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GRAND CINEMA SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



LODER'S DRAMATIC APPEARANCE AT THE FEAST!

(A Thrilling Incident in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



... THE ...
**TABLES
 TURNED!**

By OWEN CONQUEST.

A MAGNIFICENT, LONG,
 COMPLETE STORY OF
 JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE
 CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Loyal Chums.

CLANG, clang, clang!
 Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Fourth Form, sat up in bed as the first clang of the rising-bell rang out over Rookwood School.

Lovell was the first out of bed. His chums, Raby and Newcome, followed him quickly.

The three chums were dressing quickly, while the rest of the Fourth were still yawning.

Evidently there was something "on" that morning.

There was one bed vacant in the Classical Fourth. It was that of Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Form.

Mornington, the dandy of the Fourth, sat up in bed, and looked at the chums with a sneering smile.

"Goin' to say good-bye to Jimmy Silver?" he asked.

"He won't be gone yet," remarked Townsend. "His pater's comin' to fetch him, Lovell."

"And the sooner the better," said Mornington. "Fancy a chap stickin' to the school after bein' sacked by the Head! Never heard of such cheek!"

"And barrin' himself in his study and hot-pokerin' the sergeant when he comes to turn him out," said Peele sneeringly. "Just like Jimmy Silver! He always had cheek enough for a dozen!"

"We sha'n't have much more of his cheek at Rookwood," grinned Mornington. "It's good-bye to Jimmy Silver to-day for good!"

"Oh, shut up, you cads!" growled Rawson, getting out of bed.

"Shut up yourself!" said Mornington. "Jimmy Silver's a thief, and he's sacked, and— Yaroooh!"

Mornington broke off with a yell as Rawson's pillow smote him, and hurtled him over the side of the bed.

The dandy of the Fourth sprawled on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes, yelling.

"Good for you!" said Lovell. "Give the other cads some more of the same, you fellows!"

"Here, hold on!" yelled Townsend, as Lovell rushed at him with his bolster. "I'm not—I— Yooop! Yah! Oh!"

Towny rolled out of the bed under a shower of mighty smites. Peele scrambled out to escape Raby's attack.

They dodged round the beds in hot haste. "Anybody got anything to say about Jimmy Silver?" demanded Lovell, flourishing his pillow.

Nobody had.

Mornington & Co. picked themselves up, growing and scowling, but they did not make any more remarks about Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy Silver's chums were quite ready to deal with them if they did. Jimmy was down on his luck, but his loyal pals were standing by him through thick and thin.

son. The four juniors hurried downstairs to the Fourth Form passage.

The passage was deserted, and they hastened along to the end study. The door of that study was closed and fastened—screwed securely from the inside. There was a gap in the door, but inside there was a barricade of the study furniture, screwed with an abundance of screws. Jimmy Silver, expelled from Rookwood by order of the Head, had screwed himself in his study, and was holding the fort against all comers. It was an unprecedented state of affairs, and it caused tremendous excitement in the old school. And Jimmy's pluck and determination caused the belief in his innocence to spread, especially among the juniors.

The Head, perplexed and puzzled by the line taken up by the expelled junior, had sent for his father, and Mr. Silver was expected that morning to take his son away. It was the only way Dr. Chisholm could think of for dealing with the recalcitrant junior. And Jimmy Silver, secure in his fortress, had passed the night there rolled in blankets on the sofa.

Lovell tapped cautiously on the door. Communication with the expelled junior was forbidden, but at that early hour there was no prefect on the scene.

"Jimmy!" There was a yawn inside the study. Jimmy Silver rolled off the sofa and tossed the blankets aside.

He grinned at his chums through the gap smashed by Sergeant Kettle's attack the previous day.

"Hallo, kids!" "Feel all right this morning, Jimmy?" "Right as rain!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"Got plenty of grub for brekker?" asked Rawson.

"Lots!" "I say, Jimmy," said Raby, "the Head's sent for your pater!"

"I know!" "He'll be here to-day—this morning, most likely. What are you going to do?"

"Whatever my father tells me, naturally," said Jimmy Silver. "If he tells me to leave Rookwood I shall go. But I won't be expelled by the Head for something I haven't done. I never touched Beaumont's banknote. I never saw it till Bulkeley took it out of my pocket when he searched me. It was planted on me by some cad, and I believe Mornington had something to do with it. My father won't believe me guilty. I don't know what he'll decide. But unless he orders me to leave Rookwood, I sha'n't go."

"Good for you!" said Rawson. "And remember, Jimmy, we're looking into it. I've been thinking it over a lot, and I'm going to see your father, if I can, and tell him about it. Better let him hear your side of the matter before he sees the Head."

"You'll be at lessons," said Jimmy. Rawson shook his head.

"I'm going to cut lessons, and meet your pater at the station."

"Phew!"

"So are we," said Lovell. "That's what we've come to tell you, Jimmy."

"But Mr. Bootles won't give you leave of absence."

"We're going to take French leave." "I—I say, you'll get into a row," said Jimmy uneasily. "I don't want you to get into a row on my account."

"Rats! Ain't we your pals, fathhead?" said Newcome.

"You see, the Head's written to your father that you've stolen a banknote from Beaumont of the Sixth, and that you're sacked," said Lovell.

"Your pater will be cut up about it. It will buck him up no end when we meet him first and explain that it's all lies."

"And it will show him that some of Rookwood, at least, believe in you and stick to you, Jimmy," said Raby.

"It is awfully good of you," said Jimmy Silver gratefully. "The poor old pater will be cut up, there's no doubt about that."

"We'll cheer him up," said Rawson; "and we know how to put him on the track, too. We've been jawing it over, and we've thought of a way of getting some light on the subject."

"You have, you mean," grinned Lovell. "I never thought of it."

"Rawson's hit on something, Jimmy," said Newcome. "Rawson's got a long head, and no mistake. He—"

"Clear off, you young rascals!" Beaumont, the prefect, came striding along the passage.

"How dare you come here!" The juniors looked grimly at Beaumont. He was a prefect of the Sixth, but they were not much inclined to treat him with respect.

It was Beaumont's note that had been found on Jimmy Silver, and not one of Jimmy's chums believed he had stolen it. They believed that the bully of the Sixth had been concerned in the "planting" of it on him.

It was the only thing they could believe so long as their faith in Jimmy Silver remained unshaken.

"Do you hear me?" rapped out Beaumont. "It's against the Head's orders for you to come here, and you know it!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Lovell savagely. "We're going to speak to our pal if we choose!"

"Your pal—an expelled thief!" sneered the prefect.

"Liar!" said Jimmy through the door. "Perhaps it isn't Jimmy who'll be expelled when the truth comes out," said Lovell, his eyes gleaming. "Perhaps it's a bullying cad in the Sixth and a mean rotter in the Fourth, who helped him to plant a banknote in Jimmy's pocket!"

Beaumont started violently. "You—you dare to suggest—" he panted.

"Oh, that touches you on the raw, does it?" said Lovell.

"You young hound!" shouted Beaumont. He made a rush at Lovell. The four juniors stood up to him grimly, quite prepared to "handle him," prefect as he was.

But Bulkeley of the Sixth came hurrying up.

"Stop that!" he said curtly.
"Those young cads are talking to Silver," he scowled. "The Head's forbidden it."
"I know that as well as you do, Beaumont. Clear off, kids!" said the prefect. "You're not allowed here!"

And Bulkeley shepherded the juniors down the passage, followed by the scowling Beaumont. Jimmy was left alone—much cheered by the visit from his chums.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. French Leave.

THERE was intense excitement in Rookwood that morning.
At breakfast it was impossible to still the buzz of excited whispers.

On the Modern side the excitement was almost as great as among the Classicalists.

Fellows who knew Jimmy Silver still had faith in him, in spite of the overwhelming evidence against him.

The Head had had but little choice in the matter; he could only decide by the evidence. But any amount of evidence did not matter to fellows who knew Jimmy Silver to be as straight as a die.

But when Jimmy was expelled by the Head all the school had expected him to go, innocent or guilty.

His action of screwing himself fast in his study and sticking to his room took all Rookwood by surprise.

Even fellows who believed him guilty could not help admiring his nerve.

Sergeant Kettle had been ordered to force the study and remove him, and Jimmy Silver had "hot-poked" him through the split door till the sergeant beat a strategic retreat. And all Rookwood buzzed with excitement at the news. There were few fellows who did not wish well to the bold rebel.

Only Mornington and his set were looking forward to his ignominious departure from Rookwood.

The fact that the Head had given up the attempt to remove the expelled junior by force, and had sent for his father, added to the excitement.

So far Jimmy Silver had won. The honours were with him.

After breakfast a prefect was posted in the Fourth Form passage to see that none of the juniors visited the rebel in his study. He remained on guard until the bell rang for morning lessons.

But when the Classical Fourth turned up in their Form-room there were four absentees.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, was looking very distressed that morning. He was quite pale and troubled when he came into the Form-room. The disgrace that had fallen upon his Form was a heavy blow to him.

He glanced at the Fourth over his spectacles, and noted the absence of four juniors at once.

"Lovell, Raby, Newcome, Rawson!"

There was no answer.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "Does anyone know where those four boys are?"

"They went out after breakfast, sir!" said Peele.

"Dear me! Is it possible that they are playing truant?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, aghast at the idea.

"Gone to Jimmy Silver, perhaps, sir!" said Mornington.

"Shut up, you spalpeen!" whispered Flynn fiercely.

Mr. Bootles left the Form-room, evidently to investigate. But he returned in a few minutes. The absentees were not in the House.

Mr. Bootles had no recourse but to mark them down absent, and morning lessons began.

Meanwhile, the four juniors were on their way to the station at Coombe.

They had slipped out of gates quietly, reckless of the result of cutting morning lessons. There would be punishment to follow, but that had to be risked. Helping their chum when he was down on his luck was more important than constraining Latin—at least, Lovell & Co. so considered.

They arrived early at the little station of Coombe, and saw the first train from London come in. Then they waited for the next.

"I suppose Jimmy's pater couldn't get here much before midday," remarked Lovell. "He won't have received the Head's letter until this morning most likely. We may have to wait here all the morning."

"We'll wait all day if necessary," said Raby.

"Yes, rather!"

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But the devoted chums did not have to wait so long as that.

When the eleven o'clock train came in a gentleman stepped from it whom they knew very well. It was Mr. Silver.

Mr. Silver looked troubled and a little pale, and his brows were knitted.

The Head's letter had evidently given him a severe shock; but to judge by his expression, it was not in a chastened mood that he was going to Rookwood. He was going to see his son had justice.

The juniors hurried forward, raising their caps.

"Mr. Silver!" exclaimed Raby.

Mr. Silver stopped, looking at them in surprise.

"We came to meet you, sir," said Lovell.

"Indeed!" said Jimmy's father, looking puzzled. "I suppose you are aware of the state of things at the school—that my son has been expelled?"

"Yes, sir!"

"And we know he is innocent, sir," said Rawson.

"You know it?"

"Well, we believe so, anyway."

"Jolly sure of it, sir," said Newcome.

"We're Jimmy's pals, and we're sticking to him."

Mr. Silver's clouded brow cleared a little.

"Then I take it the evidence is not complete?"

"Well——" Lovell hesitated. "It's pretty strong, sir. The Head has decided that Jimmy is guilty."

"Yet you believe in him?"

"You see, we know old Jimmy," explained Lovell. "I don't care twopence for the evidence!"

Mr. Silver smiled.

"I am glad to see there is someone at Rookwood who has faith in my son," he said.

"Lots of fellows believe in him, sir," said Lovell eagerly. "Even Tommy Dodd, and he's a Modern bouncer. Only a few cads are against him. We don't blame the Head," added Lovell considerably. "You see, he doesn't know Jimmy as we do, and the evidence is pretty thick—I must say that!"

"We wanted to see you before you saw the Head, sir," said Rawson. "It's only fair for you to hear Jimmy's version first. You see, the Head believed him guilty."

Mr. Silver hesitated.

"I came to see Dr. Chisholm," he said. "It appears that my son has refused to leave the school, although ordered to do so."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Lovell.

"He's holding the study against everybody. Just like old Jimmy. He won't give in and be sacked when he's innocent all the time. You ain't waxy with him for that, are you, sir?"

"I do not blame him if he is innocent," said Mr. Silver; "and, naturally, I am inclined to put faith in my son. Yet it is extraordinary, if he is innocent, that the evidence against him should be strong enough to cause Dr. Chisholm to sentence him to expulsion from the school. I had better see the Head——"

"But we've got something to tell you that the Head doesn't know, sir!" exclaimed Lovell. "Old Rawson thought of it. He's jolly deep."

"Then I shall certainly listen to you," said Mr. Silver. "Come into the waiting-room."

Mr. Silver was a quiet and self-contained gentleman. But the juniors could see he had been "bucked," as they called it, by learning that his son's friends still believed in his innocence, and stood by him.

"Now, tell me exactly what happened at Rookwood yesterday," said Mr. Silver, as they sat down in the waiting-room.

"Go it, Rawson; you're going to do the talking," said Lovell.

Rawson nodded.

"Beaumont of the Sixth missed a five-pound note from his study, sir," said Rawson. "It was taken from the table-drawer. Jimmy Silver had been sent to the study to fetch his footer, and it seems that nobody else went into the study, sir. Beaumont didn't accuse Jimmy, but he suggested searching him. Bulkeley—he's the captain of Rookwood—searched Jimmy in the presence of Beaumont and Mr. Bootles and two prefects. The five-pound note was found on him."

Mr. Silver took a deep breath.

"It was found in his jacket," went on Rawson. "The lining was torn, and the banknote had gone through the pocket. They took it for granted that Jimmy had stolen it, then."

"I admit I was rather knocked over," said Lovell, colouring. "It did seem a clincher. But——"

"Did my son make an explanation?"

"Yes," said Rawson. "He said he'd never seen the note before, and that somebody must have put it in his jacket. Only—only it wouldn't be easy for a Sixth-Former to come nosing in our dorm for a chap's jacket in the dark—and it must have been put there in the dark."

"So—so—— And, besides, Beaumont's a prefect of the Sixth, and—the Head's hardly likely to believe such a thing of him. He doesn't know how Beaumont hated poor old Jimmy."

"Was my son on bad terms with this Beaumont?"

"Yes, rather," said Lovell. "Beaumont's the rottenest bully at Rookwood, and, of course, we don't stand that."

"Jimmy kicked him out of our study the other day," said Newcome. "He came there to lick me, and we kicked the rotter out!"

"Surely juniors are not allowed to eject a prefect of the Sixth Form from a study. Did not Beaumont complain to the Head?"

"That shows what a rotter he is!" said Lovell. "He licked Newcome so much that he dared not complain to the Head about it. But he was awfully down on Jimmy for taking the lead in kicking him out! All the fags are laughing at him for it. Some of them serenaded him under his window."

"Then Beaumont had a motive for wishing to injure my son," said Mr. Silver. "But it's a long step from that to attempting to fasten a charge of theft upon him!"

"Yes; but as Jimmy's innocent, that's the only explanation, sir."

Mr. Silver smiled. The eager, unthinking faith of Jimmy's chums touched him deeply.

"My son's innocence has to be proved yet," he said. "Did it transpire that my son knew there was a banknote in Beaumont's study?"

"Yes; and that told against him. But Rawson worked it out that it turns in his favour!"

"Indeed!" Mr. Silver looked very curious at the scholarship junior. "Please go on, Master Rawson!"

Rawson coloured a little.

"I thought of it in talking it over with these chaps," he said. "You see, Jimmy Silver knew there was a banknote in Beaumont's study because he had heard Beaumont mention it to another Sixth-Former in the passage. Well, chaps in the Fourth don't generally hear Sixth-Formers talking about their business. It was jolly odd that Jimmy happened to hear that. I thought it queer, and it seems jolly clear to me that Beaumont deliberately spoke about it in Jimmy's hearing so that it would come out afterwards that Jimmy knew the banknote was there!"

"You ought to be a lawyer, young man," said Mr. Silver. "The point is very well taken indeed! But the evidence against my son is overwhelming, and his only plea is an accusation against a Sixth-Form prefect which cannot be proved in any way!"

"That's where old Rawson comes in!" said Lovell triumphantly.

"Rawson's going to jolly well prove it!"

"Go on, my dear boy," said Mr. Silver.

And the chums of the Fourth chorused:

"Go it, Rawson!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER. "Good Old Rawson!"

RAWSON coloured and grinned. He had showed considerable acumen in thinking the mysterious tangle out, and the juniors admired him immensely for it. The scholarship boy had had a harder life than most of the Rookwood fellows, and his hard experiences had given him an old head on young shoulders, and Rawson's long head was destined to stand Jimmy Silver in good stead.

Rawson "went it" as his chums requested.

"You see, this chap Beaumont is rather a rotter!" he said. "We don't sneak about a chap, of course, even when he's a beastly bully, and I don't know that anything could be proved against him, anyway—he's jolly deep! But we in the Fourth know he's a rotter all through! He's been seen talking to a shady bookmaker who hangs about Coombe, and his fag has found cards and cigarettes in his study, and sporting papers, and all that. Everybody knows he goes the pace, though he doesn't know they know!"

"That is important," said Mr. Silver quietly. "The personal character of an accuser is a very important matter. Pray continue!"

"Well, for the last few days everybody knew that Beaumont was hard up," said



"Stop!" Mornington did not stop. With a spring Mr. Silver was at the door, and his grasp closed like iron on Moanington's shoulder. "Not so fast!" he said grimly. "Let me go!" yelled Mornington. (See page 17.)

Rawson. "The fellows joked about his having had luck on geegees—not to let Beaumont hear them, of course. He's borrowed money of a kid in the Fourth!"

"Mornington," said Lovell, "the rottenest cad in the Lower School! He's been very thick with Beaumont, and he hates Jimmy Silver as a Hun hates the truth!"

"Mornington never told us so, of course," said Rawson. "But his pals knew—Towny and Topham and Peele—and, of course, they jawed sometimes, so most of the fellows knew. Besides, it ain't usual for a Sixth Form prefect to be thick with a Fourth Form junior. It's jolly unusual, and everybody knew it was because of Morny's money. Morny rolls in money; he simply reeks with it! Beaumont wouldn't have stood him for ten seconds if he hadn't been hard up and wanting to borrow!"

"But what does this lead to?" asked Mr. Silver.

"Rawson's coming to it!" chuckled Lovell. "You give old Rawson his head! Go it, Rawson!"

"Well, sir, Beaumont being hard up, as we all knew, to such an extent as to be borrowing money from a junior, where did he get five pounds from all of a sudden?" said Rawson.

"That's it!" said Lovell.

"Five pounds is a good bit of money, even for a Sixth Form chap," said Rawson; "and we know Beaumont hadn't a quid, let alone five quid. Where did he get that fiver from?"

Mr. Silver looked perplexed.

"But it is established that Beaumont had a five-pound note," he said. "It was actually found in the search!"

"Exactly. But I don't believe it was Beaumont's fiver at all!"

"That's the point!" said Lovell, in great delight.

"But whose, then, do you suppose it was, and what has that to do with the matter?" asked the perplexed old gentleman.

"Morny's!" chorused Lovell and Raby and Newcome.

"Morny! Who is Morny?"

"Mornington of the Fourth—Jimmy's worst enemy, and the kid who is thick with Beaumont, sir!"

"You mean that Mornington has lent the five-pound note to Beaumont?"

"Yes, sir, to fix on Jimmy Silver."

"Oh!"

"You see, sir, Beaumont was so well known to be hard up that when he missed the note first fellows said he hadn't one, and was only gassing about having one and lost it."

"After we thought of this I spoke to Neville," said Rawson. "Neville's the secretary of the senior football club, and he used to dun Beaumont for his sub. We all knew it. Some of the fags used to call out to Beaumont, 'Here comes Neville for his sub!' And it made Beaumont awfully wild!"

Mr. Silver laughed.

"I have no doubt it did!"

"Well, Beaumont was looking for the fiver to pay Neville when he missed it," said Rawson; "and my belief is that he fixed it so as to have Neville present when it was missed. Neville didn't half believe at first that he had a banknote at all, and Beaumont had to explain how it was, as Neville knew he was stony. He explained that he'd received it from his uncle."

"Is not that probable?"

"I suppose it's possible," said Rawson. "But I'm jolly certain that if Beaumont got a fiver he'd have paid some of his debts with it, not used it to fix a charge on old Jimmy. But that isn't all. When he couldn't pay Neville his football sub, he couldn't have had a fiver, could he?"

"I suppose not."

"Well, he had a fiver afterwards that day, and he had it from his uncle, so he says. But he never had a letter that day!" said Rawson triumphantly. "We've been inquiring about that, and Beaumont never had a letter yesterday at all. The postman comes only twice a day to Rookwood, and Lovell met him

each time. Lovell's expecting some tin from home!"

"And Beaumont met him each time, too!" chuckled Lovell; "and each time the old boy said, 'No, there isn't a letter for Master Beaumont.' I never thought about it until Rawson started working it out!"

Mr. Silver's face looked grave.

"So you see how we work it out, sir," said Rawson modestly. "Beaumont says he had a fiver from his uncle—he told Neville so—and we know he hadn't a letter yesterday at all. Mornington is simply reeking with fivers, and we know he'd give 'em all to get even with Jimmy Silver. Beaumont couldn't have sneaked into our dorm to shove that banknote into Jimmy's jacket. But Morny sleeps in our dorm, and it would be quite easy for him to sneak out of bed and do it when all the chaps were asleep. He'd know exactly where Jimmy's jacket was, of course. That five-pound note never was in Beaumont's drawer at all."

"Never in its life!" chortled Lovell.

"It was Morny's fiver all the time, and Morny shoved it into Jimmy's pocket, and only gave Beaumont the number, so as he could claim it!"

Mr. Silver drew a deep breath.

"My dear boy," he said, "I think your theory has been largely dictated by your belief in my son; but it is certainly possible, and quite certainly this aspect of the matter shall be inquired into."

"That's what we want," said Lovell. "We know you'll see that Jimmy has justice, sir. The Head wouldn't listen to kids like us, but—"

"He will listen to me," said Mr. Silver grimly. "I should certainly require proof to the last iota before I allow my son to be branded as a thief!"

"That's it, sir," said Rawson. "Now, all banknotes are numbered, and that note had a certain number. Notes can be traced by their numbers. If Beaumont had it from his uncle, it can be proved."

"Undoubtedly."

"And if he had it from Morny, that can be proved, too. Morny will deny knowing anything about it—he's a regular Prussian for lying—but it can be proved, all the same. The note must have come from a bank, and the banker will know."

"And if the note proved to be Morny's, that settles the whole business," said Ruby. "Morny put it into Jimmy Silver's pocket and Beaumont claimed it afterwards—and very likely he'd never even seen it."

"And there's another point," said Rawson. "Where's that note now? It's Morny's, we're convinced of that, and it's served its turn in getting Jimmy Silver expelled. I don't believe Morny would let Beaumont keep it. He swanks a lot with his blessed money, but he doesn't give any away. I don't believe for a minute that he would let Beaumont keep that note, if it's his."

"And if he's got it back, he's got it now," said Lovell. "You see, they believe the matter is finished and done with; they don't guess old Rawson has been working it out like a merry Sherlock Holmes."

"My dear lads," said Mr. Silver gratefully, "you have lightened my heart very much. I cannot thank you enough for meeting me here and telling me this. I shall now know what line to take at Rookwood. You can safely leave the matter in my hands on that point."

"Oh, yes, rather!"

Mr. Silver rose. The four juniors walked to Rookwood with him in high spirits, and they arrived as the Rookwood fellows were coming out of the Form-room after morning lessons.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Silver Means Business.

DR. CHISHOLM rose as Mr. Silver was shown into his study.

The Head's face was grave and concerned. Angry as he was with Jimmy Silver, he could feel for the blow that had fallen upon the boy's father. He shook hands very cordially with his visitor.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Silver. Please sit down. I need not say how sorry I am to send for you on such an errand."

"I can quite understand that," said Mr. Silver.

"Your son must leave Rookwood," said the Head. "The discovery of his action must, of course, be a very painful shock to you. But you will see I had no resource but to expel the boy guilty of theft."

"If my son is guilty of theft, sir, he deserves to be expelled from the school and go to prison. I should have no pity on him whatever if that were the case," said Mr. Silver quietly. "But if he is innocent—"

The Head made a gesture.

"I stated the whole of the circumstances in my letter to you, Mr. Silver."

"So far as you knew them, sir."

"Really, Mr. Silver, you must do me the credit of believing that I inquired into the matter in the most thorough manner," said the Head, with a touch of asperity. "It is not a light matter to expel a boy on such a serious charge."

"Quite so. But as the boy's father, you must allow for my natural faith in him," said Mr. Silver. "I am quite aware that you intended to administer strict justice, of course. Still, there is a possibility that a mistake has been made."

The Head stiffened visibly.

"There is no room for a mistake," he said. "The stolen property was actually found in your son's possession."

"I understand that he claims that it was placed in his pocket without his knowledge."

"Indeed! Certainly he made that absurd statement, which I refused to listen to for a moment. I did not mention that in my letter to you."

"I have seen some of my son's friends here."

"It is news to me that any boy at Rookwood doubts his guilt," said the Head coolly. "On the contrary, his friends have not lost faith in him, and neither have I," said Mr. Silver composedly.

The Head drummed on the table with his fingers.

"Mr. Silver, the matter has been adjudged. I have asked you to come here to remove your son, who defies all authority, and has even resorted to violence to remain at Rookwood against my will."

"If he is innocent, doctor, his conduct can be pardoned, I imagine?"

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"If he is innocent, Mr. Silver, I should not only pardon his action, but I should express my personal regret to him for what has happened. But he is not innocent," said the Head tartly. "He is guilty, and his guilt has been proved."

"I do not regard the proof as conclusive."

"I am sorry for that. I must say my decision remains unchanged."

"You have no objection, however, to my inquiring into the circumstances myself while I am here?"

"I have no right to raise any objection, but I do not see the use."

"That may transpire later," said Mr. Silver. "Doctor, my son's good name, and my own, as his father, are at stake. You can make allowance for a parent's feelings, I am sure."

The Head melted at once.

"My dear sir, you shall be satisfied in every possible way," he exclaimed. "I am only sorry that I can see no chance of lifting the stain from your son's name. His Form-master tells me that he had a very high opinion of him until now. He was, in fact, a credit to the Fourth Form—some-what high-spirited, but an excellent lad in every way. That makes his fall more shocking and painful."

"And improbable!" said Mr. Silver.

"Well, you shall satisfy yourself," said the Head. "Heaven forbid that I should deny you the fullest satisfaction in the matter. What do you wish to do?"

"I should like to question Master Beaumont."

"Very well."

Dr. Chisholm touched the bell, and sent the page to call Master Beaumont to his study.

"You must not suppose that Beaumont accused your son," he explained. "Mr. Bootles tells me he expressed serious doubts as to whether Silver had taken the note. He required him to be searched partly for his own sake, as suspicion had fallen on him."

Mr. Silver nodded, without replying.

Beaumont of the Sixth entered the study. The prefect was looking pale, and his brows were clouded. It was not pleasant for him to meet Jimmy Silver's father. But he nerved himself for the ordeal.

"This is Master Beaumont," said the Head. Mr. Silver scanned the prefect's face.

"Thank you for coming here, Master Beaumont," he said. "I am Silver's father. I have come to take my son away if he is guilty."

Beaumont's lips quivered uneasily.

"I am afraid there is no doubt about that, sir," he said. "The matter has been proved, I am sorry to say."

"We shall see. It was your banknote, I understand, that was purloined?"

"Yes, sir."

"A five-pound note?"

"Yes."

"You remember the number of it?"

"Beaumont identified the note by the number of it," interjected the Head.

"Exactly. May I ask Master Beaumont whether he is accustomed to possessing banknotes of such value?"

"I have five or six sometimes, sir," said Beaumont.

"May I ask where you obtained this one?"

"Really, sir—" began the Head.

"Let Master Beaumont answer my question. Unless," said Mr. Silver, with bitter emphasis—"unless Master Beaumont objects to answering it!"

Beaumont made an uneasy movement.

"I have no objection to answering it, of course," he said. "I had the note from my uncle."

"You stated as much, I understand, to Neville, of your Form?"

"Yes; I told Neville," said Beaumont, astonished at Mr. Silver's knowledge.

"Please tell me your uncle's name."

Beaumont hesitated.

"I'm waiting," said Mr. Silver.

"I don't see—"

"I must say that I don't see the drift of all this," said the Head, with very visible signs of impatience.

"I have an object, sir. Unless Master Beaumont answers my questions, I shall conclude that he has spoken falsely in saying that he had a banknote from his uncle."

"Mr. Silver!"

"Let him answer," said Mr. Silver.

"My uncle is Sir Charles Beaumont," said the prefect sullenly.

"Very good. Sir Charles Beaumont, doubtless, takes the numbers of his notes," said Mr. Silver. "You have the number of the stolen note, Dr. Chisholm?"

"Yes; but—"

"I have finished with Master Beaumont."

The Head made the perfect sign to leave the study. Beaumont, very pale and perturbed, quitted the room.

"Now, sir—" began the Head.

"I observe that you have a telephone here, sir," said Mr. Silver. "Doubtless Sir Charles Beaumont's name is in the telephone directory."

"That is the case. I have received a call from him before," said the Head. "But what—"

"Will you kindly telephone to him and inquire whether he sent his nephew a banknote for five pounds yesterday, or this week at all?"

"Really—"

"My belief is that he did nothing of the kind," said Mr. Silver grimly.

"Really, sir—"

"A few words with Sir Charles Beaumont will settle the matter one way or the other," said Mr. Silver.

The Head made an impatient gesture.

"I will do as you wish, Mr. Silver; but—"

"Thank you!"

Dr. Chisholm crossed to the telephone and took up the receiver. He called for his number, and in a few minutes got through.

"Fortunately, Sir Charles is at home," said the Head irritably. "You will see in a few minutes, Mr. Silver, that your very remarkable suspicion is quite unfounded."

"Perhaps so."

"Ah, he is here! Is that Sir Charles Beaumont?"

"Yes," came back the voice on the wires. "That Dr. Chisholm?"

"Yes. Pray excuse me for this disturbance, Sir Charles. I desire to ask you one question concerning a banknote you sent to your nephew this week."

"What? What?"

"You sent a five-pound note to your nephew, Master Beaumont, of the Sixth Form at Rookwood—"

"Nothing of the sort!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I have not sent my nephew a banknote!"

The Head gasped over the receiver.

"You—you—have not?" he stuttered.

"Certainly not! I have no five-pound notes to send to schoolboys in these times," said Sir Charles coolly. "So far as I can remember, I have sent him nothing since his birthday two months ago."

"You are absolutely certain?"

"Of course I am certain! What the dickens—"

"Pray excuse my troubling you!" gasped the Head.

And he rang off without further speech, probably leaving the baronet very much puzzled.

Dr. Chisholm sank limply into his chair.

"Well?" said Mr. Silver grimly.

"You are right, sir," gasped the Head.

"Sir Charles Beaumont has not sent his nephew a banknote, and Beaumont has spoken falsely. But—but what does that prove?"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In the Toils!

THE next thing to do," said Mr. Silver quietly, "is to cross-examine the boy Mornington. Will you be good enough to send for him, doctor?"

"Mornington! Certainly, if you wish it," said Dr. Chisholm, a trifle wearily. "I will send a message to ask Mr. Bootles to bring him to the study at once."

"Thank you."

In five minutes the Fourth Form-master ushered Mornington into the Head's study.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Mornington.

"Mr. Silver wishes to question you," said the Head.

Mornington looked at the visitor as innocently as he dared.

"I don't see what Mr. Silver can do with me, sir," he replied.

"You will kindly answer his questions, Mornington."

"Very well, sir!"

"I understand that you are on bad terms with my son, Master Mornington," said Mr. Silver.

"I don't like him, sir," he said. "He keeps me out of the footer, chiefly because he's jealous of my form. I don't take the trouble to dislike him; he's not worth it!"

Mr. Bootles coughed, and the Head frowned. Mr. Silver's eyes gleamed for a minute.

Mornington's insolence made a bad impression on the three.

"You are on very friendly terms with Master Beaumont of the Sixth Form, I understand?"

"Not at all. Fourth-Formers are not usually friendly with prefects. But perhaps you don't know much about public schools, sir."

"Mornington, you will kindly answer Mr. Silver respectfully!" said the Head warningly. "I am quite aware that such a friendship is unusual," said Mr. Silver. "But in this case, I understand, it exists. You are on friendly terms with a prefect of the Sixth, and both of you are on bad terms with my son."

"Not at all."
"Are you willing for members of your Form to be questioned as to your friendship with Master Beaumont?"

Mornington shifted uneasily. His amazing "palliness" with a Sixth Form prefect had been the talk of the Fourth, and it was not much use denying a fact that could be proved at once by investigation.

"Perhaps Beaumont has been rather kind to me," he said, after a pause. "He rather likes me. I like him."

"That does not agree with your previous statement, Mornington," said the Head frowning. "I warn you to go careful!"

"I don't see that my private affairs are this gentleman's business at all, sir," said Mornington coolly. "I regard this questioning as sheer impertinence!"

"Mornington!"
"You will soon see the object of my questioning!" said Mr. Silver grimly.

"Did you or did you not enter into a scheme with Master Beaumont to fasten a charge of theft upon my son?"

"Good heavens!" murmured Mr. Bootles aghast. And the Head gasped.

Mornington drew a deep breath. "Certainly not!" he replied.

"You did not?"

"No. I regard the questions as an insult!"
"Did you, taking advantage of the fact that you occupy the same dormitory as my son, leave your bed in the night to place a banknote in his jacket, having arranged with Beaumont the next day to pretend it was stolen?"

"No!" muttered Mornington.
"Was the five-pound note yours or was it Beaumont's—the note that was found in my son's jacket lining?"

"Beaumont's, of course. He told the Head so."

"Do you know where Master Beaumont obtained it?"

"I think he had it from his uncle. I don't know much about Beaumont's affairs, of course."

"Beaumont informed us that it was from his uncle," remarked Mr. Bootles.

Mr. Silver smiled, and the Head gave a peculiar cough.

Mornington cast a sharp look on one to the other. He could see that something, at least, was known, and that something filled him with a vague fear. Had he left some point in his cunning scheme unguarded, after all? That was the deadly fear that was gnawing now in the young rascal's breast.

"You did not put the note in my son's jacket?"

"I have said so!" muttered the junior huskily.

"It was not your note?"

"No."

"Very good!" Mr. Silver turned to the Head. "Mr. Chisholm, my point is that that statement is false, that the banknote was

Mornington's, and never in Master Beaumont's possession at all. Therefore, it could not have been taken from his study by my son."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head.

"You—you amaze me!" stammered Mr. Bootles. "What possible reason was there for supposing the note was Mornington's?"

"It was not mine!" shouted Mornington furiously. "This is a rotten trick to get Silver off!"

"Silence, Mornington!" said the Head.

"Am I to keep silent while this man is arguing my good name away?" demanded Mornington fiercely. "I give you my word, sir, that the note was not mine, and I never heard of it until it was found on Jimmy Silver, who had stolen it from Beaumont!"

"You need not fear anything but the truth will be established, Mornington. Mr. Silver, I must ask you for the reason for the astounding suggestions you make."

"Proofs are better than reasons," said Mr. Silver quietly. "You have the number of the note in question."

"I have the number here."

"Very good! You have already learned that Beaumont lied in declaring that the note came from his uncle."

Mornington panted. He began to feel the toils closing about him.

"By the number of the note," continued Mr. Silver, "you can ascertain whether it was Mornington's."

"True!" said the Head.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

"Mornington, I understand that you have a very considerable allowance," said the Head. "You sometimes have banknotes?"

"I've plenty of money," said Mornington, with a touch of his old purse-proud manner.

"Did you have a five-pound note yesterday?"

A denial trembled on Mornington's lips. But a denial was not much use when he had a wad of fivers in his pocket-book at that very moment.

"Yes, sir; several."

"He had five-pound notes and Beaumont had none," said Mr. Silver significantly.

"His notes must have come originally from a bank, and either from his guardian or through the banker the numbers can be ascertained. If one of the numbers is the same as the stolen note—"

"That would certainly prove your case, sir," said the Head slowly.

"I will communicate with Mornington's guardian on the subject at once."

Mornington reeled. His face was deathly white. Every eye in the room was on him, and his terror could not escape observation.

"Mornington"—the Head's voice was slow and ominous—"do you admit now that the banknote was yours?"

"No," said Mornington thickly. "I—I deny it!"

"I have yet another point to make," said Mr. Silver, his voice like iron. "The stolen note, I presume, was returned to the supposed owner when it was taken from my son?"

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Bootles. "It was given back to Beaumont in my presence."

"I believe that note was Mornington's, and used only for the purpose of fastening a false charge against my son. After it had served its purpose the real owner would doubtless reclaim it. He would have, so far as I can see, no motive in allowing his accomplice to retain it. That being the case, it is very probably in Mornington's possession at this very moment, and I demand he be searched—"

Mr. Silver broke off suddenly as Mornington made a wild and desperate rush to the door.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

"Hurrah!"

"STOP!"

"Mornington!"

Mornington did not stop.

He fairly sprang at the door, and fore it open. But, though the Head and Mr. Bootles were taken by surprise, Mr. Silver was on the alert. With a spring he was at the door, and his grasp closed like iron on Mornington's shoulder.

"Not so fast!" said Mr. Silver grimly.

"Let me go!" yelled Mornington.

He kicked and struggled savagely in Mr. Silver's grasp.

With a twist of his arm Jimmy's father sent the wretched schemer back into the study and closed the door.

Mornington stood panting.

"Dr. Chisholm"—Mr. Silver's voice was calm and even—"after this boy's action you can have no further doubt that the banknote is upon his person."

"Good heavens!" said the Head.

"It certainly appears clear," said Mr. Bootles. "Mornington must be searched."

"Kindly search him, Mr. Bootles," said the Head. "There is little doubt now, I fear. Silver has been cruelly wronged."

Mornington started back as the Form-master approached him.

"Hands off!" he muttered thickly.

"Hands off, or—"

"Mornington"—the Head's voice was deep and stern—"submit to a search at once, or I shall call in a prefect to hold you!"

"I—I haven't the note!" panted Mornington.

"A search will prove that one way or the other."

The wretched junior groaned. There was only one explanation of his conduct, and there was nothing to be said.

He made no further resistance. Mr. Bootles drew a fat pocket-book from the junior's pocket and opened it. There were a dozen banknotes in it, and Mr. Bootles examined each one methodically. He paused at last, and drew one note out from the others.

"This is the note!"

The Head took it, scanned the number, and compared it with a number on a slip of paper.

"The number is the same," he said.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Bootles.

"This note," said the Head, "is the note found on Silver of the Fourth when he was searched yesterday. I need not ask how it came into your possession, Mornington. It was your property, and you reclaimed it from your accomplice when it was taken from Silver. Do you still wish an investigation through your guardian to prove the note was yours in the first place?"

Mornington pulled himself together.

"You needn't trouble," he said. "I own up. Not much use lying about it now. I thought the matter was ended, or I'd have left the note with Beaumont, only the silly fool would have blued it on geegees, and I should never have seen it again. The game's up, and I'm ready to take my gruel!"

The Head's brow was black as thunder.

"It is clear that you placed the banknote in Silver's pocket, and somehow induced Beaumont to make a false claim to it," he said. "Now that your guilt is proved beyond doubt you admit it."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders with his old coolness.

"I know the game's up," he said, with a

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sneer. "I swore that either Jimmy Silver or I would clear out of Rookwood. I meant it to be Jimmy Silver. My luck's out, but I'm not going to whine. I'm ready to be sacked!"

"You will certainly be expelled immediately from the school, you unmitigated young scoundrel!" said the Head. "Mr. Bootles, call Beaumont here!"

In a few moments Beaumont entered, looking pale and harassed.

His scared eyes dwelt on every face in turn.

"The game's up, Beaumont!" said Mornington flippantly, before the Head could speak. "They've found the note on me."

Beaumont gave a gasping cry.

"The truth is known, Beaumont," said the Head quietly. "How came it, wretched boy, that you, a prefect of the Sixth Form, entered into this dastardly plot with a junior to disgrace an innocent lad?"

Beaumont staggered against the door.

"I—I never wanted to," he said huskily. "You—you don't know that young fiend! He drove me into it. I owed him money. He had me under his thumb! I—I never wanted to do it—"

He broke off with a groan.

Mr. Silver rose. He was not wanted longer.

"May I see my son?" he asked.

"Mr. Bootles, kindly conduct Mr. Silver to his son's study. Please tell Silver that now his innocence is proved he is pardoned for his insubordination, and he will, of course, remain at Rookwood."

Mr. Silver left the study with the Form-master. Beaumont and Mornington remained to be dealt with by the Head.

"What news, sir?"

Lovell & Co. surrounded the old gentleman.

Mr. Silver smiled jovially.

"The best, my lad!" he said. "Master Rawson, you have saved my son! Jimmy's innocence is proved. Come with me to tell him so, my lads."

The news spread like wildfire, and an army of juniors marched with Mr. Silver to the end study.

"My boy!" said Mr. Silver.

"Dad!"

"It is all cleared up, Jimmy," said Mr. Silver in a moved voice. "You owe it to your schoolfellow Rawson, who suggested to me the line of inquiry I followed. The Head pardons you—"

"Dr. Chisholm overlooks your—ahem!—insubordination, Silver," said Mr. Bootles.

"You will—ahem!—kindly come out of the study, and—ahem!—the damage will be repaired. I congratulate you, my boy!"

"Hurrah!" roared Lovell & Co.

"Bravo, Jimmy!"

The screwed door of the end study was forced open—Jimmy Silver's siege was over now. Jimmy came out, his face glowing. His father shook hands with him, Mr. Bootles shook hands with him, Lovell & Co. fairly hugged him. And when he learned all he gave Rawson a thump on the back that made the scholarship junior stagger.

"You did it, you bouncer!" said Jimmy.

"Give us your hat, old son!"

"Hip, hip, hooray!" roared the Rookwood juniors, Classical and Modern alike.

The roar of cheering reached the Head's study, and the Head smiled as he heard it; and it reached the two wretched culprits receiving the sentence of expulsion from the school—Beaumont pale and shame-stricken, and Mornington insolent and mocking to the last.

Jimmy Silver's star was in the ascendent again, and he was not likely to forget the debt he owed to Rawson, whose loyal faith and cool, clear head had saved him when all looked black.

THE END.

"MORNINGTON'S ATONEMENT!"

By OWEN CONQUEST,

is the title of next week's magnificent story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood School.

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THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 64.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASSED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "PENNY POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4

"CHEEK."

The homely, not at all unpleasant, little word is often cropping up. I find it in my letters. The writers tell me that they hope what they are going to say will not be considered cheek. As a rule, the answer is "No."

Cheek, as an old writer says, is indispensable for prosperity in the world. Without it you have not a chance of getting on. Modest merit seeks the shade, and so sure as it does that there will modest merit stick. That is what a certain cynical philosopher held to be true, but he is not always right.

Still, "cheek" has its place. One hears the remark, "I like his cheek!" which shows that the quality is appreciated. Of course, it all depends on how and where "cheek" is displayed. It was "cheek" of the Englishman to slip off and take possession of the one bed in the inn, while others were drawing lots as to who should occupy the four-poster. But it was cheek at which folks laugh.

But it is not always funny. There are people who take the best of everything at once. They would ring up the chief of a Red Indian tribe and ask for the loan of his best blanket. Some individuals are equal to anything, and their coolness would make the Arctic Circle look cheap. But such folks get liked, somehow, all the same. It is so. What is more, audacity gets there. It is a winner all the time!

BUNTER AT AN EARLY AGE.

It appears that William George was never much given to marbles. From a priceless old manuscript which has been dug up in a mountain fastness not far removed from the paternal stronghold of the Bunters it appears that W. G. B. was a fine child—I know all details respecting the infancy of the one and only are appreciated—and could have won prizes for development had he liked.

The Owl of Greyfriars blinked wisely on the world and never uttered meaningless things like "Googli-zoo!" which get linked up with other items of humanity. At the age of three he imperilled his valuable life with a doughnut, thus revealing that intrepidity which has caused the porpoise to achieve much fame.

A YOUNG PESSIMIST.

There were some remarkable things in a letter the other day. Perhaps the writer did not mean all he said. I doubt if anybody ever does mean quite all he puts in a letter. This was it: "What's the good of it all—going on worrying with school and all the rest of it? It only means more and then more worry. You will grow up and pay taxes and meet bills, and that's all."

—As the poet asked:

"What's the good of anything?
Why, nothink!"

And there you are! I should say my correspondent had a slight fit of "fedupitis." He will soon get over it.

WORDS—IDLE WORDS!

* This is not true. Words are not idle: not those we all use. There are many hard-working words which never have a minute's peace. Idle? Not at all! Of course, there are droves of drones eating their heads off in the dictionary. They never come out of their fat retirement and do a decent day's work. Not they! Some of them call themselves obsolete. It is a mere excuse for laziness.

But have you noticed in this connection how few words really are used? You get through the day with a few hundred. The thousands of others occasionally have an airing when a pedant or a scholar gets up to speak, but for the majority of folks the mass of words belonging to the language are not in existence at all!

I am rather sorry for some of these neglected words—such jolly little terms as "Unhap," for instance, or "Proception." There are myriads of them. Some would like to come out in the limelight. Others are mere malingers. Many have lost whatever meaning they may have just through disuse. They are living on scrap-heaps.

Look at some of the fine words Shakespeare employed. There is "frampold," for instance. "I have had a frampold time," sounds far more distinguished than "I have had a rotten time!"

"Rotten" is not in it with "frampold." But there it is. And talking about the dictionary, which I believe Peter Todd reads pretty carefully, it is not half a bad little book, a veritable much-in-little. There are people who say it is not in the least necessary to buy books and papers, as a pocket dictionary contains all the words.

This is true. I should not say it if it were otherwise, and, maybe, somebody will be chipping in with the remark that there is no call for the PENNY POPULAR, as you can find all the words in a smart little lexicon. But don't encourage this idea! I want the circulation of the "P. P." to get bigger and bigger.

TALK.

It was not Sir Auckland Geddes, though he is a wise man, but somebody else, who advised fellows to talk more. I was led to this subject by a remark from a reader who told me that boys did not like a certain story which I was publishing.

How did he know? The fact is, the yarn in question is proving highly popular. I never believe in the theory that fellows do not understand this subject or the other. They do! Fact!

These are days of debating societies and exchanges of ideas. The silent Briton, as he is called, can talk as well as anybody when there is a need. Why, only the other day a fragment of paper was picked up in the Fourth Form corridor. It bore these lines in a plain hand:

"I would rather be talking,
With you out a-walking,
Than rattling after the hounds!"

D'Arcy, of course? No! They might be attributed to the brave topper-wearer, but if he wrote the words he copied them out of a book!

EVERY INCH A HERO.

I have been favoured with particulars of the memorial to Seaman Carless, V.C., at Walsall, which was unveiled by Rear-Admiral Sir Walter Cowan. Carless was mortally wounded in the action in Heligoland Bight, on Nov. 17th, 1917, but he still went on serving the gun at which he was acting as rammer. He collapsed, but rallied and cheered on the new gun crew, and then fell and died. This hero's portrait was sent to me, and shows him as a fine, upstanding sailor, who feared nothing and did his duty to the end.

A QUIET ONLOOKER.

This correspondent asks me whether I could not give a column in the Companion Papers to "Situations Wanted and Vacant."

I am afraid not. Useful as such a feature would be, I think many of my supporters would feel that story space was being unnecessarily encroached upon.

AN AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY.

Albert K. Ingersoll, 26, Harvey Road, Camberwell Green, S.E. 5, wants to know of an amateur theatrical society in his neighbourhood. He is very keen on acting, and is a bit at a loss as to how to proceed