

DO YOU WANT TO GO TO SEA? See Page 233!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

OUR MOTTO IS: "PLAY THE GAME!"

No. 800, Vol. XVI, New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending October 7th, 1916.]



Mr. MANDERS' UNWELCOME VISITOR! SEE OUR GRAND SCHOOL TALE!

THE FISTICAL FOUR'S REVENGE!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Uncle James to the Rescue.

Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Classical Fourth, came into the end study rubbing his hands, and with a gleam in his eyes.

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

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

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

"Yow-wow-wow-wow!"

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

"Yow-wow!"

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

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

"But what's the row?"

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

"Manders?"

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

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

"Wow-wow! Yes! Three on each hand. Groooh! Practically for nothing. That ass Tommy Dodd

brought his footer out, and I kicked it away from him—wow!—and it happened to catch old Manders on the chest—ow! How was I to know he was sneaking round Little Quad just at that minute? Oh, my hands!"

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

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

you know! That means lies! The old hunks!"

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

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

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

"He called me a liar!"

"That's only his bad manners."

What can you expect of a rotten Modern?" said Raby disparagingly.

"Better let him rip."

"I'm not going to let him rip!" howled Lovell.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, if you're head of this study, you can think of something. Manders is going to be made to sit up!"

Jimmy Silver looked deeply reflective.

"He ought to have reported you to Bootles," he said.

"Like his cheek to lay his Modern paws on a Classical. And calling you a liar was the limit—quite the limit! Suppose you call him one?"

"Eh?"

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, you know," said Jimmy Silver.

"Don't call him a liar, on second thoughts that's no class. Call him a rotter and a Modern worm."

"You thumping ass!" bellowed Lovell.

"Do you think I can march up to a master and call him a rotter and a worm?"

Jimmy Silver gave him a pitying smile.

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

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

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

"The telephone?"

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

"My hat!" said Lovell.

"You can slang him to any extent for a penny on the 'phone," said Jimmy.

"And the penny goes down to Bootles' bill, too. Still, you can leave a penny in Bootles' study, and he'll find it and think he dropped it. That'll pay for the 'phone."

Lovell burst into a chuckle.

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

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

"I'll jolly well do it!" said Lovell.

"I'll call him some names, too! I'll pile it on till he rings off! Ha, ha!"

"Always come to your Uncle James for advice," said Jimmy Silver complacently.

"You can rely on Uncle James."

"Jolly good wheeze! Sure Bootles is out?"

"Yes; I spotted him ambling."

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

"Any old thing," said Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four quitted the end study. Lovell seemed almost to have forgotten the smart in his hands, in the happy anticipation of making the obnoxious Modern master "sit up" by telephone.

It was just one of Jimmy Silver's bright ideas, and so far as the juniors could see, there was no risk attached. To "slang"

(Continued on the next page.)

amazed when Jimmy sat down on the bench outside Mrs. Wicks', and began to peruse the advertisement columns. They comforted themselves with ices while they waited.

"Got it!" said Jimmy at last. "What have you got, fathead? Sudden insanity?"

"No. Listen!" Jimmy read out an advertisement. "Typing, copying, etc. Authors' manuscripts, etc. Miss Peekes, Willow Cottage, Coombe."

Lovell and Raby and Newcome blinked at him.

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

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

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

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

"Where are we going now?"

"Willow Cottage."

"What for?"

"To see Miss Peekes."

"What the merry thunder—"

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

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

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

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

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

"No," said the typist, smiling.

"Well, here it is."

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

"Can I have it now?" asked Jimmy.

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

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

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

In a few minutes she handed the typed sheets to Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy laid down a shilling, and Miss Peekes insisted upon giving him sixpence change, and the juniors left the cottage.

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

"Bow-wow!" said Jimmy calmly.

"Where are we going now?" howled Lovell.

Jimmy looked at the "Coombe Recorder" again.

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

"Who the thump is F. Haines?"

"A chap who does typewriting."

"Haven't you finished?"

"No."

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

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

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

Jimmy was smiling with satisfaction as he left Long Lane.

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

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

"I call it covering up our tracks."

"Our—our tracks?"

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

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

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

"You funny ass!"

"Still, I'll let you chaps see the letter," said Jimmy considerably.

"You don't deserve it, but I will. We're going to worry Manders."

"How?"

"Think a minute," urged Jimmy.

"Now, is old Manders a generous, warm-hearted sort of chap—the kind

of old bird to help a lame dog over a stile, and to feel a deep sympathy for people down on their luck?"

"You know he isn't, fathead!"

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

"Eh?"

"There's a lot of distress in these hard times," argued Jimmy. "Lots of people are down on their uppers. We can't all be ship-owners, and make whacking war-profits, you know. Suppose everybody in this neighbourhood who's down on his luck gets an impression that Manders is anxious and awfully keen to help them?"

Lovell blinked at him.

"Why should they?" he asked.

"Anybody who's seen Manders knows he's as mean as a Hun."

"But most people haven't seen him. Rookwood isn't the only place in the county, you know, though, of course, the most important place. Everybody who hasn't seen him will believe he's a kind, benevolent old gent, and if they're hard up, they'll ring him up and call on him—dozens of 'em—and how do you think Manders will like it?"

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

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

he's anxious to relieve distress, as he's got plenty of oof."

"Catch him!" said Newcome.

"More likely to give a beggar in charge than to hand him a tanner."

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

"That's what I want."

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

"Naturally."

"And they'll call!"

"Of course they will!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell.

"Fancy a procession of seedy cadgers calling on old Manders for financial assistance!"

The juniors yelled at the bare thought. Mr. Manders was supposed to have a good deal of money, but he was never supposed to be willing to part with any of it. Indeed, he had been heard to remark that the soldiers' allowances in modern times were "scandalous." A remark which Jimmy justly considered was a full justification for any "jape" played on the science-master. Mr. Manders was a firm believer in running a war cheaply, so far as the fighting-men were concerned. For a crowd of hard-up cadgers to visit the meanest man in the county in search of finan-

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

The 5th Chapter.

Financial Assistance Required.

Buzz!

Mr. Manders gave an irritable grunt.

He was seated in his study after lessons on Friday, engaged in the perusal of a ponderous volume on chemistry, when the telephone bell rang.

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

"Hallo!"

"That Rookham double-two?"

"Yes."

"Very good. My name is Jacob Jawkins."

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

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

"What?"

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

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

"Rookham double-two?"

"Yes, yes!"

"My dear, kind friend—"

"What?"

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

"Some lunatic!" murmured Mr. Manders.

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

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

"This is some trick!" he muttered.

"Bless my soul! I— Confound it! There is the telephone again! Hallo, hello!"

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

The unknown interlocutor was cut off again, quite sharply.

Mr. Manders jammed down the receiver with a force that nearly knocked over the instrument.

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

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

"Yes! Hallo!"

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

"Yes. Who is speaking?"

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

"Eh?"

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

"Madam—"

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

"Wha-a-at?"

"Seventy-five pounds."

"Madam, are you insane?" Mr. Manders shrieked into the transmitter.

"Do you imagine, for one moment, that I intend to give a large sum of money to a stranger—indeed, to anybody? What do you mean?"

"But if you are anxious to relieve distress—"

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

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

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Manders rang off hastily.

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

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

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

Buzzzz!

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

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

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

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

"Bless my soul!"

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

The Head rose majestically.

"Really, Mr. Manders—"

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



Mr. Manders stopped as if struck by a bullet. "I—I beg your pardon, sir!" he stammered. "I—I am somewhat hurried!" "Yes, sir, so I should judge," said the Head majestically.

"Look at this!" said Jimmy. His chums looked.

The typed envelope was addressed: "Coombe Recorder, Market Street, Coombe."

"You're sending that to the local rag?" asked Newcome.

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

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

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

"A. KIDD."

"Advertisement: 'Wealthy gentleman is anxious to relieve distress. Ring up Rookham 22.'"

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

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

"Certainly!"

"That's Manders' telephone number."

"Of course it is!"

"But—but—"

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

"Ha, ha!"

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

cial assistance was a screaming joke—from the junior point of view. Mr. Manders was not likely to see the humour of it. But that was only a detail that did not matter."

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Manders almost dropped the receiver.

"Do you take this for a charitable institution?" he gasped.

"Certainly!"

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

"But, my dear sir—"

Mr. Manders rang off.

He returned to his book with a grunt of annoyance. The conduct of the unknown Mr. Jawkins, in ringing him up to ask for financial assistance, was inexplicable. Mr. Manders was about the last man in the country to render anybody financial assistance.

But the telephone bell buzzed again at once, and he growled, and took up the receiver again.

"What is it?"

"There appears to be a misunderstanding. It was the voice of Mr. Jawkins. 'I am in distress owing to want of money—'"

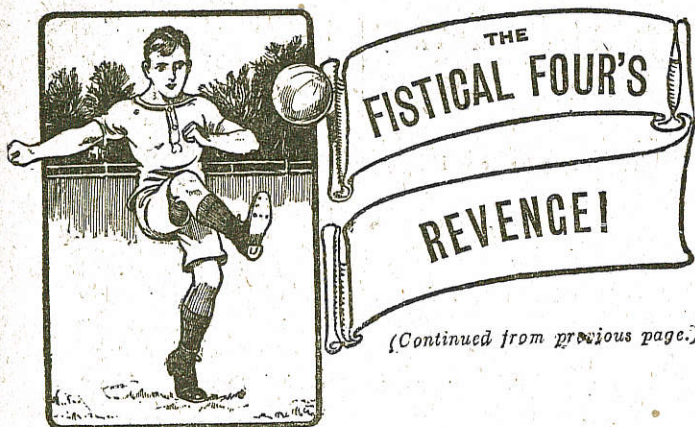
"And I tell you, sir, that I do not care two pins whether you are in distress or not!" snapped Mr. Manders. "You have probably heard of the workhouse. Go to it!"

He jammed the receiver on the hooks.

"Extraordinary!" muttered the Modern master. "Amazing! That a perfect stranger should have the effrontery to apply to me for financial aid—extraordinary!"

As a matter of fact, a perfect stranger was more likely to apply to Mr. Manders for aid than anybody who knew him.

Mr. Manders enjoyed a short rest; Mr. Jawkins was apparently done with. But a quarter of an hour later the telephone bell rang again.



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

"Really—"

"I—I beg your pardon, sir. I—I am somewhat flurried."

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

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

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

Mr. Manders halted and glared at them.

"Lovell!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir."

"Someone has telephoned to me—some insolent practical joker—"

"Indeed, sir?"

"Was it you, Lovell?"

"Not at all, sir."

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

The Fistical Four grinned at one another ecstatically.

"It's working!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"Working like a charm!" chortled Lovell. "Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Classical chums roared.

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

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

"Confound the telephone!" thundered Mr. Manders.

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Knowles.

"Hang the telephone!"

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

The 6th Chapter. Nice for Manders.

Mr. Manders did not spend an enjoyable afternoon.

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

He was tempted to cut off permanently, but that would not have done. Any message might have been one of importance, especially as Mr. Manders dabbled in stocks and shares, and was accustomed to being rung up by his stockbroker at odd times to be apprised of the state of the "market." Mr. Manders was one of those worthy gentlemen who indulge in stock speculations in war time, and victory or defeat at the Front meant to him simply a rise or fall of prices—merely that and nothing more.

There were, in fact, a couple of business calls for Mr. Manders to attend to. But a dozen other calls, dealing with the question of financial assistance which he was supposed to

be prepared to render to perfect strangers.

Mr. Manders was astounded as well as enraged.

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

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

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

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

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

But towards evening there was a blessed silence.

Mr. Manders had disconnected the bell.

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

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"Manders had any callers?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes, rather," chortled Tommy Dodd. "He was called out to see a seedy chap who waited in the passage, and there was quite a row. Seedy chap was fair shouting."

"Ha, ha! What did he want?"

"Cash."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly queer about that advertisement in the local rag," said Tommy Dodd, eyeing the Classical chums.

"Manders couldn't have put it in."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tommy Dodd yelled.

"Oh, you deep bouncer! Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver looked surprised.

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

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

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

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

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

The stranger followed him in.

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

The juniors grinned at one another.

"We must see this!" murmured Lovell.

And they cautiously "stalked" the stranger.

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

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

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

"I am Mr. Manders."

"Sir, it does me proud to behold you," said the visitor. "My name is Curll—Horatio Curll. At one time, sir, I trod the histrionic boards—"

"Kindly state your business."

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

"Sir—"

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

"I am not in the slightest degree interested—"

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

"You will get no money from me, sir," shouted Mr. Manders angrily.

"Kindly leave this building at once!"

"Do my ears deceive me?" exclaimed Mr. Curll in surprise. "Are you not the generous gent—the noble benefactor of the poor and down-trodden, who is anxious to relieve distress?"

"No, sir, I am nothing of the kind," thundered Mr. Manders, crimson with anger, as a crowd of fellows began to gather.

"Kindly take your departure at once!"

"Excuse me," said Mr. Curll, politely but firmly.

"I have business here with the generous gent I have mentioned. Having failed to get through on the telephone, I examined the directory, sir, at the post-office, and found that this was the address of Number 22, Rookham, and that the name was Manders. I have called

to see Mr. Manders, and wild horses, sir, shall not drag me from this spot until I have unfolded my tale of trouble to his sympathetic ears."

"I am Mr. Manders! I have no business with you. Go!"

"If you are the gentleman I have called to see, may I state—"

"You may not."

"That the small sum of five pounds—"

"Leave this house!"

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

"Will you go?" roared Mr. Manders.

"Five shillings even would be a boon," sighed Mr. Curll. "After raising my hopes as you have done, sir, you cannot refuse me so small a sum."

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

Mr. Curll's manner changed.

"I came as an artist in distress, in reply to what I regarded as the invitation of a generous gent!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I find a prevaricator—a hard-hearted hunk—a skinkint!"

"Go!" shrieked Mr. Manders.

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

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

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

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

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

"Five bob really any good?" he asked.

Mr. Curll's clouded brow cleared at once.

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

Jimmy Silver slipped five shillings into the somewhat grubby hand of the gentleman who dreamt that he had dwelt in marble halls. And Mr. Curll walked away quite jauntily; and it is much to be feared that the five shillings were soon afterwards expended in support of the drink traffic.

The Fistical Four went in to dinner in great spirits. After dinner they walked in the quad, waiting. The advertisement in the "Coombe Recorder" was panning out remarkably well, and they were keen to see fresh developments. Early in the afternoon a black and sooty figure came in at the open gates, and blinked round the quadrangle. Jimmy hurried up to him. The man looked like a chimney-sweep out of a job, and he had evidently been drowning his troubles at the Red Cow or the Bird-in-Hand. He rolled in his gait as he came in.

"Called to see somebody?" asked Jimmy politely.

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

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

"Thanky kindly."

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

"Mr. Manders?" asked the sooty gentleman.

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

"I ain't come about no chimneys. I'm Bill 'Arris. I got the push."

"What?"

"I got the push," explained the sooty gentleman. "The push, you know, for 'aving a drop too much. My missus, she saw your advert, and I kinder reckoned I'd come erlong, not being 'andy with the telephone like."

"I fail to understand you!" snapped Mr. Manders. "Have you anything to say to me?"

"Yes. I'm 'ard up!"

"That is no business of mine," shouted Mr. Manders, realising that this was another of the mysterious demanders of financial assistance.

"But you're the wealthy gent—"

"I do not waste my wealth on vagrants."

"I got the push!" reiterated Mr. Harris. "I'm 'ard up! You advertise that you wants to relieve distress—that means 'elping a bloke wot's 'ard up, in Henglish. Well, I'm 'ard up, and 'ere I am."

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

Mr. Harris glared.

"Eject me!" he ejaculated.

"Don't I keep on tellin' you I'm 'ard up? Ain't you goin' to 'elp a bloke wot's 'ard up?"

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

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

"Ruffian! Silver, send Mack here!"

"I'm going!" roared Mr. Harris. "I don't want no puttin' hout. But afore I goes, I'll teach yer to call an honest man names!"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it!"

The juniors yelled. They were not inclined to chip in. Mr. Harris had apparently not cleaned off the stains of his last job, since he had got the push, and nobody wanted to touch him. Justly indignant at being played with, as he supposed, Mr. Harris was after vengeance, and the angular Rookwood master fairly crumpled up in his powerful grasp.

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

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Police! Help! Oh, oh, oh! Oooooop! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There!" roared Mr. Harris, hurling the battered Modern master to the ground, where he sprawled, gasping and smothered with soot.

"That'll teach yer! Yah!"

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

Mr. Manders sat up.

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

And the Fistical Four went off into a fresh explosion.

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

THE END.

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