

FIVE LONG STORIES and Every One a THRILLER!

The POPULAR

Week Ending
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(New Series)

Every
Tuesday

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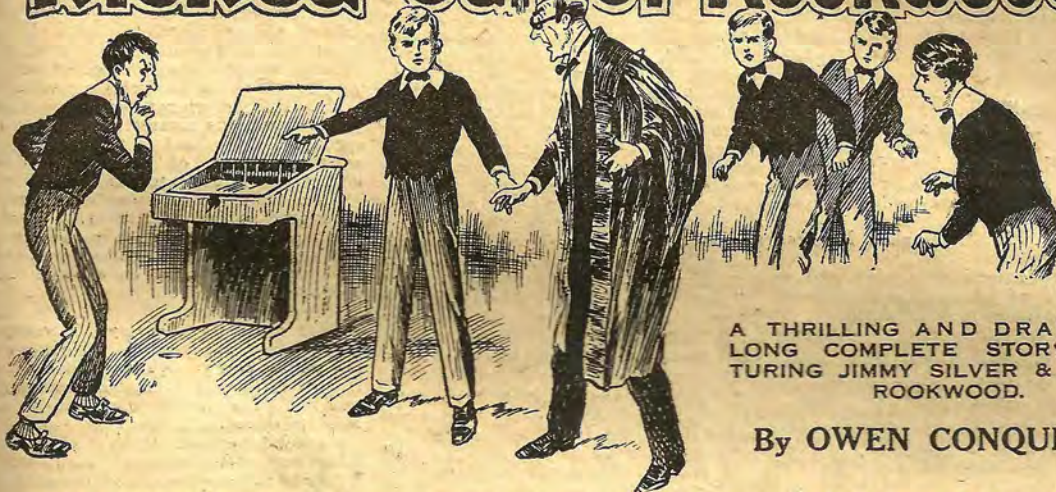


"THE HOLD-UP!"

**A FULL-OF-THRILLS TALE of the WEST,
featuring the RIO KID, BOY OUTLAW!**

Rookwood without Marcus Manders! This seems like a beautiful dream to the Classical and Modern chums: a dream that can never come true. But, unlike most dreams, it actually does happen in real life, and Marcus, the most hated fellow in the school, finds himself—

Kicked Out Of Rookwood!



A THRILLING AND DRAMATIC
LONG COMPLETE STORY, FEATURING
JIMMY SILVER & CO. OF
ROOKWOOD.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Lines for Lovell!

"**L**INES!" growled Lovell. "Oh, rotten!"

It was a half-holiday at Rookwood, and December had brought a fall of snow. These two things happening together were quite fortunate, from the point of view of Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Classical Fourth. Snowballing the Modern fellows was obviously the right and proper proceeding.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome were free to proceed upon the warpath as soon as they liked. But Lovell had lines.

"You fellows get on with it," said Arthur Edward Lovell; "and if you see that young cad Manders, give him one for me! I've got to hand in my lines before tea-time, and there's a whole Georgio!"

"But Mr. Dalton hasn't been handing out lines," said Jimmy Silver, puzzled. "Where did you bag your impot?"

Lovell growled.

"The blessed Beak!"

That was Lovell's rather disrespectful way of alluding to Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood.

"And what have you done?" asked Raby.

"Nothing!"

Three juniors grinned. The Head of Rookwood was sometimes a severe old gentleman. But in his severest moments he was unlikely to hand out a whole Georgio for nothing.

"Well, nothing to speak of," amended Lovell.

"We never do anything—and we're always getting something!" said Newcome. "It's a hard life for really innocent chaps like us! What was the 'nothing' the Beak lined you for, old chap?"

"Punching young Manders!"

"He ought to have given you a medal for that!" said Jimmy Silver.

"He's given me a Georgio instead!" growled Lovell. "All the same, I shall punch young Manders again! Jever see a cad that wanted punching so much as that Modern tick?"

"Never!" agreed Lovell's chums.

On that point there was unanimous agreement in the Fourth Form at Rook-

wood, among Classics and Moderns alike. There was not a fellow in the whole Form who would not have given a week's pocket-money to punch hard the hopeful nephew of Mr. Roger Manders, the Modern master. But a fellow who was a Housemaster's nephew and favourite was not to be punched with impunity—as many of the Fourth had found, and as Lovell had found again.

"He chucked a snowball at me!" went on Lovell. "I wouldn't have minded that; but there was a stone in it—just one of his dirty tricks! So I punched him—and he told old Manders! And old Manders went to the Head! He's fed-up with taking his complaints to Dicky Dalton; Dicky cuts him rather short. So he barged in to the Beak with it, and I got a Georgio. I wouldn't have minded fifty lines for punching young Manders—it's worth that! But a whole giddy Georgio!"

"It's rotten, old chap!" Lovell's comrades were sympathetic. But there was nothing to be done—excepting the lines. They had to be done.

"You fellows go and rag the Moderns!" said Lovell. "Give that Manders tick something if you get a chance! I'll get along to the study and grind out that dashed impot!"

And Arthur Edward Lovell, with a clouded face, went into the House, leaving his chums in the wintry sunshine of the quadrangle.

Lovell was feeling deeply exasperated. Marcus Manders had that effect on all the Fourth, and particularly on Arthur Edward Lovell.

He was a sneak—and not only a sneak, but in carrying tales to his uncle, the Housemaster of Manders' House, he was not at all scrupulous about keeping to the precise facts. Sneaks were few at Rookwood: no other master would have encouraged tale-bearing. But Mr. Manders had his own methods, and he seemed to see nothing ignominious in allowing his nephew to act as a spy in his House.

Lovell lounged reluctantly along the Fourth Form passage towards the end study. Most of the fellows were out of doors. The studies were silent and deserted. He did not pass a single fellow as he went along to his study.

He hurled open the door of the end study and strode in.

There was a sudden startled exclamation in the study.

Lovell jumped.

He had expected, naturally, that the end study would be empty, as his study-mates were out of the House. But it was not empty.

A thing, meagre-faced junior was bending over Lovell's desk in the corner of the room, and he swung round with a startled face and an exclamation as the door flew suddenly open.

Lovell stared at him.

"Manders, you cheeky cad!" he shouted.

It was Marcus Manders, the new fellow in the Modern Fourth. No Modern junior had any business on the Classical side, especially in a study with the owners absent. And the expression on young Manders' thin, meagre face was one of startled guilt.

"You cheeky cad, what are you doing here?" thundered Lovell indignantly. "What dirty trick are you playing now?"

He strode towards the Modern junior, and young Manders backed away, breathing hard.

"Nothing!" he panted. "I—I came here to—to speak to you."

"You lying worm!" said Lovell scornfully. "You never expected to be caught here! What were you doing to my desk?"

"I—I haven't touched it!"

"You were touching it when I came in. Were you going to muck up my accounts, you rotter? That would be like one of your tricks!"

Lovell, secretary and treasurer of the junior football club, was a great man at accounts. He did not have to deal in large sums, but he kept extensive accounts. And on the occasions when he attended to them, his chums were wont to retire hurriedly from the study, and leave him to it. Lovell's account books—comprehensible only to Lovell, if even to him—were looked up in that desk, along with the funds in hand. It did not occur to Lovell's mind that the cash in his desk might possibly have been young Manders' object—even of young Manders he did not think so.

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badly as that. But he considered it very probable that the young rascal had intended to "muck up" his accounts, and that only the look on the desk had stopped him. Indeed, unless young Manders had some such object, it was difficult to fathom why he had been meddling with the desk at all.

Marcus Manders backed away as far as he could, till the wall stopped him, and he could back no farther. Lovell was between him and the door, and Lovell's expression was grim and savage.

"Out you go!"

Lovell made a rush at the Modern junior.

Marcus Manders dodged desperately round the table, and fled for the door. But Lovell's grasp was on him before he reached it.

"Oh! Ow! Leggo!" yelled Marcus. Bang!

There was a loud concussion and a fiendish yell as young Manders' head came into collision with the door.

"That's for the start!" grinned Lovell.

"Yaroooh!"

"Now travel!"

Marcus Manders was swung round in the doorway, and Lovell released his collar.

The Modern junior made a desperate leap into the passage; but his leap, rapid as it was, was not so rapid as the movement of Lovell's foot.

Crash!

Arthur Edward's boot landed, and young Manders fairly flew.

"Goal!" chorled Lovell.

Marcus Manders landed on his hands and knees in the passage. He sprawled there and roared. A door along the passage opened, and Valentine Mornington, the dandy of the Fourth, looked out. Lines had kept Morny in also, as it happened; and the crash in the passage had startled him.

"What the merry thump!" exclaimed Mornington. "Hallo! What's that Modern cad doing here?"

Lovell chuckled.

"He was messing about with my desk in my study, and I caught him at it. I've given him my boot."

"Good egg! I'll give him mine."

Marcus Manders leaped up and ran. But to reach the staircase he had to pass Morny; and Morny stepped quickly out of the doorway as the sneak of Manders' House passed him.

Crash!

"Yooop!"

Once more Marcus Manders sprawled. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell.

The Modern junior scrambled up, yelling, and fled for the stairs. He turned to shake an enraged fist at the two grinning Classics, and then vanished down the staircase.

Lovell tramped back into the end study, feeling better. He sat down to his Georgic, comforted by the reflection that the sneak of Manders' House would not feel like sitting down for some time to come.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Bad Egg!

"RAIN!" growled Raby.

"Bother!"

"And wet rain!" said Jimmy Silver ruefully.

Really, that afternoon was not Jimmy Silver & Co.'s lucky afternoon. In the first place, Lovell was detained, grinding lines in his study. In the second place, Jimmy Silver & Co., having crossed over to the Modern side to snowball Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern

Fourth, learned from Towle that the three Tommies were under detention— young Manders having reported them to "Old Manders" for "calling him names." No doubt the three Tommies had applied some expressive terms to the sneak of Manders' House; but detention for a half-holiday was a rather severe penalty. And Raby, having expressed the opinion that it was a "shame," was unfortunately overheard by Mr. Roger Manders, who came by in his usual silent, stealthy way and told Raby, with savage snappishness, that his remark would be reported to his Form master. After which, Jimmy Silver & Co. walked down to the village, looking for Bagshot fellows for a little snowballing. But there were no Bagshot fellows to be seen; and when they started back to Rookwood, the deceptive fine afternoon showed itself up in its true colours, so to speak, and there was a sudden downpour of rain.

"Keep smiling!" said Jimmy; but he found it hard to smile. The fine day had tempted the juniors out without their coats, and a torrent of rain was no joke.

"We're up against it all round today!" growled Newcome. "Let's get under something, if it's only a tree."

"Cut across the field to Giles' shed," said Jimmy. "It won't last long; it's coming down too fast. Sprint for it!"

The three juniors plunged through a gap in the hedge, and cut across the field in the rain. Giles' shed was in the farther corner of the field, and they were rather damp by the time they reached it. The doorway was on the farther side, and as they moved round the shed they heard the sound of voices within. Apparently, somebody else had taken refuge from the rain in the shed.

"I can't do it, Padger! I tell you I can't! It's impossible!"

The three juniors started as they heard that voice. For they knew the whining tones only too well; of all the voices at Rookwood, it was the one least welcome to their ears. It was the voice of Marcus Manders.

"That tick!" grunted Raby.

"Impossible, is it, Master Manders?" came a deep, husky voice in answer to the sneak of Manders' House. "Do you owe me five pounds or don't you?"

"Yes; but—"

"Are you going to pay, or ain't you?"

"Yes; but—"

"You, a 'Ousemaster's nephew, and can't raise five quid!" sneered Mr. Padger. "Don't tell me! Anyhow, you can 'and over the five, or else I shall ask your uncle for it, as I've told you afore."

"Look here, Padger—"

Marcus Manders broke off suddenly. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome came tramping in at the open doorway of Giles' shed.

Young Manders' jaw dropped as he saw them. Gladly enough the three Classics would have given him a wider berth; they did not want to share a shelter with Manders. But the rain was heavy, and they had no choice.

A squat man with a shaggy moustache and a red face was in the shed with young Manders. He was smoking a cigarette, as he sat on a bench. Jimmy Silver & Co. had seen him before, at a distance; he was one of the "horsy" characters who forgathered at the Bird-in-Hand at Coombe. Naturally, they had never spoken to him; but they were not at all surprised to see Marcus Manders in talk with the man. Almost everyone in Manders' House at Rookwood, excepting Mr. Roger Manders himself, knew that Mr. Manders' nephew had a taste for dingy black-

guardism, and a good many of the Classics knew it too. Indeed, Jimmy Silver had seen something of it on young Manders' very first day at Rookwood. More than one fellow had seen young Manders in talk with the loafers of the Bird-in-Hand, and information on that point would have surprised Mr. Roger Manders very much. But even if any Rookwooder had been disposed to follow young Manders' example in sneaking, it was not likely that the Modern master would have believed a word against his favourite nephew.

Mr. Padger glanced at the three juniors over his cigarette and went on speaking, regardless of their presence, and regardless of young Manders' almost frantic signs to him to be silent.

"I'm fed-up with this 'ere, Master Manders," said Mr. Padger. "Don't you make faces at me—I'm talking to you straight, I am. You borrowed that fiver from me to put on a 'orse. Did you or did you not?"

Manders panted.

"For a few days, says you," resumed Mr. Padger indignantly. "Now it's a few weeks, and you ain't squared. But, if you can't pay me, your uncle can, and I tell you straight I'm going to ask Mr. Manders for it."

Jimmy Silver & Co. could almost have compassionated the cowering Manders.

"You—you can't speak to my uncle!" he muttered. "It—it would mean ruin for me at Rookwood."

"You pay what you owe, then," said Mr. Padger. "Besides, ain't you told me you're your uncle's favourite. He's going to stump up, if you don't."

"My uncle would not pay you a farthing to save me from being turned out of the school!" hissed Manders.

"We'll see about that," sneered Mr. Padger. "P'r'aps he won't want to let the 'eadmaster 'ear about his nephew coming along to the Bird-in-Hand for cards and billiards, and such."

"If he knew it he would turn me out himself," snarled Manders. "He wouldn't pay you a shilling. You rotter!" The young rascal's spiteful temper broke out at last. "You scoundrel! It was fixed up between you and Joey Hook about that fiver. Joey Hook raked me out of it, and a fiver of my own, as well. I don't really owe you anything. It was a trick!"

Mr. Padger rose from the bench and threw away the stump of his cigarette.

"That does it," he said. "I'm fed-up with you, young Manders! Making out you had lots of oof, and taking a man in! Don't you talk to me! I'm going to ask Mr. Manders for my money; and if I don't get it, anyhow you'll get something for yourself, and serve you right for a sneaking, lying, swindling young scoundrel!"

And Mr. Padger tramped indignantly out of the shed and disappeared in the rain.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Dark Suspicions!

MARCUS MANDERS stood panting, staring after the shabby rascal who had gone. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome exchanged glances. Young Manders, who had brought trouble at one time or another upon every fellow in the Fourth Form at Rookwood, seemed to have landed himself into worse trouble than he had ever brought upon anyone else. His face was white, and he trembled till his bony knees knocked together. He knew—better than Mr. Padger knew—what would be the result of Mr. Manders learning his true character. Sneaking and tale-bearing were

not, apparently, faults in the eyes of Mr. Manders; but the discovery that his nephew was a gambling young black-guard a "pub-haunter," in danger of being expelled by the Head for bad conduct, would have moved Roger Manders' deepest ire. Indeed, it would have been difficult for Mr. Manders to hold up his head at Rookwood School again if his nephew had been "sacked" from the school; certainly, at least, it would have taken him a long time to live down such an episode. Once he became aware of the danger, favouritism would have changed instantly to overwhelming wrath. It was a prospect that might have dismayed a more courageous fellow than the sneak of Manders' House.

Jimmy Silver turned away.

"Come on, you chaps—the rain's better than young Manders. I can't breathe the same air with that rotter!"

Jimmy Silver tramped out of the shed, heedless of the rain. Baby and Newcome followed him. Young Manders stood and stared after them, gnawing to the lip.

"Well, that chap is the giddy limit!" said Baby, as they tramped across the field. "The sooner he's kicked out of Rookwood the better, it seems to me."

Jimmy Silver breathed hard.

"A rotten sneak, always spying on fellows and getting them called over the coals," he said, "and about the worst chap at Rookwood himself! Even old Manders would be fed-up with him, if he knew. And he would see what a rotter he is, if he wasn't a good bit of a bad egg himself! My hat! I'm fed-up with the whole tribe of Manders!"

The three Classics stopped under a tree for shelter. It was an imperfect shelter in a downpour of rain, but really it was better than the shed with the company of Marcus Manders.

The rain stopped at last, and the chums of the Fourth tramped home to Rookwood. It was nearly tea-time now, and they hoped to find that Arthur Edward Lovell had completed his task. But when they came into the end study, Arthur Edward was still labouring at his Georgic. He gave them a dismal look as they came in.

"I almost wish I hadn't punched young Manders this morning," he said dolorously. "I say, what could have made Virgil such a silly ass as to write all this awful stuff!"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"We'll get tea while you're winding up," he said. "I've brought in something from the tuckshop. Morny's coming to tea."

"Oh dear!" groaned Lovell.

On a corner of the study table Arthur Edward continued to grind out

his Georgic, while his three comrades prepared tea. Mornington lounged into the doorway of the study.

"Too early?" he asked.

"Not at all, old man; trot in," said Jimmy Silver. "Chuck it till after tea, Lovell. You'll feel better then, old chap."

"I wish I could chuck it at Manders' head!" sighed Lovell, as he left his unfinished task.

old Manders' face if his precious nephew was bunked from Rookwood! Ha, ha, ha!"

That idea almost consoled Lovell for his Georgic.

Morny whistled.

"That fellow was messing about with your desk when you found him here, Lovell?" he said.

"Yes—only it was locked," grinned Lovell. "I fancy he was going to play



Lovell hurried open the door of the end study and strode in. There was a startled exclamation in the study, and a junior, who was bending over Lovell's desk, swung round with a guilty start. Lovell stared at him. "Manders, you cheeky cad!" he ejaculated. "What are you doing in here?" (See Chapter 1.)

The five Classics sat down to tea, and Arthur Edward cheered up under the genial influence of fried eggs and tea and toast. He related quite cheerfully the pleasing episode of kicking young Manders out of the study earlier in the afternoon.

"We've seen the rotter, too," said Baby. "From what we saw, I should have thought that he had something more serious to think of than playing tricks in a fellow's study. He's got himself something worse than a giddy Georgic."

"How's that?" asked Mornington.

The Classics described the meeting in the shed in Giles' field. Lovell gave a snort of angry disgust.

"He ought to be jolly well booted out of Rookwood!" he growled. "He's a disgrace to the school!"

"It will come to that, if he keeps on as he's started," said Jimmy Silver. "Goodness knows what will happen, if that man Padger speaks to Mr. Manders."

"Manders won't believe anythin' against his dear nephew," said Mornington. "Still, he's a sharp old bird. He may tumble to the facts. If he does, it will be serious for Marcus."

"A flogging, anyhow," said Lovell, with a grin. "Old Manders would be frightfully waxy if he found the fellow out. Why, if the Head knew, he'd sack the cad from the school. Fancy

some trick of his own with my account books."

"Anythin' else in the desk?"

"Only some papers and letters, and the club money, of course," said Lovell. "I keep it locked up there."

"Manders likely to know about the money?"

Lovell jumped.

"Great Scott! You don't think—Draw it mild, Morny! Even young Manders—"

Valentine Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"He's up against it, and he's rotter enough for anything," he said. "You'd better keep that desk locked, if you want to keep the money in it, while young Manders owes debts at the Bird-in-Hand."

"Oh crumbs!"

The unpleasant topic dropped, and the Classics chatted cheerily on the more pleasing subject of the coming Christmas holidays till tea was over, and it was time for Lovell to get on with his Georgic again.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Morny Takes a Hand!

"BACK up, Classics!"

"Go it, Moderns!"

"Give 'em beans!"

The December dusk was falling, and through the dusk rang the

merry voices of the Rookwood juniors. Tommy Dodd, and Cook and Doyle, released from detention, had come out of their house, looking for a little trouble to liven them up. The rain was long over, and it was bitterly cold and almost freezing. Under the old Rookwood beeches there was still plenty of snow, and the three Tommies were not long in finding the trouble they sought.

A snowball landing on the back of Gunner's neck started the ball rolling. Gunner and Dickinson minor replied in kind, and more Classics came to their aid, and more Moderns rallied to Tommy Dodd & Co., and a terrific battle was soon in progress.

Jimmy Silver & Co. came racing out of the House to join up, Lovell's Georgic having been, at long last, completed and handed over. More and more Classics and Moderns crowded into the fray, amid terrific shouting and scrambling and stumbling and yelling of rival war-cries.

The scrap was going strong when Marcus Manders came in at the gates, and stared gloomily and maliciously in the direction of the snow fight.

Young Manders had no taste for that kind of fun, and no desire whatever to back up his House in a scrap. Indeed, but for other troubles on his mind, he would probably have seized the opportunity of reporting to Mr. Manders that scrapping was going on between Moderns and Classics. But for once young Manders had something more important than sneaking to think about.

He stood and stared at the snowballing juniors in the distance. All the Fourth seemed to be involved in the battle; even Tubby Muffin had rolled up to back up his House. Even the slacker Leggett was in the ranks of the Moderns.

Manders stood looking at them with black thoughts passing in his anxious mind. He moved off at last with set lips, and he did not go to his own House. He crossed over to the Head's House on the Classical side. All, or nearly all, the Fourth were out there in the December dusk, and it was an opportunity he had hardly dared to hope for. Lovell had unexpectedly caught him in the end study that afternoon, but Arthur Edward Lovell was too busy now to give him a thought. Marcus Manders loafed into the House with a casual air, looked at the notice-board as if interested in the papers there, and, with watchful eyes about him, took an opportunity of slipping up the staircase. He scudded as soon as he entered the Fourth Form passage, and reached the end study breathless.

The passage was deserted, all the studies were dark. It seemed as if not a fellow was indoors. He was safe—safe! And he would not be long. But his heart was beating quickly as he entered the end study, and closed the door softly behind him.

His face was white.

To save himself from the consequences of what he had done there was only one way—a deeper plunge into shame and guilt. He had desperately made up his mind to it. The man had to be paid—somehow, anyhow! Lovell's desk was locked, but it was a common, flimsy lock. It would break easily enough. He would not be many minutes.

He groped for the key of the door, but it was gone. But it did not matter, a few minutes would suffice.

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him. Nobody was likely to come to the study.

The interior of the room was growing quite dark, but he did not dare to turn on the light. He hurried across to Lovell's desk, and groped at it in a faint hope that it might now be unlocked. But it was locked, and he took out his pocket-knife and opened the largest blade, and inserted it under the lid of the desk.

Snap!

It was the blade of the knife that snapped, and in the silence the sound startled him and made his heart throb.

But he thrust in the stump of the broken blade, and pressed, and this time the flimsy lock snapped.

A moment more and he raised the lid. Thievish fingers groped in the desk.

In a little compartment he found several currency notes rolled up, and a little heap of silver. Six or seven pounds—

Click!

Marcus Manders spun round from the desk. That click came from the door of the study.

He stood rooted to the floor.

There had been no key in the lock, and yet that click was the click of the key as it turned.

He was dumfounded.

Slowly it forced itself into his startled, terrified mind that he had not been, as he supposed, unobserved when he crept to the study; some Classical fellow had seen him from a study. Yet how did it happen that the key of the door had been removed, and was in the possession of the fellow who had watched him?

His heart almost died within him.

He moved at last, dragging himself with almost palsied limbs to the door. He knew that it was locked; but he tried the handle. The door did not move.

The sneak of Manders' House was a prisoner in the end study.

He bent to the keyhole, and whispered hoarsely:

"Who is there?"

"Little me."

"Mornington!" hissed Manders.

"Right in once."

"Open the door!" breathed Marcus Manders.

Mornington laughed.

"Open the door, for mercy's sake!" Manders spoke through the keyhole in a shrill, frightened whisper. "Let me out, Mornington! Let me out before they come in!"

"Have you bagged the club funds yet, you reptile?" asked Mornington scornfully. "Lovell's cash safe in your pocket—what?"

"I—I haven't touched—"

Mornington laughed again.

"I heard the lock go," he answered. "I was waiting for that, before I turned the key on you."

"Oh!" breathed Manders.

"You see, I knew what it meant when I heard what you were at this afternoon," chuckled Mornington; "and when I heard about your merry meetin' in Giles' shed, I rather figured it out that you would try again. That's why I borrowed the key of the study when those chaps went out, thinkin' out this little stunt for your benefit. I was in my study on the watch, you reptile, when you came sneakin' along. I fancied you'd jump at a chance like this, and you did." Mornington laughed lightly.

"Mornington!" breathed the wretched junior.

Valentine Mornington slipped the key of the end study into his pocket and

walked away down the dusky passage, whistling. Marcus Manders staggered across the study, and collapsed into the armchair, almost fainting with terror.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoner of the End Study.

"MORNY, you slacker—" "Why didn't you join up, Morny?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell. "We've had no end of a tussle with the Modern cads."

A crowd of Classical fellows came tramping cheerily into the House, after the snow-fight with the Moderns. Many of them were muddy, and most of them were breathless, but all were merry and bright. After a really terrific battle Tommy Dodd & Co. had been driven right back to their own House, and snowballs had whizzed fairly into Manders' House after them, till Knowles and other Modern prefects sallied out with their canes, and the Classics retreated. Mornington, lounging in the hall with his hands in his pockets, grinned cheerily at Jimmy Silver & Co. as they came in, breathless and ruddy.

"I've been busy, old bean," answered Mornington lightly. "So has young Manders. He's in your study now."

"In our study!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Just that!"

Lovell gave a snort.

"I'll boot him out fast enough!" he exclaimed. "I'll give the cad butting into my study!"

And Arthur Edward Lovell almost flew up the stairs.

The Fourth-Formers followed him up to the passage, and Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived at the door of the end study. Lovell was thumping on it angrily.

"The door's locked!" he exclaimed.

"I locked it," said Mornington.

"Eh?"

"Come along to my study, and I'll explain."

Valentine Mornington walked into his study. Arthur Edward Lovell gave an angry snort, and thumped on his door again.

"Are you there, young Manders?" he roared. "Are you there, you sneak?"

There was no answer from the end study. Manders, palpitating with terror, was silent.

"Oh, come on!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "Let's hear what Morny has to say."

The Fistical Four followed Mornington into Study No. 4. Errol was there with the dandy of the Fourth, and Oswald was in the study.

"Now, what's all this rot?" asked Lovell testily.

"Listen, and I will a tale unfold, old bean," said Morny cheerfully. "I've been lookin' after the club money while you've been snowballin' the Moderns. I had a sort of idea that young Manders had come after it, and would come after it again. And he did."

Mornington explained in a few words.

"So I locked young Manders in the end study," Mornington finished up, with a grim smile. "He pleaded to me to let him out, but there was nothin' doin'."

"Great pip!" ejaculated Lovell. "You actually heard him crack the lock on my desk?"

"Actually!"

"The awful rotter!" exclaimed Oswald indignantly. "We jolly well ought to call the Head to find him there."

"The fellow's a thief," said Mornington. "But now he's locked in the study he will take jolly good care not to be found with the money in his pockets. He's a good hand at lyin', but I think he will find it rather hard to explain away breakin' the lock of a desk where money is kept, though. But we don't want an awful disgrace in the school—fellow expelled for stealin'. My idea is to give him a jolly severe lesson. Let him roost in the study for a few hours, thinkin' that the Head is comin' to see him there; and after that I fancy he will keep his hands from pickin' and stealin'. He's an awful bad egg, but I've saved him from becomin' a thief, and if the lesson's impressed on his mind, he may keep to honesty as the best policy—what?"

Jimmy Silver put the key of the end study in his pocket.

"We'll leave him there till prep," he said. "He can meditate on his jolly old sins, and think it out that honesty is the best policy. The money's safe enough. He won't dare to touch it, in the circus. Let him roost!"

And the Fistical Four went downstairs again, and Marcus Manders was left to "roost," as Jimmy expressed it, in the end study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Last of Marcus Manders!

OLD Mack, the porter, stared. Often and often he had seen Mr. Roger Manders looking cross.

But he had never seen Mr. Manders look so terribly cross as he looked now, whisking in at the gate with a face like thunder.

Mr. Manders did not heed the school porter, or even observe his astonished stare.

He strode away to his own House, with a black brow.

Knowles of the Sixth was in the Hall, chatting with Catesby by the fire, and Mr. Manders called to him: "Knowles!"

The Modern prefect looked round.

"Find my nephew, and send him to my study at once!"

"Certainly, sir." Mr. Manders whisked on to his own study.

In that apartment he did not sit down; he paced to and fro, angry and impatient, waiting for Marcus to come in.

He was terribly disturbed. That shabby, coarse, red-faced man whom he had met in Coombe Lane—was it possible, was it barely possible, that he had spoken the truth? How could he have told such a story, if there was no truth in it?

But if Mr. Padger's story was true, what then? The nephew whom he had befriended and favoured, whom he had supported through thick and thin, was a young rascal, an arrant young blackguard. There was danger—terrible danger—that he might make the name of Manders a byword in Rookwood School—that he might, at any hour, bring overwhelming shame and disgrace upon the Modern Housemaster.

Knowles of the Sixth came at last. But he came alone.

"Manders of the Fourth is not in the House, sir," said Knowles. "Nonsense!"

Knowles bit his lip. "He is not in the House, sir."

"The gates are locked," said Mr. Manders. "He cannot be out of gates. He must be in the House, Knowles."

"He may be over on the Classical side, sir," suggested Knowles, wonder-

ing at the anxious disturbance in his nephew. But I shall soon ascertain."

And Mr. Manders whisked up the staircase.

He reached the door of the end study in the Fourth, and turned the handle. The door remained fast.

"Let me in at once!" he exclaimed. "The door's locked, sir!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, hurrying up, key in hand, his comrades following him. "I'll unlock it at once, sir."

"What!" thundered Mr. Manders. "My nephew is locked in your study! What lawless ruffianism is this?"

Jimmy inserted the key in the lock without answering.

"The Head shall hear of this!"

(Continued on page 28.)

"Can you tell me whether my nephew is in this House, Mr. Dalton?" he asked snappishly.

"Really, I do not know," answered Mr. Dalton. "As it is not yet time for lock-up, he may be here. Perhaps some of the juniors can tell you, Silver!"

"Yes, sir." Jimmy Silver came up.

"Do you know whether Manders of the Modern Fourth is in this House?" asked Mr. Dalton.

"Oh!" ejaculated Jimmy.

"I see that you know something about it!" snapped Mr. Manders surlily. "Where is my nephew, Silver?"

"He—he—he's in my study!" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"And what is he doing in your study?" snapped Mr. Manders. "I did not know my nephew was a friend of yours, Silver, and I should certainly not approve of such a friendship."

Jimmy Silver coloured.

"He's not a friend of mine!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Nothing of the kind. I never asked him into my study. I jolly well wouldn't."

"No jolly fear!" chimed in Lovell hotly.

"That will do, my boys," said Mr. Dalton severely. "It is very odd that Mr. Manders' nephew should be in your study at all."

"I suppose this is what these boys would call a rag," said Mr. Manders bitterly. "Some wretched trick has been played on my



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The Treasure City!

(Continued from page 26.)

"Come on, you chaps! I guess where Pie's dad can go we can, and we oughter be in the thick of it. Got your pockets full wi' cartridges? Right! Then away for St. George and Merry England!"

They broke cover and charged, with the few remaining blacks, over the boulder-strewn ground, firing as they went, and bringing kneeling forms toppling down from the low ramparts.

They had almost reached the gate when there was a loud shout, and a gigantic black form blocked the opening.

"Do not come!" cried M'bala. "Get back, and wait patiently. My lions are doing the good work. Listen!"

Above the shrieks and cries of the frightened defenders, roar upon roar went up from the throats of the savage creatures, who dashed in and out amongst El Hajar's men, bringing one down with a blow from a paw, and felling another, crushed and mangled, to the earth.

The city was one medley of terrified sound, so that the four adventurers were glad when the conflict was over, and M'bala had taken back the animals to their cages.

When the king reappeared triumph was written all over his face.

"How many stayed to face the lions? Only the Arab chief and three others. All the rest ran away, and even now are making off down the valley!"

"And El Hajar?" Joe asked.

The king inclined his head.

"El Hajar is dead. Theo, the King Lion, slew him. His body lies now under the parapet in the hot sun. Before the moon comes up he shall have burial."

And before the moon came up many things happened.

They went down into the ruined city, and, with the aid of the plan which the dying missionary had given them, found the hiding-place of the precious jewels.

At the base of an immense block of hand-carved stone, on which once had stood a carven image of one of those Egyptian gods which were worshipped from the Red Sea to the source of the White Nile, they found an opening behind a slab, which swung back at the touch of a spring.

A flight of steps yawned before them. Joe switched on an electric hand-torch and led the way.

On the bottom step he drew back, a cry of delight escaping him, for the very walls of the room in which he stood sparkled with diamonds.

There they were, set against the blocks of soft sandstone, in patterns and emblems, which told the story of King Nadur's reign, and of the vast treasures which he had brought with him after the sack and fall of Babylon.

Joe prised off a few of the precious stones with his knife, and handed one to each of the boys in turn. The largest, however, he gave to the king.

"There's the first instalment—a little bit on account all round!" he laughed.

The chums could hardly look round, so bright and dazzling was the glare which the diamonds reflected.

"What should you think the whole lot are worth?" Frank asked, in a hushed whisper.

Joe laughed.

"That little fellow I've given you—the size of a pigeon's egg—is going to fetch anything from thirty to forty thousand pounds in the open market. And there aren't hundreds, but thousands of 'em—bushels and bushels and bushels!"

"Makes Polruan's Millions look a bit small," said Dick, sitting down on the head of a fallen idol, and drawing a little sigh of content.

"Small!" said Joe. "That was pauper's work compared to this! Tomorrow we'll come down and make an inventory of every stone. For to-day we've done enough."

"And what the next day?" Frank asked.

"The next day!" said Joe. "Well, I guess we set our faces towards home. And you, Pie—"

Pie's eyes were shining.

"Dis chile reckon he ham gwine home wid his fader for a likklums holiday, taking dat bunjie feller wid 'uns. Then one day he come to England for a change, and see you an' Massa Frank an' Massa Dick again."

And that promise Pieface never forgot. One day, when Dick, Frank, and Joe were planning a new adventure, he suddenly reappeared. But that's a different story altogether, and has nothing to do with the finding of King Nadur's Diamonds.

THE END.

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KICKED OUT OF ROOKWOOD!

(Continued from page 23.)

"My nephew locked in a Classical study—upon my word! Disgraceful!"

Jimmy Silver threw the door open. Mr. Manders strode into the end study. It was dark; but Jimmy put on the light at once. Mr. Manders' angry stare turned on his nephew, blinking at him in dread.

"Marcus!"

"Uncle, I—I—" Marcus Manders gasped.

"What are you doing here?"

"I—I—"

Marcus' knees knocked together.

"Manders came in of his own accord, sir," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "He was locked in as a lesson to him."

"What—what! How dare you—" spluttered Mr. Manders.

"If you want your nephew expelled from the school, sir, you have only to take him to the Head!" said Jimmy Silver. "We were willing to let him down lightly; but the Head would not. If it comes before the Head we shall have to speak out!"

"What? What? What?"

Jimmy Silver, in silence, pointed to Lovell's desk. Mr. Manders followed the direction of the pointing finger, and saw the broken lock—the half of the broken knife-blade lying on the floor. The angry crimson faded from his face.

"Silver!" His voice was husky. "What—what do you dare to insinuate—"

"Nothing, sir," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "Your nephew can tell you why he came to this study, and what he was doing here when he was caught and locked in. But let him tell you in private, not before the Head."

Mr. Manders looked at him a long and searching look. Then his gaze turned upon his nephew—white, terrified, cringing, his knees knocking together with fear. The Modern House-master seemed to breathe with difficulty. His voice was hardly more than a whisper when he spoke again.

"What—what is kept in that desk, Silver?"

"The funds of the junior football club."

Mr. Manders did not speak to Jimmy Silver again. He fixed his glinting eyes upon his nephew.

"Follow me, Marcus!" he said.

"Come back to your House at once!"

He strode out of the end study, and the wretched junior limped after him.

There was surprising and welcome news in the Fourth Form of Rookwood the following morning.

Marcus Manders was gone!

It was great news in the Fourth. Tommy Dodd & Co. fairly beamed over it; it really seemed too good to be true that they were never going to see the sneak of Manders' House again.

But, good as it was, it was Marcus Manders was gone, and good. His sins had found him out at last, and the sneak of Manders' House had been turned out of Rookwood.

THE END.

(You'll laugh loud and long at: "LOVELL GETS THAT CHRISTMAS FEELING!"—next week's story of Rookwood.)