

THE CLIFF HOUSE  
PARTY!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

ONE OF THE  
BEST!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE VANISHED  
SCHOOLBOY!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

# The Penny Popular

No.  
248.

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



## A WHIPPING FOR BILLY BUNTER!

(A Great Scene from the Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.,  
contained in this issue.)

# THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!

A Splendid  
Long Complete Story,  
dealing with the  
Early Adventures of  
**JIMMY SILVER & CO.**  
the  
Chums of Rookwood.

— BY —  
**OWEN CONQUEST**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Beaumont Has a Shock.

"HALLO! What's the matter with Beaumont?" Jimmy Silver uttered the words sharply. The Fistical Four were coming along the lower passage at Rookwood, when the prefect came out of his study, and met them face to face. It was late in the evening, and Beaumont had only recently come in.

Earlier in the evening Beaumont had been searching for Leggett, the cad of the Fourth. He had inquired of the Fistical Four as to whether he had been seen by them, but he received no information.

Beaumont, the most unpopular prefect in the school, was a harsh and cowardly bully, and was cordially disliked by everyone.

As a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver and his chums, Lovell, Newcome and Raby, had known that Leggett was, at the time of Beaumont's inquiry, in the study of Tommy Dodd & Co., and they were completely mystified as to the reason.

Although Tommy Dodd & Co., the Modern chums of Rookwood, were the sworn enemies of the Fistical Four, they were frank, wholesome lads, and not given to spending their time with a cad of Leggett's type.

Beaumont had been searching for Leggett in order to give him a thrashing, and the cad of the Fourth, in his fear, had taken refuge in the Modern chums' study.

He had solemnly avowed to them that he intended to turn over a new leaf, and Tommy Dodd & Co. promised to back him up. Beaumont was hated by them as much as the rest of the school.

Tommy Dodd had hit upon a plan whereby Leggett would be protected from the clutches of the bullying prefect, and Beaumont would, at the same time, be given a severe shock which they hoped would be a lesson to him.

Leggett was to hide himself in the old tower for a couple of days and nights, so that it should appear that he had run away from school out of terror for Beaumont, and the Modern chums promised to keep him supplied with food. This plan, they knew, would give Beaumont a serious fright.

Having made their plans, Leggett had succeeded in getting away from the Modern chums' study to safe quarters without encountering Beaumont.

But now the four chums stopped in amazement and alarm as they met the prefect in the passage. His face was



The Fistical Four found Tommy Dodd & Co. in the school tuckshop busily making purchases, which Tommy Cook was packing into a basket.

strangely pale, and his eyes had a half-furious, half-frightened look that was very curious to see. The Fistical Four did not like Beaumont, but he looked as if he had had a terrible shock.

"I say, what's the matter?" asked Jimmy Silver anxiously. "Are you ill, Beaumont?"

"No," muttered the prefect thickly. "Bad news, then?" said Jimmy, noticing a note crumpled up in Beaumont's hand.

The prefect hastily thrust the paper into his pocket.

"No, no! Have you seen Leggett?" "Oh, if that's all——" began Jimmy Silver.

"Stop! Have you seen Leggett? It's——it's important. I'm afraid something has happened to him."

"Phew!"

"Have you seen him?" "No," said Jimmy Silver, "I haven't." He looked curiously at the prefect. "What have you done to him?"

Beaumont started violently. "I? Nothing! Who says I have done anything to him?"

"Nobody, that I know of," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "But if anything's happened to him, I suppose it was through you——"

"It's a lie—it's—— I say, will you go and find him? I—I promise you that I'm

not going to lick him. I—I believe this is a joke of his, but——"

"What's a joke of his?"

"Nothing. Only——only find him! It's——it's important."

"You're not going to lick him——honour bright?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then we'll find him for you," said Jimmy Silver, impressed by the prefect's strange, anxious manner. "Come on, kids?"

The Fistical Four went on their way. Beaumont descended the stairs, and the chums, glancing back, saw that his walk was strangely unsteady.

"Well, of all the giddy mysteries!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "What do you make of that, you chaps?"

"I can't make anything of it," said Raby.

"Same here," said Lovell and Newcome, looking puzzled. "I suppose Beaumont hasn't really hurt Leggett, has he, or anything of that kind?"

"Can't make it out. Let's go and see Tommy Dodd & Co. Leggett was with them the last we heard of him."

"Good!"

The Fistical Four hurried to the Modern chums' study, but it was empty and in darkness. The junior common-room was

drawn blank also; the Moderns were not there.

But just as the Fistical Four came out of the common-room, they met them in the passage. The rain on Tommy Dodd & Co.'s clothes showed that they had been out of doors.

"Hallo! Where have you been, kids?" exclaimed Lovell.

"Minding our own business, infants," grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Have you seen Leggett?"

Tommy Dodd looked thoughtful.

"Do you mean to-day or yesterday?"

"To-day, fathead! He was in your study about tea-time."

"So he was, now I come to think of it."

"Well, where is he now?"

"Can you see him, Cookie?" asked Tommy Dodd gravely.

Tommy Cook looked up and down the passage, and felt in his pockets, and then shook his head in the most solemn way in the world.

"No, I can't, Doddy," he said.

"I can't, either," said Tommy Dodd.

"Do you want to see him very particularly, kids?"

"Yes, Beaumont wants him."

"Ha, ha, ha! Beaumont had better find him, then."

"But—"

"Oh, come on, kids," said Tommy Dodd.

"We can't stay talking all night to these bouncers."

And Tommy Dodd & Co. walked away, grinning. The Fistical Four looked after them in rather wrathful amazement.

"They know something about it," said Lovell.

"I reckon so. There's a mystery somewhere, and I'm blessed if I can guess what it is," said Jimmy Silver. "Let's get on."

The Fistical Four inquired right and left. But no one had seen Leggett since tea-time; no one had noticed or cared where he had been or what he had been doing.

The four chums returned at last to Beaumont's study. They found the prefect there. He was standing in the light of the gas, reading a crumpled paper.

He thrust it hastily into his pocket as the juniors came in. It was evidently the same paper they had seen in his hand in the passage before.

"Have you seen anything of him?" asked the prefect eagerly.

"No. He doesn't seem to be in the school, and nobody appears to have seen him lately," said Jimmy Silver.

Beaumont muttered something.

"Perhaps he's gone somewhere for a master or a prefect," Lovell suggested. Beaumont shook his head.

"I've inquired; he hasn't."

"Look here!" said Jimmy Silver bluntly. "Do you really think that anything may have happened to him, Beaumont?"

"How should I know?" said Beaumont uneasily. "I don't suppose for a minute that anything has happened to him."

But his trembling lips gave the lie to his words.

"You do think so!" said Jimmy Silver deliberately. "And if anything has happened, you know something about it, too."

"You young liar! Get out of my study!"

The Fistical Four left the room.

"There's something wrong somewhere," said Jimmy Silver.

And ere long it was certain that the leader of the Classical chums had guessed correctly.

For when bed-time came for the Fourth Form, Leggett did not take his place with the rest of the juniors to march up to the dormitories.

Leggett was missing!

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## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Disappearance of Leggett.

"WHERE is Leggett?"

Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, whose duty it happened to be that night to

see lights out in the Fourth Form dormitories, asked the question.

It was a question which no one could, or would, answer.

Leggett was not in his place, and the amazement in his Form-fellows' faces showed that they did not know what had become of him.

"Where is Leggett?"

Bulkeley was puzzled. He was seen to speak in a low voice with Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth Form, and Mr. Bootles looked puzzled, too.

The Form-master questioned some of the juniors, but the replies were unsatisfactory. No one had seen Leggett for a couple of hours at least.

"Go up to bed," said Bulkeley. "This will be looked into."

The Fourth Form, greatly wondering, prepared to retire. The Fistical Four were troubled in their minds. Leggett's absence at bedtime was a pretty clear proof that something unusual had happened, and they were anxious about him.

Of late the cad of the Fourth had shown symptoms of a desire to turn over a new leaf, and the chums of the end study were rather interested in his progress.

"Worried about something, kids?" asked Tommy Dodd, glancing towards the Fistical Four as the Fourth Form were about to disperse.

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver abruptly. "Do you know where he is, Doddy?"

"My dear chap, how should I know?"

"I believe he's run away," said Towle. Jimmy Silver started.

"What makes you think that, Towle?"

"He said he was going to."

"What for?"

"Because Beaumont was always licking him."

"He'd never have the nerve to run away," said Lovell, shaking his head.

"Besides, we saw him after locking up."

"Bounds have been broken before now," said Lacy, shaking his head.

"Well, that's true."

"If he hasn't run away, where is he?" said Towle.

"Answer that if you can," said Tommy Dodd.

"Why do you believe he's run away from school, Doddy?"

"My dear chap, it's not a question of what I believe; I settle it on the evidence," said Tommy Dodd, with a yawn. "I believe I'm sleepy, and I'm going to bed."

Bulkeley went in to see lights out in the Modern dormitory that night, as Knowles, the Modern prefect, was away for a day or two, and he was taking his place.

He was looking rather troubled. Several fellows were seated on Towle's bed, talking to him. They were urging him that it was his duty to tell the Rookwood captain what he knew.

"Now, then, bed!" said Bulkeley.

"Don't bother me now."

"Towle's got something to tell you," said Lacy.

"No time now—"

"It's about Leggett."

The captain of Rookwood was all attention at once.

"Do you know anything about Leggett, Towle?"

"Only what he said to me, Bulkeley," said Towle uncomfortably.

"Tell me what it was."

"He said he was going to run away from school because Beaumont was always licking him," said Towle.

Bulkeley compressed his lips.

"When did he say that?"

"This evening, just before tea. Beau-

mont was looking for him at the time, to lick him for something or other."

"Thank you. I am glad you have told me that, Towle. Good-night, boys!"

"Good-night, skipper!"

Bulkeley turned out the light and left the dormitory.

Bulkeley went straight from the Modern dormitory to the study of the bully of the Sixth. He tapped at the door and walked straight in.

Beaumont started up nervously.

He had been sunk in a chair before the fire, which was nearly out. His face was pale, and there were drops of perspiration on his brow. He gave the captain of Rookwood a haggard look.

"Do you know what has become of Leggett, Beaumont?" asked Bulkeley in his direct way.

"How should I know?" muttered Beaumont hoarsely.

"You look as if you knew something," said the Rookwood captain, eyeing him keenly. "What is the matter with you?"

"I'm not—I'm not feeling quite well."

"Towle says that Leggett declared it was his intention to run away because you were always licking him," said Bulkeley abruptly.

Beaumont shivered.

"It's not true."

"How do you know it's not true?"

"Well, I don't suppose it is."

"I knew you were a brute to the juniors as a rule," said Bulkeley, in measured tones; "but I thought that you and Leggett were birds of a feather. And I have never noticed how you treated him. Have you ill-used him lately?"

"I may have licked him once or twice. He deserved it."

"And you cannot throw any light upon his disappearance?"

"How should I know anything about it?"

"Do you, as a matter of fact, know anything?"

There was a pause.

"No," said Beaumont desperately.

"Very well. I must go and tell the Head what I have discovered, so that the boy can be searched for. The police must be communicated with."

The prefect shuddered.

"The police!"

"Of course. It is plain that he has run away from school, and he must be found and brought back as quickly as possible. Then"—and Bulkeley's face became hard and significant—"then will come an inquiry as to why he ran away." And the Rookwood captain quitted the room.

As soon as he was alone Beaumont let his white face fall into his hands.

"Has he run away? Oh, if it is only nothing worse!" the wretched senior groaned.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### The Fistical Four on the Track.

THE next day all Rookwood knew that Leggett had run away from school. His place was empty at the breakfast-table, and in chapel, and his desk had an unoccupied space in the Fourth-Form class-room. Leggett was gone!

He had not been liked. The boys had nicknamed him "Shylock" and the "Cad of the Fourth." But now that he had taken such a desperate step there were few who did not feel some concern about him.

To run away from school was a serious offence. It might mean expulsion as a punishment. It would certainly mean a severe flogging; and Dr. Chisholm, kind headmaster as he was, knew how to lay it on when occasion required.

There was a rough time in store for Leggett when he was recaptured. That

he would be recaptured seemed certain. The junior could only, at the best, reach home, and then he would be sent back to school as a matter of course. The desperate step of running away was as futile as it was desperate.

The Fistical Four were concerned about the disappearance of Leggett, and almost equally so by their conviction that Tommy Dodd & Co. had the clue to the secret.

Leggett had, perhaps, consulted the Modern chums about running away, or they had learned something about it. At all events, Jimmy Silver guessed that they knew more than they told, and Jimmy Silver, as usual, guessed correctly.

"Doddy wouldn't grin like that if he wasn't up to something behind our backs," said Jimmy Silver, as the Modern chums passed the Fistical Four in the quad after morning school. "He knows something we don't know."

"Let's knock their heads together till they explain," was Raby's brilliant suggestion.

"I'm afraid we couldn't knock the secret out that way," said Jimmy Silver, with a shake of the head.

"Leggett seems to have really run away," Lovell remarked. "There's no sign of him about Rookwood. It was a silly thing to do. It will show up Beaumont; but Leggett will have a painful time with the Head afterwards if he comes back."

"There's something about it I don't understand," said Jimmy, wrinkling his brows. "Those Modern rotters are up to it, and we're not."

"It won't do," said Raby. "It's derogatory to our dignity as—"

"Rats! What's this little secret they've got between them. That's what we've got to find out."

"Well, we can only do that by shadowing them," said Raby.

Jimmy Silver looked dubious.

"I don't know about shadowing people in broad daylight," he remarked. "However, I suppose it can't do any harm, if it doesn't do any good."

"Quite right."

"Come along, then!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. had gone into the school tuckshop. The Fistical Four followed them in, and found them busily making purchases, which Tommy Cook was packing into a basket.

The chums looked at them curiously.

"Hallo! Going on a picnic, Doddy?" asked Lovell.

Tommy Dodd turned rather red. He was evidently not best pleased at being found in his present occupation by the Classical chums.

"Oh, rats!" he exclaimed. "Funny thing that you four kids are always poking your noses into things."

"My dear chap, if it's a picnic we'll come with you with pleasure," said Jimmy Silver liberally. "Never shall it be said that the Fistical Four refused to share a feed with anybody, friend or foe."

Tommy Dodd sniffed.

"Well, it isn't a picnic, so out!"

"Ah, it's a study feed, I suppose! Never mind; we'll be just as pleased to come along with you and—"

"It isn't a study feed."

"What is it, then?"

"Oh, rats!"

The Fistical Four looked rather surprised. They called for ginger-pop, and consumed it while Tommy Dodd & Co. finished packing the little basket and carried it out of the tuckshop.

Jimmy Silver dragged his chums to the door the moment the Modern chums were gone.

"Come on!" he muttered. "We've got to keep them in sight!"

"What's the game?"

"That grub in the basket. What do you think they want it for?"

"Blessed if I know, if it isn't a feed."

"It's to take to somebody."

"Eh? I suppose Tommy Dodd & Co. haven't started in business in the catering line, have they?"

"Yes, I believe so—and I believe they're catering for Leggett," whispered Jimmy Silver excitedly.

His chums gave a simultaneous jump.

"Leggett!"

"I reckon so."

"My hat!"

"I don't believe he's left Rookwood at all. It's all a wheeze up against Beaumont. He's hiding somewhere about."

"But where?"

"Well, there are lots of places—the ruined priory, or the old tower," said Jimmy.

"Let's have a hunt for him," suggested Lovell eagerly.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Not likely. We'll just keep those Modern rotters in sight. If they are going to feed him, they will have to get that basket to him, and that's where we come in."

Lovell, Newcome, and Raby chuckled.

"Good! Let's get on with the shadowing, then."

The Fistical Four kept the Moderns in sight, Tommy Dodd was carrying the basket. He looked back several times, and appeared annoyed to see the Fistical Four in sight.

They strolled into the gym, and so did the Classical chums a minute later. They strolled out again, and wandered down to the ruined Priory of Rookwood; and the Fistical Four wandered down there at their heels.

Then they strolled round the old tower, and the Fistical Four strolled round the old tower, too. Finally, Tommy Dodd & Co. stopped and waited for the chums of the end study to come up.

"What are you following us about for?" demanded Tommy Dodd, looking rather dangerously at his rivals of the Fourth Form.

The Fistical Four looked at them in innocent surprise.

"Following you about?" repeated Jimmy Silver.

"Rats!" said Lovell.

"You know jolly well that you're following us about!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, rather excitedly. "What do you mean by it?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Jimmy Silver blandly.

"Look here—"

"I say, you know—"

"Oh, go on, I like to hear your pretty voices!" said Jimmy Silver encouragingly.

"What are you following us about for, then?"

"Perhaps it's because we think a thing of beauty is a joy for ever, and so we don't want to lose sight of you," said Jimmy reflectively.

"You rotters! Come on, kids!"

The Moderns stalked away indignantly. Fast on their track, never losing sight of them for a moment, went the Fistical Four. Tommy Dodd looked back again and sniffed.

"They smell a mouse, kids!"

"Quite so."

"We shall have to leave this till after afternoon school."

"My hat! Leggett will get jolly hungry."

"He'll have to stand it. It will be a punishment for running away from school, anyway," said Tommy Dodd, rather unreasonably. "Come on, I'm going in."

The Modern chums went in. And the Fistical Four chuckled gleefully. They remained on the watch till the bell rang for afternoon classes, and then they stalked Tommy Dodd & Co. to the classroom.

Jimmy Silver noticed that Tommy Dodd & Co. looked rather uneasy in class.

"They know we're on the track," the leader of the Fistical Four whispered,

when Mr. Bootles' back was turned. "I think we'll do the shadowing after school a little more cunningly. No need to give ourselves away. We'll keep out of sight, and keep an eye on the bouncers, and let them guide us to the spot where they've hidden Leggett."

"Good wheeze!" said Lovell.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Leggett Turns Up.

"CAN you see those rotters?"

"No, Doddy."

"Good! I suppose they've given it up. Come on!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. came quickly out of their study, in the dusk of the evening. They scudded down the passage, Tommy Dodd carrying the basket, and left the House.

A glance round into the shadows showed nothing suspicious, and the Modern chums darted off towards the old tower of Rookwood.

Then four dim forms detached themselves from the black shadows of the ancient elms.

"There they are!" muttered Newcome.

"They've gone towards the old tower," whispered Raby.

"And I reckon Tommy Dodd had the basket in his hand."

"I saw it!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Come on, kids! We're on this!"

The Fistical Four had been watching for the Modern chums to come out. The dusk favoured them. As they scudded after the Moderns through the dusk of the Close they heard a creaking of rusty hinges through the gloom. It was a proof that Tommy Dodd & Co. were going into the old disused tower.

"Quiet now!" whispered Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four reached the ancient door of the tower. It was ajar. The Modern chums had not quite closed it, on account of the noise the rusty hinges made.

They squeezed in, and found themselves in the dense darkness of the old tower. It was the first time they had entered it since a famous occasion when they had been trapped and made prisoners there by Tommy Dodd & Co., and Jimmy Silver grinned in the darkness at the recollection of that little adventure. It was the Fistical Four's turn now.

"Quiet!" he whispered again.

They felt and groped their way to the spiral stair, and mounted slowly up the heavy stone steps.

At the second turn of the staircase a glimmer of light fell upon their eyes. It came from a deep recess in the staircase wall, a kind of stone cell without a door. There had been a door once, but it had yielded centuries before to the ravages of time.

Jimmy Silver made a sign of caution to his comrades. Keeping close to the wall, they stole on cautiously and looked from the gloom into the lighted cell.

"Leggett!" whispered Jimmy Silver.

The leader's suspicions were correct. A bicycle lantern was burning in the little cell, and its light showed Tommy Dodd & Co. leaning against the stone wall, talking to a junior who was sitting on a camp-stool unpacking the basket. It was Leggett!

The missing junior was found!

Leggett's face was rather pale in the light. He did not seem to have had a pleasant time since taking up his quarters in the old tower. Tommy Dodd was speaking, and the sound of his voice came clearly to the ears of the Fistical Four.

"Are you going to stick it out for another night, Leggett? I don't think you should. The Head is anxious, and he's a good old sort."

"I'm thinking of Beaumont," said Leggett. "I'm jolly hungry. Why couldn't you fellows come before?"

"Couldn't be did; those rotters from

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the end study were watching us. They smelt a rat. About Beaumont—I don't think you'd bear him much of a grudge now, Leggett, if you saw him."

Leggett grinned. He had selected a steak pie from the basket, and was devouring it hungrily.

"What does he look like?"

"As if he had a fearful weight on his conscience," said Tommy Dodd. "Everybody sees that he's awfully cut up about your going, and so I suppose he's sorry for having been such a beast. You should see him."

"I can guess what he's like," said Leggett. "You don't know the reason though. I left a note for him on his study table before I came here."

Tommy Dodd looked at him in surprise.

"A note! What sort of a note?"

"Oh, I told him that I was afraid to let him see me again—and afraid to run away because my father would only send me back; and so I told him I had made up my mind to drown myself in the river. I piled it on, you know, and I knew that when I disappeared he would take it all in."

"You—you young rotter!"

"Oh, draw it mild! I wanted to give him a bit of a twist—"

"By Jove! And you've done it," said Tommy Dodd. "He's said nothing about that note. Of course, he's afraid of being called to account for his share in your suicide. You—you cunning young rascal! That was taking it altogether too far. I never suspected anything of that sort."

"I knew you didn't," grinned Leggett.

"He must have been through a horrid time," said Tommy Cook. "But I say, that'll get you an extra licking when you turn up, Leggett."

Leggett grinned again.

"Not at all. If he hasn't shown the note—and I knew he wouldn't—he won't dare to show it afterwards, because he ought to have shown it at first."

"What do you—"

The words were clearly heard in the silence of the old tower. There was a gurgling sound the next moment, as if a hand had been clapped over a mouth.

But Tommy Dodd & Co. had heard enough. Leggett dropped the steak pie in alarm. The Modern chums dashed out upon the staircase with clenched fists.

"Jimmy Silver, you rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Knock 'em flying, boys."

"Rather!"

"Ha, ha! Sock it to 'em, kids!"

In a moment seven juniors were mingled in a wild tussle in the darkness of the stairs. Tommy Dodd & Co. had the advantage of position, but the odds were on the side of the Fistical Four.

With many a gasp and howl the rivals of the Fourth struggled, heedless at first of a strong voice that rang through the din.

"Stop that, will you? Stop it, I say!"

"Bulkeley!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, at last. "Here, hold on! I mean, let go! Pax! It's old Bulkeley!"

The juniors, considerably dusty and ruffled, separated at last. The captain of Rookwood strode into the midst of them.

"I saw you sneaking into the tower," he said, "and I guessed that something was up. What—the why—how—Leggett!"

He had caught sight of the missing junior. Leggett's jaw dropped at the expression upon the Rookwood captain's face. Bulkeley's quiet eye took in all the scene—the blankets on the floor of the cell, the lunch-basket and lantern, and he understood all.

"You had better come with me, Leggett," he said quietly.

"If you please, Bulkeley—"

"Come with me!"

And with Bulkeley's grasp upon his collar, the end of the Fourth was marched

off down the stairs, and out of the old tower, across the dusky quad, and into the School House, and straight to the study of Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood. The Fistical Four and the Modern chums looked at one another.

"Well, of all the giddy asses!" said Jimmy Silver. "You lot take the cake. You waltz off with the whole giddy Huntley and Palmer, and no mistake! But I say, we can't leave Leggett to face the music alone."

"I'm going to speak up for him," said Tommy Dodd, going down the stairs.

"Better than that; let us make Beaumont speak up for him."

"Beaumont?"

"Why not? Come along to his study."

The determined Jimmy Silver led the way. Beaumont was alone in his study. He looked at the juniors with a nervous start as they came in. He was rather given to starting nervously of late.

"Leggett's come back, Beaumont," said Jimmy Silver, plunging directly into the subject. He was startled by the effect of his words. Beaumont sprang to his feet, his colour coming and going.

"What! What did you say?"

"Leggett's turned up!"

"Then he's not—not—"

"No; he's not drowned in the river," grinned Jimmy Silver. "That was a little wheeze to make you sit up. Bulkeley's marched him off to the Head. We want you to go and speak up for him."

"I don't want him punished."

"Then get him off."

Beaumont hesitated some moments, and then left the room. The chums watched him enter the Head's study. They waited anxiously for Leggett to come out.

The end of the Fourth made his appearance at last, and the expression of his face showed that he had escaped with nothing worse than a lecture.

"Well, how did it go?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Right as rain," said Leggett. "The Head was in a fearful wax when Bulkeley explained to him, but then Beaumont came in. He explained to the Head that he had had to deal with me rather severely—perhaps had a little overdone it—and begged me off. He was so much in earnest that the Head gave in. Blessed if I know what's come over Beaumont! One thing's jolly certain, he won't dare to lick me after this, not for a jolly long time to come, anyway. Everybody's got an eye on him now."

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver. "And mind you keep to the straight path, Leggett, and don't forget that you're turning over a new leaf."

"Oh, that's all right," said Leggett.

"Mind, we don't want to have taken all this trouble for nothing," said Tommy Dodd. "You undertook to turn over a new leaf, and you've got to keep your word. I expect you to. If you start being a cad again I shall regard all my trouble as wasted."

"And then I shall feel it my duty to give you a high old time," said Tommy Dodd. "I shall keep a fatherly eye on you in the future, Leggett, and see that you do not fall from grace."

And Leggett smiled a rather sickly smile.

THE END.

## "ONE OF THE BEST!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

(Continued from page 16.)

done in the world, Master Lumley, and they ain't learnin' 'ow to do any of it. They're only learnin' 'ow to live without doin' any. It don't seem to me right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're only goin' to laff, Master Lumley—"

"But I'm not," said Lumley-Lumley, clapping his chum on the shoulder. "I shouldn't wonder if you're quite right, Grimey. You'll do better in the grocery line, I guess. And so we'll tell the Head. And Mr. Sands will give you your job again—"

Grimes started to his feet.

"You mean it, Master Lumley?" he exclaimed eagerly.

"I guess so."

"And you ain't offended?"

"Ha, ha! Of course not."

"Then I don't deny that I'd rather be in my old business," said Grimes. "I must say it seems to me more sensible and useful-like."

"Hear, hear!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Come with me to the Head."

And he marched Grimes off at once to the Head's study.

Tom Merry & Co. heard the news with regret.

They were sorry to lose Grimes of the Fourth.

But, as Blake sapiently remarked, very likely Grimes knew his own business best, and the Co. agreed that very likely he did.

Grimes bade a most affectionate farewell to his friends at St. Jim's.

"We shall see you again, of course, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he shook Grimes by the hand.

Grimes nodded and grinned.

"Yes, Master D'Arcy, if you want to. I shall bring the groceries, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"And I shall be playing in the Rylcombe Wanderers, too," said Grimes. "We'll meet on the footer-ground, Master D'Arcy. I'm sorry to leave all you fellows," Grimes went on, "but a chap has to make his way in the world, you know, and it's best to begin young. But I 'ope we'll always be good friends when we 'apper to meet."

"Yaas, watah!"

The next day Grimes reappeared at St. Jim's, but he was not in Etons, and he had a basket on his arm, and he came to the tradesmen's entrance. But his honest face looked very bright and happy, and he grinned cheerily at Tom Merry & Co. when they walked round to speak to him.

Fourth-Former of St. Jim's, or grocer's lad with a basket, Tom Merry & Co. were agreed that Grimes was One of the Best!

THE END.

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