

"A TALE OF TWELVE CITIES!" STARTS TO-DAY!

# The BOYS' FRIEND 1d

(WITH WHICH IS AMALGAMATED "THE DREADNOUGHT.")

No. 756, Vol. XV. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending December 4th, 1915.]



**CAPTAIN CANTLEY'S TREASURE COMES TO LIGHT!**

**A Great Scene in Our Grand New Story:  
"A TALE OF TWELVE CITIES!"**

## A TALE OF TWELVE CITIES!

The First Instalment of an Amazing New Adventure Story,  
Specially Written for THE BOYS' FRIEND

By **FAMOUS MAURICE EVERARD.**

### The 1st Chapter.

The Search for Captain Cantley's Treasure is Strangely Interrupted.

"Of course, it may be all bunkum. For all we know, Private Thomas Brown may be only log-pulling—in which case we've wasted our morning for nothing."

Kit Hampton stopped half-way down the steep path to the beach,

and, leaning over the dilapidated handrail, straightened out the paper to the gusty wind, and examined it attentively. In the way of treasure charts it wasn't much of a success; merely a crude drawing, which did its best to represent the whereabouts of Joshua Cantley's hoard.

Barney Martin shaded his clear, blue eyes with his hand, and after a quick glance seaward, stared along

the coast, with its edging of white foam where the curling breakers broke and swirled over the rocks to the shelving sand.

"A pretty rotten trick to play on a couple of fellows, if it is only a plant," he said, with customary directness. "However, I should not be surprised if there's something in it. You see, besides Private Brown's story, and the diagram he sent with

it, there's the doggerel found in a private library in Devonshire. You remember:

"He who after gold doth rave  
First must find ye smuggler's cave.  
Let ye laddes of Devon strive  
While so be they are alive."

"They couldn't very well strive after they're dead," responded Kit, folding the paper and running down to the beach. "The worst part of the business is that the verse speaks of a mystic key to unlock the box, and although we've spent a precious week of our holiday hunting round Petitor and Torquay for something faintly resembling a mystic key, we're no nearer to the gold doubloons or the promised 'wealth of the Spanish Main.'"

Kit swung round, his good-natured face shining in the sun.

"That's the fault of the joker who wrote the secret. You see, he wanted to tell us all about Captain Cantley's

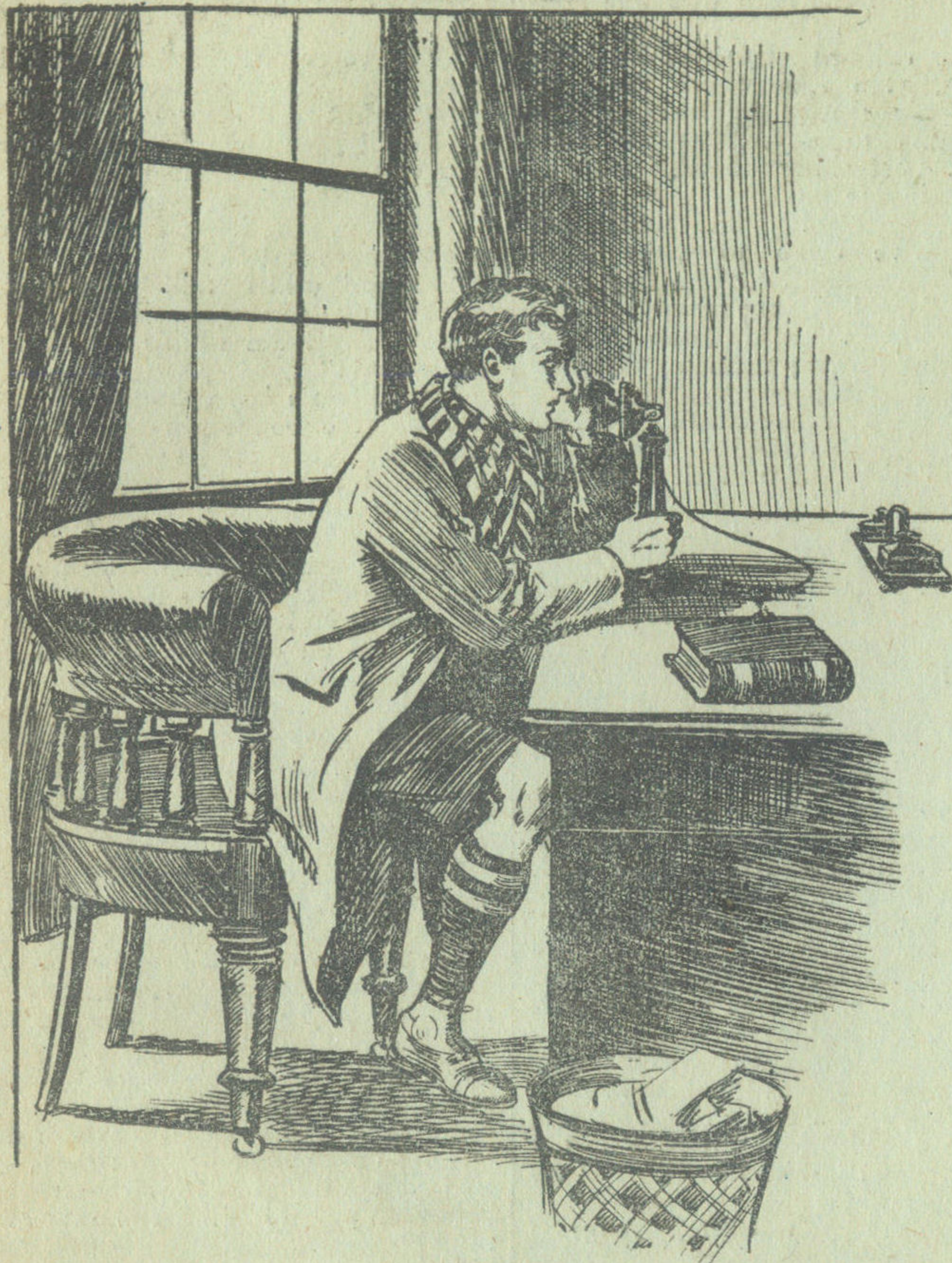
buried gold—pieces of eight, and all the rest of it, which 'Englishe grit and Englishe pluck' are supposed to win; but either he had his tongue in his cheek, or he wasn't giving too much away, for not a word about the mystic key. Still, as Brown swears he came across the box, I don't see why we shouldn't try, too."

He swung across the golden sand, five feet five of sturdy British boyhood, tall and straight as a larch, and tough as yew; with a frank, good-natured face well set above his broad shoulders, and a swing to his body as he moved that spoke of long acquaintance with field games.

Barney was quick to catch him up. "I reckon that must be the cave, old dog," he said, pointing to a cavernous opening above which the seagulls whirled and screamed in noisy flight. By the set of the tide I reckon we've a good hour and no more."

(Continued on the next page.)





"If you come to Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver, "you won't stay long. I shall ring up the police-station and give you in charge!"

### The 1st Chapter.

#### Bothering Mr. Bootles,

Buz-z-z-z!

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, laid down his book with a slight exclamation of impatience.

It was a half-holiday at Rookwood, and while the fellows were disporting themselves on the playing-fields, Mr. Bootles was enjoying himself in his own way, with a ponderous volume of Sophocles.

All Mr. Bootles' thoughts were far away, dwelling upon "the glory that was Greece," and the sudden imperious buzz of the telephone brought him back to the modern world with a jump.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles.

He laid Sophocles carefully upon a chair, rose, and crossed to the table where the telephone stood. All Mr. Bootles' movements were leisurely, and the bell was buzzing away all the time. However, he took up the receiver at last.

"Hallo!" said Mr. Bootles to the transmitter. "What, what?"

"Hallo!" came to his ears. "Are you there?"

"I am undoubtedly here," said Mr. Bootles. "Kindly proceed with your communication with as much rapidity as possible."

Mr. Bootles used words like that even on the telephone.

"That's Rookwood?"

"This is certainly Rookwood Collegiate School."

"I wish to speak to one of the boys."

Mr. Bootles fairly snorted into the transmitter. This, then, was what he had been interrupted for, it was for this that he had been dragged suddenly from the entrancing pages of Sophocles. Mr. Bootles' snort would have done credit to a war-horse.

"Sir," he said to the transmitter, "it is not customary for the pupils of this ancient foundation to receive communications by means of the telephone. The installation was not made for the personal convenience of the pupils."

"Eh? I didn't catch that."

It was no wonder that the speaker at the other end had failed to "catch" all that. Mr. Bootles repeated it with ponderous patience.

"But I want to speak to a junior—"

"A junior!" Mr. Bootles glared at the telephone as if it had done him an injury. It was not even a senior. If it had been Bulkeley of the Sixth Mr. Bootles might have excused it. But a junior!

"Are you there?" came the voice. Mr. Bootles was giving the telephone deadly looks, instead of speaking into it.

"I am here," replied Mr. Bootles, "and I respectfully beg to call your attention to the fact that it is not

customary to ring up a Form-master for the purpose of communicating with a junior. I have the honour of bidding you good-afternoon!"

And the master of the Fourth fairly jammed the receiver on the hooks and returned with a heightened colour to Sophocles.

Buz-z-z-z-z!

Barely had Mr. Bootles reopened Sophocles when the bell started again. Mr. Bootles ejaculated "Dear me!" but his expression suggested that he was inclined to say something more than that.

He took up the receiver once more. "Hallo! You rang off," came the voice over the wires. "I hadn't finished."

"I had!" snapped Mr. Bootles, and down went the receiver again.

Buz-z-z-z!

"Goodness gracious! What a dreadfully persistent person!" ejaculated the exasperated Form-master, as the bell restarted after a brief interval. "Hallo—hallo!"

"Hallo! You rang off," came the voice cheerfully. "Is that Rookwood?"

"Bless my soul!"

"Say that again, please. I didn't catch that."

"Dear me! Yes, this is Rookwood. For goodness' sake, what is wanted?"

"I want to speak to a junior—"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Mr. Bootles.

"I can't hear you. What did you say?"

"Upon my word!"

"Thank you! I want to speak to James Silver of the Fourth Form."

"You cannot do anything of the sort," snorted Mr. Bootles. "Are you under the impression, sir, that a telephone in a Form-master's private apartments is intended for the use and convenience of a junior school-boy in the Fourth Form? If you have that impression, sir, you are labouring under a very serious misapprehension."

"Great Scott!"

"What—what?" said Mr. Bootles.

"Tell Jimmy his uncle wants to speak to him."

"His uncle?"

"Yes."

"Why could you not state at first that you were a relative of the boy in question?" snapped Mr. Bootles.

"However, it is not at all customary—indeed, it is a very great and disconcerting innovation, to—"

"Exactly! I'm sorry to trouble you, but this is important—very important. In fact, it is a very serious matter, and I must speak to my nephew at once. Pray accept my apologies for troubling you."

"Oh, very well—very well!" said Mr. Bootles, somewhat mollified.

"Kindly hold on, and I will endeavour to get the junior in question here. As it is a half-holiday, he is very probably beyond bounds. However, I will endeavour to ascertain."

# HIS LAST CHANCE!

A Magnificent New Long  
Complete School Story

introducing

JIMMY SILVER & Co.  
AT ROOKWOOD.

- BY -

OWEN CONQUEST.



"I'll chance that, Jimmy," replied John Silver. "I don't believe you would send your own uncle to prison. But, if you do, it won't be much worse for me—I'm on my uppers, and desperate!"

"My—my uncle, sir?" stammered Jimmy.

"Yes. You may speak to him, though it is—ahem!—an unprecedented occurrence," said Mr. Bootles. "I shall leave you my study for five minutes, Silver."

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Bootles retired majestically, closing the door after him. His manner indicated that the occurrence was, indeed, unprecedented.

Jimmy Silver hurried to the receiver.

His face was hard set, and there was a glitter in his eyes. His voice was as sharp as a knife as he spoke into the receiver.

"Are you there?"

"Is that you, Jimmy?"

"I am Jimmy Silver."

"I'm your uncle."

"I know your voice," growled Jimmy. "What do you want? How dare you ring me up here?"

Jimmy detected a chuckle on the telephone. John Silver, the reckless scapegrace and wastrel, was not likely to be abashed by his nephew's anger.

"I want to speak to you, Jimmy. I told you my circumstances before—"

"You told me that money was missed in the office where you were employed in London," said Jimmy, "and that they suspected you."

"Hush! We may be overheard at the exchange."

"That's your look-out," said Jimmy Silver grimly. "I warned you what to expect if you bothered me at the school. You told me you were innocent, and I believed you. Now I think you lied to me."

"Jimmy!"

"You said you needed money to clear off with, and I raised it, and gave it to you, and you gambled it away. So I've finished with you."

"Do you want to see me at Rookwood?"

There was a threatening growl in the voice on the wires.

"No. If you come here you won't stay long. I shall ring up the police-station at once, and give you in charge."

"You young fool! If we are overheard—"

"Most likely we are overheard," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "I don't care! My father refuses to have anything to do with you. I thought perhaps he was hard on you. I can see now that it was like my cheek. My pater was right, and I ought to have known it. He wouldn't allow me to have anything to do with you if he knew. Well, then, you understand—I'm done with you."

"It may pay you better—"

"Rats!"

"Then you refuse to help me?"

"I can't! And I won't! If I found more money for you, it would all go the same way—I know that. I tell you I'm done with you."

"Jimmy, I'm desperate!"

"That's your business."

"I can't stay on at the Ship any longer. I owe a big bill—"

"And plenty of gambling debts, I've no doubt," said Jimmy Silver bitterly. "What's the bill for—drink?"

"Don't rub it in, Jimmy. I may have my weaknesses." The voice was wheedling now. "Don't go back on a man when he's down, Jimmy. I give you my word that if I could find honest work, I'd do it like a shot. But everything's against me."

"Then I'll give you some advice," said Jimmy Silver. "I can tell you where to get honest work."

"I—I can't do manual labour, Jimmy."

"I don't see why you can't. Better men than you do manual labour," said Jimmy. "There's no excuse for a slacker. But this isn't manual labour. I'm speaking of an honourable profession, such as is followed by the very best men in England—the pick of the whole country. Good clothes, good food, pocket-money and pension, and the best society in the wide world. Do you want the job?"

"Where's that job, Jimmy?"

"In the Army."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Among Kitchener's boys!" said Jimmy Silver, with a chuckle.

"Savvy?"

"You cheeky young scoundrel!"

"That job's going," said Jimmy Silver. "I'd go if I were old enough. You're old enough, Uncle John, and not too old. Why don't you go?"

"Look here, Jimmy—"

"Nuff said. If you'd do the decent thing, and go into khaki, my pater would stand by you—I know that. Good-bye!"

"Hold on, Jimmy! I want money."

"Bow-wow!"

"Eh? What did you say?"

"Bow-wow!"

"You refuse to help me?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm coming to Rookwood."

"You know what to expect if you come!" said Jimmy Silver, between his teeth.

"I'll chance that, Jimmy. I don't believe you would send your own uncle to prison. But if you do, it won't be much worse for me—I'm on my uppers, and desperate. It will be the finish for you at Rookwood. You won't be able to hold your head up in the school, with your uncle in gaol. I tell you I'm desperate. If you refuse to help me, I'll come to Rookwood full of drink, and kick up a shindy—"

"And you're my uncle!" said Jimmy Silver bitterly.

"You're my nephew. Help me out of this scrape."

"I've helped you all I can, and you've spent the money on drink and gambling. Not a shilling more—not a farthing. Come here if you dare!"

Mr. Bootles laid down the receiver carefully—he did everything carefully—and threw open his study door. Smythe of the Shell was fortunately in sight at the end of the passage, and the Fourth Form-master called to him.

"Smythe!"

"Yes, sir."

"Kindly find Silver of my Form and tell him to come to my study at once."

Smythe of the Shell looked rebellious for a moment. The great Smythe did not like being sent on errands like a fag. However, he reflected that if Jimmy Silver was wanted in his Form-master's study at once, it was probably for a licking. So he said "Yes, sir!" quite cheerfully, and started off.

### The 2nd Chapter.

#### Jimmy Silver's Last Word.

Jimmy Silver of the Fourth was on the football ground. The footballers of the Fourth Form were at practice. Raby, in goal, was stemming a frontal attack. Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Newcome, and Oswald had a ball each, and they were peppering him.

Raby, amid loud cheers, kept all four balls going like a juggler. The Fistical Four were thus busy when Adolphus Smythe of the Shell lounged elegantly on the ground and turned his eyeglass upon them.

"Silver!" called out Adolphus.

"Pile in!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Bravo, Raby! That's first-rate! Keep the ball rolling!"

"Silver!"

"Bravo, Raby!"

"Your Form-master wants you in his study, Silver, at once," said Adolphus, and he turned his back and sauntered away. He had delivered the message, and if Jimmy Silver did not choose to heed it, that was Jimmy's own look-out.

But Jimmy did heed it.

"Bow-wow!" he growled. "What does Bootles want now? Just like these blessed Form-masters; they've got no tact."

Jimmy Silver came off the field, hurried on his coat and muffer, and started for the School House. There was no time to change if his Form-master wanted him at once.

Glowing and ruddy with healthy exercise, Jimmy Silver presented himself at Mr. Bootles' door in a somewhat uneasy frame of mind. He was rather anxious to know why Mr. Bootles had sent for him. He rubbed his hands in anticipation as he came along the passage.

"Ah, Silver!" said Mr. Bootles, looking up from Sophocles. "You are—er—wanted."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy, brightening up. This did not look like a licking, at all events.

"A—er—relative of yours has called me up on the telephone," said Mr. Bootles. "Your—er—uncle. Dear me, what is the matter with you, Silver?" asked Mr. Bootles, as the junior started and frowned blackly.





## HIS LAST

(Continued  
from  
the  
previous  
page.)

## CHANGE!

"Then expect me in an hour." Jimmy Silver rang off. He did not choose to have any more words with the rascal. The study door opened, and Mr. Bootles' cough was heard. Jimmy Silver turned with a flushed face from the telephone.

"Ah! I trust you have had a pleasant chat with your uncle, Silver," said Mr. Bootles graciously. "Thank you, sir," said Jimmy. He left the study, and with knitted brows went to look for his chums.

The 3rd Chapter.  
Lovell's Idea.

"Licked?" Lovell and Raby and Newcome asked the question with one voice, as Jimmy Silver rejoined them on the football ground.

Jimmy Silver shook his head. "No; it wasn't a row. Come up to the study, you chaps."

"But the footer—"

"Blow the footer! I want you to advise me."

Lovell & Co. looked rather curiously at Jimmy's flushed, troubled face. "Right-ho!" said Lovell.

The Fistical Four left the football-ground. Jimmy Silver led the way without a word to the end study in the Fourth-Form passage.

His heart was heavy, and his mind troubled. He had had no hesitation in defying his scapegrace uncle to do his worst. But he shuddered at the thought of the scene with which he was threatened.

What would the fellows say if John Silver came to Rookwood—shabby, unkempt, in drink, to "kick up a shindy," as he expressed it. Jimmy's face was flooded with crimson at the bare thought. How his old enemies, the Giddy Goats, would gloat over it—Smythe, and Tracy, and Howard, and Townsend, and the rest, how they would enjoy the scene. What would the Head say? Would he not consider that Rookwood had had enough of a fellow with such relations?

And if Jimmy carried out his threat, and his uncle was taken away from Rookwood with handcuffs on his wrists—what then? The shame would be a stigma he could never live down.

His uncle's sins could not, in justice, be visited upon his head. It was not his fault if John Silver was a wastrel and an outsider. But—

A fellow was judged a good deal by his people. And John Silver, the scapegrace, the drunken waster, the absconding embezzler, was one of his "people."

"What the dickens is the matter?" asked Raby, when they were in the study. "You look as if you were going to a funeral, Jimmy."

"I feel like it," said Jimmy. "I'm in a scrape. I don't want to drag you fellows into it, of course—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Lovell. "Whatever it is, we're all in it together. But what's the rumpus?"

"It's my uncle! I've told you about him."

Lovell frowned.

"He's given you enough trouble already, Jimmy. You've got talked about through meeting that boosy rotter—excuse me—though the fellows don't know he's your uncle. You've got to keep him at a distance."

"Suppose he won't be kept at a distance?" said Jimmy Silver bitterly. "You've heard from him again?"

"Yes."

Jimmy Silver explained what he had heard on the telephone in Mr. Bootles' study.

His chums listened with startled looks.

"Coming here!" ejaculated Raby. "Yes, here!" said Jimmy. "Boosy and raging—to kick up a shindy, and disgrace me before all the school."

"Oh, Jimmy!"

The Fistical Four looked at one another almost helplessly. As a rule, they rose to meet an emergency—that cheerful quartette seldom found themselves at a loss. But how to deal with a situation like this beat them hollow.

"He—he mustn't come!" said New-

come. "Great Scott! You'd never hear the end of it, Jimmy."

"Fancy Smythe and Townsend, if they got hold of it!" muttered Raby. "And the Modern cads!" groaned Lovell. "Oh, Jimmy, what an awful scrape!"

"I couldn't stay at Rookwood afterwards," said Jimmy Silver miserably. "I've got plenty of nerve, but not nerve enough for that. When he comes, he'll go straight from here to the police-station; I'm determined on that. And then I shall have to go home."

"Leave Rookwood!" exclaimed the three chums together blankly.

Jimmy smiled bitterly.

"Rookwood will be pretty well fed-up with me, after a scene like that," he said. "The Head won't blame me—he can't; but it stands to reason he'll be glad for me to go. And—and I couldn't stay, anyway. I couldn't look the fellows in the face."

"But—but you can't go!" said Lovell, aghast. "Dash it all, Jimmy, you can't chuck us like that! And the footer—where shall we be without you? The Moderns will beat us all along the line!"

"You can't go, and you jolly well sha'n't!" said Raby.

Jimmy did not reply. He felt it as much as his chums, or more; but he did not see what was to be done. After that black disgrace, he could not stay at Rookwood. There was silence for some minutes.

"Sure he's coming?" asked Lovell at last.

"Yes; I know he means business this time. In an hour, he said. That's a quarter of an hour ago. And he'll come full of drink."

"The rotten hound!" said Lovell, gritting his teeth. "Jimmy, old man, how on earth did you ever have an uncle like that?"

"Look here, he mustn't come!" said Raby. "He must be stopped somehow."

"I don't see how. If we stopped him to-day, he'd come to-morrow," said Jimmy Silver wretchedly. "I'm fairly in for it!"

"If your pater knew, he might do something."

"There's no time. I could telephone home, but—but the villain will be here in forty minutes or so!"

"Do you know where he is at this minute? If you knew, you could put the police on him in time—"

"I don't know where he is."

Silence again.

"Don't you chaps worry about it," said Jimmy. "I had to tell you. I shall have to clear off—you can explain to the Head when I'm gone. I shall go straight home. I think I should die of shame if I stayed after that!"

"You can't go, you won't go, you sha'n't go!" said Lovell. "There must be some way of dealing with him." He wrinkled his brows in an effort of thought. "Hang it, Jimmy, you're generally bursting with good ideas! Can't you think it out?"

"Nothing doing!" said Jimmy.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Lovell. "I've got a wheeze! Look here, it's true that the bobbies want him—they're after him—"

"He told me so."

"And if they got him, they'd take care of him, and he couldn't come here. That's the wheeze, Jimmy. We'll wait for him—outside the school." Lovell's eyes glistened with excitement. "We'll meet him outside, and stop him, and then—"

"Then what?"

"Yank him away somewhere, and keep him safe, while one of us fetches the police."

"Hurrah!" ejaculated Raby and Newcome.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath. "Lovell, old man, you've got a better headpiece than I have!" he said. "If we could work that, and he never came here at all, it would be all serene. Nobody would ever hear of it then. Or, if they did, it wouldn't be so rotten, if he's kept away from the school. He deserves it!"

"I should jolly well say he does!" exclaimed Raby warmly. "Let's change, and get out at once."

"Right-ho!"

No more was said. The Fistical Four had decided. They rushed away to the dormitory to change out of their footer garb. That did not take them long. They came downstairs. Lovell thoughtfully providing himself with a coil of cord, in case it should be wanted. The Classical chums were not disposed to stand on ceremony with John Silver.

Flynn of the Fourth called to them as they left the house, but they did not answer. In the quadrangle they ran into Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern side. The three Tommies greeted them with remarks.

"What are you chucking the footer for?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "Slackers!" said Tommy Cook. "Lazybones, begorra!" said Tommy Doyle.

The Modern heroes lined up as they made those remarks, prepared for a "scrap." But for once the gauntlet was thrown down in vain to the Classical heroes. The Fistical Four took no more notice of the three Tommies than of the fountain or the old beeches in the quad.

They hurried on to the gates, leaving Tommy Dodd & Co. in a state of considerable astonishment.

"Well, my hat!" said Tommy Dodd, with a whistle. "What's the matter with them? I was ready to mop up the quad with them! Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, the Classical side at this school is going to the dogs! They're played out—quite mouldy! Let's go and chivy Smythe!"

The three Tommies went to look for Smythe of the Shell, with the kind intention of chivying the elegant Adolphus. Careless of what the Moderns thought of them—just then—Jimmy Silver & Co. hurried out of the gates of Rookwood.

The 4th Chapter.  
Nipped in the Bud.

"Sister Anne—Sister Anne!" murmured Raby. "Do you see a boosy bouncer coming?"

The Classical Four were on the watch. They had taken up their position on a knoll near the road, whence they could watch every approach to the gates of Rookwood. If John Silver came along that afternoon they could not fail to spot him.

Jimmy Silver was somewhat glum and silent, but his comrades buzzed with excitement. They were very anxious to get their hands upon the reckless blackguard who had been worrying their old pal for weeks past. In spite of John Silver's rascality, Jimmy could not forget that the man was his uncle—his father's brother. The same blood that flowed in Jimmy Silver's veins flowed in the veins of that boosy waster.

And he was about to hand him over to the police. He had been driven to it, and the rascal deserved no better. But Jimmy Silver could not be cheerful at the prospect.

Several Rookwood fellows passed along the road, and the watching juniors caught sight of Pankley and Poole of Bagshot, whizzing along on their bikes. At any other time they would have hailed their old rivals of Bagshot School with complimentary remarks. But now Pankley and Poole were suffered to pass in peace.

They heard four o'clock boom out from the clock-tower of Rookwood.

"He must be coming now, if he keeps his word," said Jimmy Silver.

They watched with increased vigilance.

About ten minutes later Jimmy uttered an exclamation.

"He's coming!"

A look of disgust came over the juniors' faces; Jimmy Silver flushed with shame. From the direction of Coombe a man had come in sight. He was tramping unsteadily along the road to Rookwood. Sometimes he zigzagged from one side of the road to the other. It was only too clear that he was under the influence of drink. Probably even John Silver, waster as he was, had needed to prime himself with strong liquor to find nerve enough to fulfil his rascally threat.

"That's my uncle," said Jimmy bitterly.

"Come on!" said Lovell abruptly. "Cut him off from Rookwood, as far from the gates as possible. We don't want the fellows to see him."

The juniors ran down the slope to the road.

Then, leaving Rookwood behind them, they sprinted along the white

road to meet the man who was reeling along from Coombe.

They reached him in a few minutes, at a spot where the road was deeply shaded by trees. The man came to a halt as the four juniors, breathing hard, stopped directly in his path.

"Jimmy boy!" he exclaimed. "So you've come to meet me—what?"

"Yes," said Jimmy grimly. "Goo' boy!" said John Silver, lurching and nearly falling. "Gimme hand! Not too proud to shake hands with poor old uncle—what? Wharrer marrer with this road? Why can't this road keep still? That's wharrer want to know!"

"Collar him!" said Lovell, in a tone of utter disgust. "The filthy brute can't stand!"

"Lemme 'lone! Don't you lay hands on a gentleman!"

The juniors laid their hands upon him promptly enough. John Silver began to struggle, but even if he had been sober, his resistance would not have been of much use against four sturdy juniors.

Before he knew what was happening, he was dragged out of the road, and in among the trees.

"Now, the beast won't be seen!" panted Lovell.

"Hands off!" mumbled the wretched man. "Don't you handle me! I've had my misfortunes. Ungrateful nephew, who won't help his poor old uncle! I'll show him up! You wait a bit! I'll show him up!"

"Will you?" said Lovell. "Keep quiet, you beast!"

"Who are you calling names—what?"

John Silver attempted to draw himself up into a dignified attitude, caught his foot in a root, and rolled over on the ground in a most undignified manner.

"My hat!" murmured Raby. "Suppose the disgusting brute had got to Rookwood—in that state! My hat!"

"There's a pool the other side of these trees," said Newcome. "Bring him along! We'll sober him!"

"Come on, you rotter!"

"Hands off!" mumbled John Silver. "I refuse to move! If a gentleman can't go to bed in his own bed—"

"Lay hold!"

"Grooooh!"

John Silver came up out of the grass and ferns, in the grasp of four pairs of hands. He was yanked through the trees to the pool. Without ceremony, his head was ducked in the cold water.

"Gerrrrr! Grooooh!"

"Give him another!"

Splash!

"Yaroooooogh!"

John Silver struggled wildly in the grasp of the Fistical Four. They dropped him, and he sat in the grass blinking, with water streaming down his face.

"Gerroooh!" he gasped. "Oh! Ah! Oh! Wharrer marrer? I'm wet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Silver blinked at the juniors dazedly, and rubbed his streaming face. The shock of the cold water had considerably sobered him.

"Jimmy!" he gasped.

"You drunken brute!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Only a drop!" pleaded the wastrel. "Just a drop, Jimmy, to keep the cold out! Don't be hard on a man. Jimmy, you're going to stand by me, after all—I know you are. You're going to help an old friend. I'm not giving you away to the young gentlemen, Jimmy. I'm mum!"

"You can't give me away," said Jimmy coldly. "My pals know that you are my uncle!"

"Oh, they know that, do they? Well, all Rookwood will know it soon, Jimmy, if you don't come up to time!"

"That's where you make a mistake," said Jimmy Silver.

"You're not going to Rookwood, Uncle John!"

"Who'll stop me?"

"We will," grinned Lovell.

"We're here to do it!"

"If you lay a hand on me—"

"We'll lay a hand on you fast enough—and a boot, too, if necessary," said Lovell. "You've worried our pal Jimmy enough, and we're fed up. We're going to deal with you now, my pippin!"

John Silver staggered up. He was sober now, as far as his head was concerned; but his legs were still decidedly unsteady, and he sat down again abruptly. A push from

Lovell's boot on his chest helped him down.

"You young villain!" roared John Silver.

"Oh, shut up!"

"You'll stand by, Jimmy, and see your uncle handled like this?"

"Yes, rather," said Jimmy Silver. "Which of you fellows will cut off to the police-station?"

"I'll go," said Lovell. "Mind the brute don't get away while I'm gone, that's all. Better tie his hands; I've got a cord!"

John Silver's jaw dropped.

"The—the police-station!" he exclaimed.

"I told you what to expect if you came to Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver moodily.

John Silver resisted feebly as Lovell and Raby grasped his hands, and bound his wrists together. Raby held on to the cord when his wrists were bound.

"Safe enough now," he said. "Cut off, Lovell!"

"We'll keep him here till you get back," said Newcome. "If he gives any trouble, we'll tie him to a tree!"

"Stop!" panted John Silver. "Jimmy—Jimmy, you can't do it! You won't let your own uncle go to prison!"

Jimmy Silver's brow was dark and gloomy, but there was no sign of relenting in his face. The wastrel had driven him too hard.

"You chose it yourself, Uncle John," he said. "You started to come to Rookwood and disgrace me, and we only stopped you in time. I told you I'd hand you over to the police if you came. It's not my fault!"

"Jimmy, don't do it! Jimmy!"

The rascal was panting now. "Jimmy, your own father's brother—you can't do it! Your father wouldn't let you if he were here—"

"What did you expect?"

"I—I—I was squiffy, Jimmy. I—I wouldn't have come if I'd been sober. Jimmy, go easy, and—and I'll join the Army, as you told me!"

Lovell gave a snort of contempt.

"As if they'd have a boozy scare-crow like you in the Army!" he exclaimed. "They don't want your sort!"

"Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver hesitated. His heart was always soft, and he was not proof against the pleading and the terror that were visible in the face of the now thoroughly sobered rascal.

"I—I say, you chaps—" muttered Jimmy Silver uneasily.

Lovell uttered an angry exclamation.

"Don't be a silly ass, Jimmy Silver! If we let him off, he'll be along at Rookwood to-morrow!"

"I won't—I swear I won't!" howled John Silver. "I'll clear off—I'll get out of the county—I'll go back to London! Jimmy, I never thought you'd come to this—your own uncle, that carried you when you were a kid—"

"I—I can't do it, you chaps!" muttered Jimmy. "After all, it's true what he says—he's my own flesh and blood. He was decent to me when I was a kid!"

"You mayn't be able to do it, but I can—and will!" said Lovell savagely. "That rotten, blackmailing hound is going to prison!"

"Lovell, old man—"

"Jimmy, you thundering ass—"

"You can't trust him," said Raby, shaking his head. "Let him off this time, and he'll know he's safe in coming to Rookwood. You'll never get him off your neck. Let the police have him!"

"I was innocent—"

"Oh, rats! You look innocent, don't you?" snorted Lovell.

"It was a trumped-up charge, Jimmy—"

"Ring off, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Lovell. "We don't believe a word you say, if Jimmy does. You're an embezzling thief, and a drunken blackguard, and you're going where you belong! I'm off!"

"Jimmy, stop him!" John Silver's voice rose to a howl. "Jimmy, ask your father—leave it to him—let him decide!"

Jimmy caught Lovell by the arm.

"My father's not here," he said.

"Get him here! I'll wait—I'll do anything!" John Silver's voice was husky and broken. "Jimmy, I'm sorry; and—and I'm not such a bad chap when I'm away from the drink. I'm nobody's enemy but my own. They oughtn't to be allowed to sell the stuff! It isn't my fault; I'm a victim!"

"Let go my arm, Jimmy!"

"Hold on, Lovell! I—I want to give him a chance," said Jimmy





HIS LAST

(Continued from the previous page.)

CHANCE!

Silver, in a low voice. "Let my father decide!"  
 "He can't be allowed to go," said Lovell grimly. "I won't agree to that. And it will take time to get to your father!"  
 "There's the telephone at the post-office."  
 "I'll wait!" mumbled John Silver. "You jolly well will!" growled Lovell. "I suppose we've got to let Jimmy have his way, you chaps; he's as obstinate as a mule! Get off and do your telephoning, you thumping, chicken-hearted duffer! We'll take care of this beauty!"  
 Jimmy Silver gave his uncle a last look, and turned away in silence. He disappeared through the trees.

this." He gave Jimmy a bitter look. "I shall not forget."  
 Jimmy's face was troubled, but he did not speak.  
 "You have to thank your nephew if you are given another chance," said Mr. Silver sternly. "My first thought on hearing that you were here was to communicate with the police at once. Jimmy pleaded for you—and I have come instead."  
 John Silver's look softened a little. "Another chance!" he repeated.  
 "I have given you chances more than once," said Mr. Silver. "I obtained an honourable post for you.

"What is your answer, John?" asked Mr. Silver, at last.  
 The scapegrace drew a deep breath. "Yes," he said.  
 "Bravo!" said Jimmy Silver.  
 "If they'll take me, I'll go—"  
 "They will take you," said Mr. Silver. "You are young, and you can be fit—if you choose. You will come home with me—"  
 "With you!"  
 "To my home, and there you will stay till you have recovered sufficiently from the effects of your evil life to offer yourself to the recruiting officers. Then you will enlist. It will be the making of you if you do your duty. If you do not, you know what to expect. It is your last chance, and I give it you for Jimmy's sake."  
 John Silver raised his head proudly. "I've sunk low," he said. "But—I mean it—when I wear the khaki I shall not disgrace it."  
 "Come, then!" said Mr. Silver.  
 Jimmy's face was bright as he followed his father and his uncle to the car. John Silver stepped in.  
 "Good-bye, Jimmy!" said his father.  
 "Good-bye, dad!" Jimmy Silver hesitated a moment, and then he held out his hand to his uncle. "Good-bye, Uncle John, and good luck!"

too strong for him, and if he disgraced the King's uniform as he had disgraced his own name?  
 But the following week there came a letter from John Silver, which was read in the end study with great satisfaction. It came from Aldershot:  
 "Dear Jimmy,—I'm in khaki now. They've accepted me, and I'm going into training at Latcham. I feel a new man already. There are some things I want you to forget, Jimmy; but always remember that you did the best thing in your life when you got me this last chance. I'm going to make the most of it. Perhaps I shall see you again before I go on active service.—Your affectionate uncle,  
 "JOHN SILVER."  
 "I must say that sounds like real business," said Lovell. "Perhaps he wasn't so black as he painted himself, after all."  
 Jimmy nodded.  
 "I'm jolly glad!" he said, with a deep breath. "He wasn't all bad, you know—only weak as water, and never quite sober. What he wanted was discipline—and he'll get that in Kitchener's Army. It'll make a man of him. This letter is rather a change

"Oh, he's deep," he said—"awful deep! He puts on a sanctified air towards us—because of a cigarette or two and a hand at nap every now and then—and an occasional visit to the Bird-in-Hand. And he goes to an awful place like the Ship—dozen times worse than the Bird-in-Hand—and meets boozy bounders miles below Joey Hook, the bookie. He's a blessed hypocrite. Now, I don't like hypocrites," said Adolphus loftily. "I don't set up to be a saint myself."  
 "Wouldn't be much good, would it?" observed Tracy.  
 Smythe frowned.  
 "And I don't like that cad Silver setting up as a saint, when he's a regular black sheep," he said. "My idea is that he ought to be jolly well shown up!"  
 "But I fancy there's nothin' in it, Smythe. His pals are palling on to him again, just as if nothin' had happened."  
 "He's bamboozlin' them," explained Smythe. "My belief is that he goes to the Ship the same as usual. Playin' a deep game, you know. I'm goin' to show him up!"  
 "How the dickens—"  
 "By keepin' an eye on him, my infants, and you can help."  
 Adolphus Smythe was determined. The next half-holiday, as it happened, Jimmy Silver was "on his own." Lovell had gone home for the afternoon, and taken Raby with him, and Newcome was busy with his photographs. After footer practice, Jimmy Silver strolled out by himself. And Adolphus & Co., who were "keeping an eye" on him, exchanged knowing looks.  
 "Goin' on the giddy razzle, my infants," said Adolphus. "I rather think we're going to take a stroll the same way—what!"  
 And the nuts of Rookwood strolled after Jimmy Silver.  
 Jimmy, who had not the faintest idea that he was being followed, did not look back. Had he been going to such a resort as the Ship, certainly he would have been more cautious.  
 As a matter of fact, Jimmy was walking towards Latcham, where there was a training-camp and a swarm of men in khaki. His uncle was in training there, and Jimmy thought he might possibly see him among the recruits.  
 As he struck off across the moor, taking the shortest cut, Smythe & Co. grinned, and cut off after him. They were quite sure now. Jimmy's route would take him quite close by the Ship, that disreputable haunt which was taboo to the Rookwood fellows.  
 "Bowlin' him out, by gad!" said Adolphus.  
 "It's lookin' like it," agreed Tracy. "By gad, we'll show him up in the common-room when we get back!"  
 "We will—rather!" grinned Howard.  
 Jimmy Silver tramped on steadily, and the nuts, who were not in the best condition, had rather hard work to keep him in sight. Over the moor the chimney-pots of the Ship appeared in sight, and Adolphus gave a gasp of relief when he saw them.  
 "Not much further now," he breathed.  
 "He's stoppin'!" exclaimed Tracy. Jimmy Silver had halted. He stood on a little stone bridge that crossed the stream flowing across the wide moor. Beyond the stream, marching along the rough path, came a column of men in khaki—recruits upon a route-march. Jimmy Silver had halted to watch them from the bridge.  
 "What the dickens is he stoppin' for?" ejaculated Smythe.  
 "He's seen us."  
 Jimmy Silver had glanced carelessly round. He started as his eyes fell upon the three nuts.  
 Concealment was impossible, and Smythe & Co. walked on to the bridge. Jimmy Silver eyed them curiously.  
 "Hallo! You've taken a long walk for you blessed slackers!" he said. "Have you come to see the soldiers?"  
 "Soldiers!" repeated Smythe.  
 "Yes."  
 "That's what you've come for, is it?" asked Adolphus, with a sneer.  
 "Yes, that's it."  
 "My hat! Was Ananias a relation of yours, Jimmy Silver?" asked Smythe, with a chuckle. "George Washington wasn't; I'll bet on that." Jimmy Silver's eyes glittered dangerously.  
 "You'd better get on," he said.  
 "Thanks!" said Smythe. "We're stayin' here a bit."  
 "As long as you do," grinned Tracy.  
 "We'll see you as far as the Ship," said Howard. "Don't fail to keep your appointment on our account."  
 "You thumping idiots!" exclaimed

The 5th Chapter.

John Silver's Last Chance.

Lovell & Co. sat down in the grass round their prisoner, and ate toffee.  
 John Silver sat with his back against a tree, his hands bound, his head falling forward on his breast. His attitude was one of utter dejection.  
 The effects of the vile liquor he had swallowed were passing off. He was left limp and flabby. The three juniors could not help feeling a kind of scornful pity as they looked at him.  
 Jimmy Silver came back through the trees at last.  
 "Well?" said Lovell.  
 John Silver raised his eyes.  
 "I've spoken to my pater," said Jimmy quietly. "He's coming."  
 "Coming here?" said Lovell.  
 "Yes. I'm going to watch for the car in the road. He will be here in an hour."  
 "Good egg!"  
 "Jimmy"—John Silver spoke huskily—"don't keep me here till he comes! Let me go, Jimmy! I swear I will get out!"  
 Jimmy shook his head.  
 "You asked me to leave it to my father, and I'm going to do it," he said. "I've promised the pater that you shall be here!"  
 John Silver's head sank dejectedly on his breast again.  
 Jimmy went back to the road.  
 The juniors waited. John Silver did not speak. He seemed to be plunged into despair. The Rookwood chums could guess that he expected little mercy from the brother he had wronged and disgraced.  
 There was the hum of a car on the road at last. Jimmy Silver ran out and waved his hand, and the car stopped.  
 A somewhat severe-looking gentleman descended.  
 "Jimmy!" he said.  
 "I'm jolly glad to see you, pater!" said Jimmy Silver. "I—I thought I'd better tell you about it!"  
 "You should have told me sooner, Jimmy!" said Mr. Silver. "At your first meeting with your Uncle John, you should have told me."  
 Jimmy hung his head a little.  
 "I—I didn't want to worry you, father. And—and I believed what he told me—"  
 "He told you falsehoods, Jimmy. But let me see him."  
 "This way, father."  
 Mr. Silver followed the juniors into the wood. They came out by the pool, where John Silver sat dejectedly in the grass, watched by the Rookwood chums.  
 Lovell and Raby and Newcome raised their caps to Mr. Silver, and discreetly retired to a distance. They could guess that Jimmy's father would not wish them to hear his talk with his wastrel brother.  
 Mr. Silver stood looking grimly at the scapegrace.  
 John Silver rose slowly to his feet. His face was an unhealthy pallor now, save where it was blotched red by drink.  
 "Well, you have found me, brother James," he said, with a sneer. "You have only to call the police now. I have to thank my dear nephew for this. I shall not forget this."



"Well, you have found me, brother James," said John Silver with a sneer. "You have only to call the police now. I have to thank my dear nephew for this. I shall not forget this."

You cheated your employers of five hundred pounds, and fled."  
 "It—it was the drink, and—and—"  
 "And you came here to blackmail my son. You told him you were unjustly accused, to enlist his sympathies, and he believed you."  
 "Give me another chance—"  
 "Jimmy has made a suggestion, and I shall act upon it," said Mr. Silver quietly. "You shall have your chance, if you choose to take it. Take it, and I will see that the money you embezzled is refunded, and the prosecution stayed."  
 The wastrel's face lighted up.  
 "There is a way—one way—in which you can prove your determination to lead a decent life," said Mr. Silver. "One way in which you can atone for your many rascalities, and the shame you have brought upon your connections. You know to what I allude—Jimmy has spoken of it to you."  
 "The khaki!" muttered John Silver.  
 "Yes."  
 "And—and you will see me clear if—if—"  
 "I will see you clear when you are a Kitchener's man, and doing your duty for your country and King." There was a long pause.

The wastrel grasped his hand for a moment.  
 Then the car hummed away down the road.  
 Jimmy Silver stood looking after it, his brow wrinkled with thought, but his eyes very bright. The car vanished down the long white road.  
 A slap on the shoulder recalled Jimmy to himself. His chums joined him.  
 "All serene?" asked Lovell.  
 "I think so," said Jimmy soberly. "He's got the chance of a lifetime. I hope he'll make the best of it. It's his last chance."  
 And the Fistical Four walked home thoughtfully to Rookwood.

The 6th Chapter. Adolphus is Suspicious.

Jimmy Silver was often in a thoughtful mood during the following week.  
 He thought a good deal of his uncle. He wondered a little whether he had done wisely in begging his father to give the wastrel that last chance.  
 John Silver was going into khaki. Perhaps that new life might mark the turning-point in his career. But what if the old vicious inclinations were

after his telephone message last week—what!"  
 And Jimmy, with that worry off his mind, was once more the sunny Jimmy Silver of old. With the exception of his three chums nobody at Rookwood knew of his relationship with the "boozy bounder," no longer "boozy." And the talk there had been on the subject gradually died away.  
 Indeed, the Rookwood fellows would have forgotten completely that Jimmy Silver had ever been suspected of playing the "giddy ox" but for the kind attentions of Smythe of the Shell. That Jimmy Silver had once visited the Ship Inn, that he had been seen in talk with a boozy bounder, Adolphus was not inclined to forget, or to let others forget. Adolphus, the great chief of the Giddy Goats, had often received the plainest of plain speaking from Jimmy Silver & Co., on the subject of his little manners and customs. And, having a "handle" against Jimmy, Adolphus was not inclined to let it drop.  
 "Silver is keepin' it awfully dark," Smythe told his study-mates, Howard and Tracy. "Of course, we know the little game."  
 "Seems to have chucked it," said Tracy.  
 Smythe shook his head.

"Not much further now," he breathed.  
 "He's stoppin'!" exclaimed Tracy. Jimmy Silver had halted. He stood on a little stone bridge that crossed the stream flowing across the wide moor. Beyond the stream, marching along the rough path, came a column of men in khaki—recruits upon a route-march. Jimmy Silver had halted to watch them from the bridge.  
 "What the dickens is he stoppin' for?" ejaculated Smythe.  
 "He's seen us."  
 Jimmy Silver had glanced carelessly round. He started as his eyes fell upon the three nuts.  
 Concealment was impossible, and Smythe & Co. walked on to the bridge. Jimmy Silver eyed them curiously.  
 "Hallo! You've taken a long walk for you blessed slackers!" he said. "Have you come to see the soldiers?"  
 "Soldiers!" repeated Smythe.  
 "Yes."  
 "That's what you've come for, is it?" asked Adolphus, with a sneer.  
 "Yes, that's it."  
 "My hat! Was Ananias a relation of yours, Jimmy Silver?" asked Smythe, with a chuckle. "George Washington wasn't; I'll bet on that." Jimmy Silver's eyes glittered dangerously.  
 "You'd better get on," he said.  
 "Thanks!" said Smythe. "We're stayin' here a bit."  
 "As long as you do," grinned Tracy.  
 "We'll see you as far as the Ship," said Howard. "Don't fail to keep your appointment on our account."  
 "You thumping idiots!" exclaimed

(Continued on the next page.)





HIS LAST

(Continued from the previous page.)

CHANCE!

Jimmy Silver angrily. "Do you think I'm going to the Ship?" "We jolly well know you are!" "I'm going to Latcham."

"We'll stay and see you go to Latcham," grinned Adolphus. "You jolly well won't!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"You spying cads! You'll clear off, or I'll kick you off the bridge. Now then—sharp!" Jimmy Silver advanced on the Giddy Goats with his hands up.

There were three of them, but Jimmy Silver did not count the odds. His temper was up, and he had a profound contempt for the nuts as fighting-men.

The marching men in khaki were passing close by the bridge now, and some of them glanced curiously at the schoolboys.

"Are you going?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"No jolly fear!" said Smythe, feeling strong in numbers. "And if you give us any cheek, we'll—Yaroooh! Oh! Ah! Go for him!"

Adolphus yelled as Jimmy Silver's knuckles came clumping on his noble nose. The three nuts piled on Jimmy Silver at once.

Jimmy staggered back before the combined attack, and lost his footing. He fell heavily backwards, and there was a shriek of horror from Smythe.

"Look out!" Jimmy made a desperate effort to save himself, but it was too late. He had fallen across the low stone parapet of the bridge.

Twenty feet below the stream rushed under the arches with a sullen murmur. The junior clutched wildly at the parapet, but his fingers scraped on the hard stone, and he felt himself falling.

Splash! Smythe & Co. stared down from the bridge in horror. "He—he's gone in!" panted Tracy.

"It was his own fault!" muttered Smythe. "You go in for him, Howard; you can swim." "I—I can't dive from this height!" "He'll be drowned!" "Help! Help!"

Help was at hand. Jimmy Silver, struggling in the deep, swift water, had clutched at the stone arch of the bridge. The water sang and bubbled round him as he clung on desperately.

There was little hold for his hands on the rough stone. He was dazed and dizzy from the fall and the shock, and his senses were swimming.

He hardly heard a splash in the water a dozen yards from him. From the ranks of the men in khaki a figure had dashed upon the bridge. Smythe & Co. were thrust aside, and the man in khaki dived.

There was a shout as the recruits, breaking ranks, crowded down to the water's edge.

The 7th Chapter. The Man in Khaki.

"Hold on, kid!" Sharp and clear the voice came to Jimmy Silver through the whirl and the rush of the icy water.

His numbed hands were still holding to the stone where it rose from the water, but the current dragged and tore at him. Once swept through under the bridge, he knew that all would be over. In the best of condition, Jimmy would have found it a hard task to swim to safety in that rushing stream; and now, dazed and almost stunned by his fall, half frozen by the icy contact of the water, he was nearly at the end of his tether.

Someone was coming to his aid. He realised that through the mists that were closing on his brain. It was not Smythe. He knew that, too. It was not one of the Rookwood Nuts. They were scarcely equal to the task, and their courage was far from equal to it. But help was coming.

Jimmy Silver clung desperately on, but his frozen fingers slipped away, almost unconsciously. He was swept into the deep shadow under the arch. At the same moment a strong hand grasped him. His head had swept under. But it

was dragged up again—up into the free air, and he breathed.

"Hold on to me!" Even in that wild moment Jimmy knew that there was something familiar in the tones that breathed in his ear.

He was in a strong grasp, and his rescuer was fighting the current. But, fight as he would, he was swept through under the bridge, still holding the exhausted junior.

Through stones and reeds on the bank heavy Service boots went tramping, as the soldiers crowded along the stream.

"Hold on to him!" "Bravo!" "We're coming! Stick it out!" Like one in a dream Jimmy heard. His struggles had ceased now. He was helpless in the strong hands that were holding him up from icy death.

It was a soldier who had leaped in to save him, who was risking his life to snatch him from death. One of the gallant men in khaki had seen his peril, and rushed to save him. Would he succeed?

With the half-senseless schoolboy in his grasp, the man in khaki was fighting for his life. On the steep bank that sloped down to the stream his comrades were crowding. The stout swimmer struck for the bank, but again and again the whirling current tore him away.

"This way!" "Stick to him!" The swimmer with his burden swept by the bank again, and three or four stalwart recruits plunged in up to their thighs, and grasped him.

Jimmy Silver was quite unconscious now. He did not know that he and his rescuer, dragged from the very jaws of death, were hauled up the steep bank. He lay insensible on the grass, and did not know that his rescuer had sunk down, panting, by his side, utterly spent.

His eyes opened at last. Men in khaki surrounded him—some were chafing his hands, blue with cold. Jimmy gazed round him dazedly.

"All right now, sonny," said a big sergeant kindly. "Right as rain. Keep your pecker up." Jimmy gasped.

"I—I'm all right!" he muttered. "I—I thought I was gone." "So you jolly nearly were, by gum!" said the sergeant. "Gone you would have been if Silver hadn't fished you out."

"Silver!" stammered Jimmy dazedly. "Yes; Private Silver here." "Private Silver!" Jimmy's heart was throbbing. What did the man mean?

"My name is Silver!" he stammered. "The—the man who helped me—who is he?" "Private Silver! Where are you, Silver? Come and speak to the young gentleman."

Jimmy Silver staggered to his feet, helped by the kindly hands of the lads in khaki. Private Silver stood before him—drenched and dripping, and still panting, but little the worse for his struggle with grim death.

Jimmy gazed at him as if in a dream. This sturdy, fit, well-set-up man, looking years younger than of old—

was this the dissipated blackguard he and his chums had collared on the Coombe Road only a couple of short weeks before?

"Uncle John!" he stammered helplessly. John Silver smiled. "Uncle John!" repeated the sergeant. "By gum!"

"Uncle John! It—it is you! Did—did you know me?" "Not when I came in for you, Jimmy," said Private Silver, smiling quietly. "But when I got you in the water—yes. I'm glad I fished you out, Jimmy. It levels up the old account a little—what!"

"Oh, uncle!" panted Jimmy. "Fall in!" came a sharp voice. John Silver gripped his nephew's hand.

"We're quits now, Jimmy. Good-bye, kid!" He was gone. Jimmy Silver, panting, stood looking dazedly at the long lines of khaki as they swept by. With that last hand-grip his uncle was gone.

His uncle! The reckless scapegrace, the dissipated blackguard and gambler of old. This was what the Army had done for him. Jimmy Silver's heart was beating fast. It was he who had won for John Silver that last chance—the chance to make a man of himself. Truly, he had been repaid.

.....

"Jimmy! What the merry dickens Newcome stared as his chum came in at the gates. Jimmy had run most of the way to Rookwood to keep off a chill. But he was wet through and thick with mud.

"What the holy poker—" said Newcome. Jimmy grinned faintly. "I've been through it," he said. "I'll tell you later. I want a change now."

A rub-down and a change, and Jimmy Silver was himself again. He came down to the study. Lovell and Raby had returned, and tea was ready in the end study. And with one voice Lovell and Raby and Newcome demanded an account of Jimmy's startling adventure.

"Pass the sardines," said Jimmy cheerily. "Getting nearly drowned makes a chap hungry. Seen anything of Smythe?"

"Yes. He asked me if you were all right," said Newcome. "Looked rather hangdog, I thought." Jimmy chuckled.

"No wonder—the blessed funk!" "But what's happened?" shouted Lovell.

Jimmy Silver explained. His chums listened, with a good many ejaculations of surprise. "Well, this beats the band!" said Lovell at last. "So he's really in Kitchener's Army?"

"Nobody's, as black as he's painted," said Raby sagely. "There's good in everybody, you know, if you can get at it. Private Silver, by Jove!"

"And he saved your life, Jimmy?" said Newcome. "He did, and might jolly well have lost his own," said Jimmy Silver, with a shiver. "Jolly lucky for me he was given that chance, you chaps. And—I never thought the time would come when I should be proud of my Uncle John. But I'm jolly proud of him now."

"Hurrah for Private Silver!" chuckled Lovell, holding up his teacup. "Gentlemen, the health of Private Silver, and long may he live!"

"Hear, hear!" And with great enthusiasm—and weak tea—the Fistical Four drank to the health of Jimmy's uncle—Private Silver.

THE END.

(Next Monday's magnificent long, complete tale of Jimmy Silver and Co. is entitled: "JIMMY SILVER'S GUEST!" Don't miss reading this grand tale!)

TALES TO TELL! Our weekly prize-winners. Look out for YOUR winning storyette.

THOUGHTFUL Mrs. Denis: "It's rainin', Moike." Mr. Denis: "It's mesilf as knows it, Bridget." Mrs. Denis: "An' whoi don't yez come in?" Mr. Denis: "O'i'm waiting for it to shtop, so I won't be bringing the wet into the house, Bridget."—Sent in by T. Perry, Newport.

NOT HAVING ANY. Pat: "Are you good at arithmetic, Mike?" Mike: "I am." Pat: "Well, if you had ten shillings, and I asked you to lend me five, how much would you have left?" Mike: "Ten shillings." Pat: "Ah, ye don't seem to ketch on to what I mean!" Mike: "Maybe, and ye don't ketch on ter my five shillings."—Sent in by Miss Dorothy Minns, Thornton Heath.

INDEFINITE. Dude (in a hurry): "Two return tickets, please." Booking-clerk: "Where to, sir?" Dude (adjusting his eyeglass and glaring fixedly at the man behind the pigeon-hole): "Back here, you silly ass! Where else do you think?"—Sent in by H. Hodges, Birmingham.

HALF-AND-HALF. Outside the lift in a big City building a smart young fellow in uniform stood waiting for people to turn up who wished to be taken to a higher or lower floor. Inside the lift waited an old gentleman of rather a talkative nature. There was no one in the lift to whom he could talk, so he turned to the lift-boy.

"Say, young man," he said, "do you spend all your time going up in that lift?" The boy smiled. "No, sir," he replied. "I spend half my time going down!"—Sent in by H. Atkins, Enfield.

JUST TO OBLIGE. Augustus Adolphus Fitzmaurice-Fitzgerald—whom you will judge by his name was a bit of a dude—strode into the hosier's shop at Puddleton, swinging his swagger cane in his hand and smoking a most expensive cigarette. "Good-day!" said the shopkeeper. "And what can I do for you?" The knut removed his cigarette from his mouth.

"Oh—aw—could I—aw—trouble you to—aw—take that—aw—yellow tie with the pink spots out of the—aw—window?" "With pleasure, sir," said the polite shopkeeper. "Always delighted to oblige a customer, you know." Augustus Adolphus turned on his heel and commenced to walk out of the shop.

"Thanks awfully!" he said. "It's extremely good of you, doncherknow. The beastly thing—aw—bothahs me every time I pass by!"—Sent in by G. Frankland, Walthamstow.

CANNY. Smith, a hotel man, and Jones, a manufacturer's agent, were talking one day about their respective business interests.

"I say," remarked Jones, "how ever do you use such an enormous quantity of pears and peaches?" "Well," replied Smith, "we eat what we can, and what we can't eat we can."

"Indeed!" said the other. "We do about the same in our business." "How is that?"

"We sell an order when we can sell it, and when we can't we cancel it."—Sent in by Thomas Slater, Glasgow.

HARD LINES. He was only a little fellow, but he strode into the grocer's shop with all the dignity and bombast of a man four times his age.

The grocer gazed at him in open-mouthed astonishment. "Here, what do you want in this shop?" he cried. "I gave you the sack on Saturday!"

"Yes, I know you did," replied the youngster. "And don't you do it again, 'cos I got into a fearful row when I got home. It'll be a jolly sight worse next time."—Sent in by J. E. Hughes, Oswestry.

NOT FAIR. A fair-haired young lady from Holland had come over to England for a holiday. She got into an electric car for the first time, and commenced reading a text-book on the English language.

She could speak very little English, but could generally make herself understood by the people with whom she came in contact.

"Your fare, miss!" demanded the conductor of the car. The young lady blushed, and continued to read.

"Your fare, miss!" repeated the conductor, getting a little exasperated. Still the lady continued to blush and to read her text-book.

The conductor commenced to lose his temper. He did not like his remarks treated in such a manner.

"Your fare, miss!" he shouted once again. "Indeed!" said the blushing young lady. "I never thought so. They have always told me at home that my hair is dark!"—Sent in by L. Jones, Plymouth.

"NUMBER PLEASE!" The little City office was the scene of industry. Two or three workmen were endeavouring to instal a new telephone, whilst a young lady typist was tapping away merrily at the typewriter.

Suddenly the latter stopped typing, and turned to the workmen. "Don't put that telephone too high up," she said. "I am so short that I can hardly reach it, you know."

"Well," said one of the workmen, who was a bit of a humorist, "you can raise your voice, can't you?"—Sent in by A. Gordon, Acton.

ONE FALL, AND— Private Jorkins was really a great nuisance. He was continually falling out when the regiment was on the march. At last the sergeant in charge could stand it no longer. He approached Jorkins one afternoon when the latter had fallen by the side of the road.

"What! Fallen out again?" he said. "I tell you what, my lad! You ought never to have joined an infantry regiment. You ought to have joined the Flying Corps. They only let you fall out once there."—Sent in by C. Daniels, Bermondsey.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" ANTI-GERMAN LEAGUE. REGISTRATION FORM. (To be signed by every British boy and girl!) I,....., living at..... do hereby solemnly pledge that I will on no account trade with, or encourage, the common enemy. I will purchase no goods whatsoever bearing the trade-mark, "Made in Germany," and I will do my utmost to persuade my friends to register their names also. GOD SAVE THE KING!

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED! Readers are invited to send on postcards storyettes or short interesting paragraphs for this feature. For every contribution used the sender will receive a money prize. All postcards must be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND and "Gem" Library, Gough House Gough Square, London, E.C.