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-- TWO --
COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



FLOGGED BY THE FAGS! A BITTER AND PAINFUL EXPERIENCE FOR MORNINGTON OF THE FOURTH.
(A Lively Incident in the Long Complete School Tale inside)

BARRED BY THE FORM.

A Splendid Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of JIMMY SILVER & Co. and MORNINGTON at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Second Form are Wrathful!

"Go it, Jones!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, looked round with a grin. Jimmy was interested and entertained.

Under the leafless beeches in the quadrangle of Rookwood there was a meeting. It was a meeting of the Second Form. A dozen diminutive fags were there, all in a state of great excitement, and Jones of the Second was mounted upon a bench to address the meeting.

There were three brothers who bore the famous name of Jones at Rookwood. Jones major was a prefect in the Sixth Form; Jones minor was in the Fourth; Jones minimus was in the Second, and the great chief and leader of that important Form. Jones minimus was evidently on the war-path now.

Something had happened to disturb the serenity of the Second Form at Rookwood, and there was an indignation meeting in progress.

Jimmy Silver looked on with interest. But the fags did not heed the Fourth-Former; they did not even see him. All eyes were fixed upon Arthur Montgomery Jones, as he stood upon the old oak-bench under the beech, and raised a commanding if somewhat grubby hand.

"Gentlemen!" said Jones minimus.
 "Hear, hear!"
 "The Second Form are going to put their foot down!"
 "Bravo!"
 "We're not going to stand it!"
 "Never!"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome came out of the tuckshop, and joined Jimmy Silver.
 "Come on, Jimmy!" remarked Lovell.
 "What are you hanging about here for?"
 "There's something on," explained Jimmy.
 "Look at the fags!"

"Oh, blow the fags!"
 "They're always ragging about something," yawned Raby. "I suppose Carthew of the Sixth has been bullying some of them! Let's go and get the ball out, and punt it round before dinner!"

"No, listen! I fancy it's something about young 'Erbert. He's taking his place in the Second Form to-day, Mornington says."
 "I don't envy him," said Lovell. "The fags will make it warm for him!"
 "Sounds like it!" grinned Newcome. "Listen to them!"

Jones minimus was going great guns.
 "We're not going to stand it! I call it a rotten shame! Who is the rotter, anyway? Some young tramp that Mornington of the Fourth picked up on the road! Very likely a pickpocket! And they're going to shove him into our Form! It's time for us to put our foot down!"

"Hear, hear!"
 "He calls himself 'Erbert!'" resumed Jones minimus. "I dare say his name's Herbert. He's got no other name that anybody knows of!"

"Boooh!"
 "He's going to be called Murphy, because he was brought up, it seems, by some chap named Murphy. And that's the kind of awful outsider they're going to shove into the Second Form at Rookwood!"

"Shame!"
 "Chap who eats with his knife, and picks his teeth with a fork!" roared Jones minimus.
 "I put it to the meeting, is that the kind of chap to be put into a Form at Rookwood—especially ours?"
 "No fear!"
 "We're not going to stand it!" said Tracy minor.

Tracy of the Second had a brother in the Shell, who was a great nut and dandy, and Tracy, whose great ambition it was to follow in his major's footsteps, was very nutty for a Second-Form fag. All Tracy minor's aristocratic nerves were jarred by the mere idea of the little waif coming into his Form.
 "Never!" roared the fags.
 "Let's go to the Head!" proposed Fisher of the Second, greatly daring.
 "And get licked, fathead!"

"Well, something's got to be done," said Tracy minor. "I'm not going to stand it, for one! He makes me shudder, don't you know?"

"You leave it to me," said Jones minimus.
 "I've got an idea!"
 "Go it, Jonesey!"

"It's a matter for our Form-master to deal with," pursued Jones. "It's up to Mr. Wiggins to see that that awful outsider isn't planted on us! I propose putting it quite plainly to Mr. Wiggins, and asking him to speak to the Head about it!"
 "Good!"

"We'll pitch it straight to Wiggins! I shan't stand any nonsense from him!" said Jones minimus.

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned at one another. Jones minimus was very daring—in the absence of Mr. Wiggins; but the fags roared approval.

"We'll all go to Wiggins, and put it to him plain!" pursued Jones. "We'll tell him straight that we're not going to stand it, and he can put that in his pipe and smoke it!"
 "Bravo!"

"Look out! Cave!" muttered Tracy minor, as the portly form of Mr. Wiggins, the master of the Second, came in sight under the beeches.

But the Second-Form orator had his back to Mr. Wiggins, and he rattled on in stentorian tones:

"I shall say to Wiggins, quite plain: 'Look here, Wiggins—'"
 "Jones!"

The awful voice of Mr. Wiggins cut Jones minimus quite short. The orator spun round on the bench, and blinked at the Form-master. Mr. Wiggins' face was like a thunder-cloud. He had heard that disrespectful reference to himself. Anybody within fifty yards might have heard it.

The orator's jaw dropped.
 Now that the Second Form master was present was Jones' opportunity for putting it plain to him, as he had declared he would.

But somehow the frowning face of the portly Form-master seemed to have a paralyzing effect upon Jones minimus.

He blinked at Mr. Wiggins as he might have blinked at the terrible head of Medusa, if it had suddenly appeared before him.

Deep silence fell upon the indignation meeting. Tracy minor sidled away and disappeared.

But the unfortunate orator could not disappear.

"Jones!" repeated Mr. Wiggins, in thunderous tones.

"Ye-es, sir!" gasped Jones.
 "You were referring to me!"
 "Oh!"
 "You were referring to your Form-master disrespectfully, Jones!"

"I—"

"How dare you hold such a noisy and tumultuous meeting in the quadrangle! Every boy present will take fifty lites!"

"Oh!"
 "You, Jones, will follow me to my study! I shall come you!"
 "Ow!"

"Disperse at once!" said Mr. Wiggins.
 "Follow me, Jones!"

Mr. Wiggins stalked away majestically towards the School House. The unhappy Jones followed in his wake, looking like anything but a bold rebel, and the meeting broke up.

"Looks like a frost!" grinned Lovell, whilst his comrades chuckled. "Poor old Jones hasn't put it straight to Wiggins, after all! He hasn't said, 'Look here, Wiggins—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 The Fistical Four of the Fourth proceeded to punt a footer about to get an appetite for dinner, what time Jones minimus of the Second Form was squeezing his hands, twisting himself into weird shapes, groaning, and mumbling, and uttering fierce threats concerning 'Erbert of the Second, to whom he rather unreasonably attributed the licking he had just received.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

'Erbert of the Second!

"HALLO, 'Erbert!"
 Jimmy Silver looked for the waif of Rookwood after dinner, and found him in the quadrangle.

'Erbert was looking very bright and cheery. Jimmy regarded him rather curiously. He felt very friendly towards the little waif. 'Erbert, with all his shortcomings, had a heart of gold, and Jimmy Silver recognised that fact.

Jimmy Silver had his faults, but anything like snobbishness was not one of them. The fact that 'Erbert was an unknown waif, who did not even know his own name, did not matter in the slightest degree to Jimmy Silver, though it appeared to get on the aristocratic nerves of Tracy minor and his friends.

It was Mornington of the Fourth who had found poor 'Erbert furnished by the roadside—who had brought him home in his big motor-car and cared for him.

Mornington, the slacker, waster, dandy, and worse, evidently had his good points, and Jimmy Silver & Co. thought all the better of him for his kind action.

Morny's friends, the Nuts, were down on him for it—as down as they could venture to be, for they did not want to quarrel with the wealthy Mornington.

How on earth Morny had persuaded the Head to allow the little vagrant to be entered at Rookwood as a new boy was a mystery the Nuts could not solve. Smythe and Tracy and Howard, Townsend and Topham and Peels discussed the mystery without finding a solution.

It did not occur to them that the Head was a kind-hearted gentleman, who realised that it was his duty to assist Mornington in

helping the little waif. Morny's action was decidedly unusual—it was astounding, in fact—but it had given Dr. Chisholm a much better opinion of him.

Morny's guardian, who was always indulgent to his ward, had acceded to his request to arrange for the payment of 'Erbert's fees, and Morny had fitted him out to take his place at Rookwood regardless of expense. Morny had more money than he knew what to do with, and it made him purse-proud and arrogant; but certainly on this occasion he was spending his superabundant cash to good purpose.

Little 'Erbert was dressed better than any other fag in the Second Form—he had a larger allowance than most—and certainly he looked a very creditable member of the Form.

During the weeks he had been sheltered at Rookwood he had been kept under keen observation, and the Head had decided that he was an excellent little fellow, who fully deserved the chance Mornington wanted to give him.

And, although his education had certainly been neglected, he had picked up knowledge at a great rate, and was fitted by this time to enter a fag Form. Mr. Wiggins, at the request of the Head, was to give him special care. He had had 'Erbert under special tuition for some time, and was satisfied with his progress.

'Erbert looked quite at ease in his elegant Etons, and he grinned up cheerfully at Jimmy Silver as the captain of the Fourth addressed him.

"Allo!" he responded.
"So you're going into the Second Form to-day?" said Jimmy Silver.

'Erbert nodded.
"Yes, sir. I begin this afternoon."
"Don't say 'sir' to another fellow, kid," said Jimmy kindly. "My name's Silver."

"Yes, Silver," grinned 'Erbert.
"Have you met any of the Second yet?"
'Erbert's cheery face clouded a little.
"Yes, I seen some of 'em," he said. "They don't seem to like me being a Rookwood bloke, some'ow. Master Tracy told me I made him sick."

"Tracy minor's a little beast!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Don't mind what the fags say, 'Erbert, and don't get your back up if you're chipped a bit at first. They'll let you alone in time. Stick it out, you know!"
"Wot!" said 'Erbert.

"And remember you've got friends at Rookwood, if not in the Second," said Jimmy. "But you'll make friends there in time."
"I 'ope so," said 'Erbert, rather doubtfully. "But they're down on me, some'ow; but I'm goin' to stick it out. Master Mornington's told me to."

Jimmy nodded, and sauntered on. It was a puzzle to him that the cad of the Fourth had taken 'Erbert up in this way. As for 'Erbert, he regarded Mornington as a god-like youth, whose slightest behest was to be obeyed without question.

"That kid's got a hard row to hoe at this school," Jimmy Silver remarked to his chums. "But I think he'll pull through; he's got lots of pluck. And the end study is going to keep a fatherly eye on him—what!"

"Any old thing!" yawned Lovell. "I suppose that means that you're going to get us mixed up in no end of fag rows?—What a life!"

To which Jimmy replied politely:
"Rats!"

A little later, when the bell rang, 'Erbert joined the stream of fellows heading for the School House. Mornington stopped him in the passage. The dandy of the Fourth gave him an approving look.

"By gad, you pay for dressin', kid!" he remarked. "You'll do!"

"Might take me for a reg'lar Rookwood bloke, mightn't yer?" said 'Erbert, with some pride.

Mornington grinned.
"Rookwood chap," he said—"not 'bloke'! We're not blokes here, you know."

"I keep on forgettin'," said 'Erbert apologetically. "I tries to remember hevery thing you says to me, Master Mornington."

"There's the rotten cad!" remarked Tracy minor. And there was a jeering chortle from a crowd of the Second.

'Erbert coloured, and Mornington looked round with gleaming eyes.

"You confounded young cads!" exclaimed Mornington. "Look here, if you give Murphy any of your rot, you'll have to deal with me! Understand that!"

There was a howl from the fags at once. The bare idea of a Fourth-Former inter-

fering with the affairs of the Second was enough to put up every Second Form back on the spot. The arrogant Morny was not exactly the person to make matters pleasant for his protege in his new surroundings.

"You mind your own business, you Fourth-Form cad!" shouted Jones minimus.

"Kick him out!" roared Fisher.
Mornington clenched his fists, but the fags were not afraid of his fists. They closed round him. Fortunately, Mr. Wiggins came along the passage just then.

"Come! What is this?" snapped the Form-master. "Go into the Form-room at once!"

The fags marched in, 'Erbert following them. Mornington made his way to the Fourth Form room, still looking angry. He might have expected something of the sort from the Rookwood fags; but any disputing of his lofty will and pleasure was enough to make Mornington angry.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
A Form Ragging!

'ERBERT took the place indicated to him by Mr. Wiggins in the Second Form room. Tracy minor was on the same form, and he ostentatiously squeezed as far away as he could from the newcomer, as if in fear of contamination. The little waif's face flushed as he noted it.

'Erbert was sensitive—a good deal more sensitive than Tracy minor, as a matter of fact.

He realised that he was not booked for a pleasant time in the Second Form. But for the fact that Mornington wished it, 'Erbert would not have chosen to enter Rookwood as a new boy. But Mornington's will was law, and 'Erbert was prepared to "stick it out," whether the fags liked it or not.

'Erbert was so new and strange to the Rookwood fags that it was not surprising that there was some prejudice.

He was, in fact, somewhat in the position of a strange dog in a kennel, and the mere strangeness was a sufficient cause for enmity and contempt.

Some of the Second ostentatiously ignored him; some watched him in the malicious expectation of seeing him make egregious "bloomers" in the Form work.

But that expectation, at least, was disappointed.

Certainly 'Erbert's choice of diction was entertaining, and the way he dropped his aspirates made even the solemn Mr. Wiggins smile sometimes.

But 'Erbert was quick and intelligent, and he had made the best use of a few weeks of careful tuition.

To the surprise—and, in fact, the mortification—of the fags, he made few mistakes, and was commended more than once by Mr. Wiggins.

Tracy minor whispered to Snooks that the grubby little beast was a "swot"—which was another count in the indictment against 'Erbert. In fact, it was a case of the wolf and the lamb over again. If 'Erbert had shown ignorance he would have been despised for it; if he showed knowledge and aptitude he was a "swot."

'Erbert was safe, however, for his Form-master's good graces, whatever the rest of the Second thought of him.

Even his dropped "h's" and peculiar diction did not worry Mr. Wiggins so much as Tracy minor's slackness and Jones minimus' slowness.

'Erbert got through the Form-work much more creditably than he had expected, and he was feeling quite cheerful again when the time came to dismiss.

After pronouncing the word "Dismiss!" Mr. Wiggins left the Form-room immediately, leaving the Form to their own devices.

Jones & Co.'s devices were already planned. 'Erbert was heading for the door, when Jones minimus stepped to it and slammed it, and put his back to it.

'Erbert stopped.
"I want to go hout," he said mildly.
"Oh, you want to go hout, do you?" said Jones minimus, with heavy sarcasm. "You don't want to stay hin!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Second.
'Erbert crimsoned.

"I don't see that you've got any call to 'owl at a bloke," he remarked.
"Hark at him!" said Snooks.

"What language!" said Tracy minor, with a shudder.
"What a rotten outsider!" said Fisher.

"What a beastly wone!"
"And that!" said Jones minimus, pointing

the finger of scorn at the waif of Rookwood. "That's in the Second!"

"Shame!"
"What are workhouses for?" demanded Tracy minor indignantly.

"'Ow would you like to go to the workus?" asked 'Erbert.

Tracy minor made a gesture of disdain.
"Master Mornington brought me 'ere," said 'Erbert. "I ain't done nobody no 'arm. I don't see wot you've got your rag out for."

"Horrid little beast!"
"Look here," said Jones minimus, "we've got something to say to you, Murphy, if your name's Murphy. We don't want you in our Form."

"You got to lump it, then," said 'Erbert sturdily. "I'm 'ere."

"You've got to clear out. You're a disgrace to Rookwood, and you know it. You're not our sort," said Snooks.

"No, I ain't," assented 'Erbert. "I wouldn't be down on a cove wot 'adn't done nothing."

"Oh, what language!" shuddered Tracy minor.
"And look 'ere, I want to get hout!"

"You're not going hout just yet," grinned Jones minimus. "You're a goin' to stay 'ere till we've done with yer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"We want you to clear out of our Form," said Jones. "I dare say you can't help being a grubby little beast!"

"I ain't so grubby as wot you are, and chance it!" said 'Erbert.

Some of the fags chuckled at this retort, which certainly was well-founded. Jones minimus glared round.

"If you're going to chortle at this rotter's cheek—" he began furiously,
"Your 'ands could do with a wash, any-way," went on 'Erbert.

"Shut up, you cheeky little beast!" roared the incensed Jones. "Don't talk to me!"
"Well, you're a talking to me, ain't you?"

"I put it to you," said Jones. "We want you to leave us alone. You're a disgrace to the Form, and the other fellows will chip us no end about having a workhouse rotter in the Second. Tell the Head you don't want to stay, and he'll let you go, and be glad of it. That's what we want."

"You ain't going to get it, then!"
"You won't?"
"No bloomin' fear!"

"Then we'll jolly well make the Second Form too hot to hold you!" declared Jones minimus. "Collar him, and we'll give him a Form ragging to start with!"

"Bravo!"
"Collar the cad!"
'Erbert put up his hands defensively.

"You leave me alone!" he exclaimed, in alarm. "Mind, I shall 'it out if you touch me!"

"Collar him!"
The crowd of fags rushed upon 'Erbert from all sides.

The new junior kept his word. He hit out, and Tracy minor retired from the scene holding his nose, and spluttering, and Snooks was stretched on the Form-room floor. But 'Erbert had no time for more.

Many hands closed upon him, on all sides, and he was pincioned.

He still struggled in the grasp of the fags, but his resistance was unavailing.

"Now give him the frog's march!" shouted Jones minimus.

"Hurrah!"
"Elp!" yelled 'Erbert.
"Bring him along!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The new fag went round the Form-room in the frog's-march. Round and round he went, bumping on the floor. His collar and his tie were torn out in the struggle, his new jacket split up the back, and most of the buttons flew off his waistcoat.

The fags halted at last, with the breathless and dishevelled 'Erbert still clinging in their grasp.

"Now are you going to clear out!" roared Jones.

"No, I ain't!" gasped 'Erbert.
"Blessed obstinate little beast!" ejaculated Tracy minor, rubbing his nose. "Give him some more."

'Erbert sprang to his feet, and made a wild rush for the door. He felt that he could not stand any more ragging just then.

"Stop him!" roared Jones.
Three or four hands clutched at 'Erbert, but he tore on, and dragged the door open.

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With the whole crowd whooping at his heels, he ran.
He headed for the Fourth Form passage, whither he knew the fags would not venture to follow. And Jones & Co., catching sight of a prefect in the passage, crowded back into the Form-room.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mornny Takes a Hand!

"**M**Y hat! What's the matter?" Jimmy Silver stared at the dusty, dishevelled figure that came tearing into the Fourth Form passage.

"Erbert reeled against the wall, panting. 'They're arter me.'"

Jimmy glanced down the stairs. "There's nobody after you, kid," he said kindly. "What on earth's happened to you?"

Mornnington came along the passage from Townsend's study, and he stopped at the sight of 'Erbert, frowning darkly.

"What's happened to you?" he exclaimed. "I—I been in a row," gasped 'Erbert.

"It wasn't my fault, Master Mornnington, it wasn't really. They set on me."

Jimmy Silver whistled. "The Second?" he asked.

"Yes," panted 'Erbert.

"Better come to the dorm and get yourself tidy," said Jimmy.

"They set on you, did they?" said Mornnington, his eyes gleaming.

"Yes, arter Mr. Wiggins' ad gone out. They don't like me in the Second Form, some'ow," said 'Erbert dolorously.

"They'll get used to you in time," said Jimmy Silver encouragingly. "Keep smiling, you know!"

"I ain't complaining, sir," said 'Erbert bravely. "I come 'ere to get away from 'em, that's all. I—I don't mind."

"I'm goin' to see to this," said Mornnington. "I'll make the young rascals sorry for it!"

Jimmy Silver gave him a quick look. "You're going to chip in, Mornnington?" he asked.

"Yes, by gad!"

"It's rather rotten of them," remarked Jimmy. "but it won't do 'Erbert much good for an upper Form fellow to take his part in fag rows. It will put their backs up, and make them more down on him, don't you think?"

"When I want your advice I'll ask for it, Jimmy Silver," said Mornnington coolly.

He walked away, leaving Jimmy with his lips set. He was very near at that moment to taking the dandy of the Fourth by the neck, and "mopping" up his passage with him. But he refrained.

Jimmy's advice was good; interference from Mornnington was about the worst thing that could happen for 'Erbert. The bare idea of being the fags join together as one man, and fellows who were not "down" on 'Erbert already would join in against him, if only to show that the Second did not mean to be detested.

But considerations of that sort were lost upon Mornnington.

His lofty will and pleasure had been disregarded and disputed, and he was going to make the weight of his anger felt by the delinquents; that was his idea.

He strode into Townsend's study with a frowning brow. Towny and Topham, Gower and Peele were there.

"Got the smokes?" asked Townsend.

"Hang the smokes. There's somethin' else on," said Mornnington savagely. "I want you fellows to back me up!"

"Anythin' you like, dear boy," said Topham.

"Row with Jimmy Silver?" asked Gower uneasily. "Look here, Mornny, it's no good gettin' into a rag with those rotters."

"It isn't that. I want you to come to the Second Form-room with me."

"The Second Form? What on earth for?"

"I'm goin' to make the little beasts sit up! They've been raggin' the new kid, an' I'm not goin' to allow it."

The Nuts of the Fourth stared at Mornnington. As a matter of fact, they were in full agreement with the Second-Formers on the subject of 'Erbert. But if they had sympathised with the little wail to any extent, they would not have been likely to go on the warpath with a fag Form.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Topham. "You ass, Mornny!"

"Catch me raggin' with fags!" said Townsend. **THE POPULAR.—No. 106.**

end disdainfully. "Ask Jimmy Silver, if you like; it's more in his line."

"Leave me out," grinned Peele. Mornnington frowned.

"Then you won't back me up, you funks?" he exclaimed. "No fear!"

"Let the little cad take his chance!" said Townsend. "I wouldn't stand him in the Fourth, I know that. You'd no right to plant the little beast on Rookwood, Mornny, an' you know it!"

"Blest if I know what the Head was about to let you!" said Peele. "I've thought of writin' to my people about it."

Mornnington turned his back on the Nuts, and strode out of the study. He left Townsend & Co. grinning.

"So the little bounder's got the chopper," chuckled Townsend. "Serve him right! I hope the fags will make him sick of Rookwood. I asked Tracy of the Shell to speak to his minor about it, an' get him to rag the little beast. No good tellin' Mornny that."

And the Nuts chuckled in chorus.

Mornnington strode down the passage with a lowering brow. He did not feel inclined to ask the end study for help in the matter, as Townsend had suggested. But though he was left alone to carry out his project, he did not falter. Along with obstinacy and wilfulness, Mornnington had unbanded pluck.

He stepped into his study, and took a dog-whip, and descended the stairs. Smythe of the Shell met him in the hall.

"Comin' up to the study, Mornny?" he asked. "No!" snapped Mornnington. And he strode on.

Adolphus Smythe elevated his eyebrows, and looked at Howard and Tracy, his pals.

"Lovely manners, what?" he yawned. "Do you know, I'm gettin' rather fed-up with Mornny!"

Mornnington, quite reckless as to whether the great Adolphus was fed-up with him or not, strode on to the Second Form room.

There was a sound of laughter and loud voices in that apartment, as the dandy of the Fourth threw open the door.

Jones minimus & Co. were chortling over the way they had handled the rank outsider. They flattered themselves that, with a little more of it to follow, 'Erbert would get tired of Rookwood, and take his departure—a consummation devoutly to be wished, in the eyes of Jones & Co.

"Hallo, Fourth-Form cad!" sang out Fisher, as Mornnington came in.

All eyes were fixed on Mornnington.

The savage gleam in his eyes and the dog-whip in his hand warned the fags of his warlike intentions at once. Though they were in a quite different Form, they had had some experience of Mornnington's insolence; but this, as Jones remarked afterwards, was the limit.

"What do you think you're going to do with that?" asked Jones minimus, pointing to the dog-whip, his eyes blazing.

"I'm going to thrash you, you young cad!" said Mornnington, between his teeth. "You've been raggin' my young friend, Murphy!"

"We'll rag him again, too!"

"I want to know which of you did it."

"All of us," said Fisher; "and we'll rag you, too, if we have any of your cheek, you Fourth Form cad!"

"I suppose you were the ringleader, Jones?"

"Right on the vicket," said Jones coolly.

"Then take that!"

Mornnington rushed at Jones minimus, and grasped him by the collar. The dog-whip sang and lashed round Jones with terrific vim.

"Yaroo!" howled Jones. "Yow-ow! Rescue, you chaps! Pile on him!"

The Second-Formers did not need bidding; they were already swarming round Mornnington.

"Stand back!" roared Mornnington furiously, and he lashed out fiercely on all sides with the dog-whip.

"Collar him!"

"Down him!"

"Scrag him!"

Mornnington was dragged down by a dozen pairs of hands, and the angry fags fairly swarmed over him. The whip was snatched away, and Mornnington struggled in vain under his swarm of assailants. He had woke up a hornet's nest, with a vengeance.

"Turn him over!" roared Jones minimus. "I'll give him some of his own medicine!"

"Let me go!" shrieked Mornnington.

"Hold him!"

Mornnington, in spite of his struggles, was

pinned down, with his aristocratic nose grinding on the Form-room floor. Three or four fags sat on his head and shoulders; three or four more trampled on his legs. That left him in a very favourable position for a flogging, and Jones swung up the whip.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need!

SWISH!
"Gurrriiiiii!"
"Swish! Swish! Swish!"

Jones was in dead earnest. He had received four or five cuts, and he intended to repay them with interest.

He laid on the lashes with all his force. Mornnington struggled furiously under the fags, yelling with pain. His yells came out muffled and choked from under the swarming fags.

"Gurr! Oh! Ah! Grooogh! Ow!"

"Go it, Jones!"

"Lay it on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

Mornnington had been flogged by the Head in his time. But a flogging by the Head was hardly so severe as this. Jones minimus seemed to be under the impression that he was beating a carpet, and that Mornnington of the Fourth was the carpet.

He laid on the lashes with all the force of his arm, till his arm ached, and he was breathless.

Mornnington wriggled spasmodically as he took the punishment. His yells rang through the Form-room.

The door had been left open, and the noise travelled a good distance. Bulkeley of the Sixth looked into the room, as Jones paused to take breath.

"What's this thumping row about?" roared Bulkeley.

"Yaroo! Grooh! Help!"

Jones minimus looked round defiantly.

"It's nothing to do with you, Bulkeley."

"What!"

"We're ragging a Fourth Form cad, that's all."

The captain of Rookwood strode into the room. He took Jones minimus by the ear, and there was a wail of anguish from Arthur Montgomery Jones.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo, Bulkeley!"

"Give me that whip!"

Jones minimus handed it over, and rubbed his ear ruefully.

"Let that fellow get up at once!" said Bulkeley, frowning.

The fags obeyed. Bulkeley, the head of the Sixth, was not to be argued with. Mornnington staggered to his feet, breathless, crimson, and gasping.

"So it's you, Mornnington," said Bulkeley grimly. "What were you doing here?"

Mornnington panted.

"He brought that whip here!" howled Snooks. "He was going for Jones with that whip, Bulkeley!"

"Is that correct, Mornnington?"

"Yes, it is!" panted Mornnington. "I came here to thrash the young scoundrel!"

"Then you seem to have got what you asked for," said Bulkeley drily. "You can't take the law into your own hands like that."

"I shall do as I like!"

"Will you?" said Bulkeley. "Well, you'd better like to take two hundred lines for your cheek. I shall expect them after tea."

"Look here—"

Mornnington was interrupted. 'Erbert came dashing into the Form-room. He had heard the disturbance from afar, and learned what was toward, and had come valiantly to the aid of his patron.

"You rotten bloomin' monkeys!" yelled 'Erbert. "If you're a touchin' Master Mornnington—"

"Come here, Murphy!"

"Oh, I didn't see you, Master Bulkeley!" stammered 'Erbert.

"Come here!" said Bulkeley, frowning. And the wail of Rookwood approached.

"How come you in that state?"

"I—I—"

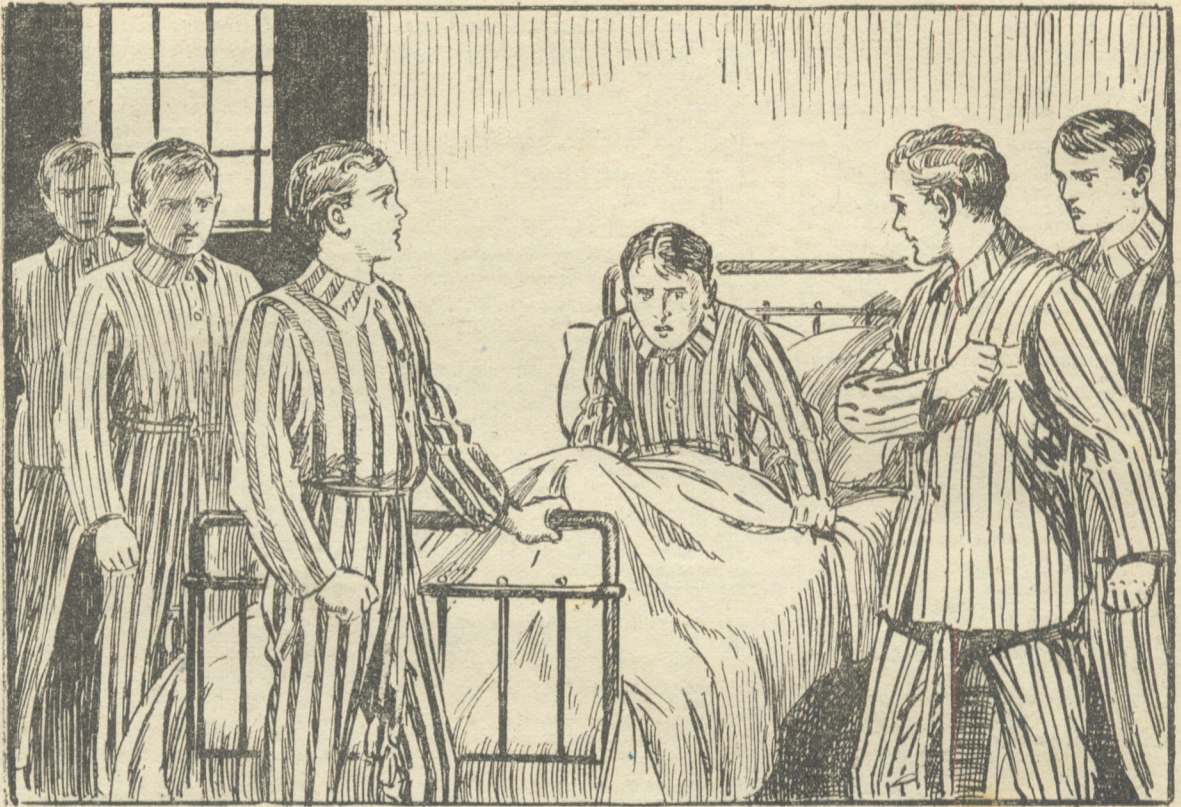
"I suppose there has been ragging here—is that it?" demanded Bulkeley, with an angry glance at the fags.

There was a grim silence. 'Erbert did not speak. He had been hardly used, but he was not inclined to complain to a prefect.

"Jones, answer me at once!"

Jones minimus looked sullen. "We ragged the young rotter!" he said.

"And why?"



"Let that rotter alone," said Jones, sitting up in bed. "We said we'd give him fair play, and he's going to have it. You've licked me, you cad, fair and square. Let him alone, you fellows! He's going to be sent to Coventry."
(See chapter 7.)

"We don't want that sort in our Form!"
"You cheeky little rascal!" said Bulkeley.
"The Head's decided that. Are you going to set yourself up against the Head?"
"We don't want low ruffians here!" said Tracy minor.

"Is that why you came here with this whip, Mornington?"

"Yes!" growled Mornington.

"Well, you shouldn't have done anything of the kind! You can get out of this room, and don't come here again!" said Bulkeley.
"I'll take this matter in hand myself. This kid has been ragged, it seems, by all of you here."

"Yes, he has!" growled Fisher.

"What has he done?"

"He's a rotten outsider!"

"He's a low bound!" said Tracy minor.

"Disgusting!"

Bulkeley's lips set.

"Now, listen to me!" he said. "The Head's put Murphy in this Form, and he's got to be treated decently. I shall report this matter to Mr. Wiggins, and you can be sure that he will come you all round!"

"Oh!"

"And after this I shall keep a very special eye on you!" continued the captain of Rookwood. "Let me hear the merest whisper of a ragging, and you'll be sorry for it! Mind, I mean what I say!"

And Bulkeley strode out of the Form-room, taking the whip with him. Mornington had already gone.

Erbert was left alone with the fags.

They eyed him almost wolfishly, but not a hand was raised to touch him. Bulkeley's authority was not to be lightly disregarded. After that warning from the head-prefect of Rookwood, even the truculent Jones was not inclined to begin another ragging.

Erbert left the Form-room, and went up with a heavy heart to the dormitory to put himself to rights. Ten minutes later Jones & Co. were called into their Form-master's study, where Bulkeley had made his report. Mr. Wiggins gave them a severe lecture and a caning all round, which did not improve the feelings of the Second Form towards Erbert.

The wail of Rookwood came down from the

dormitory, and, after some hesitation, looked in at Mornington's study. He was greatly concerned for his benefactor. He found the dandy of the Fourth alone, arranging his tie before a glass. Mornington looked round impatiently.

"I 'ope you wasn't 'urt, sir?" faltered 'Erbert.

"Of course I was hurt!" said Mornington irritably. "I'll make those little rascals sit up for it, though, somehow! What do you want?"

"N-u-nothing" stammered 'Erbert.

"Then cut along!"

Erbert withdrew from the study, his lips trembling a little. Mornington was in a savage temper, and in no mood to be bothered by his unfortunate protegee. 'Erbert stopped in the window-recess at the end of the passage, his heart heavy, and dangerously near "blubbing."

"I wish I 'adn't come 'ere!" he muttered desolately. "I ain't their sort, and I sha'n't never 'ave any friends, exceptin' Master Mornington! I—I wish he 'ad let me alone where I was, I do!"

"Hallo, kid!" came a cheery voice. Jimmy Silver came upstairs with a parcel under his arm—good things for tea in the end study.

"Feeling fit again—what?"

"Ye-e-es!" stammered 'Erbert.

"Had your tea?"

"Nuuno!"

"Fags generally have tea in Hall," remarked Jimmy. "If you're not keen on tea in Hall, young 'un, come along with me."

'Erbert was not keen on tea in Hall, where he would have to sit at the table with Jones minimus & Co.

His face brightened up.

"Come on, kid!" said Jimmy kindly.

And he marched the new fag off to the end study.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome stared a little as Jimmy came in with 'Erbert of the Second, and then they grinned. But the end study was famous for its hospitality, and Jimmy Silver's chums exerted themselves to keep up its reputation. And, under their combined efforts, 'Erbert forgot his troubles, and began to feel that life at Rookwood was worth living after all.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Outcast!

ERBERT joined the Second Form again for evening preparation in the Form-room, which was taken under the eye of Mr. Wiggins. He received many truculent glares from Jones minimus and his friends.

It was possible that if 'Erbert had been left alone to "shake down" in the Form, the fags would have ceased to bother him in a short time, though he would always have had petty persecution to expect from snobbish fellows like Tracy minor.

But Mornington's intervention had a result which the arrogant dandy of the Fourth might have expected if he had been a little less headstrong and high-handed.

Mornington had come to their Form-room with a dogwhip to chastise the fags who had offended his lofty will, and the bare idea of that made the Second Form furious. 'Erbert was booked for continual trouble now, if only to "show" Mornington, as Jones & Co. expressed it.

During prep an ink-ball landed in 'Erbert's neck, and he found his inkpot full of gum, and the leaves of his school-books gummed together. Bulkeley's warning had stopped ragging, but there were other ways of "getting at" the obnoxious newcomer.

Mr. Wiggins left the Form-room when preparation was over, and 'Erbert rather anticipated a renewal of hostilities. But the thought of Bulkeley coming in with a cane prevented that.

Jones minimus threw open the door.

"Get out, you cad!" he said briefly. "We don't want you here!"

"I'll stay as long as I like!" said 'Erbert defiantly.

But he left the Form-room.

The fags were gathering round the fire to cook one of the weird and fearsome suppers in which the Second Form indulged, and 'Erbert would gladly have joined them. But there was no place for him there—nothing but contemptuous and hostile glances. He did not want to stay where he was not wanted.

He wandered out of the Form-room into the wide old passages.

He was staring out of the window into the shadowy quadrangle, when he felt a touch on the shoulder. He looked round cheerlessly, and found two juniors of the Fourth smiling at him. They were Van Ryan and Pons, the two Colonial chums.

"I've been looking for you," said Van Ryn cheerily.

"Lookin' for me?" muttered 'Erbert, wondering that anybody at Rookwood should take the trouble to look for him.

"Yes; come on!"

"It's a baked chestnut party in the study," explained Pons.

'Erbert grinned, and followed the two Colonials up to Study No. 3. The Fistical Four were there, and Rawson and Fisher and Jones minimus of the Second. Fisher and Jones were looking very pleased with themselves. They were not often asked into a Fourth-Form study.

But at sight of 'Erbert their pleased looks vanished.

They exchanged a quick glance, and rose to their feet.

"Here we are," said Van Ryn cheerily. "Trot out the chestnuts!"

"Hallo, not going, young Jones!" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes; I'm going," said Jones minimus sarcastically. "So's Fisher. Come on, fishy!"

"But you haven't had any chestnuts!" said Rawson.

"Thanks; I don't want any!"

And Jones minimus and Fisher left the study with their noses high in the air.

They understood now why the god-natured South African had asked them there; and they intended Van Ryn to see very plainly that they weren't taking any.

'Erbert's face was crimson. He understood, too.

"Sit down, kid," said Jimmy Silver, pulling 'Erbert into a chair.

And, in spite of the lofty departure of Fisher and Jones minimus, 'Erbert spent a very pleasant half-hour before bedtime.

Jimmy Silver gave him a word of advice, when he had to go to the dormitory at nine o'clock.

"If there's any trouble, kid, pick out the biggest chap, and fight him," he said. "The fags will give you fair play. And hit your hardest!"

'Erbert grinned and nodded, and went up to the Second-Form dormitory.

Black looks from the Second greeted him. Jones minimus had detailed to his comrades how a cheeky, meddling Fourth-Former had asked him to a chestnut supper, to make him civil to the rotten outsider. Jones had magnificently declined to be corrupted by baked chestnuts. And the fact that 'Erbert was making friends outside his own Form was against him in the eyes of the fags.

Neville of the Sixth saw lights out for the Second, and he gave the fags a word of warning.

"Any ragging here, and I shall come back with a cane," he said. And he departed.

'Erbert lay quietly in bed, wondering whether there would be trouble now that he was at the mercy of the incensed fags.

Jones minimus sat up in bed. Jones & Co. had been laying their plans for the night.

"You awake, you measly worm?" asked Jones politely.

'Erbert did not reply.

"Don't you hear me, Murphy?" howled Jones.

"I 'ear you," said 'Erbert.

"Then why don't you answer?"

"I thought p'raps you was speakin' to Master Tracy, from what you said," retorted 'Erbert.

There was a chuckle from some of the beds, and a snort of indignation from Master Tracy's.

"Well, get up, you worm!" said Jones. "Bulkeley's down on us for ragging you. Just like you to sneak behind a prefect!"

"I never asked him to interfere."

"Oh, dry up! We're not going to rag you! But I'm going to take you on, and give you a thumping good licking," said Jones darkly.

"That's what you want, and that's what you're going to get. See?"

"I see," said 'Erbert, not appearing much alarmed. As a matter of fact, 'Erbert had

roughed it during his short career to such an extent that he had learned to take care of himself remarkably well, and his private opinion of the Second-Formers was that they were a "soft" lot, and that he could make rings round any of them.

"Better wait a bit to give Neville time to get clear," said Snooks.

"Oh, that's all right; there's a meeting of the footer committee in Bulkeley's study, and Neville won't come back unless there's a row!"

The fags turned out of bed, and candle-ends were lighted.

'Erbert stepped out with the rest. There was no help for it; and he was not particularly averse to a "scrap," as a matter of fact.

"Time!" said Tracy minor.

And in the glimmer of the candle-ends, with a circle of excited faces round them, the combatants met, and the fight began.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Jones Minimus Meets His Match!

JONES MINIMUS started work with a terrific rush.

The Second-Formers looked on, grinning.

Jones was the great fighting-man of the Form. He had even achieved the distinction of licking Wegg of the Third; and there was not a fellow in the Second who could have stood against him for two rounds.

Greatly to his surprise, 'Erbert stood up like a rock to his onslaught.

Still more to his surprise, his terrific drives were knocked aside apparently with the greatest ease, and a set of knuckles that seemed as hard as iron were planted on his nose.

Jones minimus went over backwards as if he had been struck by a bullet.

Crash!

"Ow! Oh!"

"Great pip!" ejaculated Tracy minor.

Jones was down! The great fighting-man of the Form was gasping, on his back, on the floor of the dormitory.

The Second Form could scarcely believe their eyes.

Fisher ran to pick his principal up. A slow grin crept over 'Erbert's face. He had hardly been touched, so far.

Jones was raised to his feet. He dabbed at his nose, and his fingers came away crimson.

The fags regarded 'Erbert a little more respectfully, and some of them edged away from him. It dawned upon them that Jones minimus had awakened the wrong passenger, so to speak, and they were quite contented that it was Arthur Montgomery Jones, and not themselves, who had to face the outsider's hard knuckles.

But Jones minimus was game. He had plenty of pluck, and after a minute or two of gasping, he came on again.

This time the combatants closed in a deadly cluch, and 'Erbert's head went into chancery. But 'Erbert's head came out of chancery, and Jones' own head took that unenviable position, and 'Erbert's hard knuckles pounded away at him with great vim.

"Break away!" shouted Tracy minor.

'Erbert released his adversary, with a bitter smile. There had been no call to "break away" when his head was in chancery.

Jones staggered back, and Fisher supported him, looking very dubious. The rank outsider's licking seemed a good distance off, at this rate.

'Erbert stood waiting. The rest this time lasted four or five minutes, but Jones minimus toed the line again at last.

"Got it, Jonesey!" said Snooks encouragingly.

Jones minimus "went" it to the best of his ability. Several of his drives got home, and 'Erbert's nose assumed a bulbous appearance, and one of his eyes persisted in winking uncomfortably. But all the time he was dealing out terrific punishment to Jones, and that hero at last went down on his back with a thump that made the floor shake.

He did not rise, even when Fisher gave him a helping hand.

"Ow-ow-ow!" was Jones' reply to Fisher's inquiry as to how he felt.

"I say, you're going on?" asked Fisher anxiously.

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"You're not goin' to let that cad lick you?" hooted Tracy minor.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The fight was evidently over. It was as much as the unhappy Jones could do to limp back to his bed and collapse in it. His friends gave the victor very curious looks.

"Rag the cad!" said Tracy minor. "If we can't lick him, we can rag him!"

"Shut up!" came an unexpected voice from Jones' bed. "Let him alone!"

"Perhaps you like bein' licked!" sneered Tracy.

"I'll lick you to-morrow!" groaned Jones minimus. "Ow! My eye! Oh, my nose! Oh crumbs!"

"If you're done, I'll be gettin' back to bed," said 'Erbert sarcastically. "If there's any other young gent what's spoilin' for a fight, I ain't tired yet."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Fisher. "Just like your sort to crow!"

'Erbert crimsoned.

"I never meant to crow!" he exclaimed. "Tain't that. And—I'm sorry if I've hurt Master Jones, too! He was tryin' to 'urt me."

"Oh, shut up!"

Jones minimus sat up in bed, blinking painfully at the fags through his twitching eyelids.

"Let that rotter alone," he said. "We said we'd give him fair play, and he's going to have it. You've licked me, you cad, fair and square. I own it. Let him alone, you fellows. He's going to be sent to Coventry. If we can't get him out of the Form, we needn't speak to the cad. He's going to be sent to Coventry by the whole Form for good, and any chap who speaks to him will get it in the neck!"

"Nobody wants to speak to him, I fancy," sneered Tracy minor.

"I don't see wot you want to be down on a bloke like this 'ere for," said 'Erbert. "Wot 'arm 'ave I done?"

There was no answer to that remark. Tracy blew out the candle-ends, and the fag returned to bed. 'Erbert turned in, in silence.

When the rising-bell clanged out in the morning, and the Second Form turned out, Jones' face was, as Fisher said, a picture. 'Erbert glanced at him somewhat contritely.

"I'm sorry you're 'urt so much, Master Jones," he said.

Jones minimus gave him a cold stare, and did not answer.

'Erbert set his lips, and did not speak again. He left the dormitory in silence. That morning the sentence of Coventry was in full force. The Second Form appeared to be utterly oblivious of the existence of the new junior. And the outcast of the Form was soon feeling that he would have preferred even the raggings Bulkeley had saved him from.

"Well, how are you getting on to-day?" asked Jimmy Silver, meeting 'Erbert in the quadrangle after lessons.

"Oh, orright!" said 'Erbert bravely. He did not intend to worry his kind friend in the Fourth with his troubles.

"Good! Keep smiling!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

And 'Erbert tried to act upon that good advice; though it was not easy to "keep smiling" while he was Barred by the Form!

THE END.

(Particulars of next week's story will be found in Editor's Chat.)

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