

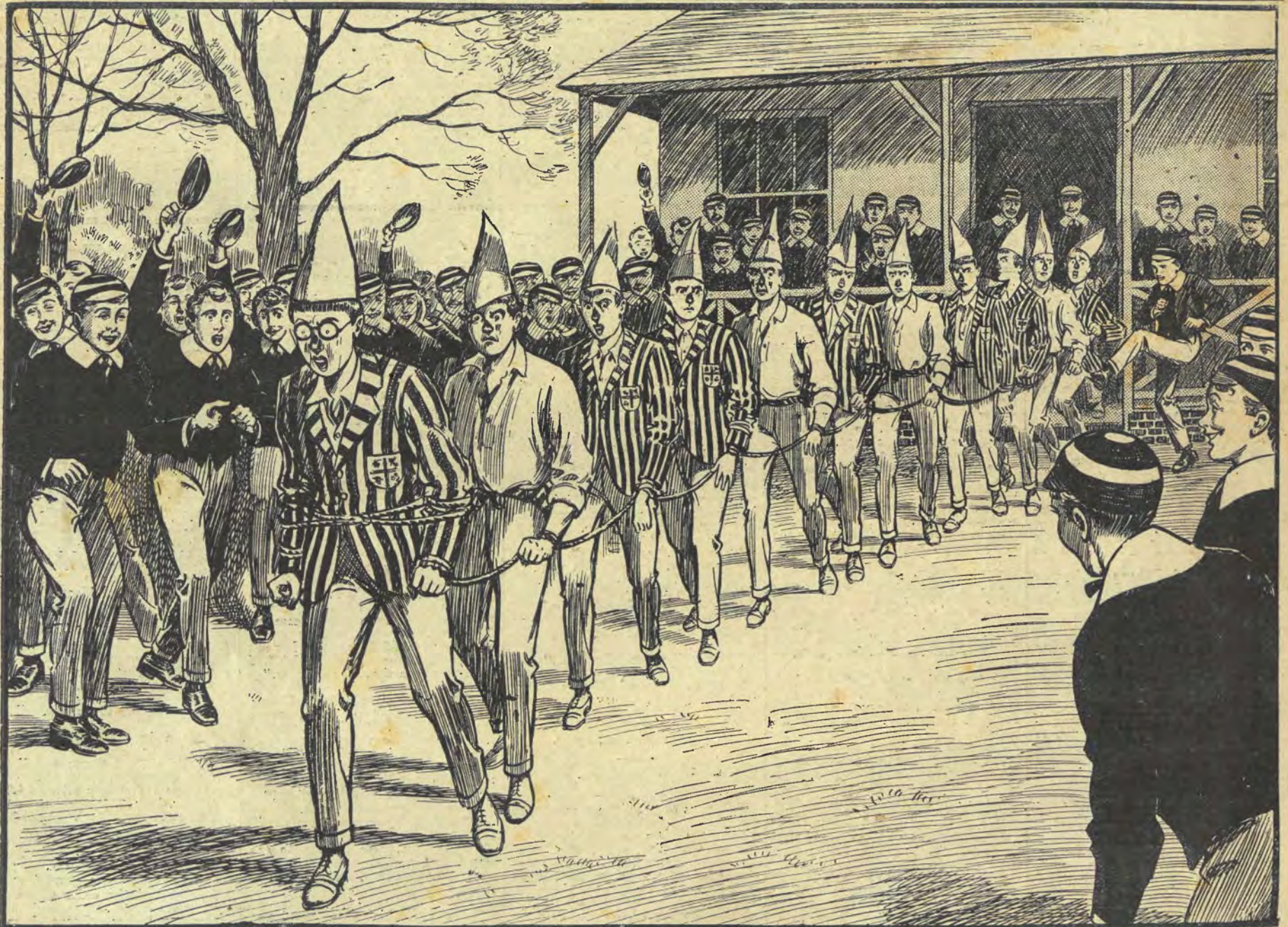
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The BOYS' FRIEND Id.

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending April 17th, 1915.



"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat!" yelled the Greyfriars juniors, as the miserable procession wriggled on like a huge centipede out of the pavilion. The Slackers of Rookwood almost wept with wrath and shame!

THE SLACKERS OF ROOKWOOD!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale of
JIMMY SILVER & CO. By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Jimmy Silver Means Business.
"If yon't do!"
Jimmy Silver brought his fist down on the table in the end study, with a bang that made the table jump, and made his study-mates jump, too.
Jimmy Silver had been thinking, with wrinkled brows and a glint in his eyes. That bang upon the table was

the outcome of his reflections—apparently of an exasperating nature. But it was certainly an unfortunate moment for that demonstration, even though Jimmy Silver, like the prophet of old, did well to be angry.
For Raby was pouring out the tea. The jump Raby gave as the table jumped naturally spoilt his aim with the teapot.

There was a ferocious yell from Lovell as the hot tea came over his knees.
"Look out, fathead!"
The startled Raby jerked his arm back to the accompaniment of a wild war-cry from Newcome, who caught the teapot with his chest.
"Oh, you idiot!"
"My hat!" gasped Raby, quite

flabbergasted. "Mum-my hat! I
"Stop pouring out the tea!" shrieked Newcome. "Do you want to drown the study?"
The tea was still streaming from the pot, fortunately into the sugar-basin now. Raby righted it at last.
Lovell mopped his knees, and gave Raby looks that ought to have felled him on the study carpet. Newcome mopped his waistcoat, and said things.
"Twasn't my fault!" said Raby. "How could I help it? When a silly idiot bangs a silly table with his silly fist just when I'm pouring out the silly tea—"
"Oh, you ass!"
"Oh, you fathead! I'm scalded!"
"Look at my bags!"
"Look at my waistcoat!"
"Mop the rest of the tea over him!" howled Lovell.
"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Raby, in alarm. "Mop it over Silver! It

was his fault! The silly jabber-wock made me jump—"
"So he did," said Lovell, "and he made us jump, too! Now I'll make him jump!"
Jimmy Silver did jump as the teapot swung round towards him. He jumped up in time to escape the stream, fortunately. But Lovell was not to be denied. His knees were soaked with hot tea, and he was wrathful. And he pursued Jimmy Silver ferociously round the study, teapot in hand.
"Hold on!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Don't play the goat! Keep that teapot away, you burbler! Gerroust of the way, Raby! Stop, you ass!"
"Stop him!" yelled Lovell, chasing round the table.
"Oh, my hat!"
Raby and Newcome grinned, and
(Continued on the next page.)

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THE SLACKERS OF ROOKWOOD!

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

(Continued from the cover page.)

collared Jimmy Silver. Lovell came up panting with the teapot.

"Now then, where will you have it?"

"Pax!"

"Blow pax! Look at my bags!"

"Look at my waistcoat!"

"Yaroo!" roared Jimmy Silver, as the tea streamed over his trousers.

"Stoppit, you dangerous lunatic! It's hot! Yowowp!"

"Now, his waistcoat!" grinned Newcome. "Fair play all round!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaro-o-o-op! Will you stoppit?"

"Yes—the pot's empty!" said Lovell.

"Next time you can moderate your transports when a dumy chump is pouring out the tea!"

"Oh, you asses!" groaned Jimmy Silver, as he mopped away the warm fluid with his handkerchief, which was soon a stained and limp rag.

"You cuckoo! I've been thinking it out—"

"Thinking what out, fathead?"

"About the Greyfriars match."

"Well, you can think it out next time without banging the table," said Lovell.

"All the tea's wasted now, and there isn't any more in the cupboard. That was the last lot."

"Serve you jolly well right for wasting it!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Look here, I suppose you fellows agree that something's got to be done?"

"Yes; we shall have to borrow some tea from Hooker, I suppose."

"Blow the tea!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "I'm thinking of the cricket match!"

"Blow the cricket match!" retorted Lovell. "I'm thinking of the tea!"

Jimmy Silver gave a snort of wrath.

"You silly ass—"

"You burbling cuckoo!"

And, with that exchange of compliments, Lovell left the end study, to borrow a new supply of tea from Hooker of the Fourth.

Jimmy Silver sat down again with a growl. Jimmy had been giving that important subject a lot of hard thinking, and the lack of enthusiasm on the part of his study-mates exasperated him.

It really was an important matter. Every fellow in the Fourth agreed that Smythe of the Shell was about the "rottenest" junior cricket captain that Rookwood could possibly have.

Smythe of the Shell was perfectly indifferent to their opinion on the subject. He went on his way loftily, and made no sign, like Jove of old on high Olympus.

The only thing that could possibly worry Smythe was a new election and a majority against him in the votes of the junior sports club.

And that couldn't happen. For the junior club was almost equally divided between the juniors of the Modern and the Classical sides at Rookwood. And Moderns and Classicals could not agree upon a candidate.

Smythe was a Classical, but then Smythe was in the Shell. The Shell stood upon their dignity as "Middle School," and not a Shell fellow would have voted for a candidate from the Fourth Form. It happened that there were more Classicals than Moderns in the Shell. So Smythe was a safe Shell candidate.

The Fourth Form was more numerous, and could have beaten the Shell easily in an election, if they could have come to an agreement. But no Classical would vote for the

Modern man, and no Modern would vote for the Classical man.

Indeed, at the last election all the Classical Fourth had voted for Smythe to avert the fearful danger of having a Modern junior skipper.

Anything was better than that, from a Classical point of view—the rivalry between the two sides at Rookwood being very keen, especially in the lower Forms.

Jimmy Silver had averted that danger—they had a Classical skipper. But he was a first-class rotter, as the juniors elegantly expressed it, and under his guidance the junior eleven was going to "pot."

Hardly a Modern chap was put into the team, which was a very sore point with Tommy Dodd & Co., the heroes of the Modern side.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. might have pardoned that—they were very much down on the Moderns. But hardly a Classical who could play was put in, and that was the rub. Smythe of the Shell exercised his powers as a skipper to the full, so far as the selection of the team went. And he seemed to regard the making up of a team as a sort of family arrangement. His friends in the Shell filled most of the places. If he took players from the Fourth, they were usually slackers like Townsend and Topham.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had sworn a solemn swear that the cricket season shouldn't be "mucked up" as the footer had been.

But without coming to an agreement with their old rivals of the Modern side, there was no giving Smythe a fall. And all attempts at a "rapprochement" with the Moderns had ended in free fights, so far.

Such was the state of affairs which gave Jimmy Silver food for thought, and caused him to bang the table in the end study with such disastrous results.

Jimmy Silver sat with a gloomy brow. He felt that he was not getting the proper amount of support from the Co. Lovell came back into the study with a fresh supply of tea, borrowed from Hooker, and Jimmy looked at him with a glum eye.

Lovell did not seem to mind. He made the tea, and cheerfully asked Jimmy Silver if he would have some.

"Oh, pour it out!" said Silver misanthropically. "There's nothing to think of in this study except guzzling, I see. It doesn't matter if Greyfriars lick us! We're used to being licked, ain't we? Didn't they go away cracking their ribs over the last footer match? I thought that chap Cherry would have a fit when he got the pass that idiot Smythe intended for that other idiot Tracy. Let's have tea! Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we'll be licked!"

"Well, you are a cheery soul!" said Lovell. "Got any more nice consoling jaw like that? Reel it off, and don't mind us!"

"Something ought to be done!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"I suppose we can't lynch Smythe?"

"I'd like to!" said Jimmy Silver savagely. "The ass wouldn't be so bad if he knew how to make up a team. Tain't that I want to play myself—though I do want to, as a matter of fact! I'd forgive him if he'd put that Modern worm Dodd in. Dodd can play. But what's the good of a set of dummies like Smythe and Howard and Tracy and Townsend and the rest going over to play Greyfriars?"

"Not much good," agreed Raby. "But they're going, and we can't help it. Smythe's skipper, and we elected him."

"It's all the fault of those Modern cads," said Newcome. "If they'd vote for one of us we'd soon shift Smythe out."

"But they won't, the worms." "Well, we'll get up a game among ourselves while they're gone," said Lovell. "We'll play cricket while they're playing the giddy ox."

"We're not the junior eleven; it don't count. Smythe has got to be prevented from making a giddy ass of himself."

"Can't be done. He was born, not made," said Lovell. "Asinus nascitur, non fit," added Lovell brilliantly—a little joke quite worthy of a study on the Classical side, where they patronised Latin."

Jimmy Silver declined to grin. He did not feel like grinning. "Something's going to be done," he said determinedly.

"What?" asked the Co. in chorus. "Blessed if I know," grunted Silver.

"Same here! Have some of this cake, and stop growling." Jimmy Silver had some of the cake, but he did not stop growling. It was a little too thick for a topping cricketer like Jimmy Silver to be left at Rookwood while a set of "burlbers" went over to Greyfriars to play the giddy ox.

Jimmy Silver did a big think while he demolished the cake, and suddenly he uttered an exclamation.

"I've got it!"

"The cake?" asked Lovell. "I can see you have. Pass it this way!"

"Fathead! Come along!"

"Whittier, O King?"

"We're going to see Smythe."

"Old Bulkeley came down on us last time we ragged him," said Raby doubtfully.

"This isn't a rag. Come on!"

"Oh, all right!"

The Co. followed Jimmy Silver from the study. They were quite willing to back up their chum, even if it led to a "rag" and having old Bulkeley down on them again.

The 2nd Chapter.

A Warning to Adolphus.

Adolphus Smythe, the ornament of the Shell and junior captain of Rookwood, reposed in an armchair in his elegantly-furnished study. He had a cigarette between his lips. That was one of his little ways. It was a most expensive gold-tipped cigarette. Adolphus was an expensive youth.

Three juniors of the Fourth were in the doorway, talking to Smythe, as the Classical four came along the passage. They were Tommy Dodd and Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook of the Modern side. They were all talking at once, and their voices were not gentle nor were their remarks complimentary. Adolphus surveyed them with calm disdain as he blew out little clouds of smoke. Adolphus looked more Olympian than ever at that moment.

"So they're playing the giddy ox, as usual!" Tommy Dodd was saying.

"It's making a howling ass of yourself you're after," said Doyle.

"You want to give the Greyfriars fellows another cackle," said Cook.

Adolphus Smythe raised a manicured hand to remove the cigarette from his lips to speak.

"Shut the door after you!" was his remark.

"Let's have him out of that chair and scrag him!" said Cook.

"There's a prefect down the passage," growled Tommy Dodd.

"Run away and play, dear boys!" said Smythe calmly. "Your voices get on my nerves a bit. I can't stand

you Modern fellows, you're so raucous."

"You've really settled about the team?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"Yaas."

"Not a Modern fellow in it!" howled Doyle.

Smythe shook his head.

"I want cricketers," he explained. "Cricketers! There isn't one of your silly gang who can play cricket."

"By gad, these Modern kids are noisy!" said Smythe. "How's a fellow to put up with these young hooligans. Tracy, old man?"

Tracy shook his head.

"Don't ask me," he replied.

"Why don't they go away and study stinks or mug up German? That's what Modern kids are born for. I wonder what they think they know about cricket?"

Tommy Dodd & Co. shook their fists at the placid Smythe, and debated whether they should rag him and chance the prefect. The Fistical Four arrived in the doorway, and Tommy Dodd glared at them. But the rivals of Rookwood met without a rag for once.

"Don't go," said Jimmy Silver. "I've come here to talk to that tailor's dummy, and you Modern kids can't back me up."

"I've been talking to him," growled Tommy Dodd. "He hasn't the sense of a bunny rabbit. He's going to let Rookwood down again. All because you Classical worms won't vote for a decent candidate."

"All because you Modern idiots won't, you mean," said Lovell hotly.

"Why, you ass—"

"Why, you fathead—"

"Peace, my infants!" said Jimmy Silver. "Smythe is our game now. I'm going to try to bring the sublime Smythe to reason."

"By gad," said Adolphus, lighting a fresh cigarette, "it's a regular deputation! Any more fags coming here to jaw?"

"I'm going to talk to you like a Dutch uncle," said Jimmy Silver. "You've made up a rotten team for Greyfriars. You've put in every slacker you could dig up, and left out every fellow who can play. Well, I want you to make some changes."

Smythe yawned.

"I want you," continued Jimmy Silver calmly, "to make seven changes at least. Put in us four and these three Modern chaps."

"We'd be satisfied with that," said Tommy Dodd. "We're willing to be reasonable."

"Well, do you agree, Smythe?"

"Hardly!" yawned Smythe.

"You're going on your own way?"

"Yaas."

"Well, then, now I come to the second point. Do you think that your team can beat Greyfriars Remove?"

"Yaas."

"You don't think they'll beat you with an innings to spare?"

"Very improbable, dear boy."

"It's a dead cert," growled Tommy Dodd. "If Greyfriars bat first they'll declare, and you'll have to follow on your innings, and they'll beat you with runs to spare and without batting again."

"What a pleasant prospect," said Smythe pleasantly.

"Yes, you care a fat lot if Rookwood is let down all through the season," growled Lovell savagely.

"By gad!"

"Now I'm coming to the point," said Jimmy Silver.

"Time you did, dear boy," agreed Smythe.

"We're going over to Greyfriars to see the match."

Smythe shook his head.

"Can't have a lot of fags tagging along after the team," he said decidedly.

"We're coming, all the same."

"You jolly well won't come in the car."

"We shall bike it."

"By gad!"

"And we'll see the match and—"

"What the thunder are you driving at?" demanded Tommy Dodd angrily.

"Do you think I'm going over there to see the Greyfriars fellows cackling at our eleven?"

"Let me finish, my son. Smythe says he can beat Greyfriars Remove. I say that he'll be beaten with an innings to spare. Well, we'll watch the match. If the Greyfriars Remove win by an innings, Smythe—"

"Yaas?" drawled Smythe.

"Then we'll give you the ragging of your life."

"What!"

"And give the Greyfriars fellows something else to laugh at as well as Rookwood cricket," concluded Jimmy Silver.

"By gad!"

The Fourth-Formers burst into a chuckle. Jimmy Silver's scheme just jumped with their inclinations.

"Jolly good wheeze!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd heartily. "We're on."

"Faith, and we are intouirely!"

"Good egg!"

"You savvy, Smythe? You've picked the team, and if you win the match or give the Greyfriars team a good tussle, you're all serene; we'll cheer you no end. But if you have a licking that makes them cackle, we rag you baldheaded."

"By Jove!"

"Now will you make some changes in the team?"

"Hardly."

"Then you know what to expect."

"Thanks!"

"You idiot!"

"Would you mind shutting the door after you?"

The Fourth-Formers retired from the study. They closed the door after them with a bang. In the passage they looked at one another expressively.

"The burlber thinks we're bluffing," said Tommy Dodd.

"He'll find out to-morrow," growled Jimmy Silver. "We're going?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I'll tell Towle," said Tommy Dodd. "That'll make eight of us. Eight will be enough to handle eleven slackers like that crew."

"More than enough," said Jimmy Silver. "All of you get your bikes out after dinner to-morrow. It's a long ride—"

"It's a long, long way to Greyfriars!" sang Newcome.

"But we'll get there; and if they put up their usual funny game, we'll make 'em look funny afterwards!"

"Hear, hear!"

And so it was settled.

The 3rd Chapter.

Two Parties for Greyfriars.

Cricket was the order of the day now at Rookwood.

Rookwood has always been a cricketing school, and the Rookwood First Eleven was famous for its exploits on the playing-fields. Bulkeley, the captain of the school, was getting together a first eleven that was to do wonders that season—if Bulkeley could bring it about. And there was excellent material in the Lower Forms for a first-rate junior eleven.

It was only owing to the unfortunate state of affairs between Moderns and Classicals that the Rookwood juniors had no opportunity of distinguishing themselves in emulation of the seniors.

Smythe & Co. were satisfied with themselves, but nobody was satisfied with Smythe & Co. They did not seem to mind that. They bore their many defeats quite cheerfully. Indeed, Adolphus had been heard to declare that no game was worth a chap's while if he had to fag over it.

Fagging over anything certainly wasn't in Adolphus's line at all. When he was got up for cricket, he was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever to look at. It was quite a

sight to behold Adolphus lounging down to the wicket, elegantly drawing on his gloves. It was another sight to see him lounging away again, quite unperturbed, when he had been bowled, stumped, or caught, often without breaking his duck. But it was not a sight to be enjoyed by fellows who were keen on cricket, and jealous of their school's record in games. The day after Jimmy Silver's interview with the great Adolphus was the date of the match with Greyfriars. Very soon after dinner Smythe & Co. came out to start. A whacking great car had come round for them. Adolphus always did things in style. He generally had plenty of money, and his friends were in the same fortunate position—for the simple reason that Adolphus declined to know anybody who was hard up. It Adolphus had suggested paying for the car out of the club funds, Adolphus would probably have been scalded; but he didn't. The Giddy Goats—the name Adolphus & Co. loved to call themselves by—stood the car themselves. And they felt very proud of the big car and of themselves, as it stood snorting outside the School House, waiting for them. Half Rookwood gathered to see them off. It was a party of twelve—special friends of Adolphus, and most of them Shell fellows. Only Townsend and Topham of the Fourth were included. The Fistical Four and Tommy Dodd & Co. were there, looking ferocious. They had hoped up to the last moment that Smythe might change his mind. If he took even a few good players with him, they were willing to call it square. But Smythe had made no change. He did not take Jimmy Silver's threat at all seriously. It was a long way to Greyfriars, and such a bike ride would have killed Adolphus. He did not believe for a moment that the Fourth-Formers intended to undertake it. "So you're off?" growled Jimmy Silver. Smythe glanced at him carelessly. "Yaas," he replied. "Remember what I told you!" Smythe looked reflective. "Did you tell me anything, dear boy?" he asked. "Excuse me, I've quite forgotten. Shocking memory, by gad! What was it?" "Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Come on, Smythe," said Howard. "Don't waste time talking to fags, old chap!" "Yaas, I'm comin'." Smythe & Co. disposed themselves in the car with their cricket-bags. The chauffeur drove the big car down to the gates. "Well, they're off!" grunted Tommy Dodd. "Right off!" said Lovell. "Off their onions! Off their silly rookers!" "Get out the bikes," said Jimmy Silver. Eight juniors rushed for their bikes. They were in their Norfolks, ready for the ride. They rushed the bikes down to the gates, and mounted. On Big Side a trial match was going on between two senior elevens—Bulkeley's Classical team and Knowles's Modern eleven. At any other time the heroes of the Fourth would have been glad to watch old Bulkeley batting; but they had no time for senior matches now. The Classical four and Tommy Dodd & Co. were all sturdy fellows, and in the pink of condition. They pedalled away at a great rate on the track of the car. The big car was still in sight, and as it slackened down to let a market-cart get out of the way in the narrow lane, the cyclists almost overtook it. Smythe & Co., looking back, perceived them. There was a ripple of laughter from the fellows in the car. "By gad!" said Smythe, extracting an eyeglass from his pocket, and jamming it into his eye. "Those fags are after us!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Where are you kids going?" called out Tracy. "Greyfriars," replied Jimmy Silver. "Ha, ha, ha! You've a long way to go!" "Chauffeur!" called out Smythe. "Yes, sir." "Let her go! There are a gang of cycling bounders just behind!" "Yes, sir." The chauffeur "let her go," and the big car raced away from the cyclists. It vanished in the distance in a cloud of dust. "Steady, the Buffs!" said Jimmy Silver. "No good trying to race a

giddy motor-car! Don't pump yourselves out at the start!" "Yes, go easy with these Classical kids," remarked Tommy Dodd. "We don't want them cracking up on the road!" "Probably leave you behind fainting about half-way!" snorted Lovell. "You Classical ass—" "You Modern worm—" "Shut up!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Is this the time for ragging, you chumps? We want all our wind for riding, if we're getting to Greyfriars!" "Right-ho!" said Lovell. "But that Modern ass—" "That Classical chump—" "Dry up, you pair of burlbers! Kint on!" The rivals of Rookwood, with noble self-restraint, forbore from ragging. Jimmy Silver's remark was just—they needed all their breath for their long ride. They went on at a steady pace, without scorching, but they covered the ground pretty quickly. The motor-car was long out of sight, and they did not expect to see it again till they arrived at Greyfriars. But half-way to their destination, when they were feeling decidedly warm, a sight burst upon their vision which caused them great joy. It was the sight of a big motor-car

there's still time to make a change in your team!" "Last time of asking," said Raby. Smythe frowned. "Don't be cheeky!" was his reply. "Come on!" said Jimmy Silver. "Leave 'em to worry with their old car. We shall get there first now!" The cyclists rode on in great spirits. If they did not get to Greyfriars first, it was certain that they would not be far behind. Mile after mile slipped under the flashing wheels. The loud hoot of a motor-horn behind them drove them to the side of the road, and Smythe's big car came whooping by. Smythe & Co. smiled disdainfully at the warm and dusty cyclists as they passed, and left them choked with petrol and dust. "Never mind!" panted Jimmy Silver. "There's a giddy milestone—two miles to Courtfield; that's close to Greyfriars!" They pedalled through Courtfield at last. It was another mile on to the school, they found, and that mile certainly seemed a long one to Jimmy Silver & Co., hard riders as they were. But the gates of Greyfriars came in sight at last, and they jumped down, a warm, perspiring, and dusty crowd, but greatly satisfied with themselves.

Adolphus that he was regarded in that light. Smythe gave Harry Wharton two fingers to shake. The Greyfriars fellow bestowed a grip upon them that made Smythe yelp. "By gad!" said Smythe, gasping. "Eh?" Smythe rubbed his fingers. He was very glad that he had not given Wharton his whole hand. As a matter of fact, it was the offering of two cold fishy fingers that had earned him that iron grip. "Any of your fellows coming over?" asked Bob Cherry. "Yaas, I think there are some fags on the road, biking it," said Smythe. "They may get here. I don't know." "Biking it!" said Bob Cherry, a little surprised. Judging by what he had seen of the Rookwood fellows, he would never have supposed that any of the Rookwooders were keen enough about cricket to ride over twenty miles to see a match. "Yaas," said Smythe. "I dare say they'll crack up on the road, though." "Very likely," agreed Bob Cherry. "I suppose you're going to give us a thumping licking this time, and they're coming to see it—what?" "Yaas." "Well, it would be worth the ride."

been wide awake. Townsend woke up after the ball was on the ground, and the Greyfriars crowd smiled audibly. Smythe sent down another ball. Bob Cherry let himself get at that, and the ball soared away, and the batsmen ran. Four times they crossed the pitch before the leather was fielded and sent in. "By gad!" said Smythe. Smythe had rested in an easy attitude waiting for the ball. When it came in at last he managed to catch it with both hands. Then he strolled away to take his little run, and delivered the ball once more. It gave Greyfriars three, and brought Squiff to the batting end. There were loud shouts of ironical warning from the spectators, as Smythe grasped the ball again. "Look out, Squiff!" "Mind your eye." Squiff cut the ball away for three, and Smythe bowled to Bob Cherry again. Bob Cherry contented himself with a single that time. Then Squiff knocked away the last ball of the over for four. Harry Wharton was smiling. He had never had a good opinion of Rookwood play; but this was a little "thicker" than he had ever expected. It looked as if Bob Cherry and Squiff would not require any assistance to finish the match. However, after a few overs—which gave Greyfriars a total of forty-five—Bob Cherry obligingly gave Townsend a catch, and came out. "What the dickens did you let that duffer catch you out for?" demanded Wharton. The batsman chuckled. "Thought I'd give you a turn, old chap." Wharton laughed, and went in. Smythe varied the bowling with Howard and Tracy and Townsend. By a miracle, Squiff's wicket fell when the score was at sixty. Mark Linley went in to take his place. It was just then that eight dusty fellows in Norfolks arrived. Bob Cherry, guessing that these were the Rookwood visitors, gave them a cordial greeting as they came up to the pavilion. "Come to see us licked—what!" he asked. Jimmy Silver gave an expressive grunt. "Come to see our team play the giddy goat," he replied. "My hat! Was that worth biking twenty miles?" "Oh, it's funny!" said Lovell. "Too good to miss! I see a lot of your fellows think so. My only summer hat, look at the way Townsend's bowling! Does he take the wicket for a barn?" Mark Linley knocked the ball away. "Look out in the slips!" shrieked Jimmy Silver. Slips were not looking out. The ball glided past them and vanished. Mark Linley and Harry Wharton sauntered along the pitch, stopped for a little chat in the middle, and then went on lazily to their wickets. The crowd yelled with laughter. Jimmy Silver looked at his chums expressively. "That's what we've come to see," he said, between his teeth. "To see a Rookwood team guyed by these bounders. Simply guyed, by gum!" "It's too sickening!" said Tommy Dodd wretchedly. "The Greyfriars chaps bat well, but we could give them something to think about. But those dummies—oh, it's too rotten!" "There they go again!" It was quite an easy catch this time, and Smythe, that brilliant field, looked like getting it. But it passed his fingers and dropped. Smythe did not seem perturbed. He shrugged his shoulders, and remarked calmly: "By gad!" "Yah! Butterfingers!" yelled Jimmy Silver, exasperated. Smythe looked round calmly. "Hallo! You fags there?" he said. "Don't make a row here, dear boys! Even the Fourth are supposed to have some manners." The Fourth-Formers of Rookwood were not thinking about manners just then. They were in such a state of exasperation that they were inclined to invade the field, and "mop up" the egregious Smythe on the spot. Fortunately, they restrained their feelings. What they felt was almost too deep for words, as the picturesque innings went on. To see batsmen strolling across the pitch, while the Rookwood slackers dawdled after the ball, was too irritating. And the sublime Adolphus appeared to have not the slightest inking that he was being "guyed." It was a relief to Jimmy Silver &



Dipping the brush into the ink, Jimmy Silver painted Adolphus's nose a brilliant red, and by the time he had finished, Adolphus's aspect was really remarkable.

drawn up beside the road, with a smudgy and sulky chauffeur at work upon one of the wheels, and twelve elegantly-dressed fellows standing round and looking on. "Hooray!" cried Jimmy Silver. "Smythe's car, by gum!" "Ha, ha, ha!" The cyclists put on a spurt, and swept up in fine style. Smythe & Co. stared and blinked at them. They had never dreamed of seeing the juniors so far from home. "By gad, it's those fags!" said Smythe. The cyclists jumped down. "Breakdown—what?" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Beastly puncture, or something!" growled Tracy. "Man doesn't seem to be able to get the tyre off, or something; or he can't get it on, or something!" Tracy's knowledge of motor-cars was evidently somewhat limited. "This is what comes of swanking," remarked Tommy Dodd. "A common or garden train would have landed you there without a puncture!" "We'll expect you at Greyfriars, Smythe," said Lovell. "I'll tell you what—as we've found you,

With red and smiling faces they wheeled their dusty bikes in at the school gates.

The 4th Chapter. "Cricket!"

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Greyfriars junior team, greeted Adolphus Smythe with great politeness. Smythe was gratified to see that a goodly crowd of Greyfriars fellows was gathering about the ground to see the match. He would not, perhaps, have been so gratified if he had divined the reason that drew the Greyfriars juniors to the spot. Harry Wharton & Co. were keen cricketers, and in the Remove cricket club had been debated more than once whether they should drop the Rookwood fixture. They did not take that fixture very seriously. But Bob Cherry, a humorous youth, maintained that the Rookwood match was as good as a cinema of the most comic variety; and the other fellows agreed that to see the Rookwood slackers leather-hunting was a sight for gods, and men, and little fishes. It wasn't cricket, but it was an entertainment. But it never dawned upon the sublime

Harry Wharton gave his chum a warning glance. The egregious Smythe could never see when his leg was being pulled, but some of his team might. And come as the Rookwooders were considered as cricketers courtesy came before everything. Greyfriars won the toss, and Harry Wharton elected to bat first. He did not think that more than one innings would be needed for his side. Bob Cherry and a sunburnt youth whom his comrades called Squiff went out to open the innings. Adolphus led his merry men into the field. Round the field the crowd was thickening. They had smiling faces. They were prepared to enjoy the acrobatic performances of Smythe & Co. in search of the elusive ball. Smythe bowled the first over. He fancied himself as a bowler. He also fancied himself as a bats; and he fancied that as a fieldsman he was hard to beat. He had quite a number of fancies. But if he fancied that he could make any impression upon Bob Cherry's wicket, never had his fancy so deluded him. The batsman knocked the ball carelessly away, giving Townsend at point a pretty easy catch, if Townsend had

been wide awake. Townsend woke up after the ball was on the ground, and the Greyfriars crowd smiled audibly. Smythe sent down another ball. Bob Cherry let himself get at that, and the ball soared away, and the batsmen ran. Four times they crossed the pitch before the leather was fielded and sent in. "By gad!" said Smythe. Smythe had rested in an easy attitude waiting for the ball. When it came in at last he managed to catch it with both hands. Then he strolled away to take his little run, and delivered the ball once more. It gave Greyfriars three, and brought Squiff to the batting end. There were loud shouts of ironical warning from the spectators, as Smythe grasped the ball again. "Look out, Squiff!" "Mind your eye." Squiff cut the ball away for three, and Smythe bowled to Bob Cherry again. Bob Cherry contented himself with a single that time. Then Squiff knocked away the last ball of the over for four. Harry Wharton was smiling. He had never had a good opinion of Rookwood play; but this was a little "thicker" than he had ever expected. It looked as if Bob Cherry and Squiff would not require any assistance to finish the match. However, after a few overs—which gave Greyfriars a total of forty-five—Bob Cherry obligingly gave Townsend a catch, and came out. "What the dickens did you let that duffer catch you out for?" demanded Wharton. The batsman chuckled. "Thought I'd give you a turn, old chap." Wharton laughed, and went in. Smythe varied the bowling with Howard and Tracy and Townsend. By a miracle, Squiff's wicket fell when the score was at sixty. Mark Linley went in to take his place. It was just then that eight dusty fellows in Norfolks arrived. Bob Cherry, guessing that these were the Rookwood visitors, gave them a cordial greeting as they came up to the pavilion. "Come to see us licked—what!" he asked. Jimmy Silver gave an expressive grunt. "Come to see our team play the giddy goat," he replied. "My hat! Was that worth biking twenty miles?" "Oh, it's funny!" said Lovell. "Too good to miss! I see a lot of your fellows think so. My only summer hat, look at the way Townsend's bowling! Does he take the wicket for a barn?" Mark Linley knocked the ball away. "Look out in the slips!" shrieked Jimmy Silver. Slips were not looking out. The ball glided past them and vanished. Mark Linley and Harry Wharton sauntered along the pitch, stopped for a little chat in the middle, and then went on lazily to their wickets. The crowd yelled with laughter. Jimmy Silver looked at his chums expressively. "That's what we've come to see," he said, between his teeth. "To see a Rookwood team guyed by these bounders. Simply guyed, by gum!" "It's too sickening!" said Tommy Dodd wretchedly. "The Greyfriars chaps bat well, but we could give them something to think about. But those dummies—oh, it's too rotten!" "There they go again!" It was quite an easy catch this time, and Smythe, that brilliant field, looked like getting it. But it passed his fingers and dropped. Smythe did not seem perturbed. He shrugged his shoulders, and remarked calmly: "By gad!" "Yah! Butterfingers!" yelled Jimmy Silver, exasperated. Smythe looked round calmly. "Hallo! You fags there?" he said. "Don't make a row here, dear boys! Even the Fourth are supposed to have some manners." The Fourth-Formers of Rookwood were not thinking about manners just then. They were in such a state of exasperation that they were inclined to invade the field, and "mop up" the egregious Smythe on the spot. Fortunately, they restrained their feelings. What they felt was almost too deep for words, as the picturesque innings went on. To see batsmen strolling across the pitch, while the Rookwood slackers dawdled after the ball, was too irritating. And the sublime Adolphus appeared to have not the slightest inking that he was being "guyed." It was a relief to Jimmy Silver &

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"The Slackers of Rookwood!"

THE SLACKERS OF ROOKWOOD.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Co. when the innings ended. It was not played out. With three down for a level hundred, Harry Wharton declared. The Greyfriars bats could have stayed in all the afternoon if they had liked, but they generously decided to give their visitors a look-in, and Smythe jumped at the chance. "Only made a hundred, by gad!" said Smythe, as the field came puffing and panting off. "Expect at least that in an innings—what!" It did not matter a rap to Smythe that the Greyfriars team had made the hundred with eight wickets in hand. If he beat them, he beat them, and Wharton would be sorry that he had taken chances. It did not even occur to Adolphus that he had no more chance of beating Harry Wharton's team than the Kaiser has of beating the British Army.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. were perfectly aware of it. They knew that the Greyfriars team would not need to bat again. That hundred would never be equalled by Smythe & Co. in a couple of innings—or in half a dozen, if half a dozen had been allowed. But Smythe & Co. came off to discuss cake and ginger-beer with placid faces—only a little breathless—and looking as if they thought that they deserved well of their country.

The 5th Chapter. Licked to the Wide!

Jimmy Silver & Co., in spite of their exasperation, found the Greyfriars fellows very agreeable. They were a little sore over the guying of the Rookwooders; but they did not blame Wharton & Co. for that. They could not expect keen cricketers, as the Greyfriars fellows evidently were, to take such a team seriously. There was an interval before the Rookwood innings started—which the visitors were glad to prolong—they needed a rest. Harry Wharton & Co. were very hospitable, and the ginger-pop flowed freely. Jimmy Silver found himself chatting with Bob Cherry as if he had known him whole terms.

And he felt that he was bound to explain a little. He found Bob a sympathetic listener.

"Don't you run away with the idea that those burlbers represent Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver emphatically. "They don't! Our first eleven is a terror, I can tell you! You should see old Bulkeley's boundary hits. And Knowles is a topping bowler—I'll say that, though he's on the Modern side."

"Better than any rotten bowler you can dig up among your mouldy Classics, and chance it!" said Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy proceeded to explain the somewhat complicated politics of the Lower School at Rookwood, which had led to such an egregious duffer as Smythe of the Shell being junior captain, with the unhappy consequence that a team of howling asses went forth to represent Rookwood in the playing-fields.

"Why don't you get a better skipper, then?" asked the puzzled Bob Cherry.

"It's all the fault of those Modern cads! They won't vote for a Classical man!"

"It's all the fault of those Classical cads! They won't vote for a Modern chap!"

Those two explanations were made simultaneously by Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, and Bob chuckled. An argument seemed about to commence, which would have been more suitably conducted at Rookwood than at Greyfriars; but, fortunately, the resumption of play came just then.

Smythe and Howard went in to open the innings for Rookwood, and Harry Wharton & Co. sauntered into the field.

Smythe came to his wicket with a swanking stride that made the spectators chuckle, knowing what they had to expect.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked on morosely. They knew what to expect too.

Harry Wharton tossed the ball to a dusky youth, whom he called Inky, but whose name, Jimmy Silver learned, was Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and who was a nabob or rajah or something in a far-off Indian

land. And as soon as the dusky bowler went on to bowl, Jimmy Silver said at once: "That fellow knows something."

Jimmy Silver's keen eye had not deceived him. The dusky junior did know something. He did not seem to take much trouble about his delivery, but the ball knocked Smythe's off-stump out of the ground without giving the Rookwood captain the slightest chance.

Smythe stared down at his wrecked wicket, evidently in a state of great surprise.

"By gad!" he ejaculated.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Ha, ha! Out!"

"Yaas, it's out!" agreed Smythe. "By gad!" And he strolled elegantly off with his bat under his arm.

"What price ducks' eggs?" howled Jimmy Silver.

Smythe did not deign to reply to that question. He signed to Tracy to go on.

"Oh, don't talk about ducks' eggs," said Tommy Dodd. "It's going to be a pair of spectacles for Smythe! Wait till he bats again!"

"There goes Tracy!"

Tracy was staring at his wicket. The middle stump had gone, and the wicket looked as if a dentist had visited it. Tracy had the grace to look glum as he came off. His armour of self-satisfaction was not quite so thick as Adolphus's.

Townsend went in next, and the third ball of the over laid him low. After that, it was quite a procession. Hurree Jamset Ram

Singh was not satisfied with the hat-trick. He was evidently a deadly bowler, and he was putting in all he knew, whether for the sake of putting the batsmen out of their misery, or for a lark, Jimmy Silver could not guess. All kinds of bowling came with equal ease to him, and never a ball seemed quite like its predecessor. Townsend warned Topham to look out for a fast ball like a shell from a particularly powerful big gun. But it was a slow that knocked Topham's wicket to pieces. Topham told Chesney to watch for that slow, with a weird twist on it, pitching to the off; but the ball pitched to leg and brought Chesney to grief.

"Oh, what a giddy entertainment!" groaned Jimmy Silver, as the sixth wicket went down to the sixth ball.

It was the double hat-trick, and a roar of cheering from the crowd greeted the performance. It was good work, even against such poor batsmen as the Rookwooders. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned, and went into the field, and Harry Wharton took the ball. Rookwood were six down for nil.

"Looks rather thick," Smythe murmured to Tracy. Even Smythe was a little staggered. "Blessed if we don't scratch this fixture, old man. They don't play cricket here—they work at it."

"It is rather thick," agreed Tracy. "Look at those fags—they're boiling."

"Oh, blow the fags!" said Smythe carelessly. "They'd have done worse."

How the fags could have done worse than lose their wickets for no runs, the great Adolphus did not trouble to explain.

Matters looked up a little for Rookwood in the second over. Harry Wharton, either from good-nature or carelessness, gave them a run for their money. Howard almost chirped when he took a two. Selwyn chuckled when three came to him.

Nugent of Greyfriars bowled the third over. Then Howard went back to the pavilion, his joys suddenly cut short. Another and another bat followed him.

"For mercy's sake, buck up a bit," Smythe whispered, as the last man went in.

Last man in tried to buck up, with the result that Bob Cherry caught him out at point.

"All out for five!" said Jimmy Silver, with a gasp. "All—all—all—out—out—out for five! Carry me away and bury me, somebody."

Even Adolphus Smythe looked a little sick at the result. He was more determined than ever, mentally, to scratch Greyfriars off the Rookwood playing list. He wasn't going to work at cricket. Not if he knew it. Selwyn was the only fellow who looked pleased. Selwyn was not out, for the simple reason that the innings being at an end, he could not be bowled, stumped, or caught. But Selwyn chose to attribute his survival at the finish to his superior play.

"Tea had been arranged after the Rookwood innings. But that innings had been so remarkably short, that it was decided to go on before tea. Smythe was called upon to follow his innings, which he did in somewhat low spirits.

"Better let me open the innings with you," said Selwyn; "and, for goodness' sake back me up this time, some of you."

But Selwyn's cheery assumption of superiority was short-lived. For he got the first ball of the over, and it knocked his middle stump out of the ground.

Selwyn came back to the pavilion talking about rotten flukes. He was greeted with remarks about rotten batsmen.

"How long is this blessed funeral going to last?" grumbled Raby.

Jimmy Silver snorted with disgust. "Not long," he said. "There's that blessed nigger going to bowl again."

"I knew it would be rotten," said Tommy Dodd. "But I didn't dream it would be quite so rotten as this! There isn't one of the silly idiots who can play for nuts."

"Not one, by gum!" "The Greyfriars chaps will simply burst their ribs soon," said Newcome. "They're trying not to laugh. I thought that black boulder was going to have a fit."

"There's Smythe's duck's egg," Adolphus Smythe ambled off the field. He had secured a duck's egg in his second innings, making the dreaded "pair of spectacles." He was quite silent for a long time, apparently ruminating on the uncertainty of the things of this world, especially in cricket.

Man after man ambled in, and ambled out again. The Greyfriars crowd did not wish to be rude, but they could not restrain their merriment; it was more than flesh could stand. Shouts of laughter followed the fall of every wicket.

The second innings lasted longer than the first. But it did not last very long. It drew to a rapid and disastrous close.

Jimmy Silver's eyes gleamed when last man went in.

"The finish now," he said. "You fellows are ready?"

"Ready, O king!" said Raby.

"Those silly duffers have made us look fools to all Greyfriars. We're going to make them look the same, and a little more so!"

"Hear, hear!"

The Rookwood chums were quite determined upon that. They had given Adolphus Smythe the fair warning; that could not be denied. Adolphus had not chosen to take the warning, or to act upon it, and Adolphus had to take the consequences. Jimmy Silver intended to show Smythe & Co. that they could not cover Rookwood with ridicule with impunity, and he meant to show the Greyfriars fellows just how much the ineffable Smythe was appreciated by his own school. At least, they would not allow Greyfriars to believe that all Rookwood was a home for idiots. And they waited grimly for the finish.

It was not long in coming. The last slacker was clean-bowled, and Rookwood were all down for nine.

"Five and nine, that's fourteen," said Jimmy Silver. "Fourteen for the two innings! Fourteen, my sons! Fourteen! Greyfriars have won by an innings and eighty-six runs!"

"Oh, don't!" said Lovell. "It's a bad dream!"

"And look at Smythe!" breathed Tommy Dodd. "Only look at him!"

Smythe seemed to have recovered his self-satisfaction. After all, what was a blessed game of cricket, that a chap should worry about it?

"By gad," said Smythe, "you seem to have licked us rather badly, Wharton!"

"Rather badly!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Only rather, my infants. Not very!"

"It's an uncertain game," said Wharton blandly.

Smythe nodded assent.

"Yaas. Astonishin' number of flukes occur in a game like this—astonishin'. Some of your bowling was good though—some of it."

"Only some of it?" murmured Bob Cherry, almost overcome.

"And I noticed some of your batting," said Smythe. "You've got a couple of good bats."

"Only a couple!" grinned Harry Wharton.

"A couple quite good," said Smythe, "and some of the bowlin' was good; you've got a couple of bowlers that I'd be willing to play in my team, by gad!"

And Smythe sauntered into his dressing-room with his team, not looking in the slightest degree downhearted. He left the Greyfriars cricketers almost in convulsions.

The 6th Chapter. Things of Beauty.

Smythe & Co. had been about a couple of minutes in the dressing-room, when the door was opened, and eight juniors swarmed in. Jimmy Silver & Co. had called on business.

Smythe looked round with a frown. "Clear off, you fags!" he said. "Is tea ready?"

"No, tea isn't quite ready," said Jimmy Silver. "But we're ready. We've had some buns, and we're not stopping to tea, thanks!"

"Well, it's time you got off, if you're not going to be late for calling-over," said Tracy. "If the match had lasted as long as we expected, we wouldn't have got home by calling-over."

"It lasted as long as we expected," said Tommy Dodd.

Smythe waved his hand to the door.

"None of your cheek! Get out! What are you up to, Silver, you cheeky young sweep? What are you locking that door for?"

Jimmy Silver turned the key.

"That's to prevent interruptions," he said agreeably.

"Look here—"

"You remember my warning, Smythe?" said Silver, in a tone of deadly politeness. "We gave you the straight tip. If you were beaten by an innings, you remember—"

"I don't want to argue with you fags!" said Adolphus loftily. "Un-

lock that door and get out, or you'll be thrown!"

"Get on with the throwing, bedad!" chuckled Doyle.

"If you've come here to make a row—"

"Bless you, we haven't," said Jimmy Silver. "There won't be any row unless you make it. We're simply going to rag you!"

"What!"

"You've made us look fools, and made Rookwood look like a home for idiots. Now we're going to make you look like suitable inmates for a home for idiots! See?"

"Why, you—"

"Perhaps you'll know better next time. There's more matches to follow this, and you're still skipper. But I hope you'll benefit by the lesson. Collar him!"

"Look here," roared Smythe, "there's a dozen of us, and if you don't clear out quietly, you'll be put—"

"Put away!"

Jimmy Silver slipped the key in his pocket. There was no danger of interference from the Greyfriars fellows, with the door locked. Indeed, it was not likely that Harry Wharton & Co. would have interfered in the private domestic affairs of the Rookwood crowd. If they heard a row, they were most likely to turn a politely deaf ear.

They certainly could not fail to hear a row.

For Jimmy Silver & Co. were rushing to the attack, and the slackers of Rookwood put up a fight, astounded by the assault.

As they were twelve against eight they ought to have carried off the victory quite easily. But they didn't. A dozen slackers and nuts had no chance whatever against such doughy fighting men as the Fistical Four, and Tommy Dodd & Co. They were mostly older fellows, too, and somewhat bigger; but it did not steady them. They were knocked right and left.

The battle raged for full five minutes, and then the members of the team who were not groaning on the floor were dodging about the dressing-room, seeking in vain an avenue of escape.

Adolphus Smythe sat dazedly on the floor, and held his nose, which was streaming with crimson. He was not really much hurt, but he was completely hors-de-combat. Adolphus was not a fighting-man.

"Ow! Crumbs!" gasped Adolphus. "You young ruffians! You hooligans! Help!"

"Help!" yelled Townsend.

"Rescue!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Gerrof!"

"By gad! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Floor 'em!" roared Tommy Doyle. "Floor 'em, bedad! Knock 'em down as fast as they get up, begorra!"

"Bump, bump, bump!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Chuck it! Yow!"

"Stoppit, you young fiends! Oh, my nose! Ow, my eye! Oh, dear!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. burst into a roar of laughter as they surveyed the field of battle. The dozen slackers of Rookwood were on the floor, most of them severely damaged. As fast as one jumped up, he was promptly knocked down again, and they had finally decided to stay on the floor.

There was a discreet tap on the door, and Harry Wharton's voice was heard outside:

"Ahem! Anything wrong, you fellows?"

"Yes," panted Smythe; "we Ger-ro-o-o-ogh!" He broke off, gurgling, as Jimmy Silver lunged at his ribs with a cricket bat. "Ow, ow, ow!"

"If they say a word, jump on 'em—hard!" said Jimmy Silver.

The wretched nuts of Rookwood did not say a word. They dared not. Jimmy Silver flourished the bat within an inch of Smythe's nose.

"Call out to Wharton that it's all right!" he commanded.

"Oh! Ow! I—Yow!" gasped Smythe, as the bat lunged again.

"All right; I was just going to! Oh, you young demon! I—I say, Wharton, it—it's all right!"

"All serene!" replied Wharton.

And he walked away, in a state of wonder. He had certainly thought that a battle-royal was going on in the dressing-room.

"Now, you confounded young hooligans—"

"Shut up!"

"I—Ow! Yow! Oh, dear! Stoppit!"

"Got the cords, Lovell?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, rather! Here they are!"

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THE SLACKERS OF ROOKWOOD.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Tie up their paws!" "Tit-tut-tie us up!" gasped Smythe. "Why, what do you mean?" "I mean what I say," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "Didn't I warn you there would be a ragging if Greyfriars beat you by an innings? This is going to be a valuable lesson for you for next time!" "You young rotters—you—" "Thump them if they wriggle!" said Jimmy Silver. "It doesn't matter if you hurt them; it can all go down as part of the lesson!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Some of the wretched victims, in desperation, attempted resistance. Their resistance was quelled sharply and efficaciously. Townsend howled loudly that he wouldn't have his hands tied. But when Lovell had bumped his head on the floor three times, getting harder each time, Townsend decided that he would. And his wrists were fastened together behind his back.

Lovell and Raby did the tying, one after another, while the other fellows were on guard, watchful as cats, to thump the unhappy victim into submission at the first sign of resistance. Adolphus Smythe was the last. He gave the juniors almost homicidal looks as they secured his hands. But he did not resist. He had had enough of that.

"Get up!" commanded Jimmy Silver. The dozen slackers scrambled to their feet, with their secured hands behind their backs. They were powerless now, even if they had been inclined to offer further trouble.

"What's the little game, you young villains?" roared Smythe. "What are you playing us this trick for?" "We—we—we'll smash you for this!" mumbled Howard.

"Rescue!" bellowed Topham. And then he yelled as his head was bumped against the wall.

"Going to be quiet?" smiled Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, dear! Yes." "Good! We can't have Rookwood fellows making a row on another school's ground!" said Jimmy Silver severely. "Think of your manners, you sweeps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The hapless team were slammed against the wall in a scowling, furious row. Jimmy Silver took a pair of scissors from his pocket. Smythe trembled with apprehension as the junior approached him.

"What—what—what are you going to do?" he panted. "Cut your hair!" "Wha-a-at!"

"Only a little bit," said Silver reassuringly. "Not enough to give you a cold in the napper! Only that beautiful curl that you put in pins every night!"

"I don't!" shrieked Smythe. "Let it alone! I—I'll smash you—" "Better keep your head still, or I may have your scalp instead of your curl!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Help!" shrieked Smythe.

Deprived of that beautiful curl, upon which he expended a great deal of time daily, the dandy of the Shell felt that life would not be worth living.

Bump! Smythe's head knocked against the wall, and he did not yell for help any more. The scissors clipped, and the beautiful curl dropped at his feet.

Jimmy Silver moved along the dismayed and demoralised line of "knuts," who could not play cricket, but who were as skilful as professional hairdressers in looking after their hair.

The scissors clipped and clipped, amid gasps of horror from the victims.

Jimmy Silver had as light a hand as a barber. He simply gave the nuts a "workhouse fringe," as Tommy Dodd called it, along their foreheads. The change it made in their nutty appearance was considerable, however.

"That do, you chaps?" asked Silver, cocking his eye thoughtfully to survey his handiwork.

"Ha, ha! Yes." "Oh, you beasts!" groaned Adolphus Smythe. "Oh, you awful beasts! I sha'n't get that grown again this term! Oh, you beasts!"

Adolphus almost wept.

"Chuck hairdressing, and start cricket practice!" suggested Lovell. But Smythe only groaned. It was excellent advice; but there was no consolation in it for Adolphus of the Shell.

Jimmy Silver slipped the scissors back into his pocket. The wretched victims hoped that he was finished. But he wasn't; he had only started.

His next step was to take a bottle of red ink and a brush from his pocket. Dipping the brush into the ink, he painted Adolphus's nose a brilliant red. Adolphus's aspect, when he had finished, was really remarkable.

Eleven more noses were similarly adorned. The slackers mumbled and endured it. But that was not all.

A dozen paper fools'-caps came into view from Lovell's pocket, and he unfolded them while Jimmy Silver was painting noses. The fools'-caps were placed on the twelve wretched heads, and fastened there by a really novel means—Lovell swamping thick gum on the hair, and jamming the paper hat on it.

The Fourth-Formers were almost suffocating with laughter by this time. The aspect of Smythe & Co. was unnerving.

"Now for the specs!" said Raby, gurgling.

Jimmy produced a large pair of

"We do—we does! Ha, ha, ha!" Jimmy Silver flung the door open. "March!"

"I won't!" shrieked Smythe.

"Kick away!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Luckily, it doesn't matter if they're hurt, as it goes down as part of the lesson. Pile in!"

"Kick! Kick! Kick!" "Yow; yow; yow!"

There was no resisting persuasion of that sort. The miserable procession wriggled out of the dressing-room. Still persuaded from behind, the twelve juniors wriggled on, like a huge centipede, out of the pavilion. A wild roar greeted their appearance.

The 7th Chapter.

Adolphus Smythe Sings Small!

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, my hat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars fellows stared at the human centipede, and shrieked. Bob Cherry threw himself down in the grass, and kicked. Yells came from everybody within sight, and the yells drew others to the spot.

Smythe & Co. almost wept with wrath and shame. They would have given whole Golcondas of wealth if the earth would have opened and swallowed them up. There were twelve of them, and they had let

nuts of Rookwood, and can guarantee them genuine filberts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The honourable nuts came here to play the giddy goat, and to cause their school to be guyed by the way they play cricket. We came over here to exhibit them in a get-up suitable for giddy goats! They can't play cricket, but they part their hair beautifully. They can't box, but they have a topping taste in scent. They can't make runs or stop a ball, but they can mop up all the places in the eleven, and play the giddy ox on the cricket-field. Here you behold them suitably attired as giddy oxen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Gentlemen, I leave you to contemplate our happy nuts! Good-bye!"

"You villain! Don't leave us like this!" screamed Smythe.

Jimmy Silver did not reply. The Greyfriars crowd were shrieking and rolling with merriment. The slackers of Rookwood wriggled and panted with fury. Jimmy Silver & Co. gathered up their bikes, which they had left at the lodge, and rushed them out through the gateway.

They mounted their machines, and sailed away gaily for Rookwood.

They did not ride fast. They couldn't. At every turn of the pedals they burst into a fresh roar of laughter.

but they succeeded in getting in before the gates were locked. The cricketers had permission to remain later. Tired, but quite happy, the heroes of the Fourth put up their bicycles, and went in to supper.

In a quarter of an hour nearly all Rookwood had heard the story.

It flew through the junior studies, through the fag Form-rooms, and reached even the august quarters of the great men of the Sixth.

Bulkeley of the Sixth roared when he heard of what had happened to Smythe & Co. Bulkeley had had an eye on the nutty Adolphus for some time, and he was not surprised that he had been called to account—though he could never have anticipated the novel method adopted by Jimmy Silver. Even Knowles chuckled over the story, though not a very humorous fellow as a rule.

Needless to say, when Adolphus's whacking big car came home, nearly all Rookwood turned out to meet the returning heroes.

The quad was swarming with the juniors and the Middle School; and even the Sixth came to their windows to look out, chuckling.

A roar of laughter greeted Adolphus & Co. as they descended from the car.

They were scowling furiously. They had had a fearful time. Harry Wharton & Co. had been very sympathetic. But in the midst of their sympathy, they had not been able to avoid incessant explosions of mirth.

Smythe and the rest of the "Goats" had been released at last. They had been provided with abundant soap and hot water; they had cleaned and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed and cleaned till their arms ached, and they were red with exertion and fury. But they had still brought home a stain of red on their noses, and gum thick in the roots of their hair. And when the big motor-car left Greyfriars, though Harry Wharton & Co. tried to look solemn as they saw the visiting team off, Adolphus knew very well that he had left them in hysterics.

On the way home there had been infuriated recriminations, and a nose or two among the party showed that the rage of the nuts had been wreaked in an internecine combat. It really did not seem probable that all the slackers of Rookwood would be in Adolphus Smythe's team next time he led the junior eleven forth upon its glorious career.

"So you've got back!" howled Hooker of the Fourth. "Why didn't you come home with your war-paint on? Where's your curly curl, Smythe?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Get your hair cut!" The unhappy nuts slunk into the house. They did not reply to a single remark. They had not nerve enough left for that. They slunk away, and shut themselves up in their studies, and locked their doors; and all that evening they "sport" their oak against all comers.

There were plenty of comers. Everybody in the school wanted to speak to Smythe & Co. that evening—especially to Smythe. They wanted to ask him lots of things—about cricket, and ducks' eggs, and pairs of spectacles, and painted noses, and gummy hair, and fools'-caps—but Adolphus was not in a mood to impart any information whatever upon those interesting topics.

For once—probably for the first time in his happy career as a nut—Adolphus Smythe shrank from public gaze, and made himself very small indeed.

On the following Wednesday there was another cricket fixture to come off, and Jimmy Silver & Co. wondered grimly what kind of a junior team was to play. They soon heard some news—news which made it unnecessary for Jimmy Silver to purchase any more gum, red ink, or fools'-caps. One lesson had been enough. Adolphus's beautiful curl had not had time to grow again yet. Perhaps he was afraid of losing his back hair next time. Anyway, there was news.

There were to be changes in the team!

When Jimmy Silver & Co. heard that news, they grinned, they chuckled, but they nobly forebore to gloat over Adolphus. They resolved to give Adolphus a chance, content that the school would no longer be represented in the cricket-field by the Slackers of Rookwood!

THE END.

(Next week's magnificent long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled: "The Prefect's Plot." Don't miss it!)



Smythe's off stump went hurtling out of the ground, and the Rookwood captain stared down at his wrecked wicket. "By gad!" he ejaculated. "I'm out!"

spectacles—spectacles of huge size, with rusty, metal frames, which he had evidently picked up cheap. He placed them on Adolphus's nose, and fastened them securely behind his ears, by passing a knotted string round the back of his head. There were no lenses in the spectacles, and they did not impede Adolphus's vision. But they made him extraordinary to look at.

"Oh, you beast!" gasped Adolphus. "That's to mark your score, you know," explained Silver.

"Oh! I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you—I'll—I'll— Oh—oh—oh, dear!"

"Sort of look well-finished now!" said Jimmy Silver, surveying the hapless dozen with great satisfaction. "Put 'em in file."

Smythe & Co. were dragged from the wall, and placed in file, one behind another. A cord was run along, "You villains! You ruffians! You're not taking us out like this!"

"We jolly well are!" said Jimmy Silver. "This is a warning to you! We hereby promise solemnly to do the same over again, every time you lose a match for Rookwood by playing the giddy ox!"

"We swear!" chuckled Tommy Dodd.

eight fellows handle them like this—helplessly. Even the ineffable Smythe realised that it does not always pay to be a hopeless slacker. Some of the care he had spent on parting his hair and curling that beautiful curl—now lost for ever—would have been better expended in the gym, with the gloves on. There was no doubt about that now. Ever so dainty a touch in hair-dressing could not save him from this!

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, hold me, somebody!" groaned Bob Cherry. "I'm having fits! I'm having apoplexy! Oh, my ribs—my poor ribs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "B-b-but what does it mean?" gasped Wharton. "What the dickens—what the thumping dickens—"

"Halt!" sang out Jimmy Silver. The centipede halted, the different members bumping on one another, and hacking with their heels.

"Look at them!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha! We're looking!" "Help!" wailed Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "These fellows are the nuts of Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver.

"Gentlemen of Greyfriars, I have great pleasure in presenting the

The ridiculous defeat Rookwood had suffered—the loss of a match wholly due to the fatuity of Adolphus Smythe & Co.—was avenged now. And with the promise of similar attentions to come next time he threw away a match, it was possible that even the egregious Adolphus would begin to consider himself, and see the error of his ways. Certainly he could not want to go through such an experience again.

"Oh, what'll they say at Rookwood?" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Pity we couldn't have brought 'em home like that—"

The juniors yelled at the idea. "And I wonder what the dickens the Greyfriars chaps think of it!" gurgled Raby; and he went off into a fresh roar.

Jimmy Silver released a handle-bar to wipe his eyes.

"It'll show Greyfriars that we're not all fatheaded chumps at Rookwood!" he said. "Smythe has given them the impression that we were. After Smythe's been through this a few times, he'll see light!"

"A few times! Ha, ha, ha!" The cyclists rode on in happy humour. They had to light their lamps before Rookwood was reached,