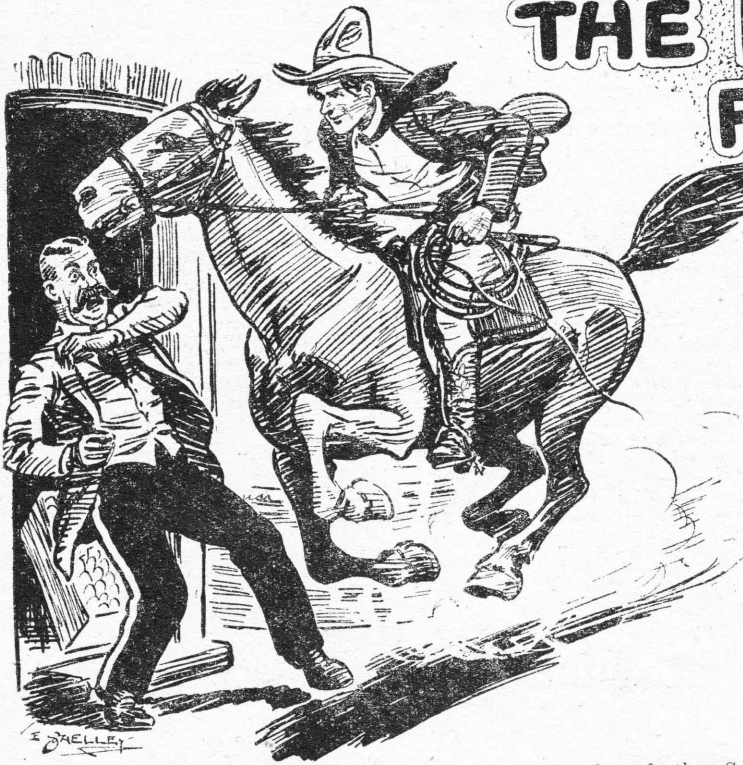


FROM TEXAS TO ROOKWOOD!

new boy, enters Rookwood, bringing with him all his wild and woolly ways. And he gives the old school the sensation of the Term!

Straight from the rolling prairies of Texas, Lick, the and woolly ways. And he



THE BOY FROM TEXAS!

A ROLICKING LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

By
Owen Conquest.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. News for the End Study!

SNOOKS of the Second came along the Fourth Form passage at Rookwood, and bumped open the door of the end study.

"Silver here?" he called out. Jimmy Silver was there.

Jimmy was stretched at ease in the study armchair, with an expression of great satisfaction on his face. Arthur Edward Lovell was reclining with more or less grace on the study sofa. Raby and Newcome adorned the study table with their persons.

The Fistical Four of Rookwood were back at school, and they were feeling pleased. They had enjoyed their trip to Canada, but they were more than glad to be back among old scenes and familiar faces. A week had passed away quite happily. There had been a football match, a rag on the Moderns, a fight between Jimmy Silver and Peele, and other harmless and necessary relaxations, and after their long absence even school work in the little Form-room was almost welcome. Snooks of the Second stared in at four cheery and satisfied faces in the end study in the Fourth.

"Here I am, kid," answered Jimmy cheerily.

Arthur Edward Lovell frowned at the fag.

"Don't they knock at doors in the slum you come from, young Snooks?" he inquired.

"Come off!" retorted young Snooks. "None of your swank, Lovell, because you been on a tuppenny holiday! Silver's wanted in the Head's study at once. I hope it's a licking!"

Lovell made a motion with a

cushion, and Snooks of the Second scudded away down the passage.

At a safe distance he halted and turned round.

"I say," he yelled, "you cads in the end study, I don't believe you've been to Canada at all. Yah! I believe you've been on third-class tickets to Margate! Yah!"

And, having delivered that Parthian shot, Snooks of the Second fled down the staircase as fast as his legs could carry him.

Lovell frowned wrathfully, and Jimmy Silver laughed. Jimmy was not much moved by chipping from so negligible a person as a fag of the Second Form.

"I wonder what the Head wants?" remarked Raby.

"Perhaps he wants to hear about what we did in Canada."

"Perhaps," grinned Newcome, "Lot of perhaps about that, I think."

"As that Indian chap at Greyfriars would say, the perhapsfulness is terrific," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "More likely a wiggling! Anyhow, I'd better go. The old boy doesn't like to be kept waiting."

And Jimmy Silver left the end study and strolled down the passage to the stairs.

Jimmy's face was a shade less cheery as he made his way to Dr. Chisholm's study.

Interviews with the Head were never very welcome. It was only too probable that the Head's cane might figure in such an interview. In the week since his return to Rookwood Jimmy Silver had thoroughly enjoyed being back at his old school. But there were drawbacks to everything. Every silver lining had a cloud, so to speak. The Head was one of the clouds.

Jimmy tapped discreetly at the Head's door. Dr. Chisholm's deep voice bade him enter.

Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, was with the Head when the captain of the Fourth came in. Both the masters were looking rather serious, and Jimmy did not doubt that Mr. Dalton had acquainted the Head with some delinquency of Jimmy's. The striking state of Peele's nose, apparently, was to be avenged.

Dr. Chisholm blinked at Jimmy over his glasses.

"Ah! I sent for you, Silver," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Dalton tells me—"

"Yes, sir," groaned Jimmy.

"That while you were in Canada you—"

Jimmy brightened.

Apparently it was not a wiggling, after all, that was to figure in this interview. Was it possible that the Head wanted to hear a yarn about the Windy River Ranch?

"You made the acquaintance of an American boy—"

"Oh!"

"Named Kick—"

"Lick, sir!" murmured Mr. Dalton.

"Ah! Yes! Exactly! Lick!" said the Head. "Quite so! The boy's name certainly is Lick."

Jimmy Silver was quite cheerful again now.

"Yes, sir," he said. "I remember him, sir."

"This boy Kick—I should say Lick—is coming to Rookwood," resumed the Head. "It appears that he belongs to— to Mexico—"

"Texas, sir!" said Mr. Dalton.

"Exactly—Texas! Texas is a State in the United States of America, Silver."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy gravely.

The information was quite superfluous. Jimmy Silver was well aware that Texas was a State in the United States of America. But it was not his business to tell the Head so. All information imparted by so great a

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man as the Head of Rookwood School was to be received with thankfulness.

"Arrangements have been made," went on the Head, "for Lick to be placed in the Fourth Form at this school—your Form, Silver."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

He wondered a little why the Head had sent for him to tell him all this. Dr. Chisholm proceeded to enlighten him.

"I was glad to hear from Mr. Dalton, Silver, that you were acquainted with this boy Kick—Lick. I understand that he had lived entirely on a—a—a—"

"Ranch," said Mr. Dalton.

"A ranch," said the Head. "A ranch in—in—"

"Texas."

"Texas," resumed the Head. "He will, therefore, be very new to our ways here. I understand, indeed, that he has no knowledge at all of school life or of English manners and customs generally. You will be able to assist him very materially, Silver, in settling down here."

"Oh!" murmured Jimmy.

Remembering what he did of Texas Lick, Jimmy was not overjoyed at the prospect of acting as bear-leader to the youth from Texas. But it was no use telling the Head that.

"It is, therefore, arranged," continued the Head, "for this American boy Lick to be placed in your study, Silver."

"Oh!"

"I believe there are four—or is it five—boys in your study already?"

"Four, sir."

"Quite so! I believe, however, that it is the largest study in the Fourth Form passage."

"Yes, sir."

"If, however, you find your room crowded with the addition of this boy Lick, one of the others will be taken out and placed in another study."

Jimmy looked at his headmaster almost compassionately. The Head was a mine of learning and knowledge. What he did not know of the classic tongues was not worth knowing. He knew nearly as much about *Æschylus* as *Æschylus* himself could have known. But he did not know that the Fistical Four of Rookwood would not have agreed to be separated, even if four or five Licks had been landed on them in the end study.

"Oh, we shall manage all right, sir!" said Jimmy.

"Very good, Silver! Now, this boy Kick—Lick is at present in charge of his father's agent in London. He arrives at Rookwood to-morrow."

"Yes, sir."

"A legal gentleman will bring him here," continued the Head. "I think, however, that if a boy belonging to his Form were to meet him at the station it would be as well. Mr. Dalton will, therefore, excuse you from the Form-room to-morrow afternoon, Silver, in order that you may meet Lick at Coombe, and conduct him to the school."

Jimmy looked quite cheerful now.

Meeting Texas Lick was no great treat, but an exeat from the Form-room was always welcome.

"Shall I take anyone with me, sir?" asked Jimmy Silver diffidently.

"It scarcely seems necessary, Silver."

"My friends, sir—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—met Lick in Canada," said Jimmy. "It would be a sort of—of welcome for him if they could come with me, sir."

Mr. Dalton smiled, and the Head looked rather hard at Jimmy Silver.

"I will leave that matter to your

Form master, Silver," said Dr. Chisholm.

"I see no objection, sir," said Mr. Dalton.

"Very well. Then to-morrow afternoon, Silver, you will meet the three o'clock train at Coombe, and I trust you will do your best to make Lick feel quite at home."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"Very good! You may go, Silver." And Silver went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Lick!

"WELL?"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome jerked that monosyllable at Jimmy Silver all together as he came back to the end study in the Fourth.

"All serene," answered Jimmy Silver.

"Not licked?"

"No."

"Then what did the old scout want?"

Jimmy Silver explained.

"Well, you ass!" exclaimed Lovell indignantly. "You say it's all serene, and it turns out that we're to have that wild and woolly animal, Lick, planted on us in this study."

"Well, that's rotten!" agreed Jimmy. "It will be a bit of a crowd. The Head says one of us may change out if it's too crowded."

"The Head's an ass!"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"That chap Lick is a cheeky chump," went on Lovell. "He's too jolly conceited and too bossy. If he puts on any airs in this study I shall jolly well thump him!"

"Oh, he's got his good points!" said Jimmy Silver tolerantly. "I dare say he will shake down in time. Anyhow, we get an exeat to-morrow, and we owe that to Lick."

"That's something," agreed Lovell. "I'd meet half a dozen Licks to get away from Latin prose. All the same, I shall probably punch his nose before we're out of the station."

"The Head might have shoved him in some other study," grunted Newcome.

"You see, we're expected to keep a fatherly eye on him, as we met him out West," said Jimmy.

"Catch me!" growled Lovell.

"Well, we'll see him through if we can," said Jimmy Silver. "Blest if I know how he will get on at a place like Rookwood, after a ranch in Texas! I fancy he's got plenty of troubles before him before he shakes down. Now, what about prep?"

"Oh, blow prep!" said Lovell. "Prep makes me wish we were back at the Windy River Ranch."

"But we're not," said Jimmy. "So we'd better pile in."

And the Fistical Four sat down round the study table to work. After prep they strolled down to the junior Common-room, to gather round the fire for a chat before going to bed. They found most of the Fourth already in possession of the news that Texas Lick, of Texas, was coming to Rookwood. There was some curiosity among the juniors on the subject of the new boy from Texas.

"You fellows have seen the kid?" asked Valentine Mornington.

"With our own eyes," answered Jimmy gravely.

"Is his name really Lick?"

"Really and truly."

"Oh, gammon!" said Townsend.

"How could his name be Lick?"

"How could Lick be a name?"

"There are more things in the heavens and the earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, dear man, and more weird names in the United States than

were ever heard of in England," answered Jimmy Silver. "His name is Lick—just Lick! And as if that wasn't enough to go on with, his front name is Texas, after his native State."

"Texas Lick," said Mornington. "Ye gods! What a name!"

"I say, I've heard that name before," said Tubby Muffin. "I've seen it in the papers. There's an American millionaire named Lick."

"That's his popper," said Jimmy.

"His what?" yelled Townsend.

"His popper."

"What on earth's a popper?" asked Topham.

"His father. Where we say pater they say popper," explained Jimmy. "The mater would be a mopper."

"Oh, my hat!"

"We learned a lot of the American language while we were out there," said Lovell. "I guess we could put you galoots wise, some."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You guess you could put us galoots wise!" said Townsend, in quite a dazed way. "Does that mean anything? Mean to say that Texas Lick talks in that language?"

"Just that," said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"Oh gad!"

"We'll stand round him and hear him talk!" chuckled Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The name and fame of Texas Lick had preceded him at Rookwood School. Every fellow in the Fourth was keen to see him when he arrived. Tubby Muffin was specially interested.

"You fellows sure that he's the son of the millionaire Lick?" he asked.

"Quite sure."

"Then he'll have lots of money?"

"Very likely."

"I say, I wouldn't be down on a chap because he comes from California—I mean Texas," said Tubby Muffin. "He can't help his name being Lick. I believe in giving a fellow a fair show." "Because he's got lots of money?" chuckled Raby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes—I mean, no, of course not! After all, what's in a name?" said Tubby. "Every chap can't have an aristocratic name—like mine, for instance."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"I dare say he's quite a nice chap," insisted Tubby Muffin. "I'm going to be as nice as I can to this chap Lick, I can tell you."

All the Rookwood Fourth were a little curious about Texas Lick. But there was only one fellow who really looked forward with keenness to his arrival. That one was Reginald Muffin. Tubby Muffin's podgy heart was already full of friendship, and he was prepared to extend the right hand of affectionate fellowship to Texas Lick at the very earliest opportunity.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Boy From the West!

"YOU may go, Silver!"

"Yes, sir."

Jimmy Silver & Co. rose from their places in the Fourth Form-room. It was half-past two.

Quite cheerily the Fistical Four left the Form-room, followed by some envious glances, especially from Tubby Muffin. They strolled out of the School House into the keen wind and the wintry sunshine.

"Jolly glad to get out, anyhow," remarked Arthur Edward Lovell, as they walked down to the gates.

"Hear, hear!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. sauntered cheerily down the lane to Coombe. They had plenty of time to meet the train, which was booked to arrive at three from Latham Junction, and was generally a few minutes late.

They arrived at the station, and went on to the platform. The train was signalled, but was not yet in.

"I suppose we shall know the chap when we see him?" remarked Raby. "I remember his face was something like a hatchet."

"He'll be in different clothes, though," said Lovell. "I suppose he'll come to Rookwood in Etons."

"I suppose so," said Jimmy Silver. "He will look a good deal different in Etons and a topper. Keep your eyes open; the train's coming in."

The train from Latham rattled into the station and stopped. A dozen or so passengers turned out.

"There he is!" exclaimed Newcome.

"My hat!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. recognised Texas Lick at once.

There was no change in him. They knew his bronzed face, his long nose, his keen, penetrating eyes. And they knew his Stetson hat and buck-skin breeches and riding-boots. He was not, after all, in Etons and a topper. Texas Lick, on his way to Rookwood, was the Texas Lick they had met on the Windy River Ranch.

He seemed to be alone. The chums of Rookwood saw nothing of the legal gentleman the Head had referred to.

Texas Lick stood on the platform and stared about him coolly. He was a stranger in a strange land, but it was evident that he was perfectly self-possessed.

The juniors crossed the platform towards him.

"Hallo, Lick!" greeted Jimmy Silver. Lick glanced at him.

"Hallo, you guys!"

Having bestowed that greeting, Lick turned to a porter.

"I guess I want my truck!" he said. "Eh?"

"There's a little grip in the car," said Lick. "The rest is in the baggage car. Savvy?"

The Coombe porter blinked at him helplessly. Few strangers came to Coombe and fewer Americans. The language of the youth from Texas was a deep mystery to old William.

"Oh, I reckon you're asleep!" said Lick. "You see my truck put out and I'll look after the grip!"

He reached into the carriage and lifted out a bag. This was the "grip" referred to.

"Oh!" gasped the porter. "Them trunks is yourn, sir."

Three trunks had been landed on the platform. Lick walked along and looked at them, leaving Jimmy Silver & Co. standing.

"Yep. I guess this is my truck!" said Lick.

"You want a truck, sir?" stammered the porter.

"Yeh."

"You mean a trolley, sir?"

"I guess you don't savvy. This is my truck," said Lick, pointing to the trunks.

"Oh!"

"Don't you know what truck is?" demanded Texas Lick derisively. "Gee-whiz! Have I come over to this little island to teach folks their own language! Look here, you galoot, you get that truck expressed to Rookwood School instanter. Savvy?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped the Coombe porter, comprehending at last that "truck" was a word meaning baggage.

Texas Lick, with his "grip" in his hand, walked away towards the exit, stared after by everyone in the station. The Stetson hat was not a common kind of headgear in Coombe.

Jimmy Silver & Co. followed him. After the first laconic greeting, Texas Lick had not even looked at them. Apparently he had "no use" for the Rookwooders, as he would have expressed it.

They overtook him as he walked briskly out of the station. He stood looking about him there.

"I say, Lick——"

"Yeh."

Lick rapped out the word. "Yeh" was a purely transatlantic monosyllable, and meant neither yes nor no

wanted me to change. I guessed not, and told him so. I told him to go and chop chips."

"Well, you can't tell the Head to go and chop chips," said Lovell, "and he'll jolly soon make you change into Etons."

"Oh, guff!" said Lick.

"Where's the gentleman who was to come down with you?" asked Raby.

"That old guy? I guess I shipped him half-way—fed up with him!" explained Lick. "He's sure made me tired! I got him into a wrong train at a junction, and I dare say he's at Southampton by this time."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Is there a car to be had here?"

"A taxi? No."



FRIENDLY ADVANCES NOT WANTED! "You're a funny galoot," said Lick. "But I guess your funny business don't go a Continental red cent with me. Git!" The new boy swung Tubby Muffin round by his neck, and planted a heavy boot behind him. Bump! (See Chapter 5.)

—neither yep nor nope—but apparently something between the two.

"We've come to see you safe to Rookwood," said Jimmy.

Lick laughed.

"I guess I don't want seeing safe anywhere," he replied. "As soon as I can't look after myself I reckon it will be time for me to go up the flume. Yes, sir."

"I fancy you want looking after a bit, all the same," said Jimmy Silver. "What the thump do you mean by coming to Rookwood in those clothes?"

Texas Lick looked down at his clothes with a glance of pride.

"I guess these are my glad rags," he answered. "What's the matter with them?"

"We wear Etons at Rookwood."

"Etons!" Lick surveyed the four Rookwood juniors with a derisive grin.

"Them Etons?"

"Yes."

"I guess I wouldn't be found dead in them. I reckon the old galoot in London

"How do you 'uns get to your school, then?"

"We generally walk," smiled Jimmy Silver. "When there's luggage we take the hack!"

"That thing?" asked Lick, with a stare at the ancient hack outside the station.

"The very thing!"

"Oh, gee-whiz!" groaned Lick.

"What the thunder did the popper mean by landing a live American in a backwoods shobang like this pesky little ten-cent island? If you ever find Texas Lick in a go-cart like that, you can let him know!"

"Well, your luggage——"

"Do you mean my truck?"

"Yes," said Jimmy, laughing. "Your truck can be sent on to the school. They'll send it on from the station all right. We'd better walk."

"I'm not gone on walking!" snorted Texas Lick. "I've rode a hoss ever since I was raised, and if there ain't a

car to be had, I guess I'm looking for a critter. Can you hire a hoss in these parts?"

"Oh, yes," said Jimmy; "but—"

"Where?"

"Look here, Lick, you ass, you can't arrive at Rookwood on horseback!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver impatiently.

"Why not?" demanded Lick.

"Well, you can't?"

"Something new—eh?" sneered Lick.

"You galoots in England are terrible afraid of anything new. You want to follow in your grandfather's footsteps—what? Well, I don't! Not little me! I guess I'm going to rouse out a hoss in this township."

"Look here—"

"Can it?" said Lick.

And he strode away.

The Fistical Four looked after him, and then looked at one another rather helplessly. They had been sent to Coombe to meet the Texan and see him safe to Rookwood under their wing. Obviously, Texas Lick did not want the shelter of anybody's wing.

"Oh, leave him to it!" said Lovell.

"Let's get off without him!"

"The ass!" said Jimmy Silver. "We can't very well leave him. We're bound to land him at the school."

"Then let's take him by the ears and march him off!"

"Good egg!" said Newcome.

Jimmy Silver hesitated. Lick had walked into the Bird-in-Hand—a public-house that was strictly forbidden to Rookwooders. Apparently he hoped to be able to hire a horse there. Being well provided with dollars, he was successful. While the Rookwooders still stood undecided Mr. Stiggins, the landlord of the Bird-in-Hand, came in person out of the inn-yard, leading a saddled horse, and followed by the Texan.

"He's a bit fresh, sir," said Mr. Stiggins. "If you don't mind that, I—"

"I guess I've ridden buckjumpers that would make your hair curl to look at them," answered Texas Lick. "You can send for this hoss later."

Jimmy Silver ran forward as the Texan mounted.

"Look here, Lick—"

"Stand clear!"

Lick gave the horse a cut of the whip. It was a good horse, and undoubtedly "fresh." There was a clatter of hoofs as the horse leaped to a gallop, and the Rookwood juniors jumped out of the way. Texas Lick waved his riding-whip.

"So-long, you galoots! Walk home!"

He disappeared at a tearing gallop. Jimmy Silver & Co. stared after him.

"Well, my hat!" said Jimmy.

And the Fistical Four started to walk back to the school. Evidently there was no prospect of taking the stranger from afar under their wing.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Texan Arrives!

LESSONS were over when Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived at Rookwood. They had not hurried back, not being specially anxious to share in last lesson in the Form-room. When they came in, they fully expected to hear that Texas Lick had already arrived. But old Mack, the porter, had seen nothing of him, as Jimmy learned on inquiring.

"Ain't seen him!" said old Mack.

"But he must have come," said Lovell. "He started before us, and he was on a horse going at top speed."

"Missed the way, perhaps," remarked Raby. "He's a giddy stranger in these parts."

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The Fistical Four walked in. Jimmy Silver was expected to hand over Texas Lick to Mr. Dalton, but as the Texan was not with him he could not very well do what was expected of him. He hesitated whether to go to the Form master's study to report, and while he was hesitating in the hall, Mr. Dalton called to him.

"Where is Lick, Silver?"

"I think he hasn't come in, yet, sir."

"Did he not come from Coombe with you?"

"He hired a horse to ride here, sir,"

said Jimmy reluctantly. He did not know what view Mr. Dalton might take of that proceeding on Master Lick's part.

Mr. Dalton stared.

"Hired a horse?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir."

"Very odd!" said Mr. Dalton. "Tell him to report himself in my study as soon as he arrives, Silver."

"Yes, sir."

So it was left to Jimmy to wait till Master Lick came in, and he waited. A number of juniors gathered round him in the quadrangle to ask after Texas Lick.

"Hired a horse at the Bird-in-Hand," said Tubby Muffin. "I say, they'd make him pay a pretty penny there! He must have tons of money!"

"More money than sense, I should say," remarked Mornington. "I wonder what the Head will think if he sees him trot in."

"Hallo! What's up?"

"There he is!"

"Lick!" exclaimed Lovell.

"My hat!"

The voice of old Mack was heard shouting at the gates. There was a clatter of horse's hoofs.

A horseman came riding in at a gallop. It was Texas Lick, with his rather long hair blowing out in the wind under the Stetson hat.

Old Mack stood and stared after him. He had never seen a new boy at Rookwood arrive in this style.

Texas Lick came up the drive at a gallop, the gravel flying under the horse's crashing heels. There was shouting on all sides. Bulkeley of the Sixth roared to him.

"Hallo, there! Stop that!"

"Pull in that horse!" yelled Hanson of the Fifth, jumping out of the way in great haste.

"Look out, you fellows!"

Texas Lick did not heed. He waved his whip and gave a cowboy yell, as if he fancied himself back on the plains of Texas. He came up to the School House with a wild rush, the Rookwooders scattering on all sides. Almost at the steps of the house he dragged in his horse, so suddenly that the animal reared and nearly came down on its haunches.

"Gee-whiz!" roared Texas Lick.

"Hyer I am—me from Texas!"

"You ass!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

"Whooop!"

Texas Lick dragged round the horse, and started off at a wild gallop round the quadrangle. Evidently he was enjoying himself, and delighted with the sensation he was making at Rookwood. The fellows watched him in amazement, almost in consternation.

Lick did not keep to the drives or to the paths. He galloped right across the Sixth Form green—a spot where no junior was allowed to walk, let alone ride. He whirled past the school shop, and Sergeant Kettle, who was standing outside, took a backward jump into his little shop to escape the flying heels—so sudden a jump that the sergeant sat down in a box of eggs,

with what a novelist would describe as a sickening thud.

"Great Scott!" gasped Erroll. "Is the fellow mad?"

"Mad as a hatter!" stuttered Smythe of the Shell. "Oh gad! Does he take Rookwood for a lunatic asylum?"

"Look out, here he comes!"

The wild rider came tearing up to the house again, the horse almost foaming. Adolphus Smythe of the Shell leaped out of the way, stumbled, and fell right in the path of the galloping horse.

There was a cry of horror on all sides.

For a second it seemed certain that Smythe would be crushed under the thudding hoofs.

Texas Lick grinned.

A touch of his skilled hand was enough. The horse rose to the leap and cleared Adolphus Smythe, the Shell fellow's dazed and horrified eyes staring up at the horse passing over him.

"Good gad!" gasped Mornington.

"Lick! Stop, you dummy!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

Lick did not stop. He waved his whip and galloped on, lost to all considerations but the excitement of the wild ride, and enjoyment of the alarm and consternation he was causing. Bulkeley of the Sixth, with a grim brow, rushed at the horse's head. Lick avoided him with a swerve, and at the same time flicked off the Sixth-Former's hat with his whip. The hat rolled away, and the horseman dashed on, and Bulkeley was left staring dizzily at his hat.

Mr. Dalton stood on the School House steps, his brow black as thunder. The Head joined him there. Both masters stared at the careering Texan.

"Is—is—is that Kick?" gasped Dr. Chisholm.

"It is Lick, sir," said Mr. Dalton. "I think that is the new boy, Lick, Silver?"

"Yes, sir."

"Boy!" thundered the Head.

Texas Lick looked round. The Head, in his gown, was a strange figure to the eyes of the young cowpuncher of Texas, but Lick recognised that he must be someone in authority. With a final whoop, he dashed up to the steps and dragged in his horse. A second more and he had alighted and raised his Stetson hat to the Head.

"Yep," he said.

"Boy," gasped Dr. Chisholm, "are you—are you Lick?"

"Sure!"

"What? What? Answer me yes or no, boy!"

"Yep."

"What do you mean by yep? Do you mean yes?"

"Sure!"

"Bless my soul! Lick, how dare you arrive in this manner? How dare you create such a disturbance in the quadrangle?" thundered the Head.

"Disturbance!" repeated Lick.

"Yes, sir!" rapped the Head.

"Oh, gee-whiz and geevihilikins!" ejaculated Lick. "You call that a disturbance, sir! My only hat! You should see the punchers on our ranch on a bender!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, boys! Lick, this—this extraordinary conduct—"

"I guess I don't savvy, sir! I had to get hyer on hossflesh, as there wasn't a pesky car to be scared up. And I was jest showing these greenhorns some riding, sir."

Dr. Chisholm breathed hard. "You must do nothing of the kind again, Lick! Have you come to Rookwood in those clothes?"

"Sure!" "Surely your father told you— Bless my soul! This is—is—is really unnerving, Mr. Dalton. Boy, I suppose you have clothes in your box suitable for this school?"

"I guess there's a stack of duds, sir, but I rather reckon I'd like to keep to these."

"You will be allowed to do nothing of the sort!" thundered the Head. "Mr. Dalton, you will see that this—this extraordinary boy changes his attire as soon as his box arrives. Then you will bring him to me."

Dr. Chisholm stalked away in wrath. Texas Lick stared after him.

"I kinder guess that that old guy has got his dander up!" he remarked to Rookwood generally.

"You—you—you shook him! You mean you laid hands on him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lick. "Nope! I guess not! I mean I shook him— Don't you understand English, sir?"

"English!" stuttered the Fourth Form master.

"It's American, sir," murmured Jimmy Silver. "To shake anybody means to get rid of them."

"Oh! Ah! Yes, I see. Lick, come into my study at once. That—that horse must be taken away! Silver, ask the porter to secure the animal. Lick, come with me!"

And Texas Lick—not in the least perturbed, to judge by his looks—swung away after the Form master, the floor creaking to the heavy tread of his boots.

He left a crowd of Rookwood fellows in an excited buzz behind him. There was no doubt that the boy from the ranch was something new at Rookwood—something very new indeed. In ten

that galoot you call Dalton isn't a bad sort. But the old guy is a caution!"

"The old guy!" ejaculated Lovell.

"Do you mean the headmaster?"

"Sure! Some guy!" said Lick.

"You'd better let him hear you call him one!" chuckled Raby.

"I say, Jimmy Silver!" shouted Peel. from the passage. "Are you goin' to charge for admission, now you've got the Wild Man from Borneo in your study?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come off!" said Texas Lick. "You guys make me tired!" He closed the door of the end study, with a slam, in a crowd of grinning faces. Then he threw himself into the armchair, and put his feet on another chair. "So this hyer is Rookwood, pardners?"

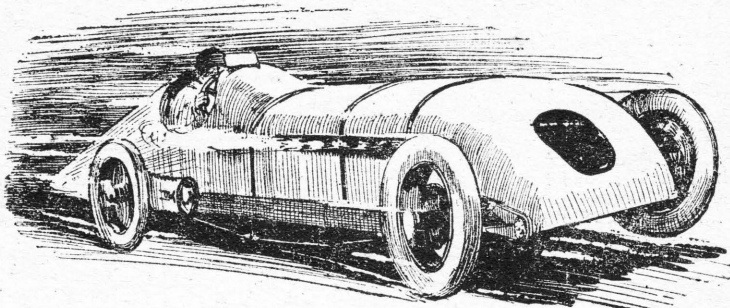
"Yes, this is Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver.

"I guess I don't think much of it!"

"Nothing to what you've got out in

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"Ha, ha, ha!" "Lick, you must not speak of your headmaster in that manner," said Mr. Dalton severely.

"Gee-whiz! Is that guy the headmaster—the head-cook-and-bottle-washer of this hyer shebang?" exclaimed Lick. "Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Dalton.

"And who may you be when you're at home?" asked Lick.

"I—I am Mr. Dalton, your Form master."

"Glad to see you, sir," said Texas Lick cordially. "Shake!" He held out a brown hand to the Fourth Form master.

Like a man in a dream, Richard Dalton shook hands with the new junior, hardly knowing what he was doing.

"Where—where is the gentleman who was to conduct you here, Lick?" he articulated.

"Hanging around Southampton grousing, I guess," chuckled Lick.

"You see, I shook him."

"Shook him!" "Yep."

minutes all Rookwood, from the Sixth to the Second, was talking of Texas Lick.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Tubby Tries It On!

HERE was a heavy tramp of feet, and a buzz of voices and laughter in the Fourth Form passage. Jimmy Silver & Co. had gone to the end study to tea, and the heavy tramp in the passage warned them that their new study-mate was coming, and apparently a crowd with him. The door crashed open, and Texas Lick stood in the doorway, grinning cheerily.

"I guess this hyer is Silver's study!" he said. "I'm told I'm to camp here with you guys."

"That's right," said Jimmy Silver.

"Trot in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a howl from the passage

Texas Lick chuckled.

"These jays seem amused somehow," he said. "I guess they've never seen a real live American before. Say,

Texas, I suppose?" said Arthur Edward Lovell, with sarcasm.

"You've got it!" assented Lick. "I guess this old shebang was put up in the early days of creation, and it's got a bit mouldy since. In the States we'd have it all down and rebuild it, with good square blocks of brick and central heating, and all that. But I reckon you guys don't know enough to go in when it rains. But I reckon I can put up with it a bit before I go back to civilisation."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Anyhow, I'm learning the manners and customs," said Lick. "I put in three months once among the Injuns, and I guess I can do the same hyer, studying the natives—what?"

"Not unless you improve your manners, I think," said Lovell grimly. "You won't last three months at this rate. You're more likely to be kicked out under three days."

"Oh, come off!" said Lick derisively.

The door opened, and Tubby Muffin's fat face looked in. He gave the Fistical Four a rather hostile look, and

bestowed his sweetest smile upon Texas Lick.

Lick stared at him.
"Great snakes! Who's that guy?" he asked.

"Oh, I say!" ejaculated Tubby. "I—I'm Muffin. I'm jolly glad to make your acquaintance, Lick. I was coming to the station to meet you, only these chaps butted in. You got here late, old chap."

"I guess I had a ride round," said Lick. "I wasn't in a hurry. Say, bub, how do you get into them clothes?"

"Eh?"
"How do you wedge into them, and how the thunder do you get them off again?" demanded Lick, staring at the fat junior.

Tubby Muffin reddened and the Fistical Four grinned. Tubby did not seem to be making much progress so far on the path of friendship with the son and heir of the ranch millionaire.

"The fact is," gasped Tubby, "I—I've come here to welcome you to Rookwood, Lick. Have you had your tea?"

"Yep. I guess I grubbed with your Mr. Dalton."

"I've got a cake in my study," said Tubby.

"Keep it there!"
"H'm! I—I say, Lick, you'd like to be shown round the school a bit, wouldn't you? Come along! Take my arm," said Tubby effusively.

Texas Lick roared.
"I guess I should have to fold down like a pocket-knife to take your arm, old scout. Ha, ha, ha! Roll away!"

"I—I say, Lick, I mean it!" urged Tubby. "I—I want to be friendly, you know. I'm not down on you because you're a wild savage from a barbarous country, you know."

"What!" ejaculated Lick.
"I know you can't help it," said Tubby fatuously. "The fact is, I'm willing to take you in hand and civilise you a bit."

"Great gophers!"
"I mean it," said Tubby. "Really, you know. Come along, and I'll introduce you to some fellows! They'll make allowances for you if I put in a word for you. I've got a lot of influence."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver & Co., quite entertained by the expression on Lick's face.

Texas Lick jumped out of the arm-chair. He strode towards Tubby Muffin, and that fat youth, under the impression that Texas Lick was accepting his offer of friendship, beamed upon him. Already, in his mind's eye, Reginald Muffin saw himself borrowing unlimited dollars from the wild Westerner, in return for his kindly offices in helping to civilise him.

Tubby was undecieved the next moment.

Instead of taking Tubby's fat arm, Texas Lick took his podgy neck. He took it in an iron grip that made Reginald Muffin squirm and yell.

"Yaroooooh!"
"You're a funny galoot, I guess," said Texas Lick. "But I guess your funny business don't go a Continental red cent with me. I reckon you're asking for my boot."

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!" howled Tubby.
"Git!"

Texas Lick swung the fat junior round by his neck in the open doorway, and planted a heavy boot behind him.

Muffin fairly flew out of the end study.

Bump!

THE POPULAR.—No. 463.

The fat Classical landed on his hands and knees and rolled over. He rolled and roared.

"Now come back and have another!" roared Texas Lick.

Reginald Muffin did not accept that invitation. He scrambled to his feet and fled down the Fourth Form passage, yelling.

Texas Lick turned back into the study with a grin.

"I guess that fat guy won't chew the rag at me again!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Texas Lick was right. Tubby Muffin's friendship did not survive the shock of Lick's heavy boot upon his tight trousers. His brief vision of borrowing unlimited dollars was over, gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

"Hands Up!"

TEXAS LICK came up to the Fourth Form dormitory with Jimmy Silver & Co. that night.

There was a good deal of grinning and chuckling among the juniors in the dormitory, and it was not difficult for Jimmy to guess that a rag on the new boy had been planned for after lights out. Jimmy Silver wondered whether it was up to him to intervene, as the Head had, to some extent, placed the new fellow in his charge.

Bulkeley of the Sixth saw lights out for the Fourth. He took no notice of Lick, apparently having forgotten or overlooked the incident in the quad.

After the prefect was gone there was a murmur of voices from bed to bed. The loud voice of Higgs, the bully of the Fourth, dominated.

"Have him out!" said Higgs.

Jimmy Silver sat up in bed.

"No rags, you fellows!" he called out. "Let the new kid alone!"

"Rats!" retorted Higgs. "He's got too much side."

"Lots too much!" said Flynn.

"Heaps too much!" said Townsend.

"It's only his little way," said Jimmy pacifically. "Let him alone, and chuck ragging."

"Rot!"

There was a sound of several fellows turning out of bed. A match was struck and a candle lighted.

"Look here—" Jimmy recommenced.

"Oh, can it!" interrupted Texas Lick. "Let them rip! I guess this infant can take care of himself!"

"Oh, all right!" said Jimmy. "I'll leave it at that." And the captain of the Fourth rested his head on his pillow again.

Half a dozen juniors surrounded Lick's bed in the glimmer of the candle. Most of the other fellows sat up to look on. Texas Lick's bumptiousness gave all the Fourth an impression that a ragging would do him good. Lick sat up and regarded the ragers coolly.

"Turn out!" commanded Higgs.

"I guess not."

"Do you want me to yank you out by the neck?" demanded the bully of the Fourth.

"Sure."

"Then I'll jolly well have you out soon enough!" exclaimed Higgs, and he made a rush at the Texan junior.

He grasped Texas Lick by the shoulders. The next moment he staggered back with a yell of terror. A metal barrel was looking him in the face.

"He's got a pistol!" yelled Tubby Muffin, and the fat Classical dived under his bedclothes.

"Great Scott!"

"Lick, you mad duffer—" shouted Jimmy Silver, starting up.

"Oh, can it!" said Texas Lick. "I guess this hyer is my funeral. You, Higgs, hands up!"

Higgs of the Fourth, nearly fainting with terror, put his hands up over his head as he had seen actors do on the films.

"Now get down on your knees and yalp for pardon!" shouted Lick, waving the revolver.

"Ow!" gasped Higgs.

He sank on his knees.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared on at the scene, scarcely believing their eyes. Peele of the Fourth ran to the door and threw it wide open and yelled:

"Prefect! Prefect!"

"I guess your pesky prefects cut no ice with me," said Texas Lick. "Now, you, Higgs, you beg pardon over my cabeza. I let the light through your cabeza."

"Oh!" gasped Higgs. "Ow! Oh dear! I—I beg pardon! Turn that thing away!"

"Prefect! Prefect!" Peele was yelling.

There was a rapid footstep in the passage. Mr. Dalton's stern face looked in at the doorway. His eyes seemed to bulge from his head as he saw Higgs cowering before the levelled revolver in the hand of the Texan.

"Lick!" he shouted.

He strode straight up to the junior and grasped the revolver by the barrel.

"Take care, sir!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Dalton did not heed. He wrenched the revolver away from Texas Lick at the risk of it exploding.

Higgs swayed unsteadily, still babbling with fright. Mr. Dalton fixed his stern eyes on Texas Lick.

"Boy! Are you mad? You have dared to bring a deadly weapon into this school—"

Texas Lick grinned.

"I guess it ain't very deadly, sir! It's a dud shooter."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I calculate I was only pulling the guy's leg, sir," said Texas Lick cheerfully. "You couldn't shoot a bunny rabbit with that sixer, sir. There's no works to it, and it ain't loaded, anyhow."

"Oh!" gasped Higgs.

There was a chorle in the Fourth. Higgs, looking very sheepish, retreated to his bed. Mr. Dalton stared at the toy pistol, and then at Texas Lick. He seemed at a loss for words for a moment or two.

"Go back to bed at once," he said at last. "If there is any more disturbance in this dormitory to-night I shall detain the whole Form to-morrow."

And Mr. Dalton, with his lips twitching, left the dormitory, taking the "dud" pistol and the candle with him. Texas Lick chuckled. He "guessed" that the laugh was on his side, and the Fourth Form of Rookwood agreed that it was.

There was no more ragging in the Fourth Form dormitory that night, and Texas Lick slept the sleep of the just, to turn out bright and cheerful in the morning to face the new life that was before him, undismayed by the sudden change in his surroundings from a Texas ranch to Rookwood.

THE END.

(How do you think Texas Lick will get on in his new surroundings? You'll enjoy reading "A Wild Westerner at Rookwood!" next week's rollicking, long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co.)