

HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE MERCHANT SERVICE!

SPECIAL
ARTICLE
INSIDE!

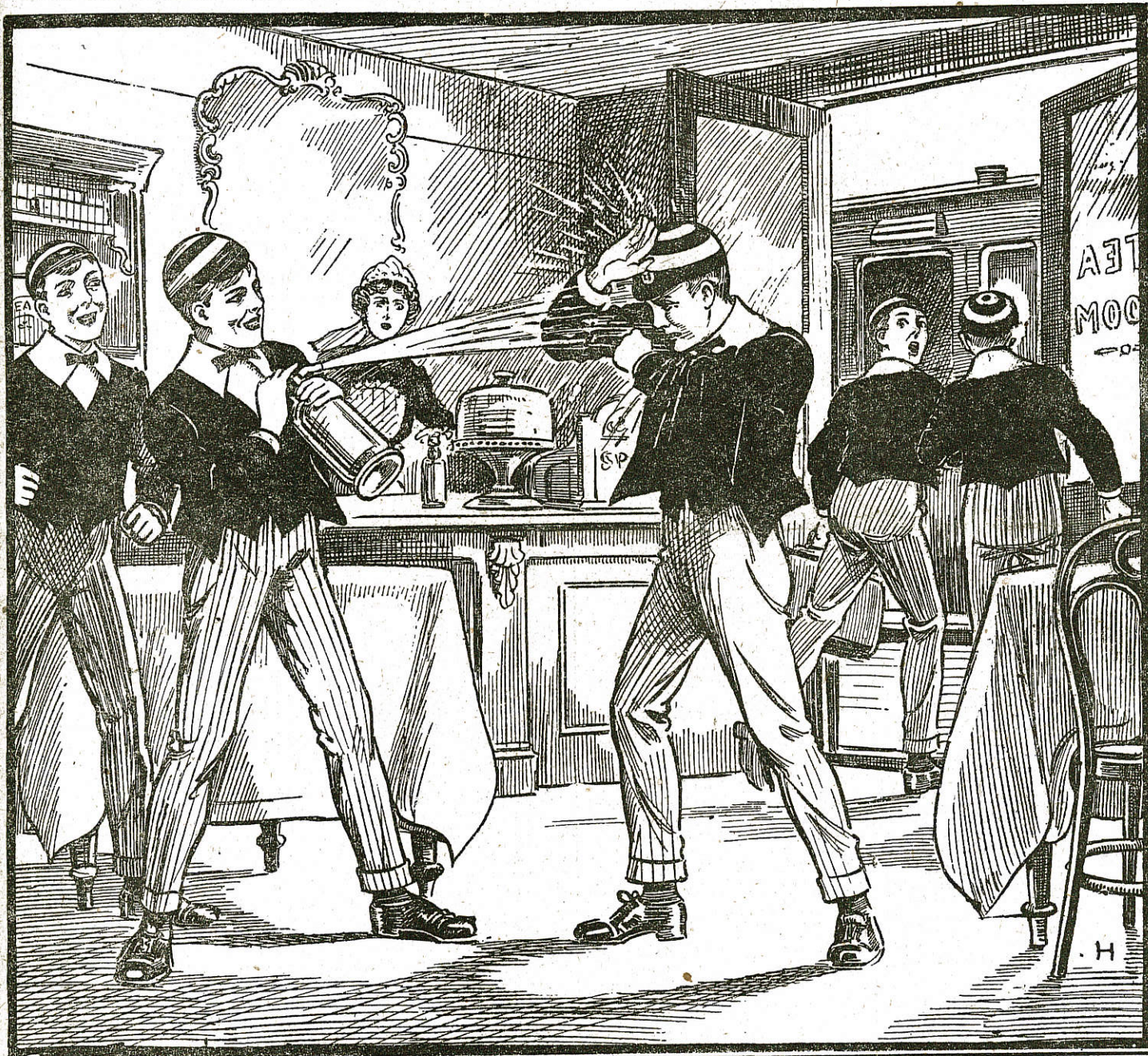
The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

OUR MOTTO IS: "PLAY THE GAME!"

No. 801, Vol. XVI. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending October 14th, 1916.]



TOPHAM TURNS THE TAP ON TOMMY DODD!

BARRED FROM THE TEAM!

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

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

No Room for Mornington!

"Flynn in goal!" said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. Lovell and Raby and Newcome nodded.

They were helping the junior captain of Rookwood with the footer list—at all events, they were listen-

ing to his remarks and nodding assent.

The first big match of the season was due on the following day, and Jimmy Silver was going over the list for the last time.

After tea it was to be posted on the board for all Rookwood to read—for the Lower Forms to read, at least. Great and important as the matter

was, it was not likely to interest the Fifth and the Sixth very much. But of the juniors, there was hardly a fellow who was not looking forward keenly to the posting of the footer list. Fellows who had no chance whatever of getting into the team to play St. Jim's hoped against hope that they might, after all, find their names in the list.

For Jimmy Silver was a first-rate footer captain, and was certain to look for talent wherever he could find it—either on the Classical or the Modern side. So every fellow who felt an inward conviction that he was a budding International hoped that Jimmy Silver's well-known good judgment would lead him to the same opinion.

"Backs, Raby and Jones minor," said Jimmy.

"Hear, hear!" said Raby. "One's jolly good, anyway!"

"Halves, Rawson, self, and Doyle," said Jimmy. "Centre-half is about my mark, I think."

"Doyle's a Modern boulder!" grunted Lovell.

"He's a good half," said Jimmy; "and the Moderns have got to have a show in the team, anyway."

"Yes. It's rotten, but I suppose so. Where do I come in?" asked Lovell.

"Forwards, Oswald, Lovell, Tommy Dodd, Towle, and Cook," pursued Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, and where do I come in?" demanded Newcome warmly.

Jimmy Silver shook his head. "You don't come in at all, old chap."

"Well, my hat!"

"Football comes before friendship," explained Jimmy Silver, "I've left you out to put Towle in."

"Left me out for a measly Modern!"

"Yes. You'll have to wire in, you know. But I couldn't pass over Towle, could I?"

"This study ought to be always in the eleven," said Lovell, with a shake of the head.

"Quite so," agreed Jimmy Silver.

"But this study will have to be the best of the bunch in that case. And at present Towle is rather ahead of Newcome."

"I don't quite see that," remarked Newcome.

"But it is so, old fellow."

"Br-r-r!"

"I think that's about the best team we could get together," said Jimmy.

"Smythe & Co. will be snorting about the Shell being left out. But the Shell will have to buck up if they want to play for Rookwood. Mornington and his pals will be raging, too. Can't be helped."

"Mornington's been shaping jolly well at the footer," remarked Lovell. "Some of the fellows expect him to play."

"Blessed are those that don't expect, then," said Jimmy calmly. "Mornington don't play in my team."

"He makes out that you only play your own pals."

"Well, I'm playing four Moderns," said Jimmy; "and I've left out one of my own pals—Newcome. Morny can say what he likes. I'm sorry, Newcome, old chap, but it can't be helped, you know. Don't you begin to jaw me, as the others will."

Newcome grinned.

"Oh, all serene! I think you're an ass, that's all."

"So will twenty other chaps when they see the list," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Can't expect more than eleven chaps to be satisfied with a footer team, really. Not even eleven, very likely. I suppose Jones minor will tell me he's best at centre-forward, and Doyle will suggest changing with me at centre-half. Never mind; it's all in the day's work. Hallo! Come in!" added Jimmy, as there was a tap at the door.

Mornington of the Fourth came into the study.

"List not posted up yet?" he remarked.

The dandy of the Fourth spoke quite agreeably, apparently oblivious of the fact that he was on the worst of terms with Jimmy Silver. When it suited him, Mornington could drop the superciliousness of his usual manner.

"Just going to take it down," said Jimmy.

"My name in it?"

"No."

Mornington's eyes glittered.

(Continued on the next page.)



BARRED FROM THE TEAM!

(Continued from previous page.)

"You're leaving me out, then?" he asked.

"I don't know about that. I'm certainly not putting you in." "May I look at the list?" "Certainly!"

Mornington ran his eye over the names.

"You've seen me at practice," he said very quietly. "I ask you candidly, Jimmy Silver, do you think Towle is a better forward than I am?"

"No."

"But you've put him in and left me out?"

"Exactly."

"Is that what you call playing the game?"

"Quite," said Jimmy Silver, undisturbed. "I've put Towle in because he's a good footballer and plays the game. He won't keep the ball to himself whenever he has a chance, and muck up the game for the rest. He won't try to bring off risky shots from the touchline to cover himself with glory, instead of centring when he ought to centre. He won't go all out for limelight, and let the game go hang. You would."

Lovell & Co. chuckled. Jimmy's plain speaking tickled them.

"You'd be a better man than Towle if you played the game," continued Jimmy Silver. "But you don't—I think you can't, in fact. You played me too many dirty tricks in the cricket for me to trust you in the footer. Once bit, twice shy, you know."

"You mean that I'm not going to have a chance in the footer because we're on bad terms personally?" sneered Mornington.

Jimmy yawned.

"You can think so if you like," he remarked. "You know it isn't true; but you can think so. I don't mind."

"I've heard how you used to gird at Smythe when he was skipper, before I came, for makin' up a team of his own pals," said Mornington. "You're doin' the same."

"Not quite. But I don't mind your thinking so," said Jimmy blandly. "It's a free country, and you can think what you like." Mornington clenched his hands hard. It was not easy to "draw" the imperturbable Jimmy.

"Does that mean that I'm not going to have a chance all through the winter?" he asked.

"You won't play for Rookwood so long as I'm skipper unless we have a mighty big change in your manners and customs," said Jimmy. "We play footer matches to win, you know; not to give a swanking ass chances to show off to the gallery." "It's no good my telling you I'll play up my best for Rookwood?"

"No good at all. If anything happened to upset your majestic serenity, you'd be quite capable of giving the game away out of sheer malice. You did it twice when you played cricket."

"So I'm left out?"

"Exactly!"

Mornington gritted his teeth.

"Well, I'm going to play," he said, Jimmy whistled.

"I'm goin' to play in the St. Jim's match," said Mornington deliberately. "So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Jimmy Silver!"

"And how are you going to manage it?" grinned Lovell.

"That's my bizney! But you can't pass over me like this. I'm not standin' it."

"Bow-wow!" grunted Raby. "What do you care for footer, anyway? Smoking cigarettes and playing nap is more in your line. Go back to your smokes, and shut up!"

"Hang the footer!" said Mornington coolly. "But I'm not goin' to be passed over—that's my point. I'm goin' to play in the St. Jim's match."

And the dandy of the Fourth turned on his heel and strode out of the study. He left the Fistical Four

chuckling. Mornington was a determined fellow, and he was known to be unscrupulous and to stick at little in gaining his ends. But it was really a little difficult to see how he was going to play in the St. Jim's match without the consent of the skipper.

The 2nd Chapter. Morny's Little Game.

"Rotten!" "Beastly shame, you know." "Just like Jimmy Silver!"

It was Wednesday, and morning lessons were over at Rookwood.

Immediately after dinner, the Rookwood footballers were to start for St. Jim's. It was a good journey, and there was no time to cut to waste. Mornington's pals, the elegant nuts of Rookwood, were sauntering in the quad, with the dandy of the Fourth, waiting for the dinner-bell. They were full of sympathy. Townsend and Topham, Peele and Gower, did not understand or share Morny's desire to shine as a footballer, certainly. They regarded football as a beastly fag, and "dodged" the practice whenever they could. But as Mornington wanted to play in the junior eleven, they agreed that it was a rotten shame that he was excluded, and that it was like Jimmy Silver's cheek to exclude a member of their noble society.

But while they sympathised with Mornington, they "rubbed it in" a little. Even his own dear pals and faithful followers were disappointed to see that the lofty Morny could not have everything his own way.

And so they smiled as they made their sympathetic remarks.

Mornington was looking grim.

"I'm playin' all the same," he said.

Townsend winked at Topham, with the eye that was furthest from Mornington.

"Playin' all the same, Morny?"

"Yes."

"Without Silver's permission?"

"Yes."

"By gad! How are you goin' to do it?"

"You fellows are goin' to help."

"Any old thing," said Peele. "But I don't see—"

"The team's goin' over by train," said Mornington quietly. "It's a rather expensive journey, you know, and nobody else is goin'." Only Newcome, they generally have a crowd to watch them when they go to Bagshot, or any place near. But a railway journey to St. Jim's is rather a big order, for the pleasure of standin' about with cold feet."

The nuts chuckled.

"But we're goin'," added Mornington.

"We are?"

"Exactly."

"My dear chap," protested Townsend, "we're not, you know. I'm not goin' to take a journey like that. No fear. Too faggin'." And I don't want to watch 'em play. I don't care a merry copper whether they beat St. Jim's or not."

"Same here," said Gower. "What's the good of wastin' money on railway tickets to watch those duffers faggin' after a muddy ball?"

"I shall stand the tickets, of course," said Mornington, "and anythin' else that turns up."

"Well, that's all right; but it's wastin' an afternoon," urged Townsend. "We're goin' to get up a game of bridge in Smythe's study, too."

"Bridge can wait," said Mornington coolly. "We're not goin' over to watch them play, of course. It's a wheeze."

"Blessed if I see it."

"Only Newcome's goin' over with the team. If anythin' happened to any of the players, that means only one reserve for Jimmy Silver to call in."

"But nothin' will happen to them," said Townsend, in astonishment. "I suppose there won't be any Zeppelin bombs on the train. What?"

"And they won't fall out an' break their necks to please you, Morny. They won't, you know," argued Topham.

"At least two of them won't turn up at St. Jim's," said Mornington calmly. "Two, at least, will get left behind somewhere. Jimmy Silver can call in Newcome, but he'll still be a man short. He will have to play me."

"Oh!" ejaculated Townsend. He understood now the cunning scheme that was working in Mornington's brain.

Certainly Jimmy Silver was not likely to be on his guard against tricks of that kind.

"Oh, my hat!" said Peele, with a whistle.

"They have to change trains twice, at least," said Mornington. "There's a good wait at each place. I've looked out the trains. Easy as winkin' for a chap to get left at the last minute—with somebody to help him."

"Oh, by gad!"

"And a later train wouldn't be any good. A chap left behind would come on too late for the match. I don't mean you're to collar 'em by the neck and drag 'em out of the train," grinned Mornington. "It's all goin' to be done under the rose, of course. First change at Rookham, with ten minutes to wait. Well, when they're catchin' the second train, one of you gets into a fight with one of them, and that one loses the train! What?"

"Oh!"

"Same thing happens at Laxham, and Jimmy Silver finds himself two men short at St. Jim's. Plays Newcome and me," smiled Mornington. "One man short wouldn't do. He'd play Newcome, not me. But two does the trick."

"Well, you are a deep bounder, and no mistake," said Townsend admiringly. "I don't see why it shouldn't work."

"It will work, of course. I mean it to work," said Mornington arrogantly; "and at St. Jim's, even if Jimmy Silver didn't want to play me, the fellows would make him. The match will be touch-and-go, anyway, and playin' a man short simply means askin' for a lickin'."

"No doubt about that," chuckled Peele.

"And Jimmy Silver will be dished this time," said Mornington.

"Ha, ha!"

"But—but he'll smell a rat," said Gower. "He'll tumble to it that you've worked it, Morny."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him!"

"Hallo, there's the dinner-bell!"

The nuts of the Fourth went in to dinner.

They were grinning with great delight over Mornington's precious plan. It really looked as if Jimmy Silver would be "dished" this time.

After dinner, the footballers prepared to start.

Newcome was going with them; and so far, Jimmy Silver did not know that anybody else was accompanying the team.

But when the dozen juniors started from Rookwood to walk down to the station at Coombe, five more fellows joined them.

Jimmy regarded the nuts with surprise.

"Comin' to see us off?" he asked.

"Comin' to see the match," said Townsend.

"What?"

"I suppose you'd like some Rookwood chaps there, to cheer your goals? What?" grinned Topham.

"You're going to make that journey to watch the game?" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, the Rookwood centre-forward.

"Yaas."

"Blessed if I know why you don't take up footer, then, if you're so jolly interested in the matches," said the Modern junior, puzzled.

"I suppose we can come? What?" said Mornington.

"Certainly," said Jimmy Silver.

"No harm in your coming. You're not asking the club to pay your fares, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha!"

The footballers were considerably puzzled. As a rule, the nuts of the Fourth did not even turn up to see the home matches. It was astounding that they should make a long railway journey to see an away match.

Still, Jimmy was willing to regard it as a sign of grace; and he had no objection to Morny & Co. accompanying the team.

The party arrived at Coombe, and swarmed into the train for Rookham, the junction where the first change was made.

Morny & Co. travelled in a first-class carriage by themselves. Jimmy Silver and his team, who saw no object in wasting money in war-time, travelled third.

But they met again when the train

stopped at Rookham, where there was ten minutes for the party to wait.

The 3rd Chapter. Left Behind!

"Put that out, you ass!"

The Rookwood juniors were waiting on the platform at Rookham, when Townsend selected a cigarette from his case, and lighted it.

Jimmy Silver snapped at once.

He had no mind for the Rookwood party to be made ridiculous in the public eye by the nutty manners and customs of the giddy goats of Rookwood.

"Oh, rot," said Townsend airily. "Why shouldn't a fellow smoke?"

"Well, one reason is that it makes you look a silly ass, and us, too, as we're with you," growled Lovell. "Put it out."

"Oh, rats!"

Lovell's eyes gleamed.

"Did you say rats to me, Tommy?"

Townsend nodded coolly.

"Yes. Rats, dear boy, and many of 'em!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter," roared Lovell, greatly incensed by this unexpected bravado from Townsend, the slacker and dandy, "do you want me to mop up the platform with you?"

"You couldn't do it, dear boy."

"Wha-a-at!"

"You couldn't, you know. Rather above your weight, I think," said Townsend, blowing a puff of smoke fairly into Lovell's face.

Lovell was crimson.

"By jingo, I'll show you whether I could or not!" he exclaimed, clenching his fists.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Raby. "The train's comin' in."

Topham and Peele and Gower were looking a little uneasy. It was nearly time for the second trick to be played, and the nuts did not feel keen to be selected for it. Mornington regarded them with an ironical smile.

"You're the man, Toppo!" he remarked.

"Oh, gad!" said Topham.

"I suppose you want Jimmy Silver to be dished, don't you?"

"Ye-es. But—"

"Collar Tommy Dodd!" said Mornington. "I rather fancy his place in the team—centre-forward suits me."

"Lots of limelight!" grinned Peele. "I—I say, that Dodd beast is rather a tough beast," said Topham uneasily.

"He's a beastly hard hitter, you know."

"Yaas, that's so. Gower had better lend you a hand!"

"Oh!" said Gower.

"I suppose you can handle him between you?" sniffed Mornington.

"Oh, yes! But—"

"It'll save you the trouble of comin' on to St. Jim's. I suppose you're not specially keen to see the match?"

"No jolly fear!"

"Well, you two keep an eye on Tommy Dodd, and collar him when the train's going. Mind they don't smell a rat, of course!"

"I—I say, how are we goin' to get up a row?" said Gower uneasily.

"He won't row with us for smokin', as Lovell did!"

"Well, chip him about bein' a Modern cad, and mop him up," said Mornington coolly. "It won't look suspicious, Classics rowin' with a Modern cad!"

"Yes, that's a good idea; but—"

"They're goin' into the buffet," said Mornington. "Come along! You may be able to keep Dodd back when the others leave to catch the train!"

"Oh, all right!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. had gone into the station buffet, which opened from the up platform, to while away the quarter of an hour they had to wait. Mornington and his friends joined them there.

The juniors discussed ginger-pop and the coming match and the weather, and the minutes passed.

Towie looked out on the platform.

"Train's signalled," he remarked.

"Get out, then," said Jimmy Silver. "Don't get losing the train any of you!"

Jimmy settled for the ginger-beer, and turned to the door. Mornington made a sign to Gower and Topham, and sauntered out with Peele.

Topham took hold of a siphon of soda-water. Tommy Dodd finished his ginger-beer, and turned away from the table. As he did so, a sudden stream of soda-water caught him behind the ear.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Tommy Dodd, spinning round.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You clumsy ass!" exclaimed Cook wrathfully.

"Do you want some?" grinned Topham.

"Why, you— Yow—ow—grooogh!"

Tommy Cook jumped back as the stream was turned on him. Jimmy Silver's voice was heard from the platform:

"Come on, you duffers! The train's in!"

"Coming!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"Come on, you chaps! No time to serag those cheeky cads now!"

The three Moderns rushed for the platform.

Whizz-sizzzz!

A fresh stream of soda-water caught Tommy Dodd in the back of the neck.

"Give it to the Modern cad!" howled Gower. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Dodd turned back with blazing eyes.

"Come on!" called out Doyle.

"I'm coming!"

Sizzzz!

It was more than flesh and blood could stand. Topham was deliberately sizzling the soda-water over the Modern junior, drenching him.

Tommy Dodd rushed at him with blazing eyes, and struck out angrily.

"Yow-ow!" roared Topham; and he rolled on the floor, and the soda siphon went down with a smash.

Tommy Dodd did not wait for more. He turned to rush out, and rushed over a foot Gower put out just in time. The Modern junior stumbled and rolled over.

Topham staggered up.

"Collar the cad!" he panted.

"Come on, Tommy!" yelled Cook from the platform. "They're shutting the doors!"

Tommy Dodd scrambled up, only to find himself in the grasp of Topham and Gower, and to go down sprawling with them.

"Let me go!" yelled the junior, struggling fiercely. "You rotters, you want me to lose the train!"

"Sit on him!" panted Gower.

"Leggo!"

"Ha, ha! Sit on the Modern cad!"

Tommy Dodd struggled fiercely, and though the nuts were two to one, he hurled them off at last, and picked himself up.

He rushed breathlessly out of the buffet to the platform.

The train was vanishing down the line. Tommy Dodd had lost it by a good minute.

The Modern junior stood rooted to the platform.

He had lost the train. The match at St. Jim's was to be played without him as well as without Lovell.

"M-m-my hat!" stuttered Tommy Dodd.

Two dishevelled youths looked out of the buffet. They grinned as they saw Tommy Dodd standing in dismay on the platform, staring blankly in the direction the express had gone.

"Done!" grinned Topham.

"Done to a turn!" chuckled Peele.

But they left off grinning and chuckling as the Modern junior of Rookwood came towards them.

"You've lost me the train!" said Tommy Dodd, between his teeth.

"You've done me out of the match, and goodness knows how it will go now! You did it on purpose!"

"The 5th Chapter. Mornington's Chance."

Jimmy Silver's face was a study. The loss of Lovell had been serious enough, but there was Newcome to take his place, more or less effectively.

But the loss of Tommy Dodd was a knockdown blow.

Jimmy sat silent, in utter dismay, as the train buzzed out of Laxham Junction. It was hard under the circumstances to "keep smiling."

The eleven had lost its centre-forward, and there was no one to fill the place.

Tommy Dodd was one of the very best men in the team, and there was not even a reserve to fill the gap.

Jimmy could hardly blame himself. He could not have foreseen that two players in succession would lose the connection.

"The silly ass," said Jimmy at last, "to get into a row with those fellows just at that minute—just as Lovell did!"

"Sure, it wasn't Tommy's fault!" said Tommy Doyle loyally. "I tell ye Topham was squirting soda-water all over him, bedad! He was lookin' for a row!"

"Looks to me like a rotten trick!" said Rawson, the right-half of the team. "Towny at Rookham, and Toppo at Laxham—it's a game to muck up the team!"

Jimmy knew the unreliable temper of the cad of Rookwood too well. Not until he had no other possible resource would he have dreamed of playing Mornington.

Jimmy's face was not so cheerful, as the train rushed on, now.

Peele could play forward after a fashion, but he was out of condition, and at the best he would not have been a patch on Tommy Dodd. It meant a weak spot in the team that required to be at its very best for the match. Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's were foemen worthy of the steel of the best footballers that Rookwood could send out.

But it could not be helped, and Jimmy took it as cheerfully as he could.

The train stopped in Wayland at last.

The footballers alighted, and Mornington and Peele stepped out of a carriage further along.

They did not join the footballers, however. Mornington was sure of his point now, and he would not appear eager. It suited him to be approached by Jimmy Silver now that he regarded himself as indispensable.

Jimmy hurried towards the two nuts as they were leaving the platform. Mornington regarded him with an insolent smile.

"Hallo! Lost another man?" he remarked.

"Yes. I shall want you, Peele."

pared to quarrel with the leader of the Rookwood nuts, and to make an enemy of the richest fellow at Rookwood.

He shook his head.

Jimmy stared at him. He could hardly comprehend, for a moment, that the slacker of the Fourth was refusing a place in the eleven.

"Sorry!" said Peele at last. "I can't do it!"

"You can't do it!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Sorry! No; I'm not in form for footer."

"I know that!" growled Jimmy. "You don't think I'd play a weedy, slacking worm like you if a fag from the Second Form at Rookwood was here, do you? I'm going to play you because there's nobody else."

"Thanks!" said Peele. "You're tremendously complimentary, and you make me feel like obligin' you—I don't think! Sorry, but I can't play!"

"That's thure for ye!" said Flynn. "You can't play for toffee! But you can walk on an' do yer best."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"Do you mean to say that you won't play for Rookwood, Peele?" he exclaimed.

"I can't."

"It's for me to settle whether you can or not. I'd rather play you than play a man short. Will you play—yes, or no?"

"No!" said Peele, driven to a plain answer at last.

"Why, you unspeakable cad!" broke out Dick Oswald savagely. "Do you want to leave your own school in the lurch?"

"Ye thafe of the worruld—"

"There's Morny," said Peele, a little alarmed by the looks the footballers bent upon him. "Morny's a better man than I am, and he's willin' to play."

"Quite willin'," said Mornington, smiling.

Jimmy Silver paused. Peele's refusal left him no resource but to play Mornington, or to play a man short against St. Jim's. That, of course, was asking for a tremendous licking in the first match of the season. And Mornington, if he chose, could play a good game. Would he choose? Certainly, he seemed keen and willing enough now.

"If one rotten worm won't play, better play the other rotten worm," Jimmy, said Oswald.

"Nothing else doing," said Rawson.

Jimmy Silver made up his mind.

"I'll play you, Mornington," he said abruptly.

"I'm your man."

"I suppose you won't mind if Lovell's clobber don't fit you to a hair?" added Jimmy bitterly.

"Not at all," said Mornington, laughing.

"Then you're in the team. As for you, Peele, you cad, you won't come on to St. Jim's. And before I leave you, you'll put up your hands."

"I—I say—"

Peele did not have time to say anything. The angry and indignant football skipper was already hitting out, and the nut of Rookwood had to put up his hands. His hands did not help him much, however. Jimmy left him gasping on the platform, to be picked up by a porter, and the footballers streamed out of the station.

Mornington went with them, smiling. The unfortunate Peele had the pleasure of nursing his nose at the station till a train came in to take him home. By that time he had repented very sincerely of his share in Mornington's plot. But the plot had succeeded, and the dandy of Rookwood was a member of the Rookwood team.

"The 6th Chapter. Checkmate."

"Bai Jove, heah you are, deah boys!"

The dulcet tones of Arthur D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's greeted the Rookwood footballers as they came out of the station.

A brake was waiting for the team outside, and Tom Merry and D'Arcy were seated in it. The Rookwooders clambered in.

"Had a good journey?" said Tom Merry cheerily.

"Oh, ripping!" said Jimmy Silver grimly. "Topping!"

"First-rate!" said Mornington, laughing.

Jimmy Silver shot the cad of Rookwood a suspicious glance as he sat down in the brake.

There was no direct evidence to connect Mornington with the disasters that had befallen the Rookwood team, but Jimmy could not help being suspicious.

It was true that Townsend & Co. were "up against" the Fistical Four



Having shaken off Townsend's grip, Lovell leaped up and raced after the train. A porter at once dragged him back, and all chances of his boarding the train were gone for good.

He pushed back his cuffs.

"I think I can see the game. Towy at Rookham, and you cads here—a sneaking game to muck up the team for the St. Jim's match! Well, you've done me, and now I'm



(Continued from previous page.)

and all their works, yet it was surprising that they should have taken so much trouble to "dish" the footballers, unless there was some strong motive behind it.

Was Mornington at the bottom of it?

Peele's refusal to play was the last straw. Peele could have had only one motive for refusing to leave the place open for Mornington.

Did that mean that Mornington had plotted the whole business, and that all that had happened on the journey was due to the machinations of the cad of Rookwood?

Jimmy remembered Mornington's declaration in the end study the previous day—that he would play in the St. Jim's match in spite of Jimmy Silver. Had he planned all that had happened in order to carry out his boast?

It looked like it. But there was no proof, and without proof Jimmy Silver could not act. If it was so, he was playing into his enemy's hands. He was rewarding him for his treachery with a place in the team. The thought of that made him set his teeth hard. But there was no proof.

Jimmy was almost silent as the brake rolled away to St. Jim's. Mornington was in great spirits, however, and he chatted cheerily all the time. The brake arrived at the old school, and the Rookwooders followed Tom Merry and D'Arcy to Little Side. Tom Merry's team were on the ground already, punting a ball about.

The visitors went into their dressing-room to change. Mornington, fastidious as he usually was, made no objection to donning Lovell's football shorts and jersey, though they were considerably too large for him. Tommy Dodd's clobber was available for Newcome.

"You'll go in the centre, Oswald," Jimmy Silver remarked, as the juniors changed; "Newcome, inside-right; Mornington, outside."

Mornington looked up quickly from facing his boots.

"What's that?" he exclaimed, his brow darkening.

"You heard what I said."

"I understood that I was going to take Tommy Dodd's place. I'm best at centre-forward."

"Isn't that for me to judge?" said Jimmy quietly.

"You'd better play me in the centre. I like the place better," said Mornington. "Oswald won't be much good there, in my opinion. He's a pretty fair winger."

"Your opinion doesn't happen to matter," said Jimmy Silver icily. "My opinion is that Oswald is worth about three of you at centre-forward, and my opinion happens to be the one that counts."

"Shut up, Morny, for goodness' sake!" said Oswald.

Mornington scowled.

"Look here, am I going to play centre-forward?" he demanded.

"No, you're not," said Jimmy Silver crisply.

"Then I've a jolly good mind not to play at all."

"Suit yourself," said Jimmy coolly.

"I've a jolly good mind, as it happens, to kick you out and play a man short!"

"And give the match away?" sneered Mornington.

"Chuck it, Jimmy," whispered Raby anxiously. "We're not looking for a licking, you know. Let the cad jaw!"

Jimmy Silver choked down his wrath. Now that Mornington was in the team, he was beginning in his usual way. He made no appearance at all of respect for his captain's authority; and he was getting into one of his sulky tempers, in which he was as likely as not to let his side down. Jimmy half repented letting him into the team at all, dire as the necessity was.

Mornington's face was dark as he left the dressing-room with the rest. St. Jim's were waiting in the field.

"You won't give me the place I want?" Mornington asked, joining Jimmy Silver as he went into the field.

"No, I won't!" snapped Jimmy. "Shut up!"

Mornington's eyes gleamed.

"You've got into the team, and that's more than enough for you," said Jimmy. "Don't let me have any more of your chin-wag; I'm fed-up with it!"

Mornington laughed mockingly.

"I told you I should be in the team," he sneered. "You are not quite the great panjandrum you fancy, Jimmy Silver. I told you I should play in the St. Jim's match, and I'm going to play. That's good enough for me, after all."

Jimmy stopped dead.

"Does that mean that you fixed this up for me, Mornington?" he asked, in a quiet voice. "You planned fixing me like this?"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders. He was utterly reckless. He was convinced that Jimmy Silver could not do without him now, at any price; and he was keen to enjoy his triumph.

"What did I tell you?" he sneered. "If there isn't one way, there's another, and I told you I should play against St. Jim's. So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Jimmy Silver!"

"Come on, Jimmy," said Raby anxiously. "The fellows are waiting for us."

Jimmy did not move.

"Mornington's owned up that he planted this on us," he said. "He put Townsend and the rest up to their game. I suspected it; but the cad has owned up now!"

"You can lick him at Rookwood," said Raby. "Come on now!"

"Mornington isn't going to play," said Jimmy quietly.

There was a buzz among the Rookwood footballers.

"Not going to play!" ejaculated Rawson.

"No!" Jimmy Silver's eyes were gleaming. "Whether we win, or whether we lose, Mornington doesn't play for Rookwood. He's dodged Lovell and Tommy Dodd out of the team, to steal their place; and I'm not backing up a plotting thief! Mornington won't play!"

"I—I say, Jimmy—"

"It's settled," said Jimmy Silver, frowning.

"But we shall be a man short!"

"Better than that play a rotten, scheming rascal. Get off the field, Mornington!"

Mornington's face was white with rage and chagrin. He had never dreamed of this. He had deemed it safe to triumph over the football skipper he had so cunningly outwitted. But he did not know Jimmy Silver.

"You—you—" he panted. "I tell you I'm going to play!"

"You're not!" said Jimmy Silver tersely. "Get out! If you don't want the St. Jim's fellows to see you kicked off the field, you'd better clear—at once!"

Mornington stood, rooted to the ground, for a moment. It looked as if there would be a scene; Jimmy's hands were already clenching. But the humiliation of being kicked off, under the staring eyes of the St. Jim's crowd, would have been too bitter. The dandy of Rookwood, deadly white with passion, turned on his heel and strode away.

In silence the footballers went into the field. The die was cast now. And the Rookwooders, now that they knew the truth, did not blame Jimmy Silver. Better to take any chances than to play a traitor in the ranks. But their hopes of a win in the first big match of the season had sunk to zero.

The 7th Chapter. A Fight to a Finish.

Tom Merry looked rather curiously at the Rookwooders as they came on.

"Man short?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver nodded shortly.

"Yes; one of my men can't play."

"Bai Jove! That's too bad," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sympathetically. "We shall give you a feebly lickin', you know."

Jimmy smiled.

"Not till we've wriggled a bit," he suggested.

"But that won't do, you know," said Tom Merry. "Pity you haven't another man with you. Can't we lend you a man?"

"Yaas, wathah! That's a good ideah."

"Better pick up a chap here," said Jack Blake. "It won't be much of a match, otherwise."

Jimmy Silver paused.

Naturally, he wanted to play that match with a wholly Rookwood team. But the suggestion was good; and the looks of his followers showed him that they thought so. He nodded at last.

"Thanks!" he said. "If you can lend me a man—"

"A dozen, if you like," said Tom Merry, with a smile. "Of course, we've got the best in the team, but there are others jolly good."

"Bai Jove! I will play for Woodwood, you know," said D'Arcy generously.

"We mustn't give a visitah a second-rate playah. Is it a forward you want, Silvah, deah boy?"

"Yes; outside-right."

"Then I'm your man."

"Take D'Arcy, if you like," said Tom Merry. "I'll put in young Julian; he's quite as good."

"Weally," Tom Merry said.

"Well, if D'Arcy's agreeable—"

said Jimmy Silver.

"I am quite at your service, deah boy."

"Then it's a go. Thanks!"

"If you have any clobber for me, I will change—"

"That's all right. Come with me!"

Mornington came out of the dressing-room, in his Etons, with a bitter look on his face. He gave Jimmy Silver a dark look, and went into the crowd round the ropes. He had one consolation left—that of watching the Rookwood team thoroughly licked by St. Jim's—as he fully anticipated. D'Arcy entered the dressing-room, and Jimmy picked up the "clobber" Mornington had thrown savagely on the floor.

"I won't keep you thwee seconds, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

As a matter of fact, D'Arcy kept him full five minutes; changing clothes was not a rapid process with the swell of St. Jim's.

But he was changed at last, and he returned to the football-field with the Rookwood skipper.

Julian of St. Jim's was already in football garb, and in the ranks of the Saints.

Tom Merry's team was ready.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy took his place on the right wing as the Rookwood team lined up.

The kick-off fell to Tom Merry, and the ball rolled as Lefevre, of the Fifth, blew his whistle.

The great match began.

The Rookwood footballers realised at once that they were "up against" a very tough proposition in Tom Merry and his team. And although they found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy a first-rate winger, and decidedly useful in the front line, they had the disadvantage of having a stranger in the ranks—a player with whom they had never practised, and whose play they knew nothing of. Jimmy had trained his team to work together like clockwork; and there was a loose screw, as it were, in the machine. But D'Arcy was doing his very best for his adopted side; and his best was very good indeed.

The first goal came to Talbot of St. Jim's, after a struggle that had lasted for twenty minutes without a score on either side.

But close on half-time the Rookwood forwards made a hot attack on the home goal, and D'Arcy centred to Oswald in the nick of time, and the Rookwood junior put the ball into the net, in spite of the efforts of Fatty Wynn in goal.

The score was level when the whistle went for half-time.

Mornington, looking on, ground his teeth.

It was anybody's match, so far, and it was quite on the cards that he would be deprived of the consolation of seeing his side defeated.

His plot, which had promised so well, had not worked out eminently successfully, after all. His boast remained unfulfilled; he was not playing for Rookwood in spite of Jimmy Silver. He had his trouble for his pains, with a long journey thrown in, and his heart swelled with malice and all uncharitableness. But the Rookwood players did not waste a thought upon the disappointed cad of the Fourth.

Rookwood kicked off for the second half, Mornington's sulky eyes watching them from the crowd.

The wind was behind the Rookwooders now, and they took full advantage of it. They came down on the home goal with a rush.

Twice Fatty Wynn in goal narrowly saved before the struggle went away to mid-field.

Then again came a hot Rookwood attack, and a shot from the wing very nearly beat Fatty Wynn in goal.

Arthur Augustus had come very near scoring for Rookwood. But it did not quite come off, and the score remained one to one, while the minutes wore away.

The game was hard and fast all through, and both goals were in danger incessantly; but Flynn for Rookwood and Fatty Wynn for St. Jim's proved equal to the test.

The referee looked up at the old clock-tower above the trees.

Five minutes to go, and the score level.

It had been a gruelling game, and some of the players on both sides had bellows to mend, fit as they were. It looked like a draw, but both teams were determined that it should not be a draw.

Tom Merry's men came on gallantly, and there was a fierce struggle before the Rookwood goal, and the ball went in, only to meet a quick Irish fist and come out again like a pip from an orange. This time Raby cleared, and Jimmy Silver saw his opportunity, and sent the ball out to D'Arcy on the forward wing.

The Rookwood forwards were away again. The ball came in to Newcome,

who centred to Oswald as he was tackled, and Oswald rushed it on.

The St. Jim's backs accounted for Oswald, but not before he had passed to Towle, who rushed on and kicked. Fatty Wynn made a leap too late, and the leather reposed in the net.

"Goal!"

Towle panted and blinked. He had had good luck.

"Goal, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Sowwy we've beaten you, Tom Merry, deah boy!"

"Goal!" gasped Jimmy Silver as he thumped Towle on the back. "Good for you, you Modern boulder! Rookwood wins!"