

**"THE PRIDE OF THE COUNTY!"** By ARTHUR S. HARDY, and **INSIDE!**  
FOUR OTHER STUNNING STORIES

# The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

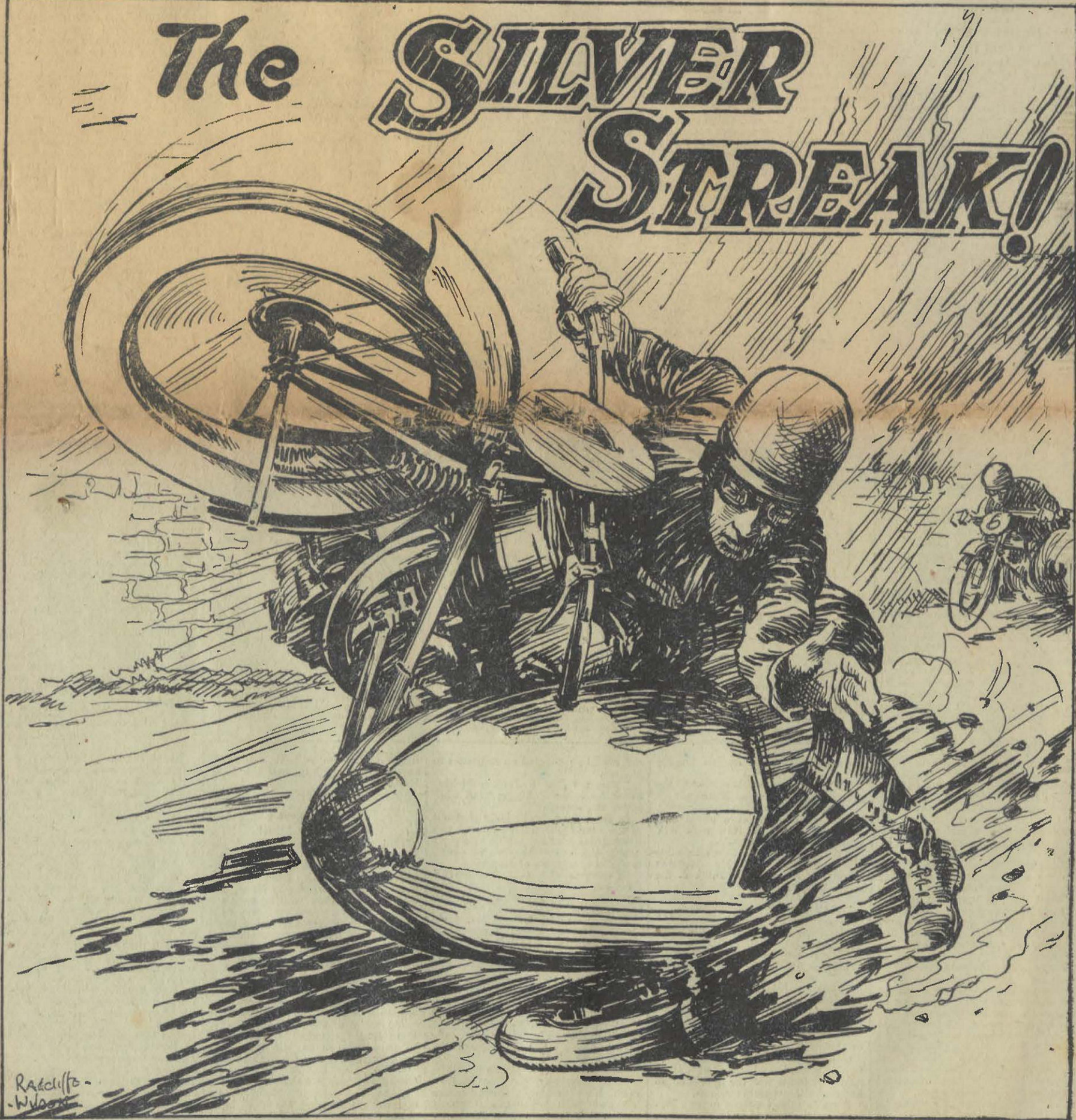
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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending June 28th, 1924.]



**A SPILL IN THE GREAT "TOURIST TROPHY" SIDECAR RACE**  
(A thrilling incident from the stunning motor-cycle racing story in this issue.)

A STORY OF THE BOYS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



The 1st Chapter.  
Mr. Greely Goes It!

"Greely's going it!"  
"That ass, Greely!"  
"That footling ass, Greely!"

That was not a very respectful way of alluding to Mr. Horace Greely, the master of the Fifth Form at Rookwood.

But there was no doubt that, at the present time Mr. Horace Greely was regarded, from end to end of Rookwood, as an ass. Fellows in his own Form, like Hansom and Talboys, agreed that Horace Greely was a footling ass; and Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth held even stronger opinions. Pompous Mr. Greely had always been lofty in his manners, somewhat dictatorial in his speech. But never, till now, had Rookwood suspected that he was so many kinds of an ass.

A crowd of fellows were converging towards Masters' Common-room—the corridor outside that apartment was swarming. Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth were there, and a good many of the Shell and the Fifth. Even some Sixth-Formers had come along, though generally the Sixth preserved an air of being far above the feelings that stirred common mortals.

It was tea-time—rather past tea-time—and the Rookwood masters generally had tea together in their Common-room. So most of the staff were there—Mr. Bohun and Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Flinders and Mr. Mooney and Mr. Dalton and Monsieur Victor Gaston, the "new Froggy," who was taking the place of the absent French master.

Quite a cheery buzz of conversation had been going on, when Mr. Greely entered.

Possibly the conversation had been all the more cheery because Mr. Greely was not there. For there was no doubt that the Fifth Form master generally dominated the talk in Common-room, not to the satisfaction of his colleagues.

Mr. Greely's entrance was the signal for silence.

His expression showed that trouble was coming.

Mr. Richard Dalton, master of the Fourth, looked slightly impatient. Mr. Mooney frowned, and Mr. Wiggins looked painfully resigned.

Victor Gaston raised his dark eyebrows a little, but otherwise took no notice of Mr. Greely.

It was upon the young Frenchman that Mr. Greely's stern, accusing eyes were fixed.

Victor Gaston did not seem to observe it. Not a muscle twitched in his handsome face.

"Gentlemen!" boomed Mr. Greely. The whole Common-room looked at him then.

"Gentlemen!" Mr. Greely surveyed the Common-room with an eye like Mars, to threaten and command, as it were. "Kindly give me your attention for a few minutes."

"Really, sir!" said Mr. Bohun testily.

"Mr. Greely!" murmured pacific Mr. Mooney.

"I am bound to ask you for your attention," said Mr. Greely, in his most pompous manner. "A short time ago, when Monsieur Gaston came to this school to replace Monsieur Monceau, I made an accusation against him."

"You did, sir," said Mr. Dalton sharply, "and the Head very properly regarded that accusation as ridiculous."

"That accusation," said Mr. Greely firmly, "I repeat. I accuse this young man, Victor Gaston, of being a bank-robber, whom I saw tried and sentenced in Paris last year under the name of Felix Lacroix."

# Put To The Test!

By Owen Conquest.

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

Mr. Greely, master of the Fifth Form, still persists in his accusation against the new French master!

Victor Gaston shrugged his shoulders.

His manner was mildly contemptuous. A slightly scornful smile hovered over his well-cut lips.

There was a buzz from the passage outside. The news that Mr. Greely was "going it" had spread fast and far. A sea of faces stared in at the open door.

A "row" in Common-room was unusual—and entertaining. Disagreements in Common-room were frequent enough at Rookwood, as at all other schools; but "rows" were really unheard-of. The news of a shindy among the masters would have drawn Rookwood fellows from the farthest corners of the school to the interesting spot.

Mr. Greely did not heed; in fact, he was not displeased that all Rookwood should hear him. All Rookwood had heard his accusation against Victor Gaston, and laughed it to scorn. All Rookwood should hear the undeniable proof that he had now to bring forward! From Mr. Greely's point of view, he had been persecuted for doing his duty—and he was very keen to cover his persecutors with confusion.

Mr. Dalton rose to his feet, a gleam in his eyes.

Between Richard Dalton and the young French master a cordial friendship had grown up in the few weeks they had known one another. And "Dicky" Dalton was the man to stand by his friend at any time.

"Silence!" he exclaimed.

"What?" roared Mr. Greely, petrified.

In the passage, Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth grinned at one another. "Dicky" Dalton was the man to deal with that pompous-ass Greely, in their opinion.

"I repeat, silence," said Mr. Dalton. "You have made this accusation before, Mr. Greely. It is regarded as ridiculous by all Rookwood, from the Head downward. On your own showing, the man Lacroix was sent to prison last year for five years—obviously, he is in prison still. Even if he has escaped, as you fancy, it proves nothing against Victor Gaston, whose testimonials have been examined by the Head, and have satisfied the Head! You have no right, sir, to repeat this foolish accusation!"

Mr. Greely turned purple.

"I am not speaking idly, Mr. Dalton!" he roared. "Silence, young man! I have proof to offer! I raise the subject again because I have proof to offer—proof that has just come into my hands!"

"Impossible!"

Victor Gaston looked curiously at the Fifth Form master. There was a gleam in his eyes.

"Mais continuez, monsieur," he said. "This proof—of what does it consist?"

"That is what I was about to state, when Mr. Dalton interrupted me," said Mr. Greely crushingly. "A boy—a junior of your Form, Mr. Dalton—went to Monsieur Gaston's room this afternoon—"

The French master started.

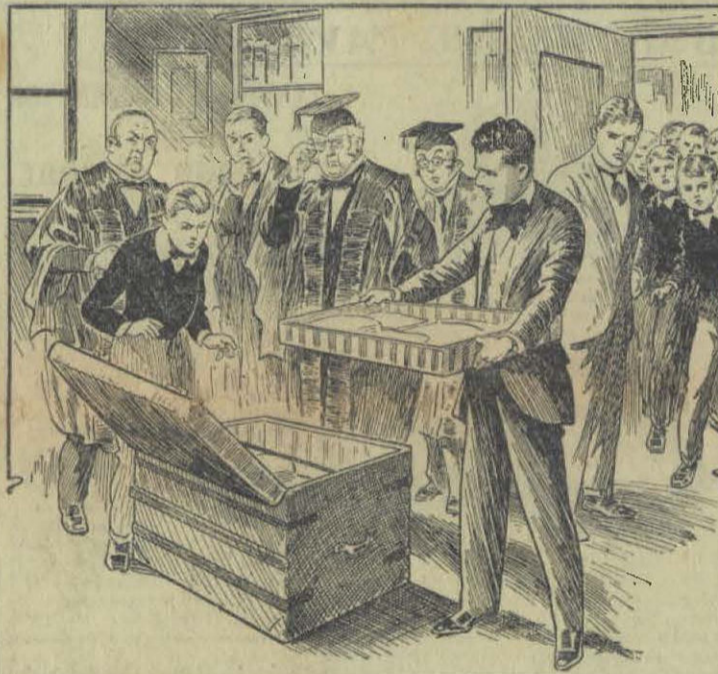
"This afternoon," repeated Mr. Greely. "The boy—Peele of the Fourth Form—admits that he went to the room intending to play a trick on the French master. Monsieur Gaston suddenly entered, and to escape observation Peele hid himself in the wardrobe."

"Well?" said Mr. Dalton contemptuously. Victor Gaston did not speak; his eyes were fixed strangely on the Fifth Form master.

"From his place of concealment," resumed Mr. Greely, "Peele of the Fourth Form saw Monsieur Gaston

open a locked trunk, and take from it a set of steel tools. There were a number of tools, all of them of polished steel, so far as Peele could see. From the beginning, gentleman, I never had any doubt that Victor Gaston, alias Felix Lacroix, had come here to carry on his nefarious business of a crackman. I suspected that he had come provided with the tools of his iniquitous trade. Now an eye-witness can prove it."

Mr. Greely paused—not for a reply,



**THE SEARCH!** Victor Gaston lifted out the tray and Dr. Chisholm glanced into the trunk. He saw a number of articles of clothing, neatly folded, a bundle of French newspapers, and two or three other articles, but the space was mostly empty. "I am ashamed to trouble you, Monsieur Gaston," said the Head. "But since we are here, perhaps you will empty the trunk." "Sans doute, monsieur." Quietly, sedately, Victor Gaston complied with Dr. Chisholm's wish.

but for breath. There was deep silence in the Common-room.

In the passage the buzz of voices had died away. Mr. Greely's positive statement had a startling effect on the crowd of fellows who heard it. Most of them liked the "new Froggy"—all of them regarded Mr. Horace Greely as a footling ass. But in spite of themselves they were impressed by what sounded like a plain statement of fact.

"Is Peele prepared to repeat this story to the headmaster?" asked Mr. Bohun, breaking the painful silence.

"He is quite prepared to do so."

"If it should prove false, he will be expelled from Rookwood, I should hope."

"He knows the risk he takes, sir!" boomed Mr. Greely. "I place implicit faith in his statement. Openly, I accuse Monsieur Gaston! Let him say that this is false, and let him open his trunk in the presence of the headmaster! Let him do so without paying a previous visit to his room. If the burglarious implements are not found in his trunk, I will withdraw my words, and apologise to Monsieur Gaston!"

Mr. Greely paused again.

All eyes were fixed on the French master. It was a dramatic moment.

**The 2nd Chapter.**  
Calling in the Head!

Jimmy Silver, in the doorway, looked anxiously across at Victor Gaston.

In spite of himself, Jimmy was worried.

He liked and admired the young Frenchman, as nearly all Rookwood did. A few slackers and black sheep, like Cyril Peele, disliked him, but that was rather a testimonial in his favour.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had "backed up" Victor Gaston, in their own way, ever since his arrival at Rookwood; they had been emphatically down on Peele & Co. for making capital out of Mr. Greely's accusation. Their faith in the Frenchman was great—all the more so because Richard Dalton had become his intimate friend. Anyone whom "Dicky" Dalton liked had a passport to the esteem of the Rookwood Fourth.

Yet Jimmy Silver was troubled now. He had not lost the strange changes of expression in the French master's face, as Mr. Greely unfolded his new accusation. Master of himself as he was, the colour had fluctuated in Victor Gaston's cheeks. And Jimmy could not help remembering the strange incident often dwelt upon by Peele—how Victor Gaston had inexplicably got out of a room after Peele had locked the door on him on the outside.

The incident had never been explained. Only Peele explained it on the assumption that "Felix Lacroix" would know how to pick locks.

The silence in the Common-room was long, and it grew painful.

me. Let the Head be called, and let us go to my room, and Dr. Chisholm himself shall open the trunk."

Mr. Greely caught his breath.

There was a buzz in the passage. This acceptance of the Fifth Form master's challenge was more than sufficient to restore confidence, shaken for a moment.

"Bravo, Froggy!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Good old Mossou!" shouted Mornington.

"You—you mean this!" exclaimed Mr. Greely, obviously very much taken aback.

"Mais certainement, monsieur!" answered Victor Gaston, with a slight expression of scorn.

"I make it a stipulation that Monsieur Gaston does not enter his room until he is accompanied by the headmaster!" exclaimed Mr. Greely.

"C'est entendu—I agree!"  
"I think that will settle the matter, Mr. Greely," said Richard Dalton. "Remain here, if you wish, and keep Monsieur Gaston under your own observation; I will call the Head."

"Very good, sir!" said Mr. Greely pompously.

He sat down at the table.

Mr. Dalton left the Common-room, making his way through the buzzing crowd in the corridor, with a frowning face.

Round the Common-room door the crowd grew thicker and thicker. The excitement was intense.

"Greely looks a bit sick!" murmured Raby. "He didn't expect Froggy to take him on like that."

"Peele has been pulling his leg!" remarked Newcome.

Arthur Edward Lovell snorted. "He ought to have more sense than to believe Peele. Of course, it's all whoppers from beginning to end; but Greely would jump at anything to prove his silly fairy-tale about Froggy."

Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful. "It's queer," he said. "If there's nothing in it, Peele will get a Head's flogging, at least; he may be bunked from Rookwood. He must know that—he's no fool!"

"You don't believe there's anything in it, Jimmy?" exclaimed Putty of the Fourth.

Jimmy Silver shook his head decidedly.

"No, I can't! But it's queer that a cunning, sharp fellow like Peele should put his foot in it like this! That beats me!"

"It beats me, too," said Valentine Mornington. "He must have fancied he saw what he says, somehow. But it's queer."

"Hallo, here he is!"  
"Peele, you cad—"  
"Peele, you rotter—"  
"Peele, you Hun—"

Cyril Peele stared round him with a scowl of dogged defiance. The whole crowd of juniors were down on him now; but Cyril Peele was expecting his vindication to come. He knew what he had seen in the French master's room; others might doubt as long as they liked, but Peele of the Fourth had the evidence of his own eyes.

"Wait and see!" he sneered.

"You've told that footling ass Greely—"

"I've told Mr. Greely what I saw," said Peele coolly. "The man's a crackman, and he's got a crackman's outfit locked up in the trunk in his room. My belief is that he came here to rob the Head's safe—"

"You cheeky rotter!" roared Lovell.

"Bump him!"  
"Hands off!" yelled Peele, as the excited juniors closed round him. "I tell you, I— Yoop! Ah! Help! Yarooop!"

Bump, bump, bump!  
"Look out! Cave! The beak!" shouted Oswald along the passage.

Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, had turned the corner with Mr. Dalton. At the sight of the Head the juniors dropped Peele, and fairly bolted. They vanished in a tumultuous mob at the other end of the passage, leaving Cyril Peele sprawling on the floor and roaring.

"What is all this?" exclaimed the Head, in a deep voice.

Peele sat up.

"Ow! Groogh! Mooooooh!" he mumbled.

"Go!"  
Peele scrambled up, and went. Dr. Chisholm rustled into Masters' Common-room with Mr. Dalton at his side. His severe brow was knitted. All the masters rose respectfully as he entered.

"Sir—" began Mr. Greely.

(Continued overleaf.)

"The Price of the Past!" is the tiptop story of Jimmy Silver & Co. and the new French master of Rookwood School in our next issue!



door and quietly turned the key in the lock.  
Then he came back to the empty trunk, and stood looking into it, standing for several minutes motionless, with a dark and gloomy expression on his handsome face. Strange thoughts were working in his mind.  
He stirred at last and bent over the trunk.  
His hand groped over the bottom of the trunk and touched a hidden spring. A secret lid rose, revealing that the trunk had a false bottom, with a narrow cavity beneath. From that cavity the Frenchman drew a leather case. He closed the lid again.  
His brow grew darker than ever, he stood with the leather case in his hand, opening it, and staring gloomily at the array of bright steel implements it contained.  
He closed the case at last, and thrust it into an inner pocket under his coat.  
Then he quitted the room.  
The gloomy expression was gone from his face, his look was careless and debonaire as usual, as he strolled down the big staircase and out into the quadrangle.  
Richard Dalton was at his study window; but the Frenchman did not appear to observe him. He walked down to the gates. Apparently he did not want company in his walk.  
Darkness had fallen when the French master returned to Rookwood. And no one in the school was likely to guess that in deep dusk by the river he had plunged that tell-tale case of implements into deep water—to sink into thick mud at the bottom, and to remain for ever hidden. Whatever his motive, the link had been broken between Victor Gaston, French master, and Felix Lacroix, hunted by the French police.

**The 5th Chapter.  
A Dog With a Bad Name!**

Arthur Edward Lovell grinned as Peele of the Fourth came limping into the passage by the studies. Peele had come back from the Head's study—and he looked as if he had not enjoyed his interview with Dr. Chisholm. His face was pale, his lips twitching, his eyes burning. Bitterness and malice were "writ large" in his features.  
As a rule, fellows who had the ill-luck to hit up against a Head's flogging were sure of sympathy. But there was little or no sympathy for Peele in the looks of the fellows in the Fourth Form passage. Peele had asked for it—begged and prayed for it, as Morry put it—and now he had got it. Even had his allegations been true, still Peele did not deserve much sympathy. It was not for any bad qualities, but for his good qualities, that he disliked the French master. Certainly Peele would not have found fault with the worst of characters who had allowed him to slack and loaf through the French class with impunity.

There had been a great deal of slacking in the French "sets" in Monsieur Monceau's time. That was changed under Victor Gaston. He expected his pupils to work, and as schoolboys generally will when they have a master who takes his work earnestly. But incorrigible slackers like Peele felt a sense of personal injury at being expected to work. He had always slacked at French—he had often "ragged" the French master in class—and he was enraged to come across a French master who put a stop to slacking and who put down ragging with a steady hand.  
Peele's motives were well-known—and his untruthfulness was equally well-known. All the Fourth thought about his story was that it was a strangely "thin" story for a cunning fellow like Peele to put up. As Putty of the Fourth observed, a fellow of Peele's experience in lying ought to have been able to spin a better yarn than that.  
Peele glanced round him at the Classical juniors as he went to his study. His look was lowering and savage. Rawson was near his study door, and Peele shoved him roughly aside, out of the way.

Rawson turned on him angrily. Tom Rawson was a burly fellow, quite equal to handling two or three Peeles. (Possibly because he could have handled Cyril Peele so easily Rawson took that rude shove with patience. He stepped back, touched by Peele's white face.  
Peele went into his study and slammed the door. His studymate, Gower, was there.  
"Had it bad?" asked Gower, with a curious look at him.  
Peele nodded without speaking.  
"You were an awful ass, you

know," said Gower. "It was too thick, old chap! I'm as much up against Mossoo as you are, but—really—" Gower shook his head.  
"Altogether too thick!"  
Peele's eyes gleamed at him.  
"Does that mean you don't believe me?" he asked.  
"Believe you?" Gower stared.  
"You don't mean to say that your yarn about the new Froggy was true?"

"Every word of it!" hissed Peele.  
"Oh, can it!" said Gower. "The door's shut—nobody can hear you but me—so what's the good of keepin' that up?"  
Peele leaned heavily on the table. He did not feel inclined to sit down just then. The Head had not spared the rod.  
"It was true!" he said thickly.  
"Every word! I'd swear it anywhere! How he got out of it I don't know! But it was true! Why, I should have been sacked if the brute hadn't put in a word for me. Do you think I'd have risked the sack?"

"Well, you did!" said Gower.  
"And it was jolly decent of him to put in a word for you after what you'd said about him."  
Peele's thin lips writhed in a sneer.  
"Was it? Perhaps he's got a bit of a conscience. He knew that I'd told only the truth. And I dare say he didn't want me sacked, and my people kicking up a shindy about it. My father would have made a pretty

Silver, or Lovell, or Tommy Dodd, there would have been plenty of believers—strange as the story was. It was his own character he had to thank for the general disbelief. But then such a story could not have been told by a decent fellow, for a decent fellow would not have played the spy, and so could not have discovered what Peele had discovered.

Yet Peele knew that he had told the truth, and he puzzled and puzzled over the strange, utterly unlooked for outcome of the affair. What had become of the set of steel instruments which, with his own eyes, he had seen the Frenchman replace in the trunk before locking it? But, aching from the flogging, Peele was in no state to think out that problem, and he dismissed it from his tired mind at last.

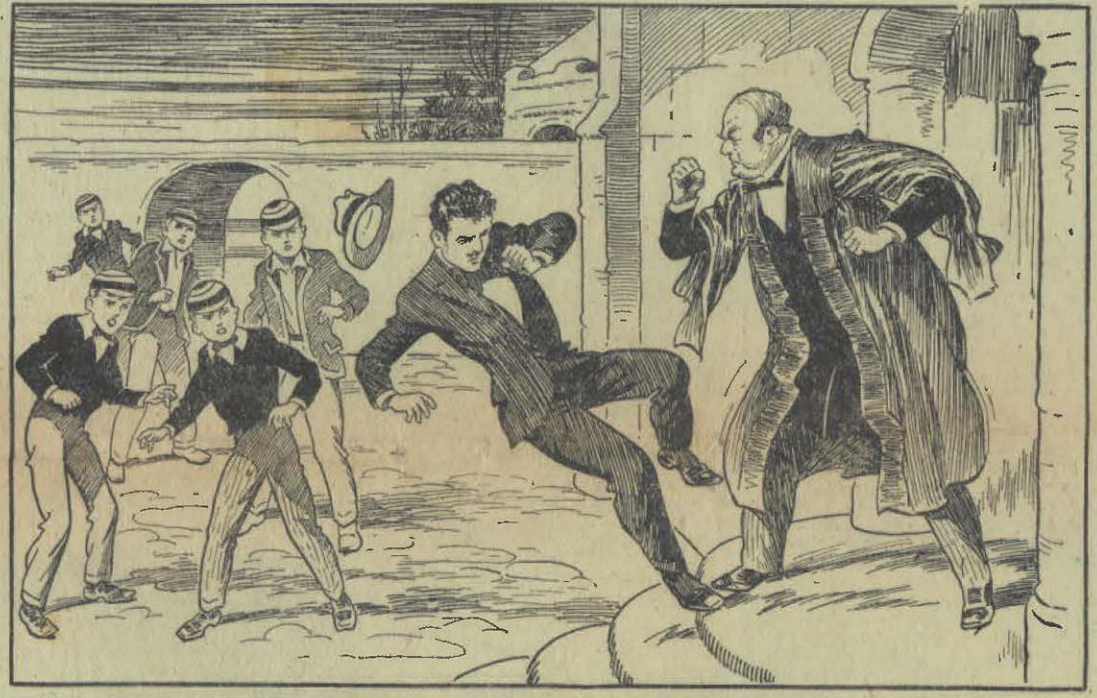
After prep that evening Peele came down to the junior room, and found most of the Fourth there. Curious glances were cast at him. Peele had almost recovered from his flogging by that time, though he was still a little pale. Jimmy Silver & Co. were talking cricket by the big window. The match with Greyfriars was coming along, and that was a matter of keen interest to the Fistical Four. They did not heed Peele till he came up to them.

"You fellows think I was tellin' lies about the new Froggy?" said Peele in a low voice.  
Snort, from Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Invisible tools!" grinned Lovell. "Has Froggy brought the jolly old cloak of darkness to Rookwood with him?"  
Jimmy Silver laughed.  
"I tell you I've thought it out!"  
Peele was almost feverishly earnest. "I know the tools were there. There must be some secret place in the trunk. It's a big, heavy trunk, and there's room for it. A false bottom to it, perhaps. I've heard of such things. That's the only explanation."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "I can think of an easier explanation than that. There never was anything of the kind, and you made it all up from start to finish, because you've got a down on Froggy. Isn't that nearer the mark?"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"I know I'm a dog with a bad name," said Peele bitterly. "But this is the truth."  
"You are—a jolly bad dog with a jolly bad name," said Arthur Edward Lovell emphatically, "and if you keep harping on this subject you'll get a jolly bad licking."  
"I tell you—"

"That will do!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver impatiently. "Stop it, Peele. Another word about Froggy, and we'll lay you over the table and give you six."  
Peele gave the Fistical Four a bitter look. But he did not speak another word. He turned, and walked sullenly out of the room. Jimmy Silver made a grimace.



**MASTERS AT LOGGERSHEADS!** Suddenly Mr. Greely raised his arm, and struck with all his force at the handsome face before him. "Mon Dieu!" Monsieur Gaston was taken quite by surprise. His arm flew up, and he partly warded the blow, but it took effect, and sent him crashing down the steps.

fuss, I can tell you—bearin' from me that I'd been booted out of Rookwood for calling a thief a thief. I can tell you, there'd have been such a fuss that Lacroix couldn't have stayed on here calling himself Gaston."  
Gower shook his head.  
"You can always argue, Peele," he said. "But there's nothing in it. Old Greely made a silly mistake—and you hooked on to it because you hate the new Froggy. That's all there is about it. What's the good of sayin' you saw him take burglars' tools from his trunk, when the Head and all the masters looked, and there was nothin' there?"  
"I know—I know—" breathed Peele.

"Accordin' to your own yarn, he put them back in the trunk and locked it, and never went to the room again till he went with the Head and the whole jolly procession. Yet the things weren't there! Dash it all, Peele, you ought to make up a better story than that."

Peele pressed his hands to his burning forehead. The mystery of it puzzled him, baffled him, bewildered him. Yet he knew what he had seen. "Cut it out!" was Gower's advice. "Don't say anythin' more about it, old bean. It was a misfire, and the sooner you drop it the better!"  
Peele scowled by way of answer, and Gower left the study. Gower did not believe a word of the story—which was natural enough, considering how it had been disproved, and considering his knowledge of Peele. Peele was left to his reflections, which were black enough. He knew that had the story been told by Jimmy

"We know you were, you mean!" he growled.  
"I give you my word that it was the truth!" said Peele.  
"And what's your word worth?" asked Raby, with a curl of the lip.  
"You gave your word that you knew nothing about Tubby Muffin's guinea when it was missing, didn't you? Your word's worth about as much as your bond, and that's worth nothing."

Peele's lip quivered. It was the best he could expect. He had lied too often for his most solemn asseverations to be received without doubt.  
"Cut it out, old bean," said Newcome. "Make up something better next time; or, better still, don't let there be a next time."  
"It was true!" muttered Peele.

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet.  
"That will do, Peele," he said. "You've slandered Froggy, and you're only here now because he begged you off from the Head. If you're not decent enough to hold your tongue after that, you'll be made to hold it. Even if what you said was true, you only show yourself up as a spy. And we all know it wasn't true—not a word of it!"  
"I tell you—"

"Cheese it! Another word about Mossoo, and you'll get a Form ragging."  
"Hear, hear!" said Arthur Edward Lovell.  
"Will you let me speak a word?" hissed Peele. "I've thought it out now. I know how Gaston pulled the wool over their eyes. I know the tools were in the trunk—they're there now."

"That chap gives me a bad taste in the mouth," he said. "Why can't he stop his rot? Now, about the Greyfriars match, you fellows?"  
And Jimmy Silver & Co. forgot Peele.

**The 6th Chapter.  
The Man who Repented.**

"Poor old Pompey!" murmured Hanson of the Fifth.  
Talboys and Lumsden grinned.  
Pompey, otherwise Mr. Horace Greely, the master of the Fifth Form, stood in the doorway, looking out into the dusky quadrangle, where the summer stars glimmered on the trees and walks, and a faint, red glow still lingered in the west. Mr. Greely's portly, majestic form occupied the doorway, his plump, purple face was dark with thought. That summer's evening Mr. Greely was not a happy man.

The three Fifth-Formers, strolling by, noticed him, and grinned. They did not feel or understand the tragedy of Horace Greely. They knew that he was to go. In a few weeks' time Rookwood would know Horace Greely no more. He was, in fact, simply staying till a new master was appointed to the Fifth. His resignation had been offered and accepted, in the French master's room that afternoon, after the strange scene there. And all the Fifth thought about it was, that the pompous ass had got it "in the neck," and they wondered what sort of a merchant would come along later to take his place.  
No one, probably, would have suspected that there was sentiment con-

cealed under the portly, purple exterior of Mr. Greely. But there was. Leaving Rookwood was a terrible blow to him. For long years he had been a master there, and with his powerful voice and portly personality had dominated the Common-room. Indeed, he could scarcely imagine Rookwood without Horace Greely, and he did not entertain the least doubt that his departure would be a severe loss to the school. Long years had he passed in the classic shades of Rookwood—many more years had he expected to pass there. His dismissal came as a shattering blow. And he was to go, leaving his rival firmly rooted there, a man he believed—a man he knew—to be a breaker of the laws—a man leading a double life!

Lost in painful thought, Mr. Greely stared out into the starry quadrangle with a lump in his throat. His colleagues would not be sorry that he was going—he knew that. Probably it would be a relief to some of them. In the incessant bickering of Masters' Common-room Mr. Greely had made himself more or less unpleasant to every member of the school staff at one time or another. Especially he had prided himself upon his gift for putting younger masters in their place. Now, somehow, Mr. Greely would have liked to think that somebody would miss him when he went.

An athletic, rather graceful figure came up the gravel path in the starlight. Mr. Greely knitted his brows at the sight of Victor Gaston. The French master was returning from his long ramble.

Victor Gaston came up the steps. Mr. Greely was in the middle of the big doorway, and he did not stir. He fixed his eyes upon the Frenchman.  
"Bon soir, monsieur!" said Victor Gaston politely.

To Mr. Greely's mind it seemed that the young man was mocking him. In the cool, smiling face he thought that he read an ironical triumph. It was too much. A surge of wrath came up in Mr. Greely's breast. For the moment he saw red. He forgot where he was. He forgot that he was a senior Form master, he forgot the dignity of his position, he forgot everything but his bitter detestation of this man, who had beaten him all along the line, and who was to be left in triumphant possession of the field of battle. He was to go, and this villain whom he had striven in vain to unmask—was to remain. And he was cool, smiling, ironical, at least, it seemed so to Mr. Greely's enraged eyes. The Fifth Form master raised his arm and struck with all his force at the handsome face before him.  
"Mon Dieu!"

The Frenchman was taken quite by surprise. His arm flew up, and he partly warded the blow, but it took effect, and sent him crashing down the steps.

There was a shout.  
"Greely's going it!" yelled Tubby Muffin along the passage. "He's knocked down Froggy!"

"My hat!"  
"Phew!"  
There was a rush to the spot. Seniors and juniors, prefects and fags, crowded up, amazed, in consternation.

At the bottom of the steps Victor Gaston sprawled, dazed and breathless. On the steps stood Horace Greely, panting, flaring with wrath. And from the starlight of the quad came the Head, returning to the House from the school library.  
Dr. Chisholm stopped dead. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

Victor Gaston struggled to his feet. There was a smear of red on his mouth, and his eyes were blazing.  
"A fight!" yelled Tubby Muffin. "Greely and Froggy! Ow! Ow! Leggo my ear!"  
"Silence!" said Mr. Dalton, compressing Tubby's ear for a moment, and then hurrying to the doorway.  
Mr. Greely stood panting. The Frenchman had his foot on the steps to mount, his hands clenched.  
"Gaston!" exclaimed Richard Dalton.

"Stop!" It was the Head's thunderous voice.  
Mr. Greely spun round towards the Head. At the sight of him all his wrath evaporated. He realised what he had done. The purple face of the Fifth Form master grew white.  
"Sir—" he stammered.  
"Control yourself, Monsieur Gaston," said the Head icily. "I have seen what occurred. This is no place for a display of fist cuffs, I command you to keep the peace."  
Victor Gaston breathed hard.  
"I am at your orders, sir," he said  
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