

**THE BOYS
OF AXLEFORD**

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The boys of Axleford by Charles Camden

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CHARLES CAMDEN

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OF AXLEFORD**

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THE BOYS OF AXLEFORD

BY CHARLES CAMDEN

AUTHOR OF "WHEN I WAS YOUNG"

psued
c. Rowe, Richards

ILLUSTRATED BY

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
I. FIBBING BILL	1
II. SULKY SAM	17
III. DASHING GEORGE	33
IV. SHY DICK	50
V. LAZY TOM	62
VI. FUNNY PAT	76
VII. BLUSTERING FRED	94
VIII. HONEST NED	117
IX. PALTRY PETER	131
X. JOLLY JIM	155
XI. TRUANT JACK	169
XII. SCIENTIFIC STEPHEN	197

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I.

FIBBING BILL.

AXLEFORD SCHOOL was a nice warm-looking old place, with twisted chimneys, and windows in all kinds of funny places in its red walls, that were as ripe as red apples, and in its grey roof-ridges, that were like ever so many little ranges of mountains; and it looked out over a green paddock that almost bulged over a sloping mossy wall, like a plump lady's instep over her shoe, on to a winding country lane that led down to the village of Axleford. I suppose the village was called so because the little stream that ran across the lane came up to the axles of the carts

and waggons that forded it. There was a little wooden bridge for foot-passengers. Elms and chestnut trees grew along the wall of the school paddock, and almost covered the lane with their spreading branches. All round about the school there were woods and meadows, corn-fields and turnip-fields. On the side of the paddock nearest Axleford there was a great pond, that we could bathe in and fish in in warm weather, and skate and slide on in cold. There was a leaky old punt on it, too, that belonged to the school-house. And close by the school there was a ruined old grey church, with bushy ivy growing all about it, and no end of birds' nests in its walls; and a big old farmyard, full of empty barns, and cart-lodges, and stables, and cow-houses, and cattle-sheds, formed part of the school premises. Most of the boys who went to school at Axleford thought it a very jolly place. I was there for a good many years, and am going to tell you something about some of my school-

mates, good and bad. They won't mind my telling tales out of school now. A good many of them, perhaps, are not left to mind. I shall call them, at starting, names that papa, and mamma, and the girls, and the "kids" can understand, but you and I know that boys aren't called like that at school. So I shall give their proper nicknames too.

Fibbing Bill, for instance, *we* called Crammer. He wasn't a bad sort of fellow in some things, but then he did tell such awful lies. He was so fond of getting into scrapes that at first you thought him plucky, but he always tried to get out of his scrapes by a fib of some kind, and therefore you couldn't respect Crammer long. There are some scrapes that it is almost natural for you youngsters to get into (you wouldn't be youngsters, but precocious grandpapas, if you didn't get into them), and there are some scrapes you have no business whatever to get into; but, whichever kind you do get into, don't back out