

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

(WITH WHICH IS AMALGAMATED "THE DREADNOUGHT.")

No. 755, Vol. XV. New Series.]

ONE PENNY,

[Week Ending November 27th, 1915.



TRACKING DOWN THE SCHOOLBOY SUSPECT!

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER!
A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story, introducing
JIMMY SILVER & Co. at Rookwood.
BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.
Down on His Luck.

Jimmy Silver sat alone in his study—the end study in the Fourth Form passage at Rookwood. His look was downcast and grim. Fellows who knew Jimmy Silver well would hardly have known him at that moment. It was unusual to see Jimmy Silver looking anything but cheery and sunny. But now, as he

sat with his hands driven deep into his pockets, and his brows knitted grimly, he looked as if most of the troubles of the world had descended upon his young shoulders. He had been a long time alone. He was wondering why his chums did not come to him in his trouble, and whether they would come at all. "We've got a few words to say to you, Silver, you cad!" said Topham. "Sure, ut's a thafe ye are!" said Flynn.

and Newcome, his chums, who appeared. Six or seven fellows of the Classical Fourth crowded into the doorway. They were led by Townsend and Topham. Jimmy Silver did not rise. He stared moodily at the Fourth-Formers, without speaking. "Here he is!" said Townsend. "We've got a few words to say to you, Silver, you cad!" said Topham. "Sure, ut's a thafe ye are!" said Flynn.

"And your own pals proved it!" said Hooker. Jimmy Silver did not speak or move. He had expected this, and he was prepared for it. Even Jimmy Silver, full of courage as he was, was almost overwhelmed by the misfortune that had fallen so suddenly upon him. The Classical Fourth had condemned him, and even his own pals seemed to have concurred. "It's proved that you boned the club funds from Newcome's desk," went on Topham. "You may as well own up to it. Have you got anything to say?" "Nothing," said Jimmy Silver, breaking his silence at last. "You admit it?" ejaculated Townsend. Jimmy shook his head. "No. I hadn't the least idea that the six quids had gone from Newcome's desk till he told me. I helped to look for the thief. When we found the pocket-knife blade in the desk, I thought that would help us find the beast. I hadn't the least idea that

the blade belonged to my own knife. Whoever burgled Newcome's desk used my knife. That's all." "Rats!" "Bosh!" "Perhaps you'd like to accuse somebody else?" said Townsend, with a sneer. Again Jimmy shook his head. "No. Somebody did it. I don't know whom. Some beastly cad did it, and left my penknife-blade there to put in on me. That's all I know." "Oh, draw it mild!" said Topham. "You can't expect us to swallow a yarn like that, you know. Tell us an easier one." "It's in keeping with what you've been doing lately, too," said Townsend. "I dare say your boozy friend at the Ship could account for the money." "Is that what you've come to say to me?" asked Jimmy Silver quietly. "If it is, and if you're finished, you may clear off!" "That isn't all," said Topham. (Continued on the next page.)



SHOULDER TO

(Continued from the previous page.)

SHOULDER!

banker, just as you like. Look here, have you got it up against me that I couldn't lend you five quids when you asked me? I really couldn't do it, you know."

"That's all right!"
"How will you get on with Joey Hook? My idea is that he'll give you plenty of time if you ask him."
"I—I think that will be all right," said Townsend haltingly. "Never mind the five quid—I don't want to borrow of you."

"You can settle now you're in funds, I suppose?"
Townsend started.
"I'm not in funds!" he exclaimed. "What made you think I was in funds? What the dickens are you getting at, Smythe, confound you?"

Adolphus stared at the dandy of the Fourth in amazement.

"Keep your wool on, old scout!" he said. "Nothing to get your rag out about, that I can see. I thought you were in funds. You wanted to borrow of me to-day, and I couldn't help you, and I know Newcome was dunning you for your footer subscription. But I hear you paid up to-day, so I concluded you had a remittance. Topham told me you'd paid up; I asked him. As a matter of fact, I was ready to lend you the five bob, if you'd wanted it. Five pounds is a different story."

"I—I paid that," said Townsend. "I—I wasn't so stony as all that. It was quids I wanted, not bobs. I settled with Newcome all right about that rotten subscription."

"Then you haven't had a remittance?" asked Smythe, a considerable amount of the geniality departing from his manner.

"No, I haven't." Townsend's lip curled in a sneer. "If you've asked me in here because you thought I was in funds, you've wasted your time!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Smythe, flushing a little. "If you were flush again, I thought you might like to try your luck at nap. I owe you your revenge, you know. I cleaned you out last time."

"I know you did," said Townsend bitterly. "You, and Howard, and Tracy, and Joey Hook, the bookie! A precious lot, the set of you! If I'd never had anything to do with you, I shouldn't be in that villain's clutches now, and I shouldn't have—" He broke off abruptly. "You introduced me to him, and you wouldn't lend me five quid to get out of his hands, when you knew he was threatening to go to my father, and get me into an awful row."

"I couldn't," said Smythe tartly. "As for introducing you to him, you asked me to—fairly ragged me into doing it, in fact. And about his threatening you, I believe that's all bluff, to put the screw on and make you pay up. You're a doocid bad payer, Towny, and you can't deny it. Newcome's had to dun you for weeks for your footer subscription, and it seems you could have paid all the time if you'd liked."

"I couldn't; that is, I mean—" Smythe, watching the Fourth-Former's agitated face, gave a sudden low whistle. A startled look came into his eyes.

"Towny, old man," he said, in a low voice, "you haven't—you couldn't—"

"What!" exclaimed Townsend fiercely. "What are you insinuating, you hound?"

"Better language, please!" snapped Smythe. "It looks jolly queer to me. You were hard hit for five quids, and the same afternoon this happens—"

"You dare to say—" Townsend almost choked. "You cad! You led me into all of it; you got me into this horrible fix, and refused to raise a finger to help me out! You slackin', smokin', gamblin' cad! It's all your fault! And if you dare to repeat a word of what's in your rotten, suspicious mind, Smythe, there's some things I could say about you, too. I wouldn't think twice of going to Bulkeley, and telling him

what goes on in this study—and at the Bird-in-Hand, too!"

"Cheese it!" said Smythe, paling a little. "I'm not goin' to say anything—it isn't my business. I'm not goin' to say a word!"

"You'd better not!" snarled Townsend; and he strode out of the study, and slammed the door violently behind him.

Adolphus Smythe, left alone, whistled again—a prolonged whistle. He stared thoughtfully out of his study window. Jimmy Silver was visible in the dusky quad, and Smythe noted that Hooker and Smith, minor of the Fourth turned their backs on

Tommy Dodd & Co. had nodded cheerily to him in the quad.

But Jimmy knew that the story must soon spread, though all the Classical Fourth agreed in wishing to keep it from the Moderns.

By the morrow he would be cut by all the Lower School, unless he succeeded in discovering the thief, and clearing his name.

Several of the Shell had heard it already, as he could see by the mocking glances he received from Howard and Tracy and Selwyn when he passed them.

He went into the common-room to look for his chums. Several of the Classical Fourth were there, and there was a hiss as Jimmy Silver came in.

Wegg of the Third was drying a pair of muddy boots over the fire, and he looked round as he heard the hiss.

"Hallo, what's this about?" asked Wegg.

Jimmy Silver went out, and no one replied to Wegg's question. But the peculiar way the Classical juniors were keeping the secret made it pretty certain that in twenty-four hours it would be all over Rookwood.

"Hallo, here you are!" said Lovell, meeting Jimmy in the passage. "The

prepared to suspect—and to watch—any member of that delectable circle who showed a desire to get outside Rookwood that evening.

"Going out?" asked Newcome affably as Townsend stood hesitating. "No," muttered Townsend. "I—I was thinking of a stroll in the quad, that's all. I've got a bit of a headache."

"It's raining," said Lovell. "I don't mind a bit of rain."

"What about your clobber?" grinned Lovell. "Suppose you should spoil your beautiful trucks, Towny?"

"Oh, rats!" Townsend went out on the steps. Lovell glanced at Newcome significantly. Townsend might be going for a stroll in the quad because he had a bit of a headache. On the other hand, he might be the very fellow they wanted, and his intention might be to scale the wall and clear off, trusting to luck not to be missed. He was not likely to be missed if he came back before bedtime.

"Well, I don't mind a bit of rain, either," said Lovell. "I'll come for a stroll with you, Towny."

Townsend stopped suddenly. "You needn't trouble," he said.

"No trouble at all."

"Look here, Lovell, we're not

"Come on, you chaps! Time for prep!"

"No hurry," said Lovell. "Come out here, Jimmy. Beautiful night for a saunter—nice and rainy, you know."

Jimmy Silver laughed, and joined them. Townsend muttered something under his breath, and went back into the house. Lovell looked at his chums, his eyes glistening with excitement.

"You spotted it, Jimmy?" he said breathlessly.

"Yes; I saw it all," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "He wanted to go out, and he wanted to dodge you chaps."

"Yes. And why?" whispered Lovell. "He's our bird, Jimmy."

"It begins to look like it. He might only be going out for one of his usual little games," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "He might have one of his precious appointments for this evening. But I fancy it will pay us to keep an eye on Towny. I don't know much about him, but I had an impression that he's got lots of money, though. Not the chap to be so hard up as I figured it out."

"That's all you know!" said Newcome. "I've had to dun him no end for his footer subscription. We had a row about it to-day. He's paid up since, though."

Jimmy Silver started. "He's paid up since!" he exclaimed. "So he was out of money before, and he's got into funds again—what!"

"I suppose so. He came to the study and paid up his five bob," said Newcome. "I was going to my desk to put his money with the rest, when I found out that the club funds were missing. That's how I came to discover it to-day."

"Then it was through Townsend"

"Yes. If he hadn't paid up to-day, I shouldn't have gone to the money drawer, certainly. Mightn't have gone to it for days," said Newcome.

"And all that time the thief would have been on tenterhooks," said Jimmy Silver. "Whoever collared the cash and left my knife-blade there, must have been anxious for it to come out, and to get it fixed on me. He put the blade there, and chucked the knife into Flynn's study, where Flynn was sure to find it and notice that it was broken—as he did. If I'd found the knife before that discovery was made, I should have been hunting for the chap who took it from my study and busted it. That would have spoiled the whole game. The discovery had to be made about the money before the knife came into my hands again. See?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And by paying up his subscription, Townsend caused the discovery to be made," said Jimmy Silver. "It may be chance, but it looks mighty like a clue. Then, he had the money to pay, and earlier in the afternoon he hadn't. And now he's trying to sneak out of the school without being seen, and gives it up because you fellows have kept your eye on him."

Lovell drew a deep breath. "We're on the giddy track!" he said.

"I think we are," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

The 5th Chapter. After Dark.

"Bed!" said Bulkeley, looking into the junior common-room.

The Classical Fourth were mostly in the common-room, and mostly discussing Jimmy Silver and his iniquities. The discussion ceased as the captain of Rookwood looked in.

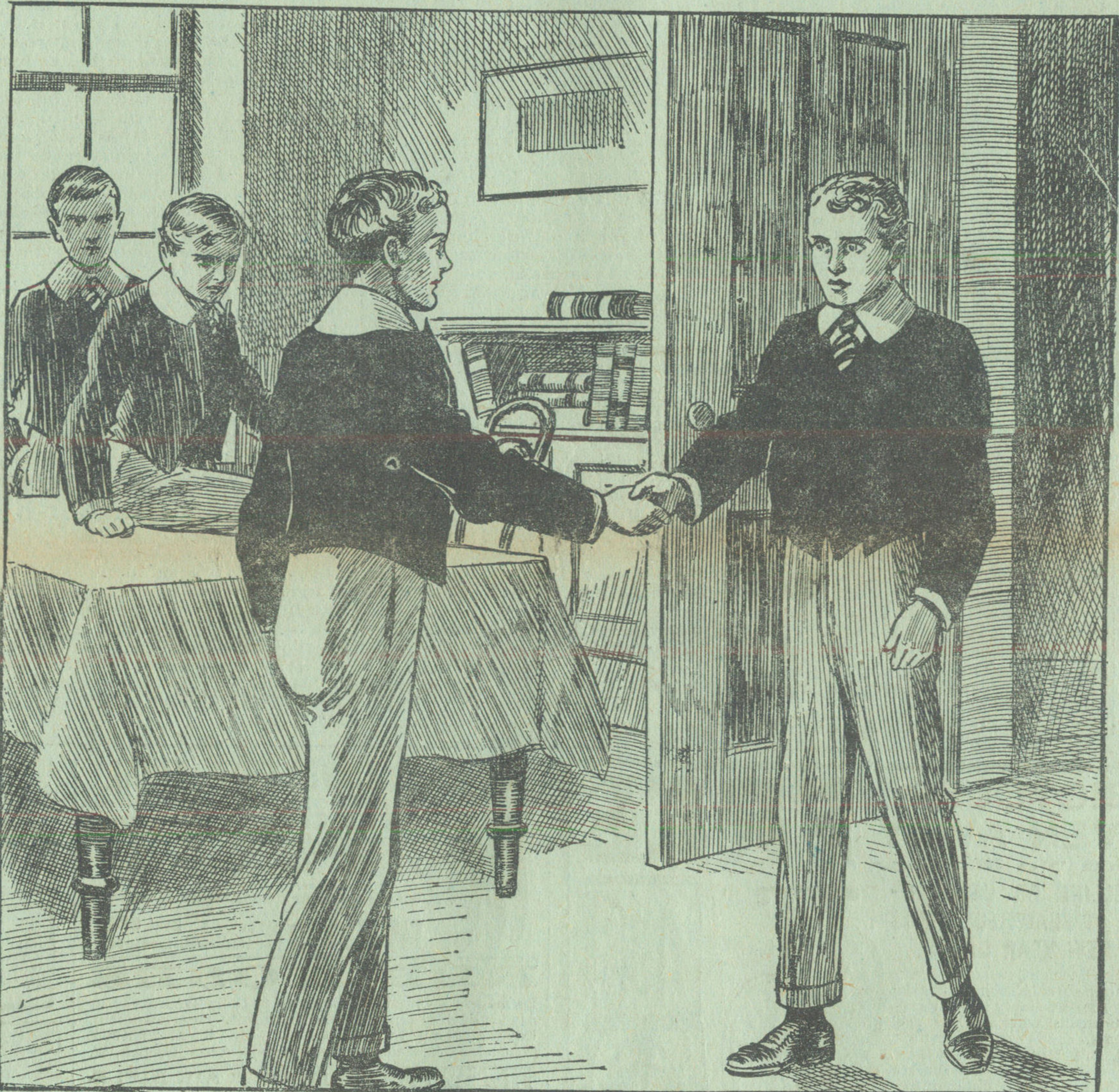
The juniors went to their dormitory. Townsend was there, with his chum Topham. Lovell was also there, with one eye on Townsend.

Hardly for a minute that evening had Townsend escaped the observation of one or other of the Classical chums.

They had their eyes open for any other possibly suspicious person; but it was upon the dandy of the Fourth that their suspicions centred.

He was one of the Giddy Goats, and they knew that he dabbled in betting. And now that their attention was turned to him, they remembered that he had been looking worried and distraught for days past. They had observed, too, that he was no longer speaking to Smythe of the Shell, and they had heard that Towny had tried to borrow money of Smythe and several other wealthy Goats, and failed. Townsend had made so many attempts to raise, by borrowing, the debt he owed to Joey Hook, that a good many comments had been passed on his state of hard-upness.

It was all additional evidence, and



"You stood by me when I was down on my luck," said Oswald, "and I'm standing by you—if you want me." Jimmy Silver's face cleared. "Good man!" he said. "If you're sure you mean that—" "Honest injun!" said Oswald.

him. He saw Jimmy Silver's face flush and his hand clench.

"Barred by his Form!" muttered Smythe. "And all the time—My hat!"

Smythe sat down, and lighted another cigarette. He could not afford to quarrel with Townsend, who knew too many of his little secrets. And he had been "up against" Jimmy Silver ever since that cheery youth had come to Rookwood. Smythe told himself that it was none of his business.

But, hardened as he was, the "Giddy Goat" of the Shell felt a twinge of conscience; and he wished that he had not had that little talk with Townsend.

The 4th Chapter. Under Suspicion.

Jimmy Silver came into the School House with a clouded brow.

With the exception of his chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome and Dick Oswald, not a soul on the Classical side of the Fourth Form chose to speak to him. So far, the Moderns had not heard the story, and

gates are closed." He lowered his voice. "Nobody's gone out."

Jimmy nodded. "We'll see at call-over, too," added Lovell.

Calling-over was held in Big Hall. The Fistical Four noted that every fellow answered to his name.

After call-over, Lovell and Newcome stood in the big doorway, chatting. They chatted with their eyes well open.

They were there to "spot" any fellow—especially any Fourth-Form fellow—who went out into the quadrangle.

It was a misty evening, and rain was beginning to fall. A little later, Townsend of the Fourth came down to the big door, which was not yet closed.

Lovell and Newcome exchanged glances as Townsend stood looking out into the misty quad. Was he going out?

Townsend was not in any way a special object of their suspicions any more than any other member of the select society of Giddy Goats. But, on Jimmy Silver's theory, they were

friends, and I don't want your company!" said Townsend abruptly.

"What beautiful manners these nuts have," said Lovell cheerfully. "Still, I suppose we can walk in the quad if we like? Come on, Newcome!"

Townsend had gone down the steps. Lovell and Newcome followed him. The dandy of the Fourth stopped again, biting his underlip.

"What are you following me for, you rotters?" he muttered, in a low, tense voice.

"Following you," repeated Lovell. "My dear chap, you haven't bought up the quad, I suppose?"

"Will you let me alone?" "Wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole, Towny. But I'm going to walk in the quad if I like, and as long as I like," said Lovell coolly.

The dandy of the Fourth stood silent for a minute, biting his lip. His eyes were glittering. Lovell and Newcome strolled on a few paces, and then strolled back again. They did not mean to lose sight of Townsend. Jimmy Silver stepped out of the doorway and called to them.



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER!

(Continued from the previous page.)

the Fistical Four were extremely interested in Townsend just now. There was not likely to be much sleep for any member of the Co. that night.

According to Jimmy Silver's astute theory, the thief could not yet have disposed of the money taken from Newcome's desk. If Townsend was the thief, and if that had been his object in seeking to get out of the school that evening, he had been baffled. He was not likely to leave it till the morrow. Only desperate fear of a hard creditor could have driven him to such a crime, and that fear would drive him to paying over the stolen money as quickly as possible, and getting rid of it. The thief, whoever he was, was almost certain to attempt to break bounds that night if there was anything in Jimmy Silver's theory.

Bulkeley put out the lights in the dormitory of the Classical Fourth. There was a buzz of talk among the juniors for some time. They did not speak to Jimmy Silver, but they spoke at him. Topham related a story of a burglary, Flynn told of a case he had read in a paper of a robbery, Jones minor discussed the manners and customs of pickpockets. It was all for Jimmy Silver's ears.

But Jimmy gave no sign of having taken it to himself. He uttered no word.

His tormentors gave it up at last, concluding, in disgust, that he had fallen asleep, and that their eloquence was wasted on him.

By ten o'clock all was quiet in the dormitory.

But all the juniors were not sleeping.

There was one who watched the starlight at the high windows with sleepless, haggard eyes. And there were five who waited and watched, but made no sound.

Eleven o'clock sounded dully from the clock-tower over on the Modern side of Rookwood.

By that time Newcome and Raby were in the land of dreams, and Oswald was nodding off. Their intention was to keep wide awake, but they

dozed off unconsciously. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

But Jimmy Silver's eyes never closed for a moment, and Lovell was equally wide awake.

Jimmy Silver's honour and good name were staked on the happenings of that night. He was not likely to sleep.

Midnight!

The last stroke of twelve died away in the silence of the night. By that time all Rookwood was plunged in darkness and slumber, save for the two chums in the Fourth Form dormitory and one other.

A few minutes after midnight there was a faint sound in the dormitory.

Jimmy Silver, without a sound or a motion, listened, striving with his keen eyes to penetrate the surrounding gloom.

He knew what that sound was. It was the faint creak of a bed, as its occupant left it with infinite caution.

One of the Classical Fourth was getting up—at past midnight!

Jimmy Silver's heart beat faster.

He had hoped and believed that the theory he had formed was correct. He had proof of it now—or almost proof. It was always possible that one of the Giddy Goats was going "on the razzle," as the elegant Adolphus would have described it. But it was very unusual for the giddiest of Giddy Goats to leave his razzle to so very late an hour. By that time even the merry sporting-party at the Bird-in-Hand would be thinking of bed.

Whoever was going out, therefore, was not a Goat on the razzle, in all probability. It was more serious than that.

Jimmy Silver listened.

Faintly in the darkness came vague sounds, and he knew that whoever had risen from his bed was dressing himself in the dark with great caution.

Then there came a sound of an opening door, and of its closing again. Then Jimmy heard Lovell turning out of the next bed.

"Jimmy!" Lovell's voice was

husky with excitement. "Jimmy, are you awake, old chap?"

"You bet!" said Jimmy Silver tersely.

"You—you heard—"

"Yes! Get your clobber on, Lovell!" Jimmy was out of bed in a twinkling. "Wake the other chaps, they're asleep; we've stuck it out, though—"

Lovell chuckled softly.

"I wasn't likely to sleep," he muttered. "Jimmy, old man—"

"Whisper!" said Jimmy.

"He'll get clear if we're not after him at once."

"No good collaring him in the passage," Jimmy whispered back.

"No good nailing him unless he's got the plunder on him. It's more likely he's hidden it somewhere, and he's going to get it and clear out over the wall. We've got to get down to the school wall and head him off."

"Right!"

Lovell shook Raby and Newcome, and they woke up at once. Jimmy Silver awakened Oswald. A whispered word was enough. The five juniors hurried on their clothes, and the rubber shoes they had concealed in their beds in readiness.

Jimmy opened the dormitory door cautiously.

There was no sound in the passage.

"He's clear!" whispered Raby.

"Wait a tick!"

Jimmy Silver crept silently to Townsend's bed. He was almost certain of the identity of the junior who had quitted the dormitory, but he intended to be quite certain.

Townsend's bed was in darkness.

He bent over it. There was no sound of breathing. Then his hand glided over the pillow. No head rested there. The bed was empty.

Jimmy rejoined his chums, and drew the dormitory door shut when they were in the passage.

"It's Towny?" whispered Oswald.

"Yes; his bed's empty."

"I knew it!" muttered Lovell.

"I knew it!" said Jimmy. "But now we're sure! Come on! Follow your leader."

Without a word or a question, the chums of the Fourth followed Jimmy Silver. Silent in the rubber shoes, they glided quickly along the dark passage.

Jimmy Silver opened the window at the end of the passage.

"The ivy!" whispered Lovell.

"Yes."

"Towny would get out by the box-room. He hasn't nerve enough for this."

"I know that. We shall head him off this way."

Lovell grinned in the darkness.

"Good!"

Jimmy Silver led the way. It required some nerve to swing out of

the window and descend by the thick ivy that covered the old stone wall thickly. In the daylight it would not have been a dangerous feat, but with darkness around and below them the juniors needed all their nerve for the task. But they did not hesitate.

Jimmy swung himself out.

"I'll cut off to the wall as soon as I get on the ground," he whispered.

"You follow on as soon as you're down. The corner by Little Quad."

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy Silver vanished into the darkness.

Only the rustling and shaking of the ivy told of his rapid descent. Lovell waited one minute for him to get clear, and then clambered through the big window.

Jimmy Silver was safely on the ground.

He did not pause a second.

With quick, silent feet he raced across the quadrangle and through the archway into Little Quad.

There, where two walls joined, at a sharp angle, an ancient beech-tree was half embedded in the stonework, and rendered it easy for the clumsiest climber to scale the wall. It was a spot well-known to fellows who had their own reasons for quitting the school occasionally at forbidden hours. Jimmy Silver & Co. certainly had seldom made use of their knowledge, but they knew all about it.

That was the spot Townsend would make for. Jimmy Silver knew that. Jimmy Silver himself might have scaled the wall in some more difficult place, but not the Slacker of the Fourth. If Townsend was going out of bounds he was certain to make for that corner of Little Quad. Many a time had Townsend, Topham, Smythe, and the other Giddy Goats climbed the wall in that place for their surreptitious visits to the Bird-in-Hand at Coombe.

Jimmy Silver panted a little as he reached the dark corner under the gloomy shade of the old beech.

He was sure that he was ahead of Townsend. The latter had had five minutes' start, but he had to descend by the box-room window at the back of the School House and make his way round the great building. And he had no occasion to hurry as Jimmy had done.

Jimmy, too, suspected that the money had been hidden, and that Townsend would have to take it from its hiding-place. He was not likely to have kept it upon him.

Jimmy waited.

A faint shadow loomed up. It was Lovell. He joined the captain of the Fourth silently.

"That you, Jimmy?"

"What-ho!"

"You haven't seen him?"

"Not yet!"

Silently in the darkness Raby and Newcome and Oswald joined them. There was a few whispered words, and then silence.

The juniors waited with tense eagerness.

Was Townsend coming, or were they on the wrong track after all? Yet for what reason could Townsend have risen after midnight and dressed himself and left the dormitory in such a stealthy fashion unless it was to break bounds? Once, when caught out of his dormitory at a late hour, he had told a story of toothache, and getting something for it from his study. But, though that story had satisfied Mr. Bootles, the juniors had known that it was false.

Was he coming?

If he was coming, there was no doubt that they were ahead of him. But was he coming?

Faintly through the silence in Little Quad came a sound—the faint sound of a stealthy footstep. The vigil had lasted a quarter of an hour.

Lovell gripped Jimmy's arm silently.

The five juniors backed against the wall, leaving clear the path to the tree. The footsteps came on.

Dimly, barely seen, a form loomed before their eyes. The rain was still falling in light drops. They heard a hurried breathing and a scraping sound of boots upon the sloping trunk of the old beech.

"Collar him!"

Jimmy Silver muttered the words and sprang forward.

The 6th Chapter. Held by the Enemy.

"Collar him!"

There was a faint shriek in the darkness. The climbing form on the tree, collared by five pairs of hands at once, came tumbling down in the grasp of the juniors.

Townsend did not resist.

He lay heavily in the hands of the juniors who had seized him.

"Got him!" muttered Lovell jubilantly.

"What's the matter with him?" exclaimed Oswald.

"Townsend, you rotter!"

"Towny, you cad!"

"Scared!" grinned Lovell. "Scared out of his silly wits! Don't be frightened, you funky ass, it's only us!"

"Little us!" chuckled Raby.

There was a deep, gasping breath from Townsend. He began to struggle. That sudden collaring in the darkness had indeed scared him almost out of his wits for the moment.

"Lovell!" he panted.

"Yes, you rotter!"

"Hold him!" muttered Jimmy

(Continued on the next page.)

FREE BICYCLES GIVEN AWAY FREE

Send No Money.

FOR SELLING OR USING 1/- WORTH OF BEAUTIFUL XMAS AND NEW YEAR CARDS.

As an advertisement, we give every reader of this journal a splendid present absolutely FREE, simply for selling 1/- worth of Beautiful Xmas and New Year Cards at 1d. each. (Gold-mounted, Embossed, Silk-Tied Folders, Glossy, Patriotic, etc.) Our up-to-date Illustrated Prize List contains hundreds of different free gifts for everyone, including Ladies' and Gents' Cycles, Gold and Silver Watches, Ostrich Feathers, Furs, Boots, Suits of Clothes, Cameras, Clocks, Periscopes, Chains, Rings, Accordeons, Cinemas, Gramophones, Air Guns, Auto-Harps, Engines, Tea Sets, Toys, etc., etc. All you have to do is to send us your Name and full Address (a postcard will do), and we will send you a selection of lovely Cards to sell or use. When sold send money obtained, and we will immediately forward gift chosen according to the Grand Illustrated List we send you. Start early. (Colonial applications invited.) Send a postcard now to—

THE ROYAL CARD CO. (Dept. 25), KEW, LONDON.

30 DAYS' FREE TRIAL.

Packed Free. Carriage Paid. No deposit required.

MEAD Coventry Flyers

Warranted 15 Years. Puncture Resisting or Dunlop Tyres, Brooks Saddles, Coasters, Speed Gears, &c.

FROM 10/- MONTHLY

Prompt delivery. No advance in prices. Write to-day for Art Catalogue and Special Offer. Rider Agents Wanted.

MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. 82H 11 Paradise St., Liverpool.

RED NOSES

Permanently Cured and Restored to their Natural Colour in a few days by a simple home treatment. Particulars free. Enclose stamp to pay postage.—Mr. B. A. TEMPLE (Specialist), 39, Maddox Street, Regent Street, London, W.

THE "LITTLE SPITFIRE" AIR RIFLE

6/-

The most accurate air gun. Shoots slugs, darts, or shot with terrific force, and is guaranteed to kill at long range. Specially adapted for garden or saloon practice, bird and rabbit shooting, also for bottle and target practice. Securely packed, with sample of shot; postage 5d. extra. Illustrated List, 1d.—B. FRANKS & CO., Gun Manufacturers, Empire Works, Caroline Street, Birmingham.

A Real Lever Simulation GOLD WATCH FREE

Guaranteed 5 years.

SEND 6d. ONLY.

A straightforward generous offer from an established firm. We are giving away Watches to thousands of people all over the world as a huge advertisement. Now is your chance to obtain one. Write now, enclosing P.O. 6d. for posting expenses, for one of our fashionable Ladies' Long Guards, or Gents' Alberts, sent carriage paid, to wear with the Watch, which will be given Free should you take advantage of our marvellous offer. We expect you to tell your friends about us and show them the beautiful Watch. Don't think this offer too good to be true, but send 6d. only, full simple conditions, and gain a Free Watch. You will be amazed. Colonial Orders 1s.

WILLIAMS & LLOYD, Wholesale Jewellers, Dept. 16, 89, Cornwallis Road, London, N., England.

JOKES, TRICKS, CATCHES, & PUZZLES.

ARE YOU SHORT?

If so, let me help you to increase your height. Mr. Briggs reports an increase of 5 inches; Mr. Lindon 3 inches; Miss Ledell 4 inches. No drugs or appliances. Send three penny stamps for further particulars and my £100 guarantee.—ARTHUR BRIGGS, Specialist in the Increase of Height, Dept. A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N.

CROSSTALK

Comic Duets, Patter, Sketches, Songs, Parodies, Complete Acts, Ventri-loquism, etc. List 1d. stamp. Some 1916's Funniest now ready. Hundreds of testimonials from amateurs.—Jack Finn, Songwriter, Magdalen St., Colchester.

25 XMAS CARDS 1/3 POST FREE

COMPARE OUR VALUE!

THE "BIG VALUE," 1915

COMPARE OUR VALUE!

PARCEL OF 25 LOVELY BOOKLET XMAS CARDS, 1/3 only, post free (1/3 P.O. or 1/4 in stamps). A wonderful Collection! Huge Value! Dainty and Pretty designs! All are Booklets (as usually sold at 1d. to 4d. each). Finished with Silk Cord or Ribbon Bows. All are different. The three Cards, illustrated in miniature, give but a very slight idea of the beautiful Cards contained in this parcel. There are Lovely Gold-mounted, Jewelled, Embossed, View, Floral, etc., etc. designs. See them for yourself, and if you are not Satisfied and Delighted over and over again we will refund your money in full. Free envelopes are sent for all cards that will not go in envelopes of ordinary size. Illustrated Catalogue of Cards and Presents, sent gratis and post free.

Pain's Presents House, Dept. 1, Hastings.

80 MAGIC TRICKS

Illusions, etc., with illustrations and instructions. Also 40 Tricks with Cards. The lot post free 1/-.

T. W. HARRISON, 238, PENTONVILLE ROAD, LONDON, N.

BLUSHING

Famous Doctor's Recipe for this most distressing complaint. 6d. P.O. Never fails. Hundreds of Testimonials.—Mr. GEORGE, 63, STRODE ROAD, CLEVELDON.

XMAS CATALOGUE FREE

Write for it and see the Big Bargains in Watches, Clocks, Jewellery, Novelties, Pocket Lamps, Toys, Xmas Cards, etc. See these Real Gold Shell Rings. All 1/- each post free. No. R145 Dress; R148 Plain; R144 Buckle; Signet—R111 Gents'; R106 Lady's. Forsize out hole in card to pass over knuckle tightly, or write for Size Card & Catalogue free.—Pain's Presents House, Dept. 33H, Hastings, Eng.

100 CONJURING TRICKS, 57 Joke Tricks, 60 Puzzles, 60 Games, 12 Love Letters, 420 Jokes, 10 Magic Pranks, 52 Money-making Secrets (worth 22s), & 1,001 more stupendous Attractions, 6d. P.O. the lot.—Hughes & Co., Station Rd., Harborne, B'ham. Sneezing Powder, 6d. pkt.

BROOKS' NEW CURE FOR RUPTURE

Brooks' Appliance. New Discovery. Wonderful. No obnoxious springs or pads. Automatic Air Cushions.

Binds and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb.

No salves. No lies. Durable. Cheap.

SENT ON TRIAL. CATALOGUE FREE, BROOKS' APPLIANCE COMPANY, 787b, Bank Buildings, Kingsway, London, W.C.

Silver, as Townsend struggled. "Don't make a row, Townsend, you idiot! Do you want to wake the school?"

"Jimmy Silver!" "We're all here!" chuckled Raby. "Five of us, my pippin! And if you wriggle like an eel, you won't get away, so you can chuck it!"

Townsend seemed to realise that, for he ceased to resist. He was securely held by the five juniors, and there was no chance for him. He panted breathlessly, his heart beating in great throbs.

"Well, you've got me," he said, trying to speak calmly, though his eyes were burning in the darkness. "You startled me at first. But now what do you want? Have you set up as prefects, to look after fellows who break bounds?"

"We're looking after you specially," said Jimmy Silver. "You are the apple of our eye at the present moment, my dear boy."

"What-ho!" grinned Lovell. "We wouldn't lose you for your weight in gold, Towny!"

Townsend peered at them in the darkness.

"What do you mean? Let me go!"

"No fear!" "You've no right to interfere with me!" panted Townsend.

"Go hon!"

"You interfering cads! Suppose I'm going down to the Bird-in-Hand!" said Townsend. "Is it any business of yours? Smythe goes, and so does Topham sometimes, and Howard and Tracy. Yes, and Knowles of the Sixth; you know it. What are you chipping in for? Mind your own business, hang you!"

"This is our business," said Jimmy Silver. "As for your blackguardly doings, they're not our business, and we shouldn't chip in for that. What have you been doing since you were out of bed? We got here a good quarter of an hour ahead of you, and you had a start."

"I—I had to be careful, picking my way in the dark—"

"You didn't have to spend any time looking for something you'd hidden somewhere?" asked Jimmy Silver caustically.

Townsend started violently, and the juniors who were holding him felt him tremble in their grasp.

The wretched black sheep was shaking from head to foot, in a spasm of sudden terror caused by Jimmy Silver's question.

"No need for him to answer that question, I think," said Oswald soberly. "It's answered pretty plainly. He's got the money about him now!"

"The—the money!" panted Townsend.

"Bring him along," said Jimmy Silver shortly.

Townsend began to resist.

"What are you going to do? Where are you going? What do you mean?" His voice rose to a shriek. "Let me go! I'll scream and wake the school!"

"Wake the school if you like," said Jimmy Silver. "If you prefer to have the Head deal with the matter, you can take your choice. It will mean the sack for you. It's your own affair!"

"What do you mean, you—you thief?" hissed Townsend.

"Shut that, you lying villain!" exclaimed Lovell fiercely.

But Jimmy Silver only laughed.

"I'll tell you what I mean, Townsend," said Jimmy Silver. "It's true enough, I dare say, that you were going to the Bird-in-Hand. But you were not going there to gamble; it's too late for that. You were going to see somebody there specially. And my belief is that it's a man you owe money to, whom you're anxious to square up at once!"

"Nothing of the sort! I'm stony, too. Anybody who knows me will tell you I'm out of tin!"

"That's what we're going to see," said Jimmy Silver. "It's known well enough that you were out of tin—your own tin. I know that. But enough said. Bring him along, you chaps. We've got to get back to the dorm!"

"I—I'm going out!" stammered Townsend.

"Your mistake—you're coming in."

With a hard grasp upon his arms and his collar, the juniors marched Townsend across Little Quad, and then across Big Quad to the School House.

Round the dark and shadowy School House they marched him, and, still with a grip on his collar, he climbed in at the box-room window, the way he had left the house. He

did not utter a word. He was powerless. He was in the hands of the Philistines, and he had to submit to his fate.

Jimmy Silver fastened the window after the juniors were inside. Then, with silent steps, they trod the passage to the Fourth-Form dormitory.

The 7th Chapter. The Thief!

As the juniors entered the dormitory Lovell groped in his pocket, and produced a candle-end, and placed a match to it. Lights and shadows danced on the white walls.

A sleepy voice came from Flynn's bed.

"Faith, thin, and what's that? Who's got a light?"

"Wake up!" growled Lovell.

Flynn sat up in bed, and rubbed his eyes.

"Howly mother av Moses! What's up?" he exclaimed. "Is it a fire or Zeppelins?"

"Neither, fathead; but it'll be masters or prefects if you howl out

was too securely held for that. Whatever he had concealed about him was not to be disposed of till it had been seen by the whole Form.

A crowd of startled faces were round him now. There was no mistaking the import of Jimmy Silver's words. It was Townsend who was accused.

Jimmy Silver's eyes dwelt with a sarcastic glance upon the surprised crowd of juniors.

"You're going to hear the facts now," he said. "Just after midnight Townsend sneaked out of bed. We were keeping awake, and we spotted him!"

"Spyin' on him!" sneered Topham.

"Watching him," said Jimmy Silver calmly, "because we suspected him of being the thief, and of wanting to get out of the school secretly with the money he had taken from Newcome's desk."

"Oh, by gad! Tell him he's a liar, Towny!"

Townsend did not speak.

"We waited for him in the corner of Little Quad, and collared him as he was getting out," said Jimmy Silver. "We brought him straight back here.

shower of silver coins came out into his open hands. Shillings, half-crowns, a five-shilling piece, a half-sovereign, and a number of florins. The Fourth-Formers looked on breathlessly. It was evidently the money that had been taken from Newcome's desk. There could not be the slightest doubt upon that point. Indeed, Flynn himself remembered having paid his subscription in a five-shilling piece, and Topham remembered that he had changed a half-sovereign with Newcome when he paid up.

Townsend leaned heavily on Lovell, who was still holding him. His strength seemed to have forsaken him.

Flynn, in grim silence, poured the handful of money upon a bed.

"Count it!" said Jimmy Silver.

Flynn counted it.

"Five pounds fifteen shillings," he said.

"Six pounds was taken from my desk," said Newcome, "and after that Townsend paid up his subscription—five shillings."

"Sure, it's plain enough."

"By gad!" said Topham.

"Do you want any more proof?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Townsend

Glances of contempt were thrown upon him from all sides.

With a moan of utter misery, the dandy of the Fourth turned into bed, and lay there silent, as the candles were blown out, and the juniors returned to bed. After a time the Fourth Form slept—but no sleep came to Townsend's haggard eyes. In dumb misery he lay, and watched the dawn stealing in at the high windows.

8th Chapter.

Least Said Soonest Mended,

Jimmy Silver's name had been cleared.

The repentant Classics the next day showed their repentance in many ways; and Jimmy Silver, who never bore malice, kindly condescended to accept their apologies. Townsend was avoided as if he had been a leper.

That day Townsend had a consultation with Smythe of the Shell, and the astute Adolphus gave him sage advice.

That evening Oswald dropped into the end study, where the Fistical Four, in the cheeriest of spirits, were starting their prep.

There was a curious expression on Oswald's face.

"Have you heard?" he asked.

"What—and which?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"About Townsend?"

"Found out and sacked?" asked Lovell.

"Oh, no! He's got out a new version of the story," said Oswald. "The chaps are talking it over—they don't know what to make of it. It seems—according to Townsend—that it was all a practical joke."

"A what!" ejaculated Raby.

"His story is that he took the cash out of Newcome's desk, and left Jimmy's knife there, simply as a joke on Jimmy."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Newcome.

"Last night he got up, intending to put it back again, with a note explaining that it was a joke, and telling Jimmy he had been spoofed."

"Great Scott!"

"But he had an appointment at the Bird-in-Hand, and he was going there first, and then you fellows collared him—"

"Phew!"

"So he wasn't able to carry out his intention. In the dorm, he felt that appearances were against him, and he was so knocked over that he didn't explain. He's explained now."

"Well," said Jimmy, with a deep breath. "That chap beats Ananias and the Kaiser at their own game. But does he think that anybody will swallow a yarn like that?"

"He's got witnesses!" grinned Oswald.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Some fellows knew the whole joke all along, you see."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Smythe and Howard and Tracy are the fellows. They declared that they were in Towny's confidence from the first, and that they knew it was a practical joke, and were laughing up their sleeve about it."

"Good old Adolphus!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "He won't let one of his precious Giddy Goats be shown up if he can help it."

"It can't be true!" said Lovell.

"Of course it isn't," said Jimmy.

"But I dare say the fellows will believe it. They'll give Towny the benefit of the doubt, anyway. Let 'em!"

"But are we going to let the miserable cad crawl out of it with a lie like that?" exclaimed Lovell hotly.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"We are—we is!" he said.

"Towny's had his lesson—he won't burn his fingers again, I imagine. Give him a chance to live it down. Least said soonest mended—we don't want to give the Moderns a chance of chipping us about a thief on this side. Let him crawl out of it. Besides, it might be the truth."

"Might!" snorted Lovell.

"Might!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Tain't our business, anyway. We come out on top—as usual—and we don't want to hit a chap when he's down, even if he's a rotter and a worm. Let him crawl out of it, so far as we're concerned."

"Then," said Oswald, "you're going to say—"

"Nothing!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Least said soonest mended."

And the Fistical Four kept to that, and declined to say a word on the subject of Townsend's remarkable explanation, so Townsend had the benefit of the doubt.

THE END.

(Next Monday's magnificent, long, complete tale of Jimmy Silver and Co. is entitled, "HIS LAST CHANCE!" Don't miss it.)



Townsend lay heavily in the hands of the juniors who had seized him. "What's the matter with him?" exclaimed Oswald. "Scared!" grinned Lovell. "Scared out of his silly wits! Don't be frightened, you funky ass—it's only us!"

like that in the middle of the night!" snapped Lovell.

"But phwat's the matter?"

"What the dickens—" said Topham.

"Hallo! What's the little game?" demanded Hooker.

The Classical Fourth were all waking up now, at the sound of voices and the glimmer of light. Fellows sat up in their beds, and blinked in astonishment at the strange scene revealed by the glimmering candle.

"Get up!" snapped Jimmy. "If you want to know, we've found the thief!"

"You're the thief!" growled Topham.

"We've found him," repeated Jimmy Silver, "and we want all the Form to witness the proof of it. Get up!"

The Classical juniors turned out of bed at that, in wonder. Another candle-end was lighted, and another. The light glimmered on Townsend's colourless face. The wretched junior had made more than one attempt to slide his hand into his breast, but he

was sneaking out of the school after midnight, with that money in his pocket.

"I'm done with him," said Topham, shrugging his shoulders.

Townsend's look was haggard. His own chum was convinced, and had turned his back on him. The wretched junior groaned aloud.

"Haven't you anything to say?" exclaimed Hooker savagely.

"You stole the club funds, then, and planted Jimmy Silver's knife in the desk to put it on him. You've led us all by the nose."

"Sure, I'm sorry," said Flynn repentantly. "But, faith, it was all Lovell's fault. He was so jolly sure about his clue of the penknife, and he told us he was going to find the thief with that silly clue, and so—"

"I don't blame you," said Jimmy Silver. "You can't help being a set of silly, burbling asses, I suppose—"

"Oh, draw it mild, you know!"

Jimmy Silver pointed to the ghastly Townsend.

"There's the thief," he said, "and there's the money. I'm going to bed."

Newcome gathered up the money. Townsend tottered to his bed.

Flynn turned the pocket out. A