper.

The sailor glared at the interrupter, but pretended not to have heard the lad's rude remark.

"And if you see such a one shoot a poisoned arrow into a running porker, and the said porker stiffens out and dies," Joe went on calmly, "you'll know that he's succeeded in bringing down Richard Polruan. Now, my good fellows, keeping your eyes open and your rifles always ready, you can go forward!"

And go forward they did, stepping out with a will, the whole column, with all its equipment, extending to some hundred and fifty yards in length. No pen could describe the wildness of the country as soon as the sea shore was left behind. The mangrove swamps were succeeded by little clusters of grim-looking hills, here and there enclosing marshy plains. Every few miles they came to a stretch of dense undergrowth teeming with game and wild animals. On the first day they sighted tigers, panthers, bears, and many kinds of deer and boars, none of which, fortunately, showed a disposition to attack so considerably a body, and among the high grass peacocks, silver pheasants, partridges, and snipe.

Rank swamp followed dense jungle, and across this the going was easier, though the danger from fever was infinitely greater than in the clearer air of the hills.

Towards sundown the travellers had their first experience of what a journey through Annam might mean. Just as it was getting dark Lawless, who had gone on some distance ahead, returned, and by a sign halted the column.

"There's some sort of a native fort two hundred yards farther on," he whispered to Joe. "We ought to reconnoitre before going on."

Joe agreed, and Frank Polruan and Mactavish were singled out to accompany him. They crept cautiously through rank grass and luxurious vegetation, and at last, from the vantage point of a cluster of trees, they looked upon high walls, rectangular in shape, with flanking bastions at each corner. Within had been placed native buildings capable of accommodating at least three hundred men.

Immediately surrounding the fort the forest was very dense, but approaches had been made by two narrow tracks, both of which could be raked by cross-fires from the walls and bastions.

"There's no chance of looking inside and finding out whether Annamese are still inside until we scale the first palisade," Lawless remarked.

"Here, Frank, hold my rifle; I'll soon find out," said Joe Tremorne. But before he could move off Frank had anticipated him, and was working his way with extraordinary speed towards the formidable-looking line of pointed bamboo stakes.

(Another long instalment of this wonderful story will be given next Monday. Also a free 'photo of Bugler Lake!')

NOT WANTED!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Continued from page 584.)

"Can't you confide in me?" asked Mr. Dalton. "Speak to me as Bicky—as, I believe, I am sometimes called in the Fourth—and not as Mr. Dalton."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Jimmy. He was moved by the young Form-master's kindness; but it was simply impossible to explain. For what Mornington had done was too serious for "Dicky" to deal with; it would have called forth the deepest wrath of Mr. Dalton.

"You—you see, sir," mumbled Jimmy unhappily, "we—we can't—we—we—"

"You can't tell me?" "N-n-no, sir." "But Mornington's offence, whatever it is, surely cannot be of a very serious nature!" said Mr. Dalton, a little startled. "Am I to understand that Mornington has done something calling for punishment from the authorities of the school if it were known, and that that is the reason why you cannot give me your confidence?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged looks of hopeless dismay. They did not speak; there was nothing to say. Mr. Dalton looked from one to another; and his face was very grave. He realised that there was something here more serious than he had dreamed of suspecting; something that the juniors would not and could not tell to anyone holding an official position in the school.

There was a short silence in the study, broken, however, by the sounds of fierce combat down the passage. There came another crash, and it was followed by a buzz of voices, but the scuffling and the trampling had ceased. The fight was over, apparently, and three juniors yearned to know the result, and it was with great difficulty that they remained quietly at the tea-table, politely attentive to their distinguished guest.

"I am surprised," said Mr. Dalton at last. "If the trouble concerning Mornington is a matter in which I should be bound to act—" He paused, but the juniors did not speak. "In that case, I will not ask for your confidence."

"Thank you, sir!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"I shall, of course, dismiss from my mind what has been said in this study," said Mr. Dalton. "That is only fair play."

Which was a relief to the juniors. But they had known that Dicky Dalton would always be sporting, and that he would never make official use of any information derived in friendly conversation. The silence of the

juniors, and their obvious discomfort, had given him a clue; but he considered himself bound not to follow it.

The Form-master rose from the table. His visit to the end study had not been a success; he was more puzzled than ever. He had done his best without result. But Mr. Dalton was not destined to leave the study unenlightened, as it happened.

Jimmy and Raby and Newcome rose, too. Honoured as they were by the visit of their distinguished guest, the interview was so awkward that they were not sorry the time had come for departure.

"Thank you very much for a ripping tea," said Mr. Dalton, with a cheery smile. "And now—" He was interrupted. The study door was hurled open from without, and a startling figure staggered in.

For a moment, Arthur Edward Lovell was hardly to be recognised. His nose was swollen, and streaming red, one of his eyes was closed—his face was a regular study in bruises and other signs of combat—he was gasping for breath, and his collar and tie were gone, and his clothes dusty from head to foot. The ancient gentleman who drew Priam's curtains at the dead of night, and told him Troy was ablaze, was not a more startling apparition than Arthur Edward Lovell at that moment.

Lovell staggered, and held on to the door, blinking with one half-closed eye, not seeing the guest in the study for the moment.

"I've licked him!" panted Lovell. "I've licked Mornington, the rotter—fairly knocked the cad out! He won't be sending any more forged telegrams in a hurry, or chucking cricket-balls at chaps and cracking their shoulders—what? I've fairly got—"

"Shut up!" hissed Jimmy Silver, in anguish. Lovell broke off, his half-closed eye discerning Mr. Dalton.

"Oh, crickey!" he gasped. Richard Dalton certainly had heard every word, and understood. But he did not look as if he had.

"Well, I must be going!" he said cheerfully. "Thanks again for a very pleasant tea!"

And Mr. Dalton walked out of the study, Lovell blinking at him blankly. "My only hat! You've done it now!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Dalton's footsteps died away down the passage; and the Fiscal Four stared at one another. It was quite a long time before they could do anything but stare.

THE END

"Mornington's Temptation!" is the title of next Monday's grand story of the adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. and Valentine Mornington at Rookwood School. A free boxing photo of Bugler Lake will also be given.

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