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THE LIMIT.

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TO NEWSAGENTS!

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# The Penny Popular

No. 240.

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



**THE LIMIT!**

A Great Scene from the Splendid Long Complete Tale of Tom Merry and Co. contained in this issue!



A Magnificent  
Long Complete  
Tale, dealing  
with the  
Early Adventures  
of  
Jimmy Silver & Co.  
at Rookwood.

# THE CAPTAIN'S SECRET!

By  
Owen  
Conquest

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Strange Meeting.

"LOOK there! Did you see him?"  
"Who?"  
"There, he is again! No! He's down behind the hedge."

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Newcome and Raby—known as the Fistical Four at Rookwood—were returning to the school after an evening sprint.

The dusk was deepening in the lane, and the pace of the three runners had slackened as they came in sight of the school, looming up blackly over the trees. There was a rush towards the hedge to which Raby was pointing, and a shrinking form was jerked out bodily into the lane.

A lad of about sixteen was revealed to view in the dusk. He was well clad, but his clothes were thick with mud and mire, his head was bare, his collar damped and soiled, and his whole aspect was one of fright and disquietude. His eyes rolled uneasily, and once or twice he tried to break from Jimmy Silver's hold, and run.

"You can't get away," remarked Jimmy. "Now, you young villain, what do you mean by following four highly respectable youths about like a giddy detective, eh?"

"I wanted to speak to you," said the white-faced stranger, "but I—I was afraid. I—will you take a note for me to Bulkeley, the captain of your school, and not breathe a word to a soul about it?"

The four Classics of Rookwood stared at the stranger in speechless amazement.

"What's that?" asked Jimmy Silver, at last. "What are you driving at?"

The pale, strange face had suddenly become earnest and eager. The trembling hand drew a note from inside his jacket. It was an odd sheet of paper scribbled on in pencil, and folded down.

"Will you take that note to Bulkeley?"

"Who are you?"  
"He—he will know. For mercy's sake do as I ask! It—it won't do any harm, and Bulkeley must—must have it. Will you take that note to him?"

"I suppose there can't be any harm in that?" Jimmy Silver remarked, taking the note from the shaking hand. "Yes, I'll let him have it."

"Heaven bless you!"  
"It's nothing much," said Jimmy Silver. "But why on earth couldn't you post it—?"

"I had no envelope, and I was afraid to—to— Never mind! Bulkeley will understand. You promise to give him that note?"

"Honour bright."  
"Heaven bless you!"

The strange, frightened figure disappeared through the gap in the hedge. Jimmy had let go his hold, and the fugitive was gone in a minute.

The Fistical Four stared at one another, and at the crumpled note in Jimmy Silver's hand, lost in amazement.

The silence was broken by a voice from the dusk, as a thin, sallow-complexioned youth came up from the direction of the village. He stopped and looked at the

four with a grin upon his ill-favoured features.

"What have you got there, Silver?"  
Jimmy Silver started, and turned his head. The sallow youth grinned at him.

"What have you got there?"  
"Hallo! Is that you, Leggett?"  
"Yes, it is. What's that note you've got for Bulkeley?"

Jimmy Silver's lip curled scornfully.  
"So you've been listening?"  
"I heard voices as I came up," said Leggett.

Leggett belonged to the Moderns at Rookwood, and was the meanest boy in the Fourth Form, and of an inquisitive, prying nature that made him especially obnoxious to fellows like the chums of the end study.

Nothing ever happened at Rookwood without Leggett knowing all about it, a fact upon which he prided himself.

"Come on, kids!" said Jimmy Silver, turning away from Leggett.

The Fistical Four were not disposed to waste any more time on the sneaking Modern at the moment.

"I'll know what's in that note, all the same," muttered Leggett, as Jimmy Silver & Co. marched off. "I expect it's something disgraceful. It all looks jolly suspicious, anyway. I never liked Bulkeley, and I'd be glad of a chance to show him up."

The Fistical Four hastened to the school, and Jimmy Silver hurried at once to Bulkeley's study with the note. He found the captain within, and was received with a smile, for Bulkeley was the best-tempered fellow at Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver handed over the note, and explained how he had received it, and Bulkeley at once unfolded the paper. He glanced over it, and a startled cry left his lips.

Apparently forgetting Jimmy Silver's presence, he glued his eyes to the note, reading anxiously every one of the written words.

Jimmy Silver looked at him in amazement. The captain of Rookwood had become pale as death.

"Good heavens!" Then Bulkeley looked up quickly, and coloured as he caught Jimmy's startled glance. "It's all right, Silver," he said hastily. "You can go."

"Yes, Bulkeley."

Jimmy Silver turned to leave the study.

"You needn't say anything about this in the school, Silver."

"No, Bulkeley. Lovell, Newcome and Raby saw the chap give me the note."

"They will hold their tongues."

"Yes, but—but Leggett saw him, too. I'm sorry."

"Well, it can't be helped," said Bulkeley, but he bit his lip. He knew Leggett.

"Run along!"

Jimmy Silver left the captain's study. As he closed the door he heard a sharp exclamation from Bulkeley.

"Oh, Arthur, Arthur!"

Jimmy hurried to the end study, and told his chums what had occurred. The chums whistled with amazement.

"Well, we'll keep it dark," said Lovell. "That's not much to do."  
"Hear, hear!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. On the Track of a Secret.

LATER that evening Leggett was crossing the dusky quad, when a tall, athletic figure passed him in the dusk, and strode on towards the gates.

Leggett gave a little gasp. He knew whom it was. It was Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, and he was evidently going out. For any of the boys to go out after locking up was so unusual that Leggett's interest would have been aroused in any case. Now he felt that he was on the track of a mystery.

"It's the note," he muttered to himself. "He's gone to meet the chap who wrote to him—that skulking fellow who looked as if he were running away from the police. My hat! This is a chance, and no mistake. If I could only get a hold over Bulkeley. By gum!"

It was certain that the captain of Rookwood was going out. Leggett knew that the captain had a key to the gate, but he did not intend to attempt to follow him out there. That would be impossible.

The spy darted off to a spot well-known to the more venturesome of the Rookwood juniors, where the thick ivy on the old grey wall offered foothold to a climber, and many a time had assisted venturesome youngsters to break bounds.

The dusk of the evening shrouded Leggett's movements. He was soon swinging up by the thick ivy, and, getting over the wall, he dropped into the lane, and ran along in the shadow towards the gates.

Click!  
He heard the shutting of the gate, and caught a glimpse of the athletic figure of the Rookwood captain striding away in the direction of the village.

In the thick dusk it was easy for Leggett to follow Bulkeley without danger of discovery. Not a thought of the meanness of the occupation crossed his mind.

He followed on Bulkeley's track like a sleuth-hound. The captain of Rookwood did not look once behind. He had not the slightest suspicion that he was being followed.

"Where is he going?" muttered Leggett. "To Coombe?"

It looked as if Bulkeley was going to the village. But about half-way he stopped at a stile which gave access to a footpath through a wood. He crossed the stile and vanished into the black shadows of the trees.

Leggett pressed on to the stile, and then hesitated. The trees looked so black and grim, and the darkness under their over-arching boughs was so dense, that his heart quailed within him.

After some hesitation he crossed the stile, but then he paused again. He dared not venture upon the black footpath under the trees.

The shadows seemed peopled with threatening shapes to his nervous fancy.



He listened intently. Perhaps the captain of Rookwood had stopped.

There was a faint murmur from the wood. It was the sound of voices—and he thought he could distinguish the tones of the captain of the school. Bulkeley had met someone there under the trees. Whom?

Undoubtedly the fellow who had sent him the note by Jimmy Silver.

Leggett trembled with eagerness. His curiosity to discover more was almost strong enough to overcome his fear of the darkness, and of running into the talkers. He was still hesitating when he heard the sound of footsteps, and he crouched down among the bracken with a palpitating heart.

Two forms came out of the dim footpath towards the stile. Crouching unseen, Leggett watched them. One was the captain of Rookwood, the other the frightened-looking fugitive he had seen before. They stopped, and Leggett strained his ears.

"I have very little," Bulkeley was saying. "You are welcome to all I have."

He felt through his pockets. There was a jingle of coin, a glint of metal in the faint light of the stars. Leggett's heart beat faster.

Was his first suspicion correct—was it a case of blackmail? Or was this some fugitive from justice, whom Bulkeley was helping to escape from the meshes of the law?

"Thanks, old man, I—I am grateful. I—I shall be able to dodge them, I think. I—"

"Come along. You can't stay the night in the wood, anyway. It's going to rain."

"But—"

"You can put up at the Bird in Hand to-night, at all events."

"But if they track me out—"

"They're not likely to, and you can give an assumed name. Then, to-morrow—"

Leggett heard no more. The two had crossed the stile, and were going down the lane towards Coombe. The spy rose shivering to his feet. The bracken was dripping with the night dews, and he was wet from head to foot.

But his eyes were gleaming exultingly. He had heard enough to make him feel that Bulkeley was in his power. The fugitive was being hunted for by someone, and by whom? Whom could it possibly be but the police?

The mysterious meeting with the captain of Rookwood, the passing of money between them, and the suggestion of putting up at the Bird in Hand in Coombe under an assumed name, all pointed to the same terrible conclusion. "Arthur" was a friend or relation of Bulkeley's who was fleeing from justice!

Leggett gritted his teeth at the thought. "He's always been down on me," he muttered. "He licked me for lending money to the kids at interest—jolly moderate interest, too, considering. He first gave me the name of Shylock, and the juniors picked it up and stuck to it. I'll make him squirm."

Leggett stepped into the lane, and hesitated a minute or two there. The pair he had been spying upon were out of sight, but Leggett had learned enough, and was not inclined for further shadowing. He turned in the direction of Rookwood.

Nine o'clock was striking from the school tower as he came up to the gates. A feeling of terror seized him. Unless he was in time to go to bed with the Fourth Form, he would be missed and sought for. He ran along by the wall towards the spot where the ivy hung, and grasped it. A voice rang from the gloom behind him. "Who is that?"

Leggett quaked with terror. It was the voice of the captain of Rookwood.

The wretched junior dragged himself up the ivy. He realised that Bulkeley had returned now from seeing the mysterious "Arthur" to the village, and that he had caught sight of him near the school gates.

With terrified haste, Leggett dragged himself over the ivy. But the straining and creaking of the tough tendrils guided the captain of Rookwood to the spot.

Leggett heard him running up, and with a last desperate effort drew himself over the wall. A hand reached up from below and narrowly missed his ankle.

Bulkeley did not wait to speak again. He ran to the gate and let himself in, and came quickly along the inner side of the wall. Leggett was not prepared for such a swift movement.

He had swung himself over the wall, drenched with water from the wet ivy, and he dropped into the quad, gasping

"You have broken bounds—at night!"

"Yes," said Leggett sullenly.

"Where have you been?"

"To the village."

"To the Bird in Hand?"

Leggett did not reply.

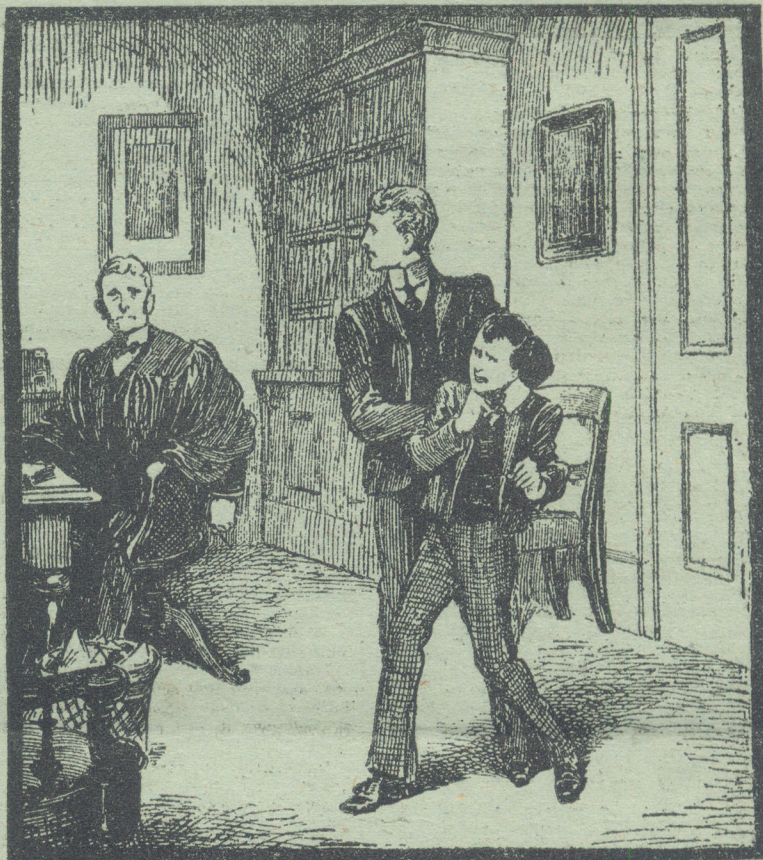
"If you had broken bounds to go to the tuck-shop," said Bulkeley quietly, "I could let you off with a licking, Leggett. A fellow might do that without being bad. But I am afraid your case is worse. There have been visits paid by Rookwood fellows to the Bird in Hand, as I know. I hardly expected to find a culprit in the Fourth Form. But—"

"I—I haven't been there."

"Well, then, where have you been?"

The junior was silent.

"Then I can only conclude that you are lying, Leggett," said Bulkeley sternly. "I cannot deal with this matter on my



"What does this mean, Bulkeley?" asked the Head, as the captain of Rookwood forced the junior into the study. "I have to tell you something, sir, he said.

for breath. He was trying to recover his breath, and shaking the water from his clothes, when a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder. He gave a cry of terror.

The grasp on his shoulder swung him round, and he looked into the face of the captain of Rookwood!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
Leggett Makes Terms.

**B**ULKELEY looked sternly at the wet, shivering junior. His grasp tightened on Leggett's shoulder. "Leggett! So it is you!"

Leggett made no reply. There was a desperate look in his eyes, which Bulkeley did not see.

own responsibility. You must come before the Head in the morning."

Leggett gritted his teeth.

"Better keep mum," he muttered.

Bulkeley stared at him.

"What did you say, Leggett?"

"You'd better keep mum, that's what I said," said Leggett desperately. "If you take me before the Head I shall tell him—"

Bulkeley's grasp tightened.

"What will you tell him?"

"Things you wouldn't like him to know," said Leggett defiantly. "One good turn deserves another, I'll keep mum if you do."

In spite of his impudence, Leggett trembled as he said this. It was a THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 240.



desperate throw of the dice for him. If he had been mistaken—if Bulkeley had no guilty secret— But the next moment he drew a deep, quivering breath of relief.

For Bulkeley's grasp relaxed, and he stood a pace away from the junior, and his face had grown pale and startled.

"Have you been watching me, Leggett?"

The captain's voice was very hard.

"Yes, I have," said Leggett defiantly.

"You saw me meet my cousin?"

Leggett grinned. He had not known that the mysterious "Arthur" was Bulkeley's cousin; he was gaining information!

"Yes," he said; "and I heard you, too!"

"Then you know—"

"Yes," said Leggett, gaining courage,

"I know all about it."

"You spying little hound!"

"Hard words break no bones," said Leggett, quite himself now. "I know the whole business, from start to finish, Bulkeley. I saw you giving him money. I know your cousin is hiding from the police—"

Bulkeley gave a violent start.

"The police! Are you sure?"

Leggett was taken aback for a moment. But his impudence was seldom wanting. He saw that he was in rather deep waters now, but there was nothing for it but to brazen it out.

"Of course I am!" he replied coolly.

"You—you lie! You must be lying; the police cannot have been called in," muttered Bulkeley. "You—you cowardly little rascal! I've a good mind to give you the biggest hiding of your life!"

"I'll keep mum," said Leggett. "But one good turn deserves another. Keep my secret, and I'll keep yours."

Bulkeley was silent.

"Am I to come before the Head in the morning, Bulkeley?"

"Go!" said the captain of Rookwood, in a hard, strained voice. "Go, you—you cur! Come into my study in the morning, and I will speak to you!"

Leggett cut across the quadrangle, and hurried in, in time to join the Fourth-Formers when they went up to bed.

The next morning Leggett did not trouble to report himself in the captain's study. Bulkeley had told him to do so, but the junior did not intend to obey. He felt sure enough of his ground now to take no notice of the captain's order.

Yet he trembled a little when, after morning school, Bulkeley passed him in the quad. Was he about to be called to account?

The captain of Rookwood passed on, apparently unaware of his existence, and Leggett breathed again.

The affair of the previous night was not to be mentioned again, then! His disobedience of the captain's order was to pass unnoted and unpunished! Leggett's heart swelled with exultation. The captain of Rookwood was in his power, and great possibilities opened before the unscrupulous junior.

Leggett's curious manner during the day did not escape the notice of Jimmy Silver and his chums. The junior's swagger rather puzzled them.

"He's got something on his chest," Lovell remarked.

"Little rotter!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "He was out last evening, and I'm pretty certain where he went to. Lucky for him Bootles didn't smell a mouse."

"There goes the little beast now," remarked Raby. "He's going to speak to Bulkeley."

Bulkeley had come out of the gymnasium, when Leggett sidled up to him. The captain of the school looked down at the junior with a steely expression.

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"Do you want to speak to me, Leggett?"

"Yes, if you please, Bulkeley."

"Be quick, then!"

"I—I'm short of money, Bulkeley!"

"What has that to do with me?"

"I—I thought you might lend me half a sovereign, Bulkeley."

Their eyes met. In Bulkeley's was scorn and contempt, and hard-held rage; in Leggett's was cunning and the consciousness of power.

"You want me to give you half a sovereign, Leggett?"

"Lend it to me, I mean, Bulkeley."

"Don't tell lies! Why should I give you half a sovereign, Leggett?"

"Well, I'm keeping your secret, you know."

"Do you know what this amounts to, Leggett?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to say that this amounts to blackmail."

Leggett grinned.

"I don't see why you can't tip me half a sovereign if you want to, Bulkeley. I'm doing you a good turn. If certain parties knew who was staying at the Bird in Hand under an assumed name—"

"Hold your tongue, confound you!"

"Certainly, but—"

Bulkeley took a ten-shilling note from his pocket-case and pushed it into Leggett's hand. Then he strode away with a dark and moody brow.

The whole transaction had been witnessed by the astonished Fistical Four, and they caught the crackle of the note as it was thrust into Leggett's palm. The young rascal turned away, and found himself face to face with the chums of the end study.

He shrank a little, and thrust the note into his pocket.

"Why did Bulkeley give you that ten-bob note, Leggett?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Because he wanted to, I suppose."

"I've a good mind to—"

"Oh, go-and eat coke!" said Leggett.

He walked away. The Fistical Four looked at one another uncomfortably. The mystery was deepening, and mystery was decidedly unpleasant to them. What did it all mean?

Lovell gave a sudden start. Night had fallen again on Rookwood, and the four chums of the Classical side were doing a little sprint round the Close for exercise. Lovell suddenly pulled his companions to a halt with an exclamation.

"Look there!"

Jimmy Silver, Raby and Newcome looked. They were near the gate of the school, and they saw the tall figure of Bulkeley stop at the gate. He had his overcoat on, and a key in his hand, and was evidently going out.

But it was not only Bulkeley whom they saw. A smaller figure was stealing through the dusk, in the Close, evidently watching the captain of Rookwood.

As Bulkeley unlocked the gate, the figure ran along the wall towards a spot well-known to the juniors, and ran right into the arms of the Fistical Four.

It was Leggett!

Jimmy Silver grasped him at once, and in a moment he was down on the ground, with the Fistical Four sitting on him. He gasped and struggled furiously.

"Let me get up, you beasts!"

"Not just now," said Jimmy Silver. "We spotted you, you see. You were watching Bulkeley, and you were going to break bounds to follow him."

"I shall do as I like!"

"No, you won't!"

"Leggo! Lemme go! I—I'll tell Bulkeley!"

"Go into the house. And, mind, I could lick you with one hand, Leggett, and if you say another word I'll do it, too."

"You—you cad! I'll—"

Jimmy Silver's right came out, and Leggett measured his length on the ground. Jimmy stood over him with flashing eyes.

"Now get up, you cad, and take some more," he said, between his teeth. "Get up! You've been asking for a hiding for a long time, and now you're going to have it."

But Leggett jumped up and dashed into the house like a shot, and was not seen again that night.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
Leggett Goes a Step Too Far.

THE next morning as Jimmy Silver was leaving Bulkeley's study after having delivered a letter to the captain, he passed Leggett who was about to enter.

Leggett had threatened the night before to tell Bulkeley that the Fistical Four had roughly-handled him. From the vindictive scowl which the sneaking junior inflicted on Jimmy Silver, the latter wondered whether he was about to put his threat into action.

Leggett had entered the study without even knocking. Bulkeley looked at him sharply, the letter still in his hand.

Leggett smiled insolently. The captain's face was turned from the light, and the cad of the Fourth could not see its expression very clearly.

"What do you want, Leggett?"

"I want to speak to you, Bulkeley."

"Go on!"

"One good turn deserves another, as I said before. You go out of Rookwood at all hours to suit yourself. You've got a key, and I haven't. I usually get over the wall."

"You are very frank, Leggett."

"No reason to keep it dark now," said Leggett. "But some of those cads—I mean Jimmy Silver and his lot—have set themselves up to watch me, and so that I don't break bounds."

"Very right and proper of them."

"Perhaps so," said Leggett, with a sneer. "But it does not suit me, you see. I want to go out at all times, and I mean to."

"Is that so?"

The captain's voice was very quiet, so quiet that it deceived Leggett. The swagger in his manner became more pronounced.

"Exactly. I want you to give me a permanent pass, you see, so that I can go out when I like. Then these rotters can't interfere with me."

"Indeed."

"And I want you to give Jimmy Silver & Co. a licking for going for me last night," said Leggett savagely. "The brutes set on me in the quad."

"You were going out, I presume?"

"Yes, I was," said Leggett defiantly. "I'll go out when I like."

Bulkeley breathed hard.

"And Jimmy Silver and the others stopped you?"

"Yes, they did."

"Quite right. I shall speak to Silver, and direct him to keep an eye on you in the future, Leggett, and see that you do not commit any of these blackguardly actions again."

Leggett stared.

"Will you?" he said, between his teeth. "Do you understand what you are saying, Bulkeley? You are in my power."

"Do you think so?"

"Hang you! You know you are!" cried Leggett angrily. "You know very well you've been aiding a fugitive from justice, and giving him money, and helping him to pass under an assumed name. The Head would be glad to hear what I could tell him."

"Then you had better go and tell him."

"You can't bluff me like that," said Leggett, though he felt an inward tremor



of uneasiness at the captain's tone. "You wouldn't have given in so easily yesterday if you hadn't had something to be afraid of."

"Circumstances may have changed," said Bulkeley. "It might have been in your power to injure me yesterday, but not to-day, Leggett."

"Rot! You know the police would be after you, too, if they knew, and I can tell them where that chap is, too. If you dare to—"

"Dare!" thundered Bulkeley. "Do you know you are talking to your captain? Get out of the room at once! Go!"

Leggett gave a snarl like a spiteful dog. "If I go, I go straight to the Head!" he shouted. "Now, then!"

He opened the door and stood with his hand on it.

"Now, then, shall I go?"

Bulkeley strode towards him.

"Yes, Leggett, you shall go, and I will come with you—to the Head," he said abruptly.

His grasp closed on the junior's shoulder, and Leggett was marched along the passage. The wretched junior tried to think that the captain was bluffing, that he would stop and turn back.

But Bulkeley's face was hard and set, his eyes gleaming.

Straight to the Head's study he marched the hapless amateur blackmailer.

The Fistical Four were in the passage, and they stared as they passed.

"He's got what he's been asking for," said Jimmy Silver, "and a jolly good thing too!"

"If—if you please, Bulkeley, I'd rather not go to the Head," whined Leggett. "I—I won't say a word. I—I'd rather not!"

"You've no choice now," said Bulkeley grimly, as he knocked at the Head's door. "Come in!"

The captain of Rookwood entered, forcing the junior to go in with him.

Leggett was trembling now, and fervently wishing that the floor would open and swallow him up.

Dr. Chisholm looked at them in amazement.

"What does this mean, Bulkeley?"

"I have something to tell you, sir," said Bulkeley, "if you will kindly give me a few minutes."

"Go on, Bulkeley!"

"I have a cousin named Arthur Bulkeley, sir. He is—or rather, was—in the Fifth Form at St. Freda's. I have been rather worried about him lately, as he was—well, a little wild, and frequently got into trouble with his Form-master. The day before yesterday, sir, I had a note brought me by a junior. It was from my cousin. He told me that there had been a terrible row at St. Freda's, and he had struck the Form-master and run away from school."

The Head looked very grave.

"He asked me to meet him, and help him out of his difficulty," went on Bulkeley. "I went to meet him that night, sir, and talked to him. Last night I visited him again, and succeeded in persuading him to return home and throw himself upon his father's mercy."

"Very right of you, Bulkeley," said the Head. "I am sincerely glad that the unfortunate boy had so kind and sensible an adviser at such a time."

"Thank you, sir," said Bulkeley. "Arthur is a good fellow, but wilful and—a little wild, but I think his father will be able to make his peace at St. Freda's, and the lesson will not be lost upon him. He has gone home, and I wrote to the head master at St. Freda's last night, and I have just had a reply to the effect that Arthur's fault will be overlooked, and he will be taken back if he will apologise to the master, and take his punishment, as I know he will cheerfully do, after what has happened."

The captain of Rookwood paused.

"But you will wonder what Leggett has to do with all this, sir," he went on. "The first night I went to meet my cousin this boy followed me. He knew that Arthur was hiding from someone, and saw me give him money, and jumped to the preposterous conclusion that I was helping a fugitive from justice to escape from the police."

Leggett trembled.

"He has endeavoured to make use of that knowledge in a rascally way," went on Bulkeley. "It would have been awkward if Arthur had been taken back to St. Freda's before going home to his father, and so to keep Leggett from speaking, although he was far from knowing the real facts, I gave him a ten-shilling note yesterday when he demanded it. To-day he has renewed his demands, so I have explained the whole matter to you, sir."

The Head's brow was like a thunder-cloud.

"You have done quite right, Bulkeley," he said. "I cannot blame you. As for this wretched boy, there is only one course to be taken. He shall not stay at Rookwood to contaminate honest lads by his presence. You will pack your box to-day, Leggett, and leave Rookwood to-morrow morning. I will write to your father, and explain."

The wretched boy fell upon his knees.

"Oh, sir, don't expel me! I—I—Think of my father, sir, and I will be flogged, only don't expel me! Speak for me, Bulkeley!"

"Have you the impertinence to appeal to Bulkeley, after—"

The captain's face softened a little.

"May I say a word for him, sir?" he said. "I should be sorry to be the means of getting any lad expelled from Rookwood. He has had his lesson. A flogging—"

"It shall be as you wish, Bulkeley. It is generous of you to speak for him after the way he has treated you. Leggett, take off your jacket."

And the captain of Rookwood quitted the study.

Five minutes later wails of anguish were heard proceeding from that apartment. The flogging that Leggett received then was one he was not likely to forget in a hurry.

It was his first and last experiment in the blackmail line, and, after that painful experience, no boy in the Fourth was so respectful as Leggett to the captain of Rookwood.

THE END.

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A Weekly Chat between The Editor  
and His Readers.

### FOR NEXT FRIDAY!

Next Friday's long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars, is one that I am sure you will all like. The title of this fine story is

### "THE SCHOOL DANCE!"

In this story the girls of Cliff House make their appearance. Harry Wharton & Co. learn of their coming, and decide to meet them on the way from the station, and present their headmistress with a bouquet.

All goes well until Harry Wharton discovers that Bulstrode intends to let off a number of fireworks in the road to scare the girls. A fight ensues between Wharton and Bulstrode, and just at the critical moment the Cliff House girls come upon the scene with disastrous consequences for the well-laid plans of reception on the part of Harry Wharton.

However, Bob Cherry manages to present the bouquet to the headmistress who, delighted at the juniors well-meaning intentions, sends them an invitation for a forthcoming dance at Cliff House. The dance turns out exceedingly well, and there is great fun and amusement, especially when Ionides, the top of the Sixth, makes his appearance in evening-dress, and is taken to be a waiter!

The second long complete tale in our next issue is that dealing with Tom Merry & Co., the chums of St. Jim's. The title of this story is

### "THE SCHOOLBOY MUSICIANS!"

Tom Merry resolves to form a concert-party to perform at the Rylcombe fete. There is great excitement and also considerable noise over this venture which at first does not pan out very well. Wally D'Arcy & Co. offer their services which are, of course, declined without thanks.

Figgins & Co. are left out in the cold, but nevertheless, having heard of Tom Merry's wheeze, they form a band of their own which, strange to say, shows greater promise than Tom Merry's concert-party.

There is a rag between the rival juniors which ends in their combining their efforts for the good of the cause. All goes well until the day of the fete, then there are ructions, in which Wally & Co. play a strong part.

The third story in next Friday's PENNY POPULAR is that dealing with the adventure of Jimmy Silver & Co. The title of this yarn is

### "THE ROOKWOOD MINSTRELS!"

Topham, the dandy of Rookwood, is in a great difficulty. He has stolen money, and is unable to repay it. Jimmy Silver & Co. take compassion on the dandy, and decide to help him out of his difficulty. They hit upon the idea of forming a minstrel troupe, and giving entertainments. They expect that the money they will earn will be sufficient to get Topham out of his trouble. Whether the Fistical Four's plan is successful you will learn next Friday.

Don't forget, my chums, you must order your copy in advance. Fill up the form on page 9 without delay, and hand it to your newsagent.

YOUR EDITOR.

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