

DOWN ON HIS LUCK!

When Tom Rawson, the scholarship boy, is down on his luck, he finds staunch champions in Jimmy Silver and his chums, who once again play the parts of "Uncle James & Co." to very good effect!

RALLYING ROUND RAWSON!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Rough Luck!

"RAWSON, old man!" Jimmy Silver, captain of the Rookwood Fourth, was quite startled as he looked into Study No. 5.

That study belonged to Rawson, Townsend, and Topham. Towny and Topy, the nuts of the Classical Fourth, were not present, and Tom Rawson was alone.

He was seated at the study table, his elbows resting on an open Latin grammar, his face hidden in his hands.

He had evidently not heard Jimmy Silver's knock at the door, and had not heard the door open. He did not look up till the captain of the Fourth hailed him.

Then he stood up quite suddenly, and a flush came over his rugged face.

His attitude had been one of the deepest dejection; indeed, Jimmy thought he could see suspicious traces on Rawson's eyelashes. Evidently there was trouble, and heavy trouble, in Study No. 5.

Jimmy stood irresolute, undecided whether to come in or to go. He could see that he had surprised Rawson at an unpropitious moment.

That Rawson had, as a rule, more than a fair share of trouble on his young shoulders, Jimmy was aware. He was at Rookwood on a scholarship, without payment of fees. It was fairly well known that he could not have come otherwise. Townsend and Topham, his nutty study-mates, huddled at his clothes. His "clobber" was always clean and neat and tidy, but only too obviously there was not much money spent on it. A single garment of Towny's or Topy's probably outweighed in cash value the whole of Rawson's attire.

Jimmy Silver, who never gave a thought to a fellow's clothes, was chiefly concerned about Rawson as goalkeeper to the junior team. It was on football matters that he had come along to speak to him. But even the St. Jim's match took second place in his thoughts now.

He looked at Rawson's flushed, troubled face; and, after a moment or two of consideration, stepped into the study and closed the door behind him.

"Anything up, old scout?" he asked.

"I—I didn't hear you," stammered Rawson. "I—I was just thinking—I—I— No! Yes! It's all right!"

It was obviously not "all right." Jimmy Silver was not exactly a chum of Rawson's, but he liked him a great deal, and they had always been friendly; so Jimmy was concerned.

"Anything a chap can do?" he asked.

"Oh, no! Not at all!"

Jimmy paused. He guessed, un-



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"Hard lines," said Jimmy.

"Father's up against it," said Rawson. "I know he'll pull round in time; he's too good a workman to be on his beam-ends for long. But there's no time, you see. I've got little brothers and sisters at home, and the money goes as fast as it comes in, or faster. It means father getting into debt if I hang on here. Anything better than that. I suppose it's rather hard for you to understand a household where every sixpence counts?"

"I think I can understand," said Jimmy quietly. "But it's frightfully hard for you to chuck up your scholarship, old man. Isn't there anything that—"

He paused. It was pretty certain that Tom Rawson had turned over in his mind every resource before coming to that decision.

Rawson shook his head.

"The game's up for me here," he said. "If I go, and give up the scholarship, there will be some cash compensation for the period that's to run. That will see my people through." His face set doggedly. "It's hard lines, but I've got to stand it. No good grousing over what can't be helped. I've had a lot of luck, one way and another, and a fellow must take the rough with the smooth. I can stick it out to the end of the term. There's nothing more from home, but I don't need much; and I've a few things I can sell along the passage."

He paused, and his face flushed.

"I'm an ass to tell you about it, really, but you've always been so decent—"

"I'm glad you told me," said Jimmy. "I wish I could help you, somehow, old chap."

"You can't, and I couldn't let you if you could. It's all right, only you won't talk about it? I'd rather drop out quietly at the end of the term, without any talk."

"I understand."

"Put me down to keep goal against St. Jim's," added Rawson, with a faint smile. "I'll be jolly glad to do that, if you want me."

"We want you, rather!" said Jimmy Silver. "Then I'll put your name on the list."

Jimmy Silver left the study with a thoughtful brow. Rawson smiled and nodded to him as he went; but when the door had closed behind the captain of the Fourth, the black, despondent look returned to the face of the scholarship junior. It was hard, very hard; and with all his grit and courage—and he had plenty—Tom Rawson did not find it easy to face his new prospects with equanimity.

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comfortably, that the trouble was money. In that he could not help Rawson. Even had he had the money, Rawson could not have accepted help of that kind from him or anyone. There were several fellows in the Classical Fourth who could have told Jimmy Silver that Rawson had been growing shabbier and shabbier for a long time, and it was well known that he "fed" regularly in Hall, and never joined in the nobby little study spreads of Townsend and Topham.

Shortage of cash at home—Jimmy guessed now that that was the trouble. And, deeply as he sympathised, there was nothing to be said.

"Well, old chap, I dropped in to speak about the footer," he said. "But another time will do."

Rawson nodded.

Jimmy turned to the door again.

"Oh, don't go, Silver!" said Rawson, making an effort. "What's it about? You want me to keep goal?"

"Yes, old bean."

"That's all right—often as you like till the end of the term," said Rawson. "Next term it will be cricket, and you won't miss me."

Jimmy Silver spun back.

"Miss you! What do you mean? You're not leaving?"

"At the end of the term," said Rawson miserably. "That—that's what made me feel a bit knocked over. It comes hard, but it's no use whining. You needn't mention it along the passage."

"I won't," said Jimmy. "But—"

"I thought I'd tell you; you've always been decent to me, and—and I shouldn't like you to think I'd crumple up over a trifle. It's not a trifle, you know—getting out of the school, and sacrificing the rest of my scholarship."

"But why should you do that?" exclaimed Jimmy. "Your fees are paid here under the scholarship till it runs out. And—and—"

Rawson smiled a little bitterly.

"And I don't spent much," he said. "You're right. My people could keep me here for about as much as Towny spends on his waistcoats; only they don't happen to have it."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Sale Now On!

"WHAT the dickens!"
"What the thump!"
Townsend and Topham uttered those ejaculations simultaneously, as they came into Study No. 5 for prep.

They were late for prep, which was quite usual with them; but Tom Rawson had not yet started his prep, which was unusual.

He was standing at the study table, handling a number of articles, which, apparently, he had been sorting out. There was an inkstand, a dog-eared stamp-album, a silver whistle, two or three prize volumes, a cricket-bat, and several other things.

"What on earth's that giddy collection?" asked Townsend, staring at the table.

"Holdin' an auction?" grinned Topham.

Rawson looked up.
"Just that!" he answered. "Not exactly an auction, though; but I'm selling these things."

The Nuts looked at Rawson's little collection of treasures, and suppressed their smiles. There was nothing there that either of Rawson's wealthy studymates would care to possess.

"I'll tell you what, Rawson," said Townsend, as he sat down to prep, "let Leggett see that old album. That Modern cad knows all about stamps—I believe the beast knows everythin' that has any money in it—and he might give you five bob."

"I'll let him see it," said Rawson.

"Now help me with this beastly Virgil, there's a good chap!" said Topham persuasively. "You look out

those rotten words in the rotten dick, Topsy!"

And the three juniors sat down to prep.

After prep Rawson strolled down the Classical Fourth passage, and let it become known that there were things for sale in Study No. 5.

Quite a number of juniors looked in, friends of Rawson's, or fellows with an eye to a bargain.

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome came together from the end study; Mornington and Erroll came from Study No. 4; Oswald looked in, and Conroy and Putty Grace, and several other fellows.

Most of the things went at moderate prices. Prices had to be low to effect a sale in the Fourth Form passage.

In an hour's time only the stamp-album remained.

Really, it looked so worthless, and most of the stamps in it were so common-place, that nobody was inclined to "spring" a half-crown for it. Tubby Muffin offered a penny.

"Dash it all, let's clear out the stock!" said Valentine Mornington. "I'll give five bob for the album, Rawson."

"You don't know anything about stamps, Morny!"

"Not at all—and don't want to!"

"Then you don't want the album!" said Rawson, rather gruffly.

Morny laughed.

"I'll take it without wantin' it, if you're not too jolly independent, old bean!"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders; and the other fellows, who would quite willingly have put up a few shillings to take the dog-eared old album off

Rawson's hands, decided not to make the offer. It was absolutely certain that nobody wanted it, and Rawson was not the fellow to accept a favour in matters where money was concerned.

So the juniors cleared off, leaving Rawson with one item unsold, and the album was stacked on the shelf again.

The sale had realised a pound and an odd shilling or two; a small sum which was a large one in Rawson's hands, as he knew the value of money and how to make the most of it. On the morrow he was likely to receive an offer from Albert Leggett of the Modern Fourth for the album, that being in Leggett's line; though the offer was likely to be extremely low, that also being in Albert Leggett's line.

popular junior, owing chiefly to his money-lending activities. But on the day following Rawson's sale, Leggett determined to look him up.

After dinner Leggett came over to the House, and looked round for Rawson. He found that youth in his study with Jimmy Silver, who was talking football with him.

Leggett looked in.
"Got that rubbish handy?" he asked.

"I haven't any rubbish here that I know of," answered Rawson.

"None till you came here, Leggett," remarked Jimmy Silver affably.

Leggett honoured the captain of the Fourth with a scowl.

"That old stamp-album, Rawson," he snapped. "Townsend's been telling me about it. I suppose you're going to tip him for doing the commercial traveller stunt for you."

"I didn't know Topham had mentioned it, and I never asked him to," said Rawson gruffly.

"He was doing you a good turn, old chap," murmured Jimmy Silver. "Old Topham isn't a bad sort of an ass!"

Rawson nodded.

"Well, where is it?" asked Leggett impatiently. "I haven't got a lot of time to waste, Rawson!"

"Busy debt-collecting, what?" grunted Rawson.

"That's no bizney of yours!"

Rawson made a restive movement.

"Look here, do you want to sell the thing, or don't you?" demanded Leggett.

"I want to sell it; but I'm not keen on selling it to you, Leggett," said Rawson. "I'd really rather have nothing to do with you!"

Leggett eyed him sharply.

"Well, let a fellow look at the thing," he said civilly. "I collect stamps, you know, and if you've got anything worth a fellow's money, I'll make you an offer, to take or leave."

"Oh, all right!"

Rawson picked the old album off the shelf and threw it on the table. Even his need of ready cash did not enable him to tolerate Leggett with equanimity. He disliked the fellow and distrusted him.

Leggett grinned at the dog-eared old volume.

"My hat! Call that an album?" he said. "I fancy that thing came out along with the first postage-stamps, about eighty years ago!"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"I wouldn't give twopence for it!"

"I haven't asked you to."

"Oh, I'll look at it, anyhow!"

Leggett turned over the leaves with an air of contemptuous amusement. Rawson's uncle, who had collected stamps in his boyhood, had apparently not had much philatelic knowledge. Most of the stamps were used, and were of the commonest varieties of British stamps, but here and there was a foreign stamp.

Leggett's expression grew more and more contemptuously derisive as he looked through the album.

Rawson turned to Jimmy Silver and resumed the discussion of football. But he was stirring restively under Leggett's unpleasant manner.

"My hat! What a lot of rubbish!" said Leggett. "All these stamps would be worth exactly their face value if they were unused. As they stand, they're worth nothing at all."

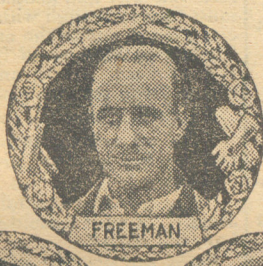
"There are some unused," said Rawson. "Three or four—"

"Rubbish like the rest, I expect!"

"Well, give me the book and clear off!" said Rawson, his patience breaking down at last. "If the thing's of no

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

On the Make!

ALBERT LEGGETT, of the Modern House, was not a pleasant or

value you don't want to buy it, and I don't want you to! That's enough!"

"Yes, travel off, Leggett!" said Jimmy Silver. "You're not a pleasant object in a fellow's study!"

Leggett did not heed.

He intended to look at every stamp in the book, on the off-chance that some valuable specimen might be there, as was always possible in an old album. He could stand a good deal of snubbing for the chance of making a pound or a couple of pounds out of an unsuspecting school-fellow.

He continued to turn the browned old leaves, with a sneering grin on his meagre face, and his thin lips curling with contempt. The two Classical fellows eyed him impatiently.

Suddenly Leggett gave a start.

His eyes became glued on a stamp, with a startled gleam in them, and he carried the album across to the window to see it more clearly.

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"Found a giddy treasure?" he asked.

Leggett seemed to recollect himself. He looked across the study from the window, at the two juniors.

"Oh, no, nothing of the kind!" he answered, with a curious tremble in his voice. "Nothing but rubbish here!"

"Then leave it alone, and buzz!" said Rawson.

"I don't mind making you an offer for the book, though, as you're hard-up," said Leggett.

Rawson flushed.

"What the thump business is it of yours whether I'm hard up or not?" he broke out angrily. "Mind your own dashed business! Leave my stamp album alone, and get out of my study!"

"Oh, keep your wool on!" said Leggett. "I'll give you five shillings for the thing as it stands, and I shall be losing on it."

"Gammon!" said Jimmy Silver. "If Leggett offers you five bob, Rawson, it means that the thing's worth more than that."

"Don't you butt in, Jimmy Silver. Is it a go, Rawson?"

"No, it isn't!" snapped Rawson. "I'm fed-up with you, Leggett. I don't want your money, and I don't want you. Is that clear?"

"I'll make it seven-and-six."

"Rats!"

"Look here, ten bob, and I'll hand you the money now, and take the thing with me," said Leggett.



CAUGHT! "That's it!" breathed Leggett. He made a motion to detach the stamp from the album. "You rotter!" roared Lovell, from the study doorway. "Oh!" Leggett gave a howl of alarm and spun round, with a face like chalk. "What are you doing with Rawson's stamps?" shouted Lovell. (See Chapter 5.)

He rattled the money in his trousers pocket.

"You mean to say that it's worth ten shillings?" asked Rawson, eyeing him suspiciously.

"Well, I don't know about that, but there are some stamps I can use to make up one of my sets. I'll risk ten bob on it."

"I'd rather not sell it to you," said Rawson. "I dare say you got the money by screwing it out of some chap."

"What the thump does it matter to you?" snarled Leggett. "Look here, here's the money!"

"Go and eat coke, and take the money along with you!" retorted Rawson. "Give me that album and clear!"

Leggett's grasp closed on the album. He drew a deep breath.

"Fifteen shillings!" he said. "What?"

"Fifteen bob! There you are!" Leggett laid a ten-shilling note and two half-crowns on the study table.

"I really would like the book," he went on. "I can make up two of my sets with these; they're not valuable, but a complete set can always be traded off to some fellow. I'll go to fifteen bob, and there's the cash. Thanks!"

Leggett crossed towards the door. "Well, if you want it—" grunted Rawson. "Hallo! What the merry thump! Jimmy Silver—"

Jimmy Silver had made a stride after

Leggett, grasped him by the collar, and spun him back into the study. Leggett spun round, crumpled up, and went to the floor with a crash, the old album flying across the room as he crashed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
No Sale!

"WHOOOOOP!" Leggett of the Modern Fourth gave a terrific roar as he came in contact with the floor of Rawson's study.

Jimmy Silver picked up the stamp album.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Rawson.

"Ow! Yow!" Leggett sat up. "You rotter! Ow! I'll jolly well lick you, Jimmy Silver! Ow! Oh! Grooogh!"

"Lick away!" said Jimmy cheerily. "Rawson, you ass, you're not selling this giddy tome to Leggett for fifteen bob?"

Leggett gasped. "He's sold it. He—I—you—" he spluttered. "He's sold it to me, you rotter! Don't you meddle!"

"He hasn't sold it, and he's not going to," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "Rawson, you're an ass! And a chump! Likewise a silly fathead!"

Rawson grinned. "How do you make that out?" he asked.

"That young Shylock has gone up from five shillings to fifteen for your old stamps. You know Leggett. I don't know anything about stamps; but I know something about Leggett, and I bet ten to one in doughnuts that the rotter has seen something in that album worth a jolly good deal more than fifteen bob!"

"Nothing of the kind!" gasped Leggett, still sitting breathlessly on the carpet. "They're all rubbish!"

"And you're offering fifteen shillings for rubbish—you, the meanest outsider in the school!" exclaimed the captain of the Fourth scornfully.

"I made the offer out of kindness, you rotter!"

"Oh, get out!" said Rawson. "Look here, Leggett, I'm going to kick you if you don't travel. Now then—"

Leggett moved to the door as Rawson made a motion with his foot. There was no arguing with a boot, and Rawson took rather a hefty size in boots. Reluctantly, his rejected money in his hand and his eyes still lingering on the old album Leggett backed out of the study.

He lingered in the doorway as if unable to tear himself away from the spot, till Rawson slammed the door on him.

Jimmy Silver grinned cheerily. "I don't want to raise your hopes too much, old man," he said, "but it looks to me as if Leggett has found something jolly valuable in that old book of yours. He's offered a pound, so it's plain that it's worth more than that, at least. A fiver, very likely."

"Oh, what gorgeous luck!" said Rawson.

"I've heard of such things happening," said Jimmy sagely. "You see, when your old uncle got those jolly old stamps together, they mayn't have been very uncommon, but in twenty or thirty years a lot of things may happen. Like first editions in books, you know. My pater has a book that his grandfather bought for a few shillings, and he's been offered two hundred pounds for it. It happens to be rare, you see."

"My hat! If there should be a giddy fiver in that old album!" said Rawson, with glistening eyes. "Thank goodness you were here, Jimmy. I should have let that cad badger me into selling him the book. Let's look through it now."

"Let's!" said Jimmy.

The two Classical juniors went through the album. There were a couple of hundred stamps in it, but nearly all of them were of the most commonplace kind, as they could see without the aid of philatelic knowledge. There were some foreign and colonial stamps, but whether these were rare or not the juniors had no idea.

"Well, it's one of these, I should say," said Jimmy. "I don't know whether these French stamps are any good. Here's a New Zealand one, and a Mauritius. You can ask the man at Latham whether they're any good, and he's bound to tell you all right. Or you could ask old Mooney; he collects stamps. Now, about the St. Jim's match—"

The album was placed on the shelf, and the talk reverted to football. Leggett was forgotten.

But Tom Rawson was in a very cheerful mood now.

Leggett had, quite unintentionally, done him a good turn. He knew that there was something of value in the old album now. A fiver would see him through till the end of the term quite easily, if it came to a fiver. And if it

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was a tenner, there would be something to send home, when he had sold that specimen, whichever it was. That was a very comforting hope to Tom Rawson. And after Leggett's conduct, it would not have been surprising at all to find that there was something worth ten pounds in the old album. Leggett's knowledge of stamps was very extensive, as Rawson knew. Certainly, five or ten pounds seemed a lot of money for an old stamp with a face value of a penny or twopence. But he had heard of rare stamps fetching hundreds of pounds, in comparison with which a fiver or a tenner seemed quite modest.

So Rawson was in a very cheery mood—probably the first time in Albert Leggett's career that he had had a cheering effect on any fellow.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act!

"L OVELL—"
"Don't bother, old chap."
"Footer!" said Jimmy Silver severely.

"Bosh!"
Classes were over that afternoon, and Jimmy Silver—with the forthcoming St. Jim's match in his mind—was thinking of footer practice. So were the other fellows in the junior eleven, with the exception of Arthur Edward Lovell.

Lovell had a pencil in one hand and an exceedingly grubby paper in the other, and a far-away look in his eyes. The paper was marked off in squares, some of which were blacked out, and looked rather like a chessboard, or a tile pattern in linoleum. But it was neither; it was a crossword puzzle, and Arthur Edward Lovell was deep in it, to the exclusion of all other matters, even football.

"Look here, old man, if you're going to play St. Jim's, you've got to keep in form," said the captain of the Fourth.

"Form!" said Lovell, with a start.

"Yes, ass!"

"Form! Good! Word of four letters, beginning with 'F' and ending with 'M.' Just what I want."

Lovell scribbled. Jamming the paper against the nearest wall, he filled up four of his squares.

"You silly ass!" roared Jimmy.

"Don't worry."

"Look here—" said Raby.

"No, it won't do," said Lovell.

"'R' is no good for the down line. I want an 'X.' I suppose there isn't any word spelt F-O-X-M."

"Oh, leave him to it," said Newcome. "There's no getting any sense out of Lovell when he's on the crossword stunt. Come along."

And Lovell was left to it.

Arthur Edward Lovell had fairly caught the crossword fever; and a lot of his leisure time was filled up in these days with crosswords, as well as some of his time that was not leisure. In the Form-room that afternoon, Mr. Dalton had given him fifty lines for devoting his attention to crosswords instead of to Latin words.

Rawson came out of the House, and grinned as he passed Lovell.

"What about the footer?" he called out.

"Blow the footer!"

And Tom Rawson chuckled and walked on towards Little Side.

Lovell, standing near the steps of the House, wrinkled his brow over his paper of squares. He wanted many words to complete his pattern; and he was feeling very dissatisfied with English orthography. Words did not seem to be spelt in a manner convenient for crossword puzzles.

"Seven letters, beginning with an 'L' and ending with a 'T,'" he murmured. "Lighted—no; that's a dashed 'D' at the end. My hat!"

Leggett, of the Modern Fourth, came lounging along, and Lovell's face lighted up. He astonished Leggett with an agreeable smile. Leggett was not accustomed to being greeted with agreeable smiles.

"Leggett!" cried Lovell. "Good!"

"Eh—what?"

"Seven letters, beginning with 'L' and ending with 'T,'" said Lovell. "I suppose names can be used in a crossword puzzle. Can they, though?"

At that new doubt, Lovell plunged into deep reflection again, and forgot Leggett's existence.

The Modern junior gave him a sneering grin, and went up the steps of the House and disappeared.

Had Lovell been less keen on crosswords he might have wondered what business Leggett had in the "House"—Leggett, as a Modern fellow, being a member of Mr. Manders' House. Many of the Modern fellows had friends on the Classical side, but Leggett had not. But Arthur Edward was far too busy to devote a moment's consideration to so unimportant a fellow as Leggett.

"Hallo! Going strong?"

It was Snooks, of the Second Form, who hailed Lovell. He came up with three or four more fags, and they stood round the Fourth-Former, grinning.

"Cut off!" he said gruffly.

"We like watching you, old top," said Snooks affably; and there was a chortle from the cheeky fags. "Go it! Mind you don't burst your jolly old brain-box. It's not strong, you know?"

Lovell made a jump at the cheeky fags, and they scattered. Then Townsend and Topham strolled along and they paused to speak.

"Got it?" asked Towny.

"Don't bother."

"I say, do you want a word of seven letters, beginning with 'F' and ending with 'D,' and meaning Lovell?" asked Townsend. "Try F-A-T-H-E-A-D!"

"You silly owl!" roared Lovell.

The nuts of the Fourth chuckled and walked on. Lovell, with a grunt, went up the steps of the House. Evidently, the labour of crossword puzzles required the privacy of his own study.

He came up the staircase to the Classical Fourth passage, his mind full of crosswords, and thinking of anything but Albert Leggett. But that unpleasant youth was suddenly brought back to his mind.

Just as his eyes rose above the level of the landing, and he had a view of the whole length of the Fourth Form passage in front of him, he was surprised to sight the Modern junior.

Leggett was just vanishing into Study No. 5.

Most of the Classical Fourth, if not all of them, were out of doors in the fine weather, and the Modern junior had found the passage deserted. There was something obviously surreptitious in the way Leggett darted into No. 5—as if he had been hanging about to make sure that he was not observed, before vanishing suddenly into the study.

"My hat!" murmured Lovell.

That Leggett could have any business in No. 5 on the Classical side was impossible. He was not on friendly terms with any of the inmates—and Lovell knew that they were not at home, anyway. Rawson was at soccer practice with Jimmy Silver & Co., and Townsend and Topham were sauntering in the quadrangle.

But Lovell, though not a suspicious fellow, could make a guess at what Leggett was after.

Jimmy Silver had told his chums of Leggett's offer for the old stamp album, and the consequent surmise that it contained some specimen of value.

"The awful rotter!" murmured Lovell. "He's after Rawson's stamps! My only hat, what a disgusting outsider! It's up to us to rally round old Rawson!"

He jammed his squared paper into his pocket, and ran swiftly and lightly along the Fourth Form passage.

Lovell stopped at the door of Study No. 5 with a grin, and turned the handle very softly.

The door opened as silently as it had closed.

Leggett was standing with Rawson's stamp album before him on the table, turning the leaves with feverish haste.

His face was excited, and his breath came thick and fast.

Obviously, he was searching for the particular specimen which had caught his eye when he had examined the book earlier in the afternoon.

He had his back to the door, and did not hear Lovell, and was deeply engrossed in his search.

Lovell watched him for a moment or two with a grin.

"That's it!" Leggett breathed the words.

He made a motion to detach a stamp. "You rotter!" roared Lovell suddenly. "Oh!"

Leggett gave a howl of alarm, and spun round with a face like chalk. The album slipped from his hands, and went to the floor with a bump. He stared at Lovell with terror in his eyes.

Arthur Edward strode into the study. "You worm! You rank outsider! What are you doing with Rawson's stamps?"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Looking After Leggett!

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL fixed his eyes accusingly on the wretched junior. Leggett stood before him, his face white, his knees knocking together, evidently frightened almost out of his wits. There was guilt written in every line of his chalky face.

He could not speak; he gasped as he stood shaking before Lovell's accusing eyes.

"You awful rotter!" said Lovell. "My hat! A Rookwood fellow coming to this—even a Modern! You frightful outsider!"

Leggett recovered himself a little. He picked up the stamp album, and placed it on the table.

"Why shouldn't I look at Rawson's stamps if I like?" he said; but his voice was trembling. "No bizney of yours. Rawson told me I could look at his album."

"Gammon!"

"I suppose you don't think I was going to steal any of this rubbish?" sneered Leggett. He had almost recovered now.

"That's just what I do think," said Lovell, with emphasis. "My belief is that you were going to bag a stamp from that book, because Rawson wouldn't sell it to you under its value."

"You cheeky Classical rotter!" said Leggett. "You dare to say that outside this study! I'll complain to the Head!"

"Why, you—you—" stuttered Lovell taken quite aback by this counter attack.

"I was just looking at the stamps," said Leggett, pursuing his advantage.

"I'm a philatelist, and interested in stamps. Mr Mooney has let me look at his stamps more than once. Why shouldn't I look at Rawson's?"

"You were going to take one out of the book."

"Nothing of the kind. I was just looking at them."

"I don't believe a word of it!"

"You can believe what you jolly well like; but I know what the Head would think of rotten suspicions like that."

Lovell breathed hard. His belief was that he had fairly caught the young rascal in the act; but he realised that Leggett had a good case, and it was rather startling and disconcerting to realise that he might be placed in the position of a suspicious and reckless accuser.

"You can just mind your own business, and clear," sneered Leggett. "Rawson won't mind me seeing his stamps."

"So you were only looking at them—what?" said Lovell.

"That's all, as I've told you."

"And if I leave you here, you'll only go on looking at them?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"No reason at all, if you were a decent chap," said Lovell. "Well, old scout, I'll leave you here, and you can look at them as long as you like, until Rawson comes in. But I know what I know, and I'm jolly well going to see that you don't bag anything out of that book. Sit down in that chair."

"What?"

Lovell drew a whipcord from his pocket.

"Sit down! You can see the stamps all right with your hands tied to the chair," he said, with a chuckle.

"Shan't, you fool!"

"That's not civil, Leggett. Even Modern fellows ought to have some manners. I generally hammer a chap who calls me names."

"Look here—"

"Are you going to sit down?"

"No!" yelled Leggett desperately. Lovell jumped forward, collared the Modern junior, and dumped him into the chair.

Leggett sat there, eyeing him savagely. He was no match for the sturdy Classical junior, and his heart failed him at the bare idea of a fistical encounter with him. He sat and gritted his teeth and scowled, while Lovell ran the whipcord round his unresisting wrists and fastened them to the arms of the chair with very secure knots.

"There! I think that will do," said Lovell cheerily.

Leggett panted with rage.

"You rotter! Let me go!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I'll yell—"

"Yell as much as you like, old bean, and explain to the fellows, when they come, what you were doing with Rawson's stamps. They may believe that you were only looking at them."

"You—you rotter—"

Lovell pulled the album across the table towards Leggett.

"You can look at them, you know. I'll open the album at any page you like. Where's that specimen you particularly want to see? Give it a name."

Leggett breathed hard, and did not answer. Obviously, it was not merely looking at the stamp that he wanted, and equally obviously he did not want to point out the valuable specimen to Lovell.

"I'm waiting," said Lovell.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Thanks—I'll go and do crosswords instead. Sure you wouldn't like me to open the album for you?"

"Hang you!" hissed Leggett.

Lovell chuckled and left the study, leaving the album almost under Leggett's nose. He went along to the end study where he was soon deep in crosswords.

Leggett wriggled furiously in his bonds.

He thought of shouting, and opened his mouth more than once to shout; but refrained. He had a plausible explanation to give of his presence in Rawson's study, certainly; but in the circumstances, it was clearly a case of the least said the soonest mended. Some fellow belonging to the study was bound to come in, sooner or later, and if it happened to be Townsend or Topham, it would be easy to "stuff" those guileless youths without mentioning the stamp-album.

So Leggett waited, hoping to see Townsend or Topham coming into the study every minute. But Fortune did not favour the young rascal. There was a tramp of many feet in the Fourth Form passage at last, and he realised that the footballers were coming in.

The study door was flung open and Rawson came in. Jimmy Silver stopped at the door to speak a word or two with his goalkeeper before going on to the end study.

"Whv, what—" ejaculated Rawson in amazement.

"What the merry thump—" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Leggett gave them almost a haggard look.

"Let me loose!" he said thickly. "A—silly fool tied me up here for a iape! Let me go!"

"Who tied you up in my study?" demanded Rawson.

"A Classical chap! Let me loose!"

"You've been messing about with my stamp-album. I left it on the shelf," said Rawson, staring at the dog-eared book on the table.

Arthur Edward Lovell strolled along from the end study. The entrance of Raby and Newcome had apprised him that the football practice was over. He grinned at Leggett and the two surprised Classics.

"Oh, you've found him!" he said.

"What on earth does this mean, Lovell?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a very suspicious look at the Modern junior.

Arthur Edward Lovell cheerily explained. Rawson's rugged face grew very grim as he listened.

"You can believe that the rotter was only looking at the iolly old smudges, if you like," concluded Lovell. "But if you've got any sense, old chap, you'll keep that album locked up after this till you sell your stamps."

"The awful rotter!" said Rawson.

"I—I was only—" panted Leggett.

"You—you poverty-stricken rotter, do you dare to say—"

"That's enough!"

Lovell had untied the cord, and Tom Rawson jerked Leggett out of the arm-chair.

"Kick him out, all together!" he said.

"Good egg!"

"Run for it, Leggett!" chuckled Lovell.

The hapless Leggett made a rush for the door. Three boots landed on him forcibly as he rushed, and Leggett roared and rolled over in the passage. He picked himself up, shook a furious fust into the study, and raced away for the stairs, and did not stop till he was safe—and thoroughly winded—in Mr. Manders' House.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's gripping long story of Rookwood, entitled "IN LUCK'S WAY" 'It's the goods!')

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