

FOOTBALL AGAIN! — A GRAND OPENING ARTICLE BY "GOALIE" IN THIS ISSUE.

The BOYS' FRIEND

ON SALE EVERY MONDAY.

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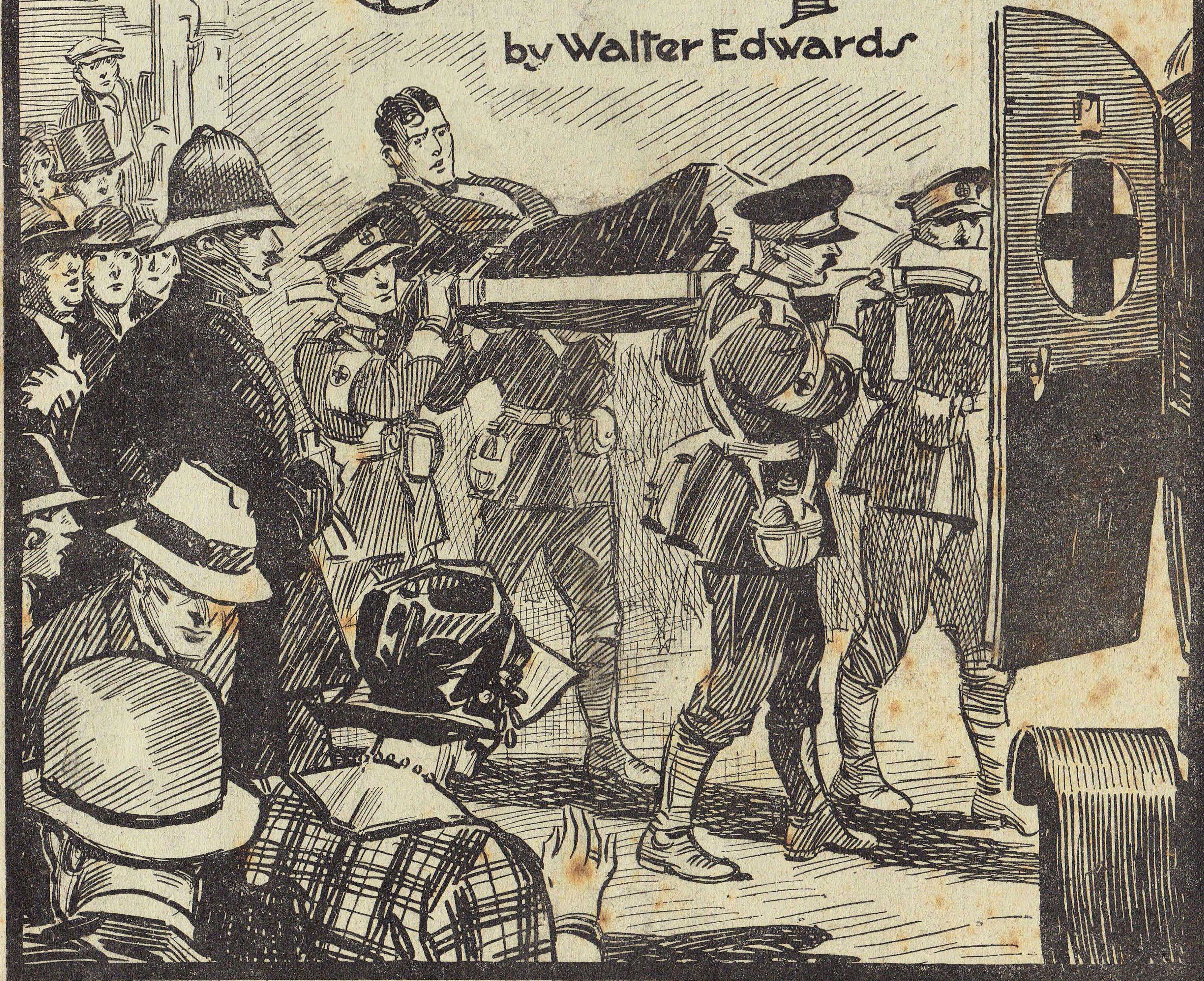
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RENOWNED THE WORLD OVER!

[Week Ending August 26th, 1922.]

The Myster Champion!

by Walter Edwards



THE KIDNAPPING OF TWO-PUNCH KERRIGAN!

THE BOGUS AMBULANCE MEN GET AWAY WITH THE CHAMPION IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!

(A startling incident from the magnificent boxing story complete in this issue.)

ANOTHER THRILLING ADVENTURE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. ON THEIR HOLIDAY TREK!

Rough on the Rookwooders

By OWEN CONQUEST.

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



The 1st Chapter. Unexpected!

According to Arthur Edward Lovell, it was the fault of Trotsky—Trotsky the pony.

According to Jimmy Silver, Raby, Newcome, and Putty Grace, it was the fault of Arthur Edward Lovell—Lovell the ass!

It was a warm afternoon, even for August. The Rookwood holiday tramps were rather tired, and very dusty. Trotsky, pulling the little baggage-cart, grew more and more laggard. He evidently thought that it was time to camp.

Trotsky was fed up. It was just his way to choose the most inconvenient spot possible for that abrupt and obstinate halt.

The holiday tramps were just opposite the open gate of a mansion that lay back from the country road. In the distance, beyond a gravel drive and some beech trees, the mansion could be seen, its old red brick front glimmering in the sun.

Jimmy Silver pulled at the pony. Raby pushed. Newcome smacked. Putty Grace gave a touch of the cricket stump. Arthur Edward Lovell watched their efforts, with a slightly superior smile.

Even Putty's stump did not persuade Trotsky to get moving. Generally, when Trotsky mistook the time, and fancied that it was "lente," the stump convinced him that it really was "presto," and a second application of the stump urged him to "prestissimo."

Now he only turned a reproachful eye upon Putty, and did not budge. "Of all the obstinate beasts!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Give him the stump, Putty!" growled Raby.

Whack! Trotsky persisted in looking reproachful, and remained where he was.

Putty could not find it in his heart to whack very hard. And half-measures were absolutely useless with a thoughtful and intelligent pony like Trotsky.

"That's no good!" said Lovell. "Perhaps you can make him move!" snapped Putty, heatedly.

"No perhaps about it," answered Lovell calmly. "I can make him move. Leave him to me, you fellows."

"No time for your swank now, old chap," said Raby, a little crossly.

"Well, if you want to stay here all the evening—" said Lovell, in a tone of patient resignation.

Patient resignation ought really to turn away wrath; but somehow it had an irritating effect on four warm and dusty juniors.

"You silly owl!" began Newcome. "Oh, let Lovell try!" said Jimmy Silver. "Make way for the giddy wonder-worker, you fellows!"

The Co. stepped back, and left Trotsky to Lovell. Arthur Edward Lovell took on his task with cheery confidence. That was his way of taking on any task—uninfluenced by a long record of "muck-ups."

Lovell pulled, and then Lovell pushed; and Trotsky might have been a pony carved in granite, for all the effect Lovell's pulling and pushing had upon him. Jimmy Silver & Co. began to smile. Lovell began to frown.

He talked to the pony—he called him

everything from a "good old hoss" to a "knock-kneed brute"; and Trotsky remained deaf to the voice of the charmer. Meanwhile, the white-moustached gentleman on the drive beyond the open gates was approaching the road, with stronger and stronger disfavour marked in his severe face.

"Give me the stump!" exclaimed Lovell, at last.

Putty smiled. "I could have done it with the stump!" he remarked, as softly as a cooing dove. "Give me the stump!" roared Lovell.

He was in no mood for argument, or for admitting failure. He grabbed the stump, and proceeded to convince Trotsky that the time of the march was not "lente," but "prestissimo con fuoco."

Whack! It was a real whack—such a whack as Trotsky had never, probably, experienced before—certainly not at the hands of the Rookwood tramps. It electrified Trotsky. He moved.

Swerving away from Lovell and the stump, he was through the gateway in the twinkling of an eye, and speeding on, with the baggage-cart rocking behind, and gravel flying from his dashing heels.

Lovell stared after him blankly.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

"You awful ass!" gasped Jimmy Silver in utter dismay.

"Well, I've started him!"

"After him!" yelled Jimmy.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Jimmy Silver, tearing on.

Two fists were shaken from the steps; two enraged voices objugated the Rookwooders.

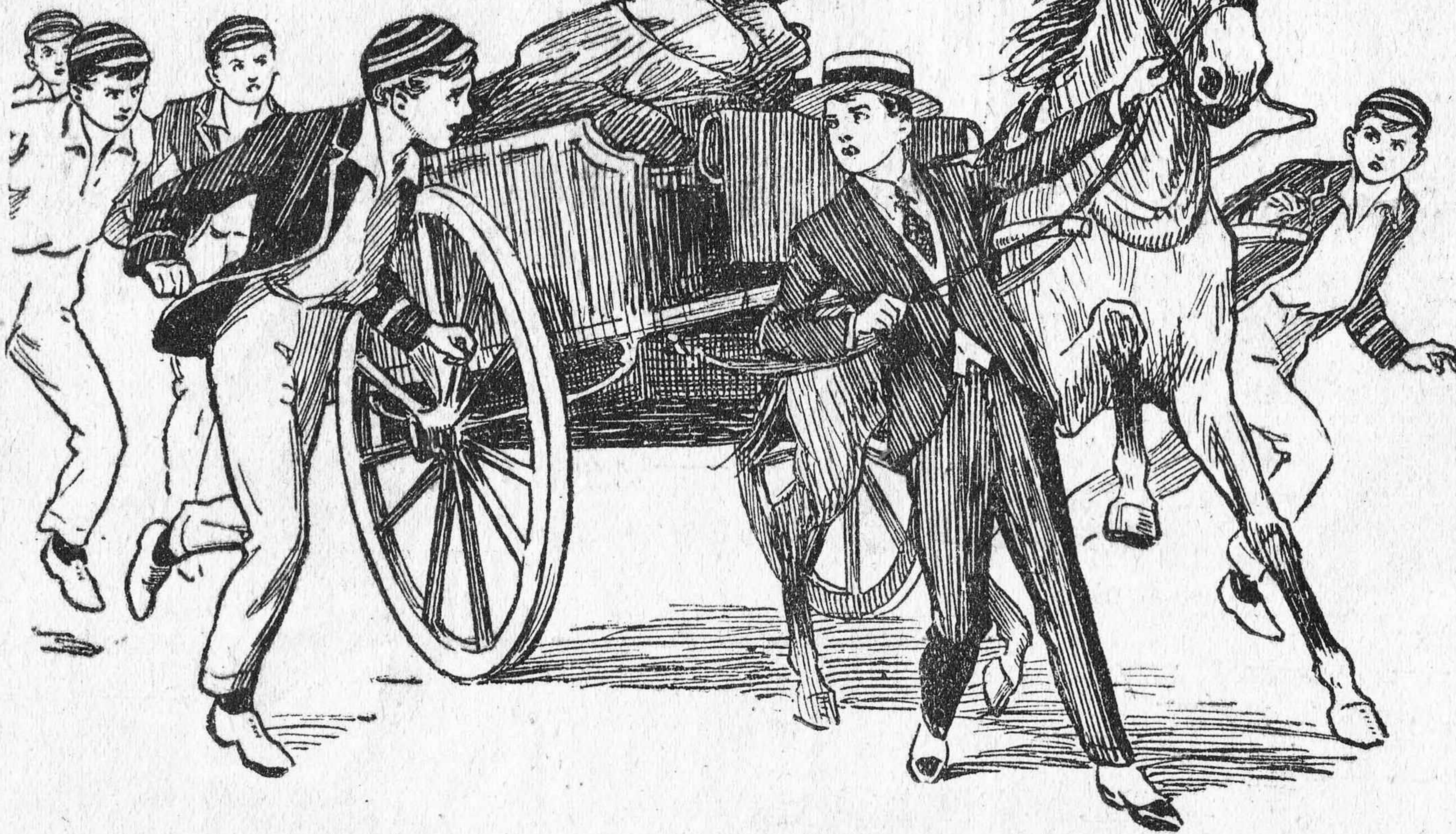
"You impudent rascals—"

"You confounded cheeky ruffians—"

Jimmy Silver & Co. had no time to stop for conversation. They raced on past the steps, unheeding. Trotsky was going strong round the drive, heading for the "out" gate. Trotsky seemed to think that he was on the race-track. Jimmy Silver, panting on ahead of his comrades, could not get near enough to grab the cart from behind. And if Trotsky escaped into the open road with all the Rookwooders' possessions trailing behind him—

Trotsky reached the exit an easy first. He whirled out into the road, with the light cart dancing behind him on one wheel. Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed into the road a few seconds later. Trotsky was going as strong as ever. But a dozen yards further on, a youth in a straw hat, who was strolling idly along with his hands in his pockets, glanced round at the sound of clattering hoofs, and, suddenly waking from lounging idleness to surprising activity, leaped into the road, caught the pony, and dragged him to a halt.

And Jimmy Silver & Co. came panting up, full of the deepest gratitude to the stranger.



AN OLD FRIEND! Jimmy Silver & Co. came panting up full of the deepest gratitude to the stranger for having stopped the runaway Trotsky. Then the Rookwooders recognised the youth and yelled in chorus: "Mornington!"

"Your outfit?" asked the youth, glancing at them with a smile. "Why—My only aunt! You!"

And the Rookwooders yelled in chorus. "Mornington!"

The 2nd Chapter. Camping with Morny!

"Morny!" "You!" "Great pip!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at the smiling face of Valentine Mornington, formerly of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood. They were glad to see him, but more amazed than glad. It was an utterly unexpected meeting.

Only once had they seen Mornington since he had been expelled from Rookwood. They had hardly expected ever to see him again. All they knew of him was that he had gone home to his guardian, Sir Rupert Stacpoole, at Stacpoole Lodge, and that he was far from happy there.

"Fancy meeting you!" exclaimed Lovell. "Old Morny, by gad!"

"Jolly glad to see you!" said Newcome heartily.

"No end glad, old chap!" said Jimmy Silver cordially. "Lucky for us, too, that you happened along. That dashed pony would have led us half a dozen miles, most likely. You see, we trusted him to Lovell."

"Look here—" began Lovell.

"Serve us right!" remarked Raby.

"It was all Trotsky's fault—"

"Yours, old chap!"

"You silly ass—"

"You born duffer—"

"My hat! This sounds like the old

Fourth-Form passage at Rookwood again," exclaimed Mornington. "Go it, you chaps, it's like old times! Slang away!"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Thanks no end for stopping the fiery untamed, Morny," he said. "But what are you doing in this part of the giddy globe?"

"I was just goin' in to dinner when I heard your gee-gee cavortin'," answered Mornington. He glanced at his watch. "Ten to seven! Just ten minutes to change. I shall be late, and my beloved uncle will get his rag out."

"Don't let us stop you then, old chap," said Jimmy Silver hastily. Jimmy knew that relations were strained between Mornington and his guardian, and he was anxious not to make matters worse.

"My dear old bean, I'm not leavin' you yet, after this unexpected merry meetin'," said Mornington coolly. "You fellows in a hurry?"

"No fear; only looking for a camp."

"Then I'll help you," said Morny. "That is," he added, with a sardonic curve of the lip, "if you care for the company of a fellow who was kicked out of school in disgrace."

"Oh, don't be an ass, old scout. We were all sorry you went," said Jimmy Silver. "You asked for it, and got it. But I wish you could come back to Rookwood next term."

"Don't I wish I could!" said Morny. "Anyhow, I can show you where to camp. I know this quarter like a book."

"But your dinner?" said Raby.

"Won't you fellows ask me to supper at your camp?"

"Yes, rather; jolly glad. But your guardian—"

"Oh, never mind the dear old uncle."

"Won't he be ratty if you cut dinner at the Lodge?"

"Yaas."

"Well, then—"

"Dear man, Sir Rupert is most amusin' when he's ratty," yawned Mornington.

"Besides, probably he will take it out of Aubrey and Augustus. My cousins, you know—the Stacpoole cousins. They're home for the holidays now, and makin' my life one long enjoyment. This way, Valentine Mornington led the pony on. Jimmy Silver & Co. walked with him—

"Lovely! Why, there's a pump over by the shed in the corner. We can get water there. But are you sure we can camp here, Morny? What about the owner?"

"I know the owner, old chap, and that's all right," said Mornington.

"Well, if you're sure—"

"Take my word for it," said Mornington.

"Right-ho!"

Trotsky was led into the field, and the gate closed. It was an ideal spot for camping—rich green grass, and shady trees, and, above all, the pump with a supply of pure water.

Trotsky was taken out of the harness and tethered to a peg, with a long rope to give him a wide feeding range. In a further corner of the paddock, two riding-horses were cropping the grass contentedly. They raised their heads to look at the intruders, and then went on contentedly feeding. Jimmy Silver & Co. camped in the opposite corner.

The tent and the cooking utensils were turned out of the cart. Jimmy Silver set up the oil stove for cooking—it was too hot for a camp fire. Mornington looked into the baggage-cart and helped to turn out the contents with great appreciation.

"That's a toppin' outfit," he remarked. "Just the thing for a walking-party. Beats a caravan hollow. Where on earth did you fellows pick it up?"

"Lent to us for the vacation," said Jimmy Silver, smiling. "Not our giddy property. The cart's a treasure, it holds no end of things, and weighs next to nothing. The pony's another treasure. Still, he's all right, except when Lovell takes him in hand."

"Look here—" bawled Arthur Edward Lovell indignantly.

"Nearly killed a jolly old gent just before you met us," said Jimmy. "Lovell will land us with an inquest yet."

"You silly owl!" roared Lovell. "I tell you—"

"Bow-wow!"

"It was the fault of the pony."

"The fault of the donkey, you mean," said Putty.

"Just that!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Lovell, old man, dry up. What are you putting into that oil-stove?"

"Paraffin, of course!" snorted Lovell. "What the thump do you think I'm putting into it—coffee?"

"No—water," answered Jimmy, with a chuckle. "It's water in that can."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That comes of a silly idiot stacking water in an oil-can!" roared Lovell.

"What silly chump wanted to put water into a can exactly like the oil-can to look at?"

"Lucky there's a pump," said Raby.

"If there wasn't, I'd like to know what we'd boil the spuds in now."

"Well, there is!" growled Lovell. "And it was a silly mistake to have cans for oil and water looking exactly alike. The silly idiot who bought them ought to be boiled in oil—hem!"

Arthur Edward Lovell broke off quite suddenly, as he remembered that the cans had been among the articles of the outfit purchased by himself. That little circumstance had quite escaped his memory for the moment.

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

"For goodness' sake, don't waste time cackling when we're frightfully hungry!" said Lovell. "Never saw such a crew for cackling. I'll draw some water while you empty the stove."

Lovell took the water-can and started for the pump. He set down the can under the pump and worked the handle. But the water did not flow.

Arthur Edward gave an angry snort.

"The dashed thing's dried up!" he growled. "Now we're out of water."

"Lots of water there, if you pump for it!" called out Mornington.

"Can't you see me pumping?" demanded Lovell, working away at the handle.

"Blow the thing! It's quite dried up—or else the spout is stopped up! That's it, I suppose."

Lovell relinquished the handle for a moment, and twisted his head under the spout to look into it.

But the pumping had told—the water was coming. It was only a little late in arriving, as water often is in pumps that are not in frequent use.

As Lovell twisted his face under the spout to peer up into it, the gush of water came—belated, but ample.

Swoooooosh!

It smote Arthur Edward Lovell fairly in the middle of his features.

There was a choking yell from Lovell, and he bounded back from the pump, streaming. There was another yell from the campers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooogh! Gug-gug—I'm drenched—oooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the campers.

"You silly, cackling geese—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell, with feelings too deep for words, made a dive for the baggage-cart to annex a towel. Jimmy Silver smilingly filled the can, while Lovell mopped his face and head, and looked daggers. It was not till supper was ready, and an appetising smell pervaded the camp, that the smile returned to Arthur Edward's face.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Order of the Boot!

Valentine Mornington leaned back against the trunk of an old beech, with a cheery smile on his face.

He had enjoyed supper with the Rookwood tramps—much more, certainly, than he would have enjoyed dinner in the dining-room at Stacpoole Lodge with the severe old baronet and the two Stacpoole cousins.

Supper was over, and Putty Grace was washing up, Raby handling the tea-cloth. Newcome packed away the remnants of the supper. Jimmy Silver gave the pony a rub down, and Arthur Edward Lovell was making up beds in the tent.

Mornington watched them.

"Just the very spot," said Lovell.

