

THE PAPER THAT CHEERS YOU UP!

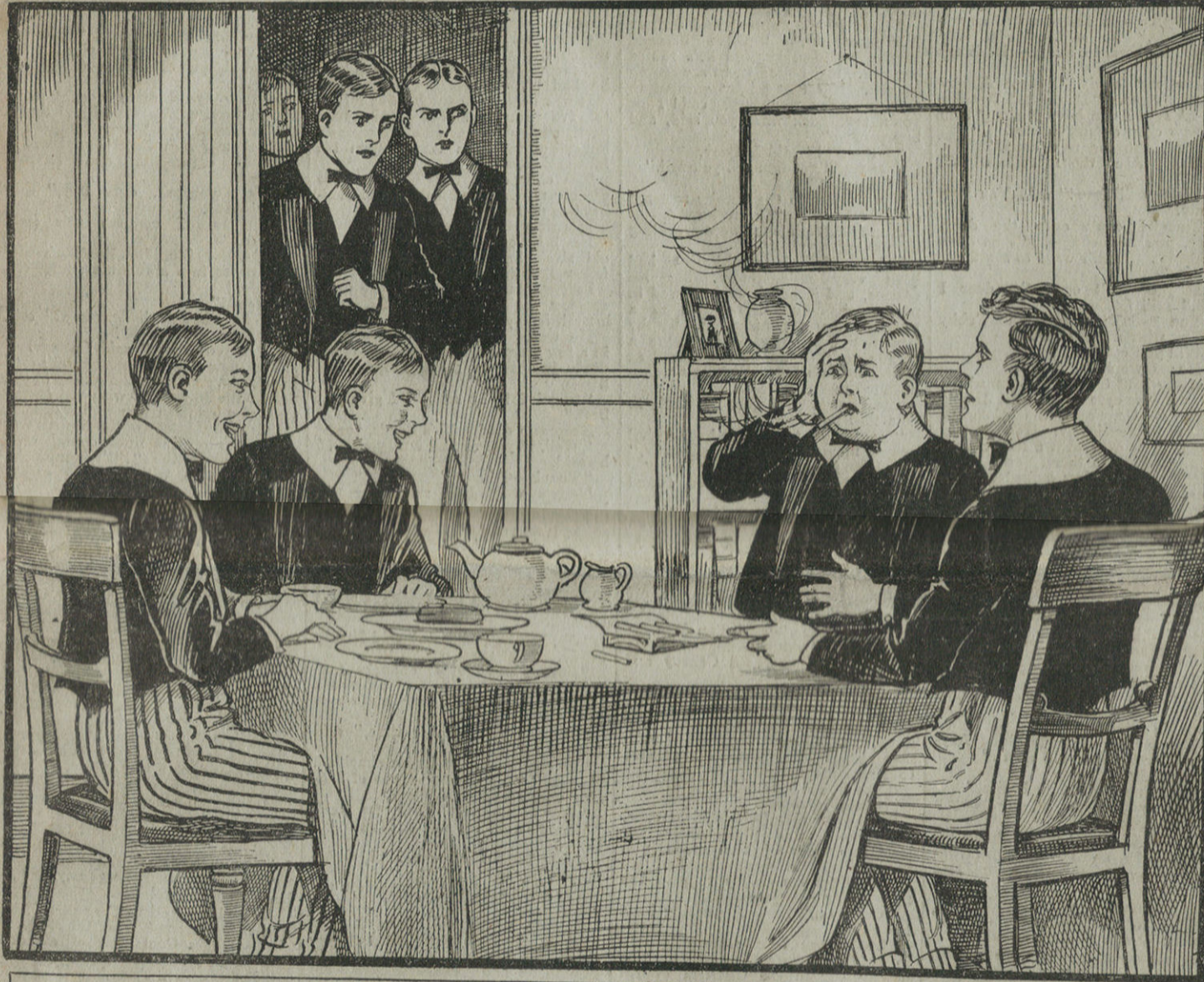
# The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

OUR MOTTO IS: "PLAY THE GAME!"

No. 838, Vol. XVI. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending June 30th, 1917.]



**FORCED TO SMOKE!** A Trying Time For Tubby!

## THE TRICK THAT FAILED!

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

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

### The 1st Chapter.

#### A Little Too Much!

"You fellows come to tea?" Tubby Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, asked the question in a dispirited tone.

Four juniors had arrived in Study No. 3.

They were Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, the Fistical Four of the Fourth. And they had come in hungry from cricket practice.

Tubby Muffin was alone in the study.

He did not look happy at the sight of the Fistical Four, which was not at all complimentary.

"We have—we has!" said Jimmy Silver. "Where's Van Ryn and Pong and Conroy?"

"They haven't come in yet," mumbled Tubby.

"Time they did. We're ready for tea," said Lovell.

"What's wrong, Tubby?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Tired of waiting for your tea, my fat tulip?"

"N-n-no!"

"Looks as if he's started, from that smear of jam on his chivvy," remarked Raby.

Tubby Muffin hastily drew a fat hand across his face.

"Well, we'll get the kettle boiling, as the merry Colonials aren't at

home," said Newcome. "I'll fill it for them."

Arthur Newcome left the study with the kettle.

Tubby Muffin sat in the armchair, fixing his eyes with a lugubrious expression upon the visitors.

Jimmy Silver regarded him, somewhat puzzled.

"Anything up?" he asked.

"N-no!"

"Has Van Ryn been whaling you for stealing the sugar again?"

"Nunno!"

"Then what have you got a chivvy like that for?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "Keep smiling, you

know. A face like that would stop a clock!"

"Oh, dear!"

"I know what's the matter with Tubby," grinned Lovell. "He thinks there won't be enough for him, with four fellows to tea."

"Tain't that!" gasped Tubby. "I—I'm a hospitable chap, you know."

"It's all serene, Tubby, my fat lump of lard," said Jimmy Silver reassuringly. "We haven't come to eat you out of house and home. Every chap brings his own bread and sugar in these days. We've shoved it in the cupboard already."

"Tain't that."

"Then what is it?"

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Tubby. Newcome came back with the filled kettle, and the chums of the Fourth made a fire to boil it. Tubby Muffin continued to look lugubrious. There was evidently something on the fat Classical's mind.

"Cheer up, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver encouragingly. "The Huns haven't landed yet, and there's a prospect of the war being over by 1939. Cheer up!"

"Oh dear! I—I think I'd better go," said Tubby, detaching himself by an effort from the armchair. "If—if Van Ryn asks for me, tell him I—I'm ill—"

"But you're not ill, are you?"

"Ahem!"

There was a tramp of feet in the passage, and Van Ryn, Pons, and Conroy, the three Colonial chums, came in bright and cheery.

"Sorry we're late," said Van Ryn. "Just got back from Coombe. Stopped to speak to a new chap who's coming into the Fourth."

"All serene," said Jimmy.

"Kettle's boiling. What's the matter with your prize porker? He looks like three or four funerals rolled into one."

"My hat! What's the matter, Tubby?"

"N-n-nothing!" stammered Tubby.

"I—I say, I'm thinking of changing out of this study, you fellows."

"Hurray!" said the three Colonials, with one voice.

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned.

If Tubby Muffin expected his announcement to cause consternation he was disappointed.

"Study No. 1 is empty now, since those two fellows left," he said. "I'm going to ask Mr. Bootles to let me have it."

"I expect the new fellow will be put there," said Van Ryn. "He's welcome to you, Tubby. I'll warn him about your boning all the sugar—that's only fair."

"You fellows will miss me when I'm gone!" said Tubby.

"Well, we sha'n't miss the grub, that's one comfort."

"I—I'm not keen on changing out," stammered Tubby. "If—if you like to—to be decent, you know—about—about—"

"About what?"

"Oh, nothing."

The Colonials looked suspiciously at Tubby Muffin. They knew the fat junior's little ways of old.

"What have you been up to?" demanded Conroy.

"N-n-nothing."

"He can't have raided the grub—I locked the cupboard door," said Van Ryn.

"My hat!" yelled Pons. "Look!"

He threw open the door of the study cupboard.

The lock was broken!

The three juniors rushed to the cupboard. Tubby Muffin rushed to the door.

"Gone!" howled Pons.

"The grub—my hat!"

Like Mrs. Hubbard's of old, the cupboard was bare!

Under the stern regulations of the Food Controller, "grub" was not too plentiful in any case. But now there was none!

It had vanished to the last crumb!

"Oh, my only aunt!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "That's what the fat bouncer was worried about."

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

But the Colonials did not laugh.

"All gone!" yelled Van Ryn.

"Your sugar and bread as well as ours—and everything else! The fat villain!"

"And there's nothing going in Hall!" said Pons.

"And I'm as hungry as a hunter!" roared Conroy.

"Same here!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Keep smiling."

"Smiling be blowed! I'm hungry!"

(Continued on the next page.)



## THE TRICK THAT FAILED!

(Continued from the previous page.)

mering on it, if it wasn't locked?" snorted Lovell.

"Haven't thought about it at all, so far," said Lattrey calmly. "Anyway, I'm going in."

He turned the handle of the door. "Hallo, who's in here?" he called out.

"I am!" replied Tubby Muffin.

"Well, let me in."

"Rats!"

"Who's that silly ass in there?" asked Lattrey, looking round.

"Oh, get in, and you'll see," said Lovell sarcastically. "You've just told us you're going in. Well, do it."

Lattrey shrugged his shoulders. "I shall go in fast enough, as it's my study," he said. "You silly chump, in there, let me in—this is my study."

"It's my study!" came Tubby Muffin's voice. "I've asked Bootles, and he says I can have it along with the new chap coming to-day."

"Well, I'm the new chap."

"Oh! Are those rotters still there?"

"We're still here!" said Van Ryn grimly.

"Then I can't open the door. Sorry, your new chap—can't be done at present. I don't want to see those fellows."

"If you don't open the door I shall," said Lattrey.

"You can't!" retorted Tubby Muffin, with a fat chuckle.

"Will you open it?"

"No; I won't!"

Lattrey bent down and scanned the lock, with his eyes close to it. Jimmy Silver & Co. and the Colonials watched him curiously. How Lattrey was going to deal with a locked door was a mystery to them.

Yet the new fellow looked as if he thought he could overcome the difficulty.

"Well, can you do it?" grinned Lovell.

"I think so."

"Blessed if I see how!"

"You wouldn't!"

Lattrey felt in his pockets carefully. After a minute or two he produced a piece of thick wire.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked Conroy.

"Pick the lock!"

"My only hat! Can you pick locks?" ejaculated the Australian junior, in astonishment.

"Yes; an easy one like this. Anybody with brains could do it."

"I couldn't."

"I said anybody with brains."

"Why, you cheeky ass—" began the Cornstalk wrathfully.

Lattrey, without heeding, knelt before the lock, and having twisted his wire into a peculiar form, he inserted it in the keyhole.

Conroy paused, and watched him.

"Two to one he can't do it!" growled Lovell. "Only swank!"

Several other fellows were looking out of their studies now. Mornington, the dandy of the Fourth, came along with Townsend and Topham. Erroll and Higgs were looking out of Study No. 2. Rawson and Oswald stopped in the passage to look on.

All eyes were fixed upon the new boy.

He seemed unconscious of it. With cool precision he proceeded with his somewhat peculiar task.

There was a sudden click.

"By gad!" said Mornington.

"He's pickin' the lock! Are you an amateur burglar, you new kid?"

"By Jove! It's open!" said Van Ryn, in wonder.

Lattrey had certainly picked the lock, though how he had done it the other juniors could not see.

The door opened under his hand. There was a gasp of consternation from Tubby Muffin as the door swung wide open.

"Oh, my hat! Oh, crumbs!"

Seven juniors rushed into the study, brushing Lattrey on one side. Tubby Muffin was surrounded by the avengers.

"Now, you fat villain—"

"Now, you Hun—"

"Now, you food-hog—"

"Bump him!"

"Yaroop! Lemme alone!" yelled Tubby Muffin.

"Hands off, you know. I—I was awfully hungry, you know, and I never really meant to finish the grub, but it—it went somehow—Yaroooh!"

"Bump!"

"Yowp!"

Tubby Muffin smote the floor—not very hard. But the yell he gave rang

along the Fourth-Form passage from end to end.

"Leggo! Yah! Oh! Rotters!"

Yawp!" roared Tubby.

"Scalp him!" roared Pons.

"Bump him!"

"Cinder him!"

Lattrey followed the juniors into the study. He stood with his hands in his pockets, looking on at the scene with a sneering smile.

"Is this one of your Rookwood customs? Half a dozen fellows bullying one?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver & Co. spun round towards him, letting Tubby Muffin collapse on the carpet.

"What's that?" rapped out Jimmy fiercely.

"You heard what I said."

"Are you calling us bullies, you cheeky cad?"

"Looks like it, to me," said Lattrey coolly.

"Why don't you give the fat fellow a chance?"

"You cheeky cad!" shouted Lovell.

"What you want is a jolly good bumping yourself."

"Hold on a minute," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"We've bumped Muffin, Lattrey, because he's raided our grub, and bolted it, as a warning to him. Not that you're entitled to an explanation, you cheeky cad! Now you'll take back what you said, and beg pardon."

"I sha'n't!" said Lattrey.

"Or you'll get bumped yourself."

"Oh, rats!"

"Don't jaw to the cheeky rotter," growled Lovell.

"Collar him!"

Jimmy Silver's eyes were sparkling with anger.

Tubby Muffin's punishment had been very mild, considering his offence, and it had been bestowed in perfect good-humour, rather as a warning than a punishment. Tubby was not hurt, though he made a terrific noise. To be denounced as bullies by this sneering fellow was a little too much.

The Fistical Four were not likely to take that patiently.

"You've got to learn to keep a civil tongue in your silly head, Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver.

"Collar him!"

The angry juniors closed round Lattrey.

"Is that another Rookwood custom?" sneered Lattrey.

"Seven against one?"

"Oh! You'd rather have a fight than a bumping!" said Jimmy.

"Very well—hands off, you fellows. Pick your man, Lattrey, and the others will see fair play."

"Make it me," said Van Ryn.

"No, me!" said Lovell.

"Me, me!" chorused Conroy and Pons and Raby.

Lattrey did not answer.

He looked the juniors over coolly, evidently selecting the one who seemed, to his eyes, the least formidable as a fighting-man. He pointed to Newcome at last.

"You'll do!" he said.

Newcome grinned.

"I'm your man," he said at once.

Newcome was undoubtedly the least dangerous of the seven in a tussle, but his comrades had no doubt about his ability to give the new junior a lesson.

"Come on," he said, pushing back his cuffs.

Half-a-dozen fellows were looking in at the doorway curiously.

The new junior in the Classical Fourth had leaped into prominence at once, on his first day at Rookwood.

"Go it!" said Mornington, always ready to back up anyone against the Fistical Four.

"I'll hold your jacket, kid."

"Thanks," said Lattrey, after a glance at the dandy of the Fourth.

He tossed his jacket to Mornington, pushed back his cuffs, and faced Newcome.

"Time!" grinned Lovell.

And the next moment the two juniors were fighting.

### The 3rd Chapter. Quite a Sport!

"Go it, Lattrey!" said Mornington, encouragingly from the doorway.

"Buck up, Newcome!" chipped in Erroll.

Both the combatants were "going it" fast.

Jimmy Silver looked on with interest. As a skilled exponent himself of the "noble art," he was interested in the new fellow's form.

Lattrey was not so strong as Newcome, and he did not seem to be in such good condition. Jimmy suspected, too, that he had less pluck. But certainly he was a master of the boxer's art.

Newcome had rather expected to knock him out in a short round, but Lattrey not only held his own but drove Newcome round the study.

The member of the great Co. was hardly keeping up the traditions of the Fistical Four.

"Bravo, new kid!" shouted Mornington, in great delight.

"Good man!" chorused Townsend and Topham and Peele from the passage. "Give him beans, dear boy!"

The prospect of the downfall of a member of the Fistical Four was distinctly gratifying to the "Giddy Goats" of Rookwood.

"Buck up, Newcome, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver anxiously.

Jimmy was wishing that the fight had been started in a more regular manner, with rounds and rests.

But Newcome, after going nearly round the study-table under Lattrey's attack, began to put his "beef" into the combat.

Heedless of the punishment he received, which was severe, he stood up to the rapid blows, and hit back with all his force.

The fight was hammer-and-tongs for several minutes now.

Then it was noticed that Lattrey had "bellow's to mend."

His breath was failing him under prolonged exertion, and the tell-tale stains of tobacco on his fingers, which Jimmy had noted, betrayed the reason why.

Newcome was as sound as a bell, and he had all the advantage now.

It was Lattrey now who was forced to give ground, and he was driven back, step by step, with Newcome's knuckles beating a tattoo upon his face and chest.

The chums of the Fourth were smiling now. The result of the combat was no longer in doubt.

Mornington scowled.

His brief hope of seeing one of his old rivals knocked out by the new fellow had evaporated.

Lattrey was in a parlous state now, gasping for breath, and defending himself feebly.

He would have been on his back in a few moments more, when he suddenly jumped back and dropped his hands.

"Chuck it!" he said. "I give you best."

Newcome dropped his hands, too.

"Well, if you've had enough—!" he said.

"Thanks—I have!"

Newcome laughed rather breathlessly. The coolness of the new fellow in stopping the fight just when it suited him, rather tickled the Fourth-former. Newcome would not have "given best" at any price.

"Call that a fight!" snorted Lovell in disgust. "I think the cheeky cad had better have the bumping after all."

"Oh, he's had enough," said Jimmy Silver. "Let's get out."

"Sure you've had enough, Lattrey?" asked Van Ryn. "There's a lot more going if you feel keen about it."

"I'll lick you another time," said Lattrey coolly.

The South African junior chuckled. He could have handled three of Lattrey without much difficulty.

"Any time you like," he said. "Where's that fat villain Muffin got to?"

Tubby Muffin had sagaciously disappeared during the fight.

The chums of the Fourth left the study.

Lattrey stood, still gasping, and dabbing his nose with his handkerchief. He had been rather hard hit, though he had "chucked" the fight before his punishment became really serious.

Mornington came into the study with a very genial smile.

Anybody who was "up against" Jimmy Silver and Co. were sure of a friendly greeting from Morny, who had never given up the hope of making a party for himself in the Fourth, and ousting Jimmy Silver from the leadership of the Form.

"Feel pretty bad?" he asked sympathetically.

"Oh, not very," said Lattrey. "I thought I could lick that fellow. I'm rather out of condition, as it happens."

"Too many smokes—what?" chuckled Townsend.

"Perhaps. Anything against that?"

"Not among us," said Mornington. "We rather go the pace in our set. But I should advise you not to let Bootles see those brown stains on your fingers. Bootles is down on smoking. That's a tip."

"I'll be careful of that."

"If you've not had your tea yet, come along to my study," said Mornington genially. "We're just going to have ours."

Lattrey regarded him curiously.

Jimmy Silver had observed that the new fellow was of a sardonic humour, with a peculiar inclination for making himself disagreeable. Probably Lattrey had seen, at a glance, that he would never "pull" with fellows like Jimmy Silver & Co., and the Colonial chums.

But his manner was agreeable enough to Mornington.

The well-dressed dandy of the Fourth, evidently wealthy, and evidently a fellow somewhat of his own sort, was worth being civil to.

"I'll be glad," he said. "I've had nothing since I started this afternoon. Mr. Bootles said the housekeeper would give me tea, but—"

"Bread and scrape, and not much of that," said Mornington. "We've got the food regulations here, you know, hot and strong."

"I should think that would interfere with feeds in your study."

"So it does—a lot. But we get round the grub rules a bit, now and then," said Mornington. "Besides, when a fellow's got money he can get a good deal that isn't regulated—there isn't a Controller yet for everything. We don't starve in my study, and we sha'n't either till the food tickets come along."

And Mornington led the new fellow away.

Mornington's study had been a land flowing with milk and honey till the "grub rules," as the juniors called them, came into force.

Even now, Mornington "did himself" very well indeed, having an unlimited supply of that useful article—cash.

Lattrey found quite a substantial tea in Study No. 4, with Morny, Peele, Gower, and Townsend there.

After tea, Mornington produced a box of cigarettes, and Lattrey grinned.

"Help yourself, dear boy," said Mornington.

"Thanks. I suppose this isn't allowed?"

"Ha, ha! No. But Bootles hardly ever noses into a fellow's study—it's all safe."

"Good!"

"What about a little game?" said Townsend.

"I'm your man," said Lattrey.

The new fellow seemed quite to have recovered from the effects of the fight with Newcome, with the exception of a crimson hue to his nose.

Evidently Lattrey of the Fourth was a fellow after the nuts' own hearts. He joined in the "little game" at Morny's table with evident enjoyment.

But the nuts of the Fourth did not wholly enjoy that game.

They found that their new friend had an almost uncanny skill with the cards, and he proceeded to win their money steadily, almost without a break.

Peele and Gower stepped out of the game, after a time, and contented themselves with looking on. Then Townsend dropped out, and then Topham, not looking at all amiable.

Mornington, who had plenty of money, and thought little about it, played on alone against the peculiar new boy.

But even Mornington looked grave when he found himself handing over a five-pound note to Lattrey.

"Call-over," said Townsend.

Mornington rose. It was time for evening call-over in Hall, and he was not sorry for it, as a matter of fact.

Lattrey gathered up his winnings. It was quite a substantial sum.

"Give you your revenge any time," he remarked carelessly.

And with a nod to the nuts of the Fourth, he strolled out of the study.

The Giddy Goats looked at one another rather uncertainly.

"The chap's a sport," said Mornington at last.

"Oh, quite a sport!" said Townsend. "But—"

"He has jolly good luck!" said Peele. "He's done me out of fifteen bob!"

"And me out of ten—my last ten!" grunted Gower.

Mornington laughed.

"Extraordinary good luck," continued Peele. "I shall keep an open eye on him if I play with him again, I know that. I noticed that he always won when he had the dealing."

"Oh, rot!" said Mornington. "He's all right. It's another chap against Jimmy Silver, anyhow, and another vote for us if it comes to an election for a new junior captain."

But Mornington was looking thoughtful as he went down to call-over. At the present rate, his new recruit was likely to prove an expensive blessing.

### The 4th Chapter. Ragging a Rascal.

"What do you think of that new fellow?"

Jimmy Silver asked that question, three or four days later, in the end study.

Jimmy's face was unusually serious. "Haven't thought much about him," yawned Lovell. "Rather a cad, I believe. Pass the war-bread."

"A bit of a rotter, I think," said Raby. "What does he matter?"

"I've been thinking of him a bit," said Jimmy Silver.

Anything going in the end study?" demanded Van Ryn.

"Nothing at all. That's why we've honoured you."

"Oh, crumbs!"

The Fistical Four looked serious now. It had struck them at first as funny. But it did not seem so funny now. They had healthy, youthful appetites, and they wanted their tea.

And tea was off—very much off!

"That fat bouncer's bolted the lot!" gasped Van Ryn at last. "All we had for seven fellows! Oh, my hat! I'll scalp him—I'll slaughter him—I'll—"

The South African junior did not finish—he picked up a cricket stump, and rushed out of the study in search of Tubby Muffin.

Conroy and Pons followed him.

Jimmy Silver & Co. regarded one another.

"Looks like a frost!" remarked Jimmy Silver. "I hope they'll slaughter that fat Hun! Let's go and help them! It's time we made an example of Tubby Muffin."

"Hear, hear!"

And the Fistical Four followed the Colonials.

Up and down through Rookwood they sought for Tubby Muffin, but they found him not.

The fat Classical was under-studying Brer Rabbit, and lying low.

"The empty study, of course!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver at last, and the excited juniors rushed up to the Fourth Form passage again.

The door of the first study was locked.

Van Ryn hammered on it with the stump.

"Tubby Muffin, you fat rotter! Muffin, you gormandising Hun! You—you Prussian! Come out and be slaughtered."

"I—I say, clear off!" came a voice through the keyhole. "I don't want to have anything to do with you fellows. You're mean."

"What!"

"I'm not coming back to your study at all. I can't stand stingy chaps."

"I—I—I'll spiccate him!" spluttered Van Ryn. "I'll—I'll strew Rookwood with his fat! I—I—I'll—"</

"Too much honour for him," grinned Raby. "What do new kids matter to us?"

"He isn't exactly like the average new kid," said Jimmy Silver. "He's been to school before, it seems, though I notice he doesn't say anything about his old school. He's chummed up with Mornington & Co."

"No accounting for tastes."

"He's made friends with Carthew of the Sixth, that rotten bully, too," pursued Jimmy Silver. "I suspect that he smuggles in smokes for Carthew."

"No bizney of ours," said Lovell, staring a little.

It was not like Jimmy Silver in the least to interest himself in matters that did not concern him.

"He's on good terms with Leggett, too, the meanest bouncer on the Modern side," added Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, I've noticed them chow-chowing together," said Newcome. "He lets us alone, though."

"In short, he seems to have a kind of instinct for the worst kind of fellow, and scent him out, and make friends with him," said Jimmy. "He hasn't been four days in the school, but he's pally with every chap who's mean or rotten or caddish or blackguardly."

"Matter of taste."

"Even Tubby Muffin don't stand him very well. He's asked the Colonial chaps to take him back. They won't."

"Ha, ha! I should think not."

"Look here, Jimmy, what are you worrying about Lattrey for?" demanded Raby. "We don't care tuppence about the fellow."

"Not a stiver," agreed Jimmy Silver. "But I'm captain of the Fourth, and this study is top of the Lower School."

"Hear, hear!"

"And I've got my suspicions of that chap. My idea is that he's an out-and-out blackguard, kid as he is, and quite puts Morny in the shade at his own game, and even Peele and Gower."

"Must be a corker, then," commented Lovell.

"I've been considering whether to speak to him, and warn him to draw in his horns," explained Jimmy Silver. "We don't interfere with Mornington. Morny's got his good points in his own way; and he seems a lot more decent, too, since he's made friends with Erroll. But Morny keeps this side of the limit, and Lattrey doesn't."

"Might give him a bumping for his own good," grinned Raby.

"Anyway, a jawing," said Jimmy Silver. "I've been thinking it over, and I think we'd better speak to him. There are some things that are not good enough for Rookwood, and Lattrey may as well know it."

After tea the Fistical Four went along the passage to Lattrey's study.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were not taking the matter so seriously as Jimmy, but they were always prepared to back up their leader.

Jimmy Silver had given the matter some serious thought. He had observed the new fellow, and the more he observed him the less he liked or trusted him.

There were reckless fellows in the Fourth—such as Morny and Townsend—and fellows whose recklessness verged on blackguardism, like Peele and Gower. But Jimmy was aware that, in comparison with Lattrey, those cheery youths were simply "not in it."

In Jimmy's opinion, Lattrey was one of these fellows who delight in rascality for its own sake—who choose the crooked path because they prefer it to the straight one. And such a fellow had to learn that his manners and customs were not considered "the thing" in the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

There was a cool, hard impudence about Lattrey's rascality that was quite a new thing in Jimmy's experience, though he was accustomed to the ways of Morny & Co.

Tubby Muffin's voice was heard, as Jimmy tapped at the door of the first study.

"Groogh! I—I don't like it, Lattrey."

"Smoke it, you fat fool!"

"Groogh! I shall be s-s-sick!"

"You'll be lammed if you don't!"

"Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver's brow darkened as he threw open the door.

Lattrey was in the room, with his fat study mate, Tubby Muffin. Peele and Gower, with whom Lattrey chummed, were there, too.

Tubby Muffin had a cigarette between his fat lips; and was making efforts to smoke it, the three others looking on in great merriment.

Tubby was not looking merry. He was looking nearly sick.

"Hallo!" said Lattrey, glancing round coolly. "I don't remember asking you into my study, Silver."

Jimmy did not heed.

"Throw that cigarette away, Tubby!" he snapped.

Tubby Muffin threw it away gladly enough. It was making his fat interior feel quite queer.

"Groogh!" he mumbled.

Jimmy turned a pair of gleaming eyes on Lattrey.

"So you're teaching Tubby to smoke!" he said.

"Is it any business of yours?"

"Yes. You were going to lam him if he didn't smoke."

"Groogh!"

"Suppose you mind your own business," suggested Lattrey. "I can do as I like in my own study, I should imagine."

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Peele. "You get out, Silver!"

"There's the door!" said Gower. "I came here to speak to you, Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I've been keeping on eye on you for a day or two."

"You must have been in want of something to do," sneered Lattrey.

"I've come to the conclusion that you are an utter, out-and-out cad and

with which the cad of the Fourth had been threatening Tubby.

"You're going to have a dozen!" he said grimly. "I can't stop you playing the blackguard, but I can stop your teaching others. Tubby, if that cad ever gives you a cigarette again, you're to tell me."

"Ye-ees!" gasped Tubby.

"Help me, you rotters!" roared Lattrey, struggling in the powerful grasp of the Co.

But Peele and Gower did not offer to help. They were not fighting-men, and they did not like the Fistical Four at close quarters.

They exchanged a somewhat sickly glance, and left the study.

Lattrey was left alone to his punishment.

Jimmy Silver whirled the cricket-stump in the air.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

It descended with force upon Lattrey, who was very favourably placed for a flogging.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yah! Oh! Help! Leave off!" shrieked Lattrey. "Oh, my hat! You rotter! Yah!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"He, he, he!" giggled Tubby Muffin. That's what he was going to give me. Give him jip, Jimmy Silver! He, he, he!"

**The 5th Chapter. Burgled!**

"Dash it all! It's too bad!"

Van Ryn knitted his brows with anger.

It was a couple of days after the affair in Lattrey's study and a half-holiday. The Colonial Co. had come in to tea after a long bike ride to Latham, and they were hungry.

But, as on a previous occasion, they discovered that the lock of the cupboard had been "cracked," and the cupboard was bare.

Conroy, with a great deal of trouble, had mended the lock after Tubby Muffin's previous exploit. It was exasperating to find it broken again, and the supplies gone.

It was all the more exasperating, because supplies were strictly limited, and it was impossible to replace them. Being in funds made no difference. The Food Regulations reigned supreme.

The Colonial Co. were faced with the pleasant prospect of missing tea, and waiting for supper in Hall before they could satisfy the imperious cravings of the inner man.

"That fat villain Muffin again!" exclaimed Pons. "Look here, we shall have to make an example of him. No tea now!"

"And I'm famished!" said Conroy. "Not a crumb left!"

"That's so. But we know he did."

"I didn't!" yelled Tubby. "I suppose you can take my word, you rotters? I—I was with Jones minor all the afternoon till I came in to tea. We've been in the quad and out on the towing-path."

The Colonial Co. paused.

They had jumped to the conclusion that Tubby Muffin was the raider. But it was possible, after all, that they had been a little too hasty.

"Erroll," called out Van Ryn as Kit Erroll of the Fourth passed the open doorway, "is Jones in your study?"

"Yes," said Erroll, looking in.

"Ask him to come here, there's a good chap!"

"Right-ho!"

Erroll came back with Jones minor in a couple of minutes. Jones had been having his tea, and he presented himself with a sardine on a fork.

"What's wanted?" he asked.

"Somebody's burgled our study cupboard?" said Van Ryn. "Muffin says you've been with him all the afternoon. Is that so?"

Jones minor nodded.

"That's so. He never burgled it before half an hour ago, anyway."

"He's been here the last half-hour," said Lattrey.

Tubby Muffin grinned.

"I told you so!" he exclaimed victoriously. "I haven't touched your grub. I didn't know it was there. I—I mean I wouldn't, of course!"

Van Ryn looked puzzled.

"Well, we do seem to have got the wrong pig by the ear this time!" he remarked. "But if Tubby hasn't done it, who has?"

Lattrey gave a laugh.

"Look in all the study cupboards till you find it," he said. "It must have been some Fourth Form chap."

"Nobody but Tubby would do it!" said Conroy.

"You say the grub's gone?" said Lattrey, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, yes."

"Then somebody's got it. You've accused my study-mate. It's up to you to find the right party," said Lattrey. "You've no right to pick on Tubby. Fair play's a jewel. Find the right party, and show him up."

"We shall jolly well do that!" growled Van Ryn. "A fellow who would sneak another fellow's grub wants showing up and ragging. And as you're giving us advice, I'll start by looking in your cupboard. You're about the next after Tubby who's most likely to take what doesn't belong to him, I fancy."

"You're welcome to look!" sneered Lattrey.

He threw open the study cupboard, but there was certainly no sign of the stolen goods there.

"Make a round of the Fourth!" he said. "You'll find the stuff sooner or later."

"Rats! I'm not going to do anything of the sort," said Van Ryn. "I don't suspect anybody outside this study of stealing my tommy."

"You won't?" sneered Lattrey.

"Then I will!"

"You!"

"Yes, I!" said Lattrey coolly. "You've accused my study-mate. I'm going to have the truth out!"

"Quite right!" said Tubby Muffin indignantly. "You've accused me, Van Ryn. I insist!"

"You fat idiot—"

Lattrey crossed to the door.

"I'm going to Mr. Bootles," he said coolly. "We'll have this looked into properly. This study isn't going to remain under suspicion."

Conroy ran after him as he went into the passage and caught him by the shoulder.

"You won't go to Mr. Bootles!" he said. "You'll stay where you are!"

Lattrey gave him a bitter look.

"The matter's going to be cleared up," he said. "You've made an accusation against my study-mate."

"Lot you care about your study-mate!" growled Pons.

"Never mind that. I'm going to see fair-play."

The Colonial Co. looked at one another. Lattrey was right, as far as that went, but the idea of searching through all the studies after the stolen provisions was not agreeable to them. They could not think of anybody in the Fourth who was liable to suspicion, excepting Tubby Muffin, or perhaps Lattrey himself.

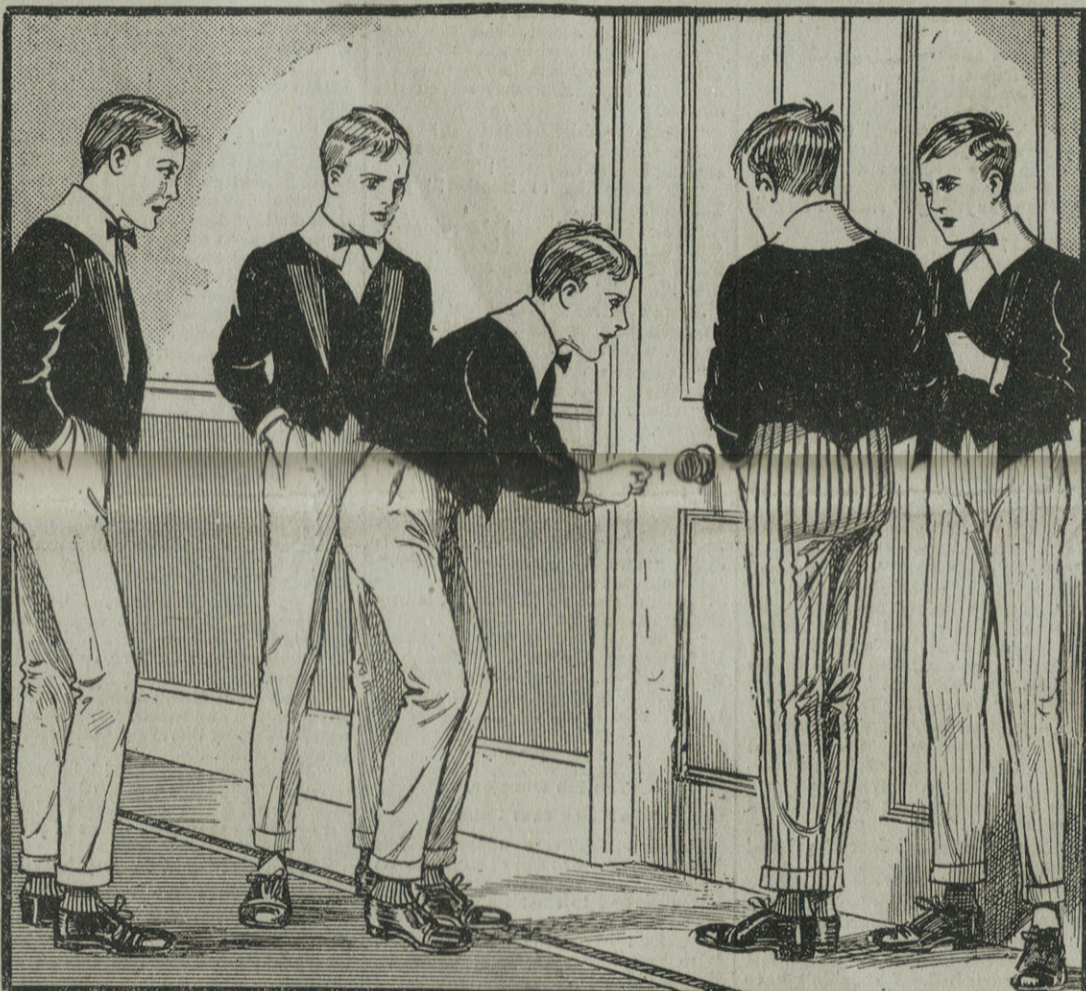
Jimmy Silver & Co., coming in from the cricket for tea, found a somewhat excited crowd in the passage. Fellows were gathering from the other studies.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Tell your Uncle James all about it!"

Van Ryn explained.

"And it wasn't Muffin?" exclaimed Jimmy in astonishment.

"Seems not, though I can't help thinking—"



"What are you going to do with that?" asked Conroy, as the new fellow produced a piece of thick wire. "Pick the lock!" answered Lattrey. "My hat!" gasped the Australian junior.

blackguard," continued Jimmy Silver deliberately.

"Thanks!"

"If the Head had known what your character's like, you'd never have been let into Rookwood."

"Lucky he didn't know, then, isn't it?" grinned Lattrey.

"And we're not standing it," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "You've chummed up with the worst fellows in the Form, and you're making them worse than they were before. There's smoking and card-playing in your study every day."

"Have they appointed you censor of morals?"

"I've appointed myself," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "I'm going to put a stop to it."

Lattrey shrugged his shoulders.

"You were going to lam Tubby if he didn't smoke. Well, I'm going to lam you for making him smoke," said Jimmy. "Put him over the table, you fellows."

"You bet!" chuckled Lovell.

Lattrey jumped to his feet.

"You cheeky cad!" he shouted. "You dare—"

He had no time to get further.

The Co. collared him, and, in spite of his struggles, pitched him across the table, and held him there, face downwards.

Jimmy picked up the cricket-stump

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yaroo! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Jimmy Silver tossed the stump into a corner.

"That's enough!" he said. "Let the cad go!"

The Co. released Lattrey, who rolled off the table, his face white with rage, and his hands clenched convulsively.

"I'll make you suffer for this!" he gasped out between his teeth.

"Oh, shut up!" said Jimmy Silver contemptuously. "That's for a beginning. Let me catch you at your tricks again, and you'll get some more—worse!"

And with that the Fistical Four left the study, feeling that they had done their duty in a very satisfactory way.

The new junior remained with white face and burning eyes. Tubby Muffin scuttled out of the study after the Fistical Four. He did not want to remain alone with his study-mate just then. But Lattrey did not heed him.

He wriggled with pain and ground his teeth, his eyes burning with rage and hatred. From that moment Jimmy Silver had a bitter enemy in the new junior. He knew it, but he despised Lattrey too much to care for his enmity. But that enmity was to make itself felt, all the same.

"We'll pulverise him!" exclaimed Van Ryn.

The three juniors rushed down the passage to the first study. They found Tubby Muffin and Lattrey at tea there.

"Where's our grub, you fat villain?" shouted Conroy.

Tubby Muffin blinked at him in alarm.

"Your g-g-grub!" he stammered. "How should I know?"

"You've scoffed it, you rotter!"

"I—I haven't!"

"Don't tell whoppers!" growled Pons. "Look here, hand it over. If you've bolted it, you're going to get the lamming of your life! We're fed up with you!"

"I—I haven't touched it!" yelled Tubby Muffin in alarm. "I haven't been in your study, you asses. I've been in the quad. I—I—I can prove it!"

"Rot! Nobody would raid our grub except you!" said Van Ryn decidedly.

"Hold on!" said Lattrey coolly. "Give Muffin a chance. I don't want any bullying in my study."

"You'll get a licking in your study if you don't keep a civil tongue!" snapped Van Ryn. "Don't shove your oar in where it's not wanted!"

"Muffin says he hasn't touched your grub!" said Lattrey coolly. "He's entitled to a hearing."

"You won't go to Mr. Bootles!" he said. "You'll stay where you are!"

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THE TRICK THAT FAILED!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Look here, you Dutch duffer!" began Tubby Muffin indignantly. "The chap ought to be found," said Jimmy Silver decidedly. "Food's short enough in war-time, without a rotter bagging another fellow's grub."

The 6th Chapter. A Surprise for Jimmy Silver.

Van Ryn led the search, but most of the Classical Fourth shared in it. It began with Lattrey's study, the first in the passage. Then came Erroll's, and it was found bare. No. 3 was the study of the Colonial Co. themselves, and it was passed over.

The Colonial Co. looked very distressed. They could scarcely believe the evidence of their eyes, but the evidence of their eyes simply had to be believed. "I-I suppose it was a joke," stammered Van Ryn, utterly at a loss.

"Somebody must have a key to my cupboard," he said steadily. "I give you fellows my word of honour that I never saw that stuff before!" "Likely!" sneered Mornington. "Anybody here got a key to Silver's cupboard? It's such a usual thing for a fellow to have a duplicate key to another fellow's study cupboard!"

"Well, the thief's found out!" said Lattrey unpleasantly. "I vote for sending him to Coventry!" "Or take him to Bootles!" said Topham. "Yes, begad!" said Mornington. "We don't want a thief in the Fourth Form of Rookwood, especially a grub thief!"

Jimmy Silver's look grew almost haggard for a moment. What was he to say, what to do? "I've given you my word!" he said, his voice shaking a little. "What's that worth?" sneered Lattrey. "Oh, Jimmy!" murmured Lovell helplessly.

The 7th Chapter. The Trick that Failed.

Erroll spoke very quietly. His handsome face was full of scorn, as his glance rested on Lattrey, and the latter seemed to shrink a little under his steady gaze. "Trick!" repeated Jimmy Silver. "Do you know anything about it, Erroll, old chap?" "I know you did not steal that food," said Erroll. "I know you too well to think so for a moment, for one thing."

Silver's. You wouldn't want that utter cad to be successful in a dirty trick like this." "Eh? Who?" ejaculated Mornington. "Lattrey!" "What's Lattrey got to do with it?" demanded Townsend. The new junior changed colour a little.

"I-I don't quite see what you're driving at, Erroll," said Van Ryn. "Lattrey's rotter enough to play such a trick, and we know he's up against Jimmy Silver. But the cupboard-door was locked, old scout, and Silver had the key."

"I-I'm sorry if I doubted you for a minute, Jimmy," said Van Ryn. "I knew you couldn't do anything of the sort, really; but—but it looked—" "All serene," said Jimmy. "Thank goodness you put your spoke in, Erroll! Now, Lattrey, you dirty Prussian, you're going to answer for it."

"My hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver. He almost reeled with the relief. There was no trace of doubt in his mind. Well he remembered how he had watched Lattrey play that peculiar trick of picking a lock with a bent wire. The feat had been remarked on by a dozen fellows, and discussed with a dozen fellows, and discussed with a dozen fellows, and discussed with a good deal of curiosity, till it was forgotten in a day or two.

"Thank you, old chap!" he muttered. "That's the truth, of course! Just the trick the cad would play! I'd forgotten that trick of his of picking a lock." "It's a lie!" said Lattrey huskily. "I-I—" His voice died away. There was unbelief and grim condemnation in every face round him. The juniors had been astounded by the apparent proof of guilt against a fellow whom they knew to be the soul of honour. The discovery that it was in Lattrey's power to play such a trick was more than enough for them.

I might have known that cur was at the bottom of it!" "I-I—" Lattrey looked round wildly for support. Mornington gave a scornful shrug of the shoulders, and turned his back on him. Townsend and Topham and Peele sneered and walked away.

There was no support for Lattrey. "I-I'm sorry if I doubted you for a minute, Jimmy," said Van Ryn. "I knew you couldn't do anything of the sort, really; but—but it looked—" "All serene," said Jimmy. "Thank goodness you put your spoke in, Erroll! Now, Lattrey, you dirty Prussian, you're going to answer for it."

There was a very cheery tea-party, after all, in the end study, and Kit Erroll was the guest of honour. For it was only too probable that, but for Erroll's keenness, Jimmy Silver would have been the victim of the cad of Rookwood.

Returned to his native village, which had not moved with the years, it was perhaps natural that he should boast a little. The village pump was still broken, the inn sign had not been repainted, and even the one shop-window, from its appearance, had not been changed.

It had been a busy day, and the hotel-keeper was just about fed up. The weary commercial had also had a hard day, and he was more than fed up. He was fed up with the fish that, to say the least, was fishy; he was fed up with the "roast" chicken that had been boiled, and the vegetables that were cold and sloppy. The landlord was fed up with complaints.

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