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The BOYS' FRIEND 1d

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending May 8th, 1915.]



Neville came up with the lighted lantern, panting. The searchers gathered round Knowles of the Sixth as the light gleamed upon him. Bulkeley's eyes almost started from his head as he saw the prefect, bound hand and foot, with the bag fastened over his head. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "Is—is that you, Knowles?"

JIMMY SILVER'S FIX!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale dealing with
THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Very Rough.

Knowles of the Sixth strode into the junior common-room at Rookwood, with a black frown upon his brow, and a stout ashplant in his hand.

Knowles looked wrathful, and really it was not surprising. A very little sufficed to make Knowles wrathful; and a very great deal was going on in the junior common-room.

It had started as an argument. Tommy Dodd & Co. had come over from the Modern side to argue a

certain important matter with the Classical juniors. The common-room being on the Classical side, the Modern juniors hardly ever came there, excepting when they were looking for trouble. They had their own "den" in the Modern wing. On this occasion, as it happened, they were not looking for trouble. But they had found it.

Nearly all the Rookwood juniors, Modern and Classical, were dissatisfied with the junior sports captain. It was agreed on all hands that Smythe of the Shell was no good,

Tommy Dodd knew what was wanted. A new election, and a general rallying of Classical and Modern juniors to elect him, Tommy Dodd—that was Tommy's idea.

The Classics didn't see it. Jimmy Silver had his own ideas about what was wanted. A new election, and a general rallying of Moderns and Classics, to elect him, Jimmy Silver—that was his idea.

But Jimmy Silver was accommodating. He conceded that the case might be met by the election of one of his pals—Lovell or Raby or New-

come. He felt that he could not say fairer than that. As for the election of a modern cad, that was absurd on the face of it, and he put it to Tommy Dodd as a sensible chap.

Then the band began to play, so to speak. Voices rose crescendo, and from words the rival juniors of Rookwood proceeded to actions.

Both sides had really intended that the matter should be argued out peacefully and calmly—quite calmly. But somehow or other, after ten minutes or so, Jimmy Silver had Tommy Dodd's head in chancery, and Lovell was rolling on the floor with Tommy Cook, and Newcome and Tommy Doyle were staggering about in a loving embrace, and Raby and Towle were hammering one another, and a dozen other excited juniors were shouting, punching, trampling, pommelling, and generally raising Cain.

Then Knowles dropped in. Knowles, the head prefect of the Modern side, had a perfect genius for dropping in just when and where he was not wanted. But for Knowles, the argument might have ended quite satisfactorily, with no harm done beyond a crop of thick ears and

streaming noses and torn collars and scattered neckties. But it was just like Knowles.

"You young hooligans!" roared Knowles. "Stop that row at once!" "Cave!" squeaked Jones minor—rather late.

It was too late to "cave." The prefect was on the spot.

Jimmy Silver released Tommy Dodd, and Tommy Dodd released Jimmy Silver. Both of them blinked rather dazedly at Knowles. Lovell and Cook sat up breathlessly. The scrap ceased as if by magic.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Tommy Dodd disconsolately. "We're in for it!"

They were certainly in for it. Knowles advanced into the common-room, gripping his ashplant.

"You young ruffians!" he said. "Do you know that you can be heard all over the place? Now then, who started this?"

That was just like Knowles, too. The heroes of the Fourth had no intention whatever of accusing one another, and they simply blinked at Knowles.

(Continued on the next page.)

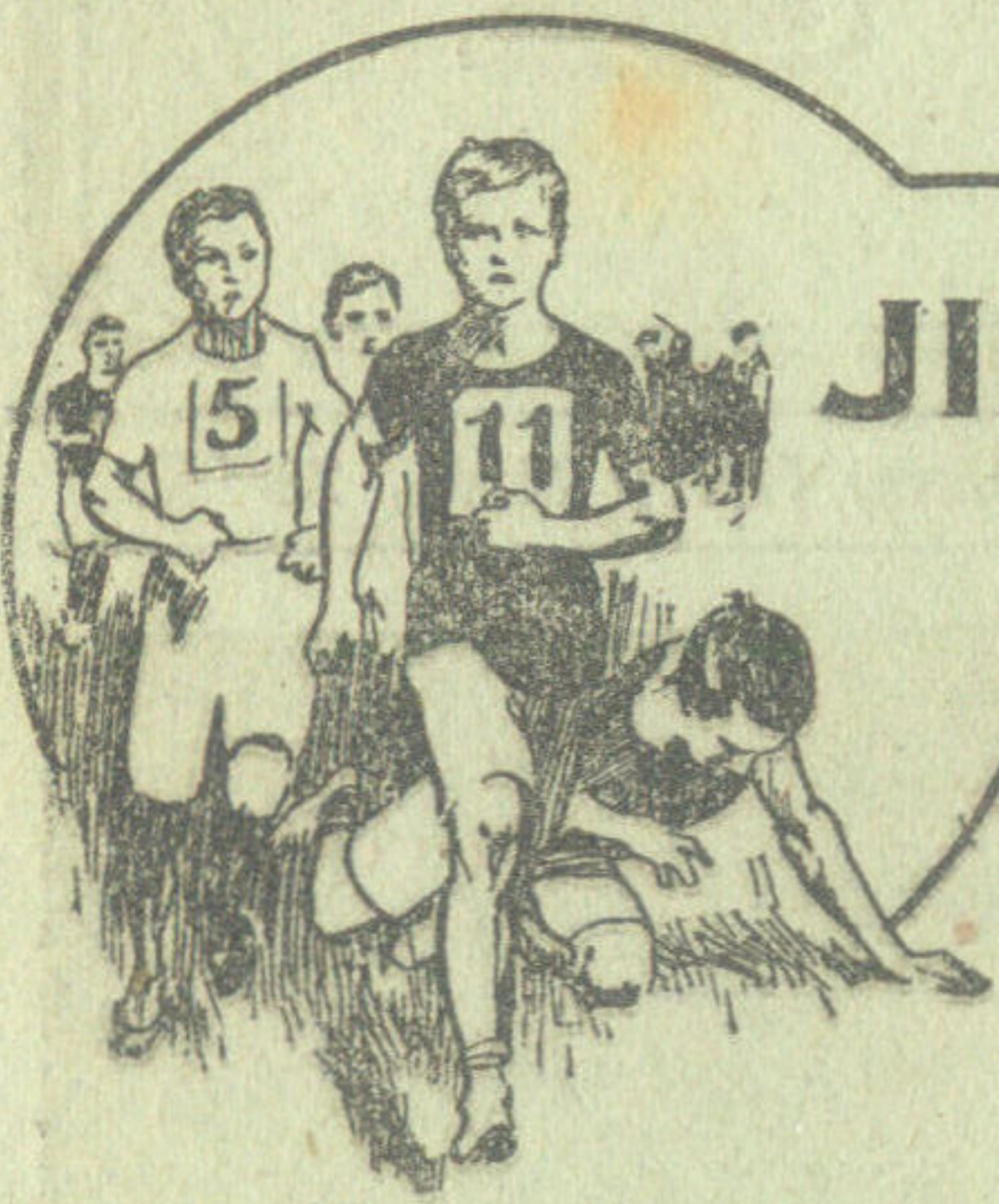
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YOUR EDITOR.



JIMMY SILVER'S

(Continued from the previous page.)

FIX!

"Sort of started by itself, I think, Knowles," ventured Tommy Dodd.

"We—we were only having a bit of an argument, Knowles," said Cook.

"Only talking about the cricket prospects," added Jimmy Silver. "We—we got a little excited, perhaps."

"I've no doubt you were the ring-leader," said Knowles, with a glare at Silver. "Well, I'm going to cane you all round. Now then, one at a time!"

"I say, Knowles—"

"You first, Dodd!"

Tommy Dodd grunted, and came to take his medicine. It was very bitter medicine.

Knowles gave him three on each hand, and Tommy Dodd was simply wriggling when he had finished.

"Oh, you beast!" gasped Tommy.

"What!"

"Ahem! I—I mean—"

"Come here again!" said Knowles.

"Oh, I say, Knowles—"

"Come here!" roared Knowles.

Swish! Swish!

"Ow! Ow!"

"Shame!"

Knowles glared round, as an indignant voice shouted.

"Who said that?"

"Sure, and I did!" said Tommy Doyle independently. "It's a baste ye are!"

"You next, Doyle!" said Knowles, closing his thin lips tightly.

Tommy Doyle went through it with a wry face. He suffered more severely than Tommy Dodd. Then came Tommy Cook's turn, and he wriggled with anguish. The three Tommies groaned in chorus.

Knowles was getting his hand in by this time. The rest of the Modern juniors took their punishment one after another. When he had disposed of the last of them the prefect turned to Jimmy Silver.

"You next, Silver!"

Jimmy Silver stared at him.

"Did you speak to me?" he inquired politely.

"Come here!"

"What for?"

"To be caned."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"You're dreaming, Knowles!" he said pleasantly. "You can't cane the Classical side."

"No jolly fear!" said Lovell hotly.

"You can report us to Bulkeley if you like, Knowles, or to Bootles. You know you can't lick us!"

Knowles set his teeth. He was exceeding his authority as a prefect of the Modern side in inflicting canings on Classical juniors. But that was one of Knowles' little ways. And he had a special "down" on Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Will you come here, Silver?"

"No, I won't!"

Knowles strode towards him, gripping the ashplant.

"Back up!" said Jimmy Silver.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome lined up with him at once. The Fistical Four had no intention whatever of being caned by a Modern prefect. The rest of the crowd looked on with intense interest; the three Tommies forgot to groan for a moment. The rebellious juniors were quite within their rights, but it was a serious matter to resist a prefect, even if that great personage was over-

stepping his just authority. But the Fistical Four were celebrated for their cheek.

"Hold out your hand, Silver!"

"Rats!"

"What!" yelled Knowles.

"Rats!" said Jimmy Silver coolly.

"You can't lick us, and you know it. We're willing to be taken to Bulkeley or to Mr. Bootles or to the Head if you like; but you won't touch us with that ashplant."

"Hear, hear!" sang out Hooker of the Fourth.

Knowles hesitated one moment. But he had gone too far to retreat now. He strode right at Jimmy Silver and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Let go!" roared Silver.

"Mind your own business, Knowles!"

"Clear off, you cad!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

The ashplant came down across Jimmy Silver's shoulders with terrific vim. Knowles had completely lost his temper.

"Collar him, youuffers!" yelled Jimmy Silver, struggling furiously in the grasp of the big Sixth-Former.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome rushed on Knowles. He was dragged back, and the ashplant torn from his hand. Raby tossed it out of the open window into the quad. Knowles uttered a howl of rage, and used his fists. Jimmy Silver went flying, and Lovell pitched across him, and then Raby and Newcome felt their heads being knocked together, and then Knowles pitched them over the two juniors on the floor.

Then the prefect strode out of the room.

Jimmy Silver & Co. sat up dazedly. They were feeling hurt.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Silver.

"The beast! The awful beast!"

"The horrible ruffian!" stuttered Lovell, clapping his nose with both hands. "The beastly prize-fighter! Oh, dear!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Groo—hooh—yow!"

There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the common-room. And for once Classics and Moderns were quite in accord. Their own little disagreements were completely forgotten. The Fistical Four and the three Tommies vied with one another in breathing vengeance upon the bully of the Sixth.

The 2nd Chapter. Done in the Dark.

Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, was having a talk with Knowles, who had come across to see him that evening. Knowles' temper was still a little "edgewise" from the happenings of the afternoon. The defiance of his authority by the Classical juniors irritated him.

Certainly, they had been pretty severely punished for it. But he was still irritated. Moreover, he knew that he might be called to account.

When he received Bulkeley's message asking him to come over he had no doubt whatever that Jimmy Silver & Co. had complained to their captain, and that Bulkeley wanted to see him about it. So Knowles had come over in a warlike humour.

But he was mistaken—the Fistical Four had not complained. Badly as

Knowles had used them, they were not the kind to tell tales.

Bulkeley wanted to talk about the cricket. For ten minutes the two talked together, and then Knowles left the study, and went out into the darkness of the quadrangle. He strode under the old beeches.

A sudden footstep under the heavy shadows of the trees made him pause and peer about him.

Even as he stopped there came a sudden rush of feet.

Knowles started.

"What—who— Oh!"

He had no time for more. Hands grasped him on all sides, and an open bag was dragged over his head and jerked tight round his neck.

The astounded prefect struck out furiously on all sides at random, but the surprise was so sudden that he was down on the ground in a few seconds, still struggling. He shouted savagely, but the bag muffled his voice.

A knee was planted on his chest, and he felt the grip of a pair of hands on each of his wrists.

He struggled wildly, but he was helpless. He knew that he was in the hands of juniors. He could tell that, but he had not caught the faintest glimpse of them in the darkness.

"You young—hounds! Help! Help!"

But the thick bag drowned his cries, and a hand jammed it tighter over his mouth, almost choking him with dust.

He felt a slip-knot placed over his right wrist and drawn tight. Then his hands were dragged together, and, in spite of his resistance, the cord was twisted tightly round his wrists and knotted.

The prefect lay gasping and choking, in almost a frenzy of rage. In the darkness under the elms the scene was passing utterly unsuspected by the rest of Rookwood; and the bag jammed over his head and face stifled his cries. He knew that his voice could not be heard.

His hands being secured, his unknown captors turned their attention to his feet. His ankles were bound tightly together, several hands going to work deliberately, with the evident intention of making a secure job of it.

Then a cord was passed round the bag, fastening it round his neck.

Knowles was almost suffocated by this time. Probably he would have been quite suffocated, but a knife was slit across the bag, making an opening before his mouth sufficient to admit air. He opened his mouth to shout, but his captors evidently expected that, for a muddy chunk of turf was promptly jammed through the slit in the bag, and Knowles sputtered and gurgled instead of yelling.

There was a pause in the proceedings, and he heard faintly a murmur of voices—only the faintest murmur, which did not enable him to distinguish them.

Not that he had much doubt as to who his assailants were. He was convinced that they were Jimmy Silver & Co. At least three or four pairs of hands had been busy upon him, and he was assured that they belonged to the Classical chums. He was as certain of that as if he could see them.

He lay panting and gasping, wondering furiously what his assailants were about to do. He soon discovered.

He was seized and raised from the ground, and this time he was certain that four pairs of hands were at work, for each of his arms and legs gave a hold to a different bearer. Four of them—the Classical chums of the Fourth, of course. Knowles inwardly resolved that they should pay dearly for it.

But what were they going to do? They couldn't intend to leave him like that. It was getting late in the evening; it would be bedtime soon. They could not intend to leave him out of doors.

He was alarmed now as well as

enraged. He did not know what direction he was being carried in, but two or three times he bumped against a wall or a tree, and he knew that his captors were skirting the quadrangle, keeping in the shadows out of danger of lighted windows.

He was bumped down at last.

He felt rough and stony ground under him. Not a word came from the assailants, but he heard a sound of retreating footsteps.

They were gone!

Knowles struggled into a sitting position, writhing with rage. He dragged madly at his bonds, but he could not release either hands or feet. The bag was tied round his neck, and it was impossible to get it off. Only the narrow slit in front allowed the air to enter. The unfortunate prefect began to shout, but the bag muffled his cries.

Where was he?

Had the young rascals set him down at a distance from the school buildings. If he did not make his voice heard, he was destined to pass the night there. The thought of it made him shudder.

No answer came to his cries. He rolled over desperately, working himself along the rough ground in the hope of reaching the quadrangle again. He brought up against a wall, and felt ivy dragging against him, and two or three loose stones rattled down upon him.

He guessed where he was then. He was in the ruins of the old abbey, which, though within the walls of Rookwood, was a considerable distance from the School House. He lay there, panting, blind with rage.

It was some time before the thought came to him to use his teeth on the bag. He succeeded in getting the edge of the slit between his teeth, and gnawed at it desperately.

The opening was soon enlarged, and he breathed more freely. Then he began to shout for help again, and his voice rang through the ruins, and echoed away over the old quadrangle of Rookwood.

The 3rd Chapter. Accused.

Jimmy Silver sat up in bed, in the Fourth-Form dormitory on the Classical side.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and the Fourth had been in bed for some time, and most of them had fallen asleep.

The Fistical Four, however, were still wakeful—for two reasons. They were still feeling the effects of that extremely painful "scrap" with Knowles in the common-room, and they were plotting and scheming schemes for making the bully of the Sixth sorry for himself. How exactly to make Knowles sorry for himself was a very difficult question, but it had to be answered somehow. The Classical Four did not mean to take their great wrongs lying down.

Jimmy Silver had been listening for some minutes, but not to the remarks of his comrades. He sat up at last.

"You fellows hear something?" he asked.

"I can hear Hooker snoring," said Lovell.

"Fathead! Something outside, I mean! Listen!"

"Oh, rot!"

"Listen, I tell you—"

The juniors listened. Faintly through the silence of the night a cry came, as if from a great distance.

"Help!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "It's somebody calling for help!"

Jimmy Silver was out of bed in a moment.

He bent his head to listen, and as the cry came again he ascertained the direction.

The big windows at one end of the dormitory looked towards the old abbey ruins. It was from this direction the cry came. The windows were

open at the top, or Jimmy Silver would have heard nothing. He mounted to one of the windows, and put his head out, and listened again. Clearer now, through the still air of the night, came the faint cry from the old abbey:

"Help!"

Jimmy Silver jumped down. "It's somebody in the ruins, calling for help," he said. "Nobody else seems to have heard it yet. Better go and tell Bulkeley."

"Yes, rather; we'll all come."

The four chums bundled into their clothes at top speed. Then they and two or three of their Form-mates dashed down the stairs four at a time, and sped away to Bulkeley's study.

Jimmy Silver bumped on the door, and opened it at once. There was an exclamation of wrathful astonishment in the study. Bulkeley and Neville, and Price of the Sixth were there discussing the cricket prospects, and the prospect of trouble with the Modern side over the cricket. They jumped up, staring blankly at the juniors as they appeared in the doorway.

"You young sweeps!" exclaimed Bulkeley. "What are you doing out of your dormitory?"

"There's somebody—"

"What?"

"Somebody's calling for help in the ruins!" panted Jimmy Silver.

"Stuff!" said Neville.

Bulkeley looked at the junior in amazement.

"Is this a lark?" he grunted.

"Honest Injun, Bulkeley!"

"Somebody in the ruins calling for help!" repeated Price. "What utter rot! How could anybody get into the ruins after the gates are locked?"

"We heard it," said Lovell.

"How could you hear it?"

"Through the dorm window," said Jimmy Silver. "We hadn't gone to sleep."

"Well, you ought to have gone to sleep," said Bulkeley. "More likely you went to sleep, and dreamed it. Still, we'd better look, you fellows. If there's nobody in the ruins, these young jackanapes will be licked all round."

"Well, I like that!" said Jimmy Silver indignantly. "After we've taken the trouble to come and tell you!"

"Go back to your dormitory," said Bulkeley. "Come on, you chaps! Better see if there's anything in it."

Neville and Price assented, and the three seniors hurried out of the house. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

"Back to the dorm?" murmured Raby.

Silver shook his head.

"We're going to see what's the matter," he said. "Dash it all, we gave the alarm, didn't we? They've no right to shove us out of it!"

"Hear, hear!" said Newcome.

"We might as well see the whole business through now we've started on it."

Jimmy Silver ran out of the house after the seniors, and his chums followed him. They were intensely curious to know what was the cause of the alarm, and they felt that they were entitled to assist in the investigations. Out in the open air, the cries could be heard more plainly.

"Help, help!"

"By Jove, it's right enough!" exclaimed Bulkeley. "Dash it! How dark it is! We'd better get a lantern. Get a lamp from the bike-shed, Neville, there's a good chap, and come after me!"

"Right-ho!"

Bulkeley and Price rushed away towards the ruins, and the juniors followed them, unnoticed in the dark. There was a pause of silence, and then the faint voice was heard calling again. It became louder as they drew near to the old abbey.

"That's Knowles' toot!" whispered Lovell.

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JIMMY SILVER'S

(Continued from the previous page.)

FIX!

"Knowles, by gum! Let's hope he's broken his neck!" said Newcome charitably.

They ran into the ruins. It was densely dark there, and they could see nothing but the rugged shapes of the old masses of masonry rising dimly on all sides.

"Where are you?" shouted Bulkeley.

"Here!"

"All right. We're coming! I can't see you. What's happened?"

"I'm tied up."

"Tied up!" ejaculated Bulkeley. He bumped into Jimmy Silver as he tried to find the direction of the voice. "Hallo! What are you fags doing here?"

"We've come to help, please."

Bulkeley grunted.

"We'll hunt for him then, as you're here," he said.

"What-ho! We'll soon find him." Neville was coming with the lantern. The light gleamed through the night as he came running up. But before he arrived the Modern prefect was found. Jimmy Silver stumbled over something in the dark, and there was a yell.

"Yow!"

"Hallo! Here he is, Bulkeley."

"Light this way!" called out the captain of Rookwood.

"Coming!"

Neville came up with the lighted lantern, panting. The searchers gathered round Knowles of the Sixth, as the light gleamed upon him. Bulkeley's eyes almost started from his head as he saw the prefect, bound hand and foot, with the bag fastened over his head.

"Great Scott! Is—is that you, Knowles?"

"Yes!" howled Knowles. "Get me loose, can't you?"

"I've got a knife," said Jimmy Silver.

"You young hound!" panted Knowles.

"Eh! What?"

"Don't come near me, you little beast! I'll have you sacked for this!"

"Wandering in his mind, I suppose," said Jimmy Silver, in great astonishment. "Blessed if I know what you're talking about, Knowles."

"You young liar!"

"Oh, crumbs! What is he burbling about, Bulkeley?"

"Cut him loose!" said the captain of Rookwood brusquely.

Jimmy Silver obeyed. He soon whipped through the cords, and Knowles was freed, and the bag was dragged from his head. He staggered to his feet, his face red and inflamed with rage.

He made a blow at Jimmy Silver, and Silver promptly dodged back.

"What's the matter with him?" Silver exclaimed, in amazement.

"Hold on, Knowles," said Bulkeley. "There's nothing to go for that kid about. It was he who heard you calling, or we shouldn't have known you were here."

"Yes, I suppose the young villain didn't dare leave me here all night!" panted Knowles.

"What! Do you accuse Silver—"

"Yes, I do!" roared Knowles furiously. "I was collared in the quad after leaving you, and I've been here ever since. They tied me up and dragged me here. Those four young soundrels!"

"My word!" stuttered Lovell.

Bulkeley looked at them sternly.

"So this was your work?" he exclaimed.

"No fear!" said Jimmy Silver promptly.

"Knowles must be wandering in his mind, I should think. Or else he's dotty!"

"Dotty, I should say," remarked Lovell.

Knowles made a spring towards them. The Fistical Four put up their hands at once. They had been the

means of rescuing Knowles from his uncomfortable position, and they did not mean to be rewarded with a thumping. Jimmy Silver's eyes were blazing.

"Yes, come on, you cad!" he exclaimed. "You won't find us so easy to handle as you did this afternoon. We're ready for you now!"

Bulkeley had caught Knowles by the arm, and he pushed him back. Knowles looked for a moment as though he would hit out at the captain of Rookwood.

"Hold on, Knowles!" said Bulkeley quietly. "This will have to be gone into. Do you say that you are certain these juniors assaulted you in this way?"

"Yes, I do!" howled Knowles.

"And we deny it," said Jimmy Silver. "It's a lie!"

Knowles, dusty and muddy and rumpled, strode furiously away, making directly for the School House. He evidently did not mean to lose any time in seeing the Head. Bulkeley bent a searching glance upon the juniors.

"Do you kids give me your word that you know nothing about this?" he asked.

"Honour bright!" said the Fistical Four, with one voice.

"Then who the dickens can have done it?" muttered Bulkeley.

There was sincerity and truth in the faces of the juniors, and it was almost impossible to doubt their assertion.

But Bulkeley was sorely troubled. Whether the chums of the Fourth were guilty or not, there could be little doubt that Classics had handled the unpopular Modern prefect, and the episode could not fail to make bad blood. It seemed that Bulkeley's efforts to draw the two sides together were doomed to failure.

"Must have been Classical chaps," muttered Neville, voicing the captain's thoughts.

Bulkeley nodded, and walked away to the house. Jimmy Silver & Co. followed, in a very disturbed frame of mind.

"Go back to bed, you fags," said Bulkeley. "The Head will want to see you."

And the four chums returned to their dormitory.

"You silly ass, we didn't do it! We hadn't the faintest idea it was Knowles there when we heard somebody yelping!"

"How did you come to hear him, when nobody else did?" asked Topham sceptically.

"Looks a bit fishy for you, anyway," said Townsend. "Besides, if you didn't do it, who did?"

"There's lots of fellows hate Knowles," said Lovell. "Might have been any of you chaps!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Townsend. "Don't try to put it on us!"

"Might have been some of the Shell chaps," suggested Flynn.

"It was some fellows who'd got their knife into Knowles," said Jimmy Silver. "He's always ragging somebody. Might have been some of the Fifth, for all we know. Anyway, it wasn't us!"

"You'd better get the Head to believe that!" grinned Townsend.

"So you can't take my word?" demanded Jimmy Silver, greatly incensed.

"Well, you would deny it, anyway!"

"Not if it was true, you rotter!"

"Bow-wow!" said Townsend. "You wouldn't own up and be sacked, I suppose! Here—yah—stoppit—leggo—hooohoooh—yowp!"

The exasperated Jimmy Silver yanked the dandy of the Fourth out of bed, and bumped him on the floor.

rubbing his head and mumbling. The news of the way Knowles had been handled afforded the Fourth-Formers pure delight. Nobody had the slightest sympathy to waste upon him. The Modern prefect had made himself too thoroughly disliked for that on the Classical side. Indeed, it was doubtful if the juniors on his own side would be displeased to hear what had happened. Knowles was a little too free with cuffs and lines and lickings to be popular even with the Moderns.

The Fistical Four followed Bulkeley downstairs, extremely disturbed in mind, in spite of their knowledge of innocence. That Knowles would make the matter as black against them as he could was certain.

Indeed, it was probable that he really believed they were his assailants; they had to admit that. At the very moment when they had first heard his cries for help, they had been discussing plans for vengeance upon him.

And everyone would regard it as a foregone conclusion that the assailants belonged to the Classical side. And who so likely as the Fistical Four? What others among the juniors had such cause to be bitter against Knowles? And what others were known to be so generally reckless and regardless of consequences?

The four Classics realised that they were in a bad box, and they did not feel happy as they filed into the Head's study after Bulkeley.

Dr. Chisholm was looking sterner than they had ever known him look before. The dark frown upon his brow made them feel glummer than ever. Knowles had had the advantage of telling his story first. The prefect, a little calmer now, but dusty and muddy as when he had left the ruins, was standing by the Head's table. He gave the juniors a bitter look as they came in.

Dr. Chisholm made a sign to the juniors to approach his table. They came up, and stood in a row before him.

"You know why I sent for you?" said the Head, in a hard voice.

"Yes, sir."

"A most outrageous assault has been committed upon Knowles—an outrage unheard-of in the history of Rookwood!" said the Head sternly.

"He accuses you!"

"I know he does, sir," said Jimmy Silver.

"You deny it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You assure me that you know nothing whatever about the matter?" asked the Head, searching their faces with his keen eyes.

"Nothing whatever, sir."

"It appears that you first heard Knowles calling for help. How did that come about, if you knew nothing of his situation?"

"We hadn't gone to sleep, sir," Jimmy Silver explained.

"You had not gone to sleep—so late?"

"We—we were talking, sir. We often jaw—I mean, chat—a bit before we go to sleep," said Jimmy Silver, "and the window of the dorm is towards the ruins. That's how we happened to hear him, and we came down at once and told Bulkeley. We didn't know it was Knowles then."

"Knowles tells me that he punished you this afternoon, and that you have acted thus from a feeling of revenge."

"He bullied us, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "He has no right to punish us. He came into our common-room and bullied us!"

"It would certainly be more judicious, Knowles, if you left the juniors on the Classical side to the Classical prefects," said the Head parenthetically.

Knowles bit his lip.

"No Classical prefects had taken the trouble to see to the matter, sir," he replied. "I found the common-room turned into a bear-garden. A dozen or more juniors were fighting."

"It was only a little scrap, sir—"

began Jimmy Silver.

"What!"

"I—I mean, only a tussle, sir. We didn't really hurt one another—just a—rag!"

"Knowles is always interfering with us, too," burst out Lovell. "He never will let us alone. Nobody on this side can stand him!"

"That will do, Lovell," said the Head drily. "By showing your personal animus against Knowles in this manner, you are adding weight to his accusation!"

"Oh!" murmured Lovell.

His outburst certainly had not improved matters.

The Head rested his chin in his hand, and scanned the juniors keenly. They looked flushed and disturbed, as was natural under the circumstances. It was no light matter to be brought



"You can come out, you sweep!" exclaimed Knowles, holding on tight to Tommy Dodd's legs. "I've got you!"

"You hear him?" panted Knowles.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Bulkeley. "If you were collared in the dark, Knowles, are you quite sure you recognised them?"

"How could I recognise them, when a bag was put over my head first thing?" shouted Knowles.

"Then you didn't recognise them?"

"I didn't see them; but I knew who they were all the time."

"You guessed, you mean," said Bulkeley.

"There wasn't much guessing required. They did this because I licked them this afternoon."

"You had no right to lick them," said Bulkeley coldly.

"So you are backing them up, after what they've done?"

"If they've done this, they'll be flogged or expelled," said Bulkeley quietly. "But it's got to be proved first!"

"Oh, I expect that from you!" sneered Knowles. "Luckily, it doesn't rest with you. I'm going to the Head!"

The 4th Chapter. The Lie.

Lovell lighted the gas in the dormitory, and the Co. proceeded to finish dressing. Most of the Fourth had awakened, and questions were showered upon the four juniors. The story of the discovery of Knowles in the ruins, bound hand and foot, made the Classical Fourth gasp.

"What a thumping lark, begorra!" said Flynn. "Serve the baste right!"

"Hear, hear!" said Hooker. "But there'll be an awful row! It's rather more than a joke, kidnapping a prefect and tying him up!"

"Blessed if I see how they had the nerve to do it!" said Townsend, the dandy of the Fourth. "Why, you may be sacked for this, you duffers!"

"Us!" exclaimed Raby.

"Yes, you. Didn't you say Knowles has gone to tell the Head you did it?"

"Yes, he has; but we didn't do it."

"Gammon!" said Topham. Jimmy Silver clenched his fist.

Townsend roared as he came down in a tangle of bedclothes. Jimmy Silver grasped his ears, and knocked his head on the floor.

"Now do you believe me, you fat-head?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Can you take my word now—what?"

"Yurroooh! Yes! Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulkeley looked in at the door.

"Stop that row!" he said angrily.

"You four are wanted in the Head's study at once. This isn't a time for ragging, Silver. You're in trouble enough already!"

"I don't see that I'm in trouble," said Jimmy Silver. "If Knowles accuses us of collaring him, Knowles is telling lies. It isn't a mistake—it's a lie!"

"You can tell all that to the Head!" growled Bulkeley. "Come with me!"

The four juniors followed him from the dormitory, leaving the Fourth in a buzz of excitement, and Townsend

Will you do Your Editor a good turn by asking a non-reader of THE BOYS' FRIEND to read Owen Conquest's magnificent school story— "Jimmy Silver's Fix!"



JIMMY SILVER'S

(Continued
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page.)

FIX!

before the Head on a charge of man-handling a prefect of the Sixth. It was a matter for a flogging at least, and possibly expulsion from the school, and the four Classics could not help feeling uneasy.

"This is a very serious matter," said the Head at last. "The matter could not very well be more serious. I should be sorry to think that four Rookwood boys could stand before me and utter falsehoods. I may ask you, Bulkeley, whether you have ever found these four boys untruthful?"

"Never, sir," said Bulkeley at once. "They are rather unruly sometimes, and have given some trouble, but I should not say that any one of them would tell an untruth!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. gave old Bulkeley grateful looks. They realised, too, that a good reputation had its value.

"You are convinced, Knowles, that the persons who assaulted you were these four boys?"

"Quite, sir. There is not the slightest doubt of it in my mind."

"You did not see them?"

"They were too cunning for that; it was in the dark, under the beeches. Of course, they had all that planned."

"There is, however, no actual proof, as you did not see them."

"There is actual proof against Silver, sir, and I conclude that his friends were the boys who were with him, as they are always his helpers in mischief."

"But you say that you did not see Silver?"

"I did not see him, sir, but I heard him," said Knowles, after a hesitation so brief as to be imperceptible.

"You heard him, Knowles?"

"Yes, sir, and recognised his voice!" said Knowles deliberately.

The 5th Chapter. Condemned!

Jimmy Silver started violently. The Head's face had become as hard as iron now. Even Bulkeley looked very grim. Indeed, even Lovell and Raby and Newcome gave their chum startled glances.

Dr. Chisholm bent his frowning brows upon Jimmy Silver.

"You hear, Silver?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Jimmy.

"I—I heard what Knowles said."

"What have you to say?"

Jimmy Silver's eyes blazed. He pulled himself together, his face flushing crimson with rage and excitement.

His voice rang through the study as he answered:

"I say that it's a lie, sir!"

Knowles compressed his lips hard together. He had lied—he knew that—but he was so convinced that the leader of his assailants was Jimmy Silver that he regarded the falsehood as a venial one. He had heard a murmur of voices among his assailants, but he had certainly not recognised a voice. But he had no doubts, and he considered himself justified in making his assertion. It was easy for Knowles's conscience to satisfy itself.

"You must not say that, Silver," said the Head harshly. "At the most, you may say that Knowles made a mistake."

"It couldn't be a mistake," said Jimmy Silver, trembling with rage. "How could he take another chap's voice for mine? He says he heard me speak, and it's a lie—a lie!"

Jimmy Silver's voice rose to an excited shout, as he lost control of himself in his fury.

Bulkeley's hand dropped on his shoulder.

"Quiet, young 'un! Remember where you are!"

Jimmy Silver tried to pull himself together.

"I—I'm sorry, sir," he stammered.

"I—I— But it isn't true, sir! He didn't hear my voice! He couldn't have, when I wasn't there!"

"I am afraid that I am bound to

accept Knowles's statement," said the Head coldly. "The only question is as to your accomplices. Were they these boys?"

"You—you believe I—I did it, sir?" stammered Jimmy Silver, aghast.

"Undoubtedly."

"But I—I didn't, sir—I didn't!"

"Silence!"

Jimmy Silver's frenzied voice died away. There was condemnation in the doctor's face.

For a moment or two there was grim silence in the study. Bulkeley broke it.

"May I say a word, sir?"

"Certainly, Bulkeley."

"Knowles was assaulted after paying a visit to my study, sir. He left me about eight o'clock. It must have been within a few minutes that he was seized in the quadrangle."

"It was," said Knowles, wondering what the captain of Rookwood was driving at.

"Very well. Where were you at eight o'clock, Silver?"

Jimmy Silver understood. The captain wanted to give him a chance of proving an alibi if he could. The Head nodded approval.

"In my study—the end study, Bulkeley," said Jimmy.

"What were you doing?"

"Preparation. We're always doing prep at eight o'clock."

"Then you were not alone?"

"No fear! My study-mates were all there—these three chaps."

"That we were!" exclaimed Lovell, with a breath of relief.

Knowles's statement had been so positive that it had staggered Jimmy Silver's chums for a moment, and made them wonder whether he had, after all, led that attack on the Modern prefect without their knowledge.

"Yes, rather," said Raby. "I remember we were in the study at half-past seven, when we started prep. We came down before nine."

"That hardly improves matters for the young rascals!" said Knowles, with a bitter smile. "There was no doubt that those three helped Silver in his assault on me. He would not be likely to leave them out of it. Of course, they had had this story arranged ready for an inquiry!"

"We're not liars, like you, Knowles!" said Lovell hotly.

"Silence, Lovell!" exclaimed the Head. "How dare you speak in that manner in my presence!"

"We've told the truth, sir," said Lovell stubbornly. "We were all in the end study together doing our prep!"

"Nobody else there?" asked Bulkeley.

"Of course not. The other fellows were doing their prep in their studies. They always are at eight o'clock."

Knowles gave a sneering smile.

"And as all the juniors were at work on their preparation, it was easy enough for you to slip in and out without being seen," he remarked.

"It would have been easy, I suppose," said Lovell, "but we didn't do it."

"Take them away, Bulkeley," said the Head icily. "To-morrow morning I shall deal with them. Knowles, I am deeply sorry for what has happened to you—it is unheard-of—but you may rest assured that the offenders will be severely punished!"

"Dr. Chisholm—" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

The Head made a gesture.

"Silence! To-morrow morning, after prayers, you will be flogged, in the presence of the whole school. Go back to your dormitory!"

"But—but—but—"

"Take them away, Bulkeley!" said the Head, frowning.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stumbled out of the study. They were overwhelmed. The captain of Rookwood conducted them back to the Fourth-Form dormitory in grim silence. They found the Fourth in a buzz of excitement.

"Turn in," said Bulkeley, very quietly.

Jimmy Silver gave him an almost haggard look.

"Bulkeley, you don't believe that we did it, do you?"

Bulkeley did not reply.

"We might have handled Knowles if we'd thought of it," said Jimmy.

"But—but we wouldn't tell the Head a pack of lies, Bulkeley. You ought to know us better than that!"

"Knowles says he knew your voice."

"He couldn't have—I wasn't there! He was telling a lie!"

"You can't expect the Head to think so."

"Well, say a mistake, then," said Lovell. "Knowles must have been pretty excited, and how could he swear to a voice with a bag over his head, as he says it was?"

Bulkeley hesitated.

"Tain't only the flogging," said Lovell dismally. "That's pretty tough, but we could stand that. But we wouldn't tell you crams, Bulkeley, honour bright."

"Blessed if I know what to think," said Bulkeley. "Tumble in now, kids, and get to sleep."

The Fistical Four turned in, and Bulkeley put out the light and retired, considerably puzzled and perplexed in his mind.

The Fourth Form dormitory remained in a buzz of voices for a long time.

After the rest of the Fourth had dropped off to sleep, Jimmy Silver & Co. were still awake, dismally discussing the situation.

After prayers in the morning they were to be flogged. There was one slight chance—the real culprits might own up to save them from an unjust punishment.

They would have done that themselves, but they knew there were a good many fellows who wouldn't. It was a slight hope, but they hugged it to their hearts, it was all they had.

They slept at last, and dreamed of a stern face and a switching birch. The star of the Fistical Four was certainly not in the ascendant.

The 6th Chapter.

A Very Awkward Discovery.

Knowles strode away with thunder on his brow and bitterness in his heart.

A moving shadow under the old beeches caught his eye, and he stopped. It was not likely that a second attack on him was planned, but he was on his guard. It was most likely some junior who was out of his dormitory at forbidden hours, and Knowles was in the mood to punish somebody—anybody—just then. He made a spring towards the shadow, and he heard a footstep and hurried breathing.

The footsteps pattered away swiftly in the dark. Knowles set his teeth and dashed in pursuit.

He caught a glimpse of a running figure for a moment, and then it vanished round the new wing. Knowles dashed after it, guessing that it was a Modern junior out of bounds, and that he was seeking to re-enter at the back of the house.

He was right.

As he came running round the house, he saw a little window at the back half-open, and a dark figure clambering in. Knowles came up, panting, and grasped the legs of the vanishing junior. There was a startled cry.

"Oh!"

"You can come out, you sweep!" said Knowles, holding on tight to the legs. "I've got you!"

The junior made a terrific effort to drag himself in through the window, but Knowles held on like a vice. The effort slackened, and the junior gasped. Knowles dragged him bodily from the window, and he plumped on the ground, panting.

"Get up!" growled the prefect.

The junior rose. Knowles peered at him, and recognised Tommy Dodd of the Fourth. Dodd was looking very pale, and breathing hard.

"So it's you!" said Knowles.

Tommy Dodd looked sullen.

"Yes," he said defiantly.

"What are you doing out of your dormitory?"

Tommy Dodd did not answer, but his eyes were fixed on Knowles with a peculiar expression, which the prefect could not fail to notice, dark as it was.

"Why don't you answer me?" exclaimed Knowles roughly. "Have you been playing larks on the Classical side?"

"No."

"Then what have you been up to?"

"I've been out in the quad."

"Nowhere else?"

"No."

"You were going out when I came on you," said Knowles. "You turned and ran when you met me. Where were you going?"

Silence.

"Why don't you answer?" said Knowles, as surprised as angry. "Do you want me to take you to the Head?"

"I don't care."

Knowles stared at him. It was not like the cheery Tommy Dodd to be silent and sullen. Perhaps he had not forgotten that tremendous licking of the afternoon, from which his hands were still aching. Tommy Dodd was certainly sullen and savage and reckless now.

"You were up to something," said Knowles, mystified and curious. "You may as well own up what it was. My hat!" he ejaculated, as a sudden thought struck him. "You were going to see Silver!"

"I wasn't."

"Perhaps you were with him in what he did this evening," said Knowles, his eyes glittering, and his grasp tightening on the junior's shoulder. "You young rascal! I might have guessed that!"

"I wasn't going to see Silver, and I don't know what he's done, and I don't care," said Tommy Dodd sulkily.

"Then what were you doing out of doors?"

No reply.

"I think I know well enough," said Knowles savagely. "Those Classical chaps were not alone in it. Perhaps you helped them to collar me. Own up, you young cad!"

Tommy Dodd started violently.

"So that touches you, does it?" sneered Knowles. "Were you in the gang? There were four of them at least—there might have been more."

"I—I—"

"Good! You can take the flogging along with the rest," said Knowles. "Come with me; you're going straight to the Head."

"I—I say—" stammered Tommy Dodd.

"You needn't say anything," said Knowles grimly. "I'm pretty certain that you were one of them, and, anyway, you can explain to the Head what you're doing out of the dormitory at half-past ten. You young hound, that's because I licked you to-day. You've helped those Classical chaps to assault your own prefect—"

"They're going to be flogged?" asked Tommy Dodd, in a husky voice.

"Yes; and you with them, if you had a hand in it."

"Jimmy Silver and his friends, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"For— for collaring you in the quad?"

"I see you know all about it," sneered Knowles. "They're going to be flogged to-morrow. I wish they could be sacked."

Tommy Dodd drew a deep, deep breath.

"Then I'll come to the Head," he said. "I—I'm glad you dropped on me, Knowles. I—I hadn't the faintest idea they might be suspected. I never thought of it. But I'd have owned up as soon as I heard they were going to be flogged, anyway."

"So you admit it?"

Tommy Dodd laughed recklessly.

"Yes, you brute! Yes, you bully! I collared you, and serve you right! And I sha'n't tell you who helped me, either."

"I know who helped you—Jimmy Silver and the rest—"

"They had nothing to do with it," said Tommy Dodd.

Knowles started. It began to dawn upon him that he had discovered a little too much.

"Don't tell lies," he said savagely.

"I'm not telling lies, you cad! Modern chaps helped me. I shouldn't be likely to go to the Classical rotters for help!" said Tommy Dodd disdainfully. "Now, take me to the Head. I'm ready to own up, and I'll show him my hands, too, and let him see how you licked me this afternoon, you bully."

Knowles released Tommy Dodd. He stared at the Modern junior blankly in the gloom. He understood now. It was not the Classics at all. The juniors of his own side, whom he had savagely punished, had planned that vengeance and carried it out. There were four of them—Dodd and Doyle and Cook, undoubtedly, and another. It was utterly unlikely that the Modern chums would have called on Classical juniors for aid in such an enterprise. Knowles knew that. His case against Jimmy Silver & Co. crumbled away. He had discovered too much.

For, oddly enough, though Tommy Dodd had collared him and tied him up, Knowles would have preferred Jimmy Silver to be flogged. And the lie he had told in the Head's study came back to his mind with staggering force. He had declared that he had recognised Jimmy Silver's voice. And Tommy Dodd was the guilty party, and ready to own up that Jimmy Silver had had nothing to do with it, and had not been on the spot at all.

"It—it was you?" stammered Knowles. "You and Doyle and Cook—"

"Find out!"

"Oh, you young hound!" Knowles was almost dazed by his discovery. His lie had come home to roost now, with a vengeance. "You—you young scoundrel!"

"Pile it on," said Tommy Dodd recklessly. "I made up my mind you'd go through it, and you have. I don't care if you take me to the Head! I was a fool to care what happened to you at all, that's all. I don't care if you know where I was going, as you know the rest. I meant to leave you tied up in the old abbey for a few hours, and then come and untie your legs so that you could walk, if you hadn't got help sooner. I was going to the abbey to see if you were still there, when I ran into you just now. Still, I don't care. I'd have owned up to-morrow morning, anyway, rather than see Jimmy Silver flogged."

Knowles panted.

He knew the truth now, and it was easy enough to take Tommy Dodd to the Head, and get the right party sentenced to condign punishment. But how was he to explain the lie he had told? He had told it, in the conviction that Jimmy Silver was guilty, and the lie could not be explained away.

If only he had had sense enough to keep to the truth! He gritted his teeth with rage as he thought of it. Even now he would rather than Jimmy Silver had the flogging than Tommy Dodd.

"Well, why don't you take me to the Head?" growled Tommy Dodd. "I'm ready."

Knowles drew a deep breath.

"Because I don't believe you," he said deliberately.

Tommy Dodd jumped.

"You—you don't believe me, Knowles?"

"No!"

"But—but I've owned up!" stammered Tommy Dodd, in utter amazement. He had not the faintest idea of what was working in Knowles's mind, and he was astounded.

"I believe you've been trying to pull my leg," said Knowles calmly. "I don't believe you know anything about the matter, excepting what I've told you. Go back to your dormitory."

"But—but—"

"Get in at that window, and go back to your dormitory," said Knowles harshly. "If you have the sense to hold your tongue, I will say nothing about this. Get in!"

He pushed the amazed junior towards the window. Tommy Dodd, with his brain in a whirl, clambered in, and disappeared in the darkness within. Knowles went round the building, and hurried to his own study.

The prefect's face was pale with rage and chagrin. What was to happen now? If Tommy Dodd had sense enough to hold his tongue, he could escape punishment, and Knowles would say nothing. The real perpetrator of the outrage could escape scot-free, with Knowles's blessing for that matter, so long as Jimmy Silver was flogged, and Knowles's falsehood was not brought to light.

Would Tommy Dodd hold his tongue?

After some reflection, Knowles decided that he would. A flogging was not a light matter, and he was pretty certain that the junior would keep silence, so long as the prefect held his peace. If nothing was said, Jimmy Silver would be flogged, and Knowles's falsehood, which had come home so uncomfortably to roost, would never be brought home to him.

Knowles went to bed feeling more comforted.

Tommy Dodd was sure to have enough sense to hold his tongue! Unfortunately for Knowles, Tommy Dodd, though quite a sensible youth, was not blessed with the kind of sense that Knowles gave him credit for.

The 7th Chapter. Coming to Terms.

Jimmy Silver & Co. turned out in the morning at the clang of the rising-bell in the lowest spirits.

As a rule, they greeted the rising sun with faces as sunny as his own. But on this particular morning, they were decidedly downhearted.

The fiat had gone forth, and there was no arguing with the Head. After prayers, before morning classes assembled, the Fistical Four were to be hauled up before the whole school and flogged.

The disgrace of that punishment, as well as the pain of it, troubled their minds. The consciousness of innocence made it all the more bitter.

They came down in glum spirits. Long before breakfast all the Classics were in possession of the story. Smythe of the Shell and his friends, who were very much up against the Fistical Four, declared that it served them right. Smythe of the Shell, in fact, seemed to look forward to the occasion with some pleasurable anticipation. But the chums of the Fourth were too dispirited even to knock Smythe's hat off.

"It's rotten," groaned Lovell dolorously. "It wouldn't be so bad if we'd had the satisfaction of ragging the cad. But to be flogged for ragging the beast, when we didn't rag the rotter—that fairly puts the lid on!"

"Our luck's out!" grumbled Raby. "The cads who did it ought to own up! Might be Smythe and his set, for all we know! Oh, it's rotten."

"They may own up, whoever they are," said Jimmy Silver hopefully. "We're not flogged yet."

"We soon shall be!" grunted Lovell.

It was exasperating, too, that most of the Classical fellows seemed to believe that the Fistical Four had "done it." Most of them highly approved of doing it, too, and commiserated the quartette on being found out. But they only smiled at the Fistical Four's almost frenzied assertions that they hadn't done it. It was a good deed, and they wished they had done it; but they hadn't.

The order had gone forth for the whole school to assemble in Big Hall after prayers to witness the flogging. The order caused much heart-searching among certain juniors on the Modern side.

For the three Tommies, and Towle, who had helped them on that great occasion, did not like the idea of being flogged themselves. But they agreed, dolefully enough, that there was nothing for it but to face the music.

"We couldn't keep quiet and let it go on," said Tommy Dodd. "It's all my fault. I got you chaps into this scrape."

"Sure you didn't intorely," said Tommy Doyle loyally. "We can stand it, anyway."

"I'm going to own up, and I sha'n't name you chaps," said Tommy Dodd. "No need for getting licked if one will do. And I persuaded you, anyway."

"Rot!" said Tommy Cook. "If you own up, we're going to."

"Well," said Tommy Dodd, "let's go out and look for those Classic worms, and ease their minds a bit."

"Right-ho!"

"Dodd!" It was Knowles' voice; he was looking for the cheerful youth.

"Hallo, Knowles!" said Tommy Dodd, with the respect due to a prefect conspicuously absent from his manner.

"Come into my study," said Knowles.

"Wait for me, you chaps!"

Tommy Dodd followed Knowles into his study. Knowles had been watching his face during breakfast. He was sure—almost sure—that Tommy Dodd would do the sensible thing. But he wanted to be quite, quite sure.

"You remember that rot you were telling me last night, Dodd?" said Knowles, when the door was closed.

"Yes," said Tommy.

"I told you I didn't believe it. I don't believe it now. And I sha'n't say anything about the matter," said Knowles.

Tommy Dodd's lip curled. "I know!" he said. "You've got your knife into Jimmy Silver, Knowles, and you'd rather he was flogged than me, though you know I did it."

Knowles breathed hard through his nose. He had hoped that Tommy Dodd would have sense enough to avoid plain speaking. Tommy Dodd seemed to be singularly lacking in sense upon some subjects.

"You do not mean to say that you intend to repeat this preposterous

story, Dodd?" said Knowles, after a pause.

Tommy Dodd looked him straight in the eyes.

"Do you want me to keep quiet about it," he asked.

"It would be better, for your own sake."

"And what price Jimmy Silver?"

"What does it matter about Silver? You don't like the fellow, anyway; I caught you fighting him yesterday."

"Yes, fighting him," said Tommy Dodd disdainfully. "I've fought him a round dozen times since he's been at Rookwood. But playing him a dirty trick—that's another matter."

"Do you want to be flogged, you young idiot?"

"No fear!"

"Then hold your tongue!"

"I can't! And I won't! What do you want me to hold my tongue for?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "So that Silver may be flogged, when he hasn't done anything. You've still got it in for him over that barring-out, I suppose. Well, as soon as we're in Big Hall, if Silver is to be flogged, I'm going to own up."

"You—you mean that?"

"Yes, I do mean it. You ought, as a prefect, to have reported my confession to the Head already," said Tommy Dodd.

Knowles ground his teeth. It had come to that—through his crooked ways. A junior of the Fourth Form was coolly lecturing him, a prefect of the Sixth, on what he ought to have done!

"And it wouldn't do you any good if I told how you've tried to persuade me to keep quiet and let Silver be flogged," said Tommy Dodd, with flashing eyes.

"Blessed if I haven't a good mind to let it out, too! If I'm going to be flogged for nailing you I'll give you a show-up, too! I'll bet the Head wouldn't let you be a prefect after what I could tell him if I chose!"

"He wouldn't believe a word of it!" stammered Knowles, pale with uneasiness.

"Very well, I'll tell him and see."

Knowles bit his lip till the blood came. Tommy Dodd swung towards the door, and the Modern captain called him back in a husky voice.

"Dodd! Stop a minute!"

"Well?" said Tommy Dodd.

"You—you really mean that—that you're going to take the flogging instead of Silver?" muttered Knowles.

"Don't you believe I mean it? You'll see soon; it's nearly time for prayers."

"Wait—wait a minute! Look here, Dodd, I want you to keep your head shut. I—I'm willing to look over what you did last night. Perhaps I was a bit too rough on you," said Knowles unsteadily. "I—I don't want you flogged."

"Fat lot you care!" said Tommy Dodd. "You want old Silver flogged for nothing—that's what's the matter with you. And you think I'm mean cad enough to stand by and see it done to save my own skin. Well, you'll see. As soon as Jimmy Silver is called out I shall trot up."

"You know you'll be flogged!" stammered Knowles.

"Of course I know it."

"If you hold your tongue—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tommy Dodd disrespectfully. "What sort of a cad do you think you're talking to?"

Knowles clenched his hands almost convulsively, and made a movement towards the junior. He looked dangerous at that moment, but Tommy Dodd did not flinch.

The junior looked the prefect steadily in the face. He was very nearly as angry as Knowles. And a suspicion was working in his mind. It could not simply be the desire to see Jimmy Silver flogged that moved Knowles to this extent. There was something more than that in it. Knowles evidently had something to fear if Tommy Dodd owned up; and

Tommy was not long in guessing what it was. He gave a low whistle, and burst into a laugh.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tommy Dodd chuckling. "You're in for it, Knowles! You've told the Head that it was Silver! You've told lies—told him you recognised him or something, and you're afraid of being bowled out! You have put your foot in it this time, Knowles!"

Tommy Dodd laughed again with enjoyment. He seemed to find something quite amusing in the prefect's predicament.

"You are in a fix, Knowles," he said cheerfully. "Fairly bunkered, by gum! It'll be worse for you than for me. You've told the Head crams. My hat! What a nerve! I might have guessed it! He wouldn't flog old Silver unless he thought it was pretty clear against him! Now you'll have to own up you fibbed! No more perfecting after that! I'd rather be flogged myself than own up as a liar!"

"Shut up, you young cad!"

"Hallo! There's the bell for prayers!" said Tommy Dodd. "Come on, Knowles. Mustn't be late, you know. I'm going to be flogged, and you're going to get it in the neck! The Head will be pleased to hear how you tried to get me to keep it dark, because you'd been telling him whoppers! Oh, my aunt!"

Tommy Dodd was on his way to Big Hall, where all Rookwood was assembled for the flogging, when Knowles came up to him. Knowles was looking pale and troubled.

"What is it, Knowles?" asked the Head, pausing and regarding the Modern prefect very cautiously.

"I—I feel that I must speak to you, sir," said Knowles, with an

effort. He had thought it out, and decided upon the only possible course of action, but he was very doubtful how the Head would take it. "It's about Silver, sir."

"His punishment is about to be administered, Knowles."

"It's—it's about that, sir. I—I've been thinking it over. You see, sir, last night I was very excited when I found myself attacked in the dark, and—a bag was over my head, and—after thinking it out very carefully, sir, I've come to the conclusion that perhaps I was mistaken."

"Mistaken, Knowles?"

"Yes, sir. I think perhaps I was mistaken in thinking that I recognised Silver's voice."

Dr. Chisholm's face became very grim.

"Indeed! Last night, Knowles, you declared to me in the most positive manner possible that you recognised Silver's voice."

"I know sir. But since then I've reflected very carefully— You see, sir, I—I thought it was Silver, and—and I thought I knew his voice. But now I don't feel at all sure about it—in fact, I really think I was mistaken!"

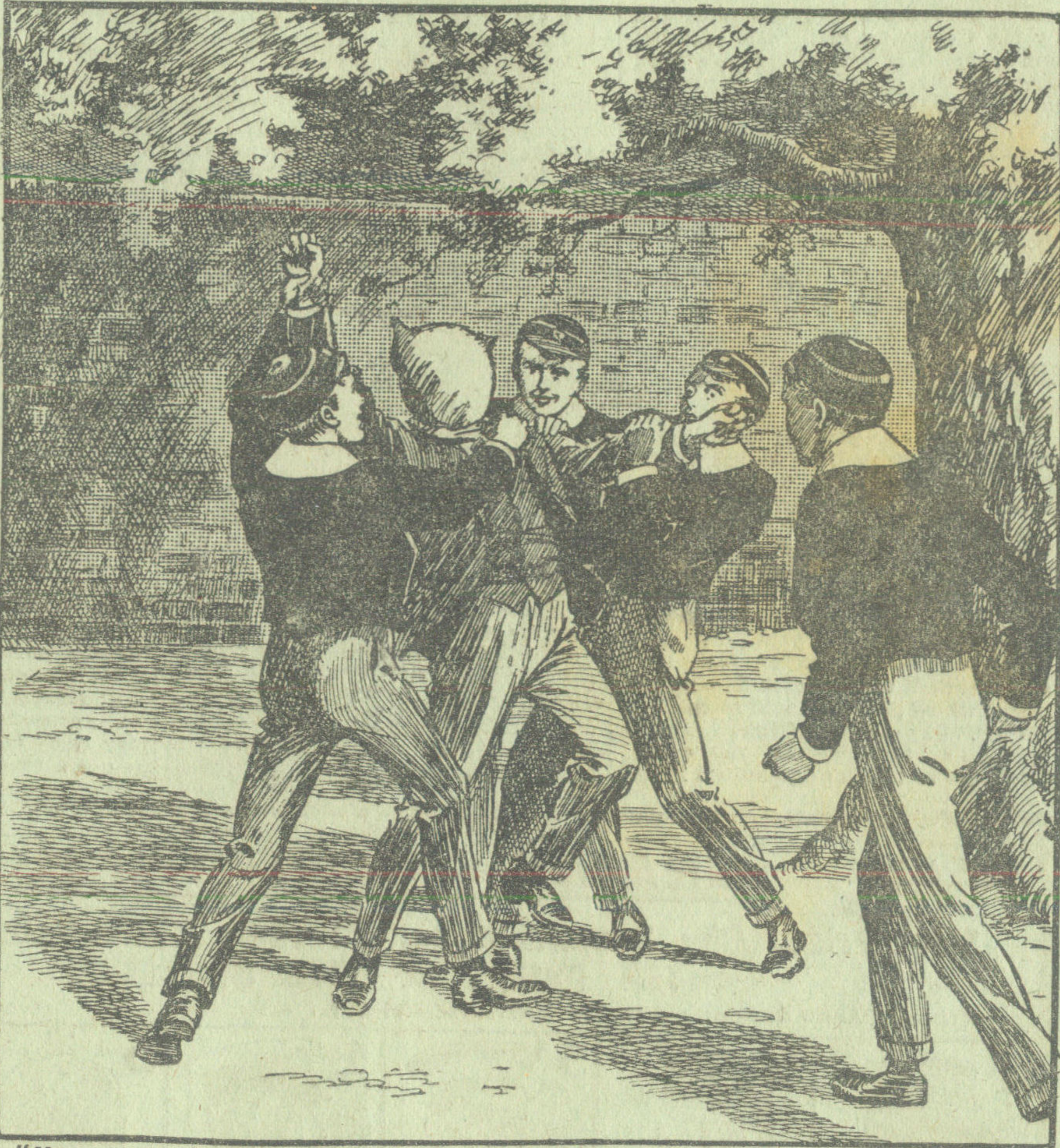
"That is very strange indeed, Knowles. Upon your positive assertion, I have sentenced four juniors to be flogged. Now you tell me that you have made a mistake."

The 8th Chapter. Scot Free.

Dr. Chisholm was on his way to Big Hall, where all Rookwood was assembled for the flogging, when Knowles came up to him. Knowles was looking pale and troubled.

"What is it, Knowles?" asked the Head, pausing and regarding the Modern prefect very cautiously.

"I—I feel that I must speak to you, sir," said Knowles, with an



"You young hounds. Help! Help!" shouted Knowles, but in a moment his hands were gripped tightly and a thick bag was jammed over his head.

"You—you will not tell him that—" stammered Knowles. "He wouldn't believe you—"

"Bow-wow! I'll give him the chance!" grinned Tommy Dodd, thoroughly enjoying the discomfiture of the bully of the Sixth. "Oh, crumbs, you have put your foot in it!"

Knowles panted with rage. "You will hold your tongue, Dodd—"

"No jolly fear!"

"I—I will get Silver off the flogging somehow," said Knowles at last, his voice quite husky. "Then—then if you don't say anything you'll get off, too."

Tommy Dodd whistled. "Now you're talking!" he exclaimed heartily. "Put it like that, and it's a go! We'll keep the little secret between us—what?"

"Yes," said Knowles, grinding his teeth.

"After the way we bagged you! I say, you are a forgiving chap, Knowles! You ain't really the sort of fellow a chap would expect to turn the other cheek like this!" chuckled Tommy Dodd.

"Oh, you young—"

"I'm willing to have it all out if you are!" grinned Tommy Dodd. "Oh, what a lark! I say, the bell's stopping! Ta-ta, Knowles!"

Tommy strolled out of the study

"I felt that I ought to speak to you in time, sir, before the punishment was administered," mumbled the wretched Knowles.

"Quite so. That was undoubtedly your duty. It would have been infamous if you had allowed those boys to be punished, if there is the slightest doubt in the matter. But you have placed me in an absurd position, Knowles," said the Head severely. "The whole school has been assembled to witness the flogging."

"I—I am so sorry, sir!"

"I trust so," said the Head tartly. "I am glad you have spoken to me in time. But I must tell you, Knowles, that you have acted very foolishly and rashly. You had no right to make that positive statement unless you were absolutely sure. You have narrowly escaped causing me to commit a great injustice."

"I'm very sorry, sir! I felt sure then, but, on thinking it over—"

"Very well. I am glad to have made this discovery in time, at all events. Have you any fresh supposition as to the authors of the outrage?"

Tommy Dodd's name trembled on the prefect's lips.

But he dared not utter it.

It was maddening to let the junior escape punishment. But he dared not bring Tommy Dodd in contact with the Head.

For, after hearing Tommy Dodd's story, Dr. Chisholm could hardly be left with any doubt that Knowles had not made a "mistake" the previous night, but had told him a deliberate falsehood.

There was no help for it—the Head must never know that he had attempted to induce the real culprit to keep silent while Jimmy Silver was punished.

His crooked policy had led him to that unpleasant position; for by his attempt to punish the innocent he was compelled to let the guilty party escape!

"Well, Knowles?"

"I have no idea, sir," faltered Knowles. "I—I think Lovell and the rest were telling the truth last night, sir. I am sure they had nothing to do with it."

The Head frowned with intense annoyance. He felt that he had been placed in a ridiculous position. Still, he was glad that this discovery had come before the flogging had been inflicted.

"Very well, Knowles! I cannot say I am pleased with you. There will be an inquiry, and I hope the real culprits will be discovered!"

Dr. Chisholm swept on, frowning, leaving Knowles breathing more freely. The chief worry on the prefect's mind now was that the inquiry might possibly be successful.

Knowles, the victim of that unexampled outrage, was in the curious position of praying that the culprits might not be discovered. It was really a valuable lesson on the advantage of sticking to the truth on all occasions!

There was no flogging that morning.

The surprised school was dismissed from Big Hall, and the fellows went to their Form-rooms in a state of wonder.

That day there was an inquiry but, as it was naturally confined to the Classical side, the facts had not much chance of coming to light. Nobody suspected that Knowles' assailants came from his own side—except the young rascals themselves.

And, to the general surprise, Knowles did not show himself at all keen to get on the track of the culprits. He seemed only anxious for the whole unpleasant matter to be dropped and done with.

And dropped it was. For some days Rookwood surmised and wondered about the mysterious affair. But it remained a mystery.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were greatly puzzled. But when Tommy Dodd and his chums came to tea one evening in the end study, the mystery was cleared up so far as the Fistical Four were concerned.

Jimmy Silver & Co. almost wept with laughter over Knowles' peculiar predicament. The mere idea of Knowles scheming and worrying to save from discovery the fellows who had bagged him and tied him up made them shriek. But outside that select circle in the Fourth, the mysterious happenings of that night remained a mystery.

THE END.

("The Fall of the Mighty!" is the title of next Monday's magnificent long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co.)