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FOUR OTHER STUNNING STORIES

The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

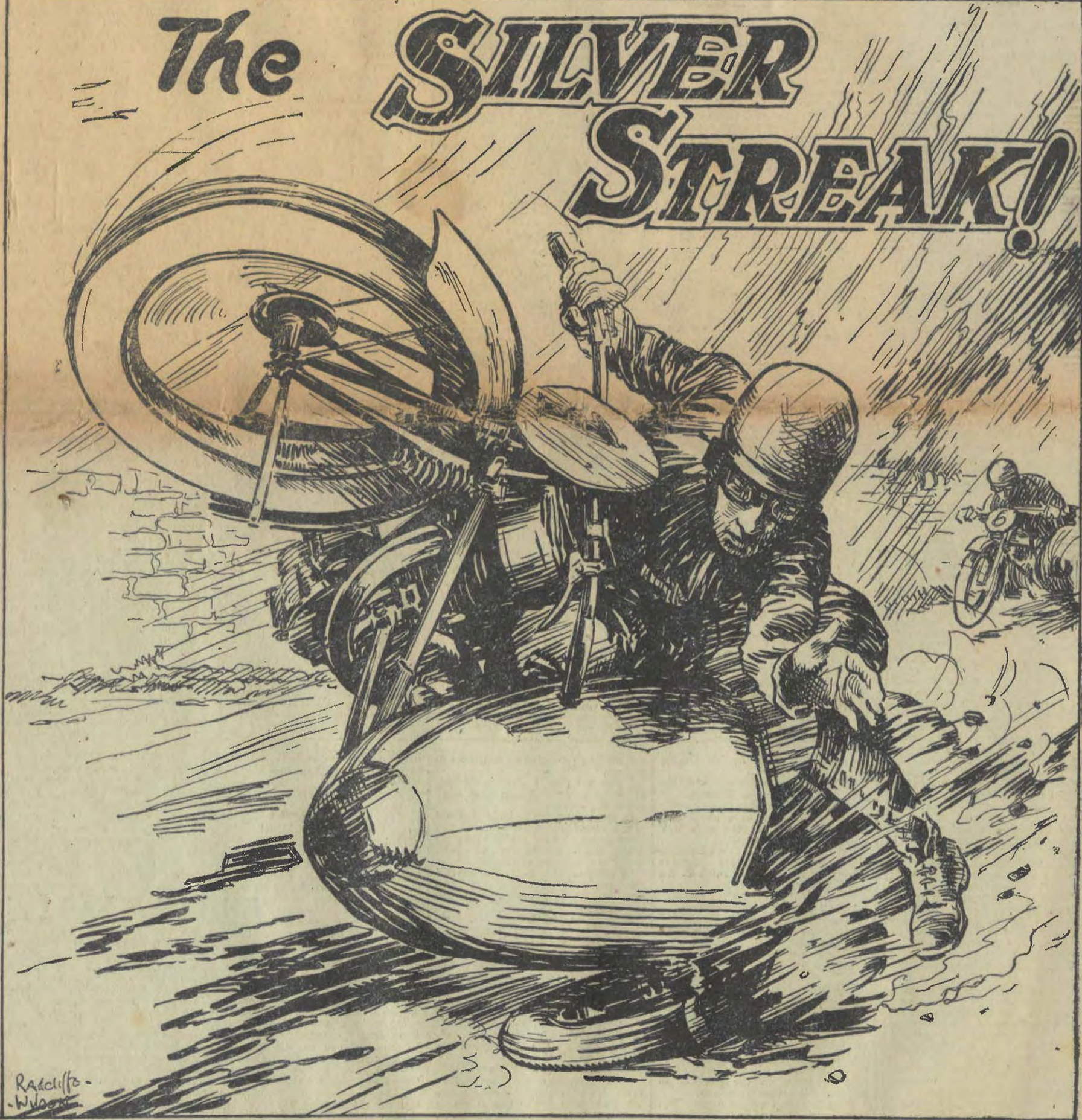
EVERY MONDAY.

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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending June 28th, 1924.]



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

A STORY OF THE BOYS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



The 1st Chapter.
Mr. Greely Goes It!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

His expression showed that trouble was coming.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Put To The Test!

By Owen Conquest.

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

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

Victor Gaston shrugged his shoulders.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Silence!" he exclaimed.
"What?" roared Mr. Greely, petrified.

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

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

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

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

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

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

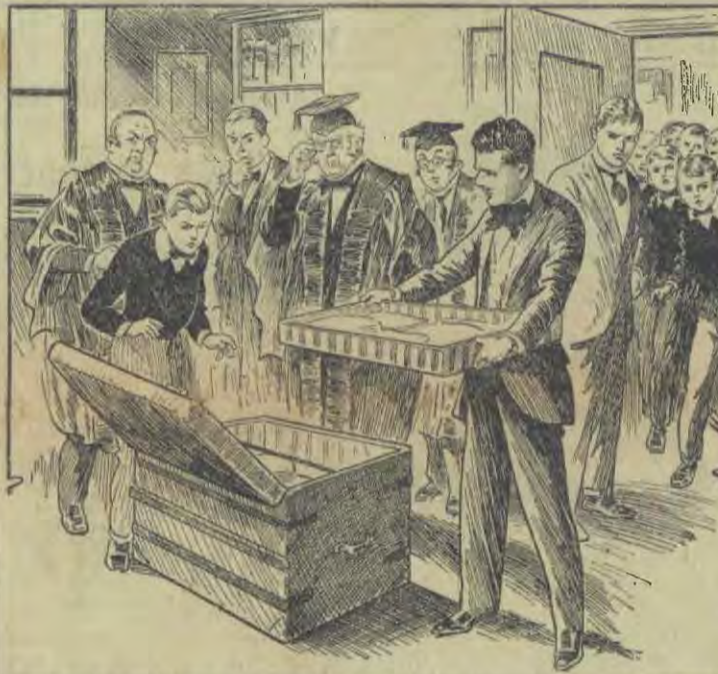
The French master started.
"This afternoon," repeated Mr. Greely. "The boy—Peele of the Fourth Form—admits that he went to the room intending to play a trick on the French master. Monsieur Gaston suddenly entered, and to escape observation Peele hid himself in the wardrobe."

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

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

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

Mr. Greely paused—not for a reply,



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

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

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

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

"He is quite prepared to do so."
"If it should prove false, he will be expelled from Rookwood, I should hope."

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

Mr. Greely paused again. All eyes were fixed on the French master. It was a dramatic moment.

The 2nd Chapter. Calling in the Head!

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

In spite of himself, Jimmy was worried.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Bravo, Froggy!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Good old Mossco!" shouted Mornington.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arthur Edward Lovell snorted.

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

Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful.

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

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

Jimmy Silver shook his head decidedly.

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

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

"Hallo, here he is!"

"Peele, you cad—"

"Peele, you rotter—"

"Peele, you Hun—"

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

"Wait and see!" he sneered.
"You've told that footling ass Greely—" began Rawson.

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

"You cheeky rotter!" roared Lovell.

"Bump him!"

"Hands off!" yelled Peele, as the excited juniors closed round him.

"I tell you, I— Yoop! Ah! Help! Yarooop!"

Bump, bump, bump!

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

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

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

Peele sat up.

"Ow! Groogh! Moooooh!" he mumbled.

"Go!"

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

"Sir—" began Mr. Greely.

(Continued overleaf.)



Put To The Test!

By Owen Conquest.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Some of the masters glanced round, and the chortle was instantly suppressed. Really it was not a time for laughter.

Stately and dignified, the Head arrived at the door of Victor Gaston's room. The French master opened it, and stood gracefully aside for his numerous visitors to enter. Fortunately, the apartments in the Rookwood School House were spacious. Otherwise the French master might have had some difficulty in accommodating so many visitors all at once.

After the staff had marched in the corridor outside was swarmed with fellows of all Forms. Nobody wanted to miss this show. Serious, indeed solemn, as the proceedings were, irreverent fags actually looked upon them as a show—indeed, some of them described the proceedings as a "shindy."

All eyes in the room were on Victor Gaston now.

Mr. Greely gazed at him in wonder

Dr. Chisholm checked him with a wave of his hand.

"Mr. Dalton has acquainted me with your amazing statement, Mr. Greely. I attach no importance to it whatever."

"Sir! I—I—" stuttered Mr. Greely.

Another commanding gesture from the Head.

"I told you before, Mr. Greely, that I had the very best recommendations with Monsieur Victor Gaston. He is a known man in his profession. That he ever bore the name of Felix Lacroix I do not credit for one moment. I blame myself for having yielded so far as to make inquiries concerning this man Lacroix. I have now been informed, Mr. Greely, that the bank-robber, Felix Lacroix, escaped from prison a few weeks after he had received his sentence."

"Did I not say so?" exclaimed Mr. Greely.

"You did. And I have this to tell you, Mr. Greely, that the circumstance that a bank-robber named Lacroix has escaped from prison does not in the slightest degree shake my faith in Victor Gaston."

"Sir!"

"There is no connection between the two, save a fancied resemblance seen by no one but yourself," said the Head. "Now, sir, I shall investigate this further accusation you have made. Your statement that Victor Gaston is Felix Lacroix is, I am certain, unfounded; but it is an accusation that he cannot actually disprove, as he has no means of producing a bank-robber who is now in hiding from the French police. But this latest accusation, sir, can be put to the test. I will examine the trunk you speak of in Monsieur Gaston's room. It shall be opened to the view of the whole staff of this school. And unless the criminal implements to which you have alluded, sir, are found there, I shall expect you to resign your position at Rookwood."

There was a hush.

Mr. Greely set his plump lips hard. "I submit, sir," he said. "I do not fear the test. I have done my duty, and if I am to suffer for it I am prepared!"

There was a touch of dignity in the portly Fifth Form master as he spoke. Dr. Chisholm bowed coldly.

"We will, then, proceed to Monsieur Gaston's room at once—with Monsieur Gaston's permission," he added courteously, turning to the French master.

"Certainly, sir," said Victor Gaston.

"You will call Peele of the Fourth, Mr. Dalton. He had better be present, as this accusation rests on his statement."

"Very well, sir!"

And Dr. Chisholm turned, and rustled in great dignity from the Common-room.

The 3rd Chapter. Put to the Proof!

"What a giddy procession!" remarked Valentine Mornington of the Classical Fourth. "Like a giddy circus!"

Some of the fellows grinned. Morny's description was a little irreverent, considering the great importance of the personages composing the procession. Certainly it bore no resemblance whatever to a circus procession.

First went the Head, lofty, grave, commanding, dignified. After him went Mr. Dalton and Victor Gaston, side by side. After them the rest of the Rookwood staff, in twos. Peele cruised in the ofling, as it were, like a light frigate keeping company with a line of battleships.

It was a most imposing procession. But follows in the Rookwood Fourth were capable of seeing humour in everything, especially Mornington.

"Where are they going?" asked Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth, arriving on the scene as the procession started up Big Staircase.

"Into the Ark, I should think," answered Mornington. "The animals went in two by two, you know."

BOYS' FRIEND FAVOURITES!



It can be truly said that Valentine Mornington, who shares with Kit Erroll Study No. 4 in the Classical Fourth Form passage, is one of the most amazing characters in all Rookwood.

Morny, as he is called by all his friends in the school, has, in the past, been a somewhat wild and reckless youth. As a matter of fact, on one

and perplexity. His belief was complete that the man was a criminal playing a part at the school. He was absolutely convinced of the truth of Peele's statements. Peele was fairly well known to be untruthful, but his earnestness in making his report to Mr. Greely had not been possible to doubt. And if he was speaking falsely he was facing the "sack." Pardon for such a statement, if unfounded, was impossible.

Peele simply could not have risked it, much as he detested Victor Gaston. So Mr. Greely was sure of his ground. Yet the coolness and self-possession of the French master amazed and disquieted him. How could the man be so cool, so self-possessed, with conviction at hand?

"Where is the trunk?"

It was the Head's deep voice.

"Here, sir!"

Victor Gaston pointed to the large metal-bound trunk.

"One moment!" interposed Mr. Greely. "Let us make sure that this is the trunk in question. Peele!"

"That is the trunk, sir!" faltered Peele.

Peele was uneasy now. He knew what he had seen; he could believe his eyes. Yet the Frenchman's coolness confounded him, as it confounded Mr. Greely.

"Monsieur Gaston, will you be kind enough to unlock that trunk?" said the Head.

"Certainly, sir."

Victor Gaston produced a bunch of keys. From the keys he selected one,

and inserted it in the patent lock of the trunk.

The lid was raised. Round the big trunk stood the Rookwood staff, and they all looked into it. They saw a tray packed with shirts and similar articles. The Head made a slight gesture. Shirts and collars and neckties were useful, and, indeed, indispensable articles. But they seemed to introduce an element of the ridiculous into these grave proceedings.

Victor Gaston lifted out the tray. The interior of the mysterious trunk was revealed.

From that interior Peele had seen the Frenchman lift the leather bag containing the set of steel implements. He had seen that, unless he had been dreaming while he crouched hidden in the wardrobe watching the man. Yet what did the icy coolness of the Frenchman mean? He could not have got rid of the tell-tale implements. Peele knew that he had not been to the room since the time he had been watched there.

Peele began to wonder dazedly whether he had, after all, been the victim of a delusion. Certainly it began to look like it.

The Head, with a touch of disdainful impatience in his face, glanced into the trunk. He saw a number of articles of clothing, neatly folded, a bundle of French newspapers, and two or three other articles, but the space was mostly empty.

"I am ashamed to trouble you, Monsieur Gaston," said the Head; "but,

VALENTINE MORNINGTON OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

occasion he has actually been expelled! But the days when Mornington played the "giddy blade" are now past, and in spite of the fact that he still retains some of his old recklessness, he is now quite a straight and decent fellow. And for this fact Kit Erroll, his staunchest friend and study-mate, is mainly responsible. Where Mornington in the days gone by would not dream of listening to the reasoning of any other fellow in the school, he would always give Kit Erroll a hearing, and the latter's sound counsel in time sank home. There is no doubt whatever that today Mornington values the friendship of his loyal study-mate. Certain it is that Morny could not have a better fellow with whom to associate.

The Dandy of the Fourth is a nickname by which Mornington is known, and this on account of the expensive and up-to-date clothes that he wears. He also sports an eyeglass and favours a top-hat. In spite of his fastidious tastes Mornington is by no means a wealthy fellow.

since we are here, perhaps you will empty the trunk."

"Sans doute, monsieur."

Quietly, sedately, Victor Gaston lifted the articles from the trunk and laid them aside.

Cyril Peel's brain swam. He could see the bottom of the trunk now—everyone present could see it. There was no sign of the leather case he had described to Mr. Greely—no sign of the set of steel implements.

Was he dreaming—had he been dreaming? His brain was in a whirl.

Mr. Greely stared into the trunk with a fixed stare. His belief had been complete, unshaken. But he had to trust the evidence of his eyes. The mysterious trunk was empty, and nothing of a criminal nature, nothing of a suspicious nature, had been revealed. The trunk was as harmless as any other master's trunk at Rookwood School.

Dr. Chisholm's grave face grew graver and grimmer. His eyes fixed themselves on Horace Greely, with an almost terrifying expression. There was a long silence, broken at last by the Head's deep voice.

"Well, Mr. Greely?"

The Fifth Form master did not speak. He could not. He was simply dumbfounded.

Mr. Dalton spoke quietly.

"I am afraid that you have allowed an unscrupulous boy to deceive you with an absurd story, Mr. Greely," he said. At that moment, the Fourth Form master quite pitied the unhappy Mr. Greely.

All Horace Greely's pompous importance had left him now. He stood limp, dismayed, crushed.

"It is clear," said the Head, "that Mr. Greely has been deceived. That is no excuse, however, for his conduct in renewing his absurd accusation against a gentleman whom we all respect." He bowed to Monsieur Gaston. "Mr. Greely, you see for yourself, I presume, that your statements are absolutely unfounded."

Mr. Greely choked.

"I—I—it—it would appear so," he articulated.

"You withdraw your accusation?"

"I—I—"

"A plain answer, sir!" snapped the Head.

"I—I am bound to do so!" gasped Mr. Greely. "I—I have been deceived. I—I have certainly been misled."

"You owe Monsieur Gaston an apology."

Mr. Greely almost squirmed.

"I—I apologise!" he stuttered.

"Do not distress yourself, monsieur," said Victor Gaston. "You have done me an injustice. But I am assured that your motives were good—it is only that you have made a mistake. Let it be forgotten."

"Monsieur Gaston is generous," said the Head. "But such incidents as these cannot be allowed to recur at Rookwood. Mr. Greely, you know the consequences of your action."

The Fifth Form master raised his head.

"I know, sir! I resign my position

Quite one of the best-looking boys in the Fourth, Valentine Mornington is an excellent scholar. Nevertheless, he is not one to pay much attention to lessons, for, to use his own expression, they bore him stiff!

Morny is fifteen years and nine months of age, two months younger than Van Ryn, the eldest boy in the Fourth.

Like most boys at Rookwood, Mornington does well in sports. It is, however, at football that he shines most of all, and he holds a regular place in both the Junior School and the Classical Fourth Form teams. He is also quite good at cricket, being useful with both bat and ball. And Jimmy Silver, captain of the Fourth, hardly ever drops Mornington from his side when King Cricket holds sway at Rookwood. As a matter of fact, Jimmy experiences great difficulty in keeping up a good cricket eleven, and fellows like Morny, who are always consistent, can generally be sure of their place.

There is no doubt that Mornington, now that he is reformed, is a credit to Rookwood. Still, a fellow of his uncertain temperament is liable to break out at any time and to fall back into his old reckless ways. However, it is to be hoped that Mornington will not do this. But who knows? Time alone will show.

(The Duke is the Boys' FRIEND Favourite for next Monday.)

in this school. I am ready to leave Rookwood. I have done my duty—at least, what I conceive to be my duty. If I must suffer for it, I do not complain."

And Mr. Greely, with that, walked out of the room. The crowd in the passage respectfully made room for him to pass. That Mr. Greely was a "footling" ass, that he had made a ghastly mistake, all the school believed. But he was down now—down and out—and there was not a murmur as he went.

The 4th Chapter.

The Broken Link!

Cyril Peele stood with his knees knocking together.

The Head's glance turned on him, and that glance almost froze Peele's marrow.

His turn had come!

Unless he had been under some strange delusion, some mysterious aberration of the senses, he had seen what he had told Mr. Greely that he had seen. Yet the trunk stood empty before him, and he was convicted in all eyes as a reckless slanderer and deceiver. Deceiver he was, by nature—he had never scrupled to deceive when deceit served his turn. And it is the fate of liars never to be believed when they are telling the truth.

"Peele!"

The wretched junior made a faint sound.

"Peele! You have told Mr. Greely a falsehood, a wicked slander of a master in this school!"

"I—I— No, sir!" groaned Peele. "I saw—I mean, I—I thought I saw what—"

"Silence! You have not a good reputation in your Form, Peele; you are known to be habitually untruthful. But this example of your falsity passes all bounds. Such a boy cannot be suffered to remain at Rookwood. Peele, you are expelled from this school."

Peele's miserable glance turned on Mr. Dalton. The Fourth Form master was distressed and troubled.

"I cannot speak a word for you, Peele," he said. "You have acted recklessly, wickedly. You must take the just consequences."

Victor Gaston glanced at the boy, and there was a strange expression on his face.

"May I speak, sir?" he asked.

"Certainly, Monsieur Gaston," said the Head graciously.

"This boy, sir—it is on my account that you are sending him away from the school. That is very distressing to me, sir. He has injured me, but I forgive him very freely. Might I beg of you, sir, to attempt to take a more lenient view?"

Dr. Chisholm frowned.

His word was law in Rookwood, and it irked him to have the slightest of his decisions questioned in the slightest degree.

"Really, Monsieur Gaston," he said stiffly.

Peele stared at the Frenchman blankly. Was this the criminal he had denounced—this man who was trying to save him from the fate he had brought upon himself?

"It is perhaps impertinence for me to speak, sir," said Victor Gaston diffidently. "But it is I who am the injured party in this matter, is it not so? I feel sure that this unhappy boy did not fully realise what he was doing. If he should be given another chance, I am assured he will make the best of it."

There was a long pause.

"Very well," said the Head at last. "It is due to you, Monsieur Gaston, to be vindicated by the severest possible punishment of your reckless accuser. At your personal request, however, I will rescind that punishment. Peele shall be flogged. Peele, go to my study and remain there till I come."

Peele limped from the room. Jimmy Silver & Co. allowed him to pass in silence. He had escaped expulsion from Rookwood, but he was booked for a flogging; and a flogging was enough for him, without any demonstration from the juniors. Slowly, wretchedly, Cyril Peele limped down the stairs.

In Monsieur Gaston's room there was something like an ovation for the French master.

The Head spoke gracious words and shook hands with him before he went. The other masters followed his example. Richard Dalton remained after the others had gone.

"I am rather glad that this has occurred, Gaston," said the Fourth Form master. "It has been a painful incident, but it has finally cleared you from any possible suspicion. Even Mr. Greely must now recognise his mistake."

"You think so?" said Victor Gaston.

"I hope so, at least. And no one else has ever distrusted you, excepting that wretched boy Peele. It was kind—it was noble of you to speak a word for that wretched boy!"

Gaston smiled slightly.

"Why should he suffer?" he said.

"He has injured you—slandered you most wickedly!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton warmly. "He deserved to be expelled."

"I should be sorry if he suffered on my account, all the same," said Victor Gaston. "As for the flogging, that does not matter; it will instruct him not to play the spy. Right or wrong, it is base to play the spy."

He smiled again.

"And you, Dalton, you never lost faith in me?"

"I never had a moment's doubt," said Richard Dalton.

"You have not known me long, but you have become my very good friend, mon vieux," said Gaston. He looked earnestly at the young Form master. "Richard, mon ami, you shall never have reason to repent of your faith in me. If in the past I have been guilty of errors, in the future at least I shall never be unworthy of your friendship."

"I do not think your errors can have been very great, old fellow," said Richard Dalton, smiling. "And we shall always be friends I hope."

When Richard Dalton had followed the rest, Victor Gaston closed the

door and quietly turned the key in the lock.

Then he came back to the empty trunk and stood looking into it, standing for several minutes motionless, with a dark and gloomy expression on his handsome face. Strange thoughts were working in his mind.

He stirred at last and bent over the trunk.

His hand groped over the bottom of the trunk and touched a hidden spring. A secret lid rose, revealing that the trunk had a false bottom, with a narrow cavity beneath. From that cavity the Frenchman drew a leather case. He closed the lid again.

His brow darker than ever, he stood with the leather case in his hand, opening it, and staring gloomily at the array of bright steel implements it contained.

He closed the case at last, and thrust it into an inner pocket under his coat.

Then he quitted the room.

The gloomy expression was gone from his face, his look was careless and debonaire as usual, as he strolled down the big staircase and out into the quadrangle.

Richard Dalton was at his study window; but the Frenchman did not appear to observe him. He walked down to the gates. Apparently he did not want company in his walk.

Darkness had fallen when the French master returned to Rookwood. And no one in the school was likely to guess that in deep dusk by the river he had plunged that tell-tale case of implements into deep water—to sink into thick mud at the bottom, and to remain for ever hidden. Whatever his motive, the link had been broken between Victor Gaston, French master, and Felix Lacroix, hunted by the French police.

The 5th Chapter.

A Dog With a Bad Name!

Arthur Edward Lovell grinned as Peele of the Fourth came limping into the passage by the studies. Peele had come back from the Head's study—and he looked as if he had not enjoyed his interview with Dr. Chisholm. His face was pale, his lips twitching, his eyes burning. Bitterness and malice were "written large" in his features.

As a rule, fellows who had the ill-luck to hit up against a Head's flogging were sure of sympathy. But there was little or no sympathy for Peele in the looks of the fellows in the Fourth Form passage. Peele had asked for it—begged and prayed for it, as Morry put it—and now he had got it. Even had his allegations been true, still Peele did not deserve much sympathy. It was not for any bad qualities, but for his good qualities, that he disliked the French master. Certainly Peele would not have found fault with the worst of characters who had allowed him to slack and loaf through the French class with impunity.

There had been a great deal of slacking in the French "sets" in Monsieur Monceau's time. That was changed under Victor Gaston. He expected his pupils to work, and the fellows played up—as schoolboys generally will when they have a master who takes his work earnestly. But incorrigible slackers like Peele felt a sense of personal injury at being expected to work. He had always slacked at French—he had often "ragged" the French master in class—and he was enraged to come across a French master who put a stop to slacking and who put down ragging with a steady hand.

Peele's motives were well-known—and his untruthfulness was equally well-known. All the Fourth thought about his story was that it was a strangely "thin" story for a cunning fellow like Peele to put up. As Putty of the Fourth observed, a fellow of Peele's experience in lying ought to have been able to spin a better yarn than that.

Peele glanced round him at the Classical Juniors as he went to his study. His look was lowering and savage. Rawson was near his study door, and Peele shoved him roughly aside, out of the way.

Rawson turned on him angrily. Tom Rawson was a burly fellow, quite equal to handling two or three Peeles. (Possibly because he could have handled Cyril Peele so easily Rawson took that rude shove with patience. He stepped back, touched by Peele's white face.

Peele went into his study and slammed the door. His studymate, Gower, was there.

"Had 't bad?" asked Gower, with a curious look at him.

Peele nodded without speaking.

"You were an awful ass, you

know," said Gower. "It was too thick, old chap! I'm as much up against Mossoo as you are, but—really—Gower shook his head.

"Altogether too thick!"

Peele's eyes gleamed at him.

"Does that mean you don't believe me?" he asked.

"Believe you?" Gower stared.

"You don't mean to say that your yarn about the new Froggy was true?"

"Every word of it!" hissed Peele.

"Oh, can it!" said Gower. "The door's shut—nobody can hear you but me—so what's the good of keepin' that up?"

Peele leaned heavily on the table. He did not feel inclined to sit down just then. The Head had not spared the rod.

"It was true!" he said thickly.

"Every word! I'd swear it anywhere! How he got out of it I don't know! But it was true! Why, I should have been sacked if the brute hadn't put in a word for me. Do you think I'd have risked the sack?"

"Well, you did!" said Gower. "And it was jolly decent of him to put in a word for you after what you'd said about him."

Peele's thin lips writhed in a sneer. "Was it? Perhaps he's got a bit of a conscience. He knew that I'd told only the truth. And I dare say he didn't want me sacked, and my people kicking up a shindy about it. My father would have made a pretty

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

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

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

"You fellows think I was tellin' lies about the new Froggy?" said Peele in a low voice.

Snort, from Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Invisible tools!" grinned Lovell. "Has Froggy brought the jolly old cloak of darkness to Rookwood with him?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I tell you I've thought it out!"

Peele was almost feverishly earnest.

"I know the tools were there. There must be some secret place in the trunk. It's a big, heavy trunk, and there's room for it. A false bottom to it, perhaps. I've heard of such things. That's the only explanation."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Lovell.

"I can think of an easier explanation than that. There never was anything of the kind, and you made it all up from start to finish, because you've got a down on Froggy. Isn't that nearer the mark?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

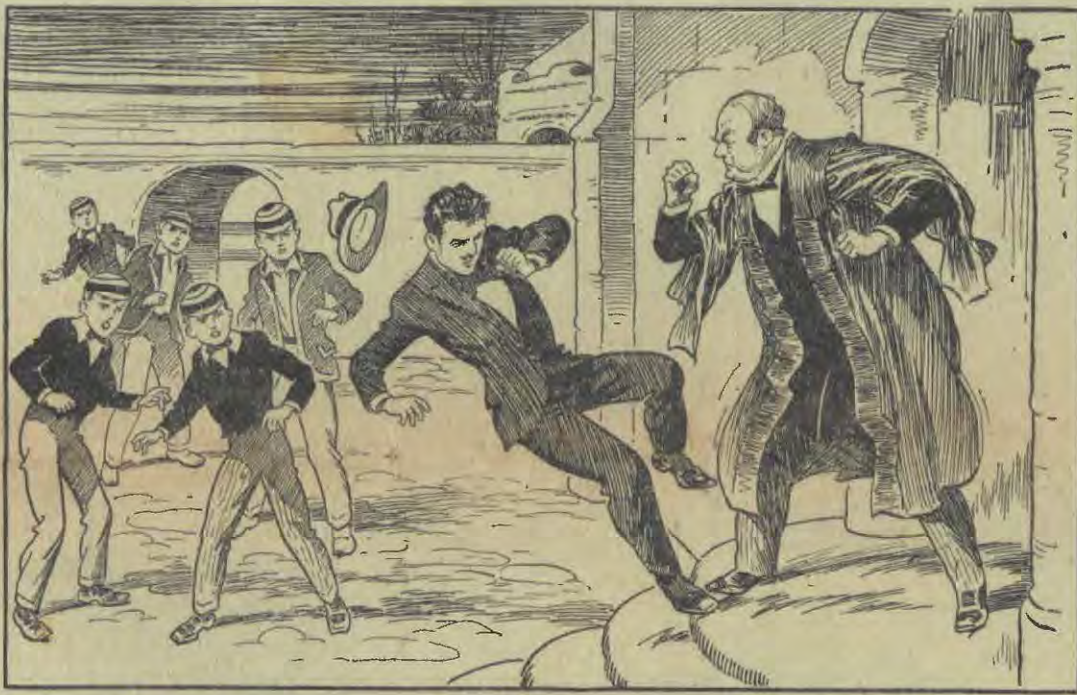
"I know I'm a dog with a bad name," said Peele bitterly. "But this is the truth."

"You are—a jolly bad dog with a jolly bad name," said Arthur Edward Lovell emphatically, "and if you keep harping on this subject you'll get a jolly bad licking."

"I tell you—"

"That will do!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver impatiently. "Stop it, Peele. Another word about Froggy, and we'll lay you over the table and give you six."

Peele gave the Fistical Four a bitter look. But he did not speak another word. He turned, and walked sulkily out of the room. Jimmy Silver made a grimace.



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

fuss, I can tell you—bearin' from me that I'd been booted out of Rookwood for calling a thief a thief. I can tell you, there'd have been such a fuss that Lacroix couldn't have stayed on here calling himself Gaston."

Gower shook his head.

"You can always argue, Peele," he said. "But there's nothing in it. Old Greely made a silly mistake—and you hooked on to it because you hate the new Froggy. That's all there is about it. What's the good of sayin' you saw him take burglars' tools from his trunk, when the Head and all the masters looked, and there was nothin' there?"

"I know—I know—" breathed Peele.

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

Peele pressed his hands to his burning forehead. The mystery of it puzzled him, baffled him, bewildered him. Yet he knew what he had seen. "Cut it out!" was Gower's advice. "Don't say anythin' more about it, old bean. It was a misfire, and the sooner you drop it the better!"

Peele scowled by way of answer, and Gower left the study. Gower did not believe a word of the story—which was natural enough, considering how it had been disproved, and considering his knowledge of Peele. Peele was left to his reflections, which were black enough. He knew that had the story been told by Jimmy

"We know you were, you mean!" he growled.

"I give you my word that it was the truth!" said Peele.

"And what's your word worth?" asked Raby, with a curl of the lip.

"You gave your word that you knew nothing about Tubby Muffin's guinea when it was missing, didn't you? Your word's worth about as much as your bond, and that's worth nothing."

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

"It was true!" muttered Peele.

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet.

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

"I tell you—"

"Cheese it! Another word about Mossoo, and you'll get a Form ragging."

"Hear, hear!" said Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Will you let me speak a word?" hissed Peele. "I've thought it out now. I know how Gaston pulled the wool over their eyes. I know the tools were in the trunk—they're there now."

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

And Jimmy Silver & Co. forgot Peele.

The 6th Chapter.

The Man who Repented.

"Poor old Pompey!" murmured Hanson of the Fifth.

Talboys and Lumsden grinned.

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

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

No one, probably, would have suspected that there was sentiment con-

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

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

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

Victor Gaston came up the steps. Mr. Greely was in the middle of the big doorway, and he did not stir. He fixed his eyes upon the Frenchman.

"Bon soir, monsieur!" said Victor Gaston politely.

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

"Mon Dieu!"

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

There was a shout.

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

"My hat!"

"Phew!"

There was a rush to the spot. Seniors and juniors, prefects and fags, crowded up, amazed, in consternation.

At the bottom of the steps Victor Gaston sprawled, dazed and breathless. On the steps stood Horace Greely, panting, flaming with wrath.

And from the starlight of the quad came the Head, returning to the House from the school library.

Dr. Chisholm stopped dead. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

Victor Gaston struggled to his feet. There was a smear of red on his mouth, and his eyes were blazing.

"A fight!" yelled Tubby Muffin. "Greely and Froggy! Ow! Ow! Leggo my ear!"

"Silence!" said Mr. Dalton, compressing Tubby's ear for a moment, and then hurrying to the doorway.

Mr. Greely stood panting. The Frenchman had his foot on the steps to mount, his hands clenched.

"Gaston!" exclaimed Richard Dalton.

"Stop!" It was the Head's thunderous voice.

Mr. Greely spun round towards the Head. At the sight of him all his wrath evaporated. He realised what he had done. The purple face of the Fifth Form master grew white.

"Sir—" he stammered.

"Control yourself, Monsieur Gaston," said the Head icily. "I have seen what occurred. This is no place for a display of fistuffs, I command you to keep the peace."

Victor Gaston breathed hard.

"I am at your orders, sir," he said

(Continued on page 832.)

The other men were listening eagerly Black Dano stroked his beard with a huge, podgy hand and scowled.

"There may be some truth in it," he said to the men who had gathered round. "Some foreign pigs may have heard rumours that our canoe carried a valuable cargo. If it is lost, it is lost. While that ship stays in the river, the next consignment must be taken through the forest by bearers. And our losses must be recovered. Make these dogs of Indians work doubly hard. For every pound of rubber and every ounce of gold brought in, let them bring two. We have been too kind, and allowed the dogs to get lazy. Send the word round, and if it is not obeyed, knife, pistol, whip, and halter to man, woman, and child, and the blazing torch to their huts."

"Those are good words," said one of the men, with a laugh. "They are too fat. More work will thin them down."

The old woman went back to her pot, and as the sun was going down, and it was the time for drinking, Black Dano brought out his bottle of spirits, a glass, and a gourd of water. The slave-driver had no suspicion of danger, but felt perfectly secure. No vessel of any size could come within a hundred miles of him. Even if the channel had been deep enough, a labyrinth of narrow waterways, and thousands of acres of reed-grown morasses and alligator-infested swamps lay between his fastness and the river.

He might have been more uneasy had he noticed how the old Indian woman kept watching him drinking and smoking as the light failed. All his hirelings came from the south, gaol-breakers or criminals flying from justice. Like himself, they only understood the dialect of the Indians imperfectly. The old crone, who hated Dano with a venomous hatred, had given him the first message from the forest, not the second one, and it was days old. The second she kept to herself as she crouched beside the smoky fire.

"The big ship stays down the river,

mother," was the message shouted through the trees, "but the little ship is drawing near, pulling a boat, and both carry white men with guns. And we think the boy who guides them is the boy who fled from Andario's village when Black Dano put it to fire and sword. And it may be that these strange white men who love gold are more cruel even than Black Dano, for so they must be if they do not fear him, so we are fleeing into the forests to escape them."

When the moon came up over the clearing, Black Dano had finished his bottle of spirits, and was sprawling across the table, snoring heavily. Shouts awakened him. One of his punitive parties had returned after burning a village and shooting down the native population who had been either too unwise or too infirm not to escape into the forest. They had killed a couple of pecary, and they started two fires to roast the animals, while their captain reported to Black Dano.

Just as the moon rose over the trees, dimming the arid light of the fires, and the warm night air was heavy with the smell of roasting pig, a man stepped out of the shadow of the trees, a man dressed in a blue serge tunic and white-topped yachting-cap. He carried a little gold-topped cane. As the men round the fire leapt up, their hands on their knives and revolvers, and Black Dano lifted himself heavily to his feet, the stranger paused to strike a match and light a cigarette. Then he walked forward.

"Good-evening!" he said. "I seem to have startled you! Such a display of weapons may perhaps be taken as a compliment, but they are objectionable. Kindly put that one down."

It was Ferrers Lord, and he spoke to Black Dano, who held a revolver in his great fist. Then like a flash the plant little gold-topped cane whished, and out down across the giant's wrist. The agony of it brought a roar of pain from the bearded throat of the blackguard, and as the weapon fell from his para-

lysed hand, Ferrers Lord took one leap across the table, dived behind Black Dano, and locked both arms round his neck.

Not a man dared to fire, for Ferrers Lord had made a barrier of the huge body of their chief. Black Dano heaved himself backwards, his tongue lolling out of his mouth, his eyes bulging, and such a grip as he had never experienced in his lifetime crushing his windpipe flat. Black Dano's men stood motionless, irresolute, spellbound. And then, with a tigerish scream, the old Indian woman snatched a knife from one of them, ran forward, and made a lunge at Black Dano's heart.

The knife missed, struck the table, and broke off short at the hilt, for at that instant both men fell. Moonlight and twilight gleamed on bayoneted rifles as the men of the Lord of the Deep formed a circle round the clearing, and Frou's deep voice bellowed "Hands up!" With almost superhuman strength Ferrers Lord dragged Black Dano over the fallen table and bench.

"My cane, please, Ching!" he said; and the prince picked it up and put it in his hand.

While his men rounded up and disarmed the gang, Ferrers Lord lashed the chief of the Indian-tormenters until he howled for mercy, and until his own strong arm grew tired. In the morning the boat, towed by the launch, went creeping through the tortuous channels loaded with prisoners. What their fate was to be they did not dream, but others knew. In that lonely, ice-bound island in the Polar seas, called Desolatia, Ferrers Lord had room for such scum of the earth in his convict-gangs.

THE END.

(Another treat! — "Spudg's Catch!" Next Monday's great new story of Prince Ching Lung, Gan Waga & Co., and Spudg. Don't miss it! Order your BOYS' FRIEND in advance and avoid disappointment!)

The cracksman's tools, dropped an hour ago into the river, buried in mud under flowing water, were gone — for ever. The man who had sunk to crime, and who had repented and resolved upon a brighter future, had broken that link with his past, and that resolve had saved him. For had the tools been still in the hidden place in the trunk this would have revealed them, and the discovery of them would have justified Peele in what he had done, and proved beyond doubt the guilt of the man he had accused. As it was Peele had discovered nothing!

"Mon Dieu!" muttered Victor Gaston. "Is it an omen? Is there pardon for the past, and honour and self-respect for the future? May Felix Lacroix vanish for ever from the knowledge of men and Victor Gaston take his place, an honourable man among men of honour? Is this a warning to me that the straight path is the path of safety?"

It seemed so—he believed so. But at the back of his mind, like a troubling shadow, lingered the thought that Nemesis lies always in wait for the evil-doer, and that somehow, somehow, the price of the past had to be paid.

THE END.

("The Price of the Past!" is the topping long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. and the new French master at Rookwood School. Don't miss it! Order your BOYS' FRIEND in advance and avoid disappointment!)

In Your Editor's Den



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers upon any subject. Address your letters to: Editor, "Boys' Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

THE RETURN OF THE DUKE.

Slippery as an eel, always ready to doublecross those who oppose him, and with his old agility at turning up when least expected, our old friend, the Duke, makes his bow next week. I had something to say last week concerning the new series of yarns specially written by Walter Edwards about the Duke and Rollo Dayton. The first story appears on Monday next. Tell your pals. This is an extra golden treat, and no error.

"CONVICT 379!"

That is the title of the grand tale which will be found in next week's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. It is a real top notcher, and will make all past records look tame affairs. Walter Edwards was out to surpass himself, and he has done it. The Duke will get a tremendous welcome, no matter in what garb he comes, but the title of the grand story, though it is suggestive of the broad arrow and other sinister things, does no more than the compelling drama and the all in grip of an irresistibly appealing yarn. Mind you do not miss this clever and baffling mystery.

"SPUDGE'S CATCH!"

Among the many other good attractions for our next number must be reckoned the matchless new tale by Sidney Drew. Gan Waga and his companions are wallowing in the mazes of the tropical jungle away in the backlands of Brazil, and they have their share of hair-raising adventures. By this time the Eskimo is accustomed to strange surroundings, and he manages to make himself at home in hot swamps which have nothing in common with the snowy scenery of his native home. Sidney Drew is great in his new story.

"THE PRICE OF THE PAST!"

Sooner or later the transgressor is bound to go off the deep end. In next week's wonderful Rookwood yarn by Owen Conquest we get a whiff of the day of reckoning so far as the very mysterious French master is concerned. Bad deeds have to be paid for. I consider next Monday's story will take a very prominent place indeed in the annals of Rookwood. It is an out and out clever tale, with plenty of brilliancy about

it, and just the kind of thing to captivate the reader. Victor Gaston is a personage whose career at the school will not be forgotten in a hurry.

"DOWN ON THE FARM!"

You will appreciate the next story of Don Darrel and "Bulldog" Holdfast. The two famous characters find themselves called upon to unravel a sensational mystery which has put everyone by the ears in a far away countryside. It is an eminently reasonable yarn, with a breathless interest right through it. To be down on a farm suggests having a quiet time in the woods and fields, but there are always exceptions. On this occasion we find happenings of tremendous import, and a mystification which taxes the ingenuity of everybody concerned.

"THE PRIDE OF THE COUNTY!"

Nothing could beat the continuation of A. S. Hardy's cricket serial. Jim Lyle acquits himself in grand style amidst circumstances which call for every quality of manhood. But such traits can be looked for with confidence in a fellow who is a cricketer born. The coming chapters of this great story are chock-full of the right spirit and all the magic of the summer game.

"THE SECRET OF THE GALLEONS!"

By Roland Spencer.

Just a word here about the new serial in our Companion Paper, the "Gem." Look out for it. "The Secret of the Galleons!" is one of the finest adventure stories ever penned. It is an adventure yarn out and out, with just such a background of romance as catches the imagination and stirs the heart. The plot comes straight out of the old days when the Spanish Armada met its grim destiny on the voyage home, and went down. But here and there the secret of the resting place beneath the waves of a golden galleon was kept and handed on through the years. The new "Gem" serial deals with just such a case, and the adventures that arise therefrom are legion. I can confidently recommend this fine story to all my chums.

Your Editor.

PUT TO THE TEST!

(Continued from page 823.)

quietly. And indeed, after the first moment or two of intense anger, there was something like compassion in the glance he gave Mr. Greely.

Richard Dalton slipped his arm through his friend's.

"Come!" he whispered.

He led Gaston away. The Head's thunderous frown was fixed upon the unhappy Fifth Form master.

"Mr. Greely, you have strangely forgotten yourself. It was my intention to allow you to remain here till a new master was appointed to the Fifth. After this outrageous display that is, of course, impossible. I request you, Mr. Greely, to leave Rookwood by an early train in the morning."

"Sir, I—"

Headless of the Fifth Form master's stammering voice, Dr. Chisholm swept into the house. Mr. Greely glanced round him. The white in his face changed to crimson. With faltering steps he made his way to his study and closed the door.

Not till he had disappeared did Mr Dalton allow his friend to enter the house. In passages and studies excited discussion was going on, and all Rookwood agreed that Mr. Greely's amazing action was the limit—the very outside edge, as Mornington put it.

Victor Gaston left Mr. Dalton in the hall and went up to his room. He was taking the Fourth Form master's sage advice to keep out of Mr. Greely's way for the rest of that evening.

He entered his room and switched on the electric light. He had been long out of gates—it was some hours since he had been in his room. But as he glanced round him he gave a start. The room had not been unvisited in his absence.

The great trunk, which had been the subject of investigation that day, lay on its side. The strong wooden bottom of the trunk had been hacked open with many a gash.

Victor Gaston stood and stared at it.

"Ciel!" he murmured.

Long he stood looking at the broken trunk. Who had done this? His enemy, Horace Greely? That was impossible!—Peele? Yes, he knew that it was Peele! Knowing what he had seen, knowing, after reflection, that the criminal tools must be hidden in some secret receptacle in the trunk, Cyril Peele had done this. The bottom of the trunk, smashed in, revealed through several openings the space under the false bottom inside. It revealed the space, and nothing more. The searcher had been disappointed, after all.

Victor Gaston breathed deep and hard.

Repentance had come to the man who had sinned, and it had come just in time to save him.

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