

# THE FISTICAL FOUR IN THE WARS! Jimmy Silver & Co. are not

the fellows to be always seeking trouble, but there are times when they cannot help getting into hot water. They commence a new term at Rookwood by reviving the old feud with Carthew of the Sixth!

# Four in Trouble!



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Back to Rookwood!

ATCHAM JUNCTION!"

"Here we are again!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Latham Junction!" sang the porter. "Change ere for Coombe and Rookwood!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. poured out of the train upon an already crowded platform.

Latham Junction was swarming with Rookwood fellows.

It was the opening day of the term at Rookwood School, and the Rookwooders were gathering from the four corners of the kingdom, and most of them gathered at Latham Junction to take the local train to Coombe. One crowded "local" had already departed, but the platform and the refreshment-rooms still swarmed. There were shouts of greeting on all sides as Jimmy Silver & Co. joined the throng.

The train was waiting by the platform, and was already getting crowded. The Fistical Four were in a carriage, cheerily blocking up the doorway against three Modern juniors who wanted to come in.

"Dogs not admitted!" called out Lovell. "Keep those Modern cads out!"

"Rush the carriage!" shouted Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth indignantly. "Mop up those Classical cads!"

Bump!

In Putty Grace's powerful grasp, the fat and breathless Tubby was propelled into the three Moderns from behind. Tommy Dodd and Cook and Doyle staggered away as if they had been smitten by a battering-ram.

"Jump in, Tubby!"

"But I—"

"In you go!"

Putty of the Fourth bundled the fat Classical neck and crop into the carriage. He jumped in after him, just escaping the wrathful clutches of Tommy Dodd & Co.

"Rush 'em!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

The three Moderns rushed, but the carriage doorway was blocked by Classicals. Tommy Dodd & Co. sat on the platform, and almost disappeared among a crowd of fellows thronging along the train. Oswald and Morny and Erroll were allowed to enter, and then Rawson; and as there were now ten in a carriage intended for six, Jimmy closed the door. Even Classicals were not to be admitted now.

Tommy Dodd & Co. scrambled up, shook their fists at the grinning faces at the window, and went along the train hunting

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for seats. Jimmy Silver sat with his hand on the door to keep guard.

"Let a fellow in!" bawled Flynn at the window.

"No room, old chap!"

"Open that door, you cheeky fag!" howled Hanson of the Fifth the next minute. "Do you hear me? Open that door!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I'll jolly well—"

Hansom tried to wrench the handle round. Jimmy held it inside, and grinned cheerfully. Arthur Edward Lovell reached through the window, and tapped Hanson's hat. He gave it rather a hard tap, and the Fifth-Former howled with wrath as the topper emitted a crunching sound.

"You—you—you—"

Hansom backed away, clutching at his damaged hat.

"Dear old Hanson!" said Jimmy Silver. "Still as Fifth-Formy as ever! Hallo, there's nobby old Carthew of the Sixth! He's scowling at us! Now, I wonder what dear old Carthew is scowling for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There really was no cause for wonder; the previous term Jimmy Silver & Co. had been on the worst of terms with Carthew of the Sixth. But they had come back from the Christmas holidays in merry spirits, prepared to forgive even the bully of Rookwood. Carthew evidently was not in such a merry or forgiving mood. He scowled blackly at the grinning juniors.

Doors were slamming along the train now. Carthew stopped at the next carriage to Jimmy's, and Bulkeley of the Sixth put his head out.

"No room, Carthew! Sorry! There's none in here—"

Carthew scowled again, and came to Jimmy's carriage. The train was on the point of starting. He dragged at the door.

"Let me in, you young cad!" he exclaimed.

"You're holding the handle inside!"

"Right first time!" said Jimmy, with a nod.

"Will you let me in?"

"Ten in here," answered Jimmy. "What about the merry regulations of the railway? No room, old top!"

"Stand back there!" shouted a porter.

Carthew gritted his teeth and dragged savagely at the door. Jimmy held it fast inside.

"Will you let me in?" panted Carthew.

"Four standing already," said Jimmy.

"Can't be done!"

Carthew released the door-handle. The window was down, and Carthew suddenly

A Grand Long Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the cheery chums of Rookwood School.

BY

OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the famous stories of Rookwood now appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")

drove his fist through the opening and landed his knuckles on Jimmy Silver's surprised nose.

"Ow!" gasped Jimmy.

"Why, you rotter!" howled Lovell.

Without stopping to think, Arthur Edward Lovell let fly his fist through the open window, and caught Carthew fairly in the right eye.

Bump!

Carthew sat on the platform with loud concussion.

"Stand clear, there!"

The guard was waving his flag.

The train began to move as Mark Carthew staggered to his feet. His right eye was blinking painfully.

He seemed about to spring at the train, moving as it was, but a porter caught him and held him back.

Jimmy waved his hand from the window as the train rolled on.

The last the juniors saw of Carthew was the Sixth-Former standing on the platform, scowling like a Hun, caressing his damaged eye with one hand and shaking the other, clenched, in the air. Then he disappeared from sight.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Knowles Wants to Know!

JIMMY SILVER rubbed his nose tenderly, and applied his handkerchief to it. The angry Sixth-Former had hit hard, and there was a stream of crimson from Jimmy's nose.

He dabbed the crimson away with the handkerchief.

"The rotten bully!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell indignantly. "Fancy letting out at a chap like that! I'm jolly glad I landed him in the eye!"

"You did land him, and no mistake!" said Putty of the Fourth, with a chuckle. "I rather think Carthew will have a fancy eye to begin the term with!"

"Serve him jolly well right!"

Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"I say, fancy a prefect turning up at Rookwood with a black eye! He, he, he! You'll get into a fearful row, Lovell!"

Lovell grunted.

He was not sorry that he had returned Carthew's angry blow; but he realised that there would be trouble in store. He had caught Carthew fairly in the eye, and it was only too probable that that eye would be black by the time the bully of the Sixth reached Rookwood. For a prefect of the Sixth Form to begin the term with a black

eye was utterly unheard-of at Rookwood School, and Lovell could not help realising that the consequences might be serious.

"Well, he hit Jimmy first!" said Lovell, after a pause. "If he makes a row about his silly eye, Jimmy can show his silly nose!"

"I don't think my nose is going to be so bad as his silly eye will be," said Jimmy Silver, with a faint grin. "We're beginning the term with trouble—still, we've done that before."

"We have—we has?" grinned Raby.

"Here's Coombe!" said Jimmy Silver. The train stopped in the little station. In one minute, the quiet platform of Coombe was swarming with schoolboys, and every echo of the station was awakened.

As Jimmy Silver & Co. alighted, a crowd of Sixth-Formers came down from the next carriage. Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, was among them, and Neville, and Knowles, Frampton and Tresham of the Modern Sixth. Knowles turned towards the juniors.

Knowles was head of the Modern side at Rookwood School, but he was very chummy with Carthew of the Classical Sixth. Jimmy Silver guessed at once that he had witnessed Carthew's mishap on the platform at Latcham.

"Stop a minute, you fags!" called out Knowles. "One of you knocked down Carthew at Latcham. Which one was it?"

But Jimmy Silver & Co. were gone, and the Modern prefect had to postpone vengeance. The juniors came out of the station with a rush, and, after a lively tussle with a Modern crowd, secured seats in the brake and rolled away to Rookwood.

The quadrangle of the old school was already swarming with Rookwooders when they arrived there. Jimmy Silver & Co. joined the crowd.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, met them in the hall of the School House with a nod and a kind smile. He glanced at Jimmy's nose.

"Have you had an accident, Silver?" he inquired.

"N-n-no, sir."

"What is the matter with your nose?"

"Ahem! It was punched, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles severely. "Have you been fighting on the first day of the term, Silver?"

"Not exactly, sir. I—I—"

"Well, well!" said Mr. Bootles. "A little—er—exuberance of spirits is excusable—ah—on the first day of term—what, what! But I shall have my eye on you, Silver—I shall have my eye on you! What, what!"

And Mr. Bootles rustled away.

"I wonder what he'll say when he sees Carthew's eye?" murmured Raby.

And all the Fistical Four wondered that. For Carthew of the Sixth himself they did not care two pins, but they felt quite a deep concern as to the state of Carthew's eye. They could not help thinking that Carthew's eye was going to cause trouble—as if it were the "evil eye" itself!

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. One Lovely Black Eye!

CARTHEW was making for the house-keeper's quarters. Mrs. Maloney held up her hands at the sight of his startling eye. But she provided beefsteak, and fastened it on for him. And Carthew went to his study, to remain there and let the beefsteak do its beneficent work.

First day of the term was not a happy day for Carthew. He could not walk around with a beefsteak adhering to his eye—that was impossible. It was difficult even to occupy himself in getting his study to rights with only one eye to see with and a painful ache in the other. The tramp of incessant feet and the buzz of incessant voices had an irritating effect on him.

In the circumstances, Carthew might have been expected to repent of the hasty punch at Jimmy Silver's nose, which had brought so prompt and drastic a retaliation from Jimmy Silver's chum. But he was not in a repentant mood. He was thinking chiefly of vengeance on the Fistical Four.

He did not show himself in public that day at all—the Head understood that he had a slight cold. Carthew had debated in his mind whether to lay his wrongs and grievances before the Head. But the ridicule of a black eye deterred him; he did not care to walk into Dr. Chisholm's presence with that adornment.

Moreover, if Arthur Edward Lovell was called up for judgment, the whole story was bound to be related; and there were many witnesses to his savage punch at Jimmy Silver's nose—moreover, there was the damaged nose as proof. For a junior to black a prefect's eye was certainly a most serious offence; but for a prefect to "bash" a junior's nose was a thing that required explanation.

So Carthew, like Brer Fox, 'lay low and said nuffin.'" But he thought the more.

It was in the evening when Bulkeley of the Sixth dropped into the study to speak to him. He found Carthew stretched on a sofa, his eye still bound up, his other eye glittering.

"Still bad?" asked the Rookwood captain, with some sympathy.

"Yes!" snarled Carthew.

"Knowles said to-day, at Coombe, that you had been knocked down by a junior at Latcham," said Bulkeley. "I didn't see it myself. Is it the case?"

"Yes," muttered Carthew, writhing.

Having been knocked down by a junior was not an agreeable thing to own up to.

"That's a rather serious matter," said Bulkeley. "Was it Silver?"

"Why should you think it was Silver?" grunted Carthew.

"I noticed he looks as if he's been in the wars, that's all."

"It was Lovell."

"Have you reported it to the Head?"

"No."

"I'll take the matter in hand, if you like. It's rather too serious to be passed over."

"I don't want the Head dragged into it!" muttered Carthew. "I can't show him this eye. I—I'd rather not. It's a matter you can deal with as a prefect. I leave it to you."

"I'll see Lovell at once," said Bulkeley.

"Good!"

The captain of Rookwood was very far from being on good terms with Carthew; but this was a question of discipline, and Bulkeley was prepared to take the matter up and deal out stern justice. He picked up Carthew's ashplant as he left the study, and Carthew's only visible eye glittered with satisfaction. That would be something for Lovell to be going on with, he considered—not that Carthew meant to let it end there. Arthur Edward Lovell was to suffer much more serious consequences than a licking from the head prefect of Rookwood, if Carthew could contrive it.

Ten minutes later, Bulkeley of the Sixth re-entered the study with a very grave face, and laid the ashplant on the table. Carthew's single eye glittered inquiry at him.

"Have you licked the young hound?"

"No," answered Bulkeley very quietly.

"No!" howled Carthew.

"It seems that you struck Silver, and then Lovell struck you," said Bulkeley. "You've damaged Silver's nose—it's swelling. Lovell ought not to have done it, of course. But you ought not—"

"Do you mean to say you've let that young cad off because they've spun you a yarn among them?" exclaimed Carthew passionately.

Bulkeley looked at him.

"There seem to be plenty of witnesses," he said dryly. "There were ten juniors in the carriage at the time. You struck Silver in the face, and—"

"He was holding the door of the carriage."

"Which was already crowded," said Bulkeley. "You acted like a ruffian, Carthew, and a brute! If the matter comes before the Head, it's likely to mean trouble for you; and the juniors demand to go before the Head if they're called to account. As a friend, I advise you to let the matter drop."

Without waiting for a reply, Bulkeley left the study, and Carthew shook a clenched fist after him.

He had already decided not to have the matter taken up officially. But unofficially it was going to be taken up; and as he lay on his sofa in the dusky study, Carthew schemed schemes of vengeance, his only solace in the painful circumstances, his friends on the Modern side—Knowles and Frampton—came in to supper, and they smiled at him. They received a black scowl in exchange for their smiles.

"Black?" asked Knowles.

"Yes."

"The beefsteak won't do it any good now. My only hat! Fancy going round Rookwood with a black eye!" said Knowles, with a

whistle. "What have you done to the fag who coloured it for you?"

"Nothing, so far."

"What are you going to do?"

"Something—to-morrow. I want you fellows to help me."

And over supper, in Carthew's study, there was an interesting discussion concerning the fate of Arthur Edward Lovell on the morrow. Probably Arthur Edward Lovell would not have slept so soundly in the Fourth Form dormitory if he had known of it.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### A Licking for Lovell!

"FAG!"

It was the following day, and the Fistical Four were sauntering in the quadrangle before dinner, when Carthew of the Sixth came along. The four juniors smiled as they looked at Carthew. His eye was very prominent.

That morning Carthew had been compelled to turn up in the Sixth Form room, and his eye—already celebrated at Rookwood—had dawned upon the Head. But Carthew did not lay a complaint. He had explained that he had "got a knock" during the rush for the train at Latcham Junction, and with that explanation Dr. Chisholm had been satisfied.

Much as he would have liked to obtain a flogging for Lovell, Carthew could not venture to let all the circumstances come to the Head's knowledge. Jimmy Silver's nose was quite "blooming" that day, and ready to be produced in evidence against him. It was wiser to let the episode drop, and to take an unofficial vengeance, which Carthew intended to make more severe than a flogging by the Head.

"Fag!" he called out. "You'll do, Lovell."

Lovell eyed him warily. He did not intend to place himself within Carthew's reach—so long as Carthew had that eye, at all events.

"What do you want?" he inquired, keeping his distance.

"Go over to Mr. Manders' House, and ask Knowles for the footer he's lending me. If he's out, it'll be on the table."

"Oh, all right!" said Lovell.

"Leave it in the lobby for me," added Carthew, turning away.

"Right-ho!" answered Lovell, quite cheerily.

He left his chums and scudded away to Mr. Manders' House—the Modern side of Rookwood. He tapped at Knowles' door; and as there was no reply, he opened it. Knowles was not in the study, but there was a football in full view on the table.

"I suppose that's it," Lovell reflected. "I'd better take it."

He stepped into the study. Lovell glanced round, to see Knowles and Frampton in the doorway.

"Hallo! What do you want here?" asked Knowles smoothly.

"Carthew sent me for a footer," said Lovell. "I suppose this is it."

Knowles and Frampton chuckled, and came into the study. Knowles closed the door and put his back to it.

"Is this it?" demanded Lovell, staring at the Modern captain.

He began to realise that he was entrapped in the study.

"Sit down, dear boy," answered Knowles, with a smile.

"What am I to sit down for?"

"To wait, of course."

"Well, what am I to wait for?"

"I think Carthew's coming to see you," said Knowles in the same smooth tone.

And Frampton chuckled.

There was a tap on the door, and Knowles opened it wide enough to admit Mark Carthew. Then he closed it again, and turned the key.

Lovell backed away.

"Look here—" he began hotly.

Carthew touched his darkened eye with his finger.

"You gave me this yesterday, Lovell," he said, between his teeth.

"I'll give you another to-day, to match it, if you put your paws on me!" retorted Lovell.

"We'll see about that. Collar him!" Instantly Knowles and Frampton seized the junior, and pinned his arms to his sides.

Lovell struggled.

His struggles were not of much avail



against two big Sixth-Formers. He was lifted on the table, face down.

"Now, then, Carthew!" smiled Knowles. Carthew was ready. He picked up a cane belonging to Knowles, and advanced to the table. Lovell glared at him over his shoulder, hardly able to move in the powerful grasp of the two Modern seniors.

"You rotter!" he panted. "You coward! You— Oh!"

Whack! The cane came down, loud and hard, and Lovell gave a yell of anguish. It came down again and again.

Lovell's yells rang through the study. "Stop his row!" exclaimed Carthew savagely. "You'll have old Manders here, at this rate."

"Leave him to me," said Knowles. He jerked Lovell's handkerchief from his pocket, and stuffed it into his mouth, open for another yell.

Lovell gurgled helplessly as the cane rose and fell again.

Whack, whack, whack! Carthew did not spare the rod. Every twinge in his aching eye lent additional force to his arm.

Lovell could make no sound above a gurgle now. He wriggled and writhed in the grip of the two seniors, while Carthew lashed and lashed till his arm was tired. A flogging from the Head was a joke to a flogging from Carthew, as Lovell had discovered now; he had experience to guide him.

"Chuck it!" said Frampton at last, rather unasily. "That will do, Carthew."

"Rot! He hasn't had half enough yet!" snarled Carthew. "Hold the wriggling little beast!"

Knowles shook his head. "Chuck it! You're going too far." He released the junior. "You can get down, you cheeky little rotter!"

Carthew reluctantly desisted. His arm was tired, but he had vigour enough to proceed with the castigation. Lovell rolled over feebly on the table, and jerked the handkerchief from his mouth. For some moments he could not speak. When he looked at the junior's face, even Carthew realised that he had had enough.

"Get out!" he said harshly. Frampton helped the junior from the

table. Poor Lovell had to cling to it for support for a few minutes.

"You've overdone it," grunted Frampton unasily. "Rot!" said Carthew callously. "Kick him out!"

He advanced towards the junior, and Lovell feebly retreated to the door. There he stopped, to fix his eyes upon the bully of the Sixth.

"You rotter!" he muttered huskily. "You coward! You coward!" Carthew stared at him, but Knowles interposed.

"Don't be a fool!" he muttered. "Get out, Lovell!" He opened the door. "Now, then, outside with you!"

Lovell limped out. He was trying hard to restrain his tears. He shivered and shivered again as he limped away. He blinked in the sunshine of the quad as he came out of Mr. Manders' House. "Lovell—what on earth—" Jimmy Silver & Co. ran up to join their chum, and they stared at him blankly.

Lovell's face was white and set. "What's happened?" exclaimed Raby blankly. "Lovell, old chap, what—" Lovell did not speak; he could not. He moved away under the beeches, his chums accompanying him in silence. Lovell leaned on one of the leafless old trees to recover himself. It was quite a long time before he spoke.

"I've been through it!" he muttered thickly.

"I can see that," said Jimmy Silver very quietly. "Tell us what's happened, old fellow."

Lovell explained, in a husky voice broken by gasps, and Jimmy's eyes glittered as he listened.

"The rotters—it was a rotten trick! Lovell, you're coming to the Head—you're going to tell the Head this!"

Lovell did not move. "Do you hear, you ass?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "You've got to tell the Head!"

"I'm not going to sneak," said Lovell. "Don't be an ass, Jimmy! Besides, what's the good? They'd have some yarn to spin. But—but—I'll make Carthew sorry for this, somehow."

"And I'll help you, old son," said Putty of the Fourth, coming through the trees.

"I heard what you said, Lovell, and it's high time Carthew had another lesson. The Rookwood Secret Society—"

"Bother the Rookwood Secret Society!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Bother your stunts, Putty! We're going for Carthew!"

"My dear chap, if you'll be guided by me—" said Putty.

"Well, we won't, ass! There's Carthew!" Jimmy Silver's eyes glittered as the bully of the Sixth came in sight, leaving Mr. Manders' House with a smile on his face. "Come on, you fellows!"

"You ass!" shouted Putty. "I tell you—"

"Rats!" Jimmy Silver did not heed. "Uncle James" of Rookwood was celebrated for his coolness and his clear head. But he had quite forgotten his usual coolness now.

The sight of Carthew had the effect upon him as a red rag on a bull. He rushed straight towards the Classical prefect, and Raby and Newcome, equally excited and enraged, rushed after him. Lovell still leaned against the tree; he had no run in him at that moment. Putty Grace shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Looking for trouble!" he grunted. "Oh, my hat! And there's old Bootles looking on!"

Mr. Bootles had stepped out of the School House for a pleasant little walk in the wintry sunshine before his lunch. And his eyes almost bulged through his spectacles at the startling scene that met them—nothing less than a Sixth Form prefect rolling on the ground, with three infuriated juniors scrambling over him and punching away as if they mistook Carthew of the Sixth for a punch-ball!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### Asking For It!

"PUNCH him!"

"Slog him!"

"Smash him!"

It seemed to Mark Carthew that an earthquake had happened. That the end study would be "wrathy" over the punishment of Lovell he was well aware, but that three juniors would rush him down in the quad, in full sight of the masters' windows, had never even occurred to his mind. But that's what had happened.

Rushed off his feet by the charge of the infuriated trio, Carthew came on the ground with a crash, with the three juniors on him, hammering.

They did not seem to mind where their blows fell, so long as they landed on Carthew.

The surprise and enraged prefect struggled furiously, hitting out in return, blindly. There was a rush from all quarters to stare at the astounding scene, and a roar of voices.

"Hammer him!" yelled Jimmy Silver. "Give the brute socks!" panted Raby.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Mornington. "Are you fellows potty?—Here comes Bootles—"

"Smash him!"

"The Head may see you from his window—"

"Punch the beast!"

"Oh! Ah! Ow! Yow!" yelled Carthew. "Draggemoff! Help! Yooop! Oh, my hat! You young villains! Oh, oh! Ow!"

"Hammer the cad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Bootles came up with a rush and a rustle, through the gathering crowd of juniors. His spectacles slid down his nose in his excitement.

"Boys! Silver! Raby! Boys! Newcome! Desist—desist at once! Upon my word—What—what! Do you hear me?"

Like the celebrated dying gladiator of old, they heard him, but they heeded not! They continued to punch Carthew of the Sixth, oblivious, for once, to the voice of their Form master.

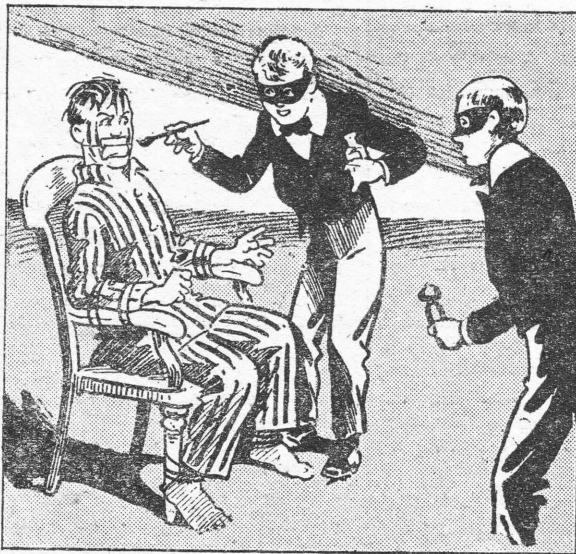
"Separate them!" gasped Mr. Bootles faintly.

Hansom of the Fifth seized Jimmy Silver, and dragged him off the Sixth-Former, and Raby and Newcome were collared and dragged off. Carthew lay spluttering on the ground, hardly knowing where he was, or what had happened. He was torn and rumpled and dusty and dishevelled, and panting for breath.

"Bless my soul!" stuttered Mr. Bootles. "It is Carthew, a—a prefect! Silver, you— you young rascal— What—what! Bless my soul! Unheard of—unparelled!"

# WHAT IS THE ROOKWOOD SECRET SOCIETY?

Who are the members of this amazing and powerful organization?



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By Owen Conquest.

NEXT WEEK'S

POWERFUL, LONG, COMPLETE STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!

"Perhaps you could lend me another while you're about it?" said Trimble. "I've got to write home for a tenner."

"Do you put two stamps on the letter when you write home for a tenner?"

"Nunno! But—but I've got to write to—to my uncle."

Talbot laughed, and handed out another stamp.

"If you've got another, Talbot—"

But Talbot was gone.

Baggy Trimble grinned, and opened his pocket-book, and put the two stamps carefully into it. There were already six loose stamps in the book.

"That makes eight," murmured Baggy. "I shall want twenty-eight more to send in the whole three bobbs' worth of solutions. I say, Kangaroo!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Harry Noble.

"Hold on a minute! Can you lend me a stamp?"

"Why, I lent you a stamp an hour ago!"

"Did you? Oh, yes! But—"

"And I saw you borrowing stamps of Ray and Kerruish," said Kangaroo.

"Have you taken up stamp-collecting?"

"Nunno! But—"

"Well, if you want another stamp, I'll give you one," said the Cornstalk genially. "Come here!"

"Thanks awfully! I say, what—Yarooooop!" roared Trimble, as Kangaroo's boot came down on his foot.

"Wharrer you at? Oh! Wow!"

"That's the stamp!" said Kangaroo cheerily. "Have another?"

"Yah! Rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kangaroo went his way, and Trimble hopped on one foot and nursed the other. Kangaroo had given him a stamp, but not exactly the kind of stamp he wanted.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you?" asked Glyn, coming along and pausing in astonishment as he saw the hopping Baggy.

"I say, can you lend me—"

"No!" said Glyn promptly.

"A stamp!"

"Oh, a stamp!" said Glyn. "Certainly, if you'll go up to my study for it!"

"I'll go with pleasure!" said Baggy eagerly. "A penny stamp, you know!"

"There's one on my table," said Glyn. "You can have it. It's stuck on an envelope. I suppose you don't mind that?"

"Not a bit! Thanks!"

Baggy Trimble hurried on to Bernard Glyn's study in the Shell passage. There was an envelope on the table, with a stamp on it. Baggy stared at it. It was an old envelope that had evidently contained a letter once, and the stamp on it was postmarked. Baggy breathed hard through his nose.

"The rotten, joking beast! All the way upstairs for nothing! Br-r-r-r!"

Trimble did not borrow that stamp. It would not have served his purpose.

A sound of laughter in Tom Merry's study told him that the Terrible Three were indoors, and he blinked into No. 10. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were shouting with laughter, apparently over some good joke. At the sight of Trimble they shouted more loudly than ever.

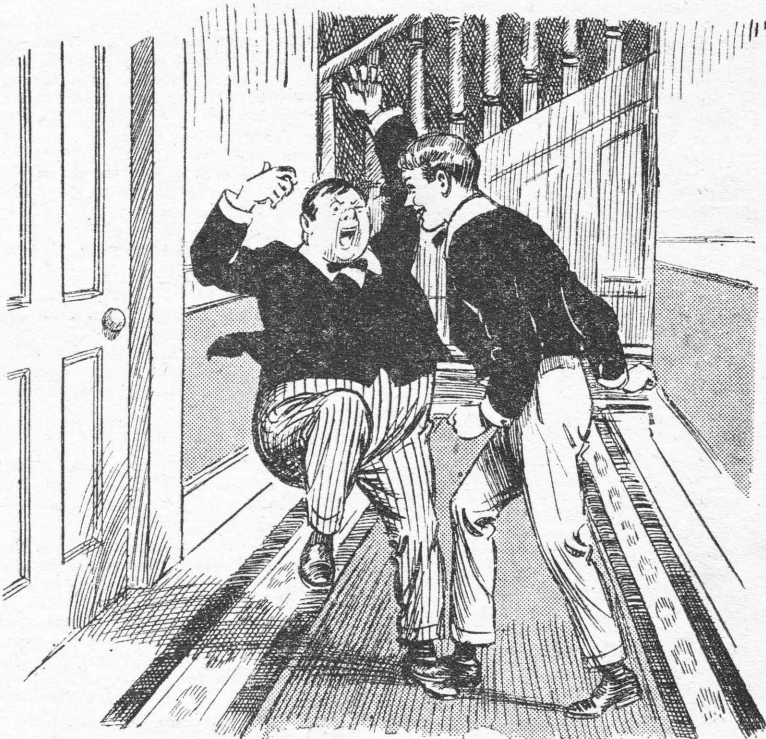
Trimble eyed them suspiciously. He suspected that the merriment of the Shell fellows had some connection with himself.

"Hallo! What's the joke?" he asked.

"You are!" said Monty Lowther politely. "I was thinking of your face, Trimble! Ha, ha!"

"Look here, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three in chorus.



**STAMP-COLLECTING!** "If you want another stamp, I'll give you one," said the Cornstalk. "Thanks awfully! I say—whoop!" roared Trimble, as Kangaroo's boot came down on his foot. "Wharrer you at?" "That's the stamp!" said Kangaroo, cheerily. (See Chapter 3.)

They seemed to find the sight of Baggy Trimble irresistible for some reason.

"Oh, don't be silly asses!" urged Trimble. "Can you lend me a stamp?"

"We're not lending anything," said Manners.

"Mean beasts!" growled Baggy.

And he departed from the study and slammed the door, leaving the Terrible Three chuckling.

But Baggy didn't stop to waste any more time on the Terrible Three. He was keen on the quest of stamps. The most enthusiastic philatelist could not have sought for stamps more assiduously than did Baggy Trimble that afternoon.

Good-natured fellows gave him stamps, relieved to find it was only a penny stamp he wanted. Baggy's collection grew. Every fellow he borrowed of was given to understand that it was just one stamp he wanted—to write to his cousin abroad, or to write to his millionaire uncle for a tip.

Trimble's stories varied a good deal, though he was the kind of fellow that, according to the old proverb, needed to have a good memory.

That evening Baggy Trimble found himself in possession of a large number of loose penny stamps. He counted them in his study.

"Thirty-seven!" he chortled. "That's three bob for the competition, and a stamp to post the letter with. Only—only they won't take loose stamps at the 'Lucky Tips' office. But that's all right!"

The cheerful Baggy made his way to his Form master's study. Mr. Lathom eyed him with severe inquiry.

"You have brought me your lines, Trimble?"

"Nunno, sir! I—I've been helping young Frayne with his lessons, and I haven't had time to do my lines yet. I—I wanted to ask you to—to help me, sir. I want to send three shillings to the

hospital, sir, and I've been saving up stamps. But I don't like to send them a lot of loose stamps. Would you take them, sir, and give me a sheet of stamps?"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom. "I am glad to see, Trimble, that you have some thought for the hospitals, who are doing so much for us all! I will certainly do as you wish!"

Mr. Lathom opened his desk, and cordially handed Trimble a sheet of thirty-six stamps in exchange for the loose ones. He was surprised and pleased. He had not fancied that Trimble was the kind of fellow to send money to the hospital funds.

"Thank you, sir!" said Baggy.

He quitted the study in great satisfaction, and returned to his own room. He was provided now with the necessary funds for the "Lucky Tips" competition, and all he had to do was to spot the winners. And Baggy hadn't any doubt about his ability to do that.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### The Solution!

**B**AGGY TRIMBLE was busy in his study.

His study-mates, Lumley-Lumley and Mellish and Levison, were at work on their prep. But Trimble had something more important than prep to think of.

"Lucky Tips" was open before him on the table. He was conning over several lists of horses—those entered for the four races in the competition. Baggy had to foretell the winners of those four races in order to bag the hundred-pound prize, or a share of it. Baggy prided himself on his knowledge of horseflesh; but even the fatuous Baggy doubted whether he would "nail" four winners at one fell swoop.



But he intended to have a dozen tries, and in a dozen tries Baggy was quite certain of getting the four. "Lucky Tips" obligingly printed a whole sheet of coupons upon which the winners were to be named. "Lucky Tips" did not mind how many coupons were used, so long as the sum of three-pence was sent for every one used. Trimble was going to use a dozen, and he hadn't the slightest doubt that among that dozen coupons one would contain the names of the four winners.

Levison was grinning.

"Got 'em?" Levison asked, winking at Lumley-Lumley, as Baggy Trimble paused to chew the handle of his pen.

Trimble nodded.

"Yes, I think I've got 'em. What do you think of Snooker II. for the Mugg's Plate?"

"Oh, ripping!"

"And Bully Boy for the Swindleton Handicap?"

"Topping!"

"And Pinch of Snuff for the Duffer-ton Plate?"

"Bound to romp home!"

"And Mayflower for the Catchem Stakes?" said Trimble. "I think that four will pull 'em off, but I'm having a dozen tries. Can't fail to get the winners on one coupon if I have a dozen tries."

"Can't fail—eh?" said Lumley-Lumley, looking up.

"Rather not!"

"Then everybody who has a dozen tries will win the hundred pounds, I guess?"

Trimble smiled a superior smile.

"Everybody with my knowledge," he said. "You see, I know all about horses—know the game from start to finish!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I shouldn't wonder if one or two other knowing blades get a whack in the prize," said Trimble.

"Knowing blades. Oh crumbs!"

"Then you're certain of a whack in it?" grinned Levison. "Are you just as certain of getting it if you win?"

"Oh, yes! The competition is conducted on lines of the strictest fairness."

"How do you know?"

"It says so in 'Lucky Tips.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see where the cackle comes in. Besides, they publish the names and addresses of the winners."

"Ripping for you, if anyone saw your name and address there!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "I guess it would be the sack."

"Well, the Head doesn't take in 'Lucky Tips,' you know," said Trimble.

"I'm risking that. A real gay blade is bound to run some risks. My name will be there, of course. I'm bound to win. This will set me up for the term. Of course, it would make it safer to send in two dozen coupons. If you like to lend me three bob, Lumley—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Or you, Levison!"

"Rats!"

"If you'd like to lend me three bob, Mellish—"

"Catch me!" grinned Mellish.

"Well, I jolly well sha'n't lend you any of the prize when I get it!" sniffed Trimble. "You'll be after my hundred quid when it comes along, I know that—"

"When!" chuckled Levison.

"Well, anyway, there are consolation prizes for fellows who get only three winners. They get a pound each. Suppose I get the four winners on my coupon, they can't help giving me the first prize, can they?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 311.

"I suppose not!"

"Here goes!" said Trimble, and he slipped his sheet of coupons into an envelope, with the sheet of stamps, and sealed it. "Now to post it. You'll sing rather a different tune next week, when I'm rolling in quids. I'm going to post this when the coast is clear."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble rolled out of the study and hurried down to the Close.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### The Result!

"HURRAH!"

Thus Baggy Trimble on the following morning.

Trimble had the morning paper in his hands, and it was open at the racing column. Baggy's eyes were dancing with delight.

"All the winners?" grinned Levison.

"Yes! Hurrah!"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You don't mean to say you got the winners in your rotten competition?"

"Look at it!" chortled Trimble. "Snooker II., Bully, Pinch of Snuff, and Son of Mine—and I had 'em all on one coupon. It was a stroke of luck, too. I got 'em rather mixed when I put 'em on the coupon. I had to catch the post, you know, and somehow I left out the horses I intended to put in, and put in the wrong ones. And—and, as it happens, they're the winners!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled.

Baggy Trimble, with his wonderful knowledge of horses and races, had made selections for the winners, and, with his usual stupidity, had entered the names of the wrong horses on the coupons. He had made that interesting discovery later, conning over his copy of the list. His selections had come in nowhere, but fortunately they were not on the coupons, so it did not matter. The names he had written by mistake happened to be the names of the winning horses. It was, as Blake remarked, fool's luck.

But Baggy could not have been more pleased if he had selected those winning names by sheer skill and wonderful knowledge.

"Look at 'em!" he chortled. "Four winners—that hundred quid is mine! This is what comes of knowing racing from start to finish—ahem—I—I mean I—"

"Ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "Why, if you'd put in the horses you selected to win, you wouldn't have got a winner at all!"

"Ahem! I've got the winners, anyway," said Trimble. "Jolly queer it should turn out like that, but there you are."

"Queerer still if you get the hundred quids!" chuckled Levison.

"Oh, you're an ass! My name will be in 'Lucky Tips' to-day."

"We'll see."

Trimble snorted. He had no doubt at all that his name would be in "Lucky Tips" as the winner of a hundred pounds.

Baggy was remarkably cheery that morning, and after afternoon lessons he went down to the village and bought a paper. The Terrible Three met him there when he returned.

There was a puzzled expression on his fat face.

"This is jolly queer!" he said, as Tom Merry & Co. came up to him.

"What's queer?" asked Lowther, with a grin.

"My name isn't here!"

"Go hon!"

"I had four winners, all right, on one coupon!" said Baggy excitedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing to cackle at!" roared Trimble. "I sent in the winners, and if nobody else got four, I'm entitled to the whole prize."

"And you won't be happy till you get it?" grinned Lowther.

"Oh, rot!" growled Trimble. "I'm jolly well going to write to them, and point out that they've overlooked my coupon!"

"And what then?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, then they'll send me the prize!"

"They will—I don't think!" chuckled Lowther. "You shouldn't have made four mistakes and got four winners, Baggy. You were too jolly clever!"

Baggy Trimble snorted. It was really too bad, after having named four winners by a series of lucky mistakes, to find that someone else had won.

"You posted your letter, I suppose?" asked Tom Merry.

"Why, of course, I—"

Baggy paused. His hand flashed to his pocket, and a startled expression came over his face. There was a roar of laughter from the Terrible Three as Trimble pulled an envelope from his pocket.

It was the intended letter to "Lucky Tips!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, what—what—"

Baggy stared at the letter in his hand—the letter he had been going to post the previous day.

"But I'm sure I posted it!" he said.

"You couldn't have done so," said Tom Merry. "You must have forgotten it. And I'm jolly glad. It'll teach you not to go in for these racing stunts."

"Ow! You rotter! It's all your fault!" cried Baggy. "Here, I say, wharrer you at?"

The Terrible Three had closed round the dismayed fat junior, and Tom Merry laid violent hands on his shoulder.

"We are going to give you a little lesson, Baggy, my tame idiot! Don't meddle in these things again," said Merry. "Collar him, you chaps!"

The "chaps" collared Baggy, and the next moment loud howls rang through the close as the three chums proceeded to teach their fat Form-fellow a lesson.

They left Baggy gasping on the hard, unsympathetic ground, and strode away, laughing. But Baggy did not laugh for some time to come.

But that evening Tom Merry & Co. found him in the school junkshop, and he was buying tarts and ginger-pop with a sheet of stamps.

"Hallo! How's the winners?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Oh, rats!" growled Baggy, and he turned his back on the Terrible Three, and turned his attention upon the pile of tarts at his elbow.

He was still upset about the unposted letter, but he got a little consolation from stamps that had not been sent. He was trying to bury his disappointment in tarts and ginger-beer, and from what Tom Merry & Co. saw he was doing it very well.

THE END.

(Don't miss "Parker The Mysterious" next week's grand, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, introducing a new and amazing character.)

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