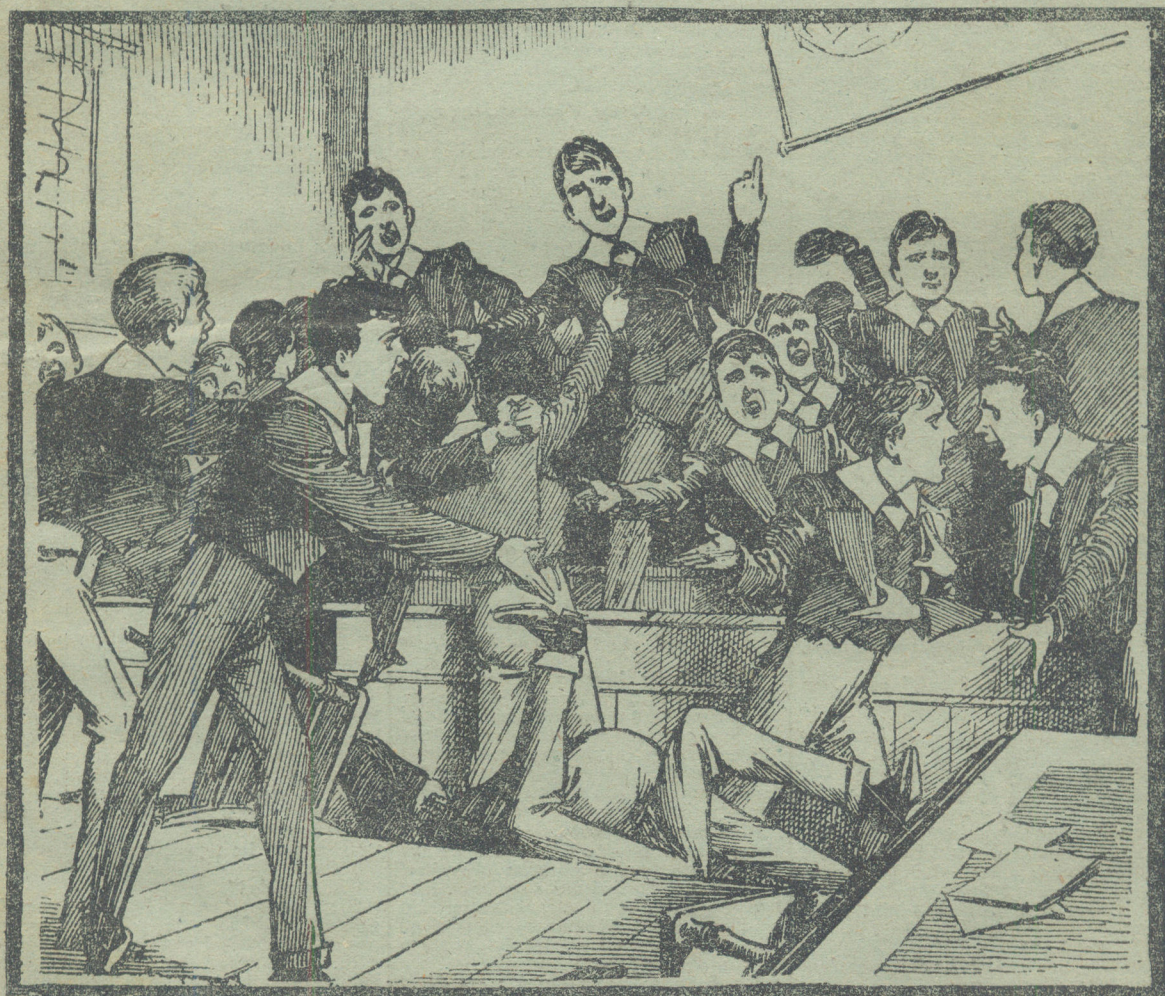


THE ALL-SCHOOL-STORY PAPER!

The Penny Popular

No.
242.

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & Co.—JIMMY SILVER & Co.—TOM MERRY & Co.



RUCTIONS IN THE REMOVE!

(An Amusing Incident from the Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co.,
contained in this Issue.)

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

THE ROOKWOOD WHEELERS!

By
Owen
Conquest

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Cycle Run.

IT was Wednesday, a half-holiday at Rookwood, and one of the finest and sunniest of May afternoons. The Fistical Four had come out after dinner, and were bending their steps in the direction of the bicycle-shed.

The four juniors looked very fit and trim in Norfolk jackets and knickers. They entered the cycle-shed, and found that it was not unoccupied.

Three Modern youths were engaged in getting their bicycles out. They were Tommy Dodd, Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle.

"Hallo, here they are again!" said Jimmy Silver. "Going for a run, Dodd?"

"Yes," said Tommy Dodd, looking round. "I'd like to take you chaps along, but we're going over Starke Hill, and, of course, you couldn't manage that!"

"I guess we could give you points and beat you there, Doddy," said Jimmy.

"We're going over the hill ourselves."

"You'll have to walk your machines up, I imagine."

"No fear!"

"Come on, kids! We shall be able to look back from the top of the hill and see these kids crawling up and pushing their machines," said Tommy Dodd.

"Rather!"

And the Moderns wheeled their bicycles out of the shed.

Jimmy Silver gave a wrathful snort.

"The cheek some youngsters have is amazing!" he said. "We'll make things hum on the road, I reckon, and pass those cheeky rotters! Get the jiggers out!"

"Oh, I remember now, I had a puncture!" said Raby.

"Well, you are an ass, Raby! Now we want to start in a hurry, you remember you've got a puncture!" said Jimmy, in disgust.

"Well, I—"

"Yank the jigger out, and let's look at it, for goodness' sake!"

Raby's machine was soon turned over, and Jimmy Silver, who was a great hand at mending anything, soon had the puncture located and repaired. But the Fistical Four were ten minutes behind the Moderns when they wheeled their bicycles across the quad. Jimmy Silver looked down the road for the Moderns, but they were not in sight.

"They're slogging up the hill by this time," said Lovell. "I'll wager a lot that we shall see them wheeling their machines!"

"I reckon so!"

"Yes, and if they look back, they'll see us wheeling ours," grinned Raby.

"Oh, we're going to ride up!" said Newcome. "Don't funk it, Raby!"

"Oh, I'll stick it out as long as you do! I've got a change gear on my machine, anyway, and I'll last you out!"

The chums rode at a good pace along the lane. That was easy enough going,

THE PENNY POPULAR—No. 242.

but when they turned into the road over Starke Hill, it was another matter.

The road—or, rather, lane—was steep and dusty. It ran under the shadowy branches of trees, bordered on either side by a thick wood, and the shade was very pleasant in the hot May sun. But the way was steep, and running steeper.

Raby soon changed to his lowest gear, and his feet went flying round. Jimmy Silver, Lovell, and Newcome slogged on, at a crawling pace, jamming down their pedals fiercely to keep the machines going at all.

Raby had a far easier time of it on his low gear, but he was getting fagged, too.

Suddenly, at a bend in the lane, a long, straight stretch came into view before the young cyclists, and they had a view of the road for a quarter of a mile in advance.

Raby gave a yell.

"Look there!"

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, and Newcome looked and grunted.

Ahead on the long, white, dusty lane three figures could be seen, walking, and laboriously pushing their machines up the steep road.

"There they are!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "Wheeling their bikes, by jingo!"

"The rotters!" gasped Lovell. "Been wheeling them for the last half-hour, too, I expect, while we've been slogging on the machines!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Raby.

"They're getting on about as fast as we are, too!"

"I guess it would be rather ripping to pass them on the machines," said Jimmy Silver. "It would make them look small."

"Can't do it!" gasped Lovell. "I'm off!"

And he plunged off his machine into the grass by the roadside, and sank down there in a sitting posture, his legs shaking from over-exertion.

"I'm off, too!" exclaimed Raby, dismounting, and leaning on his machine in an exhausted state.

Jimmy Silver sniffed.

"I'm going on for the credit of the Fistical Four!"

"You can't do it!"

"Well, I'm going to try."

And Jimmy Silver rode on determinedly, his teeth set and his nostrils dilated. But even the grim determination of Jimmy Silver could not effect an impossibility.

A dozen yards further on there was a sharp rise in the ground, and the machine simply refused to take it.

Jimmy Silver made a gallant effort, but his fagged legs could not send the pedals round, and the machine reeled over, and the leader of the Fistical Four went down in a heap into the grass under the trees.

Lovell jumped up and ran to him,

"Hurt, old chap?"

"No!" gasped Jimmy Silver, sitting up in the grass. "No; only a shake. I reckon I bit off a little more than I could chew that time, old man."

Lovell laughed.

"I reckon you did, sonny."

Jimmy rose, and rubbed his legs. He stood his machine up and took a grip on the centre of the handlebar.

"Come on!" he said. "After all, we needn't mind walking the jiggers, if those rotters are doing the same. They won't have the grin of us!"

"Right-ho!" said Lovell cheerily. "Get moving!"

And the Fistical Four wheeled the machines up the steep slope. From the brow of the hill the Moderns looked back. They waved their hands, showing that they saw the Fistical Four wheeling their bicycles, and the echo of a distant laugh floated down the hill. Then the Modern chums disappeared.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Reckless Riders.

"HERE we are at last!" gasped Lovell, as the last slope was left behind, and the chums stood with their machines on the summit of the white road over the hill.

"Now for a glorious free-wheel!"

"Let's get our breath back first," said Raby. "Can you see 'em, Jimmy?"

Jimmy Silver shaded his eyes with his hand and looked down the steep slope of the lane. The Moderns were not in sight. There was a bend of the lane a hundred yards ahead, and the view was shut off.

"They're not in sight. I reckon they've got over a lot of ground on the free-wheel. Most fellows shove their brakes on on this slope."

"Oh, well, if we don't, we may overtake the bounders!"

"Yes," said Newcome, "with our necks broken!"

"But I wouldn't think of trifles when it's a question of getting over the Moderns," said Raby reproachfully.

"Ha, ha! You see, I've got only one neck, and it's got to last me seventy years or so," said Lovell. "I'm going to take care of it."

"I say, what's that fearful row?" said Jimmy Silver, bending his head to listen.

"It's bicycle-bells, and somebody shouting. It's down the road. Can those bounders have got into any trouble?"

"If they have, we're the chaps to help them out of it!" exclaimed Raby.

"Come on!"

And he jumped upon his machine. Jimmy Silver, Lovell, and Newcome were not long in following suit. They might be the deadly rivals of the Modern chums within the walls of Rookwood; but if they were in trouble, the Fistical Four were ready to stand by them shoulder to shoulder, like true schoolfellows.

"Brakes on!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"We're in a hurry!"

"Brakes on, fathead, till you get round the corner!"

"Oh, very well! Anything for a quiet life!"

With their brakes on, the four juniors went down the slope, free-wheeling at a

good pace. Without the brakes they would have flown. They passed the bend, and Jimmy Silver uttered a warning shout, and jammed his brake on harder.

"Look out!"

A curious scene was presented to the view of the startled cyclists. The Moderns were in sight again, and so were other objects. The road was thick with a drove of sheep and cattle, evidently being driven down the lane to turn into the road to Coombe, the market town.

Tommy Dodd, Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle, had come down the slope free-wheeling without their brakes on, and, passing the bend, they had run right into the drove.

It was a reckless thing to do; but the Moderns, like many other reckless cyclists, had calculated upon the country road being clear. The drove of cattle came as a surprise to them, and undoubtedly they came as a surprise to the cattle.

Before they knew what was happening, Dodd, Cook, and Doyle were in the midst of the startled animals. The shepherd in charge of them waved his hands frantically and shouted, but that did no good at all. The Modern juniors would gladly have got out of the drove, but it was impossible.

From the higher slope the Fistical Four looked on with interest.

"Shows what comes of being reckless," said Lovell sagely. "I wonder how Dodd will get out of that?"

"Blessed if I see how we're to help them! No good getting into that crush."

"Not much!"

"It's rough on Dodd."

"He doesn't look as if he were enjoying himself, either."

The Moderns were certainly not enjoying themselves. They were jammed up among the moving cattle, and it was impossible to dismount, and almost equally impossible to keep the machines going.

Tommy Dodd had taken a wild grip upon the rough neck of a bullock, and was being towed along, and Cook and Doyle were sprawling half on their machines and half on the backs of the sheep jammed up close to them in the narrow road.

"My hat!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "This is rough!"

"Absolutely!" gurgled the others.

"Can't you get out of the road?"

"No, I can't!"

"I shall go under this beast if I let go of him; and he's—he's—Ow! Help!"

The bullock appeared to have grown tired of towing Tommy Dodd along. He was shaking his head angrily and rearing, and the leader of the Modern chums was compelled to let go. His machine reeled over away from the bullock, and Tommy Dodd plumped down upon the backs of the sheep.

There was a wild baa-baaing and scrambling of the frightened sheep, and Tommy Dodd and his machine disappeared from view in the midst of the woolly backs.

Jimmy Silver uttered an exclamation. "I reckon we shall have to chip in somehow, kids!"

"That's just what I was thinking!" exclaimed Raby, jumping on his machine again. "Come on!"

"Come back——"

But the excited lad was gone, free-wheeling down the hill at express speed, forgetful of his brakes.

"Come back, you ass!" roared Newcome.

"Stop, Raby—stop!"

But Raby was already crashing into the drove. His machine rolled over, and

Raby rolled over, too, and disappeared among the sheep.

"Come on!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. He slid his machine against a tree, and dashed down the lane, and Lovell and Newcome did the same and followed him. They overtook the slow-moving drove, and plunged among the sheep.

Raby was seized and dragged out, looking very dusty and dishevelled. His machine had been tramped over by the rearward sheep.

"What's happened? I——"

"You've acted the giddy goat!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "Come on, and let's see if we can fish these other idiots out!"

Cook and Doyle had, by this time, succeeded in dragging themselves and their machines to the side of the lane into the shelter of the trees.

Tommy Dodd's machine was lying in

"Lot of good you did!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"We've saved your life——"

"Rats!"

"Ha, ha! Well, it was worth the trouble to see those silly cackoos stuck among the sheep!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Another Catastrophe for the Moderns.

THE damage to the machines was fortunately slight. A great deal of time had been lost, otherwise neither cyclists nor cycles were much the worse for their adventure.

By the time Jimmy Silver calculated the drove of cattle would have turned off into the road leading to Coombe, the machines were ready, and in the golden



There was a sudden buzz of bicycle bells in the dusk. Ting, ting, ting! Jimmy Silver, with a terrible effort, tore the clutching hands from his throat. "Help! Help!" he yelled.

the road, passed over by the cattle, and Tommy Dodd, who seemed to have quite lost his presence of mind, was clinging round the neck of an old sheep, who was making frantic, but vain, efforts to shake him off.

Jimmy Silver grasped him by the shoulder and shook him.

The sheep tore its head loose, and ambled away after the moving flock, and the shepherd, swearing in a broad country dialect, shook his fists at the Rookwood juniors and strode on wrathfully.

Tommy Dodd sat up and gasped.

"My hat! I——"

The Fistical Four chuckled.

"You see what comes of being reckless, you young asses!" said Lovell. "Lucky we were here to look after you!"

glow of the May afternoon the young wheelers prepared to mount.

The Moderns threw themselves upon their machines, and went down the steep lane at a rush, evidently not taught caution by their late experience.

Raby jumped on his bicycle to follow at top speed, but Jimmy Silver caught him by the shoulder, and the starting cycle described a half-circle as he swung the junior round.

"What are you doing?" roared Raby. "You're not going to ride without the brake on?"

"Well, the others are doing it!"

"Let 'em! They'll be breaking their necks, but when they're doing it, we don't want to pile on top of them!"

"But I——"

"Rats! Cheese it! Lovell, mount

on the other side of him, and we'll ride holding. I tell you, I won't have him breaking his neck."

"But, Jimmy—"

"Shut up!"

"But—"

"Rats!"

The reckless junior's protests were in vain. Jimmy Silver and Lovell mounted one on either side of him, and, holding with a single hand, held on to Raby's shoulders with the other.

Newcome rode behind.

They kept their hub brakes gently on so as to moderate the speed of the descent; and it was impossible for Raby to run away from them, even if he rode without the brake.

Raby grumbled, but Jimmy Silver was firm. Had he been alone he might have taken the slope without the brake, for he was keen-eyed, cool, and plucky enough; but, like many a cyclist, he felt more anxious about other fellows' necks than about his own, and he felt it his duty to set the example of caution. Besides, if the Moderns came to grief in the road ahead, it would never do to swoop down upon them at top speed. Such a contingency might easily prove fatal.

The speed of the four was very fast, all the same. They went down the hill road with a rush, with the wind singing in their ears, and the trees flitting by as if by the windows of an express train. The speed was enough to satisfy anybody except Raby.

Ahead of them the sloping road ran straight for a mile or more. Far ahead they could see Tommy Dodd, Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle, whizzing along at an alarming rate, and getting smaller in the distance every moment.

"They'll have the laugh of us at the bottom of the hill!" grumbled Raby.

"If they get there," said Jimmy Silver. "Suppose a cart should pull out of one of the side tracks now, just ahead of them."

"Well, they'd have to turn the machines into the bank."

"And buckle them up into scrap-iron."

"True! But there's no cart in sight, and—"

"Oh, rats! We're going like an express now."

"Hallo! Look there!" shouted Lovell.

"I said so!"

Catastrophe had overtaken the racing cyclists ahead; or, to speak more correctly, it had met them. Exactly what happened the following Fistical Four could not see, but Jimmy Silver guessed that some animal had skipped across the lane in front of the whirling wheels, possibly a rabbit or a stoat, and, though it escaped the wheels itself, it was enough to throw the whizzing cyclists off their balance.

Tommy Cook gave a start, and his machine turned a little towards Tommy Dodd's in the flurry of the moment, and Dodd only avoided a collision by turning his machine into the bank. There was a deep ditch in this spot, overgrown with thick fern, and half full of water.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for Tommy Dodd, but it was not pleasant. His machine went headlong into the ditch, and curled up in the mud and fern, and Tommy Dodd was flung with a sounding splash into the water, and disappeared entirely for the moment. His face came up again smothered with mud and slime.

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, naturally startled and confused by the mishap, forgot themselves for a moment, staring after their leader; and that moment was enough. Their machines

dashed into each other and then into the ditch, and they splashed off into the water.

Splash!

"Gerr-o-oo!"

Three muddy and drenched faces looked out of the ditch. Four cyclists, riding abreast, came dashing gaily by. The Fistical Four could see that the Moderns were not hurt, and their alarm had vanished, and they were laughing heartily as they rode past.

Jimmy Silver let go for a moment of his machine to wave his cap, keeping his other hand on Raby's shoulder.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" sang out Newcome.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fistical Four were past.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

[The Fistical Four in Danger.]

"HA, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four laughed loud and long at the remembrance of the ridiculous spectacle of the Modern juniors' muddy faces looking at them from the ditch as they rode by. They laughed again and again at the recollection of it as they dashed on down the slope of the hill.

The bottom of the hill was reached at last, and the pace slackened; but for a great distance along the level road they were able to free-wheel on the impetus gained in the long run downhill.

"I think we'll stop and have some tea soon," Jimmy Silver remarked. "I feel a little peckish. So long as we get into Rookwood by calling-over we shall be all right."

"Good!" said Lovell. "We've got our lamps with us, so it doesn't matter if we're out after dusk."

"Here's a place," said Jimmy Silver presently, pointing towards a pretty little inn looking out from a group of trees with a stretch of grass and benches in front of it. "I know this place, and you can get a good feed here at a moderate figure."

"It's just the place for us, then," said Raby; "but I hope the feed won't be moderate."

It was one of the wayside inns which, since the wonderful growth of cycling and motoring, had almost lost its old character, and had become a place of temperate refreshment—places common enough on the English cycling roads.

The Rookwood juniors dismounted and leaned their machines up against a tree in a group, and were soon seated at one of the long tables under the trees.

And indeed a more enjoyable repast could hardly have been partaken of by the hungry cyclists, under the shade of the big trees in the golden afternoon of May.

The juniors were in no hurry, and they rested there a while before taking the road to Rookwood. Jimmy Silver had just risen to settle the bill, when a bicycle-bell rang on the road, and three extremely soiled-looking riders came in sight. Raby burst into a roar.

"There's the Moderns!"

"My hat!" said Newcome. "They look as if they had had a day out! I say, Dodd—good-afternoon! And have you used any soap lately?"

"Oh, rats!" growled Tommy Dodd, and he jumped off his machine. "Come in here, you chaps, and let's get a wash!"

"Well, you need it, I reckon!" commented Jimmy Silver. "Don't stay here talking to these three tramps, kids! Let's get on the wheel!"

They paid their bill, and departed. The Modern juniors had gone indoors for a much-needed wash before having their tea. The Fistical Four were in a high good humour as they mounted their machines and rode away in the setting sun.

They had had a good time, and they had had a better ride than their rivals, and they were satisfied. They followed the road round by the ancient Priory towards Rookwood School.

After the substantial meal they had eaten at the little inn none of the four felt really inclined for scorching. They rode on at a moderate pace.

Half an hour passed, but Jimmy Silver, looking back, could not see the Moderns in sight. But the dusk was gathering now over the landscape, and the lane was dim to the view. Jimmy Silver looked at his watch.

"It's not lighting-up time yet," he remarked. "It's safer, though, as a matter of fact, with the trees so thick over the lane and shutting out the light."

"Well, we may as well light up," said Raby, dismounting.

The other three dismounted, too. Lovell drew out a box of matches and lighted the four lamps in turn. The trees, arching over the narrow lane, made the spot very dark, though the sky was yet rosy with the last rays of the sun.

Lovell threw down the stump of the match and closed his lamp with a snap. Four burly figures loomed up in the gloom at the same moment.

"Hallo!" said a rough voice, and a foul smell of strong liquor accompanied the voice.

The chums drew instinctively closer together.

Four burly, rough-looking tramps had appeared out of the shadows. They had apparently been resting and eating under the wayside trees, for one of them held a hunk of cheese in his hand, and another an open knife. They stood in the path of the young cyclists, blinking in the light.

"Hallo!" repeated the rough fellow who had spoken.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver civilly. "Just lighting up, you see. Let us pass, will you?"

The man exchanged glances with his companions.

"Are you in a 'urry?" he said, with an inflection of mockery in his voice which did not escape the ears of the juniors.

Lovell quietly detached the pump from his bicycle. He thought he might need a weapon soon. In that lonely road, at that hour, the boys were at the mercy of the tramps.

"Yes, we are rather in a hurry," said Jimmy Silver. "You're in the way."

The man did not move.

"You're in the way, Nailer!" said one of the others, with a coarse laugh.

"Why don't you get out of the way, Nailer?"

Nailer chuckled.

"Please stand aside," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"Can't you help a poor man with a few coppers?" said Nailer.

Jimmy Silver hesitated.

The request was a veiled threat, and he knew it. The tramps had evidently made up their minds to profit by the loneliness of the place and the hour, and if it came to a fight the four boys were at a hopeless disadvantage. It might be wiser to propitiate the ruffians if possible.

"If a couple of shillings would be of any use to you—" began Jimmy Silver.

Nailer chuckled again.

"I think a couple of pounds would be

nearer the mark. What do you think, Ginger?"

"You're right, Nailor!"

"What do you think, Bunker?"

"You're right, Nailor!"

"And you, Nobbler?"

"You're right!"

"You see," said Nailor, turning to the boys again, "you can go for a couple of pounds, otherwise we shall have to borrow your bicycles for a time—to be returned, of course, right side up with care, when we've done with them."

And the four ruffians chuckled in chorus.

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"We haven't so much money about us," he said—"not anything like it. But if we had, we shouldn't hand it over to you."

"You're right, Jimmy!" said Raby and Newcome together.

"Rather!" said Lovell.

"Oh, we ain't pertickler," said Nailor. "If ye hain't the money, we'll put up with your tickers and tie-pins, and so forth."

"You won't touch them!"

The ruffian's manner changed. He made a step towards the junior, his brow dark and threatening.

"Now then," he rapped out savagely, "are you going to hand over your waches?"

"Not likely."

"No fear, you scoundrel!"

"Then we'll take them."

"Stand back!"

"Bah!"

The four ruffians sprang forward. They expected to knock the boys over in a moment without an effort. But they were surprised and disappointed.

Each of the juniors had grasped his cycle-pump, and they were ready for action. They had let go the machines, and stood shoulder to shoulder.

As the tramps sprang at them they struck out fiercely. Nailor reeled back with a savage oath as Jimmy Silver's pump crashed into his face. Ginger, Nobbler, and Bunker each received a fierce blow; but they came on in spite of it, muttering curses.

Lovell was seized in a powerful grip and borne to the ground.

Raby, struggling furiously, was hurled down by Ginger, and a heavy knee was planted on his chest, pinning him down. Newcome was sent flying backwards by a heavy blow.

Jimmy Silver, however, had followed up his attack. His pump, bent by the first blow, crashed again across the forehead of Nailor, and the ruffian reeled and fell on one knee.

The pump descended again; but Nailor dodged it, and sprang upon the boy. Jimmy Silver was grasped in

muscular hands, and, in spite of his fierce resistance, he was borne to the ground, and Nailor's knee was planted on him. Nailor's savage hands were at his throat.

The ruffian was red with rage, savage with pain.

"Now I'll teach you, you whelp!"

Jimmy Silver struggled fiercely. The ruffian was gripping him by the throat as if to throttle him. There was no telling what he might do in his fury, and Jimmy Silver fought as if for his life.

But the boy was powerless against the man. Lights danced before Jimmy Silver's eyes. The savage face glaring down at him seemed to double in size before his failing vision, and the ruffian's eyes to burn with a demonic light.

There was a sudden buzz of bicycle-bells in the dusk.

Ting, ting, ting!

Jimmy Silver, with a terrible effort, tore the clutching hands from his throat, and shrieked for help.

"Help! Help!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Moderns to the Rescue.

"COME on, kids!"

It was Tommy Dodd's voice, and never had it sounded so welcome to the ears of the Fistical Four.

"Help!"

"We're coming!"

The Moderns had jumped instantly from their machines, leaving them to fall where they would. To dash into the fray, dealing sledge-hammer blows among the tramps, did not take the juniors a second.

Nailor reeled off Jimmy Silver as Tommy Dodd's clenched fist came like a hammer under his ear, and he rolled gasping in the road.

Tommy Cook hammered at Ginger, and then Tommy Dodd sprang at Bunker, while Tommy Doyle went for Nobbler; and the rascals were dragged off their victims in next to no time.

Lovell, Newcome and Raby staggered to their feet. Jimmy Silver lay gasping for breath in the road.

"Sock it to 'em!" shouted Tommy Dodd.

And he rushed at Ginger again.

The rascal did not stay for him. He broke into a run, and disappeared into the gloom down the lane. Tommy Cook and Lovell sprang at Bunker, who proved true to his name, and "bunked" promptly.

"They're gone!"

"Here's one of them!" exclaimed Tommy Doyle, jumping on Nailor as he was rising clumsily, and pinning him down again. "Collar the beast!"

The juniors piled on Nailor, and he was crushed down, in spite of his struggles, and nearly suffocated into the bargain.

Jimmy Silver staggered up. His throat had been bruised by the ruffian's savage fingers, and he was gasping painfully for breath.

"Hold that brute! Don't let him get away!"

"We've got the scoundrel!" exclaimed Raby, "and he can't get away while I've got my knees on his chest and my fingers twisted into his necktie."

"Don't choke him, Raby!" gasped Lovell.

"Ow! Leggo! Ow!"

Jimmy Silver looked grimly down upon the ruffian, wriggling in the grip of six sturdy juniors, and utterly unable to escape. The leader of the Fistical Four looked thoughtful.

"We can't carry him on our bikes to the police-station," he remarked. "We shall have to let him go. But he ought to have a lesson first. Roll him over into the ditch. There's a foot of water and about two feet of mud, I reckon, so he will have a regular treat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The grinning juniors bundled the struggling ruffian over and over, through the grass to the edge of the deep ditch, and there rolled him in. He sank almost out of sight in the ooze, gasping and cursing furiously. A clod of earth planted in his mouth cut short his flow of language, however, and the laughing juniors returned to their machines.

"Thanks, awfully, Doddy!" said Jimmy Silver, patting the leader of the Moderns on the shoulder. "You came up in the nick of time. That beast had nearly choked me!"

"We were almost riding over you when we heard you yell out," grinned Tommy Dodd. "Jolly glad we caught you up in time to be of use! Feel inclined for a race to Rookwood?"

"Hardly. I am going to take it easy."

"Oh, all right. So will we. Let's keep together to the school."

"Right you are!" said Jimmy Silver. "And when we get to Rookwood, we'll have tea together in the end study, if you chaps will come. We've got a good feed there, and we'll be glad to have you."

"I rather fancy we will come!" chuckled Tommy Dodd.

"Rather!" chorused the other two.

And the tea, as Tommy Dodd said, was rippin'-first-rate in both quality and quantity, and it was done full justice to by the Rookwood Wheelers.

THE END.

Another Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next Friday's issue of the PENNY POPULAR, entitled

"THE ROOKWOOD SPORTS!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

To avoid disappointment YOU must Order your copy of the PENNY POPULAR in advance.