

A STIRRING STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD SCOUTS!

# THE ROOKWOOD DOG HUNT!

An Amusing, Long, Complete Story of JIMMY SILVER & CO. and TOMMY DODD & CO. of Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Jimmy Silver to the Rescue.

MISS DOLLY was crying. Jimmy Silver could scarcely believe his eyes at first. He paused by the gate of the Head's private garden and looked over.

There was no doubt about it. The headmaster's daughter was crying. Jimmy Silver looked nonplussed. He did not see Miss Dolly very often, but, like all the juniors at Rookwood, he admired her very much. Miss Dolly was some few months younger than Jimmy Silver, and, as a rule, she was light-hearted and sunny-tempered. Jimmy wondered what was the matter, and whether he could do anything to help, or whether he had better sneak away quietly and pretend he hadn't seen anything.

He was greatly concerned. But though generally equal to any emergency, Jimmy was at a loss at this crisis. In a rag with the Bagshot bounders or a raid on the Modern Side at Rookwood, in a "jape" upon unpopular seniors, Jimmy Silver was "all there." But feminine tears constituted a problem he did not feel equal to solving.

Before he could decide what to do Miss Dolly caught sight of him. Then it was too late to retreat, so Jimmy Silver raised his cap and blushed.

"What's the matter, Miss Dolly?" he asked timidly.

Jimmy felt that it must exercise a depressing effect upon the girl to live in the same house as that awful personage, the Head. Perhaps the Head had spoken to her in what Lovell of the Fourth called his four-point-seven voice. If so, Jimmy could sympathise. He, too, had listened to the Head's four-point-seven, and quaked at the sound.

"Oh dear!" said Miss Dolly, dabbing at her eyes with a little lace handkerchief.

"What ever shall I do?"

"I—I shouldn't mind, if I were you!" ventured Jimmy encouragingly. "He isn't as bad as he sounds, you know."

Miss Dolly stared.

"Who isn't?" she asked.

"The Head, you know."

"The Head! My father?"

"Yes. His bark's really worse than his bite, you know," encouraged Jimmy.

To his surprise Miss Dolly looked decidedly wrathful.

"How dare you speak of my father like that!" she exclaimed.

"Oh!" Jimmy Silver was taken aback. He had felt sure he was on the right track.

"Hasn't—hasn't he been ragging you?"

"You ridiculous boy!"

"Oh!" murmured Jimmy, much discouraged. Apparently it was not the Head's four-point-seven voice after all, that was the cause of the trouble.

"Sorry! I—I say, is it your governess? If she's been jawing—"

"What!"

"Nagging, I mean!" said Jimmy hastily.

"I'll tell you what, Miss Dolly. If she jaws—I mean, nags—that is to say, talks—we'll put some crackers in her handbag—"

"You bad boy!"

"Oh, my hat!" Jimmy was on the wrong track again. "I—I say, Miss Dolly, will you have some of this toffee?"

He held up a chunk of toffee temptingly. There were two pen-nibs and a fragment of sealing-wax adhering to the toffee, but in the confusion of the moment Jimmy Silver did not observe that.

Miss Dolly did.

"Thank you, I won't!" said Miss Dolly, her face dimpling for a moment into a smile.

"Toffee won't bring back Fido."

"Fido!" repeated Jimmy Silver.

"He is lost!" The tears flowed afresh. "Or stolen. My poor little Fido."

"That little fat, pink-eyed—"

"He wasn't fat."

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"Ahem! I mean plump little, beautiful, white dog!" said Jimmy Silver hurriedly.

Miss Dolly nodded.

"Yes, and he is lost. Poor little Fido! I shall never see him again. And there is nobody to find him for me!"

"Oh, don't say that!" said Jimmy Silver. "I—I'll find him!"

It was a generous offer, made on the spur of the moment. How on earth he was to find the missing Fido Jimmy Silver hadn't the faintest idea. But beauty in distress touched his heart. Jimmy had never been a squire of dames. But to dry Miss Dolly's tears he would have gone through fire and water.

Miss Dolly brightened up a little.

"Will you really?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, rather!"

"Tommy Dodd said he would find him," said Miss Dolly mournfully. "But he hasn't found him."

Jimmy Silver sniffed.

"That Modern bouncer! You see, those Modern bouncers can't do anything. Tommy Dodd couldn't find a lost elephant, even if it were under his nose. I'll tell you what, Miss Dolly. If you won't cry any more, I'll call out the Rookwood scouts this afternoon, and we'll have Fido in next to no time."

"Tommy Dodd's going to call out the scouts—"

"Tommy Dodd's an ass!"

"How funny!" said Miss Dolly, dimpling again.

"Oh! What's funny?"

"Tommy Dodd said you were an ass!"

"Did he?" roared Jimmy Silver in a voice that strongly resembled the celebrated four-point-seven tones of the Head.

"And he said I was to leave it to him, because if I asked any Classical duffers to find Fido, he would get lost more than ever."

"The—the—the—" Jimmy Silver gasped.

"That was only Modern swank, Miss Dolly. All these Modern bouncers ought to be sacked, from the head prefect to the smallest rag. If the Head had the brains of a bunny rabbit—"

"What!"

"I—I—I mean—that is—ahem!—you know—"

"I—yes—I— Jimmy Silver grew quite a little incoherent. "I—I mean the Head has more brains than a ton of bunny rabbits. But about that dog—"

"I think—"

"We'll find him, Miss Dolly," said Jimmy confidently. "We'll track him down this afternoon. Where did you lose him?"

"The gate was left open, and he ran into the quadrangle. Then he vanished, so he must have gone out into the road, I suppose. I have asked everybody, and nobody has seen him. I think he must have been stolen," said Miss Dolly tearfully. "And Leggett says—"

"Leggett!" growled Jimmy Silver.

Leggett was a youth in the Modern Fourth, and a thoroughpaced "rotter," and Jimmy did not like the idea of Leggett talking to Miss Dolly at all.

"Yes, Leggett. He said there was a wicked man near Coombe, who buys dogs for vivisection, and—and he might have bought Fido from some horrid tramp—"

"I'll jolly well punch Leggett's head!" growled Jimmy Silver. "I don't believe there's any such beast in the neighbourhood."

"Leggett advised me to offer a reward," said Miss Dolly anxiously. "He said a reward of a pound would make any tramp bring him back who had stolen him. He said he would take the advertisement down to the newspaper office for me."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"It isn't a bad idea, Miss Dolly, if some tramp's got him. But a pound's a lot of money."

"I have a pound in the Post Office," said Miss Dolly loftily. "I would give it all to get Fido back safe. But I must ask my papa."

"You leave it to us, Miss Dolly!"

"But I've left it to Tommy Dodd."

"Blow Tommy Dodd—I—I mean, bless Tommy Dodd! Those Modern asses wouldn't be able to find him in a month of Sundays. You leave it to us, and we'll find Fido before he's an hour older," said Jimmy Silver recklessly.

"Thank you so much!" said Miss Dolly demurely.

"The end study never gets left," said Jimmy Silver impressively.

And Jimmy scuttled away. Miss Dolly looked after him thoughtfully.

Tommy Dodd, the great chief of the Modern juniors, had offered to find Fido. Jimmy Silver, his rival, on the Classical side, had also offered to find the missing how-wow—before that how-wow was an hour older, too. And Miss Dolly's conclusion on the subject was:

"I think I shall put that advertisement in."

Which showed that Miss Dolly did not share the complete confidence which those cheery young gentlemen felt in themselves.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Short Way with Slackers.

"FOOTER" this afternoon?" asked Tommy Cook.

Tommy Dodd shook his head.

"Better stick to practice, bedad!" remarked Tommy Doyle.

"No time for footer."

"Phwat's on?"

"Scouting!"

The three Tommies of the Modern Fourth had just come out from dinner. It was Wednesday—a half-holiday at Rookwood.

Tommy Dodd had been looking very thoughtful throughout dinner.

Footer occupied a great deal of Tommy's thoughts, as a rule; but just now he was not thinking of footer.

"Scouting," repeated Doyle. "We had a cut run last Saturday, Tommy darling."

"We'll have another this afternoon."

"What for?" demanded Cook.

"There's a dog lost."

"A—a what?"

"Dog!"

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle stared at their leader in amazement that was mingled with wrath and disdain.

"Phwat!" ejaculated Doyle. "You're thinking of chucking footer to look for a lost dog intoirly!"

"Are you off your rocker?" demanded Tommy Cook, with equal warmth. "Bless the blessed lost dog!"

"It's Miss Dolly's little dog."

"Oh!"

"So, you see, it's important."

"Ye-e-es."

"Tain't only the dog," said Tommy Dodd confidentially; "but it will be a score over the Classical rotters if we find him. It will show that the Modern scouts can knock the Classics into a cocked hat. It's an honour for a lady to call us in to help her in an emergency, ain't it?"

"Ye-e-es."

"And Boy Scouts are bound to do a good turn every day."

"Ye-e-es."

"So call up the fellows and tell 'em to change into scout rig, and we'll begin," said Tommy Dodd decidedly. "Fido wandered out of the quadrangle somewhere, and he's bound to have left some tracks. Every fellow's got to turn out—the more the merrier, you know. If any chap wants to slack, punch his head!"

"Right-ho!"

Tommy Dodd's word was law. Perhaps his chums would have preferred the footer, but the prospect of the score over the Classics

consoled them. There was keen rivalry between the Classical and Moderns at scouting, as at everything else. And Tommy Dodd was elated at the idea of getting on the track before the Classical even heard that Miss Dolly's dog was missing at all.

The Modern Fourth turned out at Tommy Dodd's autocratic order.

There were few slackers on the Modern side. Nearly all the Modern Fourth were scouts. They turned out in the quadrangle in scout garb, ready for business, and Tommy Dodd ran his eyes over them.

"Where's Leggett?" he demanded.

"Says he can't come," said Towle.

Tommy Dodd frowned.

"Can't come! Didn't you tell him it was a scout run, by order, Tommy Cook?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, he said 'Rats!'"

"Where is he?" roared Tommy Dodd, as

"May have been turned into sausages by then!" said Dodd. "Come on; we're going to scout for it, and you're going to help."

"I won't!"

Tommy Dodd did not waste any more time in argument. The Modern leader had a short way with slackers. He brought his staff into the conversation.

Prod, prod, prod!

"Yaroooh! Stop it! You're puncturing my ribs, you silly duffer! Yow! Ow, ow!"

Prod, prod, prod!

Leggett dodged wildly out of the study. After him went Tommy Dodd, lunging from behind with his staff. Leggett was not usually a good runner, but on this occasion he came very near breaking the record. He joined the scouts in the quad, panting for breath, and looking like a Hun.

"Here we are!" said Dodd cheerfully. "Now to pick up the trail. If this slacker tries to mizzle, you're to fetch him down with a clump! Savvy?"

Jimmy Silver was determined to succeed, not only to relieve the distress of the headmaster's daughter, but to show that Rookwood Classical scouts were miles ahead of any others, especially the unspeakable Moderns.

Besides, as Jimmy Silver had impressively told his comrades, Miss Dolly was crying over the loss of her faithful Fido. If that would not spur them on, nothing would.

The facts ascertained amounted to this—that Fido had strayed into the quadrangle that morning. Assuredly he was no longer in the quadrangle, and a search round the buildings had failed to discover him. It appeared conclusive that he had wandered out of the school gates, and a heartless wide world had swallowed him up.

Probably some unscrupulous tramp had snatched him up, or some kindly person might have taken him in to feed him, or he might have gone off on a voyage of discovery, to learn what new worlds lay beyond the



The tramp dashed on with the Modern scouts hot on his track. Slowly, but surely, they gained. "Faith, we've got him!" shouted Tommy Doyle, and the remainder gave a loud whoop as they realised the fugitive was almost run down.

a chuckle ran through the ranks. "In his study?"

"Wait here!"

Tommy Dodd ran into the House, and mounted to Leggett's study. He was wrathful. He kicked open the study door.

Leggett of the Fourth was sprawled in an armchair. He jumped as Tommy Dodd strode in.

Biff!

Tommy Dodd's Scout staff prodded Leggett on the chest with force. Leggett yelled.

"Yow! You rotter! Gerroust my study!"

"After you!" said Dodd politely.

"I'm not going!" yelled Leggett. "Blow your silly old scout runs!"

Prod!

"Yow! Ow! Keep that rotten staff away, you silly idiot!"

"Miss Dolly has lost her dog. We're going to find it," said Tommy Dodd severely. "All hands to the mill on an occasion like this! Come on!"

"Hang the dog!"

"Are you coming?"

"You silly ass!" roared Leggett, dodging round the table. "You can't find the dog! You don't know where it is! Wait till there's a reward offered for it. It'll come back fast enough then."

"Yes, rather!"

"Follow your leader!" said Tommy Dodd. "March!"

And the Modern scouts marched, and Leggett marched with them. He did not like scouting, but he liked still less the prospect of being "fetched down with a clump."

There was no choice for the slacker of the Fourth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver on the Track.

"NOW for the trail!" said Jimmy Silver.

The Classical scouts were already on the war-path.

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, the Fistical Four, were in the lead. Flynn, Grace, Oswald, and Conroy, and several others had joined them.

They were not such a numerous lot as the Moderns, for it must be confessed that there were more slackers on the Classical side at Rookwood. But what they lacked in quantity they made up in quality.

Some of the Classical certainly seemed to be regarding the dog hunt from a humorous point of view.

But Jimmy Silver was as serious as a judge.

of Rookwood. Whatever it was, Jimmy Silver & Co. were going to track him down.

So Jimmy Silver said, "Now for the trail!" in determined tones.

He scanned the road for a sign.

His chums stood round and watched him. Flynn, who had brought some humorous gifts from Ireland, suggested making a bee-line for the nearest shop that sold sausages. Flynn was frowned down.

"The next silly ass who makes practical jokes will get a prod in the ribs!" Jimmy Silver remarked, as a general warning.

And they sought industriously for a sign.

"The first thing," said Raby gravely, "is to discover what kind of boots Fido was wearing. Without that, we can't pick up the track—Yaroooh! Keep that pole away, you silly ass! Yoop!"

"I warned you!" said Jimmy Silver severely.

"Grooooh! You fathead!"

"Dry up!"

Raby dried up, and rubbed his ribs. Some of the Classical scouts were grinning, but they did not make any more jokes.

"Got it?" asked Lovell, as Jimmy uttered an exclamation.



Jimmy was considerably muddy, the road being muddy after the recent rain, but his face was bright.

"Look here!"  
The scouts gathered round, and looked. In the soft mud close by the side of the road there was a plain imprint of a dog's paw.

The track led away towards the village of Coombe, but a few steps further on it was obliterated by the heavy rut of a market-cart.

"That's a dog, sure enough!" said Newcome.

"But Fido!" said Lovell dubiously. "Any dog might have made that mark!"

"Perhaps the porter's dog, intoirly!" remarked Flynn.

Jimmy Silver smiled in a superior fashion. "You fellows call yourselves scouts?" he asked politely.

"Look here—"

"Mack's dog is twice too big to leave that small track!"

"True enough!"

"Besides, it's Fido's track!"

"How do you know?"

"Because I've measured it!"

"And how do you know the size of Fido's feet exactly?" demanded Conroy.

Jimmy Silver's reply was crushing.

"Because I looked for his tracks in the Head's garden before starting. He had left lots of them there, and he's the only dog allowed in the garden, so there wasn't any doubt!"

"Hurrah!"

"He came out of the gates," said Jimmy victoriously, "and started for Coombe. Follow your leader, and look out for tracks!"

"Lead on Macduff!"

Jimmy Silver led, his eyes scanning the ground. The Classical juniors spread out in a line across the road, scanning every inch as they advanced. Since Fido's adventure there had been traffic on the road. The mud showed the tracks of other dogs, but especially of boots and wheels. But here and there, by dint of careful searching, the juniors found the trail.

The initial success encouraged them. All the scouts entered heartily into the adventures now. After all, it would be a triumph to recover Miss Dolly's favourite by sheer skill in scoutcraft.

There was a halt as the party reached the stile in the lane.

On the stile a gentleman of the road was resting—a stumpy, stubby, beery gentleman, who looked as if he had done no work for many long years, but had, nevertheless, found means very frequently to quench an abnormal thirst.

The stumpy gentleman blinked at the schoolboys, evidently wondering what they were searching the muddy road for.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver suddenly.

Close by the stile the track showed again in the soft mud where it had not been disturbed by a later tread.

"He went under the stile into the field!" said Lovell, with conviction.

"Hours ago, though," said Newcome doubtfully.

"What price that beery bouncer?" whispered Flynn. "Sure, he looks as though he wouldn't be above stealin' a dog!"

The same thought had occurred to several of the scouts, and they eyed the beery gentleman suspiciously. His shifty, beery eyes did not give a great impression of honesty. At his feet, as he rested on the stile, was a large bag of sacking, the top tied. The bag was well packed with something, and the juniors eyed it curiously.

"Good afternoon!" said Jimmy Silver politely.

The tramp stared.

"Arternoon!"

"Have you seen a dog?"

"A dawg?"

"Yes."

"Lots!" said the beery gentleman cheerfully.

"I mean, we've lost a dog—that is, we're looking for one. A little, fat, pink-eyed dog, looks a bit overfed, with a face like a rabbit," said Jimmy Silver. Miss Dolly certainly wouldn't have recognised her beautiful little white dog by that description. "It's the colour of a washy rag, and has a tail like a banana."

The tramp shook his head.

"Ain't seed it!" he said shortly.

Lovell gripped Jimmy Silver's arm suddenly. His eyes were on the sack that rested at the

tramp's feet, and he had distinctly seen a movement. There was something living in the sack.

"It's there!" whispered Lovell excitedly. "He's got it!"

"But—"

"I saw the sack move!"

Jimmy Silver's eyes gleamed. His eyes were on the sack, and he noted that it stirred as something moved within.

The tramp saw his glance, and scowled. "I reckon I'll be gettin' on!" he said.

"Wait a minute!" said Jimmy Silver. "What's in that sack?"

"That's my business!"

"I'll give you a shilling to show me what's in that bag!" said Jimmy Silver, taking the shilling from his pocket.

Wearily Willie scowled.

"Keep yer bob!" he snapped. And he put the sack on his shoulder, and started.

At a sign from Jimmy Silver, the Classical scouts gathered round him, and nine or ten staves barred the way.

"Halt!" said Jimmy Silver.

"You cheeky young 'ound!"

"Better language, please!" said Jimmy Silver sharply. "There's enough of us here to handle you, my man, and to pitch you into the ditch if you don't behave yourself!"

"Lemme pass, can't yer?"

"What have you got in that sack?"

"Me own property!"

"Then why can't you let us see it?"

"Because I don't choose, blow yer! Lemme pass!"

"We've lost a dog," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "And it's suspected that that dog's been stolen. We want to see into that sack. You've got something alive in it!" A sudden thought came into his head, and he called out "Fido, Fido! Good dog!"

A whine came from the sack.

That settled it. There was a dog in the sack beyond a shadow of doubt. The tramp made a rush to escape, but the scouts were round him, and half a dozen staves pushed him back.

"Collar him!" shouted Lovell. "He's got Fido!"

There was a yell down the lane.

"Go for the Classical rotters! They're after Fido!"

The Moderns had arrived.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Tommy Dodd and Co. come up with a Rush.

**T**OMMY DODD'S idea had been to track down the missing Fido, and win the gratitude of Miss Dolly for the Modern scouts, and score a success over their old rivals. So his wrath may be imagined when he found the Classical scouts ahead of him on the track.

Argument, Tommy Dodd felt, was quite out of place.

His preserves were not to be poached upon in this flagrant manner.

"Go for 'em!" he roared. "Stick to them!"

"Down with the Classics!"

And the Moderns rushed to the attack.

"Hold on!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "Pax, you duffers! We're looking for Fido!"

"So are we, you Classical fathead!"

"You couldn't find him in a month of Sundays, you Modern duffer!"

"Sock into them!" roared Tommy Doyle.

"Kick the spalpeens out!"

"I tell you—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here—"

"We'll give you a chance to clear off, and leave it to us," said Tommy Dodd considerably. "It's our business, and you Classical chumps would only make a muck of it, anyway! Are you going off?"

"No, fathead! We've found him!"

"Eh! Where is he?"

"That tramp's got it in his sack!"

"What tramp?"

"My hat! He's sneaking off! After him!"

The tramp had taken advantage of the altercation to make his escape. He had swung himself over the stile, and was hurrying along the muddy footpath across the field.

"He's got it, has he?" said Tommy Dodd.

"Well, we can deal with him. You Classical duffers have to sheer off—savvy?"

"Fathead!"

"Are you going?"

"No!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

"Kick the bastes out!" roared Tommy Doyle.

"Go for the Classical rotters!"

"Back up!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

In a moment more a battle royal was in progress. The Rookwood scouts forgot that they were scouts, and that the duty of scouts was to help one another. They only remembered that they were Classics and Moderns, and the old rivalry found vent, as it often did, in a terrific encounter.

They dropped their staves, and closed in combat, tramping, and splashing mud to right and to left.

"Back up, Classics!"

"Go it, Moderns!"

The pen of a Homer or the typewriter of a Kipling would have been needed to do justice to that battle.

The old battle of Classical and Modern was fought out.

The odds were on the side of the Moderns, and Jimmy Silver & Co. resisted desperately, but were driven across the lane, and—still resisting—they were driven through a hedge of willows into a wet and muddy field.

There the Moderns left them.

Tommy Dodd's signal called the scouts back into the road.

"Those Classical duffers are licked enough," said Tommy Dodd, dabbing his crimson nose.

"We've got to find Fido—that's what we really came out for!"

"Sure, and I'd forgotten him intoirly!" said Tommy Doyle nursing an eye.

All the Modern youths showed signs of combat.

"After that tramp! He's got him!"

"Right-ho!"

"Where's Leggett?" asked Tommy Dodd.

Cook chuckled.

"Mizzled!" he said. "He bolted at the start. Leggett ain't a fighting man by long chalks!"

"The blessed funk!" said Tommy Dodd angrily. "The rotter! We'll warm him when we get back. Follow me!"

The Modern scouts clambered over the stile. The tramp was running. And he was already small in the distance, three fields away. The fact that he was running to escape was sufficient for the Modern scouts.

They would have doubted whether the Classics had had the brains to discover the right man. But if this tramp was not guilty, what was he fleeing for? It was certain, at least, that the sack held a secret Weary Willie did not wish to come to light.

"Put it on!" rapped out Tommy Dodd.

The scouts broke into a rapid run. They fairly streaked across the field on the track of the dog-stealer. The beery gentleman was not so good a runner as the active juniors, and, in spite of his good start, they gained.

"We'll have him!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"We've beaten the Classics, and we're going to lick that dog-stealing rotter, and rescue Fido! Miss Dolly will know what kind of a scout to trust after this!"

And the Modern scouts replied enthusiastically:

"What-ho!"

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

##### Leggett's Luck.

**G**ROOOOH!"

"Oh, my nose!"

"Oh, my eye! Oh dear!"

Thus the Classical scouts as they disentangled themselves from the grass and reeds and mud, and picked themselves up and sorted themselves out.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were much the worse for wear.

They had done their best, and there was no disgrace in being defeated by odds; but it was very painful.

As good scouts, Jimmy Silver & Co. always presented a clean and natty appearance. But alas! now for their cleanliness and natty-ness.

They were muddy, they were damp, they were disordered, and their faces bore equal tokens of the fierceness of the combat.

"Well, this is a go!" mumbled Lovell. "I—I say, is my nose still there? It feels as if it isn't!"

"What a giddy afternoon!" groaned Oswald. "Are you fed-up with dog hunting, Jimmy Silver, you goat?"

"Bless Fido!"

"Those beastly Moderns will bag him now!" groaned Jimmy Silver, for once finding it difficult to live up to his motto of "Keep smiling." "We tracked him, didn't we? But those Moderns will take him back to Miss Dolly, and she'll think the Classical scouts are N.G."

"Rotten!"

"We'd better get back and have a wash," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "We're not done yet."

"What's the good of tackling that gang again, fathead? They're two to one!"

"Keep smiling!"

"Oh, rats!"

"A true scout never says die!" said Jimmy Silver severely. "Those Modern worms will bag Fido, but they haven't got him home yet. What's to stop us from getting a regular army of Classical chaps, and ambushing them on their way home?"

The Classical juniors brightened up wonderfully at the suggestion. All was not lost.

"We'll bump them over, and have Fido off them before they can say 'Balbus builded a wall,'" said Jimmy Silver confidently. "And we'll take the little beast—I—I mean, the lovely little dog—back to Miss Dolly!"

"Hooray!"

Greatly cheered up by the prospect, the Classics crawled through the hedge, and set off towards Rookwood. Half-way to the school they caught sight of Leggett of the Fourth. He was sauntering along in a leisurely way, and grinning.

Leggett did not care for scouting, and he had taken the opportunity of making his escape while the rivals of Rookwood were at grips. He was grinning over his success when the Classics came by.

Leggett stared at them, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What's the cackle about, you Modern worm?" demanded Jimmy Silver daskly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Leggett. "What a blessed set of scarecrows!"

"You cheeky ass!"

"You'd better leave Fido alone," chortled Leggett. "He'll turn up all right when there's a reward offered. I'll take it in hand myself then."

"You!" said Jimmy Silver, in supreme contempt. "You couldn't find a bunny rabbit in a cage!"

"Well, you haven't had much luck!" grinned Leggett.

"We found him!" shouted Lovell indignantly.

Leggett started.

"You've found Fido!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, rather!"

"You meddling asses, why couldn't you mind your own business?" exclaimed Leggett furiously.

"It was our business—rather!" said Jimmy Silver. "You mean rotter, so you wanted to find him and get a reward! That was why you suggested it to Miss Dolly, was it, and told her that yarn about the visivector? You worm, you're not fit to wear a scout's clobber!"

"Where is he, if you've found him?" said Leggett sulkily.

"That tramp's got him in his sack," said Lovell. "And we'd have had him but for those Modern cads—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh? What are you cackling at?" roared Leggett. "You Classical asses! So you were after that tramp! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, I tell you that tramp had him in his sack, and we know it."

"Ha, ha, ha—Yaroooh!"

Leggett's laughter suddenly changed to a yell of wrath and dismay as the exasperated Classics seized him.

They were fed up with Leggett's merriment and with Moderns generally. Leggett had called them scarecrows, and it was only just that he should share their state—especially as he was a Modern.

"Bump him!" shouted Lovell.

"Leggo!" yelled Leggett. "Oh crumbs! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Leggett struggled wildly in the grasp of the Classics. His jacket came up over his ears, and his waistcoat-buttons went. Several articles tumbled out of his pockets into the muddy road.

He sat up in a puddle and roared.

"Yah! Ow! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Now, then, jump!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"All together, and come down on him at once!"

Jimmy Silver's command was meant in the strictly humorous sense, and was not meant at all to be carried out. But it was enough for Leggett. He bounded to his feet and fled at top speed. In about three seconds he had vanished down the lane, leaving the Classical juniors roaring with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! He's been dropping his property about," remarked Jimmy Silver. "There's

a book, and a pencil, and—and—and— My hat! Dog-biscuits!"

Jimmy Silver's face was a study as he picked up two large dog-biscuits, which had evidently fallen from Leggett's pockets.

"Dog-biscuits!" ejaculated Lovell. "What the merry dickens is Leggett carrying dog-biscuits for?"

"Even Leggett wouldn't eat them!" remarked Raby.

Jimmy Silver whistled softly.

"Fathead!" he exclaimed, addressing himself.

"Eh? What's the matter now?"

"Duffer!"

"Who's a duffer?"

"I am!"

"Well, that's no news, intirely," remarked Flynn. "But phwat—"

"Gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver, "we're not going to lay that ambush for the Moderns. They can catch the tramp, and eat him if they like. We're going to lay it for somebody else."

"Whom?" demanded all the Classics together.

"The dog-stealer!" said Jimmy Silver calmly.

### THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

#### Not a Success.

"FAITH, we've got him!" shouted Tommy Doyle.

"Don't let him get away!"

The Moderns gave a whoop, and rushed on.

The tramp was running hard. He had crossed a dozen fields, he had dodged up and down muddy lanes, he had jumped over ditches and stumbled into them, but the Modern Scouts were not to be shaken off. They hang on his track like hounds on the track of a deer, and slowly, but surely, they gained.

The tramp was spent at last. He turned savagely on his pursuers.

With a whoop of triumph the crowd of Moderns closed round him.

"Got him!" chortled Tommy Dodd.

"Run down, bejabbers!" grinned Doyle.

"Hand over that dog, you rascal!"

"I ain't got no dog!" howled the tramp.

"Tain't yours, anyway!" he added, as a howl came from the sack he had dropped.

"We'll satisfy ourselves about that," said Tommy Dodd. "You ought to be run in, you rascal. Here, get out of the way!"

"Don't you touch that sack!"

"Rats!"

"Shove him out!"

It was evident that there was a dog in the sack, and equally evident that it was a stolen dog. The Scouts did not stand on ceremony with the thief.

The tramp hit out savagely, and the Rookwooders promptly collared him on all sides, and he was rolled over and pitched into the wet grass.

"Now you cut off!" said Tommy Dodd severely. "Prod him till he goes, you chaps."

"What ho!"

Prod, prod, prod!

"Yow-ow-ooop!" roared Weary Willie.

The prodding was efficacious. Weary Willie stood not upon the order of going, but went at once.

He streaked across the field, plunged through a hedge, and vanished.

The scouts chuckled gleefully.

"Now for poor old Fido!" said Tommy Dodd. "Won't Miss Dolly be pleased? Fancy those Classical duffers thinking they can beat us!"

"Awful asses!" said Cook.

Tommy Dodd bent over the sack, and began to unfasten the cord that secured the top.

A whine came from the inside, then a growl. Tommy Dodd started a little.

"Poor old Fido! He must be awfully cut up to growl like that," he said. "I've never heard him growl before. It sounds like a blessed bulldog."

He dragged the cord away, and tore open the mouth of the sack.

A bull-head and two fiery eyes came through the opening, and Tommy jumped back with a gasp of horror.

There was a dog in the sack—a stolen dog.

But it was not fluffly little Fido.

It was a young bulldog, and it was evidently in a terrific temper. The animal struggled out of the sack, its jaws red and open. The array of teeth gave Tommy Dodd a cold feeling inside.

"A b-b-bulldog!" he gasped.

"Tain't Fido!"

"Look out!" shrieked Cook.

The bullpup had scrambled up, and he was dashing directly at Tommy Dodd, his eyes glowing and his teeth parted.

Tommy Dodd gave him one look and fled. Gr-r-r-r-r!

That was what the bulldog said.

Doubtless he took the Rookwood juniors for the cause of his imprisonment in the sack. Certainly he was excited, and wanted vengeance, and equally certain his vengeance was going to fall upon them.

Gr-r-r-r-r!

Scout garb was very useful for scouting, but it afforded no protection whatever against the teeth of a bulldog. The scouts ran for it.

They ran their hardest.

Fortunately, they were good sprinters. They reached the wide ditch at the side of the field, and leaped across it.

Then they looked back.

The bulldog did not essay the jump. He showed his teeth ferociously on the other side.

Tommy Dodd gasped.

"Oh, my hat! It's somebody's dog that's been stolen, but 'tain't Fido!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"There's a plank farther along!" panted Towle. "He's making for it."

"B-b-better get back to tea, I think," murmured Tommy Dodd.

It was really getting near tea-time, and the Modern juniors agreed with their leader that it was a good idea to get back to tea at once. They made for Rookwood, and the speed with which they went home to tea might have indicated that they were very hungry indeed.

In the main road, however, they slackened down. The bulldog had disappeared from sight.

"What a sell!" said Tommy Dodd. "All the fault of those Classical asses, of course! We might have known that they couldn't get on the right track!"

"Of course, we might!" agreed Cook.

"We'll try again after tea—what!"

"Yes, in a different direction!" said Tommy Dodd hastily.

And the Modern scouts went home to tea. They were not aware that, from the cover of a clump of bushes near the school, nine or ten pairs of eyes watched them pass. The Moderns had given up the hunt for the present, but Jimmy Silver & Co. were still on the warpath.

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

#### What Jimmy Silver Knew.

"LOOK here—" began Lovell restively.

"Yes, look here!" growled Flynn.

"What's the game?"

"Tell us what you're driving at, Jimmy Silver, you ass!"

Jimmy Silver smiled serenely.

He had called the Classical scouts to halt in cover. From their cover they had seen the disappointed Moderns tramping homeward. The Classics were puzzled and curious. That some idea was working in their leader's brain they knew. But they were quiet in the dark as to what it was.

"What are we sticking here for, Jimmy Silver?"

The chief of the Fistical Four condescended to explain.

"We're on the track," he said. "At least, I'm on the track."

"Whose track?"

"Fido's!"

Lovell blinked round in amazement.

"Has Fido been in these bushes, then?" he asked.

"Not that I know of. That's not what I mean."

"What the merry thunder do you mean, then?"

"Listen, my infants, and don't interrupt your Uncle James!" said Jimmy Silver sedately. "Fido was missed this morning. He wandered into the quad and out of the gates. A fellow might have happened to see him—"

"Well?"

"Leggett, that Modern worm, advised Miss Dolly to offer a reward of a pound for her dog, and I think she's going to do it."

"We don't want any reward, I suppose!" grunted Lovell.

"We don't; but Leggett does."

"What on earth's Leggett got to do with it?"



"Lots!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "You noticed that Leggett admitted that he was thinking of the reward, and even said he'd take a hand in finding Fido when one was offered."

"He's that kind of mean beast!"  
"Exactly! And he was tickled to death at the idea of Fido being found in that tramp's sack. You noticed it!"

"That's why we bumped him."  
"Just so! And when Lovell first said we'd found Fido, Leggett was startled."

"He thought he'd lost his chance of getting the reward, I suppose."

"Quite so! We've just seen the Moderns go home, and we know they didn't find Fido in the sack. They must have run down that beery bouncer, but he hadn't got Fido. We thought he had, but Leggett knew he hadn't."

"He seemed to," said Lovell. "But I don't see how Leggett could have known all the same."

"He knew," said Jimmy Silver calmly, "because he knew where Fido was."  
"Eh?"

"We found that Leggett was carrying dog-biscuits in his pocket. What was he doing that for?"

"Blest if I know!"  
"Ask us another, old chap!"  
"What are dog-biscuits used for?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Eh? To feed dogs, of course!"  
"Does Leggett keep a dog?"

"You know he doesn't! What are you driving at?"

"Then what dog was he going to feed?"  
"Give it up. It's a giddy puzzle!"

"Not to a good scout," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "I work it out like this. Leggett knows where Fido is, and he was going to feed Fido."

"What!"  
"It's as clear as daylight!" said Jimmy Silver impatiently.

"Leggett saw Fido wander out, and he followed. He may have thought at first of bringing the little beast back. But then second thoughts came. Leggett is mean enough for anything, as you know, and he's awfully keen after money. It all fits together. He followed Fido, and shut him up somewhere safe—"

"Great pip!"  
"Then he went to Miss Dolly, and found her worried over the loss of the little beast, and advised her to offer a reward—"

"Oh!"  
"And scared her with a yarn about a beastly visivector who buys dogs from tramps, so that she'd be sure to do it—"

"The awful cad!"  
"So he knew Fido wasn't in that tramp's sack, because he knew where Fido really was. He was startled when Lovell said we'd found it, but he cackled when he found what we really thought."

"The rotter!"  
"But the biscuits!" exclaimed Raby.

"That's a clincher!" said Jimmy Silver. "That's what showed me the whole game. Leggett had got those biscuits for a dog. What dog? He hasn't got a dog, and he wouldn't carry biscuits about to feed strange dogs, I suppose. But if he's got Fido shut up till the reward's offered, he can't let the little beast starve to death. He's bound to visit him at least once a day to feed him. That's what he had the biscuits in his pocket for. He couldn't have had dog-biscuits about him for anything else. Most likely he was going to the place when he came out with the scouts. I don't suppose he came out with them willingly, as he hates scouting; and he hadn't got into his clobber either. So that's why we're here, my sons, because from these bushes we can watch the gates of Rookwood and spot Leggett when he comes out."

"Great Scott!"  
"Like a giddy Herlock Sholmes!" said Raby admiringly.

"Every scout ought to be able to beat Herlock Sholmes at his own game," said Jimmy modestly. "I may be wrong, but I think I'm right. Anyway, we shall soon see."

"Suppose Leggett don't go to feed Fido to-day?" remarked Oswald.

"He intends to."  
"How do you know?"

"Because he wouldn't put biscuits into his pocket to-day intending to go to-morrow."  
"Right on the wicket!" said Lovell. "But I should have thought a cad like Leggett wouldn't mind if a dog went hungry."

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"Hungry dogs howl and whine," said Jimmy Silver sententiously. "Leggett doesn't want Fido to advertise the place he's shut up in."

"Right again!" exclaimed Lovell. "Don't he beat the giddy band!"

"It's right, you fellows! The end study never gets left!"

And the Classical scouts agreed that Jimmy Silver had at least strong probabilities on his side.

"But how the merry dickens long are we going to wait here?" said Hooker.

"Not very long."  
"And how do you know that, Herlock Sholmes Baden-Powell Silver?"

"Because the gates are locked at dusk, and it will be dusk in half an hour."

"Right again, Jimmy!" said Lovell. "You shut up, young Hooker! Don't I keep on telling you the end study never gets left?"

"Well, when I see Leggett coming, I'll just—"

Jimmy Silver raised his hand and pointed through the bushes to the school gates.

"Look!" he said. "Leggett of the Fourth was coming out of the old gateway."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.  
The Scout's Victory.

"CAREFUL!" murmured Jimmy. "But the Classical scouts hardly needed the caution."

Keeping under cover, they were tracking the cad of the Fourth. The winter dusk was gathering, and it was not difficult. Leggett was walking quickly down the lane. Under the high hedges and trees the scouts followed—silent, cautious, and determined.

Leggett stopped at the stile where Fido's track had ended. It was not surprising that it had ended there, in the light of Jimmy Silver's astute reasoning. At that spot the dog-thief probably picked him up.

Leggett glanced back, and the scouts flattened themselves in the hedges. That suspicious glance showed clearly enough that the cad of the Fourth was nervous. But he saw nothing to alarm him, and he crossed the stile and started along the inner side of the hedge. In the corner of the field there was a disused barn, a shaky old building that was never visited. Creeping in the cover of the hedge, the scouts followed. Again they sank out of sight as Leggett, at the door of the barn, cast another look backward.

Then the Modern junior disappeared into the building.

"Run to earth!" grinned Lovell. "That speaks plainly enough, you fellows! Come on!"

"Follow on!" said Jimmy Silver.

Silently in the wet grass the scouts stole on through the dusk. They reached the old barn. The lower apartment was open to all the four winds, but a creaky old ladder, led to a loft above. Leggett had disappeared. They could hear the crunching of boots over the old rafters and the whine of a dog.

Leggett's voice came in a whisper: "Good dog—doggie! Quiet, Fido!"

The scouts grinned.

There was a munching sound as the dog's teeth started on a biscuit. Then Leggett's form appeared in the opening of the loft, and he swung himself down the ladder. He gave a yell of startled fright as he fairly fell into the hands of the Boy Scouts.

"Caught!" grinned Lovell.

"Who—what—Jimmy Silver!" gasped Leggett.

"Yours truly!" smiled the captain of the Fourth.

"I—I was startled! I—I've been—er—exploring the loft!"

"Not seen a dog there?" asked Jimmy Silver blandly.

Leggett turned white.  
"A dog? Certainly not!"  
"Fido!" yelled Jimmy Silver. "Fido! Fido!"

There was a whine from above. Jimmy Silver clambered up the ladder. In the dusty loft a little white, fluffy dog was secured by a chain fastened to one of the beams. Jimmy Silver patted the little animal, who rubbed his wet nose joyfully against the junior. He dragged the chain loose, and led Fido to the opening.

"Got him?" sang out Lovell.  
"Here he is!"  
"Hooray for us!"

Down the ladder came Jimmy, with the missing Fido in his arms. The dog was curling up comfortably on his chest. Leggett cast

a longing glance towards the door. It was evident that he feared a ragging from the disgusted juniors.

"Bring that cad along!" said Jimmy.

Lovell and Raby took either arm of the cad of the Fourth.

Jimmy Silver carried Fido in his arms as the scouts marched back triumphantly to Rookwood. The dusk was thickening, and old Mack had come out to lock the gates as they arrived. Inside, Tommy Dodd & Co. were waiting, curious to discover what luck the Classics had had.

"Here they come!" said Doyle. "Bet they haven't—Why—what—My hat!"

"Fido!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

"The end study never gets left!" said Jimmy Silver sweetly. "We've got him, and we've got Leggett for you!"

"Leggett!"

"Yes. Leggett had Fido hidden in the old barn, and he was keeping him there till Miss Dolly should offer a reward. As he's a Modern, we leave him to you, Tommy Dodd. We caught him there feeding Fido. Plenty of witnesses."

Jimmy Silver & Co. marched off towards the Head's house. The Modern juniors gathered round Leggett with deadly looks. The next ten minutes were decidedly painful for that enterprising youth, and by the time Tommy Dodd & Co. had considered him sufficiently punished Leggett had reason to repent his little venture in dog-stealing.

Meanwhile Jimmy Silver rang an impressive peal at the door of the Head's house. The maid who answered it stared at the muddy, begrimed juniors in amazement.

"Please tell Miss Dolly we've found Fido," said Jimmy Silver loftily.

"Fido!" Miss Dolly rushed into the hall. "Fido! And isn't he hurt? Old Fido! Jimmy Silver, you dear boy!"

Jimmy blushed.

"Alone we did it!" he murmured.

"But where was he? How did you find him? How clever of you!" said Miss Dolly, taking her favourite into her arms and caressing him.

"Ahem! A rotten beast had shut him up in an old barn to—claim a reward for finding him, you see!" said Jimmy Silver. "We spotted him. Scouts have to be able to spot things, you know, Miss Dolly. It's really nothing."

"Thank you so much!" said Miss Dolly. "It was very, very clever of you! And please tell Dodd not to look for Fido any more, as he's found, won't you?"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

And, with a great deal of pleasure, he delivered that message to Tommy Dodd. Tommy Dodd only snorted. Even the Moderns could not deny that Jimmy Silver & Co. had scored in the great Rookwood Dog-Hunt.

THE END.

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