



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Uncle James to the Rescue.

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL of the Classical Fourth came into the end study rubbing his hands, and with a gleam in his eyes.

The expression on Lovell's usually good-natured face at that moment would have done credit to a Prussian or a cannibal.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome looked at him inquiringly. It was evident that something was very wrong with Arthur Edward.

His first remark was expressive, but not explanatory. It was:

"Yow-wow-wow-wow!"

"Hallo! Been up against it?" asked Raby.

"Yow-wow!"

"Never mind; keep smiling!" advised Jimmy Silver.

"You silly ass!" was Lovell's grateful acknowledgment of that good advice.

"But what's the row?"

"Yow-wow! My hands! Ow! Manders! Wow!"

"Manders?"

"That Modern beast!" groaned Lovell. "Like his cheek to cane a Classical! Why can't he cane the Moderns if he wants to cane somebody? Yow-wow! The more they're canded the better—wow! I've a jolly good mind to complain to the Head. Wow-wow!"

"Do you mean to say that a Modern master has canded you for nothing?" exclaimed Newcome indignantly.

"Wow-wow! Yes! Three on each hand. Groooh! Practically for nothing. That ass Tommy Dodd brought his footer out, and I kicked it away from him—wow!—and it happened to catch old Manders on the chest—ow! How was I to know he was sneaking round Little Quad just at that minute? Oh, my hands!"

"Quite an accident, of course?" grinned Raby.

"Yes, you ass!" roared Lovell. "I'd like to biff him with a steam-hammer, let alone a footer, but I wouldn't be ass enough to do it, only it couldn't be helped. I told him it was an accident, and he told me not to tell falsehoods. Me! Falsehoods, you know! That means lies! The old hunks!"

"Like his cheek!" said Jimmy Silver. "Old Manders ought to know that the end study never Prussianises."

"I'm going for him!" growled Lovell. "Three on each paw for an accident; and he's no right to cane a Classical at all! I'm going to get even somehow! I've got a good mind to wait for him in the quad with a cricket-stump! Wow-wow!"

"Better let him rip," said Raby. "Old Manders is dangerous."

"He called me a liar!"

"That's only his bad manners. What can you expect of a rotten Modern?" said Raby disparagingly. "Better let him rip."

"I'm not going to let him rip!" howled Lovell. "Look here, Jimmy Silver, if you're head of this study, you can think of something. Manders is going to be made to sit up!"

Jimmy Silver looked deeply reflective.

"He ought to have reported you to Bootles," he said. "Like his cheek to lay his Modern paws on a Classical! And calling you a liar was the limit—quite the limit! Suppose you call him one?"

"Eh?"

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, you know!" said Jimmy Silver. "Don't call him a liar; on second thoughts, that's no class. Call him a rotter and a Modern worm!"

"You thumping ass!" bellowed Lovell. "Do you think I can march up to a master and call him a rotter and a worm?"

Jimmy Silver gave him a pitying smile.

"You can call him that, and a lot more, without marching up to him," he said.

"Howl it across the quad—what?" asked Lovell sarcastically.

"Not at all. Haven't you ever heard of a useful modern invention called the telephone?"

"The telephone!"

"Yes. There's a 'phone in Manders' study on the Modern side. There's a 'phone in Bootles' study on our side. We've used it sometimes—when Bootles was out. He's out now. I saw him trotting down to Coombe. Call Manders up on the 'phone, and tell him what you think of him. Better disguise your voice a bit, though. If he recognised it, he would jib."

"My hat!" said Lovell.

"You can slang him to any extent for a penny on the 'phone," said Jimmy, "and the penny goes down to Bootles' bill, too. Still, you can leave a penny in Bootles' study, and he'll find it and think he dropped it. That'll pay for the 'phone."

Lovell burst into a chuckle.

"My word! What a ripping joke to slang old Manders, without letting him know who slanged him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Raby and Newcome, greatly tickled by the idea.

"I'll jolly well do it!" said Lovell. "I'll call him some names, too! I'll pile it on till he rings off! Ha, ha!"

"Always come to your Uncle James for advice!" said Jimmy Silver complacently. "You can rely on Uncle James!"

"Jolly good wheeze! Sure Bootles is out?"

"Yes; I spotted him ambuling."

"Then, come on! You fellows can keep watch in the passage."

"Any old thing!" said Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four quitted the end study. Lovell seemed almost to have forgotten the smart in his hands in the happy anticipation of making the obnoxious Modern master "sit up"—by telephone. It was just one of Jimmy Silver's bright ideas, and, so far as the juniors could see, there was no risk attached. To "slang" the awe-inspiring Mr. Manders would be a unique experience.

The Classical chums scouted along the passage cautiously. Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, was out, and his telephone was at the mercy of the enterprising juniors.

Lovell entered the Form-master's study, and Raby and Newcome remained on the watch at the end of the passage, and Jimmy Silver just inside the study doorway.

JIMMY SILVER HITS BACK!

A Long, Complete Story of
JIMMY SILVER & Co. at
Rookwood.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

Lovell drew a deep breath, and took the receiver off the hook.

"What's the beast's number?" he asked.

"Rookham double-two," said Jimmy. "Mind you don't speak in your own toot. Manders is awfully sharp!"

"You bet!"

"Number, please?" came over the wire.

"Rookham double-two," said Lovell, in a deep, base voice.

And he waited, grinning.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Talk on the Telephone.

"H ALLO!"

It was a thin, sharp voice on the telephone—the well-known voice of Mr. Manders, the senior Modern master of Rookwood School. Everything about Mr. Manders was thin and sharp and acid. He was not an agreeable gentleman. "Are you there?" said Lovell, in the deep, base voice.

"Yes, yes! What is it?"

"Is that Rookham double-two?"

"Yes, yes! Mr. Manders is speaking."

"Old Manders?" asked Lovell.

"Eh?"

"Skinny old Manders?"

"What?"

"That dashed old rascal, Manders?" pursued Lovell, with great enjoyment. "Yah! Where did you dig up your face, old duffer?"

Jimmy Silver chuckled. Lovell was not erring on the side of over-politeness.

"What?" came Mr. Manders' voice on the wires, in tones of fury. "Who is speaking? What insolent rascal is addressing me?"

"Insolent rascal yourself! Go and eat coke!"

"What?"

"He's rung off!" grinned Lovell, looking round from the telephone. "Seems to have touched him on the raw! Ha, ha!"

"Ring him up again!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha!"

Lovell rang up again. It was another "call" to go down on Mr. Bootles' bill, but that could not be helped. Jimmy Silver considerably dropped a second penny on the study carpet, for Mr. Bootles to "field" later.

"Hallo!" came an acid voice on the wires again.

"Is that Mr. Manders?" asked Lovell, adopting a high treble voice this time.

"Yes."

"Have you paid the washerwoman yet?"

"What?"

"Unless you pay the washerwoman without any further delay, legal proceedings will be instituted!" said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver chortled. Lovell was really exhibiting a brilliance of imagination his chum had never suspected him of.

"What? I do not understand. Probably you have the wrong number!" rasped Mr. Manders.

"I am not think so. You're Manders'?"

"I am Mr. Manders."

"You're the old sneak who teaches 'stinks' in the lab at Rookwood?"

"I am the science master at Rookwood School. How dare you! Who are you?"

"Well, cocky—"

"What?"

"If you make any further attempt to bilk your washerwoman, you'll find yourself in Queer Street!"

"Who is speaking?" shrieked Mr. Manders. "Ah! I advise you to give up being such a mean old sneak!" went on Lovell. "You're a disgrace to Rookwood, you know! Your proper place is among the Huns."

"He's rung off again," said Lovell. "He doesn't seem to enjoy this conversation."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver shed another penny on the carpet, and it rolled under the table.

"Have another penn'orth," he said.

Lovell chortled, and rang up again. For some minutes there was no answer, but Mr. Manders came to the telephone at last.

"What is wanted? Who is it?" came his bitter tones.

"Is that old Manders? This is the police-station. You have forgotten to report yourself."

"What?"

"Unless you report at once, your ticket-of-leave will be rescinded."

"T-t-ticket-of-leave!" stuttered Mr. Manders.

"Yes. Then you'll go back to choky!"

Lovell put the receiver on the hook.

"Old Manders don't seem to like being taken for a ticket-of-leave man," he remarked. "I fancy he won't come to the 'phone again. Still, we've had threepenn'orth!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!" chortled Jimmy Silver. "I can just picture him now ramping round his study!"

There was a cautious whistle from the passage.

It was a warning from the juniors on the watch.

"Buzz off!" said Jimmy hurriedly. "That must be Bootles!"

The two juniors bolted out of the study.

They disappeared by one end of the passage as the master of the Fourth appeared at the other.

Mr. Bootles went into his study quite unsuspecting.

The Fistical Four gathered in the end study again in great spirits. They roared with laughter. It was easy to imagine the fury of Mr. Manders wasting itself on the desert air.

"It's the first time he's had any plain English like that!" chuckled Lovell. "I say, we'll play this game again when he cuts up rusty. We'll make him dance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Fourth roared again. Rawson of the Fourth looked into the study.

"Hallo! You seem to be enjoying yourselves," he remarked.

"We are—we is!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

And he explained the tremendous joke on the Modern master.

Rawson chuckled.

"Kipping!" he said. "I hope there won't be trouble—"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Lovell confidently. "I disguised my voice, you know. Manders couldn't smell a rat."

"I hope so. I suppose it isn't about you that old Manders has come over?"

The Fistical Four sat up suddenly.

"Has Manders come over?"

"Yes; he's in Bootles' study now—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And Bootles, has just sent me for you, Lovell. That's what I came for. He wants you in his study."

"He wants me?" said Lovell faintly.

"Yes. You're to go to his study at once."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Must be something else," said Jimmy Silver uneasily. "Manders simply can't have spotted you!"

"Better go," said Raby.

"I—I suppose I must!"

Arthur Edward Lovell was not laughing now. His face was very, very serious as he made his way to his Form-master's study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Called Over the Coals.

MR. BOOTLES was changing his boots for his slippers when there was a loud rap at his door, and it flew open, and Mr. Manders of the Modern side stalked in.

The Fourth Form master rose, with one foot on and one slipper.

Mr. Manders' excited look surprised him.

"Bless my soul! Is anything the matter?" he ejaculated.

THE PENNY POPULAR—No. 60.

"Yes, sir!" Mr. Manders' voice was thunderous. "I have been insulted, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"It was not you, I presume, who rang me up on this telephone and applied insulting and obnoxious expressions to me, Mr. Bootles?"

"Sir!"

"It was therefore some boy on the Classical side who used your telephone, Mr. Bootles."

"I—I—I do not quite grasp—"

"I should imagine, sir, that I had made myself clear. I have been rung up on the telephone, and opprobrious expressions have been applied to me."

"Dear me!"

"I was rung up three separate times and insulted, sir!" roared Mr. Manders. "I was surprised—I may say astounded. But I am not a man, sir, who can be insulted with impunity! It occurred to me, sir, to ring up the Exchange and ask them to give me the number—the number, sir, of my interlocutor! Imagine my astonishment, sir, when I was informed that the number was Rookham two-three—the number, sir, of your telephone here!"

"Bless my soul!"

"It was upon this instrument, sir"—Mr. Manders waved a skinny hand at the telephone in the corner of the study—"upon this instrument—your instrument, sir—that I was rung up three times in succession not a quarter of an hour ago! You, I presume, were not in the room?"

"I have but just returned from a walk," said Mr. Bootles, greatly flurried. "There was certainly no one here when I came in. I can hardly believe that any person has had the audacity to use my telephone!"

"I repeat, sir, that the number I obtained from the Exchange was two-three Rookham. Is not that your number?"

"Yes, yes—certainly. But—"

"During your absence, sir, some boy here used your telephone for the especial purpose of hurling insults at me. I think I can guess the young rascal's name also. It was Lovell of the Fourth Form."

"But—"

"A short time since that boy had the insolence to hurl a football at me, and I caned him. I demand that Lovell be questioned."

"There is no need to demand, sir," said Mr. Bootles, nettled. "If a boy in my Form has been guilty of impertinence to a master, I shall naturally look into the matter. I will send for Lovell."

The Form-master stepped to the door and called to Rawson, and sent the junior on his errand.

Then he sat down again, and proceeded to put on his other slipper.

Mr. Manders fumed while he waited.

"The boy is not coming!" he snorted. "A guilty conscience, sir, is keeping him away!"

"He will come," said Mr. Bootles—"indeed, he is here!"

Lovell entered the study.

"Lovell," said the master of the Fourth. "Mr. Manders makes a very serious complaint concerning you."

"Yes, sir," said Lovell, his heart sinking.

"During my absence someone used my telephone and spoke rudely to Mr. Manders. The Exchange have given him this number."

Lovell's face fell. He had not thought of that possibility.

"Mr. Manders thinks you were the person who used the telephone," said Mr. Bootles.

"Is that correct, Lovell?"

Lovell hesitated.

There was nothing for it now but an admission of the lie direct. Mr. Manders had called him a liar, and the remembrance of it tempted Lovell strongly to justify the word. There was no proof against him, but he put the temptation aside.

"Yes, sir," he said at last.

Mr. Manders snorted.

"I knew it!"

"You used my telephone, Lovell?" said Mr. Bootles mildly.

"Yes, sir."

"You insulted Mr. Manders?" exclaimed the Form-master, greatly shocked.

The junior looked sullen.

"Mr. Manders called me a liar, sir," he replied. "He had no right to do that. I told him what I thought of him because of that."

"Ahem!"

"I ordered the boy not to tell falsehoods," said Mr. Manders between his teeth. "He was lying."

"I was not lying!" said Lovell with spirit.

"If I were a liar, I could tell lies now to

Mr. Bootles, and say I never used the telephone."

"That is true," said Mr. Bootles. "I am sorry, Mr. Manders, that you applied such an expression to a lad whom I know to be truthful and honourable."

"Thank you, sir!" said Lovell.

Mr. Manders fumed.

"I presume that does not mean, sir, that this boy is to be allowed to go unpunished for his insolence?" he exclaimed. "I warn you that, in that case, I shall carry the matter before the Head."

Mr. Bootles' eyes gleamed. He was a mild little gentleman, but was not to be bullied in his own study.

"I shall be obliged to you if you will moderate your tone!" he said snappishly. "I am quite aware of my duty, and have no desire to be instructed."

"That boy has insulted me—he has applied outrageous epithets to me!"

"Lovell, you must be aware that you did very wrong. I sympathise with you in your indignation at having your word doubted by Mr. Manders. At the same time, nothing can excuse impertinence to one in authority. I shall punish you severely, Lovell."

"Very well, sir," said Lovell quietly.

He expected it; in fact, he knew that Mr. Bootles had no choice in the matter now that the facts were known.

The Fourth Form master picked up his cane.

"Hold out your hand, Lovell!"

Swish, swish!

"Again!" said Mr. Bootles.

"Mr. Manders has already caned me, only half an hour ago, sir," said Lovell. "He gave me six cuts."

Mr. Bootles laid down the cane.

"You may go!" he said.

"Mr. Bootles, I protest against this!" exclaimed the Modern master. "The boy has not been sufficiently punished!"

"Eight strokes of the cane within an hour are quite sufficient, in my opinion," said Mr. Bootles drily. "You may go, Lovell."

Lovell left the study.

"Now the boy is gone," added Mr. Bootles. "I must point out that, in caning him, you were exceeding your authority, Mr. Manders."

"What?"

"Your duty was to report his conduct to me. I object to your taking the law into your own hands in this manner. I can make allowance for your annoyance, but I cannot have my own authority disregarded!"

Mr. Manders spluttered.

"It was also very injudicious to cast doubt upon the boy's word," said Mr. Bootles calmly. "Nothing is more likely to make a lad untruthful. Yet that he is truthful you have seen for yourself. He could have denied the whole transaction, and he could not have been punished on suspicion. I trust, Mr. Manders, that you will upon a future occasion act with more circumspection."

Mr. Manders left the study without replying; he could not trust himself to speak.

Lovell was rubbing his hands at the end of the passage, and the angry master, as he passed him, gave him a box on the ear.

Lovell staggered to the wall, with a howl of surprise and wrath, and Mr. Manders rustled on.

"My hat!" gasped Lovell.

He rubbed his ear.

"Rotter!" said Oswald, who was in the passage. "Bootles wouldn't let him do that. Serve him right to tell Bootles!"

Lovell shook his head, and made his way to the end study.

"Bowled out?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Look at my hands!" growled Lovell. "Manders got the number of the 'phone from the Exchange."

"Oh, my sainted aunt! Never thought of that."

"Of course you didn't!" snorted Lovell. "That's what comes of relying on Uncle James—what! You silly ass! I've had two from Bootles and a punch from Manders as he went out. Punched my ear!"

"The cheeky rotter!" said Raby warmly.

"And now we're going to bump Uncle James for his wonderful wheeze!" said Lovell wrathfully.

Jimmy Silver jumped up.

"Here, hold on, you ungrateful bounder! It was a jolly good wheeze—"

"Collar him!"

"It's only fair," said Newcome. "When Uncle James plays the giddy ox, Uncle James wants bumping."

"Gerroff, you silly asses! Look here, I'll think of another wheeze—"

"Blow your wheezes!" growled Lovell.



"Do you wish to see anyone here?" Mr. Manders asked brusquely. "Sir, you have hit it," said the seedy gentleman in a rich, rolling voice. "I have called to see that benefactor of his species, Mr. Manders." (see page 17.)

"My hands are raw, and I'm fed up with your wheezes."

"Well make Manders sit up—"

"Manders has made me sit up; that's how your blessed wheezes turn out. You're going to be bumped!"

Jimmy Silver picked up the poker.

"Cheese it, you dufters! Look here, I'm going to have a big think—"

"What with?" grunted Lovell.

"Fathead! I'm going to have a big think, and if I don't make Manders sit up before the end of the week, you can bump me as hard as you like."

And the Co. agreed to that, on reflection—especially as the poker looked dangerous.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Uncle James' Great Wheeze!

JIMMY SILVER'S "big think" was not a rapid process. The next day he was still thinking.

For the honour of the Classical side Mr. Manders had to be made to feel sorry for himself.

The Classical chums agreed on this, and they agreed that it was up to Uncle James.

Classical ears could not be boxed with impunity, especially by a Modern hand. The insult had to be wiped out.

And unless Jimmy Silver thought of a scheme for putting salt on the tail of the Manders-bird, as Lovell elegantly expressed it, Jimmy Silver was going through a study ragging, administered by his faithful chums. If Uncle James was going to be leader, Uncle James had to learn not to land his devoted

followers into scrapes; the Co. agreed on that most heartily.

The difficulty was, that the Manders-bird was a very wary old bird, and was not to be caught with chaff. Japing Mr. Manders was a very risky undertaking—as the affair of the telephone had proved. As Jimmy indignantly remarked, nobody but Manders would have thought of spying out a telephone number in that way. It really wasn't playing the game. And Lovell and Raby and Newcome were of opinion that the wheeze, when Jimmy Silver propounded it, would end in a "muck-up," in just the same way—in which case, they were prepared to bump Uncle James for his own good.

Another day came, but the wheeze, apparently, had not come; at all events, Jimmy Silver had said nothing on the subject. It was a half-holiday that day, and the Fistical Four had intended to walk to Rookham, with Oswald and Flynn and some more of the juniors. But after dinner that Wednesday afternoon, when the fellows started for Rookham, Jimmy Silver announced that they were not going with the rest.

"Look here, ain't we going to Rookham?" demanded Lovell.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Your uncle wants you, my boy," he replied. "We're going on the war-path this afternoon."

"Oh! Manders?"

"Yes, Manders."

"What's the game?" asked Raby.

"The game is to follow your uncle without asking questions," said the captain of the Fourth calmly.

Lovell sniffed.

"Well, we'll give you your head," he remarked. "But if you muck it up, and there's a row, remember what you're going to get."

"Oh, scat!"

"What's the marching orders?" asky Raby, with a yawn.

"We're going down to Coombe."

"What on earth for?"

"For about an hour."

"I don't mean that, fathead! I mean, what are we going to do there?"

"You're going to follow your leader."

Whereat the Co. grunted in chorus; but they followed their leader, and the four juniors sauntered down the leafy lane to the village.

It pleased Jimmy Silver to adopt a lofty attitude, which was justified by the circumstances that a study ragging awaited him in the event of failure.

Jimmy's first call in the village was at the newsagent's, where he purchased the latest number of the "Coombe Recorder." His chums viewed this proceeding with amazement, and they were still more amazed when Jimmy sat down on the bench outside Mrs. Wicks' and began to peruse the advertisement columns. They comforted themselves with ices while they waited.

"Got it!" said Jimmy at last.

"What have you got, fathead? Sudden insanity?"

"No. Listen!"

Jimmy read out an advertisement.

"Typing, copying, etc. Authors' manuscripts, etc.—Miss Peckes, Willow Cottage, Coombe."

Lovell and Raby and Newcome blinked at him.

"What the thunder does that mean?" demanded Lovell.

"That means that Miss Peekes does typing for a living."

"I know it does, ass! But you don't want any typing done. Are you starting as an author?" hooted Lovell.

"No; but I want some typing done. Come on!"

"Where are we going now?"

"Willow Cottage."

"What for?"

"To see Miss Peekes."

"What the merry thunder—"

"You talk too much, Lovell, old chap. Come on!"

Jimmy Silver led the way, and the Fistical Four arrived at Willow Cottage. They were received very politely by Miss Peekes, who rose from a typewriter in her little parlour.

"Good-afternoon!" said Jimmy Silver, while his astonished chums stood, cap in hand. "I want something typed, please."

"Certainly! I charge one shilling per thousand words," said Miss Peekes.

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean, this won't be more than a dozen words or so. But I suppose I needn't have the full thousand for the bob?"

"No," said the typist, smiling.

"Well, here it is."

Jimmy Silver laid a paper on the table. Miss Peekes glanced at it.

"Can I have it now?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes; it will not take me two or three minutes."

"Thank you very much. We'll wait."

Click, click, click! went the typewriter under Miss Peeke's fair hands.

In a few minutes she handed the typed sheets to Jimmy Silver. Jimmy laid down a shilling, and Miss Peekes insisted upon giving him sixpence change, and the juniors left the cottage.

"Now, what the dickens does that mean?" exclaimed Lovell.

"Bow-wow!" said Jimmy calmly.

"Where are we going now?" howled Lovell. Jimmy looked at the "Coombe Recorder" again.

"F. Haines, 6, Long Lane," he said.

"Who the thump is F. Haines?"

"A chap who does typewriting."

"Haven't you finished?"

"No."

"Why couldn't you let Miss Peekes do the lot, then?"

"Because I'm blessed with rather more brains than they handed out to you, Lovell, old chap."

And Jimmy walked on cheerily, and his mystified chums followed to 6, Long Lane, where a bald old gentleman received them, and typed an envelope from a paper handed him by Jimmy Silver for the small charge of twopence.

Jimmy was smiling with satisfaction as he left Long Lane.

The Co. were in a state of considerable exasperation by this time.

"You howling ass!" said Lovell, in measured tones. "We might have been at Rookham this afternoon with the chaps, and you're mooching about a dashed village getting typewriting done on the instalment system. What do you call this game?"

"I call it covering up our tracks."

"Our—our tracks?"

"Yes; I suppose you don't want Manders to bowl us out again, do you?" said Jimmy severely. "Suppose he makes inquiries—you know what an inquisitive old bird he is. Well, he can't track us out by the hand-writing when a letter's typed, and two different typists makes it all safe. Miss Peekes doesn't know where the letter's going, and Mr. Haines doesn't know what's in the letter. See?"

"But what's it all about?" shrieked Lovell.

"It's about time we posted the letter," said Jimmy thoughtfully.

"You funny ass!"

"Still, I'll let you chaps see the letter," said Jimmy considerably. "You don't deserve it, but I will. We're going to worry Manders."

"How?"

"Think a minute," urged Jimmy. "Now, is old Manders a generous, warm-hearted sort of chap—the kind of old bird to help a lame dog over a stile, and to feel a deep sympathy for people down on their luck?"

"You know he isn't, fathead!"

"Exactly! Suppose a lot of people got the impression that he was that kind of old bird, and came to him for money and assistance—lots of them?"

"But—but they won't!" ejaculated Raby. "Why should they?"

"Are you quite off your rocker?" asked Newcome, in wonder.

"Look at this!" said Jimmy.

His chums looked.

The typed envelope was addressed:

"'Coombe Recorder,' Market Street, Coombe."

"You're not sending that to the local rag?" asked Newcome.

"Exactly! With the letter in it. Look at the letter."

The three juniors read the typed letter, and stared blankly. It ran:

"Sir,—Please insert the enclosed advt. in this week's 'Recorder.' P.O. is enclosed.

—Yours truly, A. KIDD.

Advertisement:

"Wealthy gentleman is anxious to relieve distress. Ring up Rookham two-two."

Lovell & Co. read that precious advertisement, and blinked at it, and blinked at Jimmy Silver.

"You're sending that to the local paper!" ejaculated Lovell.

"Certainly!"

"That's Manders' telephone number?"

"Of course it is!"

"But—but—"

"I've signed the letter 'A. Kidd,'" said Jimmy Silver complacently. "I think that's rather good. I couldn't very well put my own name, and I had to put some name. And I am a kid, ain't I?"

"Ha, ha!"

"Manders is a wealthy gentleman, and if he isn't anxious to relieve distress, he ought to be. We ought to do him the justice of believing that he's anxious to relieve distress, as he's got plenty of oof."

"Catch him!" said Newcome. "More likely to give a beggar in charge than to hand him a tanner."

"But—but—but if that comes out in the local paper," gasped Lovell, "every cadger for ten miles round will pile on Manders."

"That's what I want."

"And if he won't answer 'em on the 'phone, they'll look out his address in the telephone directory," said Lovell, chuckling.

"Naturally!"

"And they'll call!"

"Of course they will!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "Fancy a procession of seedy cadgers calling on old Manders for financial assistance!"

The juniors yelled at the bare thought. Mr. Manders was supposed to have a good deal of money, but he was never supposed to be willing to part with any of it. For a crowd of hard-up cadgers to visit the meanest man in the county in search of financial assistance was a screaming joke—from the junior point of view. Mr. Manders was not likely to see the humour of it. But that was only a detail that did not matter.

"They'll get him on the telephone first," said Jimmy cheerfully. "He'll be rung up by everybody who can get to a call-office. When he's fed-up with that, and stops answering the 'phone, they'll look his address out in the directory and call. I shouldn't wonder if he has hundreds of them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, to get the postal-order," said Jimmy. "This letter's got to be posted this afternoon, and it will come out in the 'Recorder' this week."

The Fistical Four hurried to the village post-office where the postal-order was duly purchased, placed in the letter, and the letter posted.

There was no doubt that that advertisement would appear in the "Recorder" on Thursday afternoon.

On Friday, probably, the results would begin to appear.

Exactly what the results would be the juniors could not say; but it appeared certain that Mr. Manders would have a very exciting time.

Jimmy Silver & Co. strolled back to Rookham in great spirits.

The precautions Jimmy had taken covered up the tracks of the practical joker. Even if Mr. Manders made stringent inquiries at the office of the local paper, he would learn nothing. The printer could only tell him that the advertisement came by post in the usual way. The letter itself, being typed, would betray nothing.

The Fistical Four felt that they were about to score at last, and Jimmy's chums agreed that Uncle James had deserved well of the study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Financial Assistance Required!

UZZ!

B Mr. Manders gave an irritable grunt. He was seated in his study after lessons on Friday, engaged in the perusal of a ponderous volume on chemistry, when the telephone-bell rang.

He laid down his book, and took up the receiver.

"Hallo!"

"That Rookham double-two?"

"Yes."

"Very good. My name is Jacob Jawkins."

"I do not know anyone of that name!" snapped Mr. Manders. "Will you kindly state your business with me?"

"Certainly, my dear sir. I am in need of financial assistance."

"What!"

"Having been for some time confined in prison, owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the police, I am now in acute distress. Your wealth, my dear sir, will enable you to relieve a very genuine case. If you could advance me twenty pounds—"

Mr. Manders almost dropped the receiver. "Do you take this for a charitable institution?" he gasped.

"Certainly!"

"Then you are mistaken—entirely mistaken. Good-afternoon!"

"But, my dear sir—"

Mr. Manders rang off.

He returned to his book with a grunt of annoyance. The conduct of the unknown Mr. Jawkins in ringing him up to ask for financial assistance was inexplicable. Mr. Manders was about the last man in the county to render anybody financial assistance. Mr. Manders enjoyed a short rest; Mr. Jawkins was apparently done with. But a quarter of an hour later the telephone-bell rang again.

"Hallo!" said Mr. Manders into the transmitter.

"Rookham double-two?"

"Yes, yes!"

"My dear, kind friend—"

"What!"

"Although a stranger to you, I venture to address you as a dear, kind friend. Truly, your kindness and generosity are unparalleled. My dear, kind, though unknown benefactor is—"

"Some lunatic!" murmured Mr. Manders.

"My admired and esteemed benefactor, I am in pressing need of some monetary assistance. My name is—"

Mr. Manders did not wait for the name. He jammed the receiver down.

"This is some trick!" he muttered. "Bless my soul! I— Confound it! There is the telephone again! Hallo, hallo!"

"We seem to have been cut off," went on the voice on the wires. "I was about to tell you that the sum of fifteen pounds would be a great blessing—"

The unknown interlocutor was cut off again quite sharply. Mr. Manders jammed down the receiver with a force that nearly knocked over the instrument.

The telephone-bell rang again and again, but the Modern master did not heed it. He sat tight, frowning, and the bell ceased to ring at last.

About half an hour later, when Mr. Manders had recovered his equanimity a little, there was a fresh buzz. He took up the receiver wearily.

"Yes! Hallo!"

"Is that Rookham double-two?" It was a fresh voice this time, and the surprised master recognised feminine tones.

"Yes. Who is speaking?"

"Sempronia Squigg. You are the good, kind gentleman who is anxious to relieve distress?"

"Eh?"

"Noble, generous man! How can I thank you?"

"Madam—"

"Will you call upon me, or would you prefer me to call and explain? I am in urgent need of the sum of seventy-five pounds—"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Seventy-five pounds."

"Madam, are you insane?" Mr. Manders shrieked into the transmitter. "Do you imagine for one moment that I intend to give a large sum of money to a stranger—indeed, to anybody? What do you mean?"

"But if you are anxious to relieve distress you—"

"I am not in the least anxious to relieve distress. Nonsense!"

"Then why, sir, have you announced that you are anxious to do so? Are you some swindler and charlatan?"

Mr. Manders rang off hastily. He wiped his perspiring forehead. Those repeated calls on the telephone, all for financial assistance, astounded him. Had every hard-up individual in the county gone suddenly mad?

But a sudden, illuminating suspicion darted into Mr. Manders' mind. He remembered Lovell's trick on Mr. Bootles' telephone.

"Fool that I am!" he exclaimed savagely. "Of course, it is that boy again! I did not know his voice; but he disguised his voice last time. I will wait till the bell rings again, and then rush across and catch the young scoundrel in the act."

Buzzzz!
The bell rang again as he was speaking. He rushed from the study with a grim face. The bell was still buzzing as he rushed down the passage.

Fellows in the quadrangle stared as they beheld Mr. Manders fairly sprinting across, with his gown flying in the breeze.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "What's the matter with Manders? Looks as if he's on the warpath."

Mr. Manders was indeed on the warpath. He rushed into the School House, and dashed on without a pause to Mr. Bootles' study. He had not the slightest doubt that he would catch the impertinent junior at the telephone. He hurled the door wide open without stopping to knock.

"Bless my soul!"

There were two persons in the study—Mr. Bootles and Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, who had dropped in for a chat with the Form-master. They gazed blankly at Mr. Manders as he came flying in.

The Head rose majestically.

"Really, Mr. Manders—"
Mr. Manders stopped, as if struck by a bullet. Suspicious as he was, he could not suspect the reverend Head of Rookwood of playing tricks on the telephone. The culprit, evidently, was not there.

"I—I— Excuse me!" stuttered Mr. Manders.

"Really—"
"I—I beg your pardon, sir! I—I am somewhat flurried!"

"Yes, sir, so I should judge," said the Head majestically. "So I should judge, Mr. Manders."

"I—I—I really beg your pardon!" gasped Mr. Manders, and he retreated incontinently from the study.

He went down the passage like a man in a dream. It was clear that he had not been rung up, after all, from Mr. Bootles' study. Had the young rascal he suspected rung him up from the call-office in the village? But even as the thought came into his mind he observed Jimmy Silver & Co. in the passage. They were smiling.

Mr. Manders halted and glared at them.

"Lovell!" he rapped out.
"Yes, sir."

"Someone has telephoned to me—some insolent practical joker—"
"Indeed, sir!"
"Was it you, Lovell?"
"Not at all, sir."

Mr. Manders glared at him. But the juniors had no access to any telephone but Mr. Bootles', and the Head was in Mr. Bootles' study. He had to admit that he was on the wrong track. He turned away with a snort, and returned across the quad.

The Fistical Four grinned at one another ecstatically.

"It's working!" murmured Jimmy Silver.
"Working like a charm!" chortled Lovell.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Classical chums roared.
Mr. Manders reached his house, and Knowles of the Sixth met him as he came in.

"The telephone-bell's ringing in your study, sir!"

"Confound the telephone!" thundered Mr. Manders.
"Wha-a-at!" gasped Knowles.
"Hang the telephone!"

Mr. Manders whisked on, leaving Knowles of the Sixth rooted to the floor with astonishment.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Nice for Manders!

MR. MANDERS did not spend an enjoyable afternoon.

Every quarter of an hour or so the telephone-bell rang.

He was tempted to cut off permanently, but that would not have done. Any message might have been one of importance, especially as Mr. Manders dabbled in stocks and shares, and was accustomed to being rung up by his stockbroker at odd times to be apprised of the state of the "market."

There were, in fact, a couple of business calls dealing with the question of financial assistance which he was supposed to be prepared to render to perfect strangers.

Mr. Manders was astounded as well as enraged.

When he left his study he met smiling faces among the juniors, though he did not guess the cause of the smiles.

Jimmy Silver had cycled down to Coombe for a copy of the local paper, and that copy had passed from hand to hand in the school.

Jimmy did not relate how the advertisement came to be in the paper; but most of the fellows guessed easily enough that Mr. Manders had not inserted it.

It was a joke of some "person or persons unknown," and the juniors chortled over it joyously. And whenever the telephone-bell was heard to ring in Mr. Manders' study there was an outburst of chortling among the Modern juniors.

The Fistical Four, sauntering lazily in the quad—within easy distance of Mr. Manders' study window—heard the incessant buzzing of the bell, and caught glimpses of the Modern master whisking across to the telephone.

But towards evening there was a blessed silence.

Mr. Manders had disconnected the bell.

He had to risk anyone who really had business with him calling him up and failing to get through. He simply could not stand the buzzing bell and the demands for financial assistance any longer.

That evening Mr. Manders was in a temper which made him really dangerous to approach.

"Seems to be fed up," Jimmy Silver remarked, when the bell had not been heard for some time. "The show's over for to-night. But to-morrow—"

"If they can't get through on the 'phone, they'll begin calling," grinned Raby.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors looked forward to the morrow with keen anticipation. They only regretted the necessity of lessons in the morning. Lessons were really a worry on such an occasion.

Indeed, morning lessons had never seemed so long to the Fistical Four as they did that Saturday morning. When Mr. Bootles dismissed his class at last, Jimmy Silver & Co. hurried out, and sought Tommy Dodd. The Modern junior was chuckling.

"Manders had any callers?" asked Jimmy.
"Yes, rather!" chortled Tommy Dodd. "He was called out to see a seedy chap who waited in the passage, and there was quite a row. Seedy chap was fair shouting."

"Ha, ha! What did he want?"
"Cash!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly queer about that advertisement in the local rag," said Tommy Dodd, eyeing the Classical chums. "Manders couldn't have put it in."

"Hardly," agreed Jimmy Silver gravely. "Yet it's his telephone number that's given. Queer, isn't it?"

"Jolly queer!" said Tommy. "And the chap who did it will find himself in Queer Street if Manders gets on his track."

"You think it was a practical joke of somebody?" asked Jimmy innocently, while his chums gurgled.

"I rather fancy it was," grinned Tommy Dodd, "and when Mandy sees it he will hustle down to the newspaper office, and if the printer remembers who handed it in—"

"Might have been sent in by the post?" suggested Jimmy.

"Ha, ha! It might! But if the printers kept the letter and Manders sees it and recognises the handwriting—"

"The practical joker—if there was one—might have got the letter typed by somebody on a machine," said Jimmy thoughtfully.

Tommy Dodd yelled.
"Oh, you deep bounder! Ha, ha, ha!"
Jimmy Silver looked surprised.

"Of course, I'm only suggesting that," he remarked.

"Of course," assented Tommy Dodd. "You don't know anything about it—that isn't why you didn't come over to Rookham on Wednesday! Hallo, who the dickens is this?"

A thin gentleman in a very seedy coat came in at the gates. He stopped to speak to the juniors.

"Can you tell me where to find Mr. Manders?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "He's a master here."

The stranger followed him in.

He looked like an actor who had had bad luck, and he also looked as if he had been refreshing himself during his walk to Rookwood with something more potent than water from the pump.

The juniors grinned at one another.
"We must see this!" murmured Lovell.
And they cautiously "stalked" the stranger.

Mr. Manders was going in to lunch when the seedy gentleman entered the house. He glanced at him sourly. The sight of anyone who was down on his luck was an offence to Mr. Manders' uncharitable eyes.

"Do you wish to see anyone here?" he asked brusquely.

"Sir, you have hit it," said the seedy gentleman, in a rich, rolling voice. "I have called to see that benefactor of his species, Mr. Manders."

"I am Mr. Manders."

"Sir, it does me proud to behold you," said the visitor. "My name is Curll—Horatio



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The King of the Cowboys tells readers of this week's BOYS' CINEMA some thrilling true stories of his encounters with famous outlaws in the Wild West.

"Man of Might"—an exciting new serial, featuring the famous Vitagraph Star WILLIAM DUNCAN—also begins in TO-DAY'S issue of the

BOYS' CINEMA Weekly

The Great Cinema Adventure Paper.

Curl. At one time, sir, I trod the histrionic boards—

"Kindly state your business!"
"But misfortune dogged my steps, sir," said Mr. Curl sadly. "Like the raven's unhappy master, I found unmerciful disaster follow fast and follow faster—"

"Sir—"
"Until, sir, I came down on the halls," said Mr. Curl mournfully. "I, who sang Tannhauser and Lohengrin and Alfredo in the grand old days of the Roser-Moser Company, sir—I came down on the halls! And even the halls, sir, have ungratefully declined my further services."

"I am not in the slightest degree interested—"

"Until at last, sir, I am reduced to asking financial assistance of a generous benefactor who has made known the noble impulses of his heart through the medium of an advertisement," said Mr. Curl. "Sir, I blush to say that I am in immediate need of the ridiculous sum of five pounds—"

"You will get no money from me, sir," shouted Mr. Manders angrily. "Kindly leave this building at once!"

"In case, sir, there have already been heavy drafts on your generosity, I could contrive to rub along with the more moderate sum of one quid—"

"Will you go?" roared Mr. Manders.
"Five shillings even would be a boon," sighed Mr. Curl. "After raising my hopes as you have done, sir, you cannot refuse me so small a sum."

"I will have you thrown from the door if you do not instantly depart!" shouted Mr. Manders. "How dare you come here, you beggar?"

Mr. Curl's manner changed.
"I came as an artist in distress, in reply to what I regarded as the invitation of a generous gent!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I find a prevaricator—a hard-hearted hunk—a skinfint—"

"Go!" shrieked Mr. Manders.
"I will shake the dust of these inhospitable halls from my feet," said Mr. Curl disdainfully. "I spit upon you, sir! I loathe you! You are a crawling Hun, sir! Away!"

And Mr. Curl turned majestically on his heel and strode out. He left the Rookwood master rooted to the floor.

"How dare you laugh!" he shrieked, as a giggle fell upon his ears. "Silence! Disperse at once! Go in to dinner! How dare you!"

And Mr. Manders stamped into the dining room in a boiling fury.

Jimmy Silver & Co., on the point of suffocation, followed the indignant Mr. Curl down to the gates. Jimmy tapped him on the arm.

"Five bob really any good?" he asked.

"Mr. Curl's clouded brow cleared at once.

"Young sir, you are a nobleman!" he said enthusiastically. "You would hardly believe that Horatio Curl, once the shining light of the Roser-Moser Company, is down on his uppers. Yet such is the ghastly fact. Once, sir, the delight of the brave and the fair—once the spoiled darling of the fashionable crowd. Behold me now!"

Jimmy Silver slipped five shillings into the somewhat grubby hand of the gentleman who dreamt that he had dwelt in marble halls. And Mr. Curl walked away quite jauntily.

The Fistical Four went in to dinner in great spirits. After dinner they walked in the quad, waiting. The advertisement in the "Coombe Recorder" was panning out remarkably well, and they were keen to see fresh developments.

Early in the afternoon a black and sooty figure came in at the open gates, and blinked round the quadrangle.

Jimmy hurried up to him. The man looked like a chimney-sweep out of a job, and he had evidently been drowning his troubles at the Red Cow or the Bird-in-Hand. He called in his gait as he came in.

"Called to see somebody?" asked Jimmy politely.

"That I 'ave," said the sooty gentleman. "Mister Manders 'ere—wot? That the name, I reckon. My missus looked out the number in the drectory, and she said it was Manders—wot? Where is that kind gent?"

"Just coming out of his house," said Jimmy. "There he is."

"Thanky kindly."

The sooty gentleman started across the quad. Mr. Manders had just come out, to sit under the beeches to read. He halted as the visitor bore down on him.

"Mr. Manders?" asked the sooty gentleman.

"Yes. If you have come about the chimneys, kindly go to the back door!" snapped Mr. Manders.

"I ain't come about no chimneys. I'm Bill 'Arris. I got the push."
"I fail to understand you!" snapped Mr. Manders. "Have you anything to say to me?"

"Yes. I'm 'ard up!"
"That is no business of mine!" shouted Mr. Manders, realising that this was another of the mysterious demanders of financial assistance.

"But you're the wealthy gent—"
"I do not waste my wealth on vagrants."
"I got the push!" reiterated Mr. 'Arris. "I'm 'ard up! You advertise that you want to relieve distress—that means 'elping a bloke wot's 'ard up in Henglish. Well, I'm 'ard up, and 'ere I am!"

"Silver!" shouted Mr. Manders. "Call Mack here, and tell him he is to eject this person!"

Mr. Harris glared.
"Eject me!" he ejaculated. "Don't I keep on tellin' you I'm 'ard up? Ain't you goin' to 'elp a bloke wot's 'ard up?"

"No, I am not!" roared Mr. Manders. "Not a stiver, you drunken rascal!"

"My heye! You talk to me, arter fetchin' me 'ere!" exclaimed Mr. Harris indignantly. "By gosh, I ain't the man to be treated like that there—you ask any feller at the Bird-in-Hand if I am! Why, for two pins I'd knock yer face through the back of your 'ead, you old bag o' bones!"

"Ruffian! Silver, send Mack here—"
"I'm goin'!" roared Mr. Harris. "I don't want no puttin' hout. But afore I goes I'll teach yer to call an honest man names!"

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Manders wildly, as the indignant sweep rushed on him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Go it!"

The juniors yelled. They were not inclined to chip in. Mr. Harris had apparently not cleaned off the stains of his last job, since he had got the push, and nobody wanted to touch him.

Justly indignant at being played with, as he supposed, Mr. Harris was after vengeance, and the angular Rookwood master fairly crumpled up in his powerful grasp.

Mr. Manders' head was in chancery, and Mr. Harris was pounding at his features, and the yells of the unhappy modern master rang across the quadrangle.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Police! Help! Oh!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There!" roared Mr. Harris, hurling the battered Modern master to the ground, where he sprawled, gasping and smothered with soot. "That'll teach yer! Yah!"

And Mr. Harris strode indignantly away, and old Mack came cautiously out of his lodge and fastened the gates after him.

Mr. Manders sat up.
"Groogh!" he gasped. "Has—has that ruffian gone? Good heavens! The—the man must be mad! I—I am considerably hurt! Ow, wow! I—I am dirty—dreadfully dirty! Groogh! Tell Mack to lock the gates at once—ow!—and tell him to refuse to admit anyone who calls to see me—yow!—no matter who it is! Groogh!"

Mr. Manders limped away to his house, Jimmy Silver & Co. limped away, too, quite overcome. They retreated into Little Quad, where they threw themselves on the grass, and kicked up their heels and roared.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Jimmy, almost weeping. "They won't let in any more, but that one was worth a guinea a box! Oh, dear! Manders will have a coloured eye—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you fatheads, what do you think of your Uncle James now?"

"Topping!" roared Lovell. "We'll let you off that ragging! Ha, ha, ha! He had Mandy's head in chancery! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fistical Four went off into a fresh explosion.

When Mr. Manders was seen in public again, he had a dark shade round one eye, and his nose was considerably enlarged. He wore those adornments for quite a long time, much to the hilarity of the Rookwood juniors. And, although later on the notice in the "Recorder" was brought to his attention, he never knew who had inserted it.

But a great part of Rookwood knew, or guessed, and it was agreed on all hands that Jimmy Silver had deserved well of Rookwood.

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week.)

Mr. Ratcliff's Car!

A Short Story of St. Jim's

"EXCUSE me, young gents!"
Tom Merry & Co. were about to enter the gates of St. Jim's when that remark fell upon their ears. A burly man smiled at them genially as he climbed down from his seat on a closed van which had pulled to the side of the road.

"Mr. Ratcliff 'ang out 'ere?" asked the carter, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the school.

"He does," replied Tom Merry. "I—"
There was a rustling sound, and Mr. Ratcliff himself pushed past the St. Jim's juniors and confronted the carter.

"You want me, my good man?" he asked. "I want a Mr. Ratcliff, master of the Fifth Form, New House, St. Jim's," said the "good man." "Are you 'im?"

"I am!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.
"Which as 'ow I've got a car 'ere for you, Mister Ratcliff," went on the carter. "And may I take the liberty of congratulating you on your success, sir? 'Tain't every man that can enter for a football forecast competition and get heightened out of heightened!"

"Thank you, my good man!" beamed the master of the New House. "I should like to see the car."

"C-car!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Ratty with a car! Oh, my hat!"

And the Terrible Three had the greatest difficulty in suppressing their merriment.

"Fancy old Ratty being the lucky winner out of about umpteen thousand entries! It beats me altogether!" confessed Tom Merry.

"The old ass doesn't know the difference between a football and a tank!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Blessed if I know how he did it!"

"Same here!"
"Jolly fine little car!" exclaimed Manners, as a small two-seater car was lowered to the ground from the van.

"I guess it won't last long!" remarked Monty Lowther wisely. "Old Ratty can't drive—couldn't drive a hoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I thought old Baggy's yarn about Ratcliff winning a car in the 'Weakly Football' was all gas; but it seems that he was right, after all," said Tom Merry.

The juniors walked over to the two-seater and witnessed the master of the New House sign the receipt, which he handed to the carter, with twopence for a tip.

"My eye," muttered the carter, "ain't he generous? 'Ere, sir, I shouldn't like to 'rob yer!"

And, before the astonished Mr. Ratcliff could grasp the situation the indignant carter pushed the twopence back into his palm, snorted, and climbed back to his seat on the van.

"My g-good man, I—" began Mr. Ratcliff. But the good man had gone.

The New House master pocketed the twopence, and turned his attention to the car. What Mr. Ratcliff didn't know about cars would have filled volumes. Nevertheless, after consulting a handbook and putting some petrol in the tank, he tried to start the engine running. Five minutes later, dusty and perspiring freely, he had the satisfaction of hearing the pleasant hum of the engine.

"Would you like to come for a run, Merry?" asked the New Housemaster, taking his seat beside the wheel.

"N-unno, sir!" faltered the junior captain. "T-thank you very much, sir! I've got rather an important engagement this afternoon!"

Mr. Ratcliff eyed the junior captain suspiciously, but made no reply. Manners and Lowther were fast disappearing in at the gates. They did not relish the prospect of a joy-ride with the New House master. Tom Merry followed closely on their heels, breathing a sigh of relief. Motoring with a man who knew nothing about driving was rather a risky procedure.

"Whiz! Bang! Whiz!"
"Hallo, he's off!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as the car shot past the gates.

"My giddy aunt!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. "The old idiot will kill himself! Look!"

The Terrible Three rushed into the roadway and gazed after the retreating car, which