

DON'T GO OUT AT NIGHT, BUT READ—

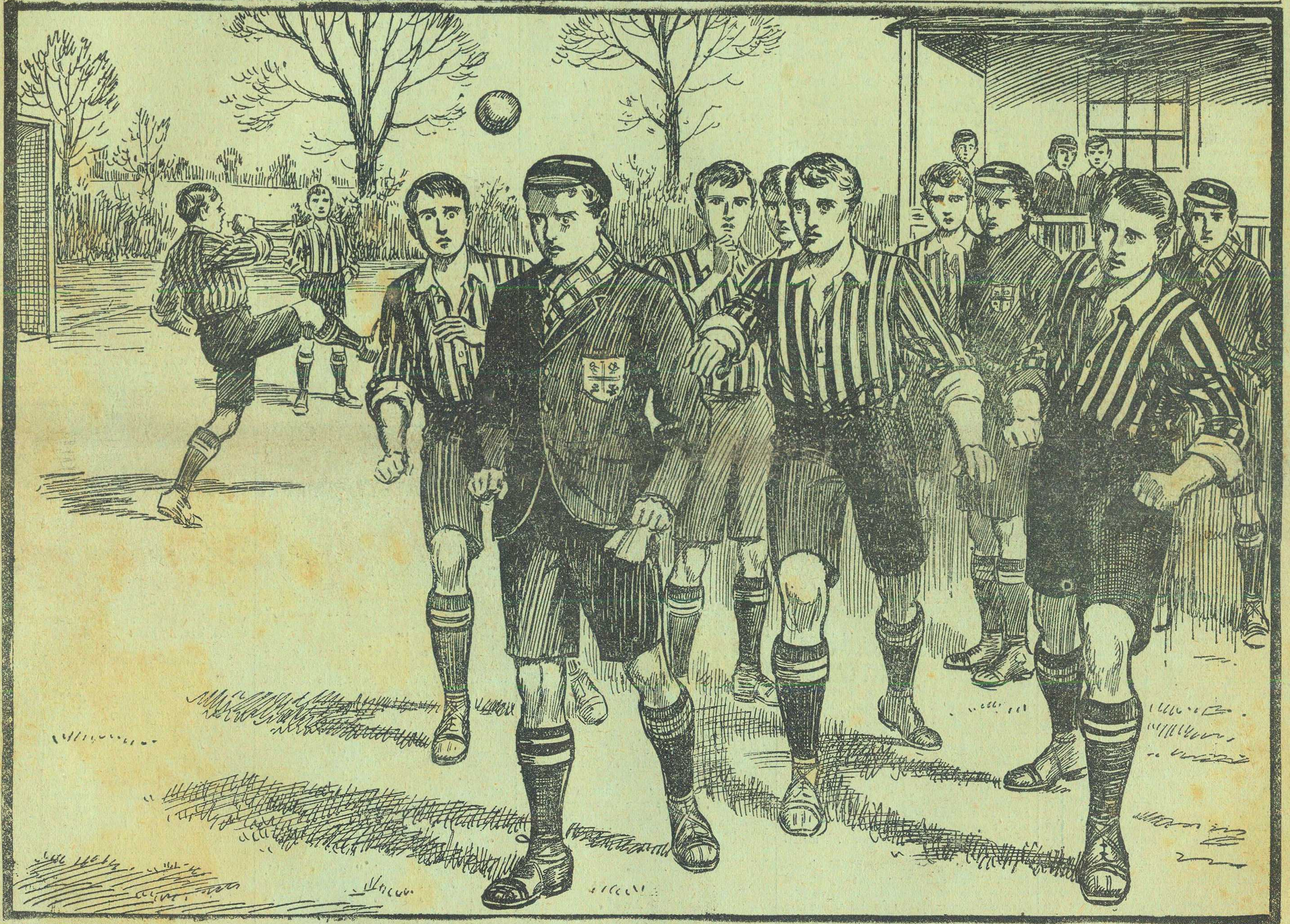
# The BOYS' FRIEND 1d

(WITH WHICH IS AMALGAMATED "THE DREADNOUGHT.")

No. 753 Vol. XV. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending November 13th, 1915.



## JIMMY SILVER LEAVES THE TEAM IN THE LURCH!

### PUT TO THE TEST!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story, introducing  
JIMMY SILVER & Co. at Rookwood.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

#### The 1st Chapter. Divided.

Morning lessons were over, and Jimmy Silver & Co. came out of the Fourth Form-room at Rookwood. Jimmy Silver drove his hands into his pockets and walked out into the quadrangle by himself. The Co.—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—looked after him with somewhat glum looks, but did not join him.

Jimmy Silver was looking morose. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were looking equally morose. Evidently there was trouble in the family. Some of the Fourth-Formers looked at them in surprise. All Rookwood knew of the close friendship that existed among the Fistical Four. The chums of the end study were inseparable. But they were separated now. Townsend, the dandy of the

Fourth, lounged up to the Co., as they stood talking together in low tones in the passage. He nodded to them affably. "Somethin' up—what?" he asked. Lovell stared at him. "What do you mean, ass?" he asked. "Ahem!" said Townsend, a little discouraged. "Can't help noticin' it. I must say I'm not surprised." "Not surprised at what, fat-head?" growled Raby.

"That kid Silver has been too cheeky ever since he came to Rookwood, by gad!" said Townsend. "I was fed-up with him long ago. I'm not surprised that you fellows are gettin' fed-up, too. Really surprisin' the way you took him up, don't you know! If you'd asked my advice—"

"Likely to ask advice of a howling idiot!" said Lovell.

"Ahem!"

"And if you've got anything to say against Jimmy Silver, you'd better say it out, and I'll pull your silly nose for it!" said Lovell, with a glare.

Townsend backed away. "Oh, really, dear boys—" he said feebly.

"Oh, buzz off!" growled Raby. The three looked so dangerous that the dandy of the Fourth "buzzed off" at once. He was greatly surprised. It was only too evident that there was serious trouble between Jimmy Silver and his chums, but the latter appar-

ently were prepared to pull the nose of anybody who said anything against Jimmy—which was really a remarkable attitude for them to take up after a quarrel.

Townsend strolled out into the quadrangle and looked for Jimmy Silver. He found him under the beeches with his hands in his pockets and a wrinkle in his brow. Townsend stopped and regarded him curiously.

"Trouble in the camp—what?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver looked up. "Eh—what?"

"I'm not surprised at it!" said Townsend. "Ill-bred cads, every one of them! Can't even give a fellow a civil answer!"

"Whom are you speaking of?" asked Jimmy Silver, with calm and deadly politeness.

"Those cads you've rowed with," said Townsend—"Lovell and—Yaroooh!" Townsend wound up with a howl of anguish as Jimmy

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## PUT TO THE

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## TEST!

Silver made a quick step forward and fastened a finger and thumb upon his nose with a grip like a vice. "You—Ow-ow!" yelled Townsend. "Wharrer you at? Leggo! Yoooop! Oh, my hat! Oh, my nose!" Jimmy Silver compressed his grip. "Led go!" spluttered Townsend. "Led go by dose! Grooogh!" "You've been calling my old pals names," remarked Jimmy Silver politely. "Groogh! Haven't you quarrelled with them, you beast? Led go!" "That doesn't make any difference. You're going to apologise, if you want any nose left." "Grooogh!" said Townsend faintly.

He glared furiously at Jimmy Silver and clenched his fists. But he did not hit out. For the slacker of the Fourth knew only too well that in a "scrap" Jimmy Silver would have wiped up the quad with him with scarcely an effort. Instead of hitting out, he wriggled painfully. "Led go by dose, you beast! Grooogh!" "You haven't apologised yet." "Grooogh! I apologise!" wailed Townsend.

Jimmy Silver grinned, and released Townsend's nose. The dandy of the Fourth clasped it with both hands in anguish. "Wow-ow-ow! Oh!" Jimmy Silver stalked away. Townsend stood under the old beeches, rubbing his nose and mumbling. He was still thus occupied when Lovell and Raby and Newcome came sauntering by. "What the dickens is the matter with your nose?" asked Newcome, in surprise. "Ow! That cad Silver—" "That what!" roared Lovell, jumping forward. Townsend fled.

### The 2nd Chapter. Chucked Out.

Tommy Dodd of the Fourth came over from the Modern Side with a thoughtful expression on his rugged face. Since the arrival of King Football there had been a change at Rookwood. Tommy Dodd, the chief of the Modern juniors, had been cricket captain in the Lower School. But Jimmy Silver had become junior captain of football; the glory had departed from the house of Israel, so to speak, so far as the Moderns were concerned. With Jimmy Silver of the Classical side rested the selection of the footer team that represented Juniors.

True, Jimmy had "played the game" quite as well as the most exacting Modern could have expected. He did not fill the junior eleven with Classical fellows, as some of the Moderns had feared he would. He picked the best men wherever he could find them, and, as he had a very keen eye to a player's form, the eleven he selected was certainly the best the Rookwood Juniors could put in the field.

Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, the Modern chums, had all been members, and there were two more Moderns as well. They could not expect more than that, and the three Tommies were pleased to approve of Jimmy Silver as skipper.

But just now Tommy Dodd was feeling doubtful. That afternoon the Bagshot match was to be played—a very important match for the junior footballers of Rookwood—in fact, greatly transcending in their eyes the importance of any of the first-eleven matches played by Bulkeley's team.

Tommy Dodd looked round as he came into the schoolhouse and spotted Lovell and Raby and Newcome, and bore down upon them.

"Where's Silver?" he asked. "Don't know!" said Lovell gruffly. "Oh, I hear you've been rowing with him!" remarked Tommy Dodd. "Oh, rats!" Tommy Dodd laughed.

"Well, you don't seem very cheer-

ful about it," he remarked. "No business of mine, however—" "Has that just occurred to you?" asked Lovell sarcastically.

"Bow-wow! I want to speak to Silver about the match." "Better look for him, then!" "Br-r-r!" said Tommy Dodd. And he looked for Jimmy Silver. He found him in the end study, alone, with a glum expression on his face, staring out of the window. Tommy Dodd coughed as he came in, and Jimmy looked round from the window.

"About the match," said Tommy Dodd. "Tain't time yet!" "I know that. Are we in the team?"

"If I'd made any changes I should have let you know!" said Jimmy rather gruffly. "Of course you're in the team!"

Tommy Dodd looked relieved. "Oh, all right! I thought I'd ask!"

"No need to ask that I can see! Do you think I should let that rag the other day make any difference in the footer?" snapped Jimmy.

"Well, I suppose not." "Or the fact that you've been putting on silly airs?" added Jimmy. "You can play the giddy ox as much as you like, but I shall put you in the team, all the same, so long as you're any good there."

"We haven't exactly been putting on airs," said Tommy Dodd, colouring. "We haven't spoken to you, I know, since the other day, when we found you at that low den, the Ship. We're not exactly gone on pub-haunters on the Modern side."

Jimmy Silver's eyes gleamed. "So you think me a pub-haunter?" he exclaimed. "I don't think—I know!" said Tommy Dodd coolly. "We found you there, at that disreputable den, out of bounds, talking to a boozy black-guard. You hadn't any explanation to give for being there. We drew our own conclusions."

"Like your confounded cheek, you Modern waster!" "Oh, draw it mild!" said Tommy Dodd. "Your own pals have drawn the same conclusion—I can see that. Most of the fellows don't know what you've quarrelled about, but I can jolly well guess. They know you were hanging about the Ship, and they don't like it!"

Jimmy Silver was silent. "Blessed if I can understand a chap like you taking up that sort of thing," went on Tommy Dodd. "I should think you could leave it to Smythe and Townsend and that set. It's a mug's game, at the best!"

"Any charge for sermons?" asked Jimmy.

"None!" said Tommy Dodd cheerfully. "While I'm on the subject, I'll advise you to chuck it—to give the Ship and your boozy friend there the go-by. They won't do you any good, you know. All those betting cads want is your money—if you've got any left by this time. From what I hear, you can't have much left."

"And what have you heard?" "Well, it's no secret that you've been borrowing money right and left in the Fourth," said Tommy Dodd. "You've borrowed money of Leggett, too—the cad who lends money at interest among the fellows. You ought to have sense enough to know where this kind of thing leads, Jimmy Silver."

"And you ought to have sense enough to know when a fellow's a black-guard, and when he isn't," said Jimmy savagely. "Go and eat coke! Buzz off, and take your sermons along with you."

"Look here—" "And when you want to sermonise somebody again, find somebody on the Modern side—Leggett, for instance. We don't have amateur moneylenders on the Classical side."

Tommy Dodd flushed angrily. "Leggett's a cad!" he said. "We own up to that, though he's a Modern. But a cad who lends money at interest

isn't much worse than a cad who borrows it."

Jimmy Silver jumped up. "You cheeky rotter—" "You Classical worm—" "If you've come here for a thick ear—" "I'll take all you can give me," said Tommy Dodd disdainfully. "Here goes, then, you Modern worm!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp! The Classical and the Modern, locked in an affectionate embrace, staggered round the study.

They bumped into the chairs, and sent them flying; they crashed upon the table, and hurled it over in the fender.

Tramp! Crash! Bump! Bang! There was a rush of juniors along the Fourth-Form passage to see the row. The doorway was soon crammed. "Go it, Silver!" shouted the Classical juniors.

"Chuck him out!" "Snatch the Modern rotter bald-headed!" "Hallo! What's the row?" exclaimed Lovell, coming along with Raby and Newcome. "Modern cad in our study, by Jove! Boot him out!"

Three pairs of hands were laid upon Tommy Dodd, and he was dragged away from Jimmy Silver by main force.

"Leggo!" shrieked Tommy Dodd. "Leave him to me!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Rats!" The Co. swung Tommy Dodd through the doorway, and there was a wild scrambling of the juniors to get out of the way. Hooker roared as Tommy Dodd bumped into him and knocked him over, and Oswald gave a yell as one of Tommy's flying elbows was planted on his nose.

"Roll him along!" roared Lovell. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Yow-ow-yoop!" spluttered Tommy Dodd, as he was bundled bodily along the passage, and rolled down the stairs.

The Co. returned to the end study triumphantly. They found Jimmy Silver dusting his clothes.

"We've chucked him out," said Lovell. "You needn't have troubled," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "I could handle him, or any other Modern cad."

"If that's all your thanks—" "That's all, and quite enough!" "Oh, rats!"

"Cheese it, you duffers!" said Raby anxiously. "Look here, Jimmy—look here, Lovell—we've had enough of this. What's the good of being at loggerheads. The study ain't fit to live in now. Chuck it!"

"I'm willing," said Jimmy Silver. "I haven't quarrelled with you fellows. You have quarrelled with me."

"I'm willing enough, if Jimmy Silver chucks up pub-haunting," said Lovell. "I bar that."

"You silly ass!" shouted Jimmy. "You boozy bounder!" retorted Lovell.

"Oh, come away!" said Newcome, dragging Lovell out of the study. Raby glanced uneasily at Jimmy, and followed them.

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders, but his face was dark when they were gone. The rift in the lute was not easily mended; but Jimmy Silver felt the estrangement from his old chums keenly.

### The 3rd Chapter. Called Away.

Jimmy Silver came out of the School House, with his coat and muffler on over his footer clobber as the juniors were gathering on Little Side for the match. He came out alone, with a wrinkled brow. Keen footballer as Jimmy was, he had other weighty matters on his mind than the Bagshot match.

He had been misunderstood and misjudged by his chums; but it was inevitable, and he did not see how it was to be cleared up. He could not tell them that the bounder he had met at the Ship Inn was his reprobate uncle, John Silver—he had to keep that secret, for his uncle's safety. He wondered a little bitterly what they would think if they knew that his uncle was under suspicion of embezzlement, and was hiding from the police. Certainly he could not tell them. He had to let matters take their course. But it was bitter enough to him.

Leggett of the Fourth stopped him as he was on his way to the football-ground. The Modern junior grinned as he noted the expression of distaste that came over Jimmy Silver's face at the sight of him. Leggett was not

popular, even on his own side of the school—his was not a pleasant nature.

"Can't stop now," said Jimmy brusquely.

"The week's up!" said Leggett. "What!"

"You haven't forgotten?" smiled Leggett. "I lent you nine quids, nearly all I had in the Post-Office Savings-bank, last week. You were going to pay me ten in a week's time. Well, the week's up. Where's the tin?"

Jimmy was silent. "You signed a little paper," pursued Leggett agreeably. "I've got it all ready for you, as soon as you hand over the money."

"I haven't got the money yet," growled Jimmy.

Leggett's face hardened. "A promise is a promise," he remarked. "I trusted you because I thought you were square, Jimmy Silver."

"Do you mean to say that I'm not square?" burst out Jimmy Silver savagely.

Leggett started back a pace. "Keep your wool on!" he said. "I want my money, that's all. You didn't expect me to give it to you, I suppose?"

"Time's not up till to-night," said Jimmy Silver. "I hoped something would turn up, but it hasn't. But your money's safe, you Shaylock. I'm going to sell my bike to raise it, unless something turns up in time."

"You won't get ten quids for your bike," said Leggett.

"It cost fifteen." "Buying and selling ain't the same thing. I'll take it off your hands for five quids, if you like, the other five in cash."

Jimmy Silver's lip curled. "I'll consider that if I don't get a better offer," he said. "Can't stop now, there's the footer."

And Jimmy Silver strode on towards the football-ground.

The rest of the junior footballers were there, but the Bagshot team had not yet arrived. Tommy Dodd & Co. were punting a ball about to keep themselves warm. Lovell and Raby and Newcome stood in a gloomy group. Dick Oswald came towards Jimmy at once to speak to him. Oswald looked concerned.

"Sorry to see this state of affairs," he remarked, with a nod towards the gloomy Co. "I suppose it's all about nothing?"

Jimmy shrugged his shoulders. "Sort of misunderstanding," he said.

"Nothing a fellow could do?" "Nothing, thanks!" Oswald hesitated a moment.

"You don't mind if I mention something—something I've heard," he said slowly.

"Oh, pile in!" "There's a sort of rumour going round. Nobody seems to know how it started. I'm sure your pals haven't said anything, but—"

"Well, what's the rumour?" asked Jimmy, with a bitter smile.

"That you have been playing the giddy ox, something like Smythe, of the Shell, only more so," said Oswald frankly. "I thought I'd mention it to you, so that you can knock it on the head—see?"

"Thanks!" "Of course, it isn't true?" "Of course, it isn't!" assented Jimmy.

"I knew it wasn't," said Oswald. "I knew you'd never go near a low den like the Ship. That's what's been said!"

Jimmy bit his lip. "And I'll jolly well speak plainly if I hear a fellow say it again, now you've told me there's nothing in it," added Oswald.

"Hold on!" said Jimmy quietly; "I haven't denied going to the Ship. I've denied playing the giddy ox!" Oswald stared at him.

"But—but you haven't been there!" he exclaimed. "I don't want to say anything about it," said Jimmy. "After all, it's my business."

"I suppose it is. Sorry I spoke!" said Oswald, colouring.

"Not at all!" said Jimmy rather sarcastically.

He could not deny what was the truth; that was not at all in Jimmy Silver's line. But his admission that he had been to the Ship had made the inevitable impression upon Dick Oswald's mind. He drew the same conclusions that the Co. had drawn; it could not be helped.

Jimmy Silver turned away moodily. So the story was getting out—that was only to be expected. The three Tommies, and his own pals, knew of

that visit to the Ship. They would not have given him away—he knew that. But incautious words had doubtless been overheard—and Leggett, of whom he had borrowed a large sum of money, had suspected, and had uttered his suspicions.

It had been inevitable that the rumour should get out in the long run. Jimmy Silver was a prominent figure in the Lower School at Rookwood.

Townsend, or Topham, or Smythe, of the Shell, could play the "giddy ox" without any great regard being paid to their doings. But Jimmy Silver, junior captain of football, chief of the Fistical Four, and a leader in most things, was quite different. Any departure from the normal on his part was sure to attract attention. It was the penalty of popularity and celebrity.

It was all the worse for Jimmy Silver in that his friends were all among the best fellows—the fellows who were likely to be most "down" on shady exploits such as the "Giddy Goats" of Rookwood indulged in.

It was a new experience to Jimmy Silver to be under a cloud in this way, and he certainly did not like it.

He had risked it to help his ne'er-do-well uncle, in whose innocence he firmly believed. His only comfort was that with the money he had taken to him, John Silver had been able to escape to safety, and was no longer in the neighbourhood of Rookwood School.

Jimmy waited restlessly for the arrival of the Bagshot footballers. A lad in uniform was seen making his way down to the football ground from the direction of the house. He had a telegram in his hand.

"Master Silver here?" he asked, as he came up to the group of juniors. "Here!" said Jimmy.

The lad handed him the telegram. "Thank you!" said Jimmy heavily. Somehow or other, the sight of that telegram had given him an oppressed feeling.

Who could be telegraphing to him? His uncle, perhaps, from some seaport, to announce that he had departed safely, owing to the help Jimmy Silver had given? It was possible; but Jimmy's heart was heavy as he drew apart from the juniors, and opened the telegram:

There was a rattle of wheels and a buzz of voices at the gates. The brake from Bagshot School had arrived.

"Here they come!" called out Lovell.

Jimmy Silver did not heed. He was reading the telegram; devouring it, with startled eyes, and with pale cheeks. It was from his uncle, and it ran:

"Come and see me to-day. Important. "UNCLE."

There was nothing in that message to excite suspicion, if it had been seen by a master or prefect of Rookwood. But to Jimmy Silver it brought consternation.

His uncle had not gone! His sacrifice had been made in vain. He had borrowed money right and left, and he had incurred a debt to Leggett which it would tax all his resources to clear. And it was all for nothing. John Silver had not gone.

Jimmy stood with the telegram in his hand, staring dazedly at it. His uncle was still at the Ship evidently, since he gave no other address. He wanted to see him—to explain, perhaps, why he had not gone—doubtless to ask him for further help—help that Jimmy could not give. He must go! "They're here, Jimmy!"

It was Lovell's voice. He shook Jimmy Silver by the shoulder, and Jimmy started out of his gloomy reverie.

He looked confusedly at Lovell. "What—who's here?" "The Bagshot chaps; they're ready."

"Oh!" Jimmy had forgotten the football match. The teams were ready—waiting for the Rookwood skipper. And his uncle had wired him to come!

He had to see his uncle—to know why he had not gone—to know what he intended to do. With that weight on his mind, Jimmy knew that his play would not be much use to the Rookwood side. He made up his mind at once. After the match it would be too late to go to the Ship; he could not have got back before dark. And to miss calling-over, and cause inquiries, was the last thing he dared to do.





PUT TO THE

(Continued from the previous page.)

TEST!

"Well, come on!" said Lovell, amazed by the expression on Jimmy's face. "What's the matter with you, Jimmy Silver?"

"I—I can't play!"

"Can't play!" exclaimed Lovell. "No!" said Jimmy hurriedly. "I—I'm called away. Tommy Dodd will have to skipper the team—he's vice, you know. I'll speak to him!"

Lovell's eyes gleamed. "You're going to stand out, and let a Modern rotter skipper us, against Bagshot!" he exclaimed.

"I can't help it!"

"You can't help it! Then you jolly well ought to. Unless—" Lovell's look softened a little. "Is that wire from home, Jimmy? Is anybody ill?"

"No!"

"But it's calling you away?"

"Ye-es!"

"And you're going, and leaving the team in the lurch!" exclaimed Lovell fiercely. "You needn't tell me any more—I know where you're going. It's to the Ship, to see your precious boozy friend there. You're a blackguard, Jimmy Silver!"

Lovell strode away furiously. Jimmy Silver set his teeth, and thrust the telegram into his pocket.

The 4th Chapter.

John Silver's Demand.

"Silver standing out!"

"What rot!"

"Can't be did!"

There was a chorus of surprise and exasperation among the Rookwood footballers. Even the Modern members of the team were exasperated. Jimmy Silver's powers in the front line were well-known.

More Modern members in the eleven would certainly, from the Modern point of view, have improved it. But they wanted to win, and Jimmy Silver, the finest junior footballer at Rookwood, could not well be spared.

Tommy Dodd, of course, was not averse to assuming command. But, with great self-denial, he remonstrated with Jimmy Silver.

"For goodness' sake don't be such an ass," he said, when Jimmy told him, "I suppose you want to beat Bagshot, don't you?"

"Yes; but—"

"Pankley's lot are in tip-top form, you can see that, and they think they're going to lick us," said Tommy Dodd. "I'll skipper the team, with pleasure—I really think I'm a better skipper than any Classical ass in Rookwood—but I want you in the forward line just the same!"

"I've got to go—it's an appointment. Important!"

Tommy Dodd's face came as near to a sneer as his rugged, good-natured face could.

"Oh, I see! Bookies and gee-gees—how interesting! Don't let a footer match come between you and your boozy friends at the Ship, by any means!"

Jimmy Silver clenched his hands fiercely. He had taken that from Lovell, but he was not inclined to take it from Tommy Dodd. But he dropped his hands again at once. A "scrap" on the footer field, under the eyes of the Bagshot fellows, was not exactly desirable.

He turned and left Tommy without another word. Several of the footballers hurried after him as he left the field.

"Sure, you can't leave us in the lurch like this!" exclaimed Flynn.

"Stick to the footer, Jimmy!" said Oswald.

"Sorry—can't stop!" said Jimmy. "Tommy Dodd's skipper—he's going to put another chap in. Pile in and beat Bagshot!"

And Jimmy hurried away.

There was a good deal of "grousing" among the Rookwood players. But they had to accept the inevitable. Tommy Dodd called a Modern junior to fill the empty place in the team, which led to fresh growling on the

part of the Classics. But Tommy Dodd was a good skipper, and he got his team together, and led them into the field to face Pankley & Co., of Bagshot. Jimmy Silver would be missed in the Rookwood ranks, but the match would be hard fought, all the same.

Jimmy hurried away to the House, and changed in the dormitory into his Norfolk. Then he wheeled his machine out of the shed. As he went down to the gates, he heard a shout from the football-ground.

"Goal! Bravo, Pankley!"

The shout came from Bagshot fellows who had come over with their

phere of beer and stale tobacco that hung about the place sickened him. A low-browed, beery-looking man in shirt-sleeves asked his business, and Jimmy inquired for "Mr. Robinson," the name by which his uncle was known in those shady quarters.

The man looked at the clean, healthy, fresh-looking schoolboy very curiously. Jimmy Silver was certainly very much out of place in the purlieus of the Ship. Jimmy coloured under his gaze, and was glad to escape from it. He was directed to Mr. Robinson's room, and he went down a dirty passage and knocked at the door.

There was a sound of voices in the room, and a smell of strong tobacco came from it. The door was a few inches ajar.

"Nap!" said a voice, as Jimmy knocked.

It was his uncle's voice. Jimmy's brow grew harder. He pushed open the door and entered.

The room was not pleasant to look at. Although it was late in the afternoon the bed was unmade, and the room was untidy. John Silver, in an old coat and slippers, was seated at a table, with a cigar in his mouth, playing cards with a man in loud

"You mean that you didn't intend to let me see you gambling like this, uncle," said Jimmy bitterly.

"Only a little game, Jimmy, to pass the time!" pleaded the wastrel. "You can't guess how horribly dull it is in this hole of a place. I've been tempted to give myself up to the police more than once. It couldn't be much worse than this in Dartmoor."

"Why haven't you gone?"

"I—I couldn't go, Jimmy."

"Last week I brought you ten pounds," said Jimmy, his voice vibrating with indignation. "You didn't know, and didn't care, what a twist it was to raise the money. I gave it to you to get away with. I've been expecting to hear that you were safe out of England. Why haven't you gone as you promised?"

The man was silent. The furtive expression on his face showed plainly enough that he was mentally seeking excuses.

"Where's the money?" asked Jimmy suddenly. "You've got it still?"

"I—I—no! That's why I asked you to come here, Jimmy. I—I can't get away without more money."

"What have you done with it?"

"I've had to live, I suppose," said

"You must be living in a remarkably high moral atmosphere at Rookwood," said his uncle, with a sneer.

"Never mind that," said Jimmy. "I believed you when you told me you were unjustly accused. I've tried to help you. You've gambled the money away, instead of escaping with it. I can't do any more. I don't know now whether my father would approve of what I've done already; he won't have anything to do with you himself. It's no good my staying Good-bye!"

"Jimmy!" exclaimed John Silver, as the Rookwood junior turned to the door.

"Well?"

"Hold on! You can't leave me like this. I—I must have money—I tell you that any day the police may find out that I am here, and come for me. I've got to be helped to get clear—and you've got to help me!"

The 5th Chapter.  
A Regular Rascal.

Jimmy Silver swung round from the door, and fixed his eyes upon the rascally reprobate. There was a ring of threatening in John Silver's voice, and it stirred Jimmy's anger afresh. He had not come there to be threatened.

"I'll speak out plainly, Uncle John," he said. "You've acted rottenly, and if you suffer for it, you've only got yourself to thank. I found you the money to get away with, and you've spent it on gambling and drink and smoking. I can't do any more."

"You must, Jimmy!"

"Rats!" said Jimmy contemptuously.

His uncle came a step or two nearer to him.

"Look here, Jimmy, I've got to have money. I can't stay here. I admit I've been reckless—it was the drink—"

"You shouldn't drink," said Jimmy coldly. "No man need make a beast of himself unless he chooses. Don't tell me you can't help it, for I sha'n't believe anything of the kind. A man who can't help drinking ought to be suffocated."

John Silver's eyes gleamed.

"You're putting it plainly, Jimmy. I admit I've done wrong, if you like, but I can't stay here. You don't want to see your uncle marched off with handcuffs on his wrists, I suppose."

"I don't," said Jimmy. "But it isn't in my hands. I'm clean stumped. I can't even pay back what I've borrowed for you, let alone raise any more money. I'd do it if I could, and give you another chance. But it can't be done."

"It must be done."

"What's the good of saying it must be done when it can't be done," said Jimmy irritably. "I'd better go."

"You can raise money somehow, Jimmy. You don't want your friends at Rookwood to know you've got an uncle hunted for by the police."

"I dare say they'll know sooner or later," said Jimmy bitterly. "It must be known outside Rookwood, so I suppose some time it will be known inside."

"It's not in the papers yet," said John Silver moodily. "Your father could save me if he liked by paying the firm the money—"

"That would be as good as admitting that you had embezzled it," said Jimmy. "You've told me you are innocent."

"Of—of course I am innocent," muttered his uncle. "Jimmy, I've got to get away. I want money."

"I haven't any."

"Is that your last word, Jimmy?"

"Yes."

"And you're going to desert me?"

"I can't do anything more. I did all I could, and it was enough if you hadn't gambled the money away. You've got yourself to blame for that."

"Do you want me to come to Rookwood, Jimmy?"

Jimmy started.

"To Rookwood!" he repeated.

"Yes. How would you like me to be arrested in the quadrangle at Rookwood? The other fellows wouldn't let you forget it soon, I imagine."

"Why should you come to Rookwood?"

"I might."

There was a savage look upon the hardened, drink-coarsened face of John Silver. Jimmy stared at him hard, and then he understood.

"You mean that you'd come to my school on purpose to disgrace me?" exclaimed Jimmy, fiercely yet almost incredulously.

"Why shouldn't I, if you won't help me?"

"I can't help you."



The three juniors went on with their work, but Jimmy Silver sat staring at the IOU as if mesmerised by it. Jimmy knew how difficult it must have been for his chums to raise such a sum of money to help him out of his difficulty, and Jimmy realised the sacrifices they must have made.

champions, and who were delighted to see Pankley score first. It was first blood to Bagshot. But Jimmy Silver closed his ears to the shouts, and walked on to the gates. He would have given a good deal at that moment to be on the footer-field, helping in the tussle against the old rivals of his school; but it was not to be.

He mounted in the road, and pedalled away, with a knitted brow. Important as that footer match was from a junior point of view, it soon faded from Jimmy Silver's mind. He was thinking of his uncle.

What were John Silver's intentions? Jimmy thought of that problem all the way during the long ride by the lonely track across Coombe Moor to the Ship Inn, on the uplands looking towards the sea.

He reached the lonely inn, and wheeled his bicycle into the garden. The Ship, with its evil reputation, was strictly out of bounds for Rookwood fellows; but that was a risk that Jimmy Silver had to run.

Jimmy Silver entered the inn with an inward shrinking. The atmos-

check clothes, who was also smoking. The room reeked with tobacco to such an extent that the junior coughed as he came in.

"Uncle!"

John Silver turned his head quickly and started to his feet. To do him justice, he looked ashamed of having been thus caught.

He threw down the cards in his hand, and made a sign to his companion, who grinned and quitted the room at once. Jimmy crossed to the window and threw it wide open. He was not inclined to stand upon ceremony. John Silver had asked, or rather demanded, that he should come there, and this was how he had met him. A deep anger was burning in Jimmy Silver's breast.

"Well, Jimmy, I'm glad to see you!" said John Silver, looking a little uneasily and very searchingly at his nephew.

Jimmy compressed his lips. "I—I didn't expect you quite so soon," said John Silver. "I—I mean, I hardly noticed how the time was passing—"

John Silver sullenly. "I've had to pay my way here—pretty stiff, too, as they suspect there's something shady, and I can't object to over-charges. Then—then I had some other expenses—"

"You mean you have been gambling, and lost the money," said Jimmy, his eyes gleaming. "Drinking, too; I can tell that by your face."

"I—I—"

"And you can afford to smoke cigars," said Jimmy, with increasing bitterness. "Lots of men have given up smoking cigars in war-time. You can afford them."

John Silver bit his lip. "I didn't ask you to come here to lecture me, Jimmy," he said sulkily. "I'm your uncle, and I'm an innocent man accused of embezzlement. If you want to keep me out of prison you can help me."

"I have helped you," said Jimmy, "and I've got myself into a fix in doing it, too. I've got suspected of pub-haunting by my best chums through coming here, and they won't speak to me."





PUT TO THE

(Continued from the previous page.)

TEST!

"Rubbish! You can raise money somehow. Borrow it."

"I've borrowed all I can."

"Borrow some more, then—without asking permission. You can pay it back later—some time. There are a lot of rich fellows there."

Jimmy Silver trembled with anger. He had known little of his uncle, excepting that the man was on bad terms with Jimmy's father.

"You're going to help me, or I shall come to Rookwood," said John Silver deliberately.

"I've taken my choice," panted Jimmy. "You are my uncle, but you are a scoundrel. I will have nothing to do with you."

Jimmy strode out of the room. But for the fact that the man was his father's brother, the Rookwood fellow felt that he would not have been able to keep his fists off the flabby, bloated face.

The junior did not answer. He strode away from the room and away from the house. He had done with John Silver.

With a grim brow, Jimmy Silver wheeled his bike out of the inn-garden and mounted it.

He put on a good speed as he rode away from the Ship, his heart still throbbing with anger and resentment.

Was his uncle, after all, an innocent man? He doubted even that now, after the villainous proposition John Silver had made to him.

At all events, he was finished with him. Whatever happened, he would have nothing more to say to the black-guard of the family.

Jimmy Silver was the last fellow in the world to be influenced by threats. He rode across the moor, and came out into Coombe Lane in the growing dusk.

"Hallo!" shouted Pankley of Bagshot, from the brake, as he caught sight of the cyclist.

There was a roar of laughter from the brake. Evidently the Bagshot fellows had heard something of the rumours respecting Jimmy Silver.

"How did the match go?" he called out.

The brake rumbled on, and Jimmy was past it and had no time to reply. He frowned as he pedalled on to the school.

He reached Rookwood and put up his machine and went into the School House.

"I hear that Bagshot won," Jimmy remarked, as he met Jones minor.

"They just did it—two to one," said Jones, with a snort.

"You silly ass—"

Jimmy Silver came very near at that moment to wiping up the floor with Jones minor.

"Know we're licked, I suppose?" growled Lovell.

"Yes, I'm sorry," said Jimmy.

"Nothing for you to be sorry about," said Lovell satirically.

Jimmy Silver flushed. "Oh, cheese it, Lovell!" said Raby, the peacemaker.

The 6th Chapter. Loyal Chums.

"Silver here?" Leggett of the Fourth asked the question, looking into the end study after tea.

"No, he isn't," growled Lovell. Leggett looked unpleasant.

"Well, I'll jolly soon find him."

Leggett looked a little alarmed.

"Suppose I have?"

"Have you or not?" demanded Lovell.

"Yes."

"How much?"

"You leave it to me, Raby. Do you think I'm asking this cad questions out of inquisitiveness?"

"Well, no. But Jimmy wouldn't like—"

"Blow Jimmy! How much tin have you lent Jimmy Silver, Leggett?"

"That's his business, not yours," said Leggett.

"I'm making it mine," said Lovell coolly.

"Why, you're jolly well on fighting terms, and all the Fourth knows it," exclaimed Leggett.

"Can't a chap be on fighting terms with his own pal if he chooses, without you giving an opinion about it?" demanded Lovell, so fiercely that Leggett jumped back in alarm.

"Ye-es, of course," stammered Leggett.

"It's not a question of what you want. You've been lending Jimmy Silver money, and charging him interest, of course, in your caddish way. Blessed if I know how even the Modern cads can stand you. We'd scrag you if you were on this side."

"We'll scrag you anyway, if you don't tell me at once how much you've lent Jimmy Silver."

"Nine pounds," said Leggett sulkily.

"Nine pounds!" shouted Lovell. "Nine pounds!" gasped Newcome.

"What a whopper!" said Raby. "Where did that worm get nine quids from?"

"I had it in the Post Office Savings Bank," said Leggett.

"You save other chaps' money, you mean," snorted Lovell.

"Show it to me."

Leggett looked very uneasy.

Leggett opened his pocket-book and showed the I O U with Jimmy Silver's somewhat sprawling signature upon it.

"That's for ten quid," said Lovell. "Silver's paying me ten quid."

"A pound interest in a week!" ejaculated Lovell.

"It's Silver's business if he chooses to borrow my money," said Leggett sullenly.

"You're dunning him for this?" said Lovell abruptly.

"Time's up to-day, and he's got to pay. I'm not expected to lose my money, I suppose? He shouldn't gamble money away if he can't afford it."

"How dare you say Jimmy Silver's been gambling, you worm!"

"All the fellows know it," said Leggett.

"Oh, shut up! If time's up, why hasn't Silver paid you? You said just now he was dodging you. That means that he can't pay."

"He's got to," said Leggett. "I'm willing to allow him five quids for his bike, as part settlement."

"Five quids for a fifteen-quid jigger, you Shylock!" said Lovell in disgust.

"I won't!" yelled Leggett.

"When the debt's settled," said Lovell. "We're going to settle it, and get our pal out of your clutches—see?"

Leggett looked relieved.

"You can have the paper if you settle the debt, of course," he said.

"Fair!" said Lovell. "If that's fair, what do you call foul? But don't talk to me, you worm! You make me sick! Jolly good mind to go and let Bootles know about it! He'd jolly soon put a stop to your precious money-lending!"

"No, I won't, you cad! You'd jolly well get expelled if I did, and serve you right!" grunted Lovell.

"I'm going to pay you and take that paper. You fellows, it's up to us to raise that ten quid, as Jimmy Silver can't."

Raby and Newcome nodded assent, but they looked very grave.

Leggett looked by the collar, and whirled him over, and proceeded to rub his long, thin nose energetically in the hearthrug.

To judge by Leggett's wild yells, he did not enjoy the process.

He wriggled and struggled spasmodically.

"Yurrooh! Leggo! Chuekit! Stoppit! Yoop! Ooop! Yowp! Ow!"

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PUT TO THE

(Continued from the previous page.)

TEST!

"Go it!" chorused Raby and Newcome enthusiastically.  
 "Yow-ow-ow—groooch!"  
 "Now then!" panted Lovell, dragging the wriggling Leggett up again.  
 "Now are you going to talk about any extra interest—what?"  
 "Wow—wow—wow—wow!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Raby and Newcome.  
 "Groogh! I was only—only putting a case!" spluttered Leggett.  
 "Yow—ow! I—I really didn't mean anything of the sort! Grooh!"  
 "Well, don't put any more cases to me," said Lovell. "Now, we're going to pay you that money somehow, you sneaking worm! You're not to dun Jimmy Silver any more, do you hear?"

"Gerroogh!" mumbled the unfortunate Shylock of Rookwood.  
 "Ow, my nose! You've rubbed the skin off, you beast! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"  
 "Do you hear?" roared Lovell.  
 "Yes, yes! All right. Ow!"  
 "Now get out! The sight of you makes me sick!"

Leggett got out.  
 The meanest fellow at Rookwood was impervious to contempt, but he was not impervious to Lovell's energetic methods of showing his contempt. He went down the passage gritting his teeth and rubbing his nose.

Lovell looked at his chums.  
 "It's up to us," he said. "Jimmy has turned out a howling idiot, with a touch of the blackguard in him. I can't understand it, but there it is. But he was our pal, and we've been through a lot of things together. We won't speak to him, but we're backing him up."

"Right-ho! But where the thunder is ten quid coming from?" asked Raby.

"I've got five for my new footer rig-out," said Lovell gruffly. "It came to-day. I'm going to make my old things do. That's half."

"I say, Lovell, that's rather thick, you know. You ain't called on to pay up to a tune like that," said Raby slowly.

"Well, I'm going to," said Lovell obstinately. "That's half, I tell you. You chaps will have to stand the other half between you. You had a remittance to-day, Raby."

"A quid from my aunt," said Raby, with a grimace.

"That makes six."

"Ahem! Exactly!"

"How are you fixed, Newcome?"

"About ninepence in cash," grinned Newcome.

"Br-r-r-r!"  
 "But—but there's my stamp-album," said Newcome, with rather an effort. "I've been offered three for that. It's worth a lot more. But young Baker will give me three—he's offered it."

"Hard cheese, old chap! But it's all for the sake of the study," said Lovell. "We'll buy it back from Baker some day when funds rise. Take it to Baker and screw the quids out of him. He's got lots of tin."

Newcome nodded, and quitted the study with his stamp-album under his arm. It was a wrench to part with it, but Jimmy Silver was not to be left in the lurch, in the clutches of a youthful Shylock like Leggett.

"That'll make nine," said Lovell. "Where's the other quid coming from, Raby?"

"What about my camera?" asked Raby.

"Good! And if that don't make it up there's my pocket-knife with the three blades and the tools in it. That'll easily fetch ten bob."

"I—I say, what will Jimmy say about it?"

"Hang Jimmy!"

"Oh, all right."

Half an hour later the three chums were minus some of their dearest possessions, but Jimmy Silver's I O U reposed safely in Lovell's pocket.

The 7th Chapter.  
 Honest Injun!

Jimmy Silver was looking down in the dumps that evening.  
 He could not help it.

Jimmy's motto was "Keep smiling," and as a rule he succeeded in keeping smiling. But just now everything seemed to be going wrong.

There was his reprobate uncle's threat of coming to Rookwood and showing him up if he did not provide him with further cash. Jimmy was not influenced in the slightest degree by the threat, so far as dealing with John Silver was concerned, but he could not help thinking of the possibility with misgiving. True, he was not to blame for his uncle's misdeeds, but he had a naturally strong disinclination to let the Rookwood fellows know that he possessed such an uncle.

Then there was his parting with his

It was not an agreeable recourse. It would leave him with a debt of six pounds to meet in a week's time, as well as several small debts that he had to settle. If he could not pay, there would be more interest. He could not haggle with the cad of the Fourth about that. The fellow was a rascal; but Jimmy had dealt with him of his own free will, and he had only himself to blame.

It looked as if he would be in Leggett's clutches for the rest of the term, and that the astute young rascal would bag all his financial resources all the time.  
 So when Jimmy Silver came into the end study to do his preparation, his brow was clouded, and he found it quite impossible to keep smiling.

He noted that Lovell and Raby and Newcome were looking a little self-conscious, and that they exchanged rapid glances as he came in. But he did not speak. He sat down to his work without a word.

Lovell coughed.  
 Raby coughed, and then Newcome coughed.

Jimmy Silver looked up.  
 "You fellows got something to say?" he asked.

"Ahem!"  
 "If you have, you may as well say it out, and not keep on coughing and snorting!" said Jimmy irritably.  
 "Ahem!"

"And get it over, so that I can get my prep done!"

Lovell seemed on the verge of an outburst. The fact was that Jimmy Silver's patience was giving way. His late experiences had caused his temper to suffer.

But Lovell controlled himself with an effort.

"I'm not going to give you a sermon!" he blurted out.

"No? Hurrah!" said Jimmy.

"Tain't that at all—"

"Good egg! Let's get on with the prep, then."

"But there's something else—"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Jimmy Silver, with resignation. "You're like the little brook in the poem—you go on for ever! Is it going to last till bed-time?"

"I've got something for you," said Lovell.

"Not a sermon?"

"No, hang you! You've been getting into debt—"

"That's my business, I suppose! I haven't asked you to pay my debts!" said Jimmy.

"Draw it mild!" murmured Raby.

"You don't know what Lovell's driving at, Jimmy."

"No; I don't!" said Jimmy tartly.

"You silly asses have chosen to be down on me—"



Lovell grasped Leggett by the collar, and whirled him over, and proceeded to rub his long thin nose in the hearthrug. To judge by Leggett's wild yells, he did not enjoy the process. "Yurrooh! Leggo!" he yelled. "Chuck it! Stop it!"

old chums. The breach was growing wider. They hardly spoke to him now, and he hardly spoke to them. It seemed as if the old friendship was dead.

Then there was the general reproach of the fellows on the subject of the lost footer match. That match with Bagshot had been touch and go. If Jimmy Silver had been on the field it would have been sufficient to turn the scale in favour of Rookwood—at least, all the footballers thought so.

Then—last, but not least—there was his debt to Leggett.

Jimmy Silver had contracted that debt to provide his scapegrace uncle with money—money which he knew now had gone in gambling and drink. He had had no doubt about his ability to meet it in time. But certain remittances he had hoped for had not arrived, and it seemed as if the debt was to cling about his neck.

His bike was well worth ten pounds, second-hand; but it was not a season for disposing of bikes to advantage. There seemed only one recourse before him—to let Leggett have the bike for five pounds on account, and to accept the young rascal's terms—another week of grace at the cost of another pound in interest.

"Do you want to jaw me about the football match?" asked Jimmy sarcastically. "I should think I've had enough about that, without getting it in my own study. Lots of the fellows think they can play footer better than I can, but they're all agreed that the match was lost because I happened to be away."

"So it was!" said Lovell warmly.

"Well, it was up to you to save it!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "What the dickens did you let Bagshot beat you for? Why didn't you lick them? Don't you know how to play footer?"

"Look here—"

"Shush!" said Raby. "For goodness' sake don't let's have any more ragging! I'm fed-up about that footer match, too."

"Well, I'm fed-up about it right up to the chin!" said Jimmy Silver. "Give it a rest!"

"Tain't a footer captain's place to clear off when there's a specially tough match on," said Lovell.

"Give it a rest!" urged Raby.

"Oh, let him keep on!" said Jimmy Silver. "Lovell was born to give certain lectures! Get on with the sermon, Lovell!"

"Look here—"

"With jolly good reason, I think!" growled Lovell.

"Yes; you think so—that's because you can't think for toffee! But you can think what you like, and be blown! If I've got into debt, I can get out of it again, and I'm not likely to bother you with my debts. Let it drop! It's my business, and you're not expected to pay my debts."

"We've paid 'em, all the same!" Lovell said quietly.

Jimmy Silver jumped.

"What!"

Lovell took a paper from his pocket and tossed it upon the table before Jimmy Silver. Jimmy stared at it blankly. It was his I O U—the paper he had signed the previous week promising to pay Leggett of the Fourth ten pounds in seven days.

"But how on earth did you get hold of that?" demanded Jimmy.

"I got it from Leggett."

"But—but how—"

"He's paid."

"Leggett's paid?" said Jimmy dazedly.

"Yes. You're clear of that. And if you've got any sense at all you'll keep clear of it!" said Lovell gruffly. "That's what I had to say—not a sermon this time. If you're fool

enough to go on pub-haunting, you can do as you like, without any jaw from me, Jimmy Silver."

Jimmy Silver sat silent.  
 The three juniors went on with their work, but Jimmy sat staring at the I O U as if mesmerised by it.

The black trouble had rolled from his mind through the utterly unexpected action of his old chums. What had they done it for? Jimmy knew how difficult it must have been for them to raise such a sum of money; he understood the sacrifices they must have made. And they had done it for him—and while they were on bad terms with him! Jimmy Silver felt a lump rise in his throat.

He was silent for a long time.  
 When he spoke at last his voice was a little husky.

"You chaps found the money to pay that beast for me!" he said.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"I didn't ask you to! I wasn't going to ask you to help me!"

"Why couldn't you ask us?" snapped Lovell. "Wouldn't you have done it for us?"

"Well, yes. But—"

"Well, that's all."

"But—but you chaps think I owed this money because I'd been playing the giddy ox," said Jimmy.

"What did you owe it for, then?"

"So you still think so!"

Silence.  
 "Well," said Jimmy, "it wasn't that; it was something else. I can't tell you, because it's not my secret, as I've said before. But I'll tell you this much, as you've been so decent—I raised that money to help a lame dog over a stile, and I give you my word, honest Injun, that I've not done anything that I'd be ashamed to tell my own father. Isn't that good enough for you?"

Lovell drew a deep breath.

"That's good enough," he said simply. "You know how it looks, Jimmy. But—but if you give us your word, and—and you won't be going to the Ship again—"

"That's all over."

"But why can't you explain, Jimmy?"

"I can't! It isn't my secret. But you used to be able to take my word."

"I take it now!" said Lovell. "It looks rotten enough, and you know what the other fellows think; but—but you were always square. I do take your word, Jimmy, and—and I'm backing you up."

The next day the Classical Fourth were interested to observe that Jimmy Silver was on his old footing with his old chums.  
 He had put a severe strain upon the faith of his chums, but they had proved equal to the test. Jimmy Silver's troubles were not over, by any means, but he felt that the worst of them had passed.

THE END.

("Jimmy Silver's Downfall!" is the title of next Monday's grand long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co.)

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