

SCHOOL STORIES FOR ALL!

**The
Penny
Popular**

No.
244.

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



EXPOSED!

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

THE SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVES!

A Splendid Long Complete
Story, dealing with
the Early Adventures of
JIMMY SILVER & CO.,
the Chums of Rookwood.
— BY —
OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Private Detectives.

WHAT'S the trouble, Hooker, old man?" asked Tommy Dodd, leader of the Modern chums at Rookwood.

"Oh, go away, you beastly Modern rotters!" exclaimed Hooker angrily.

"But we are anxious to know if we can help you," responded Dodd, speaking on behalf of himself and his chums, Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle. "We may be rivals, but when another chap is in trouble, be he Classical or Modern, we're always willing to lend a hand."

It was perfectly obvious that Hooker was in trouble, hence the inquiry from the Modern party.

The fact was Hooker was an enthusiastic stamp-collector, and had received that morning from his uncle a stamp he had long coveted—"a yellow-green 1864 Ceylon twopenny," as he termed it.

This stamp—which had cost his uncle £4—had arrived, in a letter, just as the bell rang for morning classes, and Hooker stolidly affirmed that he had left it in the envelope on his study table when he went in to class.

When he returned the letter was there, but the stamp had disappeared.

"Come on, old man, out with it!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

"Well, if you must know, my yellow-green 1864 Ceylon twopenny, which only came this morning, has been stolen."

"Stolen!"

"I know I left the stamp on this table, and that it was taken while I was away."

"Have you complained about it?"

"No, Jimmy Silver is looking into the matter, and we hope to get the stamp back if possible without making a row."

"Good wheeze!" said Tommy Dodd approvingly; "but about Jimmy Silver looking into it, that's not much good. As leaders of the Form, that's for Cook and Doyle and me."

"You can look into it, too," suggested Hooker. "I don't mind who finds the stamp so long as I get it back."

"Right-ho!" said Tommy Dodd. "Come on, boys!"

He led the way to their study, and closed the door before he said a word on the subject. Then he looked at his chums, but he did not speak.

"Well," said Tommy Cook, "who's the giddy thief?"

"I can't think of anybody in the Fourth who'd be mean enough to steal anything," said Tommy Dodd. "Unless it's—" He paused, and looked at his chums.

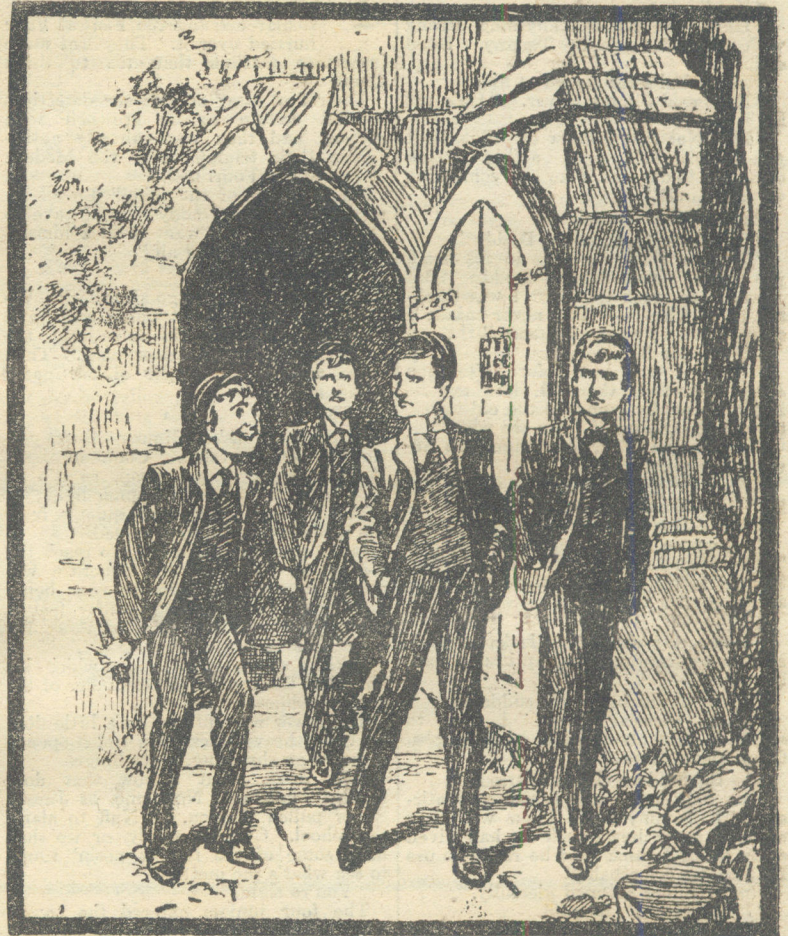
They nodded a full assent.

"Quite so," said Tommy Cook.

"You know who I'm thinking about?"

"Leggett!" answered Tommy Cook.

Tommy Dodd nodded.



The amateur detectives came ruefully out of the tower, and bestowed angry glares upon the cackling Hooker. They marched on without a word, and the cackle followed them.

"He's the thief, right enough. His game will be to lock it up in his desk for safety. It's easy enough to hide a stamp. We've got to examine his desk."

"Suppose it's locked?"

"It's pretty certain to be locked."

"You wouldn't break a lock, Doddy?"

asked Tommy Cook, startled.

"For the honour of the Form, yes."

"But, I say," said Tommy Doyle, "Jimmy Silver may come along at the same game."

Tommy Dodd wrinkled his brow thoughtfully, and ran his fingers through his hair.

"I'm! We must take care that he doesn't!"

"How?" asked Tommy Cook. The leader of the Modern chums gave a quiet chuckle.

"I've got an idea!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Laying the Snare.

LEGGETT must have been the rotter, of course," Jimmy Silver said, in a lone tone, to Lovell, Newcome, and Raby, as the Fistical Four came out of the class-room

in the dusk after afternoon school. "There's simply no other fellow at Rookwood capable of it—excepting Beaumont, the prefect, and we can't very well suspect a prefect of stealing a stamp."

"Oh, it was Leggett, right enough!" said Raby. "And here he comes!"

Leggett was coming along the passage. He was a lad with a sallow face, and looked as if he were in want of fresh air and exercise—as, indeed, was the case.

He never went in for any sports if he could help it, and he had not the excuse of "swotting." He was idle by nature, and no credit to the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

Raby was for tackling him there and then on the subject of the missing stamp, but Jimmy Silver hurriedly pointed out to him in a whisper the absurdity of such an idea, as Leggett passed them.

"We'll look into the matter without putting the suspected person on his guard first," grinned Jimmy Silver. "I reckon that's more like Nelson Lee or Sexton Blake!"

"Oh, have it your own way," said

Raby; "but shut up—here comes those Modern rotters! They'll smell a rat if we're not careful!"

"Be careful yourself, and don't look so beastly mysterious, or—"

"Oh, you—"

"Hallo!" said Tommy Dodd, as he strolled up with his chums. "Have you seen Leggett lately?"

"Yes."

"Have you noticed anything wrong with him?" asked Tommy Dodd seriously.

The Fistical Four stared at him.

"No," said Jimmy Silver. "He's not ill, is he?"

"Ill? Not that I know of. But don't you think he's been acting rather curiously to-day—as if he had something on his mind?"

Jimmy Silver stared.

"Have you thought so, Doddy?"

"Well, a chap has eyes in his head, you know," said Tommy Dodd. "But it wasn't so much that that I was thinking of as what— But never mind; I suppose it's of no consequence."

"What was it?"

"Why, it was just before afternoon school— But, there, I dare say he had a reason for going up the old tower, though I'm blessed if I can see why!"

The Fistical Four exchanged an involuntary glance.

"He went up into the old tower, did he?" said Jimmy Silver.

Tommy Dodd shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose it was nothing," he said.

"Only what a chap should want to go up the old tower for just before afternoon school puzzles me."

"Quite so!"

"You see, when a chap looks worried, and then goes wandering up into a place like that—"

Tommy Dodd broke off suddenly.

"Hallo, there's Towle! I want to speak to him about those photographs. Come along, boys!"

And the Modern chums hurried off.

"My only hat!" said Lovell emphatically, "if Tommy Dodd knew what was on, and knew how much he had given away to us, I think he'd be ready to use his head for a football!"

Jimmy Silver grinned gleefully.

"I reckon so!" he said.

"We're on the track now with a vengeance!" exclaimed Raby. "It's as plain as anything that Leggett went up the old tower to hide the stolen stamp."

"I should think so!"

"Come along, me boys; let's go and look for it!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, catching Raby by the arm. "We can't go up the tower now, with those rotters in sight! They'd suspect something at once."

"That didn't occur to me, old son."

"We'll leave it till after tea."

"But it will be dark then."

"Well, it's pretty dark already inside the old tower, and what's the matter with taking a lantern, anyway?"

"Quite so," said Newcome. "Come along, and let's have tea!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. kept an eye on the Fistical Four as they walked away. They chatted for a few minutes with Towle, and then left him. They grinned joyously at one another.

"I think they took the bait, boys," said Tommy Dodd.

"Absolutely!" grinned his chums.

"They'll go up the old tower exploring for that giddy stamp!"

"They will!"

"And then we shall come on the scene—"

"What-ho!"

"And if they get out of the tower"

again in a hurry, it won't be the fault of the Modern chums at Rookwood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Catching the Fistical Four.

TEA in the end study was usually a leisurely meal, but on this particular evening the Fistical Four hurried over it. They had more important matters than tea to think about.

Their first essay as amateur detectives seemed certain to be crowned with success, and they were already anticipating their triumph over the Modern chums of the Fourth.

"The cream of the joke," Lovell remarked, "is that Doddy himself gave us the clue! He will want to kick himself hard when he knows all."

"I reckon he will!"

"It's a good idea to go after dark. We can slip away without being seen, and not light the lantern till we're inside the tower and have the door shut. Then there will be no danger of our game being spotted."

"That's so."

"Finished?" asked Jimmy Silver, getting up from the table. "Come on, then! We'll take my bicycle-lamp, as it's an acetylator, and shows a ripping light!"

The Fistical Four went quietly from the study and out into the quad.

It did not take them long to reach the old tower. The ancient structure was partly in ruins, the upper part being gone; but for a height of fifty feet it stood intact, with masses of thick ivy growing over it.

Within was a spiral stair, which led almost to the top of the remainder of the ancient edifice.

The tower was entered by a little door set in the heavy brickwork, which opened outward on shrieking, rusty hinges.

"By Jove, what a row that door makes!" muttered Newcome, as Jimmy Silver pulled it open. "Nuff to alarm the school. Close it gently, or we shall have some of the fellows nosin' round to see what's the matter!"

"You're right."

The four juniors entered the tower, and Jimmy Silver closed the door behind him. He did it as quietly as possible, but the hinges groaned as the door moved. Within the tower was impenetrable darkness.

"Don't move!" said Jimmy Silver. "I'll get a light in a jiffy. Keep still, which ever of you is moving!"

"Well, I—" began Raby.

"You ass, you've knocked the matches out of my hand now!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, stooping to search for the dropped box.

"I'm sorry, Jimmy!" said Raby. And he stooped to grope for the matches, unaware that Jimmy Silver was doing so.

There was a terrific yell from the leader of the Fistical Four as Raby's head came against his in the darkness with a crash.

"Ow! You utter idiot! Ow!"

"You clumsy rotter! You've busted my head now!"

"Ow! You lunatic!"

"You've nearly brained me!"

"You—"

"You—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Lovell. "What a row you make over a trifle! You'll have half Rookwood on the spot soon!"

"I reckon—"

"You—"

"Hush! Hark! What was that?"

It was a sudden, indefinable sound in the darkness. It came from the door.

"Blessed if I know!" said Jimmy Silver. "It sounded like somebody

knocking at the door, but it can't be that. My hat! There it is again!"

It was certainly the sound of a dull, thudding noise outside the door of the tower. Jimmy Silver started towards the door.

It occurred to him that it would be no joke—from his point of view, at least—if some mischievous junior had seen them enter the tower, and should fasten the door on the outside.

Unfortunately, Lovell was between him and the door, and Jimmy Silver's sudden movement in the dark sent Lovell reeling. He knocked his head against the stone wall with an audible biff, and the sound of a whoop rang through the tower, and echoed far and wide.

"Ow, ow! My head! Ow, my napper! Ow, ow!"

"What a row you're making over a trifle!" howled Raby.

"Ow, my napper! Ow—"

"Oh, dry up!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "Anybody would think you were hurt!"

"I am hurt!" yelled Lovell.

"Well, then, be hurt quietly. Look here. I believe somebody's playing a game with that door!"

And the leader of the Fistical Four groped his way to the door and pushed it.

It did not budge.

Jimmy Silver put his shoulder against it, and exerted his strength. The door remained as firm as a rock. He set his teeth.

"It is fastened!"

"But there's no fastening on the outside!"

"It is fastened, all the same."

"You must be mistaken, Jimmy. How can it be fastened on the outside, when there's no fastening on the outside of the door?" asked Raby.

"I reckon they've driven a peg into the ground close to the door. That was the noise we heard."

"They!" exclaimed Newcome. "Who?"

Jimmy Silver laughed rather savagely. "Tommy Dodd & Co., of course!"

"My only Panama hat!"

"They were fooling us with a yarn of having seen Leggett go up the tower!" growled Jimmy Silver, whose keen brain was not long in arriving at a correct conclusion. "Now I come to think of it, Doddy never said that he had seen Leggett do anything of the kind. He wouldn't tell a lie. He just hinted, and, like silly idiots, we swallowed the bait, and here we are!"

"It would have been better to take my advice, and—" began Raby.

"Oh, shut it! How are we to get out?"

"But—but if you're right, Jimmy, Tommy Dodd & Co. must know that we're playing the giddy detective, and that we suspect Leggett," said Newcome.

"Of course they know it! I suppose Hooker has told them. They'd guess we suspected Leggett, because they'd immediately suspect him themselves."

"True!"

"And now"—Jimmy Silver exerted his strength on the door again, but it refused to budge—"we're shut up here like rats in a trap!"

"Let's all shove on the door at once," said Lovell.

"It's no good; but we may as well try, I suppose."

The four juniors put their shoulders to the door, and pushed with all their strength. But it did not move. It was clear that a peg had been driven solidly in outside the door, and a dozen men could not have moved it.

Jimmy Silver hammered on the door with his fist.

"Open this door, you beasts!" There was no reply, save the echoes of the shout, which filled the old tower with almost deafening noise for a few moments, and then died away.

"We'll skin you for this!" Still no reply. Tommy Dodd & Co. were probably not there. The Fistical Four shouted and kicked and beat upon the door. But no word, no sound, came in reply, and at last they desisted.

"It's no good," said Jimmy Silver. "We're prisoners here till they choose to come and let us out. We may as well make up our minds to it."

And the Fistical Four waited with all the patience they could muster, which was not much.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Tommy Dodd Investigates.

"CAUGHT!" Tommy Dodd murmured the word as he heard the hammering of the Fistical Four on the inside of the door of the old tower. And his chums murmured: "Absolutely!"

The Modern chums had, of course, been watching near the tower for the time when the Fistical Four should arrive.

Tommy Dodd had had the peg and the mallet all ready, and to drive it into its place was the work of only a few seconds. The Fistical Four were prisoners, and

he had brought the mallet along with him.

"How are you going to open—" began Cook. A terrific crash answered him before he could finish, and the lock of the desk, and some of the desk, lay scattered in fragments on the study floor.

"My hat!" gasped Cook. "That's one way; but it's hard on the desk!"

"What can a chap expect who goes about stealing valuable stamps?"

"But suppose he didn't steal the stamp?"

"What's the good of raising difficulties?"

"Well, but—" "That's all right. Let's have a look for the stamp."

The Modern chums set to work. They ransacked the desk thoroughly. They found some papers which proved that the cad of the Fourth had not quite given up his old game of lending money out at interest among the juniors.

They found several racing papers with marginal notes in Leggett's hand. Under the circumstances, Tommy Dodd did not feel justified in interfering with these.

He was after the yellow-green Ceylon stamp, and nothing else just at present. But the yellow-green Ceylon stamp was just the thing that he could not find.

There was not a quarter of an inch of space in the desk that the Modern chums

"Still, we may as well get clear. Come on."

The Modern chums left the study, having turned out the gas, went over to the Classical side, and sought out Hooker.

"I say, Hooker, you haven't heard of your stamp yet?" asked Tommy Dodd.

Hooker shook his head. "Well, I have an idea that Jimmy Silver has gone to look for it in the old tower," said Tommy Dodd. "Why don't you go and see how he's getting on?"

"What on earth should he look for it in the old tower for?" demanded the astounded philatelist.

"Oh, some idea of his, I suppose!" Hooker hurried off. He did not see how his missing stamp could possibly have come into the old tower, but if it was there, he was anxious to see it. Tommy Dodd winked at his chums.

"They've been shut up long enough," he remarked. "We can't keep them there over to-morrow, so they may as well be let out now. Hooker can do it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hooker soon reached the old tower. The door was closed, but he could hear a murmur of voices from within. He tried to open the door, but it was fast.

"My word!" exclaimed Hooker. "It's been pegged from outside!" He

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the Modern chums listened to their vain hammering and shouting with great amusement.

"I fancy we score this time," said Tommy Dodd. "But we'd better be moving. Some ass may come along and let them out. We've got to get the search over in Leggett's study before they get loose."

"That's so." The chums hurried away. The sound of hammering died into silence behind them as they crossed the shadowy ground towards the Modern side.

"Suppose Leggett is in his study?" asked Tommy Cook.

"He's not likely to be at this time; he's usually in the Common-room. But if he is, you must get him away with some yarn or other, while I do the trick."

"Good!" But, as it happened, the study was dark and empty when the chums arrived. Tommy Dodd opened the door, and they went in.

"Shut the door, while I light the gas. Lock it. We can't allow Leggett to interrupt if he comes back."

Cook and Doyle chuckled and shut the door. The gas gleamed out, and Tommy Dodd turned at once to Leggett's desk. It was locked, as he expected; but Dobby had been prepared for that, and

did not carefully search. But there was no trace of the stamp.

Annoyed and fatigued, the chums gave it up at last.

"It's not here," said Tommy Dodd, "and as this is the only place where it could be hidden, it stands to reason that Leggett has got it about his person."

"Quite so."

"He's keeping it in his togs, and I'm pretty certain that he'll go off to-morrow afternoon to try and dispose of it," said Tommy Dodd sagely. "That's where we come in. We can't very well jump on him and search him in the quad, but as soon as he's outside the walls of Rookwood, we'll have that stamp, or bust something!"

"Good!"

"We'd better be off, now, I think, before Leggett comes back. I suppose it's no good trying to conceal the fact that we've been here?" said Tommy Dodd, with a rather rueful look at the smashed desk.

His chums chuckled.

"Rather not, I should say," said Tommy Doyle.

"Never mind, Leggett won't dare to make a fuss, for he'll know that, whoever busted his desk must have seen those sporting papers and the I O U's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

knocked on the door. "I say, are you there?"

"Yes," came the voice of Jimmy Silver in reply. "Is that Hooker?"

"Yes."

"Let us out, old chap, like a good fellow. We've been fastened up here by a couple of beasts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle over. Unfasten the door."

Hooker apparently saw something to cackle over, for he continued to cackle while he prised out the peg, and pulled the door open.

The Fistical Four came out ruefully. Hooker was still cackling. The chums glared at him, and marched off without a word. And still the sound of the philatelist's cackle followed them.

"It's beastly!" growled Lovell. "Hooker will tell all the Fourth how we were done in by those rotters."

"We'll get even with them," granted Jimmy Silver. "Let's go and look in at Leggett's study now."

The Fistical Four entered the Modern side of Rookwood, and made their way to Leggett's study. Jimmy Silver lighted the gas, and then stared at the smashed desk.

"My only Aunt Jane! They've been here before us!"

The Fistical Four looked at the desk, and at each other, in dismay. And as they did so a footstep came along the passage, and Leggett entered the study.

He glanced at the lighted gas and at the four juniors standing there. Then his eye fell on the desk, and he gave a yell.

"What have you smashed my desk for?"

The Fistical Four stared at the furious junior. He sprang towards the desk, and glared at it and glared at them. His rage was too great for words. He mumbled at them, and it was easy to see that fear was a great part of the emotion he felt.

"We didn't smash your desk," said Jimmy Silver at last. "We have only just come in!"

"Liar!" spluttered Leggett.

Jimmy Silver turned red.

"Better language, you rat! I admit that it looks suspicious, but we have not touched your desk. It was done before we came here!"

"It's a lie! You've taken my papers—"

"Eh? What papers?"

Leggett bit his lip. He ran his eye quickly through the desk. He could see that the contents had been disturbed, but nothing appeared to have been taken away. Jimmy Silver made a quick step towards him.

"What's that, Leggett? Have you been up to your rascally tricks again?"

The question showed Leggett that it could not have been the Fistical Four who had ransacked his desk. He could have bitten his tongue out then.

"It's—it's all right," he stammered. "I—I believe you!"

"What have you got there that you're so frightened about?"

"N-nothing! Leave my study. You say yourself that it looks suspicious. Somebody has broken my desk and searched it. I'll complain to the Head if you don't get out!"

It was evidently useless to linger. The Fistical Four went out into the passage. Jimmy Silver was looking worried.

"I guess it was Tommy Dodd & Co. who busted the desk and searched it," he said. "The question is, have they found the stamp?"

"No," said Lovell decidedly; "they haven't. Leggett was only nervous about his papers, whatever they are, and he said nothing about a stamp. It's pretty clear that the stamp wasn't in the desk, I should say!"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"I should say you're right. Those rotters haven't got ahead of us, after all, in spite of their confounded tricks! And I guess it's pretty certain that Leggett's keeping the stamp in his togs somewhere!"

"You're quite right, Jimmy," said Raby. "Well, we shall have to see that the rotter doesn't sell the stamp in the village."

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Paying the Piper.

THE next morning Lovell contrived to ascertain whether Leggett was going to the village in the afternoon.

As Leggett usually spent his half-

holidays in the village, there was nothing unusual in that. But the Fistical Four needed accurate information to lay their plans.

"We don't want to follow the rotter from the school, you see," said Jimmy Silver. "Tommy Dodd & Co. may have their eyes on us, and they would tumble at once. We'd better be ahead of him, and drop on him suddenly from ambush—say, at a stile where there's plenty of cover for us in the trees!"

And so it was settled. After dinner the four juniors strolled down to the cricket-field, where a match was beginning, and thence by easy stages to the gates.

They slipped out, and sprinted along the lane to the village.

Meanwhile, Leggett, all unconscious of the plans laid for his discomfiture, put on his cap about half an hour later, and walked away from the school.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were lounging near the gates, with a great appearance of indifference; but their eyes were alert, and as soon as Leggett had gone out they followed.

The cad of the Fourth kept straight on towards the village without looking back once. Tommy Dodd chuckled as he and his chums shadowed the unsuspecting junior.

"We'll let him get as far as the stile," said Tommy Dodd. "That's about half-way, and a lonely spot. Then we'll put on a spurt and collar him!"

"Rather!"

Totally unconscious of the Modern chums' kind intentions, the cad of the Fourth kept on his way. He had reached the old stile, and the shadows were quickening their pace, when four forms started up suddenly from the bracken under the trees.

Leggett halted in astonishment. Before he knew what was happening, Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby were upon him.

"Collar him!" roared Jimmy Silver.

Down went the cad of the Fourth, under the combined grasp of the four chums. He lay and wriggled in the dust, with a knee on his chest.

"What—what—what do you want?" he gasped. "Have you gone mad?"

"Where's the stamp?"

"Eh?"

"Where's the stamp?"

"What stamp? Do you want a stamp? You can get one at the post-office!"

"None of your funny business!" said Jimmy Silver severely. "You know very well what I mean—the stamp you stole from Hooker's study!"

"I—I— You're dotty! I haven't stolen any stamp! I'll complain to the Head!"

There was a sound of running feet in the lane, and Leggett yelled frantically:

"Help! Help!"

"Off you go!" roared Tommy Dodd, hurling himself upon Jimmy Silver, while Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle biffed into Lovell, Newcome, and Raby with equal violence. "That's our prisoner!"

"Rats! He's ours!"

"He's not; he's ours! We're after the stamp!"

"So are we!"

"I tell you—"

In a moment the Modern chums and the Fistical Four were engaged in a wild and whirling combat. Leggett sprang to his feet. The Fistical Four were too busily engaged to hold him now.

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd reeled to and fro breathlessly. Tommy Cook was fighting valiantly, but Lovell and Newcome pinned him to the ground. A sudden shout broke from Tommy Dodd:

"He's gone!"

"Well, of all the burbling—" said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, of all the idiots—" said Tommy Dodd.

"Hallo, you chaps! What's the row about?" It was Hooker, the philatelist. "We were after the stamp," said Jimmy Silver. "We should have had it, too, if these asses hadn't come up and mucked up the whole show!"

"You mean, we should have had it," said Tommy Dodd, "if you hadn't—"

"The stamp?" said Hooker.

"Yes."

"Oh, that's all right! I've found it!" For a full minute the Fistical Four and the Modern chums were simply dumb.

Jimmy Silver was the first to break the silence.

"You've found it?" he said, in measured tones.

"Yes," said Hooker. "I meant to tell you at dinner, but I forgot. I found the stamp in my study. It had got shoved into a book that was lying on my table at the time, you see. Blessed if I know how, unless I put it there for safety, and forgot all about it!"

"Then it wasn't stolen, after all?"

"No, of course not."

"It wasn't stolen!" said Tommy Dodd. "We've ragged Leggett almost out of his wits, and busted his desk, and generally made asses of ourselves, and it wasn't stolen!"

"And now you stand there as cool as a cucumber and tell us so!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Yes," said Hooker beamingly. "I'm jolly glad I've found it!"

"We'll pay Leggett for his desk," said Tommy Dodd; "but it occurs to me that this cheerful idiot has got something to pay for!"

"Rather!"

"I guess you're right for once, Duddy."

"Right-ho!" said Lovell. "Collar the howling idiot!"

"Here, what are you doing?" yelled Hooker, as they seized him. "I—I—I—Ow!"

They did not heed his remonstrances. They gave the philatelist the most terrific ragging that seven enraged juniors could give anybody.

When they left him at last, he sat up amid a mass of dry fern in the ditch, with his collar hanging by one end, his hair like a lump of half-picked oakum, his face dusty, and his clothes dustier, and an expression of absolutely idiotic bewilderment upon his face.

And then, somewhat relieved in their minds, the Fistical Four and the Modern chums returned to Rookwood, with a firm resolution in their breasts to very carefully consider the matter before they started in the amateur detective line again.

THE END.

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