

6 **SPLENDID STORIES THIS WEEK!**

The **POPULAR**

EVERY TUESDAY

Week Ending New Series
November 20th. No. 408
1926

2^D



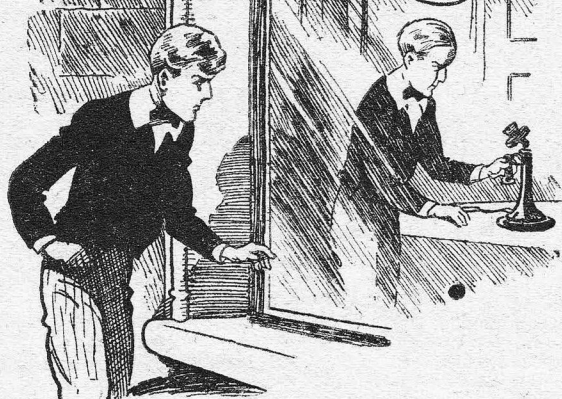
THE YELLOW HUNTER!

Special Nature Tale **INSIDE**

THE SKIPPER'S TASK!

Skippering the Fourth Form is not an easy task, but when he is called upon Jimmy Silver is always ready to play up to his nickname of "Uncle James"!

Swindling The School!



A Splendid Long Complete
Story of Jimmy Silver & Co.
of Rookwood.

BY

Owen Conquest.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Sportive Muffin!

"PUNCH his nose!" suggested Arthur Edward Lovell.

Lovell's ideas were often of a drastic nature.

"You see—" said Jimmy Silver dubiously.

Lovell grunted.

"Who's junior captain at Rookwood?" he demanded.

"Little me!" admitted Jimmy.

"Well, being junior captain isn't all honey," said Lovell. "Junior captain has duties to do."

"Among others, punching fellows' noses?" asked Raby, with a grin.

"Yes—if they ask for it."

"Has Tracy asked?" inquired Newcome mildly.

"Hasn't he?" snorted Lovell. "Asked for it? I should say so—begged for it, in fact! Look here, Jimmy, I'll punch his nose if you like. It always does Tracy of the Shell good to punch him, anyhow. Shall I go along to Smythe's study now and punch Tracy?"

Lovell rose from his chair in the end study, evidently prepared to act upon his own suggestion, as junior captain's delegate.

But Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Leave Tracy's nose alone, for the present," he said. "I'm not sure that it's a case for punching noses. He's an awful rotter, of course. But—"

"Oh, go and give him a tract!" said Lovell, in great disgust. "That's more in your line, I suppose."

Jimmy Silver smiled serenely. He was used to emphatic criticism from Arthur Edward Lovell.

"You see, though I'm junior captain, I'm in the Fourth," he said. "Tracy's in the Shell. There's a certain amount of delicacy in the matter—laying down the law to a higher Form."

A loud snort from Arthur Edward Lovell announced what he thought of considerations of delicacy.

"But I'm going to look into it," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "It looks to me as if Tracy is playing some low-down game. I don't know that it's my bizney, especially if those asses in

Smythe's study play the goat generally. But this time I can't help thinking that there's something very fishy in it. Oh, for goodness' sake, clear off, Tubby!" added the captain of the Fourth, as Reginald Muffin rolled into the end study.

"To-morrow's Wednesday!" said Tubby Muffin.

"What about it, fathead?"

"It's a half-holiday," said Tubby.

"And—and if you could lend me five bob for to-morrow, Jimmy—"

"I couldn't!"

"It's a very special occasion," said Tubby persuasively. "I can promise to return it by evening. At the same time, I shall settle up some other small sums I owe you. I am also going to stand a big spread in my study, and I want all you fellows to come. The feed will be unlimited. So in the cires, Jimmy—"

"Coming into a fortune to-morrow?" asked Lovell sarcastically.

"Not exactly a fortune, Lovell," said the fat Classical. "But I shall be handling two-pound-ten."

"Then what do you want with my five bob?" asked Jimmy Silver.

Tubby hesitated.

"Owing to—to circumstances, I can't get the two-pound-ten without having the five bob first," he explained. "You fellows wouldn't understand—but that's how it is."

The Fistical Four of the Classical Fourth stared at Reginald Muffin. Reginald was rather mysterious; but the veil of mystery was not very thick, and all four of the juniors could see through it quite easily.

"You fat chump!" said Jimmy Silver, in measured tones. "You're thinking of making a bet."

"Hem!"

"You're going into Tracy's little game—what?"

"Hum!"

"I've heard that he offered ten to one last Wednesday," said Jimmy Silver.

"That would be two-pound-ten to five bob. You frabjous lump of fat—"

"Well, isn't it a good thing?" demanded Tubby Muffin. "I wish you fellows would be a bit more sporting—"

like me! Where's the harm in a little flutter? Last Wednesday Tracy took on three or four fellows with bets of ten to one against the favourite, and he won all along the line. Stands to reason it can't happen again. It's understood that he's offering the same odds to-morrow. I'm on it, I can tell you! If Tracy makes a book on the three o'clock race to-morrow I'm going to nail him down."

"Precious game to be going on at Rookwood!" snorted Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Oh, you ain't sporting!" said Tubby Muffin. "Why not go in for it? Be a man, you know—like me!"

"Oh, my hat! A man—like you!"

"A lot of fellows are keen to take on Tracy if he goes the whole hog again," said Tubby. "I can tell you, it's a good thing. He took awfully long chances last Wednesday. It can't come off again. Lightning never strikes twice in the same place, you know. I know Tracy pocketed three whole quids last week. He's going to shell out if he plays the same game to-morrow—what!"

"Fathead!" said Raby. "Do you think a fat duffer like you can beat a keen rotter like Tracy of the Shell?"

"There's the law of chances, you know," said Tubby. "Tracy can't bring a thing off twice like that. Stands to reason!"

"So a lot of fellows are going in for this, are they?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a worried look.

"Regular crowd," said Tubby. "Lat-trey, and Gower, and Flynn, and a lot in the Shell. Tracy will be doing business to-morrow like a regular bookie."

"Are you going to punch his nose now, Jimmy?" inquired Arthur Edward Lovell.

"I'm going to think it out," said Jimmy.

"Rot!"

"What about that five bob?" asked Tubby Muffin anxiously. "You don't want me to miss a sure thing like this, do you, Jimmy?"

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet.

"I won't lend you five bob to back a

THE POPULAR.—No. 408

horse, Tubby," he said. "But as you're a born idiot—"

"Oh, I say—"

"And your Form captain is your keeper, to some extent," continued Jimmy, "I'll lend you something else. Hand over that fives bat, Newcome!"

"Ha, ha! Here you are!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter!" roared Tubby Muffin, in great indignation and alarm. "If you— Yah! Oh!"

Jimmy Silver took the fat Classical by the collar with one hand, and the fives bat in the other. There was the sound of a loud, ringing whack, followed by a louder yell from Reginald Muffin.

"Now, that's for your own good, old chap!" said Jimmy Silver. "Whenever you think of backing a horse in future, think of the fives bat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! You awful beast—"

"Now buzz along!" said Jimmy, twirling the fat junior out of the study.

"Next time you want a loan for backing horses come along to this study. The fives bat is always at your service."

"Yah! Rotter!" roared Tubby Muffin, and he rolled away in a state of righteous indignation and wrath. Applying a fives bat to his tight trousers was not really a respectful way of treating a merry sportsman.

Jimmy Silver sat down at the tea-table again, with a thoughtful frown on his brow. Uncle James of Rookwood had plenty of food for thought in Allan Tracy's latest development. He hated to interfere, and as a rule he paid no heed to the sportive ways of the "Giddy Goats of Rookwood." But Tracy's latest was rather out of the common, and Jimmy Silver felt bound, in the peculiar circumstances, to give it his very best attention.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Suspicion!

ADOLPHUS SMYTHE of the Shell was about to light his after-teea cigarette, when a tap came at the door of his study.

Adolphus hastily thrust the cigarette into his pocket.

His study-mates, Tracy and Howard, followed his example.

The door opened, and Jimmy Silver of the Classical Fourth walked into the study.

"Oh! Only a dashed fag!" said Smythe; and his cigarette came into view again.

"That's all!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "Only a dashed fag—the same as yourself, Smythey!"

"If you've come to my study to be cheeky, Silver—" began Adolphus loftily.

"I've come to speak to Tracy."

"Oh, my aunt!" said Adolphus, with a whistle. "Are you in it, too, Silver? I really thought that the end study was far above that sort of thing. I never knew you'd heard of such a thing as a racehorse. Has the end study—the giddy palladium of the school—fallen from grace?"

The nuts of the Shell chuckled.

"My dear man," said Tracy, "I'm open to take you on, with the rest! But there's nothin' doin' until to-morrow!"

"I've not come here to make dirty bets, as you know jolly well," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "It seems, Tracy, that you've been making a start in the bookmaking line."

"Nothin' to do with you, unless you want to back your fancy!" answered Tracy.

THE POPULAR.—No. 408.

"It's a sermon!" said Howard. "Silver is great on sermons! Let him rip. But chuck it about seventhly, Silver! Have some consideration for unhappy sinners, you know!"

"Yaas, go it up to seventhly, and then travel!" grinned Adolphus.

Jimmy Silver did not heed the badinage of the merry nuts. His face remained quite serious.

"I've been making a few inquiries up and down the Fourth," he said. "You seem to have had a lot of luck last week, Tracy!"

"I laid against the favourite," yawned Tracy. "Never thought much of his chance."

"Ten to one was long odds, though."

"I took the risk."

"It was a thumping risk for a Shell fellow to take giddy sportsman as he is!" said Jimmy. "You laid ten to one in quids."

"That's so."

"With four fellows."

"You've got it."

"Which would have landed you with forty pounds to pay if the favourite had won."

"I knew he wouldn't win—know all about gees, you know," said Tracy airily. "If I lose, I pay."

"You can raise forty pounds, then?"

"I can raise my losses if I bet. It's for the fellows who bet with me to complain if I Welsh them!" said Tracy coolly. "Nothin' for you to butt in for, that I can see!"

"Of course, Tracy couldn't have raised forty quids," said Howard. "But he knew he was on a sure thing."

"How could he know?" asked Jimmy Silver quietly. "I've been looking at a last week's paper, and I find that the favourite was beaten only by a neck—the race was a close thing. How could Tracy know he was going to lose, to the extent of laying ten to one in quids against him?"

"Luck!" said Adolphus.

"Knowledge!" said Tracy. "My dear man, I could tell you anythin' about horses! You see, I've got a system, founded on the form of the geegees, and I work it out practically by mathematics!"

"What utter rot!" said Jimmy.

"Facts speak for themselves," said Adolphus Smythe sapiently. "I thought Tracy was goin' it rather recklessly last Wednesday, but it came off. I know I'm not backin' against Tracy any time."

"Same here!" said Howard, with a nod.

Jimmy Silver surveyed the nuts of the Shell. There was vague suspicion somewhere in his mind. Tracy's racing exploit and its success really seemed remarkable. A "system" on horse-racing was, as Jimmy knew, all rot. Yet certainly the result seemed to speak for itself.

Jimmy had vaguely supposed the existence of some kind of scheme in Smythe's study, but he could see now that if there was anything "crooked" going on Smythe and Howard were not in it. Their admiration for their comrade was too open and genuine for that.

"You're playing the game again to-morrow?" asked Jimmy, after a pause.

"That depends," said Tracy. "I'm thinkin' of makin' a little book on the three o'clock race to-morrow. But it depends on the latest news in the paper to-morrow mornin'. I've got to mug it up and think it out. I'm not offering ten to one unless I feel pretty sure about it, you can guess!"

Jimmy compressed his lips.

"I'm not sure that it's my bizney to interfere," he said slowly.

"Take my word for it, old bean—it isn't!"

"But this isn't your usual silly rot, that you call sporting!" said Jimmy. "This seems to be a bookmaking scheme for making money on a pretty large scale. If it goes on the prefects will get to hear of it in time. And I can't understand your luck, Tracy."

"It wasn't luck; just knowledge of the form of the gee," explained Tracy. "I worked it out that the favourite couldn't win, to my own satisfaction, and risked my money on it."

"That sounds jolly steep to me! And is it against the favourite that you're laying the money to-morrow?"

"If I lay at all," assented Tracy. "There's one thing that strikes me about it," said Jimmy slowly. "Last Wednesday, from what I hear, the race was run at just three. But you didn't make up your book on the race till after three o'clock."

Tracy nodded.

"It comes to the same thing," he answered. "The result isn't known here till the evenin'. Bets are made any time up to the announcement of the result. I suppose you don't think I'm a giddy spiritualist, and that spooks breathe the winner's name in my ear?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Smythe and Howard.

"I don't see how you could get the result of the race in time," confessed Jimmy Silver. "You couldn't get a wire here without its being known, and you wouldn't dare to ring up a man on the race ground on a telephone in a master's study, I suppose?"

Tracy gave him a quick look.

"So you're so jolly suspicious as all that?" he asked, with a sneer.

"Luck like yours needs explaining, somehow!" said Jimmy Silver dryly.

"And laying the bets after the race is run looks fishy, and I'm going to find out more about it."

And with that Jimmy left the study, slamming the door behind him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Uncle James Works it Out!

JIMMY SILVER, on the following day, was giving a good deal of thought to Allan Tracy of the Shell and his "latest."

So were several other fellows in the Fourth.

Jimmy noted grimly that other fellows as well as the sportive nuts were taking an interest in the afternoon's race at Newstead; the thing was spreading, as it were. Newstead was fifty miles from Rookwood, in another county. It was a well-known racing centre, and the three o'clock race was a rather big event.

From the talk in the studies it seemed that Bully Boy was the favourite for the three o'clock, and the latest news in the sporting columns in the newspaper was that Bully Boy would start at odds on. If Tracy laid against the favourite, it looked as if Tracy would not be likely to repeat his former luck. Jimmy could not understand it—but there was a deep and growing suspicion at the back of his mind.

But that was not all. He did not trust Allan Tracy, and he did not believe that Tracy was taking such chances. Somehow or other Tracy was on a "cert," but Jimmy did not think of believing for a moment that he had a system of spotting winners; that was unthinkable and impossible. If he laid heavy odds against the favourite it was because he knew that that horse was not a winner, and the fact that on the

previous occasion Tracy had made his "book" after the race was run was suspicious in itself. True, it seemed utterly impossible for Tracy to get news from the racecourse, fifty miles away, within ten minutes of the event. Anybody at Rookwood would have laughed at the idea. Yet, if all was above-board, why did not Tracy "make his book" before the race, instead of after?

Jimmy cudgelled his brains on that subject.

Whether he ought to interfere in the sportive games of the nuts he was not quite sure; but if Tracy was working some cunning swindle on his school-fellows there was no doubt that somebody ought to interfere. If Tracy, after knowing that a horse had been beaten, laid odds against that horse, it was robbery, pure and simple, and the fellow was a thief. In that case, Uncle James of Rookwood not only meant to interfere, but to interfere with a very heavy hand.

But was that it?

In any case, it was a disgrace to Rookwood to have this blackguardly betting going on amongst the juniors. And Jimmy determined to stop it.

After morning lessons he looked for Tracy, and found him chatting with several juniors in the quadrangle.

"Making up your book—what?" asked Jimmy.

Tracy shook his head.

"Haven't made up my mind yet," he said. "If you want anything on come along later."

"After the race?" asked Jimmy sarcastically.

Tracy shrugged his shoulders.

"After I'm ready," he answered. "I've got to get the latest form of the horses that are running. My copy of the 'Racing Oracle' doesn't get here till after dinner—I give a kid sixpence to bring it on his bike. When it comes I shall go through the thing and make up my mind."

"No results of races in that?" asked Jimmy.

"Fathead! It's a morning paper. It will get here before three, I hope, and anyone else is welcome to see it," said Tracy. "I'm not makin' a book till I've seen it; my game isn't chuckin' money away."

Jimmy Silver retired, baffled. Tracy's excuse—if it was an excuse—was a good one, and Jimmy was perplexed.

After dinner three members of the Fistical Four were not thinking about Tracy and his racing stunts. There was a Sixth Form match on Big Side that afternoon; Bulkeley, Neville, Knowles, and the other great guns of the Sixth were meeting a senior team from Bagshot. And Lovell, and Raby, and Newcome were going to be spectators, like most of the rest of the Lower School.

"There'll be a big crowd," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "We'll get along early, and boost the Moderns out of the best places, if they shove in, Jimmy."

"I think I shall give it a miss," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully.

"What on earth for?"

"I'm looking after Tracy."

"Blow Tracy!"

"Blow him as hard as you like. I'll come down to the ground, though," added Jimmy Silver reflectively. "But I sha'n't stay. If Tracy does his book-making stunt this afternoon, he is going to have an eye on him."

The Fistical Four walked down to Big Side together, and Tracy of the Shell watched them go with a smile on his face. Probably he was pleased to see Jimmy Silver & Co. occupied that afternoon—especially Jimmy Silver.

But Jimmy did not remain long in the crowd on Big Side. He strolled away quietly after the game had commenced, leaving Lovell & Co. watching, and exchanging badinage with Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern Fourth. Jimmy Silver strolled back to the School House and looked for Tracy. He found two or three other fellows looking for that sportive youth.

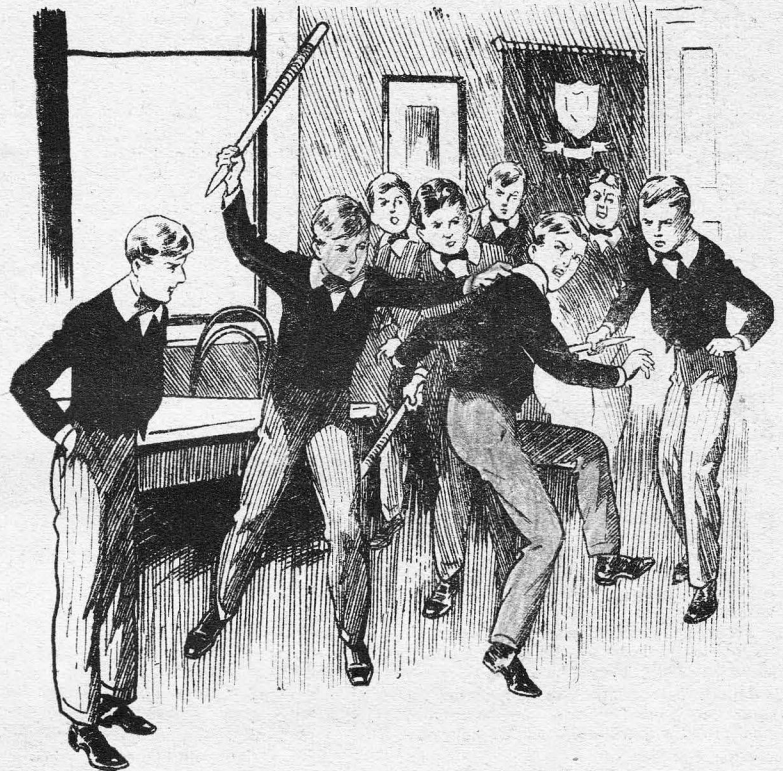
"Seen Tracy?" asked Flynn of the Fourth.

"Isn't he about?" asked Jimmy in turn.

"Seems to have vanished intirely," said Flynn. "I want to know what he's

not want to back his fancy, but he wanted to know what the Rookwood bookie was up to.

Tracy could not have ventured out of school to get a telephone call in the village; he decided on that. With so many fellows on the alert, he was certain to be seen coming or going; and, besides, it was some distance to Coombe. He could scarcely have got back before half-past three, and on the previous occasion, Jimmy knew, Tracy's bets had been laid within ten minutes after three o'clock. Had he received his "Racing Oracle" and retired to some secluded spot to study the



"STUMPING" THE ROGUE! Tracy was whirled into the Common-room and Lattrey produced a cricket stump, and every one of Tracy's "clients" had a go with the stump, amid wild yells from the young rascal. Jimmy Silver looked on with a cheery smile. He felt that it was worth while giving up watching the First Eleven match for this. (See Chapter 4.)

doing, you know. Sure, I lost a quid to him last week, and I want to try again."

"Young ass!" said Jimmy, and he walked on. In the Common-room he found Townsend and Topham, and they also asked him if he had seen Tracy of the Shell.

"Gone out of gates, perhaps," suggested Jimmy.

Towny shook his head.

"No, he hasn't; Selwyn and Chesney are lookin' for him there. Somebody's been givin' hints about Tracy's luck, and if he goes out now I fancy fellows will suspect a telephone call in the village," Townsend grinned. "We're fly, you know."

"Not fly enough for Tracy, I imagine," said Jimmy Silver.

He left the Common-room, more suspicious than ever.

He then proceeded, quietly and thoroughly, to look for Tracy of the Shell. It was getting on for three o'clock now, and fellows who wanted to "back their fancy" with the amateur bookmaker were anxious to see Tracy. Jimmy did

form of the horses? It was possible, but Jimmy did not think so.

After failing to find Tracy, Jimmy sat down to think it out. And the subject of his cogitations was that wonderful modern invention, the telephone.

Tracy could not get a telegram at the school unknown. He could not get to the village for a phone call at the post-office. Therefore, if he really had a cunning scheme for learning the result of the race before he laid his bets he was using one of the school telephones.

It was impossible—or seemed impossible. But by the process of exclusion, Jimmy Silver had arrived at that as the most probable theory.

The Head's telephone was out of the question, and though several Form masters had instruments in their studies, they were equally out of the question. Fellows sometimes borrowed a master's phone surreptitiously for a call; but this was a case of a call being received. If Jimmy's surmise was correct, Tracy was getting a call

from Newstead Racecourse from some rogue whom he had tipped to send him the result; and he could not possibly get such a call on a master's phone. It might arrive when the master was in the study. Tracy could not depend on the master's absence at any given moment. Then Jimmy Silver thought of the telephone in the prefects' room. The same objections seemed to apply—such a call coming through when a prefect was in the room would be disastrous for Tracy.

And then Jimmy gave a jump. At any other time, certainly, the use of the prefects' telephone was impossible without great risk of discovery. But just now the first eleven was playing a match on Big Side, and all the prefects except Carthew were in the team. And Carthew of the Sixth had gone out—Jimmy knew that; Carthew very seldom spent his half-holidays within gates. The sportsman of the Sixth was probably at that moment playing billiards in the village. That afternoon, until the game on Big Side was over, it was a practical certainty that no prefect of Rookwood would enter the prefects' room—and it was barred to all but prefects. If Tracy had the "neck" to take a call on that telephone, he could do so with perfect impunity.

"I've got it!" murmured Jimmy Silver, and his eyes gleamed.

With a grim expression on his face, the captain of the Fourth made his way to the prefects' room. It had just turned three o'clock, and if his suspicions were well founded Tracy of the Shell was in the prefects' room—where certainly nobody would think of looking for him—waiting to take his call.

Jimmy found the door of the prefects' room closed—and he did not open it. He stepped from a corridor window upon a little balcony that ran under the windows of the room. From the balcony he looked into the prefects' room through the window.

Tracy of the Shell was standing at the telephone his hand on the receiver, ready to lift it from the hooks.

Jimmy Silver gave him one glance and then returned the way he had come. There was a grim smile on his face now.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Tragic for Tracy!

BUZZZZZZ!

Tracy lifted the receiver. He gave one quick glance round as he did so; but he was not apprehensive. With all the prefects out of the House he was quite safe—no junior was likely to venture into the sacred precincts of that apartment. He was not thinking of Uncle James of Rookwood at that moment.

The call came through. The husky voice of Mr. Joey Hook came to Tracy's listening ear.

"Hallo! Is that young Nibs?"

Mr. Hook was careful not to mention names on the telephone.

"Yes. That you, old bird?"

"Right!"

"How's it gone?"

"Charley's Aunt got home."

"Good!"

Tracy put up the receiver at that. Charley's Aunt was the horse that had won the three o'clock race, and Bully Boy, the favourite, was therefore beaten. Tracy's favour was clear before him now.

If the favourite had won Tracy would have laid his money on him—at odds so long that his dupes wouldn't have been tempted to take the risk. As he had lost

the amateur bookie's task was easier. He was going to lay any odds against the favourite—a very secure proceeding in the circumstances. He crossed to the door of the prefects' room, smiling.

He had his "Racing Oracle" in his pocket. If fellows wanted to know where he had been he had been in the library, conning over the latest obtainable news of the horses' form. That was good enough. He had only to quit the prefects' room quietly and unseen—an easy task, as most fellows were out of the House, and those that were indoors had no business to draw them near the prefects' quarters.

But as Tracy opened the door he met with a surprise.

There was no reason at all why anyone should be in the corridor outside until the match on Big Side was over. But, startling to relate, there was quite a crowd there!

Selwyn and Chesney, of the Shell, Townsend, and Topham, Flynn, and Tubby Muffin, Lattrey, and Peele, and Gower, Smythe, and Howard—and Jimmy Silver. It was very unusual company for Jimmy Silver, but he was there. And the whole crowd of sportsmen, with Jimmy, were evidently waiting for Tracy to come out of the prefects' room.

Tracy gave a start.

"We've been lookin' for you, old bean!" said Townsend of the Fourth genially. "Where on earth have you been all this time?"

It did not take Tracy a second to recover from his surprise. He nodded coolly.

"Lookin' over the form of the horses," he answered.

"Thunderin' nerve to sit down in the prefects' room to do it!" said Smythe.

"Well, I wanted a quiet spot."

"Ready to do business, Tracy?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Certainly! Let's get along to the Common-room."

"Backin' the favourite?" asked Flynn.

"Well, no," said Tracy cheerfully.

"I've gone into the matter pretty carefully, and my opinion is that Bully Boy won't win."

"What's the odds?" asked Topham.

"Three to one against Bully Boy."

"Not ten this time?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"You see, Bully Boy's a good horse, and I may be wrong," said Tracy. "I think I'm right—but you never can tell. Three to one is the figure, take it or leave it!"

Jimmy Silver smiled grimly. The cunning young rascal seemed to leave no point unguarded; and, but for one circumstance, Tracy would certainly have experienced a rush of custom from the amateur punters. Rather to his surprise, the juniors looked at him, and at one another, and did not make any offers.

"Don't all speak at once!" said Tracy sarcastically. "I'm ready to do business, if you like. I'm not specially keen on it—I know Bully Boy's a good horse."

"You won't give four to one?" asked Flynn.

Tracy seemed to consider.

"Why not a hundred to one?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Eh?"

"Or a thousand to one?" said Jimmy, with grim humour.

"I—I don't quite catch on—"

"You thale of the world!" burst out Flynn, unable to control himself any longer. "You've just had it on the telephone that Bully Boy's beaten!"

Tracy paled a little. But he kept cool.

"You're dreaming!" he said pleasantly. "How could I possibly? Surely you don't suspect—"

"You haven't had a call?" asked Townsend, with a curl of the lip.

"Do you think I'd let myself be rung up on the prefects' telephone, when they might drop in any minute?" muttered Tracy.

"Not while the match is on—though we never thought of that till Jimmy mentioned it."

"You rotten blackguard!" said Townsend. "Silver saw you at the telephone!"

Tracy panted.

"He didn't—he couldn't! It's a lie!"

"I saw your game from the balcony," said Jimmy Silver tranquilly. "You see, I spotted your game!"

"It's a lie!" yelled Tracy furiously.

"And then I gathered up your sporting crowd, and brought them along," said Jimmy cheerfully. "We've been waiting here, Tracy, old bean, and every fellow heard the telephone-bell ring."

Tracy was pale to the lips now. He gave Jimmy a black and bitter look.

"You rotter—you—"

"I don't think I'm the rotter here!" said Jimmy Silver contemptuously.

"Last week, Tracy, you played this game, and you swindled fellows out of four quid. You're going to hand that money back."

"I—I—"

"Shell out!" roared Flynn.

The crowd of juniors made a general movement towards Tracy. He backed to the door of the prefects' room, and stood there, white and desperate.

"I—I don't mind handin' you the money, if you think—" he stammered.

"I—I—I'll—I—I don't mind a—"

"Shell out!"

Tracy shelled out; there was no help for that, and he hoped that that was all. But it was not all.

"That fellow is a swindler!" said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You silly asses deserve to be swindled for playing the ox as you've done. But that don't alter the fact that Tracy is a dirty thief! He ought to be kicked out of Rookwood—but he's going to be kicked, anyway!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Rag him!" roared Tubby Muffin.

"Hands off!" shrieked Tracy.

"Swindler!" shouted Gower.

"Collar him!"

There was a frantic howl from Tracy as he was collared by the angry juniors and dragged away. He went whirling along the passage, and it seemed to him that a series of earthquakes happened before he reached the junior Common-room. And after that it was worse.

Lattrey produced a cricket-stump, and every one of Tracy's "clients" had a go with the stump, amid wild yells from Allan Tracy.

Jimmy Silver looked on with a cheery smile. He felt that it was worth while giving up watching the first eleven match for this. Certainly the junior punters had had a lesson, and undoubtedly Tracy of the Shell was getting a still more severe lesson.

"I—I think that will do!" gasped Townsend at last.

"I think it will!" said Jimmy Silver, with a chuckle.

And he sauntered away to witness the tail-end of the first eleven match—while Tracy of the Shell crawled to his study, feeling that life was not worth living in the same school with Uncle James of Rookwood.

THE END.

(There will be another topping long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, next week, entitled: "The Boy Who Came Back!")