

TO NEWSAGENTS!

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The BOYS' FRIEND 1d

OUR MOTTO IS: "PLAY THE GAME!"

No. 832, Vol. XVI. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending May 19th, 1917.

THE LUCK OF POLRUAN!

An Amazing New Story of Thrilling Adventure, introducing Dick and Frank Polruan and Old Joe Tremorne.

By MAURICE EVERARD.



THE BLACK BOY'S SNAKE SCARES THE SAVAGES!

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

DICK and FRANK POLRUAN, and OLD JOE TREMORNE, return to Polruan Hall one day to find that "The Luck," which consisted of an old flag, has been stolen from the place. Immediately the boys and Joe resolve to go in search of the Luck, and to bring it back to the Hall, for there is an old tradition that, whenever the Luck is stolen from the place, misfortune falls on the existing Polruans.

Together, with a black named PIEFACE, they set out on board the Southern Cross, and after many exciting adventures, arrive at Rio Bay. There they pick up the trail of the Luck. Old Joe hires the only motor-launch left in the place, and the owner, an American named Trap, swindles them.

But Joe turns the tables upon the rascally American, who in revenge attempts to raid the station, where the little party are staying, with a horde of natives. He is beaten off, however, and the boys continue their

journey, when Dick, who is grumbling about the heat, is suddenly pitched from his horse far out into mid-stream.

(Read on from here.)

The Snake-headed God.

He struck the water with a resounding splash, disappeared for exactly the space of five seconds, and rose slowly to view looking like a glorified, mud-swathed edition of Rip Van Winkle.

"Didn't know you were performing for the pictures!" laughed old Joe, the tears streaming down his hot cheeks. "Hurry up, Franky, and crank the camera! This set of pictures must be taken lifelike. And don't forget, Dicky, that's the sort of punishment a bad-tempered little boy gets for being rude to his uncle!"

Both Frank and Pieface joined in the hearty peal of laughter which went up at the luckless youngster's expense, but for once Dick failed to

see the humorous side of the situation.

He helped drag the pony out of the mud, and, getting into the saddle after changing his clothes, rode on through a depressing silence.

For several hours they continued in this fashion, the stream gradually narrowing, but the flow of water becoming swifter—sure sign that the source was being reached.

Two miles further on, however, the river swallowed somewhat, with a stretch of mud-flat on either side.

Suddenly Joe, who was riding a little in advance, threw up his hand as a sign for the rest to draw rein. Then he jumped nimbly from his steed, and, bending down, closely examined something in the mud.

"Well, Joe, what is it?" Frank asked, as the sailor came towards them, making as little sound as possible.

"The print of a man's boot, and I don't like the look of it!" he said, dropping his voice to a whisper. "A big man with very big feet has passed

this way not so long ago. I'd like to learn a little about him before we bivouac for the night."

"Well, what do you suggest?" Frank asked.

Joe unslung his rifle, and handed it to the boy.

"I sha'n't want this. I've got a shooting-iron in my pocket. The prickly lianas grow pretty close to the ground ahead. I'm going to trail this man till I get sight of him. You stay here. I sha'n't be long."

A minute later they saw him cross the little patch of mud, and on hands and knees forge his way through a wall of moist green foliage.

Evening was drawing in on a hushed and sleeping world. The paracquets had ceased their shrilling, and only the murmuring swish of the stream against the oily banks broke the tense silence.

The three sat their ponies like statues, every now and then wiping big beads of moisture from their foreheads. The minutes lengthened into

a quarter of an hour. That passed, and became a half-hour.

Frank Polruan shifted uneasily in his saddle.

"I don't like this at all!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Here, old Joe has had time to trail a man for miles, and, with darkness coming on, there is no telling if he can hit the track back to us!"

"Hark!" Dick suddenly lifted his hand and raised his head. "I thought I heard a shout!"

"I can't hear anything except the faint stirring of the leaves of the trees," replied the elder boy, shaking his head.

But before the words were off his lips the jungle hush was broken by three sharp whiplike reports very far away.

"Revolver-shots!" snapped Frank, the colour draining swiftly from his face. "Joe has met trouble!"

At this they spurred forward, taking, as they thought, the line in which the sailor had gone; but a panting journey of close on a mile only carried them deeper into the heart of the forest, and though they raised their voices again and again, calling Joe's name, no answering sound came back, and only the dying echoes of their own scared voices trembled on the heavy air, mocking their fears.

"It's jolly silly for chaps like us to go on a hunt for a man," said Frank Polruan, brushing back the crisp brown hair from his moist brow. "This forest is no worse than dozens of others we've been in. Perhaps the shots we heard were only old Joe keeping his end up."

"Yes; but where is Joe?" Dick asked, a trifle fretfully. "We keep pushing on through this sticky heat, and we're no nearer hitting his trail now than we were twenty minutes ago!"

Frank looked curiously into his cousin's face. He saw that the usually healthful brown cheeks were unduly flushed, that Dick's eyes shone with an unnatural brightness, and that despite his recent change of clothing, his present suit clung to his figure, sodden with moisture.

"Look here, old chap, you're not feeling quite up to snuff!" he said sympathetically. "I can see your busted arm is giving you ginger. You'd best stay here in charge of the ponies, while Pieface and I push on in search of Joe."

"All right. I don't much care either way!" muttered the lad listlessly, as he slipped from the saddle. "I'll tether this crew, while you scout round; only for goodness' sake come back. I don't want to get lost in this jungle!"

For an instant Frank hesitated. It was unlike Dick either to show fear or to be peevish, and in the circumstances he hated the thought of leaving him.

The only alternative was either to send the black boy after Joe, or for him to push on alone, which might have dangerous consequences were the sailor found to be in a tight corner.

"I guess we've got to see Joe right, anyway!" he said briskly. "I'll blaze a trail on the trunks as we go forward, so there can't be any question of our missing you. You've got your gun loaded, and you're shooting arm's all right. We sha'n't be long!"

"Which way are you going now?" "On a cross-track towards the river again. From there we may be able to pick up Joe's marks. So-long, and keep cheerful!"

He waved Dick a brisk farewell, and, signing to Pieface to follow him, plunged into the rank undergrowth. This in parts was so thickly inter-

(Continued on the next page.)

ROOKWOOD ON RATIONS!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

The Food Hogs.

"My gad, it's Bulkeley!"
Mornington of the Fourth muttered the words between his teeth. And Peele and Gower ejaculated simultaneously:
"Oh, crumbs!"

The three Rookwood juniors looked dismayed.

They were in Mrs. Wicks' tuckshop in the village of Coombe. Mornington had a large bag in his hand, in which he had stowed several purchases, the bag already containing a good many.

And just as they were about to leave the tuckshop, Bulkeley of the Sixth came in sight, striding up the village street.

The captain of Rookwood was evidently heading for Mrs. Wicks' shop.

Mornington & Co. dodged back quickly out of sight. Bulkeley had not seen them. But if he came to the shop, there was no doubt that he would see them.

The bag in Mornington's hand contained "tuck" of various kinds, to about ten times the extent of the amount allowed to any Rookwood fellow since the new food regulations had come into force.

While nearly every fellow at Rookwood was "playing up" loyally, the dandy of the Fourth had not allowed the regulations to make the slightest difference to his reckless expenditure.

The school shop was out of bounds, excepting for certain purchases that were clearly defined, and Sergeant Kettle politely but firmly declined to exceed the amount.

But Mornington was equal to the occasion. It was his custom to take a long walk with a bag, purchasing food at various shops in small quantities, and returning to Rookwood heavily laden with his loot.

The magnificent "spreads" for which Mornny's study was famous had not diminished in the least since the new regulations had come into force, though it was, of course, necessary to keep the indulgence secret.

All the Fourth Form knew, but they could not very well give Mornington away, and for public opinion in the Form Mornny did not care a rap.

But it looked as if disaster had arrived at last.

"The beast's comin' here!" said Peele, turning quite pale. "He suspects somethin', Mornny!"

Mornington set his teeth.

"Hang him!" he muttered.

"The game's up!" said Gower dismally. "If we're spotted with a cargo like this it means that they'll keep a sharp eye on our study afterwards."

"We're not goin' to be spotted!" growled Mornington. "I'm not goin' to starve, I can tell you that. Blow the regulations!"

"You can't blow Bulkeley and the Head!"

"We're not caught yet!"

Mornington turned back to the counter.

"I say, Mrs. Wicks, would you mind our goin' out the back way?" he asked. "There's a fellow in the street we don't want to meet!"

"Yes, Master Mornington, if you like!" said Mrs. Wicks, opening the door of her little parlour. "Go straight through!"

"And you needn't mention our names, ma'am!"

Mrs. Wicks opened her eyes.

"We've been out of bounds," said Mornington. "Don't give us away, ma'am!"

Mrs. Wicks looked rather doubtful, but she nodded.

The nuts of Rookwood hurried through the little parlour and down the passage into the garden.

"Put it on now!" grinned Mornington.

They broke into a run, and reached the towing-path. They did not pause there. The possibility of being caught red-handed by the captain of Rookwood was too dismaying.

It meant severe punishment for disregarding the regulations, a matter upon which the Head of Rookwood was very strict indeed; and, worse than that, it meant a stoppage of study spreads.

Once suspicion was fixed on No. 4

study, it would be impossible to continue the reckless indulgence of old.

The three juniors did not pause till they were in sight of the gates of Rookwood School.

There Mornington drew his companions to a halt.

"Hold on!"

"Better buck up!" urged Peele.

"Bulkeley will come straight back, looking for us very likely!"

"Old Wicks won't give our names, but if he asks whether Rookwood chaps have been there, she'll tell him!" said Gower.

"I know that!" snapped Mornington.

"Come round to the back. If old Mack sees us go in with a bag, that will give us the kybosh!"

"Oh, I see!"

The nuts of the Fourth scuttled round to the tradesmen's entrance.

There they got in unobserved, and sauntered round to the School House with an unconcerned air.

From the cricket-ground a loud shout reached their ears.

"Well bowled, Jimmy!"

The Fourth-Formers were at cricket practice, and Tommy Dodd's wickets had fallen to Jimmy Silver's deadly bowling.

Mornington glanced towards the cricketers with a somewhat bitter look on his face. It was Mornny's "swank" and uncertain temper that kept him from taking a prominent place among the junior cricketers of Rookwood.

"Come on!" whispered Peele.

"Never mind cricket now. We've got to get that bag out of sight!"

"All right!"

Mornington & Co. went into the House.

On that fine, sunny half-holiday the School House was deserted. The three juniors did not meet a soul as they hurried up to the Fourth Form passage.

"All serene now!" said Peele, with a breath of relief, as they reached the door of No. 4 study. "Hallo! Where are you going, Mornny?"

Mornington grinned.

"End study!" he replied.

"What on earth for? There's nobody there!"

"That's why I'm goin' there!" said Mornington coolly.

"What the merry thunder—"

Peele and Gower, in amazement, followed the dandy of the Fourth to the end study. That celebrated apartment belonged to the Fistical Four of the Fourth—Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome—with whom Mornington was on the worst of terms.

The Fistical Four were all on the cricket-ground now, and what Mornny could want in their vacant study perplexed his comrades.

Their amazement increased as Mornington opened the lower doors of the bookcase, put his bag inside, and closed the doors again.

"What the dickens!" yelled Gower. "Are you making those cads a present of two pounds worth of tuck, Mornny?"

"No, ass! Let's clear off!"

"But, I say—"

"Buck up, fathead! Bulkeley may come in any minute!"

They left the end study.

"But—but what—" stuttered Peele.

"Don't you see, ass?"

"Blessed if I do!"

"Bulkeley was headin' for Mrs. Wicks' shop. I saw his face, too. He suspects somethin'!" said Mornington coolly. "Somethin's got out, I dare say! Well, as he won't find anythin' out in Coombe, he may think of searchin' the studies when he gets back. I think it's jolly likely under the circumstances."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"If he does he won't find all that tuck in No. 4!" said Mornington.

"He's not likely to look in the end study. He trusts Jimmy Silver. After the interferin' brute's cleared off we can get the tuck easily enough."

"Oh, good!" said Peele.

"But supposin' he did search the study, an' found the tuck?" said Gower.

Mornington laughed.

"In that case, I think Jimmy Silver will get into a row. There's nothin' on the bag to identify it, and nothin' to show we put it there. It would be worth the tuck for Jimmy

Silver to get called up before

the Head an' licked for disregardin' the merry regulations."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the nuts.

Mornington chuckled gleefully.

Jimmy Silver had been very emphatic in denouncing the food hogging in No. 4 study. For Jimmy to suffer for the sins of the food hogs struck those cheery young gentlemen as an excellent joke.

Mornington & Co. strolled down to the cricket-ground in great spirits. They wanted that tuck for a spread in the study at tea-time; but, upon the whole, they would have been willing to miss tea, for the sake of having it discovered hidden in Jimmy Silver's study.

The 2nd Chapter.

Mr. Bootles is Shocked.

Bulkeley of the Sixth was frowning as he strode into Mrs. Wicks' little shop in the High Street of Coombe.

The captain of Rookwood was, as Mornington surmised, suspicious.

He saluted the widow politely, however. Mrs. Wicks looked a little worried. She had good-naturedly consented to let the juniors escape, and she did not feel inclined to betray them, but it dawned upon her mind that the matter was more serious than she had supposed.

"Good-afternoon, Mrs. Wicks," said Bulkeley. "I think some juniors from Rookwood have just been here."

"Yes, Master Bulkeley."

"Were they buying food?"

"Well, yes."

"Would you mind giving me their names?"

"I—I'd rather not, Master Bulkeley," stammered the good lady.

"The young rascals have been breaking the regulations," Bulkeley explained. "I'm sure you don't approve of their bagging more than their allowance of food. It's come out that a Rookwood fellow has been going round the shops, buying stuff at each of them, in small quantities. Of course, he gets a lot together. The village shops are out of school bounds now, you know."

"I know," said Mrs. Wicks drily.

"The good dame was not wholly pleased by her little shop being placed out of school bounds, as the Rookwooders had been among her best customers."

"It's necessary, you know," said Bulkeley. "Food-hogging means some people going short of food."

"Yes, I know that."

"Where did they go?" asked Bulkeley. "I didn't see them come out."

"They left by the back way."

"Oh!"

There was evidently nothing further to be learned from Mrs. Wicks. Bulkeley left the shop, and, after hesitating a few moments, started for Rookwood.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, had received a hint of the "food-hogging" carried on by some unknown Rookwood fellow, and he had asked the head prefect to look into the matter.

Bulkeley had been round the village, and at two or three shops he had learned that Rookwood juniors had made purchases, names unknown.

Mrs. Wicks, the last they had visited, knew the names, but declined to give them, from an amiable desire not to get the boys into trouble.

But now that he was certain the suspicion was well founded, Bulkeley did not mean to let it drop.

He strode rapidly down the lane towards Rookwood.

As he came into the quadrangle he observed Mornington, Peele, and Gower sauntering carelessly towards the cricket-ground. He did not note them specially, however. There was



"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, gazing into the cupboard. "What is that, Toots?" "A—a bag, sir!" faltered the pageboy.

nothing about them to indicate that they had lately been out of gates.

The captain of Rookwood went on into the house, to Mr. Bootles' study.

"I've looked into it, sir," he said, as Mr. Bootles gave him an inquiring look. "It's right enough. Three juniors are concerned in it, but they gave me the slip. I dare say they got back to the school before me, as they certainly spotted me coming."

"You do not know their names, Bulkeley?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Bootles pursed his lips.

"The matter must be looked into thoroughly," he said. "The boys have been put on their honour. It would therefore be an insult to the great majority of them to institute a system of supervision. I am convinced that only a few are erring in this way. They must be discovered."

"They were certainly juniors," said Bulkeley. "I dare say the stuff is stacked away in their study."

"No doubt. Please send the page to me, Bulkeley, and I will take charge of the matter."

"Yes, sir."

A few minutes later Mr. Bootles started for the Fourth-Form passage, with Toots, the House page, at his heels.

The Form-master intended to look into the Fourth-Form room, and then the Shell, and, if these were drawn blank, to look into the fags' lockers in the Form-rooms.

He sincerely hoped that the unknown food hog would not be discovered on the Classical side of Rookwood. He would have been quite pleased to hand over the investigation to Mr. Manders, in the Modern quarters.

It was not a pleasant task for the Form-master, and he was feeling extremely exasperated.

But in justice to the Rookwood fellows themselves, the investigation had to be pursued.

It was extremely repugnant to Mr. Bootles to think of exercising constant supervision over the juniors. Most of them could be trusted to play the game. It was better to single out the delinquents and punish them, and let the incident close.

Under Mr. Bootles' eye, Toots the page went through study after study, looking into the cupboards, boxes, and other receptacles.

Study after study was drawn blank. Even in No. 4, which belonged to Mornington, the wealthiest fellow at Rookwood, no undue supplies were discovered.

The investigators arrived at the end study at last.

Mr. Bootles placed a very full reliance upon Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth, and it was more as a matter of form than anything else that he looked through the end study. He did not expect to find anything there that was forbidden.

But an exclamation from Toots, as he opened the lower doors of the bookcase, drew his attention.

"Bless my soul, what is that, Toots?" asked Mr. Bootles.

"A—a bag, sir," said Toots reluctantly.

Toots liked Jimmy Silver, and was sorry to bowl him out.

Mr. Bootles' brow became very stern.

"Open the bag, Toots."

"Yessir."

The page opened the bag.

Mr. Bootles adjusted his spectacles very carefully, and blinked into the bag. It was a large bag, and it was crammed with eatables. They were eatables of the most expensive kind, and the quantity made the Form-master stare.

"Bless my soul!" he said. "Toots, kindly convey that bag to my study."

"Yessir."

The Form-master, frowning, followed the page as he carried the bag away. It was deposited upon Mr. Bootles' table.

"Now request Master Bulkeley to come here, Toots."

"Yessir."

Mr. Bootles stood frowning as he waited for Bulkeley. The Rookwood captain started at the sight of the packed bag as he came in.

"You have found it, sir?"

"Apparently this is the food that was purchased this afternoon, Bulkeley. It was found in Silver's study."

"Silver, sir?"

"Yes, Bulkeley."

"I am very much surprised, sir. I should never have suspected Silver."

"Neither should I, Bulkeley. The bag was very carefully hidden in the bookcase cupboard," said Mr. Bootles.

"Will you find Silver and his study-mates, and bring them here. I fear that I shall have to report them to the Head for a flogging; but I will question them first."

"Certainly, sir."

Bulkeley left the study in search of the Fistical Four. Mr. Bootles remained in a very perturbed frame of mind. His opinion of Jimmy Silver had been a high one, and this discovery was a painful shock to him.

Tubby Muffin, the fat Classical, was "mooching" about the quad, and Bulkeley called to him.

"Have you seen Silver, Muffin?"

"He's playing cricket," said Tubby. "You'll find him on Little Side, Bulkeley."

"Right!"

The Rookwood captain went on to the cricket-ground with a grim brow. A shout greeted him as he arrived.

"Well, played!"

"Bravo!"

The 3rd Chapter.

The Benefit of the Doubt.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were too busy with their game to observe the approach of Bulkeley, but Mornington & Co., who were lounging near the nets, noticed him at once.

"There comes Bulkeley!" murmured Mornington. "Look at his chivvy! Looks like trouble for somebody."

"Shouldn't wonder!" grinned Peele.

Bulkeley did not notice the smiling nuts. He came down to the pitch. Jimmy Silver was bowling to Erroll, the new boy in the Fourth. Erroll had shown very good quality as a cricketer, and Jimmy, who had an eye on him as a recruit for the Junior Eleven, was putting him through his paces.

Jimmy was the champion junior bowler of Rookwood, but Erroll was

keeping his wicket up in great style against Jimmy's bowling. Quite a crowd of the Fourth had gathered round to watch the contest.

"Silver!" called out Bulkeley.

Jimmy looked round.

"You want me, Bulkeley?"

"Yes, at once!"

"All serene! Take the ball, Lovell."

"Lovell's wanted, too," said Bulkeley grimly; "also Raby and Newcome."

"Oh," said Jimmy, "the whole merry family! Anything wrong, Bulkeley?"

"You'll see soon enough. Come on!"

Jimmy Silver tossed the ball to Conroy, the Australian, and the Fistical Four followed the Rookwood captain from the cricket-ground. Mornington & Co. watched them with smiling faces.

"Jolly clear what's happened," murmured Gower. "They've found the bag in the end study, Morny."

"Certain!" said Mornington.

"Nothing about it to identify you, Morny, you're sure?"

"Quite sure."

"It means missin' tea, though," remarked Peele.

"It doesn't," said Mornington coolly. "There's time to get out and do some more shoppin'. When they've made an example of Jimmy Silver, they won't think of lookin' any further, an' we shall be safe as houses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four looked rather less cheery than usual as they followed Bulkeley to Mr. Bootles' study.

"That something was 'up' was quite clear, though they could not guess what it was. Bulkeley's grim brow seemed to hint that it was something unusually serious.

"Something's come out," Lovell remarked. "What the merry dickens is it? What have you been doing, Jimmy?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Jimmy Silver. "It can't be on account of ragging the Moderns yesterday. That's ancient history now."

"I punched Smythe's head," remarked Lovell. "That was this afternoon. He was blinking at me through his silly eyeglass, so I punched his head. But you fellows wouldn't be wanted for that."

"Well, we'll soon see."

"Here are the juniors, sir!" said Bulkeley, as he shepherded the uneasy four into Mr. Bootles' room.

The Form-master rose, frowning.

"Ah! Yes! You are doubtless aware why you are sent for, Silver," said the Fourth Form master sternly.

"No, sir!" said Jimmy.

"I have to deal with you for your transgression of the food regulations, Silver."

Jimmy Silver started.

"I, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Yes; and your study mates, doubtless, are equally concerned in the matter. I am surprised and shocked at your conduct, Silver."

Jimmy crimsoned.

"What have I done, sir?" he exclaimed.

"You are well, aware, Silver, that the food regulations are to be obeyed most strictly. Anyone taking more than his fair share of food deprives someone else of his just portion!" said Mr. Bootles severely.

"I know that, sir. We always stick to the rules in our study."

"Silver!"

"We couldn't do anything else, sir, if we wanted to!" said Lovell.

"We're only allowed a fixed amount at the school-shop, and all other grub-shops are out of bounds."

"It is possible, however, to make a round of shops, and purchase food in small quantities at each," said Mr. Bootles.

"Only a rotten cad would do it, sir!" said Raby.

Mr. Bootles coughed.

"You need not prevaricate," he said. "The food has been found in your study."

"What!" ejaculated the Fistical Four together.

Mr. Bootles waved his hand to the well-packed bag on the table.

"You know that bag, Silver?"

"No, sir!" said Jimmy.

"Do you deny that it is yours?"

"Certainly, sir! It's not mine!"

"It belongs to a member of your study, at all events?"

"No, sir!" said Lovell, Raby, and Newcome with one voice.

Mr. Bootles made an impatient gesture.

"Cease your foolish denials!" he exclaimed. "That bag of food was discovered in your study!"

"M-m-my hat!" ejaculated Lovell in astonishment.

"The matter is very serious," said Mr. Bootles. "I shall take you to Dr. Chisholm to be dealt with."

"But, sir, that bag of grub isn't

ours!" shouted Newcome excitedly. "I've never seen it before, for one!"

"Same here, sir!" said Raby.

"It's not ours, and we never had anything to do with it," said Jimmy Silver steadily. "It can't have been found in our study!"

"I found it there myself, Silver!"

"Oh!" said Jimmy, taken quite aback.

"In our study!" said Lovell dazedly. "Who could have put it there?"

"Bulkeley found that some juniors of this school had been purchasing food, against orders, in Coombe," said Mr. Bootles. "He was unable to ascertain their names. But the food has been found to be your property. It will, of course, be confiscated, and the Head—"

"But it isn't our property, sir!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "We've never seen it before!"

"Then how did it come into your study, Silver?"

"I suppose it was put there by the chap who bought it. It can't have got there any other way."

"Why should the purchaser place it in your study?"

"I—I don't know."

"You may as well admit the obvious truth, Silver."

"I've told the truth, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "I don't know anything about that grub. We've never broken the regulations in our study. We've been down on fellows who

this food into the school personally, I feel that I must give you the benefit of the doubt."

The Fistical Four were glad to hear it.

"I give you my word of honour, sir, that I know nothing about it!" said Jimmy Silver earnestly.

"I hope—in fact, I believe—you are speaking the truth, Silver. I have never known you to speak untruthfully," said Mr. Bootles. "I will accept your explanation. Can you suggest to whom this bag may possibly belong?"

Jimmy was silent.

He had little doubt that it was Mornington, or one of his friends, who had brought the forbidden goods into the school. Morny & Co. were the only food-hogs in the Classical Fourth.

Tubby Muffin certainly might have transgressed, but Tubby never had sufficient money for purchases on this scale.

"Well, Silver," said Mr. Bootles sharply. "I am waiting for your answer. It must have been some member of the Fourth Form who did this. You are head boy of the Fourth, and you must have some idea."

"I—I don't know, sir!" said Jimmy. "Perhaps I've an idea, and I mean to find out, too. But—but I don't know who it was."

Mr. Bootles ruminated a few moments.

Mornington of the Fourth in very affectionate tones as the latter came in with Peele and Gower.

Mornington stared at him superciliously, and walked on.

Tubby toddled after him.

"I say, Morny—"

"Oh, get out!" snapped Mornington.

The three nuts walked on, and Tubby blinked after them. It was past tea-time, and Tubby was hungry. The fat Classical was always hungry.

True, he had had his tea in Conroy's study, and he had consumed his full allowance, and, in fact, a little more.

But that made little difference to Tubby.

He was accustomed to expending all his allowance, as well as any sums he could borrow, at the tuckshop. The food regulations had come as a crushing blow to Tubby Muffin.

He had enough to eat—quite enough. But the trouble was that he wanted too much.

Tubby knew of the glorious feeds that went on in Morny's study in spite of the regulations; and although his conscience disapproved of food-hogging, his inner Tubby longed for a share of the feshpots of Egypt. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

Gladly would the fat Classical have joined in Morny's ripping spreads, but the aristocratic Morny barred

in the end study did not matter much to Mornington, who had more money than he knew what to do with. He was quite ready to sacrifice that to get Jimmy Silver suspected, and perhaps punished.

The three nuts had come in with a fresh supply, as Tubby's keen eye had noted. The study table was covered with good things, most of them forbidden. Tubby's round eyes glistened as he stood outside and tapped at the door.

The door was locked. Tubby rapped again with his fat knuckles.

"Who's there?" snapped Mornington.

"Me!"

"Cut off!"

"Won't you let me in, Morny?"

"No, you fat idiot!"

"I say, are you having tea, Morny?"

"If you call me 'Morny' I'll wring your fat neck!"

"Are you having tea?"

"Yes!" shouted Mornington.

"Cut off, or I'll come out to you with a cricket-stump!"

"Ain't you going to ask me to tea, Morny?"

No reply.

Tubby Muffin knocked at the door again.

"Will you cut off?" roared Mornington, exasperated.

"Hadn't you better let me in?" asked Tubby through the keyhole.

"Bootles might hear me banging at the door, you know, and he might come up!"

"Clear off!"

Bang! Bang!

Tubby's fat fist was thumping loudly on the door now. The door was suddenly torn open, and Mornington appeared, his eyes glittering with rage. He had a cricket-stump in his hand.

"Now, you fat rotter!" he said between his teeth.

Tubby jumped back.

"Don't be a beast, Morny! Leggo my collar! Yaroooh! I'll yell for Bulkeley! Yah! Prefect! Prefect!" roared Tubby.

"Let him alone, for goodness sake, Morny!" came Peele's scared voice from the study.

Mornington, pale with anger, released the fat Classical.

"Will you clear off?" he hissed.

"No, I won't!" said Tubby independently. "I'm not going to clear off, Morny. If you choose to be a pal and ask a fellow in—"

"You fat porker!"

"Well, I'd rather be a fat porker than a food hog!" said Tubby, with a disdainful sniff. "The fact is, Morny, I can't allow this!"

"What!"

"I can't allow it!" said Tubby firmly. "I'm shocked at you, Morny!"

"Why, you—you—you—"

"If you were a pal of mine I might make allowances for you," said Tubby; "but, as it is, Morny, I feel bound to put my foot down. So I warn you I'm going to Bulkeley to tell him what's going on in this study. It's really too disgusting, you know. I regard it as a duty!"

Mornington ground his teeth. He made a move forward, with the stump upraised, but Peele caught his arm, and stopped him.

"Don't be a fool, Morny! Do you want a prefect to come here and see what's in the study?" he snapped.

Mornington choked back his rage.

"That fat beast isn't coming to tea!" he snarled.

"All right; I'll go and see Bulkeley!" said Tubby Muffin.

"I—I'll smash you—"

"Shut up!" muttered Peele. "You can come in, Muffin. You're welcome."

"Well, that alters the case, of course!" grinned Muffin. "If you choose to act as a pal, of course I shouldn't give you away!"

Tubby Muffin rolled into the study. Mornington stood breathing hard.

He was extremely inclined to begin on Tubby again with the cricket-stump, but he knew too well that Tubby would roar for help; and if a prefect came up to No. 4 just then, it meant serious trouble for the food hogs.

There was no help for it. The fat Classical held the whip-hand.

Mornington sat down with a sullen brow.

Tubby Muffin was all smiles.

"My hat, what a spread!" he said genially. "How jolly good of you fellows to ask me! Pass the ham, Peele. By gad, you've got a week's allowance of ham on the table! Never mind; I've got a good appetite. Thanks!"

Tubby Muffin started operations on the well-spread board with great gusto.

He did not seem to observe the savage looks of Morny & Co. Their looks did not matter to Tubby. He



One by one the nuts went through the ordeal, and at the end of a very busy half-hour Mornington and his elegant guests were strewn on the study carpet in various states of sticky horror.

have. It's a rotten trick. Perhaps the rotter found that Bulkeley was after him, and hid the stuff in our study to save his own skin. And I can prove that I haven't been out of gates this afternoon, either!"

Mr. Bootles started a little.

"Indeed! If you can prove that, Silver—"

"We've been on the cricket-ground ever since dinner, sir! Half the Fourth can bear witness to that, if necessary!"

"Yes, rather!" chimed in Lovell.

Mr. Bootles pursed his lips and glanced at Bulkeley. The captain of Rookwood was scanning the Fistical Four very keenly.

"If that's the case, sir, these can't be the juniors who were in Mrs. Wicks' shop," said Bulkeley. "I can easily inquire if you wish, sir."

"The food may have been brought in for these juniors by another person, Bulkeley."

"Yes, sir; that's possible."

"It was found in your study, Silver," Mr. Bootles hesitated now. He had not expected the denial of the Fistical Four, and he was evidently in a state of doubt. "Of course, it is possible that some boy, thinking himself suspected, may have deposited his purchases in your study instead of his own. I am very anxious not to commit injustice, and as it appears that you did not, at all events, bring

He understood the junior's objection to giving information against a schoolfellow. Jimmy Silver would rather have been found guilty himself than have sneaked even about a fellow like Mornington.

"Well, well!" said Mr. Bootles at last. "The matter is most unsatisfactory. It is humiliating to me and to the boys under my charge for a system of supervision to be instituted. I prefer to trust to the sense of honour of my boys, but that is evidently impossible after this occurrence. Unless the culprit is discovered the whole Fourth Form will be under suspicion."

Jimmy Silver set his lips.

"I mean to look into it, sir," he said, "and I can answer for it that there won't be anything more of the same kind. The whole Form are down on it."

"Well, you may go," said Mr. Bootles. "This food will, of course, be confiscated. I sincerely trust, Silver, that the explanation you have given me is well-founded. I have always trusted you. You may go."

The Fistical Four left the study with glum brows.

The 4th Chapter.
Tubby Comes to Tea.

"Morny, old chap!"

Tubby Muffin was waiting in the school gateway, and he addressed

Tubby. Sometimes Tubby hung about No. 4 study at tea-time, but never by any chance was he invited within; and when he ventured in without an invitation he was assisted out with more promptness than politeness.

"Rotters!" groaned Tubby dismally. "The rotters! They've got their pockets bulging with tuck—I could see that—simply bursting with it! And they never ask a fellow to share. Serve them right if I told Bootles!"

Tubby's eyes gleamed at the thought.

Certainly, Tubby wasn't a sneak, with all his faults, and he had never thought of giving the food-hoggers away to the Form-master. The fellows who were most down on Morny's conduct would have disapproved of that.

But it came into Tubby's mind—sharpened by greed—that he held the whip-hand, in a way, and that Morny could not afford to quarrel with a fellow who could give him away if he liked.

After some thought, Tubby Muffin started for the School House, and made his way to No. 4 study.

There was a sound of teacups clinking within, and a rattle of knives and forks.

Morny & Co. were already at tea. The confiscation of the supply left

the end study did not matter much to Mornington, who had more money than he knew what to do with. He was quite ready to sacrifice that to get Jimmy Silver suspected, and perhaps punished.

The three nuts had come in with a fresh supply, as Tubby's keen eye had noted. The study table was covered with good things, most of them forbidden. Tubby's round eyes glistened as he stood outside and tapped at the door.

The door was locked. Tubby rapped again with his fat knuckles.

"Who's there?" snapped Mornington.

"Me!"

"Cut off!"

"Won't you let me in, Morny?"

"No, you fat idiot!"

"I say, are you having tea, Morny?"

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was feeding on the fat of the land for once, and he enjoyed it.

Morny & Co. had come in hungry, but Muffin disposed of as much as the three together. The pleasure of entertaining Tubby to tea cost Mornington at least ten shillings. Probably he did not think that it was worth it.

Tubby's fat face became redder and shinier as he proceeded.

Morny sat in grim silence.

Tubby has unfastened three waistcoat buttons, and he was breathing stertorously, when he suspended operations at last.

"Have you finished?" asked Mornington in a choking voice.

"Yes, thanks!" said Tubby, beaming. "So good of you to ask me to tea, Morny! I'll come again to-morrow if you like."

"Get out!"

"Yes, I may as well be getting along!" said Tubby, rising with some difficulty.

"Do you mind if I take some of the biscuits with me, and this cake, and that box of fruits, and some of the nuts? Thanks!"

Mornington & Co. watched Tubby as if they were mesmerised, while the fat junior calmly filled his pockets.

Then, with an agreeable nod, Tubby Muffin rolled out of the study.

Peele grinned.

"The spoofin' fat beast!" he said. "He's done us, Morny. He'll come to tea again, you bet, the sneaking, fat worm!"

"I—I—I'll brain him if he does!"

"He'll sneak to Bulkeley if he doesn't!" said Gower. "Better let him rip!"

Mornington growled, but he realised that, exasperating as it was, there was nothing for it but to let Tubby "rip." The way of the food hog, like that of the transgressor, was not easy.

The 5th Chapter. By Order.

There was a crowd in the junior Common-room after prep.

Word had been passed for a junior meeting, and the Fourth Form of the Classical side had turned up almost to a man.

Mornington & Co. came in in a bunch. They did not know what the meeting was about, but they were the opposition. Whatever line Jimmy Silver took, on whatever subject, they were there to oppose him. That was the amiable Morny's usual policy, and his nutty friends followed his lead.

Lovell closed the door when the meeting had assembled. Jimmy Silver mounted upon a chair.

"Gentlemen of the Fourth!" he began.

"Hear, hear!" said Rawson.

"Go it, Jimmy!"

"There's a serious matter to be dealt with by the whole Form!" continued Jimmy Silver. "It's the question of food-hogging."

Morny & Co. exchanged quick glances. They understood now that the meeting concerned themselves. Mornington sauntered to the door.

"Where are you going, Mornington?" rapped out Jimmy Silver.

"Out!" said Mornington.

"Stay here!"

"Rats!"

"Don't open that door, Lovell!"

"No fear!" grinned Lovell.

"Let me pass!" exclaimed Mornington haughtily.

"No food hogs allowed to pass!" said Lovell. "Stand back!"

Raby and Newcome, Conroy and Pons, and Rawson had lined up at the door. There was no passage for the nuts.

Mornington looked inclined to "run amuck" for a moment, but as that would only have led to a severe bumping, he restrained himself, and turned away with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders.

"There are food hogs in the Fourth!" went on Jimmy Silver, unmoved by the sneering smiles with which the nuts were regarding him.

"The matter's become serious. Some of the cads smuggled tuck into the school to-day, and hid it in my study when Bulkeley came after them. It was found there, and I was called over the coals."

"A likely story!" sneered Mornington.

"I've got a pretty clear idea who did it!" said Jimmy Silver. "It was you, Mornington!"

Mornington gave a shrug.

"Sure it was a dirty trick!" said Flynn.

"Got any proof?" sneered Townsend.

"Well, it's pretty clear," said Jimmy Silver. "Morny's the prize hog of the Form, and only Morny could spare enough tin for that whacking pile of tuck. Of course, it might have been you, Towny—"

"Oh, by gad!"

"Or Topham, or Gower, or Peele—probably the lot of you together!"

"Rats!"

"But never mind that. You fellows have gone in for food-hogging, and the whole Form are down on you for it!"

"The whole Form can go and eat coke as far as I'm concerned!" said Mornington disdainfully.

There was a growl from some of the juniors. Mornington cast a scornful look round him.

"Now, it's got to stop!" resumed Jimmy Silver quietly. "I've been down on it, though I've never interfered. Perhaps, as captain of the Form, I ought to have done so."

"I've told you that!" snapped Higgs. "Now, if I were captain of the Fourth—"

"Dry up, Higgs!"

"Go it, Jimmy!"

"When it comes to sticking the grub in my study, and nearly getting me booked for a flogging, it's high time I chipped in. I think!" said Jimmy Silver. "Now, I put it to the Fourth. Is the Form going to allow it to go on?"

"No!" shouted the juniors.

"Bulkeley's left it to us. We can stamp it out ourselves, or we can have the Head taking it up," said Jimmy Silver. "That means the whole school down on us, and the Modern cads clapping us—all because three or four fellows won't play the game. I'm willing to put it to the vote of the Form. Is food-hogging in the Fourth to be stopped?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You hear that, Morny?" said Jimmy.

"Is that all?"

"Yes, that's all."

"Like me to answer?" yawned Mornington.

"It's the order of the Form, Mornington," said Dick Oswald. "You'd better do the decent thing, and make up your mind to it."

"I'm goin' to do exactly as I like," said Mornington deliberately. "If this rot makes any difference to me, it will make me stand bigger spreads in my study, that's all!"

"Collar the cheeky cad, and bump him!" growled Van Ryn.

Mornington's lip curled.

"I'm goin' to stand a supper in my study to-morrow," he drawled.

"All my friends are comin'. We're goin' to have a toppin' spread, and there's goin' to be plenty of everythin'—about six weeks' allowance on the table. That's my answer, and you can put that in your pipe, an' smoke it, Jimmy Silver!"

And with that Mornington lounged to the door.

Lovell pushed back his cuffs, and looked inquiringly at Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy shook his head.

"Let him go!" he said. "He knows what to expect."

"Rats!" said Mornington.

And he sauntered out of the common-room with his hands in his pockets. It was evident that the dandy of the Fourth did not intend to pay much attention to the order of the Form.

The 6th Chapter. The Heavy Hand!

Tubby Muffin looked in at No. 4 study the next day at tea-time.

He found that luxurious apartment vacant.

Mornington & Co. had expected the fat Classical's company, and they had gone down to tea at the bunshop in Coombe.

Tubby gave a disappointed blink round the study, and rolled out.

But he consoled himself with the prospect of supper with Morny.

He had heard Mornington's boast in the common-room the previous evening, and he knew that the dandy of the Fourth would be as good as his word.

The nuts were sure to come in laden with good things for that

extra-special spread in the study which was to mark and accentuate Morny's defiance of the order of the Form.

Tubby Muffin decided to be present on that occasion, and all through the evening he was revelling in the delights of anticipation.

He scuffled over his prep. in a great hurry, and went along the passage to investigate about eight o'clock.

He heard a sound of cheery voices in No. 4, and a clinking of tea-things and knives and forks.

Morny's little party had assembled. Tubby tapped at the door.

"Let me in, Morny, old chap," he said, through the keyhole. "You've forgotten me, old fellow."

"By gad, is that fat boulder comin'?" It was the drawing voice of Adolphus Smythe of the Shell. "I didn't know Muffin was a friend of yours, Morny."

"You know he isn't," growled Mornington. "Clear off, you fat brute!"

Tubby rattled the door-handle.

"I say, Morny—yaroooh! What's that?" howled Tubby, as a heavy hand descended on his shoulder. He rolled round to find Jimmy Silver's stern eyes upon him. The Fistical Four had come along from the end study.

"Well, what are you doing here?" demanded Jimmy.

"Only—only speaking to Morny," stammered Tubby Muffin. "Of—of course, I wasn't going in to supper with him. I—I wouldn't, you know."

Conroy and Pons and Van Ryn seized the fat Classical, and rolled him home to their study. Tubby rolled along with a succession of yells, and was duly deposited in the study, on the floor. He was left there in a breathless state, gasping like a pair of very old bellows.

The Colonial Co. returned to Jimmy Silver. The Fourth-Formers were gathering in force outside Mornington's study. Oswald and Rawson, Flynn and Jones minor, Hooker and Dickenson minor, and several other fellows, had joined up. The merry nuts were destined to discover that the Rookwood Fourth were in deadly earnest.

Jimmy Silver rapped on the door.

"Hallo, who is it this time?" drawled Peele's voice.

"It's I, Jimmy Silver. Let me in!"

"Rats!"

"Have you asked yourself to supper, like Tubby Muffin?" sneered Mornington. "You can go an' eat coke, Jimmy Silver. You're not the kind of fellow I want at my table."

"Rather not, by gad!" said Smythe of the Shell. "I'm surprised at your cheek, Silver, I am, by gad!"

"Open this door!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Will you let us in, Mornington?"

"No, I won't!"

"Bring the coal-hammer here, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"What-ho!"

Crash! Crash!

The nuts in No. 4 study jumped to their feet in alarm.

"By gad, that won't do!" exclaimed Tracey of the Shell. "We don't want the whole school here, Morny. Better let the cad in."

Crash!

"You rotter!" shouted Mornington furiously. "You want to bring the prefects here, you rotten sneak!"

"You can open the door if you like," said Jimmy Silver. "It's going to be opened, anyway!"

Mornington, with a savage exclamation, threw the door open. The lock would not have resisted the coal-hammer for long, even if the proceedings had not been interrupted by the arrival of a master or a prefect.

Jimmy Silver & Co. crowded into the study with grim looks.

A very festive scene met their gaze.

Mornington had kept his word. Supper in No. 4 was a magnificent spread, which quite put Morny's previous efforts into the shade. And there was quite a large and distinguished party present—Townsend and Topham, Peele and Gower, of the Fourth, and Smythe, Howard, and Tracy, of the Shell. They were all on their feet now, looking both exasperated and alarmed.

The dandy of the Fourth fixed his eyes savagely upon the intruders.

"Well, what do you want, now you're here?" he snarled.

"You know the order of the Form, Mornington—"

"Blow the order of the Form, and the Form too!"

"You cheeky cad!" roared Lovell.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Shut the door!" said Jimmy

Silver. "We want to get through this without any prefects chipping in, if possible."

Raby closed the door.

"Look here, this won't do, you know," expostulated Smythe of the Shell. "What right have you got to chip in here, Silver?"

"Lots," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "Food-hogging is barred at Rookwood!"

"Oh, don't be a cheeky young cad, you know," said Adolphus loftily.

"And it's going to be stopped! Every food-hog is going to be made an example of on the spot," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "The same dose will be repeated every time. I think you'll get fed up with hogging in the long run. Collar them!"

"Hands off!" shouted Mornington furiously.

"Collar the cads!"

"Hooray!"

"Back up!" yelled Mornington, putting up his hands. "Back up, you fellows! Kick the cheeky rotters out of the study!"

Mornington led off with a fierce rush at Jimmy Silver. He had plenty of pluck, and if his nutty friends had been equally endowed with that useful article, there would certainly have been a battle-royal in No. 4 study. But the nuts of Rookwood were not fighting men.

Jimmy's hands went up like lightning, and he met Mornington half way.

The two were fighting furiously the next minute.

But that was nearly all the fighting. Smythe & Co. attempted to assume an attitude of lofty contempt; but they looked considerably less lofty when the invaders seized them and bumped them over on the carpet.

Their struggles were feeble, and were soon finished. And when they attempted to struggle up from the floor, they were promptly knocked down again, so they decided at last to remain there.

Then the juniors gathered round Jimmy Silver and Mornington.

The dandy of the Fourth was fighting hard, all the savage anger in his breast aroused, and he was receiving severe punishment.

A right-hander on the chin sent him spinning at last, and he landed on Smythe of the Shell, eliciting a fearful howl from Adolphus.

"Yaroooh! Gerroff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now pile in!" said Jimmy Silver, a little breathlessly. "You know what you've got to do. If they make any fuss, bang their nappers on the floor!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

Then the ragging began.

Mornington was the first victim. Lovell and Conroy seized him, and held the struggling dandy of the Fourth in an iron grip. Oswald took the jam from the table and proceeded to plaster it over his owner.

Mornington gasped and spluttered, and yelled and kicked, and every time he kicked his head was banged on the study wall as a warning. He found it judicious to submit quietly at last.

There was an ample supply of jam at Morny's supper. Morny had reason to wish that it had not been so ample, for every atom of it was plastered over his face and neck and head, and rubbed into his hair with active fingers.

Then the ashpan was pulled out of the grate, and Morny's sticky head was jammed into it. When it came out again Mornington presented a most extraordinary appearance. The juniors roared with laughter, and even the other nuts gave a sickly grin, though in a state of great apprehension for their noble selves.

"Now give him the ginger-pop!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Grooogh!"

"Now the milk that won't keep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think we can use some ink, too, though it's war-time. Ink's not on the Food Controller's list."

Mornington spluttered and gasped as a bottle of ink drenched over him.

The once elegant and natty dandy of the Fourth was a shocking spectacle now. He looked, as Newcome remarked, as if a self-respecting dust-heap would not have owned him.

Under the thick coating of jam and ashes and ink his face was crimson with fury, but his face could not be seen. Morny required a great deal of washing before his face could be seen again.

He was gargling helplessly when he was released at last.

"I think Morny will do for a bit," said Jimmy Silver grimly. "Now for the others."

"I—I say, you know—" stam-

pered Adolphus Smythe. "I—I say—"

"Smythe next!"

"Lemme alone!" gasped Adolphus.

"I—I—yaroooh! Grooogh! Yooop! Gurrurrh!"

Adolphus went through it with gasps and howls. He collapsed moaning on the floor when the juniors had finished. His ordeal was not quite so severe as Mornington's, but it was severe enough for Adolphus.

"Peele next!"

"Keep off, you rotters!" yelled Peele, seizing a jug and brandishing it. "I'll brain you—yaroooh!"

A loaf, deftly hurled by Pons, caught Peele on the waistcoat and bowled him over. The jug went to the floor with a crash, and the next moment Peele was wriggling in the grasp of the avengers.

Jam and ink were running short, but Flynn cut off to his study for a fresh supply of ink. He thoughtfully brought back a jar of treacle with him. It was a waste, but it was in a good cause. Peele had the benefit of most of the treacle, and he was pitched into a corner in a sticky mass. Some of the treacle was reserved for the other victims, however.

One by one they went through the ordeal, resisting or unresisting; it came to the same thing.

At the end of a very busy half-hour Morny and his elegant guests were strewn on the study carpet in various states of sticky horror.

They gasped and moaned, and groaned and gurgled in a dismal chorus.

"Take all that grub away," said Jimmy Silver. "You can pack it in Morny's cricket-bag. Mornington, all that grub is going to be sent down to Coombe to-morrow to be given to the poor. The same will happen every time you smuggle tuck into the school, as long as the food regulations last, and you will get a ragging into the bargain. Savvy?"

"Grooogh!"

That was all Mornington could reply.

The grinning juniors packed the expensive tuck into the cricket-bag. The bag was pretty well filled.

"Ta-ta!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Always at your service, Morny, when you feel in need of a lesson. Come on, you fellows!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. marched out of the study, taking the big bag of tuck with them. The once festive board was left quite bare. But the nuts of Rookwood were not thinking about supper now. They had something else to think about.

Adolphus Smythe staggered to his feet. He blinked at Mornington through jam and treacle and ink and ashes with a deadly blink.

"Hang you!" spluttered Adolphus. "You silly fool! Let me catch you askin' me to your study again, you howlin' idiot! Grooogh!"

Adolphus limped away, and Tracy and Howard limped after him, gurgling.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Townsend. "You might have expected this, Morny. We were fools to come!"

"Grooogh!"

"And you were a silly fool to ask us, Morny—a silly, conceited, fat-headed chump!" said Topham.

"Gurrig!"

Townsend and Topham departed. Mornington and his study mates were left to themselves. Mornington gouged jam out of his eyes, gasping.

"You thunderin' idiot!" said Peele.

"You howlin', swankin' ass!" said Gower.

And all the unhappy Morny could say in reply was:

"Grooogh-hoooh! Gurrig!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth gave Jimmy Silver a rather curious look the next morning.

"I fancy there was a row in the Fourth Form passage last night," said Bulkeley.

"Was there?" said Jimmy innocently.

"I fancy so."

"Well, perhaps there was," said Jimmy Silver cautiously. "But it's all serene, Bulkeley. There won't be any more food-hogging in the Fourth. You can be sure of that."

And Bulkeley smiled, and did not ask any questions. Jimmy Silver was right. Even Morny, obstinate as he was, decided that it was not good enough, and the nuts of the Fourth were very careful to "toe the line" after that emphatic enforcement of the Order of the Form.

THE END.

(Another magnificent long, complete story of the Rookwood chums, entitled: "Mornington's Masterstroke!" Don't miss it!)