

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE BOAT-HOUSE!



By
OWEN CONQUEST

"Fair play's a jewel." And never was this saying brought home with more discomfort and sorrow to a rascally schemer than in this topping tale of the Rookwood boat-race!

THE FIRST CHAPTER RIVALS OF THE RIVER.

"**P**ULL, you beggars!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Go it, *Classicals*!"
"Bravo!"

The towing-path swarmed with Rookwooders, both *Classicals* and *Moderns*. The *Classicals* were shouting at the top of their voices, as Bulkeley's crew shot by in their racing skiff.

"*Classicals* will win on Saturday!" said Jimmy Silver. "Just look at them, you chaps! They'll beat the *Moderns* hands down."

"Good old Bulkeley!"

It was the last practice before the Rookwood boat-race; and the *Classical* senior crew were in great form. Jimmy Silver & Co., being merely juniors, were not personally concerned in the great event. But, as *Classicals*, they took a deep interest in it. Any member of the *Classical* Fourth would have given a term's

pocket-money to see Bulkeley's crew victorious when the race came off.

"We're going to win!" said Raby; the "we" referring to the *Classical* side of Rookwood generally.

"About a dozen lengths!" said Newcome. "Knowles won't be able to touch them."

"Not in his life-time!" said Arthur Edward Lovell emphatically.

"Fathead!"

Tommy Dodd of the *Modern* Fourth put in that remark. Tommy Dodd, being a *Modern*, took quite a different view.

"My dear chap," said Lovell tolerantly, "you *Moderns* don't know anything about rowing—"

"Ass!"

"Best thing you can do," continued Lovell, "is to warn Knowles to keep off cigarettes till after the race—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Otherwise, you'll see him crack up!" grinned Lovell.

"You cheeky ass!" growled

Tommy Dodd. "The Modern crew is going to walk away from Bulkeley's crowd on Saturday."

"Look at Knowles," murmured Mornington. "He doesn't look as if he thinks so."

The juniors glanced round. Cecil Knowles of the Modern Sixth was standing at a little distance, with his gaze fixed on the Classical boat. The Classical eight, pulling together in perfect time, were well worth watching, but Knowles' expression did not indicate that he found any pleasure in the sight.

His brow was dark, his thin lips tightly compressed, and his eyes had an angry gleam in them. Knowles was too busy with his own thoughts—not agreeable ones, evidently—to remember that he was not alone; and at that moment his looks betrayed his feelings very plainly.

The Classical juniors grinned. Knowles certainly did not look at that moment like a fellow who expected to win.

"Looks happy and confident—what?" chuckled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buck up, Knowles!" called out Lovell. "A race isn't lost till it's won, you know."

Knowles of the Sixth gave a start, and spun round towards the juniors. His hard face crimsoned as he caught the grinning looks on all sides.

"What? What did you say, Lovell?" he exclaimed.

"I said buck up," said Lovell cheerfully. "You're not beaten yet. You won't be licked till Saturday, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Certainly a junior of the Fourth Form should not have addressed a prefect of the Sixth in that cheeky manner. Arthur Edward Lovell, in the exuberance of his spirits, was really allowing himself a little too

much latitude. Knowles evidently thought so, for he made a furious stride towards Lovell, and caught him by the collar.

"Hallo! Leggo, will you!" roared Lovell.

Shake, shake, shake!

It was the turn of the Modern juniors to chuckle. Knowles of the Sixth shook Lovell a great deal like a terrier shaking a rat.

But if Knowles was understudying the terrier, there was nothing of the rat about Arthur Edward Lovell. He struggled gamely.

"Let go, you Modern rotter!" he shouted.

"Knowles—" began Jimmy Silver.

Smack!

The back of Knowles' free hand caught Jimmy Silver across the mouth, and Jimmy sat down on the towing-path quite suddenly.

"Ow!" he stuttered.

Lovell, with a savage wrench, tore himself free. He gave Knowles a shove that sent the Modern prefect staggering.

"Keep off, you rotter!" shouted Raby and Newcome together as the Modern senior rushed at Lovell again.

But Knowles did not heed.

It was not only the chipping of the Classical juniors that had irritated him. It was the form shown by the Classical crew in the trial run, as all the fellows present knew perfectly well. Knowles was almost savagely keen on winning the rowing event, and the sight of Bulkeley's crew had roused all the bitterness in his bitter nature. It was a solace to him to take it out of Bulkeley's enthusiastic supporters in the Fourth Form.

He grasped Lovell again and, instead of shaking him, began to box Arthur Edward's ears right and left.

Lovell struggled furiously, punching recklessly at the prefect.

Jimmy Silver jumped up.

"Collar the beastly cad!" he shouted.

"Down with him!" yelled Mornington.

There was a rush of the Classical juniors to Lovell's rescue. That the person of a prefect was sacred and not to be lightly touched by a junior was quite forgotten in the excitement of the moment. Cecil Knowles was collared on all sides and dragged away from Lovell, and in a moment he was sprawling on the towing-path.

That was too much for Tommy Dodd.

Tommy did not like Knowles personally, for the bully of the Sixth was not popular in his own House. But he was head of the Moderns and entitled to loyal support on that ground.

"Back up, Moderns!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

And Tommy rushed into the fray with a dozen Modern juniors. The Classicals met them more than half-way.

Bulkeley's eight, pulling down the river, vanished in the distance, quite unheeded now. There was a terrific scrap on the towing-path, Classicals and Moderns mixing up in a wild mêlée. Knowles of the Sixth, sprawling in the grass, was in the midst of



"Boys!" It was Mr. Dalton's voice. "Cave!" gasped Lovell. "Hook it!" As the master of the Fourth came hurrying along the tow-path, the Juniors scattered in every direction.

the combat which surged over him. It was, indeed, rather unfortunate for Knowles that Tommy Dodd & Co. had rallied to his rescue in that prompt manner. They meant well, but the last state of Knowles was worse than his first.

He gasped and spluttered as he was trampled over by wildly excited juniors. He scrambled up, but a rush knocked him over again, and Tommy Dodd was hurled sprawling across him and Cook and Doyle went across Tommy Dodd, and two or three Classicals were added to the heap.

Under the pile Knowles squirmed and wriggled and spluttered.

" Go it, *Classicals* ! "

" Buck up, *Moderns* ! "

" Give 'em beans ! "

" Back up ! "

" Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-wow-wow ! " came in faint gurgling accents from the unhappy Knowles.

" Boys ! "

It was Mr. Dalton's voice. The master of the Fourth hurried on the scene.

" Cave ! "

" Look out ! "

" Hook it ! " gasped Lovell.

It was quite kaleidoscopic. As Mr. Dalton came hurrying along the tow-path, the juniors scattered in every other direction. By the time Mr. Dalton arrived the stricken field was tenanted only by Knowles of the Sixth, who lay gasping, too winded to rise.

The Fourth-Form master helped him to his feet, by what time the rival juniors of Rookwood had vanished in all directions over the horizon.

THE SECOND CHAPTER LOVELL BUTTS IN.

JIMMY SILVER groaned.

Arthur Edward Lovell echoed his groan.

Raby mumbled. Newcome gasped.

It was a scene of woe in the end study in the Fourth-Form passage. The Fistical Four were suffering.

For quite a long time no sounds were heard in that celebrated study but groans and mumbles and gasps.

" Well, we've been through it ! " said Jimmy Silver at last. " I really think Dicky Dalton has overdone it, this time."

" He's a beast ! " groaned Lovell.

" Ow, ow ! " said Newcome.

" Ow ! My hands ! " moaned Raby.

Jimmy Silver grinned faintly.

" After all, it was worth it, " he remarked.

" Was it ? " groaned Lovell. " It doesn't seem to feel as if it was."

" Keep smiling, " said Jimmy.

" Wow ! "

" Knowles had the time of his life, " said Jimmy Silver. " After all, we were bound to be licked for ragging a prefect. But Knowles had a really good ragging."

" Wow, wow ! "

" Let's have tea, " said Jimmy.

And he gave his suffering palms a final rub, and started getting tea. His chums more slowly followed his example.

The Fistical Four had been through it. Knowles' complaint to their Form-master had been loud and long, and Mr. Dalton had administered what seemed to him an adequate punishment. To the Fistical Four it had seemed more than adequate.

Tea in the study revived them somewhat, and they began to recover their spirits. Lickings were not uncommon incidents in the career of the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

" I don't blame Dicky, " said Lovell at last. " Dicky couldn't do anything else when Knowles yarned to him. Dicky's strong on discipline, and I don't blame him. But that cad Knowles——"

" That rotter Knowles——" said Raby.

" That beast Knowles——" said Newcome.

" Oh, let him rip ! " said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. " After all, you did cheek him, Lovell."

Lovell snorted.

" Did he pitch into me for cheeking him, or because he could see that the Classical crew were in winning form ? " he demanded.

" That's so, " said Raby. " Knowles was as wild as a Hun about that. He could see that Bulkeley's crew will beat him on Saturday."

" And that's why Knowles tackled

me," said Lovell savagely. "He wanted to take it out of somebody on the Classical side. He would punch Bulkeley if he dared."

"I suppose that's so," assented Jimmy Silver. "We may as well keep clear of Knowles till after the race."

"I'm not going to keep clear of him," said Lovell. "I'm going to make him sit up."

"Look here, old chap——"

"He's pitched it to Dicky Dalton that we ragged him, and got us licked," said Lovell. "Think I'm going to have my ears boxed by a Modern cad, and a licking from Dicky into the bargain. I'm going to rag Knowles."

"But——"

"Oh, rats! I tell you I'm going to rag him," said Lovell, evidently in one of his most obstinate moods. "Let him keep his paws for Modern cads; they may like having their ears boxed!"

"Old chap——" said Raby.

"They're holding a committee meeting in the common-room in Manders' House after tea," said Lovell; "I had that from Towle. I'm going into Knowles' study while the dashed meeting is on, and when he gets back to his study he'll find a bit of a change there. I'm going to rag the place right and left."

"You'll be spotted," said Jimmy Silver uneasily.

"Rot!"

"You'll fall foul of Tommy Dodd and his gang if you go over there at all," urged Raby.

"You fellows can ask the Modern cads to a boxing-match in the gym. They'll accept, and that will keep them off the grass."

"Yes; but——"

"I'm going!"

Arthur Edward Lovell spoke in a tone of finality. His chums knew that

tone, and they ceased to argue. When Arthur Edward was in one of his mulish moods, as his chums termed them, he was not to be reasoned with, and they had to give him his head.

So all that the Co. could do was to take whatever measures were possible to make Lovell's raid as safe as they could.

After tea, the boxing challenge was issued to the Modern juniors, and accepted at once by Tommy Dodd & Co. Nearly all the Modern Fourth came over to the gym to see the three Tommies matched against Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome.

Arthur Edward Lovell strolled across the quad with a very careless air, and chose his moment for dodging into Mr. Manders' House.

His strategy was successful—so far. In the Sixth-Form passage there was no one to be seen. Most of the Modern juniors were in the gym, and most of the seniors at the committee meeting in the common-room. Cecil Knowles' study door was half-open, showing the room vacant.

Lovell dodged in, and closed the door quickly.

How long Knowles would be detained at the meeting he did not know, but he hoped that it would be long enough to allow him to rag the study thoroughly and efficaciously, and to get clear afterwards.

Alas for the strategic Lovell!

He had barely had time to pour the ink into the clock when there were footsteps in the passage outside.

Lovell started, and put down the inky clock hurriedly. The footsteps were approaching Knowles' study, and he heard the voice of Cecil Knowles himself. He did not distinguish the words, but Knowles' rather strident tones were unmistakable.

Lovell stood for a moment in utter dismay.

Acting rather upon instinct than thought, the Classical junior made a dive for the bed in the alcove. The Sixth Form studies at Rookwood were bedrooms as well as studies, as the high and mighty Sixth did not sleep in dormitories like the smaller fry. Almost before he knew what he was doing, Arthur Edward Lovell had plunged out of sight under the bed.

A few seconds later the door opened.

Lovell could only hope that Knowles had come back to his study for some temporary purpose and would go again. That hope was soon knocked on the head.

"Come in, Frampton."

Frampton of the Sixth came in with Knowles, and the door closed again. Knowles came across the study to the fireplace.

Lovell suppressed a groan. He suppressed it very carefully, knowing only too well what to expect if the Modern senior found him hidden in the study. There was nothing for Lovell to do but to wait—and hope! But his spirits, lately so exuberant, sank down to zero.

THE THIRD CHAPTER FOUL PLAY!

KNOWLES of the Sixth stood before the fire with his hands driven deep into his trousers-pockets, and a dark frown on his brow. Frampton sat on the edge of the study table, swinging his legs and regarding his chum curiously. There was silence in the study for several minutes—much to the hidden junior's surprise. He could see no reason why the two Modern Sixth-Formers should stare at one another without speaking, like a pair of boiled owls, in Lovell's opinion. It was Frampton who broke the silence at last.

"Well? You asked me to come here, Knowles. You said you had something to say."

"About the race on Saturday," said Knowles.

"Well?"

"I watched Bulkeley's lot at practice to-day," said Knowles. "They're in great form."

Frampton made a grimace.

"I know! Topping form! Bulkeley drives his men a bit harder than you do, Knowles. He's a good skipper."

"Perhaps he's got better men," said Knowles sourly. "His men don't smoke cigarettes when they're in training for a rowing match."

Frampton had taken out a cigarette. He paused, and threw it into the fire.

"You're right!" he said. "It's throwing away our chances. But, dash it all, Knowles, old man, you don't set us a very good example, you know."

"Never mind that," said Knowles.

"Look here, Framp, I'm keen on this race. The Classicals swank no end about getting the better of us in sportin' events—they claim to run better, and row better, and swim better, and play football better—"

"They do seem to bag things, somehow," said Frampton. "Still, I don't want to work under a dashed slave-driver, like Bulkeley's men. No need to break one's neck winnin' pots and things!"

"That's all very well; but we want to win this," said Knowles. "It's a big thing, and will set off a lot of lickings we've captured in other events. The school's thinking of nothing else."

"I know that. But—"

"If we bag it, it means no end of kudos; it will shut the Classicals up about their football wins, and it will be something for us to talk about if they get the better of us at the cricket and—"

"We all want to win," said Frampton, staring at Knowles. "You're

preaching to the converted, old bean. But if you're so jolly keen you might have tried a bit harder earlier on to pull the crew together."

"No good goin' into that!" snapped Knowles. "We could have done better; but with a set of slackers to drive——"

"Oh, draw it mild!" urged Frampton.

"Well, never mind that!" said Knowles more amiably. "The fact is we're up against it. I've timed the Classical crew, and at practice they've covered the distance with two minutes to spare over our best. And they weren't going all out to-day. The race is a goner, unless——"

"Don't see where the 'unless' comes in. You're not hoping that Bulkeley will fall downstairs and break his neck, I suppose!"

"No such luck!" said Knowlessourly, "I've been thinkin' it over, Framp. If the Classicals beat us this time we may as well shut up shop for good. They've won both the House matches and the swimming cup. Are we going to let them walk over us all the time?"

"Not if we can help it. But——"

"We can help it!" said Knowles in a low voice.

Frampton started. There was something in Knowles' tone that startled him.

"Dash it all, what are you thinkin' of, Cecil?" he asked uneasily.

Knowles set his lips.

"I'm goin' to pull it off, by hook or by crook!" he said in a low, concentrated voice. "As the matter stands, we're licked. It's partly our own fault—but it's too late to think of that. Bulkeley isn't goin' to crow over us at rowin' as at everything else so long as there's a shot in the locker. Are you game to help me dish them for the race?"



As footsteps approached the study, Lovell heard the voice of Cecil Knowles. Almost before he knew what he was doing, the Classical junior had plunged out of sight under the bed.

"But—but how? What——"

"I don't see why we should stand on ceremony with them," said Knowles. "We're up against Bulkeley and Neville and that lot all along the line. I've got a key to the boat-house."

"What's the good of that?" muttered Frampton.

"It wouldn't occur to Bulkeley that anybody might tamper with his craft," said Knowles, with a curl of

the lip. "He's too jolly unsuspicious for that. But such things have been done."

"Good heavens, Knowles! If it came out—"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Do you think I'd let it? They won't find anything wrong with the boat when they turn it out to-morrow. That will dawn on them half through the race."

"It's bound to come out later that the boat's damaged."

"Who's to hint that we know anything about it? Nobody knows I have a key to the boat-house; I'm not supposed to have one. Bulkeley has a key, as captain of the boats."

Frampton laughed slightly.

"Bulkeley couldn't be suspected of damagin' his own boat," he said.

"I don't care what they suspect—but they can't suspect us."

"I don't see how they could. But—but—"

"I've mapped it all out," said Knowles, almost in a whisper. "I've got a drill—"

"Knowles!"

"Nothin' will show—only when they're fairly goin' will it gradually begin to tell. Just about enough to give us a sportin' chance."

"I—I say, Knowles, it's an awfully rotten trick!" muttered Frampton, whose face had become quite pale.

"Does that mean that you funk it?" sneered Knowles.

"N-no! But I—I don't like the idea. I—I'll back you up if you're determined on it. I'd like to see those cads down, of course."

"I'm determined on it. I'd rather risk bein' sacked from Rookwood than let them pull it off!" said Knowles bitterly. "I want you to hold the light for me, that's all. We slip out at midnight and get down to the boat-house. The boat-keeper will be snoring in bed; not a soul will

be awake anywhere. Easy as fallin' off a form! It won't take us a quarter of an hour."

"It's risky—"

"Rot!"

"Well, I'm your man! But—" Frampton slipped from the table. "Don't let's say any more; I've heard enough. If anybody should hear us—"

"Who could hear us in this study, you nervous ass?"

"Enough said, anyhow. It's a go!" said Frampton. "Let's get out. We don't want fellows to think we're confabbing together; there'll be talk enough after the boat-race—"

"It's all right," said Knowles. He followed Frampton from the study.

The room was left vacant—save for the Fourth-Former under the bed in the alcove.

For some minutes after the two Modern seniors had gone, Lovell lay motionless in his hiding-place, his brain almost in a whirl. But he realised at last that now was his chance of escape, and he crawled out from under the bed.

It was deep dusk in the quadrangle. Lovell opened the window cautiously and dropped out. He did not care to take the risk of being seen to leave Knowles' study.

Two minutes later Arthur Edward Lovell dashed into the end study in the School House, pale and breathless. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome were there, in excited discussion of the boxing-match with the Modern juniors, just ended. That discussion ceased suddenly as the chums of the Fourth caught sight of Lovell's face.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Lovell sank into a chair.

"The rotters!" he gasped.

"What—"

"The scoundrels!"

"Who—which—"

"I'll stop them, though," gasped Lovell. "I know all about it. I'll jolly well give Bulkeley the tip!"

"What the merry dickens—"

"Drilling holes in the Classical boat!"

"Wha-a-a-t!"

"Knowles—Frampton"—Lovell grew incoherent—"midnight—sneaks—rotters—midnight—Knowles—drilling holes—boat-house! Sneaks! Rotters! Cads! Foul play! Rotters—yaroooooh!" Lovell wound up as Jimmy Silver caught him by the shoulder and shook him forcibly.

"Now explain what you're babbling about!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Leggo! I tell you I'll stop them and—"

"Explain, you ass!" howled Newcome.

And Lovell, recalling himself at last, explained. The Co. listened in horrified amazement.

"The awful rotters!" gasped Raby.

"I'll show 'em up," panted Lovell. "I'll make Rookwood ring with it! I'll make Knowles ashamed to show his face in the quad. I'll—"

"Keep your head, old fellow," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You won't."

"I will! I—" Lovell spluttered. "I'm going to Bulkeley. I—"

"Easy does it. Listen to your Uncle James," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "You won't, old chap. Bulkeley wouldn't believe you, and Knowles would deny every word. What proof have you got?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Lovell. That was a new view to the rather headstrong Arthur Edward.

"Besides," said Jimmy, "we don't want a scandal in the school. Only those two cads are in this; the other Modern rowing men are all right. We don't want to disgrace a Rookwood House because of two sneaking rotters. The rest of Knowles' crew

would lynch him if they knew he was plotting to win the boat-race by foul play."

"That's so," said Raby.

"But," spluttered Lovell—"but, you ass, Jimmy, are we going to let them beat Bulkeley by dirty tricks?"

"Ass!" said Jimmy Silver politely.

"This study can deal with them. If Knowles and Frampton can sneak down to the boat-house in the middle of the night, so can four other chaps—us, for instance."

"Oh!" said Lovell.

"Knowles won't get at the Classical skiff, even if he has a key to the boat-house," said Jimmy Silver. "Leave it to your Uncle James."

"But—"

"Old man, your greatest fault is that you keep on butting like a billy-goat," said Jimmy Silver. "Not a word outside this study, I tell you."

"So long as we stop the rotters," said Lovell.

"That's the game."

And—in the deepest secrecy—the Fistical Four discussed the matter in the end study, and laid their plans. Over in Manders' House Knowles of the Sixth was feeling cheery and confident—so confident that his men, who had their own private doubts about the race, felt quite bucked and encouraged, little dreaming upon what grounds Knowles based his confidence of success.

But certainly Knowles would not have felt so confident had he known of the intentions of Uncle James of Rookwood and his faithful followers. Fortunately, Knowles did not know.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER TWICE BEATEN!

MIDNIGHT! There was a glimmer of starlight on the river as it rippled and murmured past the Rookwood raft. Dark and silent, locked for the night,

lay the boat-house. Not a glimmer of light shone from the boat-keeper's cottage near at hand. Two dark forms came stealing down from the direction of the school as midnight sounded from the clock-tower of Rookwood. Both of them were muffled up in overcoats, with caps pulled down low over their brows. They lurked in the shadow of the boat-house, one of them trembling slightly, the other cool, determined, with a cynical grin on his thin, hard face.

"Safe as houses!" whispered the latter. "Keep your pecker up."

"I'm all right!" muttered Frampton sullenly.

"You've got the electric torch?"

"In my pocket."

"Good."

Knowles fumbled for the key and drew it out. He inserted it in the lock of the boat-house door.

Frampton stood close to him, casting fearful glances into the deep shadows. Certainly the coast seemed clear enough; but the less determined of the two plotters was tormented by a guilty conscience. As was said of old, "the thief doth fear each bush an officer!" Frampton caught Knowles' sleeve suddenly;

"Hold on!" he breathed. "I—I heard—"

"Nothing."

"I—I think I heard—"

"You coward!" hissed Knowles, startled himself by his comrade's fears. "Pull yourself together! We—"

Knowles broke off suddenly. There was a sudden rush of footsteps, and four shadowy figures hurtled out of the gloom.

The attack was so sudden, so utterly unexpected, that the two rascals were taken completely by surprise. Frampton went whirling over from a violent shove, and

Knowles was grasped and dragged down.

Frampton sprang to his feet, and without even a glance to see who the attackers might be, he ran. The fear of exposure was too strong for him. Heedless of his comrade in the grasp of the mysterious assailants, Frampton fled at top speed and vanished into the night.

Knowles was not so lucky.

He was on the ground in an iron grasp, and a knee was planted in the small of his back, pinning him down helplessly.

He fairly squirmed with terror and apprehension. That his dastardly scheme was discovered was evident, and his brain almost swam at the thought of exposure to the scorn of the whole school—with expulsion from Rookwood to follow as a matter of course. Somehow Bulkeley had found out his plot—that was his thought. At that terrible moment Knowles almost fainted from sheer horror and dread.

But he quickly realised that he was in the hands of juniors. There was a faint chuckle above him, and the knee ground hard into his back. Then a can was up-ended over the back of his head, and there was a strong smell of paint.

Knowles gasped and spluttered.

Thick green paint flooded his head and his neck and his ears and his hair. His cap was jerked off, and the paint-can was jammed down over his head in the place of it, fairly bonneting him.

The key he had left in the lock was jerked out and flung into the river, splashing out into the middle of the stream.

Then, as suddenly as they had appeared, his assailants vanished. Knowles was left sprawling and clutching frantically at the paint-can on his head, from which paint



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was still exuding in horrid streams. He sat up, dazed, dizzy, smothered, blinking, the unhappiest plotter in the wide world.

Four shadowy forms vanished in the distance.

Not till they were close to the School House again did Jimmy Silver & Co. venture even to chortle. Then they chortled gleefully.

"Our win!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Knowles!" moaned Lovell. "How long will it take him to get that paint off his napper? I fancy he will be looking rather green to-morrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy he will chuck it up, now!" chuckled Raby.

"He's got to!" grinned Jimmy. "I pitched his key into the river. He can't get into the boat-house now, unless he does it with an axe.

But I fancy Knowles is thinking just now chiefly of a wash!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four climbed over the leads to the box-room window—five minutes more and they were back in bed in the dormitory.

Meanwhile, Cecil Knowles was busy. He was scraping off paint. He scraped and scraped till he felt that he could venture to get back to Rookwood without leaving a green trail behind him. Under the daubs of paint his face was white and furious when he crawled into his study again.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were foremost in the crowd the following day, prepared to make the welkin ring for a Classical victory. When the rival boats took up their stations it was generally remarked that Knowles looked pale and worn. His adventures of the night had told upon him.

But there was bitter determination

in his looks. His foul play had been defeated, but a faint hope still lingered of winning by fair play.

"They're off!" roared Lovell at last.

"Put it on, *Classicals!*"

"Play up, *Moderna!*"

Jimmy Silver & Co. led the rush along the towing-path after the racing skiffs. From the Rookwood raft to Coombe Bridge there was one continuous roar. Tommy Dodd & Co. yelled encouragement to the Modern crew, but their yells were almost drowned by the enthusiastic roar of the *Classicals*.

The *Classical* boat led, but Knowles & Co., with a desperate spurt, passed them, and then the *Moderna* roared gleefully. But it was soon seen that Knowles & Co. had shot their bolt. The *Classical* skiff drew ahead again—half a length, a whole length, two lengths—and then the *Classical* crowd on the towing-path and the bridge went nearly insane. Caps were hurled in the air, with a reckless disregard to what became of them afterwards, fellows thumped one another on the back with mighty thumps, and there was a roar that might have made Stentor himself stop his ears.

"*Classics* win! Good old Bulkeley!"

Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!"

"Three lengths!" yelled Lovell.

"Hurrah!"

The *Moderna* crew held on gamely, but the game was up. The *Classical* skiff shot away, and led by four lengths at the finish. The river rang with cheers for the winning crew. But in the privacy of their own quarters Jimmy Silver & Co., while giving Bulkeley's eight due credit for their achievement, agreed nem. con. that the end study had done a very great deal towards winning the Rookwood boat-race.

THE END



GREYFRIARS RHYMES

HARRY WHARTON

(captain of the Remove and leader of the Famous Five)

THE praise of Wharton I extol,
The ever-famous leader,
Whose grit and courage thrill the soul
Of every "H.A." reader;
Who made his Form a fighting force,
And worked some wondrous "wheezes";
Upon whose frank and fearless course
Adventure often seizes.

When Harry came to Greyfriars School
He made a bad impression;
Like Saul of old, he "played the fool,"
And paid for each transgression.
Although by Wharton's timely aid
A boy was saved from drowning,
He checked the friendly offers made,
And could not keep from frowning.

But now the past is blotted out,
His character is sounder—
A ripping sportsman, splendid scout,
And jolly good "all-rounder"!
To say his patience never fails
Would be absurd and silly;
Such models only dwell in tales
Of "perfect little Willie."

The person is amiss, I fear,
Who tenderly supposes
That Harry Wharton's school career
Is like a bed of roses.
Black sheep abide in every fold,
And this is no exception;
The Bounder figures, as of old,
In many a base conception.

On one occasion Smith excelled
In cunning (woe betide him!)
Through him poor Harry was expelled,
And several more beside him.
Bob caused the bitter to be bit
(He's cuter than Alonso);
And Smith showed no desire to sit—
The doctor laid it on so!

Since Smithy's vain attempt to score
His manner has been quiet;
No doubt when things are straight once more
He will again run riot.
But Harry Wharton's glorious fame,
He never will diminish;
For those who always play the game
Are victors at the finish.

May Wharton's great and good renown
Be present with us ever!
The friend of fellows who are "down,"
Courageous, strong, and clever.
Who by his just and manly rule
Will win the admiration
Of British boys in shop and school
For many a generation!