

:: THE ::

Missing Captain!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

... A SPLENDID, LONG, ...
COMPLETE STORY, DEALING
WITH THE ADVENTURES OF
JIMMY SILVER & CO.,
THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Jimmy Silver's Eleven.

JIMMY SILVER stopped before the notice-board at Rookwood and pinned up the paper he carried in his hand in a prominent position.

It was an important paper. For it contained the list of the Junior Cricket Eleven, who, on the morrow, were to visit Bagshot School, and inflict dire defeat and confusion upon the ancient rivals of Rookwood.

There was a rush of juniors to read the list.

Most of the names contained in it could be guessed in advance; but there was a chance that any fellow might find his name there.

"Jolly good team!" remarked Tommy Dodd, of the Modern side, finding written there his own name, and the names of his two special chums, Cook and Doyle. "A few more Moderns would improve it. But it's jolly good."

"Wants a few more Classical names," remarked Dick Oswald. "But it's jolly good, all the same. My name's there."

"And mine, intirely," remarked Flynn. "Jimmy Silver's the best captain we've ever had in the Fourth. Smythe used to lave me out."

"Glad you're all satisfied," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"I'm not satisfied," said Dickinson minor. "What have you left me out for, Jimmy Silver?"

"Sorry, old chap; but we want to beat Bagshot!" said Jimmy affably.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a jolly good list!" remarked Lovell. "I think we shall give Bagshot the kybosh this time. I suppose Bootles isn't likely to chip in again, and ask us to play that slacker Mornington."

Jimmy shook his head.

"No fear. That's all over, for one thing. I've spoken to Bulkeley about that, and he's chipped in."

"Good old Bulkeley!"

"Mornington expects to play," remarked Newcome.

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him expect! He won't play."

"He's been telling chaps that he's in the Bagshot match."

"No law against that," said Jimmy. "He can tell chaps that he's going to be Head of Rookwood, if he likes."

"Here he comes!" said Lovell, with a grin.

Mornington of the Fourth came up to the notice-board. Townsend and Topham and Peele were with him. The Nuts of the Fourth glanced at the cricket list, and Mornington frowned darkly and turned to Jimmy Silver.

"You've left my name out!" he said sharply.

Jimmy nodded.

"Why is that?" demanded Mornington.

"Because you're left out yourself, my dear chap."

"I've told you that I expect to be played!"

"Go on!"

"The best thing you can do is to put my name in at once," said Mornington. "I decline to be left out, and it will save you trouble in the long run."

Jimmy Silver looked grimly at the dandy of Rookwood.

Nobody but Mornington would have dreamed of taking such a tone with the captain of the Fourth.

But Mornington was not quite like the other fellows.

His wealth loomed largely in his own eyes and in the eyes of fellows like Townsend & Co. His uncle and guardian, Sir Rupert Staepole, was chairman of the governing board of Rookwood.

Mornington was ambitious to shine among the cricketers, but his ambition did not

cause him to stick to practice or exert himself in any way; and Jimmy Silver was the last fellow in the world to play a slacker if he could help it.

On one occasion he had not been able to help it. Mornington's complaints to his guardian had caused that gentleman to approach the Head on the subject. And Dr. Chisholm, who knew little of junior cricket matters, had intererred.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, had conveyed the Head's request to Jimmy Silver to play Mornington in the St. Jim's match. Jimmy, sorely against the grain, had concurred.

But for the fact that a couple of juniors locked Mornington in a study, and kept him out of the match, the result would have been disastrous for the Junior Eleven.

Jimmy Silver did not mean to run that risk a second time.

He explained the matter to Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of the school, and Bulkeley had "taken a hand" promptly enough.

Bulkeley had interviewed the Head on the subject, and there was no danger of a repetition of the Head's request to Jimmy Silver.

Mornington was evidently unaware of the new state of affairs.

Evidently he considered that he had only to state his wishes in order to have them assented to.

"You hear me?" he said. "You'll put my name down in that list at once, Jimmy Silver!"

"Cheeky ass!" growled Lovell. "Shall I mop up the passage with him, Jimmy?"

"Bump him intirely!" said Flynn.

"Do you hear me, Silver?" snapped Mornington.

Jimmy nodded.

"Yes, dear boy!"

"Well, what do you say?"

"Rats!"

"Wha-at!"

"R-A-T-S—rats!" said Jimmy. "Isn't that plain enough?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington set his teeth.

"Well, you'll get an order from the Head," he said. "You'll find that you can't do as you please."

Jimmy Silver smiled, and turned away. Mornington turned away also, to make his way to the Head's study. But before he had taken two steps, several pairs of hands were laid upon him. He swung round savagely, and glared at the grinning faces of Lovell and Raby and Newcome and Tommy Dodd.

"Let me go!" he shouted.

"You're going to be bumped for your cheek," said Lovell coolly. "Up with him!"

"Let go! Help!"

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

"Cave!" ejaculated Rawson of the Fourth, and the juniors scudded away as Mr. Bootles came out of his study.

Mornington was left sitting on the floor, gasping.

Mr. Bootles stared at him.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, peering at Mornington over his glasses. "Who is that? Mornington—ha! What ever are you doing on the floor, Mornington?"

Mornington staggered to his feet, crimson with anger.

"I've been ragged!" he gasped. "Lovell and—"

"That will do, Mornington! I am sorry to see that you cannot live on better terms with your Form-fellows," said Mr. Bootles severely. "You are concerned in incessant disturbances, Mornington. I fear that it is the insolence of your manners that is the cause of it. I advise you, Mornington, to amend your ways, and to cease to exasperate your schoolfellows by ill-

founded arrogances. You will do well to bear this in mind, Mornington."

Mr. Bootles rustled on, leaving Mornington almost stuttering with rage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Surprise for Mornington!

TAP! Dr. Chisholm laid down his pen. "Come in!"

Mornington of the Fourth entered the Head's study.

He was still looking somewhat red and flustered, and was evidently in a savage temper. Only Mornington, of all the fellows at Rookwood, would have ventured to show signs of temper in the august presence of the Head.

Dr. Chisholm noted the knitted brows and gleaming eyes of the dandy of the Fourth, and he frowned.

"Well?" he said sharply. "What is it, Mornington?"

"I wish to speak to you, sir!"

"Kindly be brief!"

The cold, severe glance of the Head somewhat abashed Mornington. His gaze dropped a little, and his voice was quieter as he went on.

"I have been left out of the cricket team again, sir!"

The Head made a gesture.

"That is a matter that concerns only the junior cricket club. You may go."

"My guardian asked you—"

"Listen to me, Mornington," said the Head quietly. "Sir Rupert Staepole wrote to me on the matter, and I did not care to disoblige a governor of Rookwood, and for that reason I uttered a word on your behalf. Since then I have received further information on the subject. I have learned the particulars from Bulkeley. It is a matter that entirely concerns the cricket club, and I understand that you are omitted from the playing eleven because your play is not up to the standard required, and because you refuse to attend the necessary practice. I cannot interfere in the matter again."

"But—"

"I recommend you to attend more constantly on the playing-fields, and make yourself useful as a cricketer, and in that case I have no doubt you will have as much chance as the others of playing for the school," said the Head. "The matter, however, does not concern me. You may go!"

Mornington did not stir.

"Am I to be left out, then?" he exclaimed.

"That depends on the captain of your club, I presume."

"He dislikes me."

"Probably you have given him reason, if that is the case," said the Head drily. "I have received very unfavourable reports of you from your Form-master, Mornington. It appears that you treat the other boys with insolence and an assumption of superiority. You cannot expect that to make you popular. I advise you to mend your manners."

"I—I—"

"And now you have wasted enough of my time. Leave my study!"

The Head took up his pen again. But Mornington did not go.

"Do you hear me, boy?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm, in surprise and anger.

"Yes, sir."

"Leave my study at once!"

"I'm going to play in the Bagshot match," said Mornington doggedly. "I want you to tell Jimmy Silver so, sir."

"Boy!"

Mornington stood his ground, unabashed now by the glare the Head of Rookwood bestowed upon him.

There was an ominous pause.

"It is due, I suppose, to your extraordinary training that you dare to speak to your

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headmaster with such unexampled insolence!" said the Head at last. "If you think that such insolence can be tolerated, Mornington, you are mistaken!" Dr. Chisholm took up his cane. "Hold out your hand!"

Mornington's eyes gleamed. "I won't be caned, sir! I shall write to my guardian. He is chairman of the governors, and he will not allow—"

The Head rose. "Hold out your hand immediately, Mornington, or I shall administer a public flogging!" he exclaimed.

Mornington hesitated a moment, and then his hand came slowly out.

Swish! "Now the other hand!" thundered the Head.

Swish! Mornington squeezed his hands together, his face pale with pain and rage.

The Head pointed to the door with the cane. "Go!" he said.

Mornington went, almost choking. Townsend & Co. were waiting for him in the passage with rather anxious looks. Although it suited the Nuts of the Fourth to chum with Mornington, they could have little liking for him, and they were never without a certain amount of uneasiness lest his insolence should land him, and themselves, in some serious scrape.

Nobody but Mornington would have dared to "beard the lion in his den" as he had done.

The Nuts were not surprised to see him come forth squeezing his hands and mumbling.

"Well?" said Townsend.

Mornington gritted his teeth. "I've been licked!"

"Well, what the dickens did you expect?" said Peele. "You can't cheek the Head, you know, and I'll be bound you cheeked him! What about the cricket?"

"The Head won't interfere again."

"Couldn't expect him to," said Townsend. "Nothin' doin', of course."

"He doesn't seem to understand that I can give him trouble about it," said Mornington. "My guardian will back me up."

The three Nuts grinned at one another. They did not have so much faith as Mornington in the influence of his guardian.

"You can crackle!" growled Mornington. "I know what I'm talkin' about. Sir Rupert doesn't like the Head. As a matter of fact, he would be glad to get him into the bad books of the governors. He has a friend he would like to see Head of Rookwood, if Dr. Chisholm were gone. I know he's thought of workin' it already."

"Phew!" said Topham.

"Anyway, you're out of the Bagshot match," said Townsend. "Let's have a jolly afternoon to-morrow instead. There are races at Highcombe."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Never mind the races. I suppose I'm out of the cricket—owin' to Jimmy Silver. He's been one too many for me. But I'll get even. Jimmy Silver is goin' to be out of it, too!"

"How the dickens—"

"You know what they did with me when the St. Jim's match was on?"

"Locked you in Rawson's study," grinned Townsend. "Us, too, the rotters! But you can't work that on Jimmy Silver. A study wouldn't hold him."

"I'm not thinking of a study." Mornington lowered his voice. "What about the old tower? There's Sergeant Kettle's tuckshop on the ground-floor, but the rooms above are never used and never entered. A fellow shoved in there would never be found—till we chose."

"My hat! But how would you get Jimmy Silver there?"

"Four of us could handle him, I suppose."

"But—but we should be seen getting him there—"

"Not after dark."

"But after dark the match will be over."

"I'm thinking of to-night."

"Great Scott!"

"You—you're dotty!" said Peele, aghast.

"You couldn't keep the chap there all night. He'd be missed."

"Well, what about it?"

"There'd be a row—a search—no end of a fuss."

"I don't care."

"You may not," said Townsend. "But I do. I'm not going to get myself sacked from Rookwood to please you, Mornington!"

"So you are a funk!" sneered Mornington.

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"I haven't an uncle on the Board of Governors to see me through," said Peele, with a sneer. "If I had, I might risk it."

"There's no risk. Silver wouldn't give our names."

"He might have to."

"Then I'll do it alone," said Mornington.

The three Nuts looked at one another. But they shook their heads.

"Too jolly risky," said Peele. "It would be a flogging at least."

"Then I'll do it alone," said Mornington, and he turned his back on his companions and walked away.

Townsend & Co. looked at one another uneasily.

"What the dickens has he got in his head?" muttered Towney.

"Blessed if I know," said Topham. "But I know one thing, and that is—I'm going to keep clear of it!"

To which Towney and Peele heartily agreed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Caught Napping!

THE Fistical Four sat down to tea in the end study in great spirits.

They were looking forward to the cricket-match of the morrow, and Jimmy, who was very pleased with the form his team had shown of late, fully expected to "mop up" the Bagshot ground with the Bagshot team.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were equally confident.

They had dreaded a repetition of the trick Mornington had played on them on the occasion of the St. Jim's match. But Mornington had come to the end of his tether; there was a limit, evidently, to the influence of his guardian at Rookwood.

The careless and swanking slacker would have been sufficient, if he had been played, to reduce the chances of the Rookwood team to zero.

The danger was over, however, and the Fistical Four rejoiced accordingly.

"Of course, we wouldn't have stood it," Lovell remarked. "If the Head had chipped in a second time, there would have been trouble."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Jolly sure of that!" he replied. "The whole club would have gone on strike, I think. But the Head didn't savvy. Mornington's guardian gave him the impression that a set was made against the silly ass, and that he wasn't given a fair chance. Now Bulkeley's spoken to the Head it's all right. The Head means well," added Jimmy tolerantly. The captain of the Fourth felt that he could make allowances for a headmaster.

"Mornington is ratty about it," grinned Raby. "He was looking like a Hun when I saw him last."

"Let him!" said Jimmy serenely.

"The silly duffer!" remarked Newcome. "He can't play cricket for toffee. Blessed if I think he cares twopence whether Rookwood wins or loses, so long as he can swank at the wicket."

"Well, he won't swank at the wicket this time," said Jimmy Silver sententiously. "No room for slacking asses in the Rookwood Junior Eleven."

"Hear, hear!"

After tea, as there was plenty of light, the Fistical Four walked down to Little Side for some batting. Mornington & Co. stood looking on, decidedly sour in appearance.

In the dusk the chums of the Fourth walked back to the School House. They were chatting on the steps after calling-over, when Mornington came up.

The Fistical Four looked at him rather grimly.

They were prepared for some more insolence from the dandy of the Fourth, and quite ready to roll him in the quad at the first word.

But, as it happened, Mornington was quite civil for once.

"Tommy Dodd wants to speak to you, Silver," he said carelessly.

"Where is he?"

"In the tuckshop."

"Well, I suppose he can come here?" said Jimmy.

"Time we got on to our prep," remarked Lovell, as eight rang out from the clock-tower. "Don't waste time on that Modern bouncer, Jimmy!"

"Well, it won't take me long to run across," said Jimmy, a little puzzled, but always obliging.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome went up to

the end study, while Jimmy Silver ran across the dusky quadrangle.

The school shop, which was kept by Sergeant Kettle on the ground-floor of the old disused clock-tower, was closing. The sergeant was about to lock the door when Jimmy came up.

"Hallo! Is Tommy Dodd here, sergeant?" asked Jimmy.

"No, Master Silver."

"The ass! He sent for me."

"Well, he ain't here, Master Silver," said Sergeant Kettle, and he retired into the shop and closed the door and locked it.

Jimmy Silver looked round wrathfully at Mornington, who had followed him from the house.

"Have you been pulling my leg?" he demanded. "Dodd isn't here."

The next moment Jimmy uttered a gasp of amazement.

"What the dickens— Hands off! My hat!"

Crash!

Mornington had sprung at him like a tiger. Jimmy Silver was not often taken by surprise, but the attack was utterly unexpected, and he went down in a heap, with Mornington on him.

He lay on his back on the ground in the deep dusk, with the dandy of the Fourth kneeling on his chest.

He glared up at Mornington.

"Get up, you silly chump! By gum, I'll smash you! Lemme gerrup!"

Mornington did not move. He had grasped Jimmy's hands, and he held him by the wrists, in spite of his struggles.

From round the corner of the tuckshop a junior ran quickly and silently, and a sack was thrown over Jimmy Silver's head as he lay prostrate.

So quickly was it done that Jimmy did not catch a glimpse of his new assailant, and, indeed, did not know what was coming until the sack was over his head.

He struggled furiously.

But he was at a disadvantage, and two strong pairs of hands were grasping him. He struggled in vain.

"Quick!" panted Mornington.

The young rascal had chosen his moment well.

The quadrangle was dark, and there was no one near the tuckshop, and Sergeant Kettle had retired into the back-room.

Jimmy Silver, more amazed than angry, struggled in the hands of the two assailants.

But the second assailant ran a loose cord round his wrists as Mornington held them, and it was drawn tight and knotted.

Then Jimmy was helpless.

Another cord was knotted round his ankles, and then the sack was pulled close over his face, stifling the shout he tried to utter.

Then he was lifted and rushed away in the darkness.

He felt himself being carried into a building, and up stone steps, upon which he bumped several times.

He was set down at last.

"Good!" It was Mornington's voice. "You can cut. He hasn't seen you."

Jimmy heard departing footsteps.

A match scratched, and the sack was pulled from over his face. He blinked in the light of a candle.

In utter amazement, he stared at Mornington.

He opened his lips to speak, and as he did so a folded handkerchief was thrust into his mouth, and Mornington proceeded to tie it there safely, winding a string round and round his head.

Then he rose to his feet, and looked down on Jimmy Silver with a mocking grin.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Kidnapped!

JIMMY SILVER stared up blankly at Mornington.

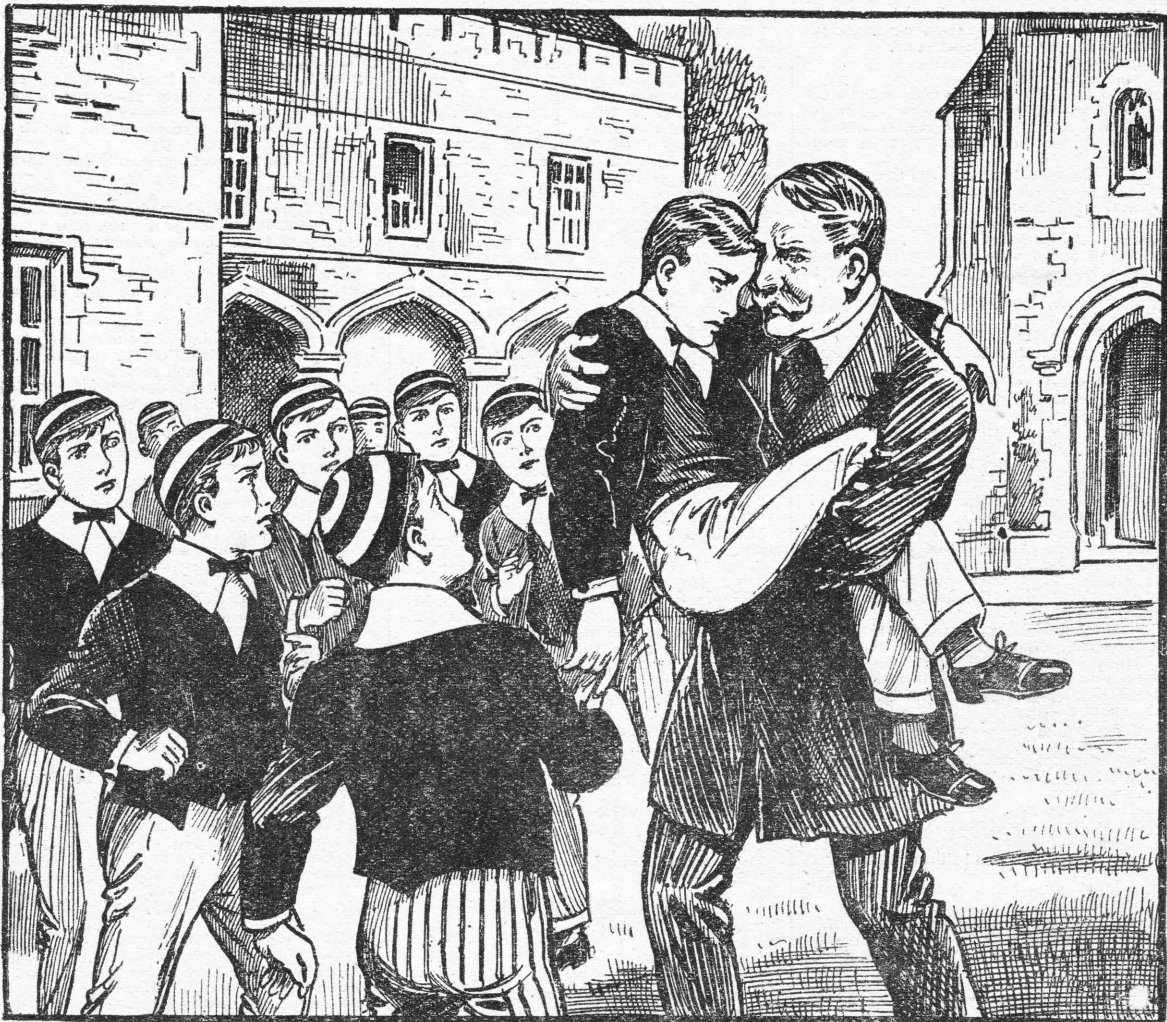
He was lost in amazement.

He lay upon the stone floor of a small room, with a tiny window open to the starry sky.

He knew where he was.

Part of the ground-floor of the ancient clock-tower of Rookwood was occupied by the school shop, but the greater part of the dilapidated old building was untenanted. Sometimes the fellows climbed the crazy old stairs to investigate the deserted place, and to view the country from the high window; but it was seldom.

The climb up the stairs was hard work, for the spiral stair contained over a hundred steps. Sometimes the place was not visited for weeks together, or even for a



There was a shout from the fellows, as the burly sergeant was seen to cross the quadrangle to the School House, bearing the missing junior in his arms. "Silver!" they cried. "It's Jimmy!" (See page 17.)

whole term. The door at the foot of the spiral stair was generally kept locked, and old Mack, the porter, had the key; but he would part with it for a moderate tip.

Mornington had evidently obtained the key from the porter, and chosen this out-of-the-way spot as a hiding-place for his prisoner.

But Jimmy could not understand.

It was not uncommon for Moderns and Classics at Rookwood to raid one another in this way.

But why Mornington should take the trouble to kidnap Jimmy Silver was a mystery. Jimmy could not be kept there long, at all events, as he would have to turn up on the Classical side at bed-time. And it was quite certain that he would hammer Mornington without mercy if he were kept a prisoner in the old clock-tower for a couple of hours.

He was far from divining, as yet, the thoughts that were in the mind of the reckless young rascal.

Mornington was breathing hard after his exertions. Smoking and slacking did not make it easy for him to carry Jimmy Silver's weight up a hundred steps, even with the assistance of his unknown companion.

He was gasping, in fact, and for some minutes he could not speak. Neither could Jimmy, for the excellent reason that the gag choked back any sound but the faintest mumble.

Mornington found his voice at last, however. "Well, here you are!" he remarked.

Jimmy could not speak, but his look was eloquent. But the dandy of the Fourth only grinned at his expression.

"You wonder why I've taken all this trouble?" grinned Mornington. Jimmy nodded.

"I'm goin' to make terms with you. Play me in the team to-morrow, and I'll let you go. Nod your head if you mean 'Yes.'"

Jimmy Silver did not nod his head. Evidently he did not mean "Yes."

"Don't be an obstinate ass!" urged Mornington. "You'll find it pretty cold to stay here, though it's a summer's night. I've brought this old sack for you to lie on, but it won't be comfy."

Jimmy Silver's eyes opened wide.

For the first time it occurred to him that Mornington intended to leave him there a prisoner for the night.

It was scarcely credible that the dandy of the Fourth could be so brutal and so reckless; but Jimmy's heart sank.

He knew Mornington's fixed belief that, whatever he did, his uncle, the governor, would be able to see him through.

Jimmy knew that, in that, he miscalculated; but Mornington did not know it.

"You're going to play me, or you won't play yourself!" said Mornington. "You can take your choice. Both or neither. If you nod your head, I'll take it as your word of honour that you'll put me in the team."

Jimmy's head remained motionless.

"Still obstinate!" grinned Mornington. "I'll come and see you before brekker, and I think you may have changed your mind by then!"

Jimmy strove to speak, but only a mumble came forth.

"I've borrowed the key from Mack," went on Mornington. "I shall lock the door below, and tell Mack I've mislaid the key. He won't be able to make a fuss, as he's not supposed to lend it to us. Nobody can come here—if anybody wanted to, which isn't likely.

You can't get out of this room—the door opens outwards, and I'm going to wedge it with a chunk of wood. You can't call for help—you're gagged. You'll have a bad night if you stay here."

Jimmy Silver's look was expressive.

He no longer doubted that the dandy of the Fourth intended to carry out his threat, and the prospect of a night, bound and gagged, at the top of the old tower, was dismaying enough.

But Jimmy Silver did not intend to surrender.

"You think I shall get licked for this," continued Mornington, grinning. "Well, you can lick me, though I shall put up a fight, I think. As for the Head, he dare not flog me. He would have the governors down on him."

Jimmy shook his head.

Mornington laughed.

"Well, I'm risking it," he said. "You'll see. But if you still want to get off, you've only to agree to play me in the Bagshot match. You see, I'm determined. Now, do the sensible thing."

Jimmy's eyes burned, but he made no sign of assent.

Mornington waited a minute; then he shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and went to the door.

Thud!

The heavy oaken door closed. Mornington had taken the candle with him, and Jimmy Silver was in darkness, save for the faint glimmer of starlight at the little window. He could hear a scraping sound as Mornington drove a wedge of wood under the door.

Even if he could have released himself from THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 71.

three were discussing the matter dismally in the quadrangle. Tommy was looking concerned. In spite of his many rows and rags with Jimmy, he had a real liking for the captain of the Fourth.

"Not heard anything of Jimmy?" he asked. Lovell shook his head.

"What about the Bagshot match?"

Lovell snorted.

"Blow the Bagshot match! I'm not thinking of cricket!"

"Well, they're expecting us," said Tommy Dodd awkwardly.

"We're going out to look for Jimmy this afternoon," said Raby. "You'd better take a team over, Tommy."

"Well, I'll do it, if you like. We're bound to play the match, or else send an excuse, and it's rather late for that," said Tommy Dodd.

And so it was settled. Lovell & Co., keen cricketers as they were, had no mind for cricket that afternoon. They had resolved to spend the afternoon in a search for their missing chum. Little did they dream how near at hand he was.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Sergeant Kettle Makes a Discovery.

"YOU'LL want some players, I suppose?"

Tommy Dodd glared at Mornington as the dandy of the Fourth asked that question.

"Not your sort," he said, with a sniff.

"There's a lot of fellows standin' out—Rawson and Oswald, as well as Lovell and Raby and Newcome," said Mornington. "They're goin' out huntin' for Silver."

"I know that."

"Well, I'm willin' to play, if you like."

"But I'm not willing," said Tommy Dodd tersely. "Go and eat coke!"

And he turned his back on Mornington.

The team that departed for Bagshot School was mostly composed of Modern fellows. Quite a crowd of the Classical juniors had resolved to spend the afternoon searching for Jimmy Silver.

Mornington strolled away idly after speaking to Tommy Dodd, and sauntered round the tuckshop to the door of the staircase of the old tower.

He inserted the key and unlocked the door, and disappeared within.

Townsend had observed him from a distance, and he turned a somewhat scared look on his chums.

"Morny's got him shut up right enough," he whispered.

"The silly ass!" said Peele. "He'll be flogged for this. Mind, we don't know anything about it—not a word."

"Not a syllable," said Topham. "It's a rotten trick, too; the poor beggar must be hungry by this time."

Townsend shivered a little as he thought of the night the imprisoned junior had passed in the lonely room at the summit of the tower.

"It's rotten!" he muttered. "But we can't say anythin'. It's rather thick, even for Morny. He's a regular hoodigan. Scrye him right if he's sacked. I wonder who helped him? He couldn't have handled Silver alone."

"Leggett, of course," said Peele. "Leggett would play any mean trick for half-a-quid. It was Leggett."

"Sorry for him, then, when Silver gets out," said Topham.

Mornington mounted the spiral staircase, unfastened the door at the top, and entered the little room.

Jimmy Silver lay on the sacking on the floor.

His face was deadly pale.

He had slept little in the night. His limbs were cramped by his bonds, and he was faint with hunger and want of sleep. His eyes burned as they turned on the rascal of Rookwood.

Mornington regarded him with a mocking smile.

"It's time to start for the match," he remarked. "They're sending over a team with Tommy Dodd as skipper."

A faint mumble came from Jimmy Silver. He had gnawed away part of the gag, but still he could not speak.

"Would you like to be let loose?" smiled Mornington. "There's still time, you know!"

Jimmy nodded.

"Will you play me if I let you loose?"

Jimmy shook his head.

"Still obstinate!" grinned Mornington. "You are a sticker, and no mistake! But I'm rather a sticker, too."

Jimmy mumbled. "For the last time, you know. I'm willin' to let you loose, and go over with the team to Bagshot."

Jimmy did not trouble to shake his head. But his look was enough.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders, and left the room, carefully fastening the door after him.

He descended the staircase, and left the tower, turning the key in the lock. Then he strolled away and joined Townsend & Co.

"Comin' out for the afternoon?" he said lazily.

"Not with you," said Townsend tersely. Mornington raised his eyebrows.

"Why not?"

"Look here, we'd rather not be seen speaking to you at present," said Townsend. "We don't want to get into a row when it all comes out."

"Gettin' funky?" grinned Mornington.

"We've had nothin' to do with it, mind," said Topham.

Mornington laughed.

"I'm not goin' to drag you into it," he said contemptuously. "If it comes out, I can face the music on my own."

"The chap who helped you—"

"Silver didn't see him—that's all right."

"And you won't mention his name?"

"I've promised not to."

"Look here, when are you goin' to let the poor beggar out?" demanded Townsend abruptly. "We can't let this go on."

"Not till it's too late for him to play in the Bagshot match."

"Well, that won't be long!" said Peele.

"The team's startin' now. And if you don't mind, Morny, we'd rather not have your company this afternoon."

"Just as you like," said Mornington indifferently.

He sauntered away.

Townsend & Co. joined the crowd of fellows who were going to hunt for Jimmy Silver. That seemed to Townsend the best way of keeping up appearances. In spite of Mornington's assurances, the nuts could not help feeling uneasy.

It was not till five o'clock was striking from the clock-tower on the Modern side that Mornington entered the old tower again. He nodded coolly to Jimmy Silver as he entered the room at the top of the staircase.

"Time's up!" he remarked, as he took the gnawed gag from the junior's mouth. "You can get out now."

Jimmy could not speak, his lips were numb. Mornington cut through the cords that bound him.

Jimmy made an effort to rise, but sank back on the sacking with a cry of pain. His limbs were cramped and icy cold.

"By gad, you look bad!" said Mornington, with a touch of remorse. "Of course, I didn't intend to hurt you, Silver. By gad, you look as if you're goin' to be ill. Let me help you down."

"Let me alone, you rotter!" gasped Silver. "Don't you want my help?"

"No!"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders, and left him. Jimmy made another effort to rise, but sank back helplessly. He realised that he was going to be ill. His limbs felt like lead, and his head was burning. Mornington had not reflected on the probable results of his dastardly action. The results were to be more serious than he had dreamed.

Jimmy lay helpless on the sacking, unable to rise now that he was free. Mornington was gone, but even had he been there Jimmy would have refused his help.

"My hat!" murmured Jimmy. "I feel awfully queer! I suppose this means the sanatorium for me. The silly ass!"

Again and again he strove to rise, but he could not. He felt as weak as a baby. But he could use his voice now, and he called for help.

His voice was faint at first, and did not reach beyond the walls of the little room. But it became stronger.

It seemed an age to Jimmy Silver before he heard steps on the staircase, and the bronzed old face of Sergeant Kettle looked in.

"Now, then, wot's this 'ere little game?" said the sergeant gruffly.

Then, as he caught sight of Jimmy Silver, he uttered an exclamation of horror.

"Master Silver! You here!"

"Help me out!" said Jimmy faintly.

The sergeant did not ask any more questions. He picked up the junior in his strong arms, and carried him downstairs.

There was a shout from the fellows in the quadrangle, as the burly sergeant was seen crossing to the School House, with the missing junior in his arms.

Mr. Bootles met them at the doorway, blinking with astonishment.

"Silver!" he exclaimed.

The Head came hastily out of his study. He had seen the sergeant with his burden from the study window.

"Silver! Where did you find the boy, sergeant?"

"At the top of the old tower, sir," said Sergeant Kettle. "He'd been tied up, sir. There was the cords lyin' round him, and he's been tied up, and cut loose again."

The Head's brow was like a thundercloud.

"Have you been all night, and all the morning, in that place, Silver?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir!"

"A prisoner—bound?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is monstrous! Who did this? Tell me!"

Jimmy was silent. Much as he had suffered at Mornington's hands, he was not inclined to betray the rascal of Rookwood.

"You hear me, Silver? Tell me at once who was guilty of this outrage?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm.

"I—I'd rather not, sir!" faltered Jimmy.

"What!"



Funny People From Funland Farm!

These are only two of the many jolly characters appearing every Tuesday in "Little Sparks," which is full of COLOURED pictures and picture stories now, and is like an entirely NEW paper! Take a copy home to the little ones TO-DAY.

LITTLE SPARKS 1½

The ALL-PICTURE Paper For Children.



"One word, sir," interposed Mr. Bootles. "Whoever placed Silver there must have obtained the key from the porter."
 "Ah! Kindly call Mack here, Mr. Bootles. Sergeant, take Silver up to the dormitory. Go to bed at once, Silver, and I will telephone for the doctor."

The sergeant carried Jimmy upstairs. In a few minutes he was in bed, with blankets piled on him, and a hot-water bottle at his feet. And in a few minutes more he was fast asleep.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Flogged!

ROOKWOOD was in an uproar. The news of the sergeant's discovery spread like wildfire.

"Who did it?" exclaimed Lovell, with blazing eyes, as the chums of the Fourth went downstairs again. "The Moderns, what!"
 "Impossible!" said Rawson. "They wouldn't play such a dirty trick!"
 "But it was somebody—"

"It's bound to come out. Mack will know what he had the key of the tower."

Mack, the porter, was at that moment in the Head's study, being questioned by Dr. Chisholm. He had little to say, but that little was very much to the point. Mornington had asked for the key of the tower, and had not returned it. Mack had supposed that he wished to explore the place. The Head dismissed him and sent for Mornington.

Mornington entered the study calmly enough.

The storm had burst, and he had expected it. He was ready to face the music now, with plenty of nerve. He faced the Head calmly.

"You sent for me, sir?" he asked.
 "I sent for you, Mornington. You have been guilty of an astounding outrage!"

"Indeed, sir!"
 "Do you deny that you placed Silver of the Fourth, bound hand and foot, in the old tower, and left him there, without food, for a whole night?" thundered the Head.

"No, sir!"
 "You—your admit it?" ejaculated the Head.

"Yes, sir!"
 "Why did you do this wicked and brutal thing, Mornington?"

"I did not mean to hurt Silver, sir. I am sorry if he is ill. I only meant to keep him out of the Bagshot match, as he refused to play me."

"Good heavens! For so trifling a motive you have been guilty of this dastardly outrage?"

"That was my motive, sir."
 "You understand, of course, that your punishment will be severe? Only in consideration of your training, or want of training, I refrain from expelling you in disgrace from the school. You will be flogged!" thundered the Head. "To-morrow morning, in the presence of the whole school, I shall administer the severest flogging that has ever been administered at Rookwood! Now go!"

Mornington gritted his teeth.
 "I will not be flogged! I—"

"Go!" thundered the Head.
 And Mornington went.

The next morning, after prayers, all Rookwood was assembled to witness the punishment of the culprit.

Grim faces looked at Mornington as he entered the Hall, with Bulkeley's hand on his shoulder.

The thrashing that Mornington received was, without doubt, the severest the Head had ever dealt out to a junior at Rookwood. When at length he was set down he staggered from Big Hall without a word.

The Rookwood fellows crowded out. They looked grimly at Mornington, who was gasping on the settee in the passage and groaning with pain. He gave them a fierce look.

"This isn't the end! I'll have him sacked! I'll have him turned out of Rookwood! There'll be a new Head here soon!" hissed Mornington.

"Silly ass!" said Jimmy Silver.
 And the juniors, grinning at Mornington's wild threat, passed on.

But they were destined to be reminded of that threat.

THE END.

(Next week's grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled: "RULED BY A TYRANT!" by Owen Conquest. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy EARLY.)

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 71.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

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

NEXT WEEK'S STORIES.

Our Grand New Cinema Serial, "THE MYSTERY MAKERS!"

By Nat Fairbanks,

is creating quite a stir, and I think my chums will agree, after reading the first two instalments, that the story promises to develop into an exceptionally interesting and exciting one. Nat Fairbanks assures me that he has something quite out of the ordinary in the way of "copy" concealed up his sleeve, and I am now anxiously awaiting the delivery of another batch of it.

The two complete school stories, which are on our programme for next week, deal, of course, with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co at Greyfriars, and of Jimmy Silver & Co at Rookwood. Both are exceptionally good stories, and the Rookwood story, especially, which is entitled:

"RULED BY A TYRANT!"

By Owen Conquest,

chronicles one of the most amazing episodes in the history of the old school. You will all enjoy next Friday's "Penny Popular."

A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY-VILLAGE.

Some friends of mine who are putting in some enjoyable weeks in Italy seem to find matters rather easy-going. In their remote quarter of the boot-heeled kingdom, life does not hurry. When you want to go ten miles by train, you find there are several changes. "We were turned out at a junction where the station house looked like a hut, and told to hurry for the second train. We found this train at last. It was standing in the long grass—just a toy sort of train, but it was in no hurry, at all, and did not move for half an hour." There was a visit to a certain post office at mid-day. Everybody was fast asleep. Someone woke up, and told the callers to come back later, when the staff would be awake, and able to transact business.

But the best touch of all had to do with the house-bell. A new bell was required. Three engineers came and spent a day over the work. They threaded some wire from the gate, through the shrubs, to an oleander bush, on which a humble little sheep-bell was hung. You tug at the wire. It often breaks, and has to be tied up. Occasionally the bell gives the faintest tinkle, but the best plan is to keep your eye on the oleander. When the oleander wags, you know there is a visitor.

It is all a pleasant, take-things-quietly sort of existence. No need to worry. If life gets irritating, just take a nap!

CARDEW.

"A Faithful Reader" writes from Sunderland: "Just a few lines to let you know that I like the stories very much, but please let us hear more about Cardew." "I have made a note of the suggestion. Cardew is immensely popular, even if he does not hit it off with the Australian supporter to whom I have referred. When there is real merit, you can put up with affectations."

BASEBALL.

R. T. Ellis, of the Waterloo Hotel, Alexandra Road, Newport, Mon., is much interested in baseball. There are many teams in South Wales. Newport, Cardiff, Ebbw Vale, and Swansea are keen on the game. Did the sport originate in this country? Well, the general impression is that the States originated baseball as it is now, though, to be sure, in the back ages, before the time of the Mayflower, there was a game of the sort in this country. An American baseball team came over to London in September, 1859, and played an exhibition match at Kennington Oval, but though there was a lot of interest shown, it did not look then as if the fine game would get a firm hold this side as it has done.

EXCELLENT!

"Gert," writing from Pretoria, says a lot of cheery things about the yarns, but the writer takes grave exception to Fingo. Fingo was the Kaffir boy who figured in one of the tales not long since. My correspondent points out that she has never heard of a decent native. A Kaffir her family trusted because he had saved her brother's life took French leave when he chose, stole all he could lay his hands on, got drunk, and ended up by attacking the family with a knife. "He got away, thanks to my brother, who still had the idea that he was indebted to the savage. . . . In future when reading about Fingo, I shall imagine I am out in England, where I've never seen a savage. Now, I want to ask you where Trimble is? We have hardly heard of him lately. All the new boys seem to be fading away. We don't want them to figure in every story, but, still, they might be mentioned occasionally. It is very difficult to get back numbers here. Who is Doris Levison? I am out of many details to which you refer in Chat. I was a reader of the good old 'Penny Popular' before the war."

"Out here in Pretoria there are many admirers of the Companion Papers, but there are few who ever write to give you their opinions of the stories. The distance is apt to dishearten them a bit. Then most of them think you can only read British English, not African slang English. If, however, you were to receive the verdicts of everyone here, I am sure you would be of the opinion that you have a loyal band of followers of the Companion Papers out here in South Africa."

I am extremely obliged to this correspondent. Doubtless, ere this, she has had a chance to see some of the stories in which Ernest Levison's sister figures. Many of her points are real winners. The letter deals with facts, and would carry weight anywhere. I was proud to get it.

SO MUCH FOR BUCKINGHAM.

A staunch reader tells me that I often refer to various counties in Chat, while there is never any mention of leafy Bucks. So here goes! All the same, I think there is a mistake here, but no matter, as the man said, when he picked up a five-pound note in the street. To my mind, Buckinghamshire is a most interesting county. Burnham, where my correspondent lives, is a regular football village. The scenery all round is hard to beat. The walks about the Cliveden district are wonderful. They are that! Then, again, Bucks is one of those counties which are unspooled by big towns. Buckingham, up in the north, used to be the county town. Aylesbury has the honour now. Buckingham is cheery enough, not much more than a village. At the station all the notices used to be put up in French as well as English, because the French Royal Family used to live at Stowe House, the old seat of the Dukes of Buckingham. This title is now extinct. Aylesbury is a town which should be visited. The old George Inn has a minstrel's gallery, and pictures of the period when this country was fighting Napoleon. Not far away is Hartwell House, where another exiled French King lived for years.

But Bucks need not rely merely on picturesque memories. It is a beautiful county all the way from Slough or Denham—the latter the daintiest village anywhere—in the south, right away into the Verney region.

I can congratulate my chum on his interesting reminder. I remember, during a stroll round Burnham, coming upon a smart little picture house right away from the houses. The owner told me he was doing excellent business. I wonder if he is still there!

(Continued on page 20.)