

Jimmy Joins Up!

by Owen
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Who's JIMMY SILVER? Only a common or garden "new kid" think the Fourth Form at Rookwood—until Jimmy alters their opinion for them!

CHAPTER 1. Chucked Out!

JIMMY SILVER sat in the corner of the crowded carriage, listening to the buzz about him. The carriage was crowded, not to say crammed. It was supposed to accommodate six, and there were nine fellows in it, without counting Jimmy Silver. And as all those nine fellows seemed bent upon making the greatest noise possible, the din in that carriage was terrific.

Most of the other carriages in the long train were crowded, too, and from many of them proceeded an uproar of voices and musical instruments. For it was the first day of the new term at Rookwood School, and two hundred odd boys, of all ages and sizes, were returning to the academic shades

of Rookwood—not to mention a sprinkling of new boys, of whom Jimmy Silver was one.

"Black Monday" seemed to have terrors for the Rookwood boys. From the junior portion of the special train's hum-cargo, at least, there came loud sounds indicative of great exuberance of spirit. The seniors, who were awfully select carriages by themselves, were naturally more sedate. But the juniors fairly let themselves go.

From one carriage came "Tipperary" a tremendous chorus; from another proceeded an improvised concerto of mouth organs and tin-whistles. In the corridor it was a corridor train—some particularly exuberant fags were attempting a game leap-frog under difficulties.

In Jimmy Silver's carriage everybody was talking at once, excepting Jimmy. He was speaking to nobody, and nobody was speaking to him. He didn't know a soul there. His existence was unnoticed, excepting when somebody trod on his feet, and unreasonably asked him if he wanted all the carriage.

He was only a new boy. He looked on and listened, greatly interested in the talk of his future schoolfellows, and wondering whether any of these old hands would condescend to notice his existence before they arrived at Rookwood.

"'Nother quarter of an hour," said a boy with curly hair and a prominent nose, looking at a big silver watch. "Mind you fellows keep an eye open for the first brake!"

"Right-ho, Tommy Dodd!"

"There's never enough brakes," went on Tommy Dodd, "and if we don't buck up, Lovell and his crew will do us in the eye. I tell you, you chaps, we're simply going to give those Classical cads the kybosh this term!"

"Hear, hear!"

"All very well with your 'Hear, hear,' Tommy Cook. But how can a fellow Hear, hear," when Doyle is making such aumping row on that mouth-organ?" said Tommy Dodd. "Chuck it, Tommy, for goodness' sake!"

Doyle—evidently the youth with the mouth-organ was Doyle—blew harder, glaring defiance over the mouth-organ.

Jimmy Silver regarded the three with interest. All three of these cheerful youths seemed to rejoice in the Christian name of Thomas. From their previous talk, Jimmy had guessed that they were pals.

Evidently they took full advantage of the pal's privilege of putting things plain.

Tommy Dodd put his fingers to his ears. Tommy Cook followed his example. Tommy Doyle blew and blew till he looked like a newly-boiled beetroot.

"Oh, my hat!" said Tommy Dodd. "Look ere, young Doyle, if you want to play that hastily thing, why not play a tune? 'Tipperary,' for instance."

"Yes; play us 'Tipperary,' there's a good chap!" said Tommy Cook.

Doyle took the mouth-organ away from his lips at that.

"You silly asses! You burling fatheads! You—you—I am playing 'Tipperary'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Was that 'Tipperary'?" ejaculated

Tommy Dodd. "My only hat! First I thought it was 'Rule Britannia,' mixed up with the 'Dead March in Saul,' and then I thought you were just blowing away to make a row! Throw it out of the window, old chap! Besides, there's a new boy here. Think of the impression you're making on him."

"Blow the new boy!"

"Blow anything you like, my son, except that awful mouth-organ!" said Tommy Dodd. "Go out in the corridor and play it to the Classics. They deserve it."

"Why, you—you—"

"Order!" said Tommy Dodd, holding up his hand. "I'm going to talk to the new boy. He's here somewhere—I remember treading on something! Where's that new boy?"

"Here it is!" said Tommy Cook, who was sitting next to Silver, and jamming him uncomfortably in the corner. "I've trodden on it several times. These new boys are always getting in the way."

"Stand up, new boy!" rapped out Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver blinked at Tommy Dodd.

"Deaf?" demanded that youth.

"Eh? Are you speaking to me?" demanded Jimmy, in his turn.

"Of course I'm speaking to you! You're the only new boy here, ain't you? Stand up!"

Silver stood up. Cook promptly appropriated his place, and there did not seem much chance of the new boy sitting down again.

"Now, what's your name?" asked Tommy Dodd.

All the fellows in the carriage were looking at Silver now, apparently becoming aware of his existence for the first time.

As a new boy, and a stranger, he possessed a certain amount of interest for them. Interest in the mouth-organ solo had quite ceased.

"Jimmy Silver."

"And you're coming to Rookwood with a name like that?" said Tommy Dodd disparagingly.

"I—I suppose so. What's wrong with my name?" asked Jimmy rather warmly.

"Not so much as there is wrong with your face!" replied Master Dodd cheerfully. "You can't help the one any more than you can the other, I suppose. When did you have your accident?"

"My—my accident? I haven't had an accident!"

"You haven't?" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, in great surprise. "You don't mean to say that you were born with your face like that?"

There was a chuckle from the other juniors in recognition of Master Dodd's pleasantry.

The face in question became quite crimson. As a matter of fact, it was quite a handsome, sunburnt face, and there was no call whatever for Master Dodd's personal remarks.

"Behold, he blushes!" said Tommy Doyle. "These new boys are always blushing when you speak to 'em!"

"They are!" said Master Dodd. "They is! But don't be down on the poor chap—he can't help being a new boy any more than he can help his face! I'll tell you what, you chaps, if he turns out to be one of us, we'll have a whip-round and buy him a mask, or a fire-screen, or something!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You let my face alone!" exclaimed Jimmy, a little nettled. "What price your own, anyway? Was it an elephant that trod on it?"

Master Dodd's breath seemed to be taken away for a moment at that question. The other fellows chuckled still more loudly. Master Dodd pushed back his cuffs, and then nobly restrained his feelings.

"Don't you be cheeky!" he said, in a warning voice. "New boys at Rookwood have to mind their P's and Q's, I can tell you! Otherwise, they are liable to be found lying about in need of first aid. Now, young Copper—"

"Silver, please!"

"Shut up! If I tell you your name's Copper, 'nuff said!" said Master Dodd ferociously. "Now, young Copper, which side are you on?"

"Which what?"

"Side, fathead! New side or old side?"

"I—I don't understand."

"Oh, I forgot you were only a new boy!" said Master Dodd patronisingly. "Understand, then, my innocent youth, that there are two sides at Rookwood. There's the mouldy old side that dates from the time of the Flood, and is quite played out and out of date—that's the Classical side. They teach you to grub up Latin roots and things on that side.

"But, just before the school could dig out of old age and general debility, they brought things round by instituting the Modern side, where we learn things that live people want to know about—see? And we have French instead of Greek, and stinks instead of Latin, and so on. That's the best idea—the Modern side. I belong to the Modern side," added Master Dodd as if that were a final clincher.

"Oh!" said Silver.

"Well, which are you? Out with it!"

"I'm going into the Classical side," said Silver modestly.

There was a general groan from all the company. Evidently the new boy had gone into a carriage occupied only by Modern youths. He began to understand, too, the Classics and Moderns at Rookwood were "up against" one another—at least, among the juniors.

"A measly Classical!" said Tommy Dodd, more in sorrow than in anger. "Mouldy grubber of Latin roots! And he had the cheek to stick himself in our carriage!"

"Awful nerve!" said Cook.

"Chuck him out!"

"Oh, draw it mild, you know!" said the new boy, in some alarm, as the Moderns all rose to their feet. "Don't rot, you know. Look here, hands off!"

"Put your gloves on before you touch him," said Tommy Dodd. "These Classical kids ain't fit to touch. Don't hurt him, as he's only a new boy, and don't know any better. Just sling him out his neck!"

"Look here, don't play the goat! I'm not going out—"

"Open the door on the corridor, Webb!"

"Right-ho!"

"Now, out with him. Can't have Classics spoiling our atmosphere!"

"Rats!" said Jimmy Silver, putting his hands. "Keep off, you silly asses! I'm not going out! I warn you I shall hit!"

"He's going to lick us all—all nine of us!" gasped Doyle, in mock terror.

"Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd of Modern juniors closed round Jimmy Silver. The new boy looked excited. He had no mind to be pitched into the corridor, and to finish the journey standing up. He kept his word and went out.

"Ow!" roared Tommy Cook. "Why, the cheeky sweep—"

"I told you—" began Silver.

"Collar him!" roared Tommy Dodd.

"All hands on deck!"

In a moment more Jimmy Silver was in the midst of a wild and whirling mass of juniors. His nice new silk hat went he knew not where. He put up a tremendous fight, and as it was difficult to get at him in the confined space of the carriage, he held his own for a few minutes. Cook and Doyle and Webb went down among the feet of their comrades, roaring.

Then many hands seized the new junior, and he was whirled over, and before he knew what was happening, he was shot bodily out of the carriage into the corridor. There he came violently in contact with an elegantly-dressed youth who was chatting with a couple of others, and both of them rolled on the floor together. The carriage door closed with a click, and there was a triumphant chuckle from the Modern juniors within.

CHAPTER 2.

More Trouble!

Ow! "Oh, my hat!"
 "You thumping ass! Where are you going to?"
 "Oh! Ow! I—I couldn't help it!"
 "Fathead!"

Jimmy Silver sat on the dusty floor of the corridor in a somewhat dizzy state of mind, and a dusty state of clothes. He blinked dazedly at the fellow he had knocked over, who sat a yard away blinking wrathfully, and holding his nose. Two other juniors were looking on and laughing.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped the elegant youth on the floor. "I'll smash him! A blessed new boy run into me like that—"

"Go easy, Lovell, old man!" said one of the two lookers-on. "Those Modern cads chucked him out. He couldn't help it."

"That's all very well, Raby—"

"Of course it is!" said Raby, helping Lovell to his feet. "Next time mind where you're running, young 'un, when you're kicked out."

Jimmy Silver staggered up breathlessly. He glanced back at his carriage, the glass was crammed with grinning Modern faces.

There was not much chance of getting back into the carriage.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry!" said Jimmy. "I couldn't help it. Those silly idiots pitched me out because I'm going to be on the Classical side at Rookwood!"

"Oh, you're a Classical, are you?" asked Raby, looking at him. "You don't mean to say you put up a fight against all that crowd?"

"What-ho!" said Jimmy promptly. "I wasn't going to be chucked out if I could help it. Are you fellows Classical?"

"Listen to that, Newcome," said Raby, addressing the third junior. "He asks us if we are Classicals. Shows he's a new boy. Don't you know, young 'un, that all the decent fellows at Rookwood are Classicals? No fellow with any self-respect would be found dead on the new side!"

"No fear!" said Newcome. "As you're a new boy, young 'un, I'll tell you something. At Rookwood you're simply got to look at a chap to see which side he's on. If he's decent, and washes his neck, he's a Classical. Otherwise, you can set him down as a beastly Modern."

Jimmy Silver grinned. This did not quite tally with what he had heard from Tommy Dodd & Co. He began to understand a little better how things stood at Rookwood.

"What's the grin about?" demanded Lovell, still a little "edgewise" from his fall, which had dusted his elegant "clobber." "New boys are not supposed to grin when they're being told things."

"I'd heard it rather differently in that carriage," Jimmy explained. "They told me the decent side was the Modern side."

Lovell sniffed.

"They would!" he replied.

"Oh, rather!" said Newcome. "Awful outsiders; they'd tell a new kid anything. Hallo, we're getting near now! Keep an eye open for the brakes, you fellows. It would be just like those Modern cads to bag the first brake, if they could."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at now?" demanded the three Classical youths together.

"That's just what they're going to do!" grinned Silver.

"My hat! Are they? We'll see about that!" said Lovell. "You fellows back me up, mind. We're going to begin this term by putting those Modern cads in their

places. You can back up, too, Silver. Watch us, and do the same as we do. Those Modern worms have a majority, and every little helps—even a fat-headed new boy who biffs into people with his eyes shut!"

"Oh, rats!" said Jimmy. "I've told you I couldn't help that, and there's no harm done, anyway!"

"You've made my bags dusty," said Lovell, frowning. "Luckily, there's time to dust them before we get in. Have you got a clothes-brush about you?"

"Hardly!"

"Use your hands, then, and sharp!"

"What for?"

"To dust my bags, fathead!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Lovell looked wrathfully at his comrades.

"I knew he would have to be licked, and you stopped me!" he exclaimed. "I've told you before that you're an ass, Raby. Look here, I may as well tell you that I am junior captain on our side at Rookwood. When I give an order to a new boy, that new boy has to obey—see?"

"No, I don't quite see!" said Jimmy. "And I'm certainly not going to dust your trousers."

"Then I'll jolly well dust your jacket!" said Lovell excitedly. "Hold on to my topper, Raby!"

"Better chuck it," said Raby. "You'll have a prefect coming along; old Bulkeley is down on scrapping in the train, too!"

"Blow old Bulkeley!" snapped Lovell. "Hold on to my topper while I teach that new boy manners."

"Oh, all right!" said Raby. "Knowles may come along—"

"Blow Knowles!"

And Lovell put his hands up, and advanced upon Jimmy Silver in a warlike attitude.

"Where will you have it?" he demanded.

"Wherever you can put it," said Silver.

"That's on your nose, then. Take that, you cheeky—Yaroooooh!"

Jimmy Silver's hands came up like lightning, and Lovell's right was knocked up, and Silver's left came out, and Lovell sat down on the dusty floor of the corridor once more, with both hands to his nose.

"Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Raby. "You've woke up the wrong passenger, old chap!"

"Why, I—I'll smash him!" roared Lovell. He leaped up and rushed at the new boy, and they clasped one another in a loving embrace, and bumped and fumbled in the narrow corridor of the train.

A big fellow in a tail-coat came along the corridor from one of the carriages farther down the train. There was a yell of warning from Raby and Newcome.

"Cave!"

"Prefect!"

But the big senior was on the scene at once. He was a big fellow, with a sharp hard face, and somewhat flashily dressed.

"Stop that row!" he rapped out angrily.

"Beginning the term in the same old style I see, you rascals!"

Lovell released Jimmy Silver. He blinked round rather breathlessly at the big Sixth-Former of Rookwood.

"It—it's all right, Knowles. I—I was only licking this new boy!"

"Bullying a new boy—eh?" said Knowles. "I'll report you for this."

Lovell's eyes flashed.

"Report and be blowed!" he exclaimed. "You're not my prefect. You look after Modern kids, Knowles, and let Classics alone!"

"I say, it's all right!" struck in Jimmy Silver. "He wasn't bullying me. It was only a scrap. No harm done!"

"Good!" murmured Raby.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked a cheery voice, as another big Sixth-Former came along the corridor with a bag in his hand. Lovell and Newcome were awfully respectful at once, somewhat to the surprise of Jimmy Silver, who did not know that the big, good-natured-looking fellow was Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood. Knowles the prefect gave the newcomer a vicious look.

"Some of your fags playing the hooligan in the corridor, that's all, Bulkeley," said. "I keep the fags on my side in a better order."

And Knowles passed on.

"First day of term, you know, Bulkeley old man!" murmured Lovell.

"And we ain't at school yet, you know," said Raby.

Bulkeley laughed good-humouredly.

"Well, draw it mild, or you'll catch it," he said. "No more scrapping in the corridor, mind that."

"Oh, no, Bulkeley!"

The captain of Rookwood went on down the corridor. The train was slackening down now, and all the fellows were preparing to move. Jimmy Silver looked curiously after the big Bulkeley, to whom he had taken a liking at once.

"I say, who's that, you chaps?" he asked.

"Well," said Lovell disdainfully, "that's Bulkeley, our captain, and the head of the Classical side."

"And that chap Knowles?"

"He's the Modern captain—and a cad."

"Hallo, the train's stopping!" said Raby. "Mind you back up for the brake."

"What-ho!"

"I'll lick you later on, new boy," said Lovell. "At present you can back me up in getting hold of the brake before those Modern cads scoff it."

"Right-ho!" grinned Silver.

The door of Tommy Dodd's carriage slid open, and the Moderns came pouring into the corridor. A battered silk hat sailed along and caught Jimmy Silver on the side of the head.

"There's your bushy, you Classical new boy!" shouted Tommy Dodd, and there was a howl of laughter.

Jimmy Silver caught his topper and smoothed it out with his sleeve rather ruefully. It was—or had been—a new topper, and it certainly looked more like a bushy than a silk hat now. The Modern young gentlemen had apparently been amusing themselves with it. However, Jimmy jammed it on his head as the train clanked to a halt, and was ready to join in the rush for the brake.

CHAPTER 3.

Classicals Against Moderns!

A BUZZING crowd poured out of the station.

Jimmy Silver looked round him in the bright sunshine. Lovell, Raby, and Newcome had been joined by a crowd of other juniors, evidently on the same side, and they came out of the little station in a body, and Jimmy Silver kept with them. But Tommy Dodd & Co. were ahead, and Doyle was blowing wildly on his mouth-organ, which seemed to be the rallying signal for the Moderns.

Outside the station three brakes were drawn up. Tommy Dodd & Co. were swooping down on one of them, and Tommy Dodd was first in. Jimmy noticed that the Modern juniors seemed to outnumber the Classical side, and they were turning up in great numbers at the blast of Doyle's mouth-organ.

The Moderns, Jimmy further observed, were distinguished with red ribbons in their caps, while the Classics wore blue. They were the rival colours of Rookwood. And Jimmy could not help seeing that a good many fellows with red ribbons were slacking about instead of helping Lovell & Co. in their enterprise of bagging the brake. Apparently the Classical side was not the most energetic side at Rookwood.

"Back up!" roared Lovell. "Back up, Classics!"

But a rush of red-ribboned youths swept Lovell and his friends aside, and the Moderns piled into the brake. On top of the brake Doyle was already seated, blowing great guns on his mouth-organ. Half a dozen Moderns round him had produced pea-shooters, with which they opened an effective fire on the Classics in the crowd.

"Come on!" yelled Silver, highly excited, and surprised to find himself falling into the ways of Rookwood so soon. "Back up!"

And Jimmy clambered on the brake, in spite of shoves, pushes and thumps from the swarm of Modern juniors.

"Hallo, here's that new boy again!" roared Tommy Dodd. "A Classic! Kick him out!"

"Back up!"

Jimmy Silver went whirring off the brake, and again his topper flew off. This time it was trodden on by a Modern boot, and after that its state was hopeless. But Jimmy was too excited to think about toppers just then. He caught Lovell by the arm as the Classics were swept back in the crowd.

"Come on!" he panted.

"N.G.!" snapped Lovell. "There's too many of them. Half our side are slacking instead of backing up! Rotten slackers!"

"What about the other brakes?"

"They're for the seniors. Mustn't touch them."

"Oh, have another try!" exclaimed Raby. "If we don't get the brake, we've got to

hang about an hour waiting for it to come back, or else walk. Come on!"

"Make those slackers back up, then!" howled Lovell. "Here, Townsend, lend a hand, can't you? They'll get the brake!"

Townsend, a very elegant youth, was drawing on a nice pair of kid gloves. He glanced at Lovell and shook his head.

"Too much fag, dear boy. I'm going to have a cab."

"Blow your cab! Back up, you slacker!"

"Oh, rats!" said Townsend. "None of your scrapping for me!"

"Oh, come on!" shouted Raby.

A couple of dozen Classic juniors rushed for the brake once more. But Tommy Dodd & Co. were fairly in possession. The Classics were pushed and punched away. Every seat was taken, and there were fellows standing up, and Tommy Dodd was urging the driver to start. The brake was set in motion, with Silver and Lovell clinging on the back of it. The Moderns cheered uproariously.

"Done again!" yelled Tommy Dodd. "Knock those Classic cads off! My hat, if it isn't that new boy again! Lemme get at him with this umbrella!"

"Hurrah! Give him the brolly, Tommy!"

"No good!" gasped Lovell, and he dropped off into the road; and Jimmy followed his example, just in time to escape a swipe of the brolly.

The crammed brake rolled on, the Modern juniors shouting and waving hats and caps in triumphant derision. Down the road it went towards Rookwood, and Lovell & Co. gathered outside the station in a dejected crowd.

"Done again!" growled Lovell. "If our side had backed up—"

"What can you expect from rotten slackers like Townsend?" snorted Newcome. "What do they care if we're done by the Modern cads? Blessed if I ain't sick of our side! I've a jolly good mind to become a Modern!"

"Now we've got to wait?" asked Silver.

"Of course we have! A jolly good hour, too! And when we get in those cads will be sniggering at us."

"There's the other brakes."

"Don't I keep telling you they're for the seniors?" howled Lovell, whose temper had suffered considerably from his defeat. "We can't touch 'em. Don't be such a fool!"

Make that thing look something like a ha and shut up!"

Jimmy was trying to thump his toppe into the shape of a topper again, not with much success.

"There goes Bulkeley!" said Raby.

The captain of Rookwood, with a crowd of Classical seniors, started off in one of the brakes.

The third brake, evidently intended for the Modern seniors, was still empty. Knowles, the captain of the Modern side, had gone into the tuckshop near the station with a crowd of his senior friends, and was standing treat. Lovell & Co. looked at the crowded shop, and sniffed.

"Knowles is splashing his money about as usual!" growled Lovell. "Same of Knowles! That's the best of having a moneylender for a pater."

"My hat! Is his father a moneylender?" said Silver.

"Well, Knowles says he's a banker," said Lovell. "I dare say he's a moneylender. Knowles simply reeks with quids. Disgusting, I call it! Don't grin at me, you new boy! I've got time to lick you before the brake comes back. Blessed if I don't do it, too! It will keep me warm, anyway."

"Might be a little too warm," suggested Jimmy.

"Why, you cheeky little beast! Here hold my hat, Raby!"

"Hold on!" said Jimmy, into whose active brain an idea had flashed—a daring scheme that had not entered the heads of the Classical juniors. "Look here, there's a brake standing idle—"

"That's Knowles' brake, you fathead."

"Well, Knowles is a Modern, isn't he?"

"Of course he is!"

"And ain't we up against the Moderns?"

"Hark at the chap!" growled Lovell.

"Might have been fifty years at Rookwood by the way he's talking! Never heard new kid gas so much!"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Jimmy Silver. "Look here, what's the matter with colling that brake?"

"Wha-a-at!"

"You ass!"

"I don't see it," said Jimmy Silver. "We're Classics, ain't we, and that's Modern brake? Well, let's scoff it."

Lovell & Co. stared at him speechless.

The cool nerve of the new boy took their breath away.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Raby at last. "Collar a senior brake! Why, they'd raise Cain! They'd scalp us! They'd——"

"Let 'em!"

"Let 'em! Why, you—you ass—— But I say," broke off Raby, "it would be a jolly lark if we did! Those Modern cads would never dare to scoff a senior brake!"

"Can't be done!" growled Lovell, though he was evidently somewhat taken with the idea, too. "The driver wouldn't go if we told him."

"The driver's gone into the pub," said Jimmy Silver.

"Then who's to drive, fathead?"

"I will."

"Oh crumbs! You cheeky fathead! My hat, Knowles would be waxy! We might get a licking all round! But—but it would be a dot in the eye for the Moderns!" exclaimed Lovell, his eyes glistening. "Are you fellows game?"

"Game as pie!" said Raby promptly.

"Blessed if we don't!" exclaimed Lovell. "After all, they can't eat us. And—and the brake can come back for those Modern cads."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't care if they're seniors," went on Lovell, growing bolder and yet more bold as the idea took hold of him. "Seniors or not, they're only Modern cads. And it's the first day of term. Always a bit of freedom on first day. I—I wonder if old Bulkeley would stand by us if Knowles came over raging——"

"Chance it," said Silver. "It'll be a lark, anyway. And they're better horses, and I can drive, and we'll catch up the Modern cads and race 'em to the school."

"Done!" exclaimed Lovell, quite convinced now. "We'll chance it. Buck up!"

No more time was wasted in words. Jimmy Silver clambered into the driver's seat and gathered up the reins. Knowles and his friends were still very busy in the tuckshop, where the ginger-pop was flowing freely. Lovell and Raby and Newcome piled into the brake and shouted to their friends.

There was a general gasp from the Classical crowd at their nerve. Townsend and a number more held back, evidently

not wishing to bring down the vials of Knowles' wrath upon their heads. But fifteen or sixteen bolder spirits clambered in after Lovell. Jimmy Silver cracked his whip, and the two horses started.

"All aboard!" sang out Raby. "Come on, you slackers, if you don't want to be left!"

Two or three of the Classics who had hesitated made up their minds at the last moment and rushed after the brake and clambered in. But a crowd stayed behind. There was a shout from the tuckshop as the brake lumbered away down the village street. Knowles had caught sight of that daring act of commandeering, and he came out of the shop with a bound, his face red with anger, and waved his hand frantically after the brake.

"Bring that brake back, you young sweeps!" he yelled.

But Jimmy Silver turned a deaf ear. He gave the horses a flick, and they broke into a rapid trot. Knowles started to run after the brake, and the Classical passengers, forgetting the respect due to a prefect in their excitement, yelled at him with derisive epithets.

"Yah! Go home!"

"Put it on, Knowlesey!"

"Race you to the school!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knowles stopped short, his face furious. He saw that he could not overtake the brake and that the juniors had no intention of stopping. He strode back, gritting his teeth, and bestowed a series of angry cuffs upon the Classical juniors who had remained behind, which was all the reward Townsend and his companions received for their very laudable respect for authority.

Crack, crack! went the whip.

"Don't turn us over in the ditch!" shouted Lovell.

"Oh, rot!"

Jimmy Silver evidently knew how to handle horses. He was driving exceedingly well. His handsome face was flushed with excitement and enjoyment. On his first day at Rookwood he had learned the "ropes" in a really remarkable manner, and was helping in a big score over the rival side. As for the consequences, it was quite probable that there would be the deuce to pay. But that couldn't be helped. Sufficient for the moment was the evil thereof.

"Hallo, there's old Bulkeley!" exclaimed Lovell, as the Classical senior brake was sighted ahead. "Can you pass him?"

"What-ho!"

"Give him a cheer as we go by," said Raby.

Silver cracked his whip loudly, and the Classical seniors looked back in surprise. Bulkeley stared at them as Silver swept up. There wasn't much room to pass in the lane, and some of the juniors held their breath for a moment as they swept by. But Silver managed it well.

"You young sweeps, what are you doing in that brake?" shouted the captain of Rookwood as they swept by him.

But the Classical juniors did not see fit to reply to that question. They cheered Bulkeley instead.

"Hurrah! Good old Bulkeley! Hurrah for the captain of Rookwood, and down with the measly Moderns! Hip, hip!"

Bulkeley grinned a little, and the junior brake swept on. The horses were fairly going now, and the senior brake was soon left behind. Jimmy Silver kept a keen look-out ahead for Tommy Dodd & Co.

The Modern brake was soon sighted in the winding lane. The blasts of Doyle's mouth-organ came back on the breeze. The driver, being a steady person of middle-age, was not taking it out of his cattle as Silver was doing. The Modern brake was going at a moderate jog-trot. Silver was soon close behind, cracking his whip loudly. Tommy Dodd & Co. looked back, and their eyes almost started from their heads at the sight of the Classical juniors crowded in a senior brake. Doyle even left off blowing his mouth-organ in his astonishment.

"Look at 'em!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "They—they—they've collared a senior brake! The cheeky rotters! My hat!"

"Faith, and they'll get the licking of their loaves!" ejaculated Doyle.

"Yah! Modern cads! Get aside!"

"That's the new boy!" howled Tommy Dodd. "That's the new boy driving and velping to us to let him pass. Catch us!"

"Get to the side of the road!" shouted Silver. "Do you youngsters want to be run down?"

The Modern juniors almost danced with rage. To be called youngsters by that new kid was a little too much. They glared at

Jimmy Silver in the wrecked top-hat, who was handling the brake as if he had driven a pair of horses all his life. They looked as if they would have eaten him if he had been within reach.

"The cheeky cad!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Youngsters! My hat! What is Rookwood coming to, when new boys talk like that?"

"That chap's got more cheek than the whole Classical side lumped together," said Cook. "But we're not letting him pass not much!"

"No fear!" said Tommy Dodd emphatically.

And the Modern crowd yelled and shook their fists at the brake behind, in defiance and contempt. The noses of Jimmy Silver's horses were almost touching the Modern brake now, but there was not room to pass unless the leading vehicle drew to the side. Far away in the distance ahead rose the grey old tower of Rookwood.

Crack, crack, crack! went Silver's whip.

"Pass 'em—pass 'em!" roared the Classics.

"Yah!"

"Get aside!" bellowed Silver. "We run you down!"

"Rats! Yah!"

But the staid old driver of the Modern brake did not see eye to eye with his youthful passengers. He looked round, and, seeing a vehicle trying to pass, he drew naturally to the left to give it room. The Moderns, who were all looking back, did not observe this for a moment. But they observed it when Jimmy Silver, taking instant advantage of it, drew abreast with them. Then Tommy Dodd turned round in a fury to his driver.

"Thompson, you idiot, you're not to let those cads pass us! Pull out! Do you hear? Pull out, I tell you!"

But as pulling out would have led the Modern brake to lock wheels with the other, the driver was not likely to obey. The horses were neck and neck now, and the two brakes, dashing on side by side, filled up the lane from hedge to hedge. The Moderns raved with wrath.

"Buck up!" shrieked Doyle. "You youngsters beat us, you spalpeen! Don't you see it's a race? Put it on!"

But the driver was obdurate. Farth-

head was a sharp turn, and a race round that corner would almost certainly have led to one or both of the vehicles coming to grief. So the prudent driver declined absolutely to "put it on," and the Classical brake forged ahead.

Now the Classics were looking back at their rivals, and Jimmy Silver was prompt to take the middle of the road, so that he could not possibly be passed if the other driver bucked up ever so much.

The Classical juniors yelled with joy as they swept ahead. Tommy Dodd & Co.aved and stamped and shook their fists, but they were hopelessly beaten.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" shrieked Raby. "See you later at Rookwood. Ta-ta!"

"Oh, you rotters! You spoofers! You rds!"

"Done!" groaned Tommy Dodd. "Done y the Classic jays! Done by a new boy! h, take me away and kick me, some-body!"

And in helpless wrath the Moderns watched the Classical brake sweep round the corner ahead and disappear from ght.

CHAPTER 4.

The First Day at Rookwood!

HURRAH for us!"

"Beaten to the wide!"

"Down with the Modern cads!"

"Hip, pip!"

Lovell & Co. rejoiced uproariously as the Modern brake vanished behind. Rookwood as in sight now—a grey old tower and a ase of buildings, some old and some new, eing to view above the trees. The big ites stood open, and a short, squat man as looking out, evidently surprised to see a brake with a junior schoolboy driving and ming up the road at such a spanking te.

"There's old Mack," said Lovell. "Give em a yell!"

The Classics gave the school-porter a ll as the brake came sweeping up.

"My 'at!" gasped Mack.

"Stop now, new boy. My hat, you're not owed to take the brake in!" howled vell.

But Silver was too excited to heed.

Mack the porter jumped out of the way alarm. With really wonderful skill the

new junior turned the horses in at the gate, and the brake swept in and up the gravel drive.

"Stop, you ass!"

"Stop, you fathead!"

"You'll be bagged by the Head!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Right up to the grey old School House the brake dashed in fine style. Jimmy Silver brought it to a halt outside the ivy-clad stone porch with a masterly hand. The horses stood sniffling and steaming, and Jimmy Silver jumped down from his seat, his face red and his eyes glistening.

The Classics tumbled out of the brake in a great hurry. They had beaten the Moderns hollow, and that was a great satisfaction. But some of them had caught sight of an awe-inspiring figure in cap and gown on the steps of the School House, and their hearts quaked within them at the sight of Dr. Chisholm, the reverend Head of Rookwood.

Dr. Chisholm was looking astonished. On the first day of the term many little relaxations and freedoms were allowed at Rookwood, and it was the custom of the junior Forms to take full advantage of them. But never in his experience had the Head seen a brake arrive driven by a junior boy, and dashing in style right up to the house.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

The juniors dragged off hats and caps in great haste.

"The Head!" whispered Raby, in a scared voice; and Jimmy Silver jerked off his damaged topper in a hurry.

"What does this mean?" said the Head in a rumbling voice, which sounded like thunder to the ears of the Classics. "How comes it that a junior boy is driving this brake?"

"Ahem!" murmured Lovell.

"We—we—we—" Raby began to explain; and there he stopped dead.

"Boy, what is your name? You are a new boy, I think?"

"Yes, sir. Jimmy Silver, sir."

"Why have you taken the driver's place?"

Silver turned crimson. New as he was to Rookwood, he was quite aware that it wouldn't do to explain to the Head that he had taken the driver's place in order to "dish" the heroes of the Modern Side.

"I—I— If you please, sir, I'm a new boy," stammered Silver. "I—I—I can drive, sir. I—I thought—"

"Well, well, as there has been no accident, I will say nothing about it," said the Head kindly. "As a new boy, perhaps you did not know any better—though certainly some of the others might have told you." He gave a severe glance towards Lovell & Co., who hung down their heads, and looked properly contrite. "Mack, please take charge of the brake, and send it back for the other boys."

"Yessir!" gasped the porter, who had come panting up the drive after the brake.

The Head disappeared into the house, and the Classical heroes gasped with relief. As Newcome remarked breathlessly, he had been convinced that the chopper was coming down. But the chopper hadn't come down, and the Classics were free to rejoice in their victory once more.

Mack the porter, giving Jimmy Silver a very peculiar look, led the steaming horses away. The juniors crowded into the house. Lovell and Raby and Newcome scampered off together up the wide old oak staircase, and Silver heard Lovell ejaculate:

"The end study—quick! Before some cad can bag it."

And the trio vanished.

The boys dispersed in various directions, and Jimmy Silver was left standing alone in the wide old hall. The excitement had died away, and Jimmy realised once more that he was a new boy, quite alone, and that he didn't know a soul in the school. A feeling of loneliness came over him.

What the juniors had scampered off for he could not guess, being a new boy. He did not know that they were anxious about their studies, and that it was a case of first come first served. Those who had had good studies last term were keen to regain possession of them, before rivals could put in a claim. Those who had had bad ones were keen to make a change. Everybody forgot the new boy, and Jimmy Silver was left on his own.

Not knowing what to do with himself, and finding nobody to take the slightest interest in his existence, Jimmy Silver looked round the place, and then wandered out into the quadrangle, with his hands in his pockets. He liked the look of Reekwood, and he gazed about him with great interest.

Part of the school was very ancient, but there was a mass of new buildings, which time had not yet toned down. Jimmy

Silver was still looking about him, when a brake arrived, and the Moderns came pouring in. There was a yell from the three Toms at the sight of Silver.

"There's the chap!"

"Collar him! Bump the cad!"

Jimmy Silver promptly made a run for the shelter of the house, with the whole crowd whooping after him. Tommy Dodd & Co. swooped into the hall after him, and Jimmy Silver fled up the stairs in the direction he had seen Lovell & Co. take. With the vengeful mob at his heels, he rushed on, and found himself in a wide passage, with doors on both sides, numbered in order. A crowd of his old acquaintances of the brake were here, chatting in the passage or in the doorways of the studies, and he greeted them.

"Modern cads! They're after the boy! Kick 'em out!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. halted on the landing, as the Classics swarmed to meet them. Jimmy divined that he had stumbled into the Classical quarters. There was instantly a rough-and-tumble scuffle on the big landing, in which Jimmy joined heartily, and had the satisfaction of flooring a couple of Moderns who collared him. Lovell and Raby and Newcome came dining out of the end study in the passage, and joined in the fray. It was going strong and strong, when a voice shouted up the stairs:

"Stop that noise at once!"

"Phew! That's Bootles!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "Better cut!"

And the Moderns promptly cut, followed by a howl of derision from the victorious Classics. Jimmy guessed that Bootles was a master, and he discovered later that he was the master of the Fourth—the form to which these young heroes belonged.

"Hallo, new boy!" said Lovell. "They were after you—what! Never mind—we've beaten them. And, look here, I was going to lick you—"

"Thanks!"

"But after the way you helped me, the Moderns, I'm going to let you off," Lovell generously.

"More thanks!" said Jimmy, with a chuckle. He had an idea that it was he who had fished the Moderns, but Lovell, as junior captain, was evidently bent on claiming the credit of that feat.

Lovell looked at him rather suspiciously.

"None of your cheek, you know, or I shall have to give you that licking after all."

"Don't rag the new kid, Lovell," said Raby. "He'll get enough of that. I say, what Form are you in?"

"I've been prepared for the Fourth," said Jimmy.

"Well, you'll have to behave yourself if you're coming into our Form," said Lovell. "I don't like cheeky new boys."

"Bow-wow!" said Raby. "Got your study yet, kid?"

"Oh, do I have a study?"

"Does he have a study!" said Lovell, with deep scorn. "Did you ever hear of such a fool? Don't all the Fourth have studies, ou booby?"

"Well, I—I don't know, you know. Can choose a study for myself?"

"Bootles gives out the studies," said Raby. "We generally bag 'em, and trust to luck. Bootles is a good little ass, and doesn't interfere. Pick out the best one you can see, and plant yourself in it, and if the owner doesn't like it, punch his head, ice!"

"Thanks!"

Jimmy Silver took that excellent advice, so far as picking out the best study was concerned. He went along the passage, looking in at the various studies, and came to the end one, which was undoubtedly the best of the lot. It had two windows—one looking overlooking the quadrangle—and a re-grate, and was a good deal larger than the other studies. Jimmy promptly walked into it.

"This will suit me," he remarked.

"This!" exclaimed Lovell, who had followed him in, in some surprise at his action. "This is our study!"

"It's the best of the bunch," said Silver. "That's why we've bagged it," grinned Raby. "I wasn't referring to this study when I gave you the tip. Look a bit further."

"Can't I dig in here?"

"Of course you can't!" exclaimed Newcome. "We don't want any new kids lanted on us. Get out, you ass!"

"Raby said I was to punch the owner's head if he didn't like it."

"You'd better not start head-punching here!" exclaimed Lovell. "Get on the

other side of the door, you silly fathead!"

"I don't see—"

Jimmy Silver had no time to finish. The three juniors closed in on him, and collared him, and he was lifted off his feet and bumped down in the passage. Then the study door slammed on him.

"My—my hat!" gasped the new boy.

The question of the end study was evidently settled. Feeling somewhat sore, Silver went along the passage looking for quarters. But he found the most unfeeling inhospitality on all sides. New boys, it appeared, were not wanted. Every fellow he spoke to announced that he didn't want any blessed outsiders in his study, and some of them offered to punch his head merely for making the request.

After making a round of the Fourth-Form passage, Jimmy Silver wisely decided to leave the matter to his Form-master, and wandered downstairs in search of something to eat.

CHAPTER 5.

Paying the Piper!

BIG HALL was swarming.

A high tea—which was very plentiful—was spread on a dozen tables, and all Rookwood had gathered to do justice to it.

Jimmy Silver was wedged in at a junior table amid a crowd of youngsters he had never seen before. All Rookwood had arrived long ago, and Jimmy was a little dazzled by the swarm of boys, the incessant talk, the noise, and the confusion.

The rattle of plates, the clatter of teacups, made a ceaseless accompaniment to the buzz of voices. Jimmy had brought a good appetite with him to Rookwood, and he did full justice to the good fare on the table, in spite of the strangeness of his surroundings.

While he ate he kept his eyes well about him, anxious to pick up knowledge of his new quarters and his new associates.

At another table he could see Lovell and Raby and Newcome together talking nineteen to the dozen, if not ninety. They were also exchanging defiant signals with Tommy Dodd & Co. at another table. But the presence of the seniors prevented anything more hostile than derisive gestures. The Sixth Form were there in all their

glory. Big, rugged, good-natured Bulkeley was chatting away with a group of seniors. Knowles was in the group, and Jimmy Silver, remembering the scene outside the station, was not anxious to catch Knowles' eye. He had a strong impression that the Modern captain was not the kind of fellow to forget or forgive. But, wedged in as he was among the fags, Silver was not likely to be noticed by so great a person as a prefect and vice-captain of Rookwood.

The fags at his table were talking as they munched, and Silver listened with interest while he looked about him.

"Those Classic cads are going to pot," said one youth. "Only one new boy on their side, I hear, and three on ours. If this goes on, blessed if Rookwood won't soon be all Modern!"

"And a jolly good thing, too, Lacy! Time that mouldy old Classic side was turned out," said another.

Silver realised that in his ignorance of the ways of Rookwood he had planted himself in the midst of enemies. He went on eating sedately, wondering whether they would recognise him as a Classic, and what they would do if they did.

"Awfully cheeky beggar that new kid," said Lacy. "Got more cheek than all the old lot put together, I should say. Walked off with Knowles' brake. You should have seen Knowles when he came in. Simply boiling. I shouldn't care to be in that new boy's shoes."

Silver left off eating suddenly. This was not comforting.

"Knowles has told Bulkeley, and Bulkeley said something about taking no notice, as it was first day of term," remarked another. "Catch Knowles taking no notice! He's going to scalp that new kid—simply scalp him! Shouldn't wonder if he gets him a swishing from the Head!"

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Silver involuntarily.

His remark caused the eyes of the Modern fags to turn on him. They had been too busy eating to notice him before. Messrs. Lacy & Co. regarded him with suspicious and disparaging looks.

"Hallo! That's a new boy," said Lacy. "That's not one of ours. I know that, because I gave 'em a thick ear all round, just to show 'em their places. This kid hasn't got a thick ear. He's a Classic."

It was conclusive evidence. Silver certainly hadn't a thick ear, so far; but looked as if he would not be long without that adornment, for the looks of the Modern young gentlemen were decidedly hostile.

"The very new chap who scoffed a senior brake!" said one. "That's the cad! And he's got the cheek to sit down among us!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Silver quite unintentionally, as half a dozen boots hacked him under the table.

He jumped up as he yelled, and his cup of tea went flying, the tea being hurled in hot flood upon Master Lacy's chest. And there was a whoop from Lacy that would have done credit to a Red Indian.

Every eye in Big Hall was turned to Jimmy Silver.

"Keep order there, you fags!" called out good-natured Bulkeley. "Not so much of your row!"

"It's only a Classic new boy, Bulkeley chucking his tea over Lacy."

"Well, shut up, all of you!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Knowles, whose eyes had turned towards Silver without rest. "There he is! That's the junior who collared my brake that I told you about, Bulkeley. Come here, young fellow!"

Jimmy Silver hesitated. Coming forward looked like going for a licking. But he understood that a prefect of the Sixth Form was to be obeyed, so he reluctantly squeezed away out from among the Modern fags. Those cheeky young gentlemen hacked and shoved and pinched him as he passed with great heartiness, and the new boy yelled one or twice before he escaped from them.

He came up to the group of seniors, and cast a rather wistful look at Lovell & But Lovell & Co. were gazing at the plates as if they were counting their crusts. Apparently they were too bashful to come into public attention at that moment.

Knowles fixed a pair of grey-green, pleasantly sharp eyes on Silver's red face. It was not a light ordeal for the new boy to stand there, the cynosure of all eyes, and he bore it manfully.

"So you drove off a senior brake, you?" said Bulkeley. "I remember seeing you on the road. Don't you know you mustn't touch the senior brake?"

"Yes, Bulkeley."

"And that you mustn't check a prefect—that!"

"Please, I'm a new boy," said Silver weakly.

"Well, well, if he didn't know you were prefect, Knowles—" began Bulkeley.

"Please, I did know," said Jimmy at once. Whatever might be awaiting him, he wasn't going to get out of a scrape by telling a lie.

"Oh, you did know!" said Bulkeley, a little nonplussed. "Then it was like yourumping check, you young sweep. Still, on first night, Knowles—"

"He's on your side," said Knowles, with a shrug of the shoulders. "If a fag on the Modern side checked you, Bulkeley, I could lick him, and you know it."

Bulkeley flushed; the Modern prefect's name was very unpleasant. Some of the Classical seniors frowned, and some of the Moderns grinned.

"Well, I suppose he ought to be licked," said Bulkeley reluctantly. The good-natured captain of Rookwood was averse to licking a new boy on first night. But the way the prefect had put it left him no choice.

"I should jolly well say so," growled Knowles. "Why, I had to walk from comb, because they collared the brako. There were a gang of them in it." Lovell jumped up.

"It was as much our fault as the new boy's, Bulkeley!" he called out. And there was a murmur of admiration from the Classical juniors.

They agreed that this was very decent of old Lovell. But Knowles quite plainly did not share the admiration. He scowled.

"Then you can come and take some of a medicine, you young cad," he said.

"Oh, for goodness' sake, don't let's have a general execution on first night!" said Bulkeley restively. "This young sweep's tough. Somebody fetch me a cane."

"Here's a cane," said Knowles.

He handed the captain of Rookwood a light walking-cane.

Bulkeley took it with reluctance. It was an unpleasant task for him to cane a new junior in Big Hall on first night, with all the school looking on. Knowles had placed him in a very unpleasant position; which was perhaps his object as

much as anything else. There was no love lost between the captain and vice-captain of Rookwood.

"Hold out your hand, kid," said Bulkeley gruffly.

Jimmy Silver held out his hand. The cane came down hard enough, and he squirmed. But he did not utter a sound.

"Now the other!"

Swish!

"Ow!" murmured Silver.

"Now you can clear off, and mind, don't check a prefect again, or I shall come down heavy on you!"

Jimmy Silver was only too glad to lose himself in the crowd. His hands were smarting and tingling, but he did not feel any resentment towards Bulkeley. But he felt just then that he would have liked to boil Knowles in oil.

"Is that enough?" snapped Knowles.

"I think that's enough," said Bulkeley, in so decided a tone that the Modern captain said no more, though he bit his lip.

Jimmy Silver got out of sight as quickly as he could. He did not return to the table of the Modern fags. He edged his way towards the Classical table, where Lovell & Co. were sitting. They greeted him with approving nods.

"You didn't howl much for a new boy," said Lovell.

"I didn't howl at all!" exclaimed Silver indignantly.

"Bow-wow! Why, you're jolly near blubbing now!"

"Catch me blubbing!" said Silver scornfully. "I've a jolly good mind to punch your head, Lovell!"

"Order!" murmured Raby, as Lovell half rose in his seat. "Knowles is looking this way."

"I don't care for a Modern cad, prefect or no prefect," grunted Lovell, but he sat down again.

"Can't you make room for a chap?" asked Silver. "I haven't finished my tea."

"Don't want any cheeky new kids at this table."

"Oh, rot!" chimed in Raby again. "This new kid's all right, and he's been licked. Don't be a beast, Lovell, old scout. Sit down here, new kid."

And Raby shoved Newcome, and made

room between, and Jimmy Silver wedged into the seat.

In spite of the smarting of his hands, he managed to make an excellent meal, and Raby and Newcome both condescended to speak to him, Lovell looking rather morose. The junior captain of the Classical side felt that this was something rather unusual in new kids, and that unless he was very careful, his leadership of the Classic juniors was in danger. And Lovell was mentally resolving to give the new kid a terrific licking—not from any personal motives, of course, but simply for his own good, and to put him in his place.

CHAPTER 6.

Study Mates!

"BEGINNING to look shipshape," remarked Newcome.

The three Classical chums were in their study—the famous end study. They were putting it to rights for the new term. The tremendous cleaning done during the vacation had left the study spotless as a new pin, after all the wear and tear of the previous term. It was not likely to remain long in that happy state. So far, however, only one inkpot had been upset, and a can of cycle-oil had leaked. That was really nothing.

Lovell & Co. were glad to get back into their old quarters. They had succeeded in bagging their old study; though it had been necessary to eject one or two rivals "on their necks." That, however, had been promptly and efficaciously done, and the three were in possession. And they had the cheery prospect of having the study to themselves for the whole of the term. There was only one new kid on the Classical side, and no reason why he should be planted on them. In a very cheery mood, after the feed in Hall, the three chums had come up to put their study to rights before call-over.

They had brought some possessions from home to improve their quarters. Lovell had a nice new pair of curtains, which were hung up amid great satisfaction. Raby had brought a new copper kettle, which gleamed like a new penny. Newcome had a picture. It was not exactly a work of art, but it had four colours in it, all

prominent, not to say glaring, and Newcome said it would give an artistic touch to the study.

There was one corner of the study farthest from the two windows, which was a little dusky, and Newcome said the picture would brighten it up. Raby agreed that it had better be put in a dusky corner. Otherwise, in Raby's opinion, it might have a startling effect on visitors—might even produce apoplexy or something. There was a pause in the proceedings while Newcome told Raby what he thought of him and his opinions. Then the three chums proceeded to hang the picture.

They were hanging the picture—at least Newcome was driving a four-inch nail in the wall with terrific blows from a cold hammer, and Raby and Lovell were advising him not to make a tunnel into the next study—when the door opened, and Jimmy Silver came in.

The new boy had been interviewing Mr. Bootles, his Form-master, and Lovell & Co. had not seen him since tea. He looked round as he came in, Newcome pausing to take breath. Two inches the nail still remained to be driven in, and the wall was showing signs of damage. Newcome did not hit the wicket every time.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Only you!"

"Don't you come bothering here!" said Newcome testily. "We don't want a new kid here being funny when we're putting our study to rights. You can have a go at that nail, Raby, if you like. We want to hang that picture before second call."

Raby took the hammer and stepped onto the chair. There was a clatter of falling plaster after his first doughty blow.

"My hat!" ejaculated Silver involuntarily.

Raby glared down at him. "Kick that new kid out!" he bawled. "Do you think I'm going to hang your rotten picture with him standing there cackling like a Cheshire cheese—I mean cat?"

"Here, hold on!" said Jimmy Silver. Lovell and Newcome made for him, dodged round the table upon which lay a bundle of books. "Mr. Bootles—"

"Clear out!"

"I've just been with Mr. Bootles—"

"You can go to him again, if you like."

"Will you go out on your feet or your back?"

"I'm not going out, Mr. Bootles—"

"Blow Bootles! Have you come here to talk about Bootles? Go and tell Hooker about Bootles in the next study, if you like. Get out!"

"But Bootles— Leggo! Oh!"

Lovell and Newcome seized him, and he struggled.

"I tell you—" he roared. "Bootles—"

"Brought his blessed books here, too," said Raby, from the chair. "Chuck him out, and his books after him!"

"But Bootles—" panted Silver. "Bootles has sent me to this study."

"If you've got a message from Bootles, say couldn't you say so, ass?" growled Lovell. "What does Bootles want?"

"He sent me here."

"Well, what for?"

"I'm to share this study."

"What?"

"Mr. Bootles said as there were only three in this room, and it's the largest, I'm to come here," said Silver. "He told me—"

"Crams!" yelled Lovell furiously. "Bootles wouldn't be such a beast. We're not going to stand it, anyway. A new guy planted on us—us! My hat!"

"Kick him out!" said Raby, jumping from his chair. "Nice state of things Rookwood is coming to, when a new boy is planted on us, with a dozen other studies to choose from. Out you go! Go down the passage and look for another study. Bootles won't say anything—he doesn't care a tuppenny rap."

"But I do," said Jimmy Silver sturdily. "This is the best study in the passage, and like it."

"He likes us!" roared the exasperated Lovell. "He likes our study! We'll give him something he doesn't like—"

"I shall hit out!" yelled Silver. "I warn you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why you—you greenhorn," said Lovell, "sit out! Do you know that we three are the top-hole fighting men in the Fourth—by call us the 'Fistical Three.'"

"Bow-wow!"

That "Bow-wow" was not respectful, and it was too much for the classical trio, who simply piled on Jimmy Silver.

The new boy meant business. He put up a tussle that drew other juniors round the doorway, in great admiration and interest. In the course of the battle, the new lace curtains suffered somewhat from being caught in a heavy boot and jerked down, and Newcome's picture could not be said to be improved by having a foot driven through it.

The study table was pitched into the fire-grate, and the clock came off the mantelpiece with a crash. Outside in the passage a Classical crowd looked on with intense enjoyment. They cheered on both sides with great impartiality.

"Go it, new kid!"

"Down him, Lovell!"

"Look out for your nose, Raby! My hat! It doesn't look like a nose now."

"What's the matter with your eye, Newcome?"

"That chap is a terror—a top-hole terror! What nerve!"

But the odds were too great. Jimmy Silver's powers as a fighting-man won wide admiration. But the Classical three got him out at last. He was hurled bodily into the passage, and collapsed there, without an ounce of breath left in him. The door slammed on him.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You put up a good fight, by gad!" said Townsend, the dandy. "By gad, you did! But you're a cheeky kid, all the same."

"Time those bounders in the end study were taken down," remarked Hooker.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Silver dazedly.

"Fancy tackling the three of them!" said Jones minor. "What a nerve! What was the row about, new boy?"

"That's my study," gasped Jimmy. "I'm going in."

"They'll eat you, if you do. Listen to their sweet voices now," grinned Jones minor.

Jimmy staggered to his feet. He was very dusty and breathless, and he required his second wind before he could carry the proceedings farther. From within the end study excited voices could be heard. There had been a good deal of damage done in that terrific encounter, and the Classical trio were wrathful.

The juniors cleared off, leaving Jimmy to recover his breath. Jones minor kindly hinted to him to get himself tidy, as the

bell for the second call-over would go soon.

"I'm going to have my study," said Silver.

"You mustn't miss call-over on first night—there'll be the deuce to pay if you do," said Jones minor. "A prefect will come looking for you with a cane, and he won't take any excuses, I promise you. It's in a quarter of an hour in Big Hall."

Jimmy was left alone, struggling to recover his breath. From the end study came voices in debate, as to whether the picture was still worth hanging. Newcome said the gash in it wouldn't show in that dusky corner, and that it was lucky there wasn't glass in it, considering. Raby said he could hang it, and be hanged. Lovell declared that what he felt inclined to hang was that new boy.

The new boy listened. His brain was working. Roll-call in Big Hall was close at hand, and the three juniors who had ejected him had to turn up, like the rest, or be looked for by a prefect with a cane. Jimmy Silver whipped a length of whipcord from his pocket, made a loop at the end, and slipped it quietly over the door handle, and drew it tight.

Opposite the junior's study was a box-room, and the handle of that door was not far from the handle of the study door. Silver passed the cord from one to the other, and fastened it securely. That was a beginning. He looked into Jones minor's study, where he had seen a box uncorded. The rope lay on the floor, and Jones had gone down.

Silver borrowed the rope, returned to the end study, and added it to the whipcord, considerably strengthening it. As the end study door opened inwards, it was quite impossible for the three occupants of the room to get out now, unless help came from outside.

The sound of hammering had been resumed in the end study, so apparently the three had decided finally on hanging the picture. Jimmy Silver waited in the passage, grinning. He dusted down his clothes, smoothed out his collar, and retied his tie, and generally made himself a little more presentable after the rough-and-tumble. He was content to wait cheerfully. The studies were almost deserted now, the juniors going down to roll-call. The bell began to ring at last.

The hammering suddenly ceased in the end study.

"My hat! There's the bell!" exclaimed Lovell. "Leave that blessed daub—"

"Tain't a daub—"

"Well, leave it. Can't be late—you know the Head on first night always takes the roll. Ratty if a chap's late. Come on!"

There was a rattle at the door, and a tug from within. Then a surprised exclamation.

"Hallo! The door's jammed somehow."

Jimmy Silver grinned, and waited for developments.

"Oh, rot!" said Raby. "How could jam? Gimme hold of it!"

Tug! Then a grunt from Raby.

"It is jammed, by gum!"

The bell was still ringing. There were excited voices—more excited than ever the end study now. As Jimmy Silver realised, it was awfully important not to be late for call-over when the Head was taking the roll.

"Lay hold!" panted Newcome desperately. "I'll take the blessed thing with both hands, and you hold on to me, and all pull together!"

"Right-ho!"

The door strained and creaked under the pressure put on it. But it did not open.

"N. G.!" howled Lovell. "Let up! 'Tain't jammed! Some young idiot has fastened that door outside! I'll skin him! I'll scalp him! I'll slaughter him! I will!"

"Shut up!" roared Raby. "No time for jaw now. The bell's stopped. Hall out there! Undo this door at once, whatever you are! Do you hear?"

"Hear, hear," said Silver.

"Why—why, it's that new boy!" exclaimed Lovell, in tones of concentrated wrath. "That new kid, by Jove! Open this door at once, you out there!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you we've got to get down to roll-call!" yelled Lovell. "We shall be gated for a half-holiday, and licked—licked by you idiot! Open the door!"

"Good-bye!"

"Come and let us out, some of you fellows!" shrieked Newcome.

"They're all gone!" chuckled Silver. "And I'm going! Good-bye, and keep your peckers up! It's a long, long way to calling-over, but I wish you luck!"

"Hold on!" shouted Lovell, through the keyhole, as Jimmy's footsteps retreated. "I say, you new boy, don't go! Let us

out! I say, what'll you take to let us out? I—I'll stand you a whack in my hamper and I won't lick you! Honest Injun!"

"Not good enough!" replied Jimmy Silver.

"What do you want, you young villain?" yelled the hapless three together.

"I want my study."

"Wha-a-t?"

"I want my study," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "I'm sharing that study with you. I want you to promise to let me in and take it in a friendly way."

"Never, you rotter!"

"Never, you new kid!"

"Good-bye, then!"

"Here, hold on!"

"Sorry, I can't stop, I shall be late for roll-call," said Jimmy Silver calmly.

"Good-bye!"

"Oh, my hat! Stop!"

"I say Silver, let us out, there's a good chap."

"Jimmy, old man, open the door like a good fellow! We mustn't miss roll-call! I say—"

"Last time of asking," said Jimmy coolly. "Word of honour to let me into my own study, and keep the peace, or I'm off."

"Oh, the beast!" groaned Raby. "The rotter! He's got us fixed properly, Lovell, old man! What do you say?"

"Never! yelled Lovell. "Dictated to by a new boy. By Jove, I'll see him hanged first!"

"You can't see the Head hanged though—were already late! I say, new kid, don't go—"

"I'm going."

"I—I promise!" yelled Raby. "Honour bright! After all, Lovell, Bootles put him in here. Let the beast have his whack in the study!"

"Same here!" yelled Newcome. "Open the door, you new kid, I promise!"

"What about Lovell?" asked Silver.

"I—I'll smash you! I'll squash you! I'll—I'll—I'll—" said Lovell incoherently. "I'll make little tiny pieces of you! I say, don't go, you young villain! We must get out! I—I—I promise!" gasped Lovell at last. "You share the study! Honour bright! Now open the door!"

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy Silver's pocket knife whipped

through the rope and whip cord, and the study door flew open. Three infuriated juniors came out, panting. Jimmy Silver looked at them with a friendly, smiling face.

"All serene!" he said. "We'll be pally yet! Better get a move on or you'll be late!"

Lovell choked back something and started on a wild run for Hall. Raby and Newcome raced after him, and Jimmy Silver raced after them.

They were just in time to squeeze themselves in at the big door as the names of the Fourth began to be called.

After roll-call Jimmy carefully carried his books into the end study. This time they were not pitched out into the passage, neither was their owner ejected on his neck.

It was a bitter pill for the Classical three to swallow, but they had given their word and they kept it. But Jimmy found the atmosphere of the study decidedly chilly. He did not seem to mind much.

"Don't be ratty!" he urged his new study mates. "You know I'm in the right, you know. And you'll find me all right—A. 1., in fact, top-hole! I'm quite an easy chap to get on with."

The Classical three glared, and did not reply.

"Like Achilles sulking in his giddy tent—what?" said Jimmy. "Never mind, I'll stand it as long as you do! I'll wait for you to come round!"

And the new boy, comfortably ensconced in the end study and undismayed by the majestic frowns of Lovell & Co., waited cheerfully for them to come round.

CHAPTER 7.

First Night at Rookwood!

THERE was an incessant buzz of voices in Big Hall.

It was First Night at Rookwood.

First Night was always somewhat free and easy. Though it was close upon bed-time, not even the youngest fags showed any signs of getting off to the dormitories. Fellows who had met from all four corners of the kingdom had heaps of things to say to one another, and they were all saying them at once.

Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, centre of an admiring crowd of seniors, was laying down the law on the subject of footer during the coming term. Groups of juniors were relating tall stories of wonderful doings in the holidays. New boys wandered about like lost sheep, or sat, with eyes and mouths open, staring at their unaccustomed surroundings, and wondering whether they would ever feel at home at Rookwood, like that chap Lovell, or that nervy boulder Tommy Dodd.

There was one new boy, however, who did not bear the remotest resemblance to a lost sheep. That was Jimmy Silver, of the Fourth. Jimmy Silver strolled into Hall with his hands in his pockets, looking perfectly cool and self-possessed. Indeed, Knowles of the Sixth, the captain of the "Modern" side at Rookwood, bestowed a cuff on him in passing simply because he looked so very much "all there."

But Silver did not seem at all cast down by that sign of Knowles' disapproval. He only sniffed disdainfully, and dodged. He was quite satisfied with himself. For was not he on the "Classical" side—the old old side at Rookwood; the gentlemanly side—as Lovell called it—and was not Knowles simply a measly Modern?

And although Jimmy Silver had only belonged to Rookwood for a few hours, he had already learned to entertain a tremendous scorn for the Modern side, from the oldest prefect down to the youngest fag.

But even Jimmy Silver, cool and cheerful as he was, wished that he had somebody to speak to in that buzzing crowd. He would have liked to add his voice to the general din. He approached Lovell and Newcome and Raby, his new study-mates, but they gave him the "marble eye," and turned their backs on him.

They resented having the new boy—Jimmy Silver—planted in their study, and they meant to let him know it. Jimmy indulged in another sniff, this time at the Classical juniors, and walked away, and leaned up against one of the pillars in the old hall and looked on at the animated scene. Snatches of talk came to his ears from all sides, oddly.

"Yaas, I tell you winter sports are the thing." This came from Townsend, a

Classical dandy. "We had simply a top-ping time—top-hole, you know."

"That ass Smythe footer captain! N this term!" came from Towle, a Modern junior. "The biggest ass on the Classical side—what!"

"Elections to-morrow, Towle—"

"It's spelt 'ski,'" went on Townsend drawing voice, "but you pronounce 'she'—"

"My hamper hasn't come yet. I've spoken to the dame about it."

"Hallo, here's that new boy!"

Jimmy Silver looked round quickly as he heard that last remark. Three juniors bore down upon him—Tommy Dodd, and Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle, of the Modern side. Jimmy looked at them with a smile. He had had some little trouble already with the three Modern heroes, but he was quite prepared for more.

"Here he is!" repeated Tommy Dodd surveying the new boy with a severe glance. "The cheeky beggar who collared a Modern brake to get from the station and left our prefect to walk!"

"And got licked for it," said Cook.

"Not licked enough, to judge by his looks," said Doyle.

And the three Tommies frowned majestically at the new boy. Jimmy Silver laughed.

"You Modern worms wouldn't have had the nerye, would you?" he suggested.

"Still the same cheeky ass he was in the train," said Tommy Dodd. "Did you fellows notice him tucking into supper? Just as if the whole place belonged to him. Where are your colours, you young ass?"

"My colours?" repeated Jimmy, not understanding.

Tommy Dodd laughed scoffingly.

"Did you chaps ever see such a green horn?" he exclaimed. "Don't you know we have different colours for the sides here, young Hopeful—red for the Moderns and blue for the rotters."

Jimmy Silver nodded. He remembered having noticed that distinction in the caps of the Modern and Classical fellows.

"Well, where's your cap?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"I—I left it in the lobby."

Tommy Dodd looked at his watch.

"You've got just three minutes," he said. "I suppose you wouldn't know,

being a new boy," he went on patronisingly. "But the Head always goes round on First Night, speaking to new kids, giving 'em a word of encouragement, you know. Says nice things to them about their side, whichever it is. Making the rounds, we call it here. It's a regular institution at Rookwood on First Night."

"Oh, leave him alone, Tommy!" said Doyle. "What does it matter to us if the Head rags him? He's only a Classic."

"Well, that's so," said Tommy Dodd, hesitatingly. "But—he's a new kid, and doesn't know the ropes."

Jimmy Silver looked a little alarmed. The three Modern juniors looked preternaturally grave, and gave him pitying looks. Jimmy had been feeling that he was getting on remarkably well for a new boy. But here was evidently something that he did not know—and something of extreme importance, too, judging by the looks of the Modern trio.

"I—I say, you might as well tell me," he said.

"Hasn't Lovell told you?"

"Lovell's been cutting up rusty because I've been put into his study," explained Silver.

"No wonder, such a benighted greenhorn as you are," said Tommy Dodd scornfully. "A new chap who hasn't even heard of making the rounds—"

"But I—I'm new here, you know," said Silver. "Dash it all, you might as well tell a chap."

Tommy Dodd seemed to reflect deeply.

"Well," he said, relenting, "as you're a new kid, perhaps I might. Don't you go telling fellows on my side, though, that I've been looking after a Classical kid. They'd scalp me!"

"All right—not a word!"

"Only two minutes now," said Tommy Dodd. "I'll tell you, and chance it. You see, you can't expect the Head to know by the shape of your nose or the cut of your classic brow that you belong to the Classical side."

"I suppose not."

"Well, then, when the Head makes the round all new boys have to wear their hats or caps, as they like, so that he knows them at once. And if you don't want to get a thumping good wiggling, young innocent, the sooner you get your cap the better for you. Don't tell any of

our fellows I told you. They'd like to see you licked, as you're only a Classic new boy. Come on, you chaps, don't let's be seen talking to him, or some of the fellows will guess we gave him the tip."

And the three Tommies walked quickly away, without another word or look at Jimmy Silver. But Silver did not wait for another word or look. He was squirming through the crowd to get out to the lobby where he had left his cap. If the Head was to make the rounds in two minutes, there was evidently no time to be lost.

He dived into the lobby in search of his cap and found it, and heard the half-hour after nine strike as he came out again cap in hand. He hurried back breathlessly to Hall. He could not help thinking that it was very decent and good-natured of Tommy Dodd to give him that tip, considering that Tommy was a Modern and he was a Classic.

A good many glances were cast at Jimmy Silver as he came breathlessly into Hall with his cap on. Lovell & Co. stared at him and whispered to one another. Jimmy glanced round quickly, and was glad to see that the Head was not present. He was in time.

"By gad!" came Townsend's voice. "Look at that new boy! Bulkeley's got an eye on him! My word!"

"Silver!" came Bulkeley's deep voice, booming across the hall.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy.

"Come here!"

All eyes were upon Jimmy as he approached the captain of Rookwood. The junior felt his cheeks burn under the general scrutiny, and he wondered why everybody was looking surprised or amused. Bulkeley was frowning. Jimmy could not see that anything was the matter. He had his cap on in time, he was sure of that.

"Silver—your name's Silver—"

"Yes," said Jimmy, wondering.

"What the deuce do you mean by wearing your cap in Hall?"

"Eh?"

"What do you mean by it?" rapped out Bulkeley. "Have you got a cold in the head?"

"Nunno."

"Somebody find me a cane," said Bulkeley.

"But—but I say," gasped Jimmy, "it's all right, you know. I—I put it on on purpose, you know."

"You did, did you?" said Bulkeley. "Then it's up to me to teach you manners."

"But—but— The Head, you know"

"Eh, what's that about the Head?"

"Isn't he just going to make the rounds?"

Bulkeley stared at Silver open-mouthed.

"The what?" he stuttered.

"The rounds," said Jimmy, a little indignantly. "Don't new boys always have to wear their caps in Hall when the Head makes the rounds, so that—"

"He's mad!" said Bulkeley. "He must be! Stark dotty! Nice kind of new kids we get at Rookwood nowadays. Take that cap off at once, you young idiot!"

"Just like these Classic new boys!" came Tommy Dodd's voice, in disparaging tones. "What do you expect of 'em, Bulkeley?"

Jimmy Silver stared blankly at Tommy Dodd.

"Why, you—you—" he gasped. "You told me—"

"They've got no more manners than bears," said Tommy Dodd calmly. "Still, coming into Hall with his cap on is a bit thick even for a Classic."

"You told me," roared Silver—"you told me that the Head was going to make the rounds, and that new boys had to have their caps on—"

Jimmy's voice was drowned in a roar of laughter. The new boy at Rookwood, who had been so satisfied with himself only ten minutes ago, realised at last that his leg had been pulled by the cheerful Modern youths, and that he had been hopelessly done. His face was crimson as he blinked at the hilarious crowd. Bulkeley wiped away his tears.

"Oh, you young duffer!" he gasped. "You silly young ass! Clear off, and if I catch you wearing your cap in Hall again, I'll warm you! Dodd, you young rascal—"

But Tommy Dodd had discreetly retreated into the crowd. Jimmy Silver beat as prompt a retreat as he could. Seniors and juniors were howling with laughter, and the unfortunate victim of Tommy Dodd's little joke was only

anxious to get out of sight. But he was not allowed to escape so easily. A crowd of Modern juniors blocked his way to the door, and Towle snatched away the offending cap.

"Give me my cap, you rotter!" shouted Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy made a rush for his cap, and two or three of the hilarious Moderns tripped him, and he rolled on the floor. As he sat up breathlessly, he saw Towle parading the captured cap, elevated at the end of a poker, through the hall, amid yells of merriment. Silver picked himself up and fairly scudded out of Hall, leaving the trophy in the hands of the enemy.

CHAPTER 8.

A Dormitory Raid!

"PRECIOUS ass!"

"Hullo, where's your cap?"
"Don't you wear your hat the dorm?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver was first in the Class dormitory, and he turned very red as the rest came in and greeted him with those remarks. After the absurd scene in B Hall, Jimmy had been glad to disappear. He had inquired of the matron for his dormitory, and gone there and turned in. It was already bed-time, but as it was First Night, the Fourth did not come until nearly half an hour later.

But Jimmy Silver was not asleep. He had been, the remarks of his Form fellows would have awakened him. Lovell and Newcome and Raby stared at him with unmeasured contempt. The other laughed at him in an equally unmeasured way. Lovell & Co. felt that the new boy had brought discredit on his side by being taken in by the Moderns. And they were not slow to let him see it.

That blessed new boy, who had been "shoved" into their study, and declined to seek fresh quarters at their lordly behest; he was ass enough to have his leg pulled in full Hall by a set of Modern duffers! No wonder the Fistical Thre were indignant. They were very much inclined to yank the new junior out of bed and bump him on the floor of the dormitory.

"By gad, he's blushing!" yawned Townsend. "What a complexion! I say, young Silver, put your pillow-case on your head—quick!"

"Eh? What for?" asked Jimmy, in astonishment.

"The Head's going to make his rounds," grinned Townsend; and there was a cackle of laughter through the dormitory.

"Look here, chuck it!" said Jimmy, his face like a beetroot. "How was I to know? Dodd told me it was an old custom at Rookwood—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And that's the image they've planted in our study!" said Lovell, in tones of the most contemptuous disgust.

"Hard cheese, old chap!"

Jimmy Silver put his head on the pillow again, and closed his eyes. He was feeling the ridicule keenly. He knew that he had got on uncommonly well for a new boy until that unlucky moment when he fell into the humorous Tommy Dodd's little trap. Now it seemed as if there would be no end of it. The juniors did not tire of the subject. When Neville, a Classical senior of the Sixth, came in to see lights out, Raby yelped out to the new boy to put his hat on quick. And Neville chuckled—the great Sixth-Former actually chuckled at the joke.

Poor Jimmy wished that the dormitory floor would open and swallow him up. Neville put out the light, and cleared off, and the Classic Fourth-Formers were left to themselves. The Modern juniors evidently had another dormitory. After the prefect had gone, there was a buzz from bed to bed. Late as the hour was—past ten o'clock—the juniors were not thinking of sleep yet.

"Election's to-morrow," said Lovell. "And mind you all turn up, and mind you rot all the fags. We've got to be in strong force. If the Modern cads beat us at elections, we may as well give up the game."

"They've got more fellows than we have," said Townsend.

"Yes; but they're generally guzzling in the tuck-shop, or mucking about with some filthy chemicals, or photographs, or huckstering, or something, like beastly Modern cads as they are!" said Lovell. "They won't all turn up. What do they

care about the clubs? But Tommy Dodd will pull it off if he can."

"I say, what are elections?" came an inquiring voice from the new boy's bed.

Lovell snorted.

"Of course, being a new kid, you don't know."

"How the dickens should I know?" said Jimmy warmly. "Why can't you tell a fellow, instead of talking out of your neck?"

"I'll tell you," said Raby. "Elections is where a fellow wears his cap—"

Raby was interrupted by a loud laugh, and Jimmy subsided into silence.

"May as well tell the chap, though," remarked Newcome. "New boys have votes, and every vote counts in the elections."

"Yes, that's so," admitted Lovell. He sat up in bed. "Listen to me, young Silver. Second day of term the school elections are held. The senior clubs elect their officers, and so on—lot of rot, I call that! That doesn't matter to us. But we've got a footer club in the juniors, see? We don't see why we shouldn't have elections if the seniors do. Well, practically everybody is in the clubs, and the Modern cads are sure to try to carry it."

"I thought you were up against the Moderns?" said Jimmy, puzzled.

"So we are, ass!"

"But they belong to the same club?"

"The junior school club, of course. We have our own teams as well—Classical and Modern—but for outside matches we have to play a combined team."

"Oh, I see!"

"Of course, we could make up a Classical team for School matches, so far as that goes, but we don't, because—because—"

"You're too modest?" suggested Jimmy.

"Don't you start being funny, young Silver. We consider it only the right thing to let those Modern cads have some sort of a look-in," said Lovell loftily.

"Besides, they pay their subscriptions," remarked Hooker.

"Oh, shut up, Hooker! As if that's got anything to do with it!" said Lovell irritably.

"Well, new kid, you see now how it is. We hold the meeting after lessons to-morrow—"

"In Hall?" asked Jimmy.

"The senior elections are held there, fathead!"

"But the junior elections are just as important, I suppose?"

"Of course they are. Still, we don't want to—to inconvenience the seniors, so we hold our elections in the junior Common-room. We used to hold them in the woodshed, but there isn't room enough there now those Modern cads have taken to bringing in every possible man to vote. There's simply no meanness they would stick at to beat us at elections."

"Are you going to take every possible man?"

"Of course, idiot!"

"Well, if you do, why shouldn't they

"Hark at the silly fathead!" said Lovell wrathfully. "Why don't he go over to the Modern side and have done with it?"

"Well, I only wanted to know——"

"You know what I tell you, and that's enough. After lessons to-morrow, you take jolly good care to turn up in the Common-room, and vote for our man. That's what you've got to do."

"Who's our man?"

"Smythe of the Shell. You'll know him—a swankin' ass with an eyeglass."

"Good footballer, I suppose?"

"Rats! No, rotten!"

"Then what the dickens do you want to elect him skipper for?"

"Because he's a Classical, you silly ass! Haven't you got any patriotism?" bellowed Lovell.

"Well, I'd rather have a good skipper if I'm going to play in the team," said Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You play in the team!" snorted Lovell. "You—you idiot! About another dozen terms, and you may be allowed to try your luck. Don't be a silly ass! And if you don't come up and vote for Smythe, you'll be scalped, slaughtered, and ragged—see?"

"But why not put up a better man?" demanded Silver, who evidently had a thirst for information.

"Oh, you ass! We've got lots better in the Fourth, of course, but the Shell fellows won't vote for a Fourth-Former; they're too high and mighty. The louts think they're almost seniors. And as they stand

by Smythe, we stand by him too, to keep the Modern cads out. If we split the vote the Moderns will romp home. Now do you see?"

"That's all very well, but——"

"Oh, shut up! You know what you've got to do now?"

"I haven't decided yet."

"What!"

"I haven't decided how I shall vote," said Jimmy coolly.

"My only hat! If you voted Modern you'd be cut dead by every chap on this side, as well as slaughtered and boiled in oil!" said Lovell excitedly. "You—your unpatriotic beast!"

"Have him out and bump him!" said Raby. "He's got too much cheek for a new boy!"

"Hear, hear!"

But just as Lovell & Co. were turning out of bed, with perfectly ferocious intentions towards the new boy, the door of the dormitory was thrown suddenly open, and a voice, recognisable as that of Tommy Dodd, was heard to howl:

"Go for the cads!"

"Give 'em socks, the Classic rotters!" howled Tommy Cook.

And Lovell, forgetting all about the new boy, shouted:

"Look out! Modern cads! Back up, Classics!"

CHAPTER 9.

Back to Back!

THERE was a rush of feet in the darkness of the dormitory, a swiping of pillows, and howls and gasps galore.

Jimmy Silver sat up in bed, blinking round him in the gloom, wondering. A light gleamed out—a match, and then a candle. The light flickered upon a peculiar scene.

A dozen juniors in pyjamas, armed with pillows, had suddenly invaded the Classic dormitory. Tommy Dodd & Co. were taking advantage of the liberties allowed on First Night to raid the dormitory of the rival party. They had come with their pillows for a pillow-fight, but it looked more like a rout than a fight, for the Classics were taken quite by surprise, and Townsend and some more of the slackers

remained in bed instead of backing up as Lovell commanded.

The rush of the Moderns carried all before it. Lovell & Co. were knocked right and left, and fellows were "pillowed" out of bed and rolled on the floor amid gasps and howls and yells.

The three Tommies were well to the fore, laying about them with their pillows like ancient Crusaders with their battle-axes.

The Classics who backed up were sent spinning, and the Moderns carried the attack to the fellows who remained in bed.

There was a yelp from the aristocratic Townsend as he was dragged out by the ears and landed on the floor with a bump. Bedclothes were hurled right and left, pillows and bolsters and mattresses and the juniors' clothes flung round the dormitory by the victorious raiders till the room looked as if a hurricane had traversed it.

"Back up!" gasped Lovell, staggering to his feet. "Back up, I say! Turn out, you slackers!"

Lovell went over again under Tommy Dodd's pillow. The Moderns had not been in the room five minutes, and already, in the glimmering candlelight, it looked a wreck. Then Tommy Dodd & Co., fearful of a visit from a prefect with a cane, retreated towards the door.

That was where Jimmy Silver came in. The new boy had been too surprised to join in at first. But he quickly realised that all hands were wanted. And even as Tommy Dodd called out to his valorous followers to clear, Silver darted to the door, closed it, and turned the key in the lock, and faced the Moderns, his pillow in his hands.

"Back up!" he was shouting in his turn. "Don't go to sleep on the floor, Lovell! Get a move on, you fellows! Back up, Classics!"

Jimmy had no time for more. The Moderns were keen to get out of the dormitory now, and they rushed on him in a body. Like Horatius of old on the bridge, Silver faced the rush of the enemy, hitting out mighty swipes with his pillow. The great Tommy Dodd himself was bowled over, and Cook went sprawling across him, and Doyle across Cook. Then Jimmy was down on the floor, with two or three Moderns scrambling over him, and Towle dragged at the door. Towle gave a yell:

"Where's the key?"

The key was somewhere on the floor, under the struggling heap of juniors. The escape of the Moderns was cut off. And the Classics, having recovered from the surprise, were coming on now, and numbers were on their side.

Lovell & Co. led the attack gallantly, and the Moderns were hemmed in round the door.

Jimmy Silver stumbled to his feet in the midst of the Moderns, and brought his pillow into play again. Fortune no longer smiled on Tommy Dodd & Co. They had wrecked the dorm., but their escape was barred. They were outnumbered and they were surrounded.

"Give 'em socks!" gasped Lovell. "Oh, what a ripping wheeze to lock the door! Collar the cheeky rotters! Bump 'em over!"

"Pile in!"

"Back up, Moderns!" gasped Tommy Dodd; and then he went down again, and Jones minor sat on him and kept him there. Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle were also on the floor, very much sat upon.

All the Classics were in the fray now, strong in numbers; even the ineffable Townsend had seized a bolster and joined in. The tables were turned.

"Go for the cads! Sit on 'em! Hurrah!"

"Ow! Gerroff!"

"Wow Gerroff my head, you idiot!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Down and out!" yelled Raby, as the last Modern was floored and a Classic junior jumped on him and pinned him down.

"Hurrah for us!"

"Hip-pip-hurrah!"

"Not so much of your hip-pip, or we shall have a blessed prefect here!" panted Lovell.

"Not on first night," grinned Newcome. "Old Bulkeley's deaf on first night. That cad Knowles would chip in, but, thank goodness, he's on the other side! Now we've got all the cads, and we're going to execute 'em."

"What ho!"

The Classical juniors were cl'r'ruping with triumph. Every raider was on the floor, pinned down by a Classic junior, and struggling to escape, but struggling in vain.

"Ow, you rotters!" groaned Tommy

Dodd. "Lemme gerrup, and I'll lick any two of you! Ow!"

"What a nobby wheeze to lock the door!" chuckled Raby. "Who did it?"

"I did!" panted Silver.

"Like your cheek to chip in!" said Raby, rather unreasonably. "Still, we've got 'em now. Keep still, Doddy. If you wriggle, your face gets trodden on—"

"Grooh!"

"I warned you. My word, what a haul! Twelve Modern cads in the cart. We're going to make an example of you, Doddy!"

Lovell waved his hand commandingly. Lovell was master of the ceremonies now.

"Tie 'em up!" he said.

"Wha-at!"

"Tie 'em up!" repeated Lovell firmly.

"Back to back!"

"My hat!"

"Then they can wriggle home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you rotters—" roared Tommy Dodd. "Grooooooh!"

"I warned you," said Raby again, as his foot caressed the face of the furious Modern leader. "You will have it."

"Oh, crumbs! Grooh!"

"I—s-say!" gasped Tommy Cook. "We c-c-can't get back to our dorm., you know, if you fix us up like that. Now—"

"You can carry one another pickaback," said Lovell cheerfully. "Take it in turns, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you rotters!" snorted Tommy Dodd. "Oh, you wasters! You— Gerroooooh!"

The grinning Classics hastened to carry out their leader's behest. Pockets and boxes were searched for whipcord, any kind of cord, to serve as bands. Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook were the first victims.

Struggling manfully, but in vain, they were rolled together on the floor, their arms placed in position, and bound tightly together. Then they were hauled upon their feet, and stood up, back to back, unable to escape from that awkward position, and panting with rage.

Pair by pair the captured raiders were tied up, back to back, till the last pair were disposed of, and six couples stood glaring and panting in the candlelight. Round them the triumphant Classics were grinning and chuckling.

Jimmy Silver hunted for the key, and the door was unlocked.

"Kick 'em out!" said Lovell. "Come back whenever you like, you know. Always glad to see you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We—we can't— Oh, you beast!"

"I tell you, you Classic cads— Oh, yarooooh!"

With howls of laughter, the Classics bundled the unfortunate raiders out of the dormitory. Fortunately, Tommy Dodd & Co. had no stairs to negotiate. They had to go down the passage, across a wide lighted landing, and then wriggle home to their own dormitory.

With gentle pushes from the foot and swipes from the pillows, the Classics helped them to start. In an awkward procession, the defeated raiders stumbled away down the passage, half of them walking backwards, and all of them growling and grumbling as they received back-kicks from one another.

"What the dickens—"

The deep voice of Bulkeley from the direction of the landing put a sudden stop to the Classic laughter. The Classics bundled back into the dormitory, closed the door, and blew out the candles in hot haste.

But for the unlucky Moderns there was no escape. In the light on the landing they had almost stumbled into the captain of Rookwood.

Bulkeley stopped dead, staring blankly at the extraordinary procession.

"What the thunder—" he exclaimed.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Don't hang on me, Towle, you ass!"

"Well don't bang me with your heels, you fathead!"

"What's this little game?" roared Bulkeley. "What are you kids doing out of your dormitory? What are you tied up like this for?"

"Ahem!"

"You—you see, Bulkeley—"

"First Night, you know, Bulkeley," said Tommy Dodd, with a feeble grin. "It—it—it's only a la-l-l-lark!"

"A lark, is it?" said Bulkeley grimly.

"You call it a lark to tie yourselves up like that and parade about the passage?"

"We—we didn't!" gasped Cook. "We—we—we—"

"We—we called on the Classic chaps, you know," stammered Doyle, "and—and—and—"

"And they fixed us up like this!" groaned Towle. "Only a—a—a lark, you know."

To their relief, Bulkeley burst into a laugh.

"Well, get off to your dorm," he said. "My hat, you look a weird sight! Wriggle away, you worms!"

The unhappy Moderns wriggled away. It took them a long time to wriggle to their own quarters. They were glad that they did not encounter Knowles or any Modern prefect during that prolonged and painful wriggling. They were panting and aching by the time they wriggled into their dorm, at last. And the fellows there greeted them with a howl of surprise and merriment.

"Oh, don't cackle!" snorted Tommy Dodd. "Come and get us loose, you fat-heads!"

"You let those Classic duffers handle you like that?" shrieked Lacy.

"Owl! They couldn't have done it. It was that new kid. He looked us in, and then—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let us loose, I tell you, you cackling dummy!"

And when they were freed at last Tommy Dodd & Co. were glad enough to turn in, and postpone to a future occasion vengeance upon the Classics. But even Tommy Dodd had to admit that on the first day of the term the Classics had distinctly scored, and that it was all due to the new boy at Rookwood.

CHAPTER 10.

Votes Wanted!

JIMMY SILVER took his place in the Fourth Form at Rookwood the next day.

He found that some lessons were shared by Classics and Moderns, but for the most part the rival juniors saw little of one another in the class-rooms.

Between Classic and Modern at Rookwood, in fact, there was a great gulf fixed.

It was not so very long since Rookwood had been wholly a Classical school. The old-fashioned curriculum had been taught there for centuries with little change. But

the spirit of modern times had penetrated even to Rookwood at last.

The Modern side had begun in a small way, with the introduction of German instead of Greek for those boys whose parents preferred it. Then the chemistry class had made its appearance—"stinks," as the Classic juniors called it, sniffing whenever they mentioned it. Then came other improvements—or otherwise, according to the view taken—till, as Lovell said sorrowfully, even book-keeping could be mugged up at old Rookwood. Indeed, Lovell asked sarcastically why they didn't institute a type-writing class while they were about it.

The Modern side, which had started so modestly, progressed by leaps and bounds, till at last it was the bigger side. Fellows, when they went out into the world, found French more useful than Greek somehow—perhaps because they did more business with modern Frenchmen than with ancient Greeks.

Book-keeping, it appeared, was a greater asset than any amount of Latin. A Modern fellow would ask you, with a superior smile, what salary you could command in the City for hexameters of the most classic finish and grace. To which the Classics would retort that it was just like a measly Modern to be thinking about disgusting money.

According to the Classic idea, there were two kinds of fellows at Rookwood now—Classics and cads. According to the Moderns, there were two kinds, classified as Moderns and duffers. Nothing could exceed the Classic contempt for French, book-keeping, stinks, and the rest, unless it was the scorn the Moderns felt for the dead languages, which, according to them, ought to be buried.

But it was not only the items in the curriculum that the Rookwood fellows disputed about. Of late, since they had grown in numbers, the Moderns had "wedged" themselves into all sorts of things that, according to the Classics, did not concern them. They did not venture to lay sacrilegious hands on old Bulkeley's position as captain of the school. But they had carried the election of their own head-prefect, Knowles, as vice-captain.

They were equally represented in the school eleven. And they made it a great merit on their part that they didn't hag all the offices in the school clubs, as their

numbers would have enabled them to do if they had been inclined to carry matters with a high hand. Indeed, there was suspicion in some quarters that Knowles had an idea in the back of his head of supplanting Bulkeley as captain of the school as soon as a convenient opportunity arrived, and the bare idea of that was enough to put every Classic's back up.

Needless to say, the juniors took even more pronounced views than the seniors. Lovell & Co. especially stood up for the Classics—not to the extent of displaying any extraordinary energy in the Form-room. Indeed, their private feelings towards Julius Cæsar and Virgil were frequently almost homicidal. Tommy Dodd & Co. were equally stubborn in their support of Modern ideas—though, again, their kind teachers had never observed them to take a sincere delight in French verbs.

But there was no doubt that the Modern side was more "go-ahead" than the Classic. Even Lovell confessed that, more in sorrow than in anger. In his own Form, Townsend and his set were slackers of the first water, much more occupied about manœuvring their hands and parting their hair than about standing up for the rights of the Classic side. While Tommy Dodd & Co. were all hustlers. But that, as Lovell would remark, was just what you might expect of Modern cads.

Jimmy Silver absorbed all this information with eager interest during his first day in the school. And he was prepared to go to any length to maintain the ancient dignity of the side he belonged to. And the great question of elections was to be decided that day, and a most important question it was.

For, from the junior point of view, the junior clubs were out of all comparison more important than the senior variety. If a Modern cad should get in as captain, all the Classics agreed that Rookwood would go to the dogs. Smythe of the Shell might be an ass—he was; he might be a swanker—he was; he might wear an eyeglass—he did; but he was a Classic, and it was the duty of all true Classics to see that he got in as captain of the junior clubs. He might be no footballer—he wasn't; he might be a rotten skipper—it was sad, but true; but he was a Classic, and Lovell & Co. were prepared to move heaven and earth to secure his re-election.

On that point Jimmy Silver had his

doubts, perhaps through being not yet thoroughly permeated with the Classic atmosphere.

After lessons the great question was to be decided, and about that time Lovell & Co. showed Jimmy Silver a new civility that was as surprising as it was pleasing. Lovell offered him a "whack" in the study bookcase, which was his private property. Newcome showed him where to "bag" a chair for his own use in the study. Ruby made him a present of a pocket-knife—of which Jimmy afterwards discovered that both blades were broken. The fact was, the Fistical Three had realised that the new boy had a will of his own—and every vote counted in a close election.

But to all hints and remarks on the matter of the election Silver responded, in an airy way, that he hadn't decided yet how he would vote.

His indecision was perhaps excusable, but it made the Classics writhe with rage. One vote might turn the scale, and stand Rookwood on the road to honour, or the path to the giddy bow-wows. And the new boy hadn't made up his mind.

Lovell & Co. darkly debated whether general licking would help him make up a bit more quickly. But the thoughtful Ruby pointed out that it might make the beast go and vote Modern out of sheer ingratitude.

They decided to get Smythe of the Shell to speak to him; and the great Smythe, who was very keen to be elected, bore down on the new junior in the quad, nobly condescending to become aware of his existence. With his beautifully-cut trouser, his diamond pin, and his eyeglass, Smythe ought to have overpowered the new kid at first sight, but Jimmy Silver seemed singularly unmoved. He looked coolly at Smythe, just as if Smythe was a mere ordinary mortal, instead of—Smythe!

"Look here," said Smythe, "you're voting for me—what!"

"I haven't decided yet how I'm going to vote," said Silver.

"Look here, when my name's called you put up your hand for me. See?"

"I haven't decided—"

Smythe clenched his fists. But he remembered the value of a vote, and unclenched them again.

"You want your own side to win—what?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"Then you must vote for me."

"Suppose you stand down, and let in a candidate who's some good?" suggested Jimmy. "You're no footballer—anybody can see that."

Smythe nearly choked.

"You cheeky young ass! Do you think any of the Shell would vote for a Fourth Form kid? They're solid for me."

"Must be awful duffers in the Shell, then!" was Silver's remark.

"Look here," roared Smythe, losing his temper, "you're going to vote for me at elections, or I'll whop you—see? And if you don't give me your word now, honest Injun, to vote for me, I'll whop you now! Now, what do you say?"

"I haven't decided yet how I shall vote," replied Silver sweetly.

Smythe pushed back his immaculate cuffs. He was much bigger than the Fourth-Former; but Jimmy looked at his weedy form and pasty complexion, and smiled. He wasn't afraid of Smythe of the Shell.

"Then I'll give you a jolly good hiding to start with!" said Smythe.

And he rushed at the new boy, intending to wipe him right off the quadrangle.

What happened next was a surprise to Master Smythe—a surprise he was a long time in recovering from.

His windmill blows were all knocked aside, and a fist that felt like a lump of lead crashed on his nose, and there was a spurt of claret.

Master Smythe sat down in the quad, greatly astonished and very much hurt. While he sat dazed, his beautiful silk topper was jammed down over his eyes, and his highly-scented cambric handkerchief was jerked out of his pocket and crammed down his back.

Smythe of the Shell sat gasping and spluttering, dabbing at his streaming nose with one hand and struggling with his topper with the other. When he recovered himself a little, and glared round for Jimmy Silver, he saw the new boy strolling cheerfully away with his hands in his pockets.

And Smythe of the Shell, for reasons best known to himself, allowed him to stroll away in peace.

CHAPTER 11.

Rival Claimants!

"HERE he is!"

It was Tommy Dodd. Jimmy's saunter through the quad had brought him near the little school shop, tucked away in a corner of the old quad. The three Tommies were in the doorway, and Jimmy Silver prepared for war at the sight of them. But the three Toms were smiling sweetly, and looking as if butter or cream would not melt in their mouths.

"Come in, kid," said Tommy Dodd.

"Have you tasted the tarts here yet?" asked Tommy Cook.

"Come and try 'em," said Tommy Doyle. "Our treat!"

Jimmy looked at them suspiciously. He suspected another jape. But the three Modern juniors walked him into the tuck-shop, and Tommy Dodd ordered tarts. Sergeant Kettle, the old soldier who kept the school shop, trotted them out. This looked like business, and Jimmy Silver thawed.

"You don't mind that little joke last night—about your cap, I mean?" said Tommy Dodd. "We always jape Classic cads—ahem!—I mean, fellows. No offence."

"Not at all," said Jimmy, tucking into his tart. It was certainly very nice. "I can take a joke."

"And you did us brown in the dorm," said Tommy Dodd. "It was you that locked the door, wasn't it?"

"You bet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the three Moderns, apparently enjoying the joke against themselves. "It was great!"

"Oh, good!" said Silver, considerably puzzled.

What the Modern heroes were buttering him up in this fashion for, and why they were standing him tarts, was a deep mystery. But the mystery was explained as he started on his second tart.

"I've heard some of your side talking about you," said Tommy Dodd. "I hear that you won't allow that ass Smythe to lead you by the nose, as he does the rest of them."

"No fear!" said Silver promptly.

"Hear, hear!" said Tommy Cook. "Britons never shall be slaves. Is it true that you haven't decided how you're going to vote, Silver?"

Then Jimmy understood. Those three extremely artful young gentlemen were after his vote. The new junior began to realise what a very important person he was.

"Certainly!" he smiled.

"That's really decent of you, Silver," said Tommy Dodd impressively. "You see, that cad Smythe is no good. He can't play footer. You should have seen how we were licked last time we played Greyfriars, because that howling ass was captain. Smythe only puts his own pals into the team, and they're all as duffy as he is. Now, I know you're too sensible a chap to vote for a duffer like that, simply because he's a Classical. The first time I saw you, I thought to myself, now here's a sensible chap."

"So did I," said Cook, with a nod.

"Same here!" said Doyle heartily. "It's a queer coincidence."

Jimmy thought the coincidence very queer indeed. Those tributes to his good sense were extremely flattering. He started on a third tart.

"Have some ginger-pop?" said Tommy Dodd hospitably.

"Oh, good!"

"You see, you're a pretty important person just now, Silver," said Tommy Dodd. "Your vote may make all the difference. If that fabulous ass Smythe gets in, Rookwood may as well throw up the sponge at once, as far as footer's concerned. Now, if I'm elected—"

"You!" said Silver.

"Yes. I'm the rival candidate."

"Oh!"

"If I'm elected, we shall finish the season in grand style. And, you see, what we've got to think of is the good of the school as a whole, not this side or that," said Tommy Dodd patriotically. "Like those giddy Greeks, you know, in the poem: 'Then none were for a party, then all were for the State.' What are you cackling at?"

"I thought they were Romans!" grinned Silver.

"I tell you they were Greeks!" said Tommy Dodd.

Silver shook his head.

"Romans!" he replied.

"Greeks, you fathead!"

"Romans, you ass!"

"You cheeky kid— Leggo my arm, Tommy Cook! I'm going to— Ahem—

ahem! Perhaps you're right, Silver," said Tommy Dodd, with a startlingly sudden change of front, as he received warning glares from his comrades. "I—I dare say they were Romans, just as you say. Have—have another tart!"

"Thanks; I will!"

"The election's going to be very close," went on Tommy Dodd, sweet and conciliatory again. "In fact, it depends on you doing the right thing, Silver."

"You bet I'll do the right thing, if I know how," said Silver.

"That's right," said Dodd approvingly. "I said at first you were a sensible chap, and wouldn't let those measly Classics—"

"I'm a Classical!"

"I—I mean those Classical chaps lead you by the nose. Now I don't mind telling you that I've been making a calculation. We can make calculations on our side," said Tommy Dodd loftily. "The fact is, if you hadn't come, the number of voters would have been just equally divided."

"I thought there were more Moderns," said Silver.

"So there are; but they don't all belong to the club," explained Tommy Dodd. "Some of 'em go in for bug-hunting instead of footer. Some of 'em are nuts on botany and stinks. Even as it is, some of them didn't join till I hammered them. And, you see, only those who've paid up their subscriptions are allowed to vote. And those chaps I licked into joining haven't all paid up their subscriptions. Tain't all lavender trying to do one's duty by the school, I can tell you. By the way, you've paid up your sub, I hope?"

Silver nodded.

"That's all right, then. You can vote. You see, last term they got Smythe in by a rotten Classical majority of four. This term there are four new kids in the Modern side. Well, we looked after 'em to day; we simply licked 'em till they agreed to join the club and pay up their subs. See? So that makes the voting exactly equal on both sides."

"Without counting me?" said Silver, understanding at last what an important position he occupied in the politics of the Lower School.

"Just so!"

"You're the only new boy on the Classical side," said Doyle. "If you hadn't

come, we should have tied. None of those cads would have voted for our man; they're too jelly mean for that. And you can bet that the Moderns are too decent to vote for a Classical idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"Now then, Doyle, don't you start ragging the new kid!" said Tommy Dodd, in an authoritative manner. "Silver's a good sort, and he's going to do the right thing. You haven't made up your mind yet, Silver?"

"Not yet," said Jimmy.

"Have another tart?"

"Thanks!"

"You see how the matter stands," urged Tommy Dodd eloquently. "With me as captain, we go ahead by leaps and bounds. We shall lick Greyfriars and St. Jim's, and that's worth something, isn't it? With that ass Smythe, we shall be wiped off the field, as usual. Now, decide how you are going to vote, old man."

"I'll think it out."

"But look here——"

"Look at the rotters!" shouted Lovell's voice in the doorway. "They've got hold of our voter! Back up, Classics!"

There was a rush of Classic juniors into the tuckshop. Evidently they had been looking for that very valuable new boy. Tommy Dodd & Co. gathered round Silver, prepared to defend him by force of arms until they had extracted his promise to vote for the Modern candidate.

"Yah! Cads!" howled Newcome.

"Trying to nobble our voter?"

"He ain't your voter!" retorted Tommy Dodd. "He's our voter! You're going to vote Modern, ain't you, Silver?"

"He'd better not!" roared Lovell. "We'll scrag him if he does! You haven't promised those cads your vote, Silver?"

"Haven't promised anybody so far," said Silver lazily.

"But he's going to——"

"He isn't!"

"Come on!" exclaimed Lovell, seizing Silver by the arm. "You come with us. Decent fellows never speak to Modern cads. 'Tain't safe to leave you here! They're mean enough for anything. You come on!"

"Let him alone!" shouted Tommy Dodd.

"Rats! He's our voter!"

"But! He's ours!"

"Modern cad!"

"Classical snob!"

"Back up, Classics!" shouted Lovell.

"Rally round, Moderns!"

"Here, I say!" yelled Silver, as he was seized on all sides by the rival juniors. "Let go! Leggo, I say! Oh, my hat! Gerrrrrrrr!"

The rivals did not let go. Jimmy Silver's vote was too precious for risks to be run with him. Lovell had evidently been making calculations, as well as Tommy Dodd, and understood the extreme value of the new junior. The Fistical Three all collared Jimmy Silver together, and Tommy Dodd & Co. promptly collared him also—and other Classics and Moderns crowded in, and all seized hold of the unfortunate voter wherever they could get a grasp.

A whirling crowd surged out of the tuckshop, with the breathless new boy struggling vainly in their midst. Neither party was inclined to yield him to the other, and it really looked as if Jimmy Silver would be divided between the two.

"Let go our voter, you Modern rotters!"

"Hang on, Moderns!"

"Drag him away!"

"Hold tight!"

"Yaroooooooooh!" came in tones of anguish from the subject of dispute. It was not all lavender to be a very valuable voter.

The juniors struggled, and swayed, and staggered to and fro, but they all held on to Jimmy Silver. The Moderns had captured his legs, and the tail of his jacket. But his arms were in the possession of the Classics, also his head, and Lovell had an arm round his neck, in a regular strangle-hold. The struggle was tremendous—especially for Silver.

"Ow! Ow! Ow, wow!" came from the victim of Rookwood politics. "Wow, wow, wow! Leggo! Grooh! I'm chook-chook-choking! Ow, wow!"

"Let go, you Modern cads! You're damaging him!"

"Damaging our voter!" howled Jones minor indignantly. "Never mind, Silver, we'll look after you. We won't let go!"

"No fear!"

"Yow! Wow, wow, wow, wow!"

"Punch their heads if they don't let go!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

"Mop up those Modern cads, you fellows."

The fight grew hotter. The necessities of attack and defence caused the rivals to

relax their hold on Silver, and he dropped to the ground among the trampling feet.

The tussle raged over him. Jimmy Silver squirmed out from among the combatants—a sorry sight—his jacket split, his trousers rumpled, and all the buttons gone from his waistcoat. He started for the School House at a run. He had had enough of both sides just then. "A plague on both your houses," was his feeling, to put it in Shakespearean language.

There was a yell from the juniors who spotted the escape of the bone of contention.

"He's mizzling!"

"After him! Collar him!"

The whole troop broke into pursuit, Classics and Moderns racing across the quad together after the fleeing voter, ready to renew the struggle as soon as he was captured. But the voter was not to be captured. He was fed up. He ran like a deer, and vanished into the School House; and without a pause sped up to the Fourth Form Classic dormitory, and locked the door after him. Then he sank, panting, on a bed.

"Oh, my eye! Oh, my, hat! The silly chumps! I've a jolly good mind not to vote at all! Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

CHAPTER 12.

The Election!

"SILVER, old man!"
It was a sweet and gentle voice through the keyhole, about a quarter of an hour later. Jimmy Silver, having got his second wind, was making some much-needed improvements in his toilet. He was looking more like himself when Lovell's dulcet tones came through the keyhole. Lovell had tried the door and found it locked.

"Hallo!" growled Silver.

"I—I hope you weren't hurt!"

Silver understood exactly how much Lovell cared whether he had been hurt or not, and so he replied with a snort.

"We backed up like anything to rescue you from those Modern cads," went on Lovell, through the keyhole.

"I didn't want rescuing," growled Silver. "They were standing me ginger-pop and jam-tarts."

"That was a rotten bribe. They were trying to corrupt you," said Lovell indignantly. "But I know you're going to do the decent thing, Silver!"

"Oh, yes!"

"And vote Classical."

"Bow, wow!"

"Look here, Silver, it depends on your vote. I've counted 'em on both sides, and it's a tie."

"I've had that from Dodd."

"So that worm's been counting, has he? Just like a Modern cad—always making some rotten calculations. They learn that rot on their side. I say, Silver, open the door."

"Rats!"

"How are you going to vote, old chap?"

Silver chuckled.

"I haven't decided yet."

Lovell breathed hard through his nose. Never had he felt so inclined to give the new junior a tremendous licking.

"I say, Silver!"

"Well?"

"If we get our man in, we're going to have a feed in the end study. You will be the guest of honour—ahem!—if you vote Classical."

"What about bribery and corruption now?" chuckled Silver.

"Time we got down to the Common-room," said Raby's voice. "Those cads will be holding the meeting without us, and getting their man in. Bootles will be there, and he won't wait."

"Silver," came Lovell's persuasive voice through the keyhole, "the meeting's coming off now. You don't want to miss it, do you?"

"No fear!"

"Then come out."

"Thanks! I'm not going to be yanked about any more. I know where the Common-room is, and I can walk there on my own."

"Those Modern cads will try to nobble you."

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here, you young scoundrel, if you dare to vote Modern—"

"Bow, wow!"

"How are you going to vote, confound you?"

"I haven't decided yet."

The grinning Silver heard a muttering

of curious voices outside the door. Then there was a sound of retreating footsteps. Jimmy waited till all was quiet in the passage, and then unlocked the dormitory door and stepped out. Immediately there was a rush of feet, and he was surrounded by triumphant Classics. Too late he realised that those wary young gentlemen had only pretended to depart, and had stolen back on tiptoes to lie in wait for him.

"Let go!" shouted Silver, as Raby took one arm, and Newcome the other, and Lovell made a hasty grab at his hair.

"We're not going to hurt you," said Lovell reassuringly. "Only just going to walk with you into the Common-room."

"Leggo!"

"Bring him along, you fellows! Those cads mustn't be given another chance."

In the midst of the Classics, Jimmy Silver was walked along the passage, and down the stairs. A crowd more fellows joined them, heading for the junior Common-room. The hour of elections was nigh, and all the fellows who had votes were anxious not to be left out. If any Classic had failed to register his vote, his life would not have been worth living on the Classic side at Rookwood afterwards—and the same was the case with the Moderns.

Fourth-Formers, and fags of lower Forms who belonged to the School club, were swarming towards the rendezvous. Classics and Moderns chipped one another, and exchanged words and howls of defiance, as they trooped in. There was a rush as the new boy was spotted, but the Classic Fourth-Formers closed round him in a solid phalanx, and marched him on triumphantly into the Common-room.

"There!" panted Lovell, as they came into the crowded room. "Now, if the beast's got a spark of gratitude, he'll vote Classical, after we've looked after him like that."

"How are you going to vote?" hissed Raby.

"Haven't decided yet," said Silver cheerfully. And Raby looked daggers, or rather machine-guns, at him. He was mentally promising the new boy all sorts of things later for keeping the anxious Classics on tenterhooks like this.

Smythe and his friends in the Shell were there in all their glory. More and more

fellows were crowding in. With the swarm of fags, there were over a hundred fellows in the Common-room. Leaving a trusty band to guard the new boy, Lovell hurried about, ascertaining whether all his backers were present.

He was really taking much more trouble about the election than the candidate himself. For Smythe, as a matter of fact, he did not care two pins. What he wanted was to get a Classic elected, and it was Smythe or nobody. All other considerations vanished before that great and important point—the alternative of Classic or Modern.

A little man, with bushy whiskers, in a gown, came into the room, and Moderns and Classics, who were ragging one another, became more orderly. The new-comer was Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth. The Form-master kindly presided at the election in order to prevent it from ending in a free fight. For, without that restraining presence, it was a dead certainty that the defeated side would have proceeded from the counting of hands to the punching of noses.

"Ahem!" said Mr. Bootles, peering round the crowded room through his spectacles. "Are we all here—what—what?"

"All here, sir," said Lovell promptly.

Lovell had ascertained that all his voters were in the room, and he was not without hopes that some of the rival party were still outside. Once the door was closed, and the counting started, late comers would apply in vain for admittance.

"Then we may proceed—what—what?"

"Hold on!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "Not all here yet, sir. Some of ours—"

"Time!" exclaimed Raby, pointing to the clock. "Look, sir—it's half-past seven! If we waste any more time, we shan't be able to do our preparation."

Mr. Bootles nodded approval.

"Quite so, Raby. I am glad to see—ahem!—that you have returned to school this term with a determination to work—what—what! A decided improvement upon last term, Raby!"

"Oh, the rotter!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Fat lot he cares about prep, the sweep!"

"What did you say, Dodd?"

"N—nothing, sir; but I think that clock's fast, sir."

Mr. Bootles consulted his watch, and



"Let go our voter, you Modern rotters!" "Hang on, Moderns!" "Yaroooooooh!"
came in tones of anguish from the hapless subject of the dispute.

compared it with the clock. The Classics watched him anxiously. They were anxious to get to business. But Tommy Dodd & Co. highly commended that deliberation of manner. Lacy and Towle were still absent. Tommy Dodd cast a desperate look down the passage. He did not dare to go in search of the missing juniors, lest he should be shut out himself.

"H'm! The clock appears to be right," said Mr. Bootles, putting back his watch. "And as Raby has very justly remarked, further delay will interfere with evening preparation—which is not to be thought of, not for a moment—what, what! Please shut the door, Dodd."

"Ye-es, sir."

"Well, you are not shutting it."

"I—I—yes, sir. It—it seems to have caught," stammered Tommy Dodd, who did not intend to shut the door, if he could help it, until Towle and Lacy were on the right side of it.

"I'll help you, Dodd, old chap," said Lovell sweetly. "Why, it's not jammed at all, Doddy. Quite a mistake on your part."

"It won't shut."

"The cad's got his boot in the way. Look here—"

There was a hurried scampering of feet in the passage, and Towle and Lacy rushed up—just in time.

"Too late!" shouted Lovell. "Shut 'em out!"

"Let 'em in, you spoofers!"

Lacy and Towle settled the matter by squeezing in. Then the door was shut, Lovell glaring at Tommy Dodd, and Tommy Dodd grinning triumphantly at Lovell. They were all there now, full force on both sides, and the momentous decision depended on the new boy—who hadn't decided how he was going to vote.

"You silly chumps, you nearly spoiled it all!" muttered Tommy Dodd fiercely to the two late-comers.

"All your fault!" said Towle indignantly. "Didn't you tell us to watch for Bulkeley's fag, and shut him up in the box-room—"

"Ahem! Silence!" said Mr. Bootles. "You must not waste time. We will proceed—what—what!"

And they proceeded.

CHAPTER 12.

Awfully Close!

THE great question was about to be decided.

The two candidates, Dodd of the Fourth, and Smythe of the Shell, were proposed by their friends, amid cheering from their respective sides.

As both sides demanded a show of hands, it was necessary to count. It was clear from the rival cheering and howling that the voting would be very close. Curiously enough, the two candidates attracted less general attention than the new boy at Rookwood—the fellow who hadn't been forty-eight hours in the school. Anxious glances were turned on Jimmy Silver from all sides.

Silver stood with his hands in his pockets, and a serene smile on his face. If he liked the limelight, he had plenty of it at that moment.

"Silver, old man, how are you going to vote?" murmured Lovell, almost in tones of anguish. And a crowd of fellows hung upon Silver's reply, as if pearls of wisdom were to fall from his lips.

"I haven't decided yet!" said Silver cheerily.

Lovell ground his teeth.

"Oh, you wait till afterwards!" he gasped.

"Eh! What did you say?" asked Silver calmly. "Wait for what, Lovell?"

Lovell smiled a sickly smile.

"The—the feed," he said feebly. "A ripping feed in the end study, you know; if our man gets in—my hamper from home—"

"We will now count—what—what!" said Mr. Bootles, apparently quite oblivious to the thrilling excitement of the situation, and only anxious to get back to his pipe in his study. "Boys in favour of Dodd will hold up their right hands."

A forest of right hands went up. Mr. Bootles proceeded, in his deliberate and solemn manner, to count. Lovell looked at Silver. The new boy still had his hands in his pockets. He wasn't going to vote for the Modern beast, anyway. At the worst now it could only be a tie. Lovell felt immensely relieved, and Tommy Dodd looked daggers. The bribery and corruption in the tuckshop had evidently been wasted

—a sheer waste of four jam tarts and two ginger-pops.

Classicals and Moderns waited anxiously for the result. Tommy Dodd had a desperate hope that some Classical at the last moment might do the right thing, and Lovell had a lurking terror that some unspeakable cad might go over to the enemy. But when the result was announced, all their doubts were set at rest.

"Thomas Dodd—fifty-four votes!"

It was the exact number of Modern juniors and fags in the assembly. Well enough the rivals knew the numbers—they had counted and recounted many times.

"Now hands up for our man!" said Lovell, with an imploring glance at Jimmy Silver.

Raby whispered to the new boy:

"I say, Silver, do you like white rabbits? I've a beauty—a real beauty—and you can have him for—for nothing if you like."

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"Have some of this butterscotch, Jimmy?" murmured Newcome.

"Thanks!"

"How are you going to vote, old fellow?"

"I haven't decided."

If Mr. Bootles had not been there, Jimmy Silver would have been massacred on the spot. Fortunately, Mr. Bootles was there.

"We will now count hands for Smythe, what—what!" said Mr. Bootles.

"Hands! Back up, Classics!"

Mr. Bootles started at the end, and came slowly towards where Lovell & Co. stood with Silver, counting.

Beseeching looks were cast upon the new junior. Silver appeared to hesitate for a moment. He drew his left hand from his pocket, and the Classics' hopes rose, while Tommy Dodd's went down to zero. Then he put it back again, and Lovell & Co. gasped, and Tommy Dodd brightened up. Then, just before Mr. Bootles reached him, he detached his right hand from his pocket and held it high in the air.

There was a gasping cheer from the Classics.

"Our game!" chortled Lovell. At that moment he felt that he could forgive that exasperating new junior everything.

"Fifty-three, fifty-four—ah, fifty-five!" droned Mr. Bootles' voice as calmly as if nothing out of the ordinary was occurring.

A cheer from the Classics and a groan from the Moderns. The die was cast.

"Silence, please! As Dodd has taken fifty-four votes and Smythe has taken fifty-five, I declare Smythe to be elected," said Mr. Bootles.

"Hurrah!"

"Smythe for ever!"

"Yah! Classic cads! Yah!"

"Our game!" roared Lovell. "Bravo, the Classics! Hurrah!"

Smythe of the Shell stood smiling and smirking. Once more he was captain of the school junior club, and free to distinguish himself on the football field in his usual manner with disastrous results to the Rookwood record.

But the Classics did not think of that. They had won the victory. They had defeated the hated foe. They had upheld the ancient honour of the Classic side of Rookwood. What did anything else matter in comparison with that! The Moderns were defeated, beaten, baffled, licked to the wide. And the Classics cheered and cheered, till the roof rang.

"I congratulate you, Smythe," said Mr. Bootles, gracefully. "Dodd, if you throw that cushion at Lovell I shall cane you." Tommy Dodd dropped the cushion. "Please do not make such a dreadful noise, my dear boys. There is really nothing to be excited about; and you must not forget your preparation. You Modern juniors will now return to your own side. I will—ahem—see you off."

Mr. Bootles knew what would happen if he left Modern and Classics in the common-room together after the election. And the defeated Moderns, thus compelled to postpone dire vengeance, were shepherded off by the thoughtful Mr. Bootles, accompanied by thunderous cheers from the Classics.

"Beaten to the wide!" chuckled Raby. "Got our man in," said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Now, what about that feed in the study, Lovell? There's time before prep."

Lovell gave him a glance.

"You jolly near turned traitor!"

"Rats!" said Jimmy Silver warmly. "Of course I meant to vote Classical all along. Did you think I would vote for a Modern rotter?"

"You said you hadn't decided how you'd vote!" roared Lovell.

"I know that; and I hadn't."

"You—you hadn't?"

"No. I meant to vote Classical, but I hadn't decided how I'd vote," explained Silver affably.

"What—why—how—"

"You see, I could have voted with my right hand or my left hand," Silver further explained. "It really didn't make a pin of difference, you know. But I finally decided how I'd vote. I voted with my right hand."

"You—you funny idiot!" burst out Lovell, when he found his voice at last. "So—so—so you were rotting us—what?"

Silver nodded cheerfully.

"Yes. I thought you were a bit too lordly, you know, the way you told me how to vote, so I thought I'd pull your leg a bit—see?"

"Why, you—you—I'll—I'll—"
Words failed Lovell.

"You'll come up to the study and stand that feed?" said Silver. "You gave your word. I suppose you're not going to back out like a beastly Modern?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Raby. "It's a fair catch, Lovell, old man. Bury the giddy hatchet. After all, we got our man in, and it was Silver's vote that did it. Come on, no scrapping after a glorious victory. Think how we've dished the Moderns. Come on!"

"Yes, make it pax, old son!" said Newcome. "I'm hungry!"

"Well—" said Lovell.

But he made it pax, and the hatchet was buried, and good-humour was fully restored in the end study, where a tremendous feed celebrated the great victory of the Classics over the Moderns. Rookwood had had, as the Classics said, an awfully narrow escape of going to the giddy bow-wows, but the situation had been saved, and it was Jimmy Silver who had saved it. And so, for that evening at least, Jimmy Silver was a personage whom the Classics delighted to honour.

CHAPTER 14.

Trouble for Three!

THERE was trouble in the end study. Excited voices could be heard proceeding from that famous apartment. Apparently four fellows were talking at once, and each doing his best to

drown the voices of the others. Grinning Fourth-Formers came along the passage and listened to the row.

"It's that new kid," remarked Topham of the fourth. "Lovell & Co. can't stand him at any price. He's got too much nerve. Gather round, my infants, and see him come out on his neck!"

And quite a crowd of Fourth-Formers gathered round to wait for that interesting event. They fully expected to see Jimmy Silver, the new junior, come out of the end study "on his neck." For a whole week, ever since Jimmy Silver had arrived at Rookwood, in fact, there had been more or less trouble in the end study. And it had evidently reached a head at last.

Inside the study Jimmy Silver was seated on the corner of the table with his hands in his trousers pockets. He was the coolest there. Lovell and Newcome and Raby, his study mates, were highly excited. Lovell, in fact, was brandishing a clenched fist in the air to lend additional emphasis to his remarks. Not that they needed emphasising. They could be heard at the other end of the passage.

"I tell you, you—" Lovell was shouting.

"And I say the same!" exclaimed Newcome. "A new kid that hasn't been a week in the school—"

"I tell you it won't do!" vociferated Raby. "And we're not going to stand it. And we're not going to stand you! We're fed up!"

"Fed right up to the chin!" roared Lovell.

"And the long and the short of it is, we won't have you in the study—"

"And if you don't get out—"

"We'll make it too hot to hold you—"

"And we'll begin now—"

Jimmy Silver took his hands out of his pockets. It looked as if he would need the use of his hands soon.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he protested.

"You can go and dig with somebody else!" shouted Lovell. "Go over to the Modern side if you like! I dare say they'd take you in! You're their sort!"

"Yes, you'd just suit the Modern cads!" chimed in Raby. "Anyway, you're not staying here. We're not taking any. Now what do you say?"

Jimmy Silver grinned. He did not seem very much put out by the excitement of

the Fistical Three. He was as cool as a cucumber. Indeed, it was his remarkable coolness which as much as anything else had an exasperating effect on his study mates.

"Oh, I say rats!" he replied.

"What!"

"Rats!" said Silver.

"That's done it!" howled Lovell. "Out he goes!" And outside the study. Topham and his companions chortled: "Now watch!"

Lovell & Co. made a rush at the cool new junior sitting on the table. Jimmy Silver's hand was resting on the inkpot. His hand came up as the three exasperated juniors closed in on him. The inkpot was full, but it was empty in a second, as a stream of black fluid met the oncoming three.

Lovell caught the first splash with his mouth, which was open, and he staggered away gurgling frantically. Raby caught it with his eyes, and Newcome with his nose. Then the inkpot was empty, and the three war-like juniors were coughing, spitting, gurgling, and gasping hysterically, smothered with ink.

"Gro-oo-o-gh!"

"Gur-rr-rgg-g-rgg-gh!"

"Oh crumbs! Oh! Yow!"

Jimmy Silver slid off the table. He made a quick step to the door. The end study was not a salubrious spot for him after that.

"Ta-ta!" he said cheerily. "See you later, and I hope you'll be a little more reasonable. I'm sticking to this study!"

"Gur-rr-rgg!"

Jimmy Silver opened the door and stepped out into the passage. There was a murmur of expectation among the crowd as the door opened. Then they stared as Silver came coolly out and walked down the passage. Then they roared at the sight of the three inky juniors in the room, dabbling wildly at the streaming ink on their faces.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo-o-gh! Oh, I'll slaughter him!"

"Yow! My eye! I'll massacre him!"

"Oh crumbs! Let's get after him and smash him!"

The inky trio rushed out of the study, shoving their way through the laughing crowd, in pursuit of the new boy. But Jimmy Silver had not lingered. He was

already downstairs. If they had been a little calmer, the Fistical Three might have hesitated to show themselves in public with their faces and collars streaming with black ink. But they were not calm. They wanted vengeance, and they wanted it at once.

They rushed furiously down the passage, and as they caught sight of Silver in the Lower Hall, they rushed down the stairs. A yell of laughter from a crowd of Modern juniors greeted their appearance.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Look at those Classical niggers! Ha, na, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell & Co. did not heed. They hardly saw their old rivals of the Modern side. They had eyes only for Jimmy Silver, who was sauntering out coolly into the quad. They dashed after him at top speed. In their hurry they almost dashed into Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, who was in the doorway.

Bulkeley stared at them and gave a shout.

"Stop! Do you hear? Come in at once!"

The inky three reluctantly stopped. There was no gainsaying Bulkeley. The big Sixth-Former glared at them.

"You young sweeps! A pretty state to come out in! What do you mean by it—what!"

Lovell & Co. blinked at him through the ink. They could not deny that they were in a very unusual state for appearing in public.

"Oh, don't mind them, Bulkeley!" chirped Tommy Dodd. "These Classical kids never wash themselves! I dare say it's a week since they spilled that ink on their chivvies!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go in at once!" said Bulkeley, frowning at the dismayed three. "Go in and wash yourselves, you mucky young rascals! And take fifty lines each, and show them up by tea-time, do you hear? Not a word. Get out of my sight, you sweeps!"

Lovell and Newcome and Raby went disconsolately in. Vengeance on the obnoxious new boy evidently had to be postponed. The Modern juniors sent a volley of laughter and chipping after them as they sneaked upstairs and got out of sight. In

the Fourth Form dormitory there was a sound of splashing as the heroes of the end study proceeded to remove the ink.

It was not easily removed. There was plenty of it, and it clung. By the time they had cleared it off and changed their collars, Lovell & Co. were crimson with exertion and stuttering with rage.

"That—that new boy!" gasped Lovell. "We'll slaughter him for this! We'll boil him in oil!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Topham as they came back to their study. "Have you slaughtered the new kid? Why—what— Yaroo!"

Topham, to his surprise and indignation, was collared by the exasperated three and bumped in the passage. The three badly wanted to bump somebody, and Topham had come along just in time with his awkward question. They went on to their study, leaving the Fourth-Former sitting on the floor and spluttering with indignation.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver was sauntering cheerfully round the quadrangle. Under the circumstances, he decided that he would give the end study a wide berth for the present.

CHAPTER 15.

Run Down!

LOVELL did not see Silver again, however, till dinner-time, when they met at the Fourth Form table.

He knew that the new boy must have been avoiding him. As a matter of fact, Jimmy had been carefully keeping out of his way. The cause was not funk, as Lovell supposed. But Silver realised very clearly that if his life was to be comfortable at Rockwood he would have to get on better terms somehow with his study mates. And a fight with Lovell was not very good as a beginning.

Although Lovell & Co. were called the Fistical Three, from their well-known prowess as fighting-men, Jimmy was not at all alarmed at the prospect of an encounter. He was a good boxer, he was strong and sturdy, he had heaps of pluck, and a really sublime confidence in himself. He was not afraid of being licked. But he was afraid of licking Lovell. If it came to a stand-up fight, he believed that he would win, and then there would be an

end to all hope of chumming up in the end study. Lovell had lost enough ground already, and a licking from the new boy would be the finish. So Jimmy sagely avoided him till he had had time to calm down.

Unfortunately, Lovell showed no signs whatever of calming down. He was, as he would have expressed it, fed up to the chin. Nothing would satisfy him save giving the new junior a terrific whopping. That was his fixed intention. He dropped into his seat beside Silver at the dinner-table, and gave him a black look.

"I want you after dinner," he muttered.

"Sorry!" murmured Silver. "I'm going out."

"You can stay in. I'm going to lick you!"

"I'm not looking for a licking, thanks."

"You'll get it without looking for it. If you're not a rotten funk, you'll come behind the gym. this afternoon."

"My dear chap, I'm going to have a look at the Coombe Quarries this afternoon. You can't expect me to give that up simply for a licking, now can you?"

"Rotten funk!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, you've got to fight me!" hissed Lovell.

"What are we going to fight for?"

"Because you're a cheeky new kid. I'm going to thrash you."

"That's all very well. But suppose I thrash you, what then?"

"You—you silly ass—"

"Look here! Will you agree to make it pax and be a decent pal if I thrash you?" asked Silver in a businesslike tone.

Lovell almost choked.

"You—you worm! I—I'll mop up the ground with you! As for palling with you, I'd sooner pal with a hyena!"

"Then I'm not going to thrash you," said Silver determinedly.

"You howling jabberwock!" exclaimed Lovell. "Do you think you could stand up against me for two ticks?"

"Lovell, you are raising your voice," said Mr. Bootles, blinking along the table. "You seem to be quarrelling. You will go to the Form-room for an hour this afternoon, Lovell, and write out a verb of the first conjugation, both active and passive voices."

Lovell gurgled. His luck was out again.

If he was to spend an hour writing out the active and passive voices of a verb of the first conjugation, the new kid would be able to dodge him, after all. That licking would not come off. And Lovell felt he couldn't wait.

But he had to wait. After dinner, when he made a move to follow the rest into the quadrangle, Mr. Bootles shepherded him off to the Form-room, where he was planted with a Latin grammar and a sheaf of impot paper.

As soon as Mr. Bootles had gone Lovell jumped to the Form-room window. He saw Jimmy Silver sauntering away, evidently bent on the visit to the Coombe Quarries that he had spoken of. Lovell shook his fist from the window after the unconscious junior.

"You wait a bit, you blessed funk!" he growled. "Oh, won't I give you a hiding presently!"

And then Lovell sat down to the joys of the active and passive voice.

An hour later he crawled wearily out of the Form-room. The Classical juniors had a tremendous contempt for the Moderns and all their studies. They held that the study of the dead languages was "the thing." They prided themselves upon mugging up Virgil while the Modern cads were busy with bookkeeping or "stinks."

Lovell might therefore have been expected to enjoy his hour with the active and passive voices of a verb of the first conjugation. But he hadn't. At all events, he did not look as if he had been enjoying himself when he came out from his detention. He looked as if he were in a mood for homicide—or manslaughter, at least.

Raby and Newcome were waiting for him. They were sympathetic.

"Where's that new kid?" was Lovell's first question. "Has he come in?"

"No," said Raby. "Never mind him now. We've been waiting for you to go down to the footer, old chap."

"Hang the footer!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Newcome indignantly. "We've waited an hour, and I want to get to the footer, for one."

"Get to it, then!" said Lovell. "I'm going to look for that new kid!"

"Oh, let him alone!" said Raby un- easily. "If he don't want to fight you, Lovell, don't pile it on him. He—he isn't such a bad chap, you know."

"Are you standing up for him?" bawled Lowell.

"Don't shout, old chap. I say he isn't a bad sort. Look how he dished the Modern cads—"

"Like his cheek!"

"Well, yes, but—"

"And he's a measly funk. I told him I was going to fight him this afternoon, and now he's sneaked off somewhere by himself."

"He didn't strike me as a funk," said Newcome. "It does look a bit like it, though. But if he's a funk he ain't worth bothering about."

"I'm going to lick him."

"Come down to the footer, there's a good chap."

"Blow the footer! I'm going after that new kid, I tell you! I know where he's gone."

"Well, I'm going down to the footer," said Raby. "See you later, Lovell. We're going to have a feed at tea, you know. I've had a postal order."

"Blow the feed!" growled Lovell. Evidently he was not in a reasonable mood.

"Must say you're agreeable this afternoon," said Raby. "As you're so jolly plain-spoken I'll follow your example. I think we've been too much down on that new kid—or, rather, you have. He's not a bad sort at all, and it would be more sensible to make pax with him. He could help us no end against the Modern cads."

"So you're backing him up against me!" snorted Lovell. "That's the kind of pals you are, is it?"

"Oh, don't you get your rag out over nothing!" remonstrated Raby. "Blessed if you don't fly out at a word. What's the matter with you? You used to be a good-tempered chap once upon a time."

"Well, if you prefer that chap to me you can back him up and leave me alone!" snorted Lovell. "But he'll come back to you with a beautiful set of features, I can promise you that!"

And Lovell strode away towards the school gates, in a towering rage.

Raby and Newcome looked after him in something like dismay.

"My hat! Old Lovell's got his back up, and no mistake," said Newcome. "Shall we go after him, Raby?"

"Let's get down to the footer. He'll feel better when he's licked the kid," said

Raby. "All the same, that chap Silver is decent, and I don't quite see being down on him like this. Come on."

They went down to the footer.

Lovell strode out of the gates and took the road towards Coombe. Jimmy Silver had told him that he was going to see the Coombe Quarries, so Lovell knew where to look for him. He strode on with a set brow and tight lips. The fellows who knew Lovell for a good-tempered and amiable fellow would hardly have known him now. His "down" on the new boy seemed to have quite changed him.

He strode along the lane at a good speed. Half-way to the village he turned off by the footpath that led to the quarries.

The old chalk quarries were abandoned now, and the spot was a very lonely one. The great yawning pits left in the earth where the quarrymen had worked years ago made the vicinity dangerous to a stranger.

But Lovell knew the ground well. He came out from the footpath amid the bracken and gorse that grew thickly over the wide expanse, and that covered up in some places the opening of the deep old pits until one was very close. And his eyes glittered now as he caught sight of a junior in Etons at a distance.

"That's the cad!"

He started towards the junior. It was Jimmy Silver. The new boy at Rookwood was spending a very cheerful afternoon exploring the old quarries on the upland near the sea. But the cheerful expression faded from his face as he caught sight of Lovell dashing towards him through the long grass and bracken. He looked worried.

"Stop!" shouted Lovell.

Jimmy Silver stood still watching him. Between him and the oncoming junior lay a wide pit which extended for a great distance in each direction. Lovell had not observed it, but the pit barred him off from Jimmy Silver. He came on at a run.

"Hallo!" called out Silver. "Looking for me?"

"Yes, you funk!"

"Mind where you're running to!"

Lovell halted, gritting his teeth with rage.

The deep cavity in the earth yawned at his very feet. It was ten feet wide, and the sides sloped steeply down. At the

bottom there was a splash as Lovell's foot detached a stone and it whizzed down in the depths. There was water down there, but in the gloom of the pit it could not be seen. The Classical junior halted, simply raging. Jimmy Silver smiled across at him.

"You funk! You've been dodging me!"

"Guilty, my lord!"

"I'm going to lick you!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Will you wait for me there till I get round?" shouted Lovell.

Silver laughed.

"No fear! I'm going for a stroll."

"Wait there, you funk—you rotter—"

"Rats!"

"Then I'll jump it!"

Lovell retreated from the side of the pit, to take a run for the jump.

Jimmy Silver stared at him in alarm.

"Don't be a mad idiot!" he shouted.

"Why, it's sixty feet deep at least!"

"Bah! Mind your own business! I can clear ten feet, I suppose!"

"But suppose you don't! Stop, I tell you! Lovell, don't be a silly ass!" yelled Silver, really alarmed now.

But Lovell did not stop. He took a rapid run and bounded across the cleft.

Jimmy Silver watched him stonily. The leaping figure came soaring across, and Lovell's feet landed, but the crumbling edge of the pit yielded under his feet. He flung himself desperately forward, clutching with his hands. Roots came out in his desperate clutch.

Silver bounded towards him, white as death. But before he could reach the unfortunate junior Lovell had slipped back. Jimmy Silver halted on the very verge of the pit.

Far below came the hollow echo of a splash. Lovell had disappeared!

CHAPTER 16.

By Sheer Pluck!

JIMMY SILVER stood paralysed on the crumbling edge of the pit. His face was white with horror.

But it was only for a moment that he stood thus. Then he flung himself on his hands and knees on the dizzy verge and peered down into the darkness below.

The bulging side of the pit alone met

his gaze. And there was silence below, after that one faint splash.

"Lovell!"

Jimmy's voice was hoarse and strained; he hardly knew the sound of it, as he called:

"Lovell! Are you hurt? Answer me!"

Only the echo of his voice replied.

"Lovell! Lovell!"

And "Lovell" answered the echo mockingly.

From the junior who had disappeared into the depths of the old quarry came no word, no sound.

Jimmy Silver staggered to his feet and cast a wild look round him. Not at that moment did he think, or care, that the fallen junior had been seeking him with bitter hostility. His only thought was for Lovell. He glanced wildly to right and left. Only the lonely uplands stretching away to the sea met his gaze. There was no help—no help!

The nearest building was far out of sight. And Lovell lay—mained perhaps; perhaps dead—at the bottom of the abandoned pit!

"It's my fault!" groaned Jimmy. "I—I've got to get to him! But how—how?"

He thought of following the edge of the pit. Sooner or later he might find where it was shallower, where he could descend in safety. He knew nothing of the lay of the land; it was his first visit there.

But the time was passing; and perhaps there was no way into the quarry, no way but—

Jimmy Silver looked over the dizzy verge and shuddered.

Could he do it? And if he fell? What had happened to Lovell? If he fell—

He set his teeth. It was barely possible that, with the aid of the clinging roots and the bulging wall of the old pit, he could climb down.

He could not leave Lovell there. He had fallen in water. He might be drowning at this very second! Every instant was precious.

Jimmy Silver made up his mind.

The Rookwood juniors would not have suspected that he was a funk if they had seen him then.

He ran along a dozen steps, to where a mass of creepers hung over the edge of the pit. He looked down, setting his teeth. It needed all his self-control to keep his

brain from reeling. But he did not tate. Lovell lay below in the deep, injured, perhaps dying, and he was going to him. He grasped the creepers, swung himself over the edge.

Fragments of earth and stone rained down upon him, and fell with splashes far below. With his teeth Silver worked his way downwards. The bulging side of the pit helped him, and down he went, digging his hands into the crevices of the clayey soil, clutching crevices, at roots, at tiny projections, till a root came out in his hands, his bright fingers slipped as he grasped, and he was himself going!

In a moment all the horror of death thrilled the junior.

He was falling—falling. Stones and earth rattled down on him; his last grasp was gone. He was falling! But there was only a dozen feet that remained, almost in an instant his feet plunged into icy water. He reeled over and fell, scrambled up again, wet and muddy, unhurt.

He panted for breath. There was dusk around him, though the sun shined on the uplands. He was aching every limb, but he did not think of that just then. The shallow water left by rain filled the old quarry from side to side, but it was more than a foot deep; and it was thick, soft mud. Jimmy Silver slipped and stumbled along, peering through the dusk for Lovell.

"Lovell! Lovell!"

Still no answer, but a sigh of relief escaped him as he caught sight of the place he sought.

In the deep dusk of the pit he saw at last. Lovell lay in the water, huddled up against the wall of the pit. His face lay back against the chalk; his face was deathly white, his eyes were closed. His legs were under water. Jimmy splashed to his side.

"Lovell! Lovell!"

He grasped the insensible junior, dragged him farther out of the water upon the strip of mud between the wall and the side. His heart was throbbing with relief. The worst had not happened. The water and the bed of soft mud had broken the junior's fall. Jimmy felt

limbs; they were sound. There was a bruise, growing blue, on his forehead—that was all. And, to Silver's joy, Lovell's eyes opened and stared at him wildly.

"Lovell, old chap—" panted Jimmy.

"Oh, my head! Oh!"

"Poor old chap! I thought you were a coner!" gasped Silver.

Lovell blinked at him, and shivered. The contact of the water was icy. It was some minutes before Lovell realised where he was, and what had happened. He tried to rise, and sank back again, panting.

"Oh, crumbs! I—I fell in!" he muttered.

"Yes. Thank goodness it's no worse!"

"How did you get here?"

"I came down for you."

Lovell stared at him.

"You—you came down?"

Silver nodded. Now that it was done, he hardly knew how he had done it. It was a wonder that Lovell was surprised.

"You climbed down?" gasped Lovell.

"You—you climbed down?"

"I had to see what had happened to you," said Silver. "You—you didn't answer when I called to you. I thought at perhaps—perhaps—"

He broke off. Thank goodness it isn't so bad as that! an you walk? We've got to get out of this."

"You came down for me," said Lovell lazily. "Then—then you can't be a funk! don't know a fellow who'd have tried."

"Never mind that. How are we to get out? You know this place better than I do—I've never been here before. Is there a way out of this?"

Lovell blinked at him.

"We can't climb out," he said.

"No fear," said Jimmy, with a glance up at the almost perpendicular walls of the pit. "Not much chance of that."

"You—you came down for me, without knowing whether there was a way out?" murmured Lovell.

"Blessed if I thought about that."

"And suppose there isn't a way out?"

"My hat!"

Silver's face became very grave. If there was no way out of the pit in that lonely place, it was not pleasant to think of what could happen to the two juniors. Their

voices would never be heard; there was no building within a mile.

"We've got to get out somehow," said Jimmy desperately. "My word! What are you grinning at, Lovell? Blessed if I can see anything to grin at in a ghastly fix like this."

"Oh, you ass!" gasped Lovell. "You—you plucky ass! Do you think I should take it so calmly if there wasn't a way out? We've got to follow the dashed pit for about half a mile, and then we can walk out easily."

Jimmy breathed more freely.

"Good! Can you trot?"

"Ow!"

"What's the matter now?"

"My ankle!" groaned Lovell. "Yow! I've twisted it!"

"Might have been your neck!" said Silver comfortingly. "Don't grumble."

"But I can't walk, you ass!"

"Lean on me."

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Lovell, as he dragged his feet from the mud. "I—I can't stand it! I—I can't! I can't put my foot down. Cut off, young Silver, and fetch help."

"Rats!" said young Silver. "If you can't walk, I'll carry you."

"You can't carry me half a mile."

"I'm not going to leave you here."

Lovell blinked at him again. This was the junior he had a "down" on—the fellow he had come out to thrash. He coloured as he thought of it.

"I'm not going to let you carry me," he muttered. "It—it's not good enough. Besides, you can't."

"Bosh! Get on my back."

"But—but—"

"You'll catch your death of cold here, fathead. Get on—pickaback."

Lovell made no further demur. He was already shaking with the cold. Jimmy helped him on his back, and started. Splash, splash, he went on through the dark water, dragging his feet heavily out of the mud at every step. It was not easy going, with thick, soft mud under his boots, the icy water swishing round his legs, and Lovell's weight on his back. But he stood it manfully. On he went, staggering sometimes, but never losing his footing. Lovell did not speak a word, and Jimmy had no

breath left for talking. In silence, save for the splashing of the water, he tramped on.

The pit was growing shallower at last; the sunlight streamed in on them. A steep slope brought them to the upper ground. The water was left behind. Jimmy stumbled on with his burden up the slope.

He staggered out upon the grassy upland at last.

There he let Lovell slide upon the grass, and sank down himself, utterly exhausted. For a quarter of an hour or more he lay in the grass, drawing quick, almost sobbing breaths.

Lovell sat in the grass, chafing his bruised ankle, and rubbing his head. He had been lucky to escape only with bruises. But he was not thinking of that. He was thinking that if Jimmy Silver had not come down to his rescue he would almost certainly have perished in the disused pit.

He remembered how Silver had found him—a little slip might have brought his head under water. And he could never have crawled away without aid, and even an hour in the icy water might have meant death to him, even if he had not been drowned. He was thinking of that as he watched the exhausted junior slowly recovering himself from the terrible strain that had been put upon him. And there was a strange expression on Lovell's handsome face.

Jimmy Silver sat up at last. He grinned as he looked at Lovell, and Lovell grinned, too. Both of them were simply smothered with mud, and barely recognisable.

"We're out of that," said Silver. "What's the next move? We've got to get back to Rookwood jolly sharp, or we shall catch our death of cold. I'm wet through."

"Same here," said Lovell. "But we needn't go to the school. The village is close here now, behind that ridge. We can get a change there, and a man to drive us home. You can't carry me to Rookwood."

"Well, I could, but I'd rather not," said Silver, laughing. He rose rather stiffly to his feet. "I shall have to carry you into the village, anyway. Come on!"

"Hold on!" said Lovell quietly.

Jimmy looked at him inquiringly.

"Your ankle hurting you? Isn't a sprain, is it?"

"No, only a thumping hard knock. But I can't walk. But—but it wasn't that I was going to say. I—I don't quite get on this. You know what I came after you for?"

"Oh, don't begin that again, old chap. You don't look much like licking anybody just now."

"I'm not thinking of licking anybody just now," said Lovell, with a muddy smile. "You can lick me if you like, and I won't say a word."

"I'll carry you into Coombe instead. Come on!"

"But I haven't finished yet. Why do you scoot off instead of scrapping? I thought you were a funk."

"Thanks!"

"Well, I know you're not a funk now, said Lovell. "A funk wouldn't do what you did. I'm not a chap to jaw, but I know what you've done for me, and I'm not likely to forget it. But why did you keep out of my way, then?"

"Because I didn't want to scrap."

"Why not?"

"I'd rather be friends."

"After—after the way I've been down on you?" faltered Lovell.

"Oh, that's all right! You didn't know me, you see. We'll get on better when you know me better," said Silver cheerily.

"I think I know you well enough now," said Lovell. "I could kick myself. I'd been an ass, Silver—and a silly ass! I'd be obliged to you if you'd kick me."

"Well, I won't!"

"It would serve me right. But there's something else you can do. After this I'll be your pal—if you care about palling with a silly idiot? What do you say?"

"Done!"

They exchanged a firm handshake on it, and then Silver took Lovell on his shoulder again.

Mrs. Wicks, at the village tuck-shop, was much astonished when a muddy junior tramped in with another muddy junior on his back. But the good lady hastened to provide them with hot water and towels, and while they were cleaning off the mud she dried their clothes by the kitchen fire, and when they had scraped as much of the mud from their clothes as was possible she took them to the Red Lion for a boots the trap from the Red Lion bore them away to Rookwood.

CHAPTER 17.

Palo!

RABY and Newcome were waiting tea for Lovell.

There was a festive spread in the end study. It was past teatime, and Raby and Newcome had prepared a really handsome spread ready for their layward chum. They sincerely hoped that he would come back in a better temper, but as the time passed on they grew a little anxious—not about Lovell, but about the food. The rashers were beautifully cooked, the toast was made, the tomatoes were done in a turn, the kettle was singing on the hob. It was ready for Lovell, and if he did not come in soon the feed would be spoiled.

"I suppose the duffer's still hunting for at new kid," said Raby, with a growl. The bacon would dry up, the silly ass!"

"And the poached eggs!" said Newcome. I must say this is rather rotten of Lovell to keep us waiting like this! Blow that new kid!"

"Hallo! Here he is!"

The door of the end study was thrown open. Lovell appeared, and he did not come alone. He was limping and leaning heavily on the arm of Jimmy Silver.

Raby and Newcome stared at them. If Lovell required an arm to lean on, they could have expected him to select any arm other than Jimmy Silver's. The two juniors could hardly believe their eyes.

"Tea ready?" said Lovell.

"Yes; but—"

"So am I. So is Jimmy."

"Jimmy!" gasped Raby and Newcome together. It was their ears that they could scarcely believe now.

"Yes. Shove a chair this way. I've hurt my hind leg, and I can hardly walk at. Look muddy, don't we?" said Lovell.

"Yes, a bit. Where the deuce have you been?"

"At the bottom of the old pit," said Lovell, as he sat down.

"Great Scott!"

"Don't be funny!" said Newcome. "You mean to say you fell in?"

"Right in."

"Then how the thunder did you get out?"

"Silver fished me out."

"Silver!" yelled Newcome. "You went out to lick Silver!"

"I've asked him to kick me for it," said Lovell. "He won't. I'm going to kick myself when my hind leg gets better. I say, I'm hungry. So's Silver. I hope you fellows are going to do the decent thing to Silver now he's my pal."

"Your—your pal!" said Raby dazedly.

"Well, he saved my life, and might have broken his neck doing it!" said Lovell warmly. "If you think I'm an ungrateful beast, Raby—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Silver. "Look here, I'm hungry! But if you fellows don't want me to tea, I'll hook it. That's straight."

"Sit down, you thundering ass!" said Raby, pushing him into a chair. "This wants a bit of getting used to, that's all. Newcome and I wouldn't have cut up so rusty but for Lovell. But we have to back him up. Last time we saw him he was thirsting for your gore. Now he's come in like a tame lamb. It wants some getting used to, that's all."

"You can get used to it while we have tea," said Lovell. "Don't I keep on telling you that I'm famished?"

The four juniors sat down to tea, Raby and Newcome still in a dazed condition. When the first edge of his tremendous appetite had been taken off, Lovell condescended to tell them the whole story. Jimmy Silver did not interrupt him. He bestowed all his attention on the rashers and the poached eggs and the toast.

"Well, my hat!" said Raby, when he had heard all. "I must say that Silver played up like a real brick. Serve you jolly well right if he'd left you down there to soak, Lovell!"

"Don't I know it?" said Lovell. "Haven't I told you a dozen times that I was an ass—not such an ass as you and Newcome, but still an ass!"

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Newcome indignantly. "Why, I liked the chap from the very first, when he dished the Modern cads, but you—"

"Same here," said Raby, with equal warmth. "It was you—you ass—"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

"Cheese it!" said Jimmy Silver, bursting into a laugh. "Let giddy bygones be bygones! We're friends now—what!"

"Hear, hear!"
 "Bosom pals!" chuckled Lovell. "Pass the rashers!"

And fellows in the Fourth who looked in on the festive scene in the end study had the surprise of their lives. The trouble in that famous study was over—quite over—and Lovell & Co. and the new kid were bosom pals.

CHAPTER 18.

On the Football Field!

"GOAL!"

"Bravo, the new kid!"

The shouts rang very pleasantly in the ears of Jimmy Silver, the new fellow in the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

Little Side at Rookwood was crowded. Nearly every junior in the old school had turned up for that match. For it was a match of unusual importance. Not only did the teams represent the rival sides—Classical and Modern—but from the players on both sides was to be selected the team to meet Greyfriars on the following Wednesday. So every fellow in the twenty-two was doing his best, in the hope of catching the eye of Smythe of the Shell, the junior captain.

And there was no doubt that Jimmy Silver was doing remarkably well. He played inside-right on the Classic side. His chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, were delighted with him. And Tommy Dodd & Co., the heroes of the Modern side, were surprised—not quite agreeably surprised. At this rate, as as Tommy Dodd grunted to his comrades, the Classical new boy would get a place in the School junior eleven, which meant one less chance for a Modern.

The match had been very hard and fast, so far. Jimmy Silver's goal was the first one taken. And they were in the second half. Smythe of the Shell was not playing himself. He was looking on—judging the form of the players, as was supposed. As a matter of fact, he spent most of the time with Townsend and Topham of the Fourth, and only glanced at the field every now and then in a patronising sort of way.

"Hallo! What's that yelling about?" drawled Smythe, looking round languidly. "That kid's scored," said Townsend.

Smythe frowned.

"That new kid—the cheeky young rep who squashed my topper on my head. By gad!"

"He will expect a place in the eleven against Greyfriars after that," Townsend, with a grin.

"Let him!" said Smythe, in a tone that did not promise much for Jimmy Silver's chances of playing for Rookwood.

Smythe of the Shell was a lordly young man, a great nut, and a good deal of a slacker. And he had not forgotten that Jimmy Silver, while he was still quite a new fellow, had had the unexampled cheek to "squash his topper on his head—an action which was equally astonishing and exasperating to the great Smythe. True, he "cheeked" the new kid, but that was a reasonable reason whatever why the new kid should cheek him!

Jimmy Silver's face was very cheerful. He walked back to the centre of the field. Lovell patted him on the shoulder.

"That was ripping, kid," he said. "simply ripping! I couldn't get up time to take the centre, but I thought you'd put it in. But you did what-ho!"

"Rotten fluke!" remarked Tommy Dodd, who overheard the remark.

Lovell sniffed.

"There's going to be some more flukes like that, you Modern bouncer!"

"You Classical fathead—"

But the whistle went, and the game resumed—just in time to prevent it from turning into one of the old-fashioned "rags" between Moderns and Classics.

Tommy Dodd & Co. put all their energy into it after the restart. It was "up" to them to play their hardest. As Smythe the skipper, was a Classical, they more than suspected that he would put as many Classics in the school team as he could. And they were determined that he should have no good reason for leaving out Modern heroes.

Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, strolled down to the ground to look on, having finished his own practice on Big Side. And the deep voice of Bulkeley was heard as Tommy Dodd & Co. broke away in line and charged down on the Classical goal:

"Bravo, young 'un!"

The encouraging voice of the captain

the school inspired Tommy Dodd. If the great Bulkeley approved of his play, even that slacker Smythe couldn't very well leave him out of the junior eleven.

And Tommy Dodd played up like a regular International. He simply streaked rough the opposing side. And in spite of the efforts of Jones minor in the classical goal, Tommy Dodd sent the ball spinning in. Then there was a roar from the Moderns crowded round the field:

"Goal! Goal!"

"Well kicked!" exclaimed Bulkeley.

And Tommy Dodd's face glowed.

But the Moderns were not to have it all their own way. There remained still ten minutes to go, and the Classics were determined to make a win of it.

The struggle was hard, and it swept away to the Modern goal, and then came hurrying back to midfield.

Tommy Dodd got away with the ball again, but a Classical back robbed him of it, and cleared, and the Classical forwards had another chance. They passed like clockwork as they swept the ball onward, fought down the field they came, with a hundred pairs of anxious eyes upon them.

"Go it, Classics!"

"Look out in goal!"

"Kick! Kick, you beggars—kick!"

Newcome had the ball on the wing. He let Jimmy Silver have it, and Jimmy lashed on, eluding a leaping half and striking round a stumbling back. But the other back was on him like a shot, and he entered just in time to Lovell. Lovell kicked the ball as Jimmy went sprawling before the charge of the back, and Lovell slammed it in before Tommy Cook, the Modern goalkeeper, could see it coming. Then there was a tremendous roar from the Classical crowd.

"Goal!" "Hurrah!" "Well kicked, Silver!" "Well kicked, sir!" "Hurrah!" Bulkeley of the Sixth dropped his hand to Smythe's shoulder, and the Shell fellow looked up at him.

"You've got some good men there for the junior school team, Smythe," said Bulkeley. "Yaas," said Smythe.

Smythe was a dandy, and affected a crawl.

"Why aren't you playing?" asked the sixth-former.

"Oh, I'm watchin' and selectin'!"

"Are you captaining the junior side against Greyfriars on Wednesday?"

"Yaas, rather!"

"Well, you'd do better to be playing instead of mooning about with your hands in your pockets," said Bulkeley.

And with that remark he walked away.

"Check!" said Smythe, waiting till Bulkeley was out of hearing before he made that remark, however. "No bizney of his. Not going to have seniors meddling in our bizney, what!"

"No fear!" agreed Townsend and Topham together. "Blow Bulkeley! You're not going to crowd the eleven with Modern rotters!"

"Catch me!" said Smythe.

And the match being over, Smythe walked away with his companions. The players came off the field, Tommy Dodd looking a little sore.

The Classics had won the match, and as a rule the Moderns beat the Classics—the Classical side at Rookwood being generally much slacker than the Modern side.

And Tommy Dodd felt that this would be an excuse for Smythe to leave Moderns out of the School eleven.

"Well, you've pulled it off, you bounders!" grunted Tommy Dodd.

The Classics chuckled.

"What did you expect?" said Lovell.

"Oh, rats!" said Tommy Dodd crossly. "It was that new kid did it. Your team's never up to ours. But I admit you've got a good man there!"

"Thanks!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"And I suppose Smythe will be shoving you into the eleven next Wednesday," said Tommy Dodd. "Well, I don't mind that, if he gives the Moderns a look-in. But if we don't have fair play you can look out for trouble!"

"Bow-wow!"

And the footballers went off to change.

CHAPTER 19.

Smythe's Selections!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. had gone to their quarters, the end study in the Fourth Form passage, to tea. They were in great spirits. That tea was an unusually festive spread, in celebration

of the victory over the Moderns. But Silver noted that there came very thoughtful expressions over the faces of his chums. Indeed, they looked at last as if a great part of the worries of the world had settled on their young shoulders.

Jimmy Silver was not worried. He did not see anything to be worried about. During his first week or two at Rookwood he had been on fighting terms with his study-mates, but all that was over now, and they were bosom pals.

The Fistical Three, as Lovell & Co. had been called, had become the Fistical Four. So everything in the garden was lovely, as far as Jimmy Silver could see. And his recent exploits on the footer-field made it practically certain that he would get his cap for the junior School Eleven—at least, he supposed so. So he was in tremendous spirits.

"What's the trouble?" he asked at last. "Anything the matter? You were looking chippy enough when we beat the Moderns. Now you're looking like a sot of boiled ows."

"I'm a bit worried," admitted Lovell.

"Confide it in your Uncle Jim!" said Silver encouragingly.

Lovell grinned.

"It's about the Greyfriars match on Wednesday," he said.

Jimmy Silver looked perplexed.

"Blessed if I see anything to worry about!" he said. "This study is sure to be well represented in the team. As the junior skipper is a Classical, he won't make the mistake of putting in too many Modern cads. Of course, he'll have to put in Tommy Dodd in the front line, and Tommy Cook in goal, and Tommy Doyle among the halves. But I don't see why the rest of the team shouldn't be Classical. You at centre, Lovell, and Newcome and myself on the right wing, and Raby at centre-half—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where does the cackle come in? Ain't that a good selection?"

"Jolly good!" said Lovell, with a chuckle. "But where does Smythe come in? And where do his pals come in?"

"My hat! I forgot Smythe. He plays centre-forward, doesn't he? Then you'll have to go on the wing."

"And his pals?" said Lovell moodily.

"Look here," said Jimmy Silver warmly,

"you don't mean to say that Smythe would be rotter enough to put in his own pals over the heads of fellows who can play."

"He always does."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"That's why we're always licked," said Raby gloomily. "In the last match Greyfriars they simply walked over. Everybody walks over us. We could make up a junior team that would lick them right, but not so long as Smythe's skipper. Last term we had only one win. Smythe an ass! What he doesn't know about football would fill big books."

Jimmy Silver stared at his study-mate. His expression was very grave.

"That isn't playing the game," he said. "A football skipper ought to make up a winning team if he can."

"Catch Smythe playing the game," growled Newcome.

"But why did you vote for him for junior captain?" demanded Silver warmly.

"Why did you?" grunted Lovell.

"Well, because he was a Classical."

"Same here!"

"It had to be done," said Raby. "Tommy Dodd only missed it by one vote, and we came jolly near having a Modern rotter for junior skipper. If you had happened to come to Rookwood it would have been a tie. You see, the Shell fellows wouldn't vote for a Fourth-Former, so was no good one of us putting up."

"The Shell fellows on the Modern side voted for Dodd."

"Yes; that's different. They were keen to get in their best footballer as skipper. But there are a lot of slackers on our side," said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver wrinkled his brows. As a new boy at Rookwood, he had voted for the Moderns at that election and turned the scale in favour of the Classical candidate. He had not thought much about the matter, except that the Moderns, as the deadly rivals of the Classical side, were to be beaten in the election. They had been beaten, and Smythe of the Shell had been re-elected on the new term as junior captain.

The results of that victory over the Moderns were now becoming apparent. Smythe and his pals in the Shell were a set of hopeless slackers and nuts, and his friends as Smythe had in the Fourth were of the same sort, like Townsend and Townsham. If Smythe made up an eleven of the

at the match would be a walk-over for Greyfriars.

"My hat!" said Silver, after a long pause. "This is jolly rotten! Why, this study worked like thunder to get Smythe elected, and now do you mean to say that it's going to pass us over, and put in howling slackers and duffers like Townsend?"

"I'm jolly certain of it."

"Then we've acted the goat, and no mistake. We ought to have voted for Tommy Dodd."

"And had a Modern cad for junior skipper! No, thanks!"

"Better than chucking footer matches away!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver warmly. "I must say you fellows have played the C. I was new here, and I didn't quite catch on. I tell you, when the cricket comes on and there's a new election, I'll all vote against Smythe, whether we get Modern skipper or not."

"Blessed if I shan't feel inclined to!" said Lovell. "It's sickening, the way we've walked over in the matches, considering that we've really got the material for a jolly good eleven. If you've finished tea, let's go down and see if the list is up. It's been posted up to-day."

The Fistical Four left the study and made their way down to the hall. Jimmy Silver was in a worried mood now, quite as much as his chums. He was a keen footballer, and whether he played in the game match or not, he wanted the school to have a chance of winning. Under the leadership of the egregious Smythe, however, it looked as if they would not have a dog's chance.

The list for Wednesday was evidently up, for there was a big crowd of juniors in front of the notice-board, and the groans and growls of indignation showed that the blame Smythe's selection did not meet with the approval of those young gentlemen. Tommy Dodd & Co. were there with a crowd of Moderns, and their faces were deeply crimson with rage.

"Here they come!" howled Tommy Dodd. "Let 'em see the list and the result of their giddy election victory. Look at you silly chumps! What do you think that for a team to meet Greyfriars?"

"Shame!" howled the Moderns.

The Fistical Four pushed their way through the crowd and read the list down. It was in Smythe's sprawling hand, and it

made them almost as furious as the Moderns. Smythe of the Shell had evidently followed his usual method of making up a team of his own pals, irrespective of the form shown by the players in the afternoon's match. Smythe was supposed to select the eleven from the best players on both sides in that match.

The list showed how much he had done so. It ran:

Lake; Selwyn, Merton; Chesney, Howard, Topham; Townsend, Lacy, Smythe, Wilton, Tracy.

In all the eleven only Tracy was a Modern and a passable player. He was in the Fourth. Of the rest, Townsend and Topham were Fourth-Formers. All the remainder of the team were in the Shell, and on the Classical side, and they were all fellows like Smythe and Townsend—nuts and slackers. The Fistical Four were conspicuous by their absence from the list, and Tommy Dodd & Co. were totally unrepresented.

Jimmy Silver stared at the list as if he could scarcely believe his eyes. He had been uneasy, but he had never anticipated anything like this. That even Smythe should be ass enough to leave out all the players and put in duffers was extraordinary. The match was as good as lost already. Not only lost, but the Greyfriars team would simply laugh at the kind of game Rookwood would put up. For once the rivalry between Classicals and Moderns was forgotten in their equal indignation against the egregious Smythe. Their rage at the sight of the list was a bond of union.

"The silly idiot!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"The crass ass!"

"The howling jabberwock!"

"Satisfied now?" howled Tommy Dodd.

"You elected him! You got him in as junior football captain! I hope you're satisfied now! My word!"

"Nearly all Shell fellows, and all Classicals but one!" shouted Tommy Doyle.

"Sure, we're not going to stand it intirely!"

"The silly ass ought to be scragged!" howled Tommy Cook. "The Greyfriars fellows will laugh us to death!"

"That's no new thing!" snorted Tommy Dodd.

The indignation of the three Tommies was tremendous. It was shared by all the Moderns.

Only one Modern in the whole team—and that one second-rate! But the Classical juniors were equally indignant. If Smythe had gone deliberately to work to make up the worst team possible, he could not have succeeded much better.

"Well, this is a go!" said Lovell, with a whistle.

"Rotten!"

"Shame!"

"Oh, go for 'em!" said Tommy Dodd. "Mop up the ground with these silly idiots who voted for Smythe, anyway!"

"Hold on!" Jimmy Silver held up his hand. "Pax, you fellows!"

"Pax be blowed!"

"Pax, I say! This isn't a time for rags!" exclaimed Silver. "If we're going to rag, let's rag Smythe."

"Well, that's a good idea!" admitted Tommy Dodd.

"We're not going to stand this," continued Jimmy Silver. "We can't let Smythe make fools of us like this. Let's go and see him about it. Let's show him that we're united on the subject; that's a great point."

"Something in that—"

"Hear, hear!" said Lovell. "Come on! We'll put it to him plain."

The idea was taken up at once. All the fellows, Classics and Moderns, felt that it would relieve them to talk to Smythe. They had quite a lot of things to say to him, and there was a rush at once to Smythe's study.

Jimmy Silver jerked down the notice from the board, and carried it in his hand as he led the extremely excited deputation to visit Smythe. It looked as if there were trouble ahead for somebody—probably Smythe.

CHAPTER 20.

Remonstrating with Smythe!

SMYTHE of the Shell was at tea in his study.

He had guests there—quite a number of guests, all Classics, of course; Smythe was far too lofty to "know" Moderns. His contempt for the Modern side, where they studied German

and bookkeeping and "stinks" was unbounded.

Smythe prided himself on being one of the "gentlemanly" side at Rookwood. So did all the other Classics, as a matter of fact, but most of them took that attitude more or less humorously. Smythe of the Shell took it with as deadly acrimony as he took himself.

There wasn't a more completely self-satisfied young gentleman in all Rookwood than Master Smythe.

Topham and Townsend, the nuts of the Fourth, were in the study, so were Howard and Chesney and Lacy of the Shell. They were all looking very pleased with themselves.

They had reason to be pleased. They were all members of the junior school eleven. True, their footer was rotten; they regarded regular practice as a "fag," and, in fact, looked on the great game itself with a more or less patronising eye. Playing a hard, keen game was not in their line at all. But they fancied themselves in the role of the champion junior players of Rookwood all the same.

Slogging at practice was all very well for those young ruffians in the end study, and for rotten Moderns like Tommy Dodd & Co. It didn't suit the nuts. Their idea was to stroll elegantly on the football field, as if the game wasn't really quite worth playing, but they had condescended to play to give it a leg-up. And the many lickings they received did not abate their self-satisfaction in the least.

"There'll be some grouching among the fags over that list, Smythe," Howard remarked.

"Let 'em grouse!" said Smythe.

"The Moderns will cut up a bit rusty, by gad!" said Townsend.

"Let 'em cut up!" said Smythe.

And the nuts applauded. That was the way to deal with cheeky fags. Let 'em grouse, and let 'em cut up rusty, and the great Smythe would still be unmoved.

But a tremendous kick at the door somewhat startled even Master Smythe from his lofty serenity.

Jimmy Silver, at the head of a crowd of excited juniors, stalked into the study. He had in his hand the famous footer list.

Smythe started to his feet.

"What do you fags want here?" he exclaimed. "Get out!"

Jimmy Silver thrust the footer list almost into Smythe's face.

"What does that mean?" he demanded.

"Why, you cheeky beast, you've taken my list down off the board!" ejaculated Smythe. "Go and pin it up at once! Do you hear?"

"I want to know what it means!"

"Can't you read, by gad!" said Townsend. "It's the list for the eleven on Wednesday."

There was a roar from the crowd.

"Rats!"

"Rot!"

"Bosh!"

"Is it a joke, Smythe?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

Smythe was red with rage.

"No; it isn't a joke!" he bawled.

"That's the footer list. Go and pin it up again, you impertinent cad!"

"It isn't a joke? Then what is it?"

"The footer list, you dummy!"

"Bosh!" said Jimmy Silver. "This list might be a list of candidates for a home for idiots. It might be a list of cases for a private lunatic asylum. But it isn't a footer list."

"Hear, hear!"

"And we've come to tell you, Smythe, that we're not going to stand it!" roared Lovell.

"Not for a minute!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

"Get out of my study!"

"Are you going to alter the list?"

"No!" bawled Smythe. "Who's captain here, I'd like to know. Wasn't I elected skipper? You voted for me yourself!"

"And a precious ass I was!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "But this is too thick! You ought to put me in—but I won't ask that—but put in Lovell and Newcome and Raby, and Tommy Dodd and Doyle and Cook!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I've made up that list, and I'm sticking to that list!" said Smythe. "Now get out of my study! You ought to know that you can't question the decision of a football captain."

"Well, so-s; but there are limits."

"And you've passed the limits, Smythe, you howling ass. We're not going to stand it!"

"Not at any price!"

"We've had enough lickings at footer."

Put in half a dozen who can play, and keep the rest of the list for yourself and your pals," said Raby.

"That's a fair offer."

But Smythe did not seem pleased at that fair offer. Perhaps he thought that he and his pals could play.

"Will you clear off?" he shouted. "You inky young soundrels, get out of my study!"

"Will you alter the list?"

"No!"

"Then you'll jolly well be ragged!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "And we may as well begin now."

"Hurray! Pile in!"

There was a furious rush of the juniors. Smythe & Co. were almost dancing with rage.

But their rage did not matter to the heroes of the Fourth.

They were fed up—right to the chin, so to speak. Smythe had always been a rotten football skipper. Favouritism and fatheadedness, as Tommy Dodd said, was his motto. But he had never gone quite so far as this before. On previous occasions he had kindly allowed five or six fellows who could play to be in the team, and on those occasions they had gritted their teeth to see the smiles with which the opposing teams had regarded the Rookwood eleven as a whole.

Lovell & Co. had vaguely hoped that Smythe would do a bit better this term. That he would go from bad to worse they had never dreamed. They could have kicked themselves for electing him. But, as that wouldn't have done any good, it was some comfort to kick Smythe. And they kicked him—hard! Smythe dodged round the table to avoid the rush of the ragers, and Jimmy Silver's boot came behind him, and Smythe roared.

He was "passed" to Tommy Dodd, who swung him round, and "passed" him again to Lovell, who also swung him round, and "passed" him once more.

This time Smythe collapsed into the fender, into a dish of toast that was waiting to be transferred to the table. And the howl that Smythe gave, as the dish cracked under him, and he squashed the hot toast, might have been heard as far as the Sixth-Form passage.

"Yow-ow-ow-owl!"

"Going to make a change in the list?" howled Tommy Dodd.

"You! No! Yow-ow! Help!" shrieked Smythe.
 "You young villains!" Leggo!"

"Bump him!"
 "Help!" yelled Smythe. "Townsend, you dummy—Topham, you ass—Howard, you cad—lend me a hand!"

But the select company couldn't help Smythe. They couldn't help themselves. They made a valiant rush for the door. But there was no getting through the crowd. They were tumbled back into the study, bowled over, and rolled on. And their dismal howls rose like a chorus of woe. They were not great fighting-men. But if they had been Goliaths, Berserkers, or anything in that line, the odds would have been too great for them. Smythe was dragged out of the fender. His comrades were on the floor, most of them being sat on heavily.

The din in the study was terrific. That it would reach the Sixth-Form quarters, and bring the Classical prefects on the scene, was pretty certain. But the indignant footballers were too excited to think of that.

"Rag 'em!"
 "Bump 'em!"
 "Jam 'em!"

"Now, then, Smythe, are you going to do the sensible thing?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"
 "Will you alter the list?"

"Grooh! Keep that jam away! No, I won't! Gur-r-r-g!"

"Will you resign?"
 "No, I won't! Help!"

"Give him the jam!" said Jimmy Silver savagely. "Then we'll give him beans. Go it!"

Smythe gasped and gurgled horribly as his own jam-dish was emptied over his carefully-oiled and parted hair. Jimmy Silver mixed up the jam with his hair, using the butter-knife, with plenty of butter on it. Jam and butter streamed over Smythe's immaculate collar.

The dandy of the Shell struggled wildly in the grasp of his tormentors. But he struggled in vain.

"Now then, Smythe, are you giving in?"

"Groooh! Help!"
 "Give him the pickles!"
 "Bravo!"

"Oooo-ohhh!" gurgled Smythe, as he received the pickles, some on his head,

but most down his neck. "Oh, crumbs! Oh, yow! Help!"

"Give some of those other slackers——"

"Keep off!" shrieked Townsend. "Oh, dear! You ruffians! I'll tell Mr. Bootles! Yow! I'll go to the Head! Oh!"

"Take some pickles with you, Towny, dear!"

"Ooooooh!"
 "Yow! Help! Oh, help!"

There were heavy footsteps in the passage, and a yell from a Modern junior at the door.

"Cave!"
 The crowd in the passage fled at top speed. But there was no time for the fellows inside the study to flee. Into the doorway strode Bulkeley and Neville, prefects of the Sixth, with frowns on their faces and canes in their hands. And the festive proceedings in Smythe's study came to a sudden stop.

CHAPTER 21.

NO LUCK!

"YOU young rascals!" roared Bulkeley.

"Oh, Bulkeley!"
 "Blessed set of hooligans!" exclaimed Neville. "This is a Modern rag, I suppose. No, there are both sorts of young hooligans."

"I—I say, Bulkeley——"

"What does it mean?" roared Bulkeley. "You can be heard all over the house. Let Smythe go at once. Are you ragging this study?"

"Nunno!" said Jimmy Silver, keeping a wary eye on Bulkeley's cane. "This isn't—isn't exactly a rag, you know."

"Then what is it?"

"We—we're remonstrating with Smythe, in a friendly way."

"That's it, Bulkeley," chimed in Loveli. "It—it's a friendly remonstrance. Of course, we shouldn't let these Modern cads rag a study on our side."

"Lot you could do to stop us, if we wanted to," snorted Tommy Dodd.

"Why, you Modern cheeky rotter——"

"You silly Classical ass——"

"Dry up!" shouted Bulkeley. "Smythe, tell me what's the matter, as I can't get any sense out of these fags. You're a Shell fellow, and you ought to have more

sense than to turn your study into a bear-garden in this way."

Smythe dabbed jam and pickles from his face, almost sobbing with rage.

"I couldn't help it," he howled. "They rushed the study. Didn't they, Towny?"

"They did!" shrieked Townsend, also busy with pickles. "Rushed us like a lot of wild tigers. Groo! Look at my clothes! Oh, dear!"

"I see how it is," said Bulkeley grimly. "You young monkeys have got tired of ragging one another, and you've joined forces to rag the Shell—what! Well, I'm I'm going to teach you better manners. Hold out your paws in turn!"

"I say, Bulkeley, we haven't explained yet, you know," ventured Jimmy Silver.

"I—I admit we got a little bit excited. But, you see—"

"You—you see—" stammered Lovell.

"Yes, I see. Hold out your hands! You first, Silver!"

"But—but it was only a football argument," said Jimmy feebly. "We—we were only talking to Smythe about the footer—"

"He's made up a rotten team for the Greyfriars match," shouted Tommy Dodd.

"He ought to be ragged. He ought to be scragged. He ought to be hung."

"So that's how you argue with your footer captain, whom you elected yourselves?" said Bulkeley. "Enough said! If there's any more of it, I'll report you to your Form-master. This time I'll deal with you myself. Come, Silver!"

There was no help for it. Jimmy Silver had to hold out his hands, one after the other, and the two cuts he received were simply terrific. Old Bulkeley was an athlete, and he seemed to think he was wiping at cricket, as Jimmy said afterwards dolefully. Lovell came next, and then Raby and Newcome and Hooker and Jones minor, and the rest of the Classical crowd. The Moderns waited, rubbing their hands in painful anticipation. But Bulkeley lowered his cane.

"I shall report you kids to your own prefect," he said. "Knowles will look after you."

"Oh!" said Tommy Dodd, in dismay. Knowles was heavy-handed in dealing out punishments, and the young rascals preferred Bulkeley. "I—I say, Bulkeley, would you mind licking us yourself instead? Neville will do it if you're tired."

Neville burst into a laugh and Bulkeley grinned. But the captain of Rookwood shook his head.

"I can't interfere with Knowles' menagerie," he said. "I'll give you a note to take to Knowles, Dodd."

And a few minutes later Tommy Dodd & Co. were driven forth, Tommy Dodd armed with a note from the captain of Rookwood to the head prefect of the Modern side, enumerating their names and requesting punishment. Smythe was blinking triumphantly at his assailants through the jam and pickles. The heavy hand of authority had come down on the mutineers.

"Now, don't let's have any more row here," said Bulkeley.

"I say, Bulkeley," said Smythe, "those fags have nucked up my study. Look at it! Ain't they to make it tidy?"

The Classical heroes looked at Smythe as if they would eat him. Fag for a Shell fellow—and a dandy and slacker like Smythe! That was likely! But to their horror Bulkeley nodded assent.

"That's only fair," said the Rookwood captain. "Buckle to, you young rascals, and I'll stay here and watch you do it!"

"Look here, Bulkeley—" exclaimed Jimmy Silver rebelliously. "Ow! Yow! Wharrer you doing with that cane?"

"I'm licking you with it," said Bulkeley. "And if you don't do as I tell you at once, I'll give you the licking of your life!"

With looks of suppressed fury the mutinous Classics set to work, under Bulkeley's eye, to put the study to rights. There was a good deal to do, for the room had been almost wrecked by the ragging. Smythe and his pals stood looking on, grinning. They were enjoying the scene, in spite of the jam and pickles that still clung to them. It was very pleasant to see Lovell scraping up pickles from the carpet, Jimmy Silver on his knees mopping up spilt jam, Raby twisting the fender into shape, Newcombe wiping milk off the table, and so forth.

Not until the study was almost spick-and-span did Bulkeley let the exasperated juniors off. When they had finished, he saw them safely off the premises before he departed. Had he left them there, there would certainly have been a renewal of the trouble.

The Pistial Four and their friends re-

turned to their own quarters in a state of mind that bordered on frenzy.

"Well?" said Jimmy Silver, with a sickly smile, as they gathered in the end study. "We haven't done much good by ragging Smythe—I mean remonstrating with him."

"Giddy disaster all along the line," groaned Lovell. "Bulkeley is a beast. I used to think well of old Bulkeley. I'm done with him now!"

"Lot of damage that will do him!" sniffed Jones minor.

"Fagging for Smythe!" breathed Newcome. "Fagging for a worm in the Shell! Oh, my hat! That does put the lid on!"

"And the way it ended, that ragging won't do him any good," grumbled Raby. "The cad won't alter the list now."

"Ow! My hands!"

"That beast Bulkeley must have been getting up his muscle specially," groaned Hooker. "Yow! Still—" Hooker brightened up. "Knowles will take it out of the Moderns. He's a worse beast than Bulkeley. Bulkeley's only a beast sometimes, but Knowles is a beast all the time. They'll get it hot!"

Which was all the consolation there was for the sorely-tried Classical heroes.

CHAPTER 22.

Tommy Dodd's Little Dodge!

TOMMY DODD & CO. looked dolorous as they came over to the Modern side of Rookwood. Tommy Dodd had Bulkeley's note in his hand. It almost seemed to burn his fingers. He had to take that note to Knowles' study. It was not a pleasant duty. His comrades had to go with him. And they knew what to expect. Knowles of the Sixth was not like good-natured old Bulkeley. Bulkeley could "lay it on" when he saw reason, but he never laid it on like Knowles. Knowles was a good deal of a bully, and his methods with juniors were very strict.

Of course, in the presence of their rivals the Classics, Tommy Dodd & Co. would have maintained, at the top of their voices if need were, that the Modern captain was every bit as good as the Classical captain. They would have averred that it

was rotten that he should be only vice-captain of the school. They would have held that Knowles was a first-class footballer, as indeed he was, and that he was a captain any side, or any school, might have been proud of—which was not quite so certain.

But when it came to being licked, they would have preferred to chance it with old Bulkeley. The Classical captain had given the delinquents two each—stingers, certainly, but only two each. Tommy Dodd knew that he and his friends would get at least four each for the same offence, from Knowles, and perhaps lines as well.

"Don't take the blessed note," suggested Tommy Cook. "Bulkeley may forget to speak to Knowles about it."

Tommy Dodd shook his head.

"No go. He won't forget, and if Knowles knew we'd chucked away a note for him, he'd be frightfully waxy. No go."

"Sure we're in for it, then," growled Tommy Doyle. "Why couldn't Bulkeley lick us himself, the spalpeen?"

"Well, if he chipped in with Knowles' bizney, he would have trouble with Knowles," said Tommy Dodd sagely. "Bulkeley's always very careful about not going over the line. Knowles isn't so jolly careful. I've seen him cuff Classical kids."

"Knowles is a cad," said Cook. He did not mind saying that as there were no Classics present to hear him make the admission.

"Let's go and get it over," grunted Towle.

But Tommy Dodd had halted, with a peculiar expression on his face, and a twinkle in his eyes. An idea had come into his fertile brain.

"Hold on!" he murmured. "I've been thinking—I've got a wheeze. Look here—strictly among ourselves, of course—Knowles is a bit of a worm."

"Of course, we crack him up to those cads," said Cook, "but among ourselves—ahem!"

"And not to put too fine a point on it—he's as jealous of old Bulkeley as a fellow could be without going quite green," continued Tommy Dodd.

"There ain't much secret about that," said Webb.

"And he's frightfully touchy about any Classical prefects interfering with the

kids on this side—poaching on his preserves."

"Yes; that's why Bulkeley has sent us to him to be licked. He's keeping off the grass. He doesn't want trouble with Knowles." Cook remarked.

"But Knowles wouldn't be so jolly sorry if there was trouble," said Tommy Dodd. "In fact, among ourselves, Knowles looks for trouble, and nothing pleases him better than to give Bulkeley one in the eye."

"We know that. But what—"

"Let's go and get it over!" growled Towle again. Towle found anticipation painful.

"We mayn't have to get it over," said Tommy Dodd. "You leave it to your Uncle Tommy. Knowles is always hunting for a chance to give Bulkeley a fall, and we're going to give him a chance. I'm going to pull Knowles' leg."

"What!"

"You ass!" said Towle. "I'd rather pull a wild tiger's leg in the giddy jungle!"

"You leave it to me," said Tommy Dodd. "Follow me, my infants, and don't jaw. Let me do the jawing, and we'll see."

The Moderns followed Tommy Dodd to Knowles' study. What was in his active brain they could not guess, but they were willing to back him up in any scheme for escaping that licking. But they did not feel hopeful.

Tommy Dodd tapped discreetly at the study door, and Knowles' somewhat sharp voice bade him enter.

Knowles was at tea with his chum Catesby of the Sixth. The two Modern seniors stared at the crowd of fags.

"Well, what do you want?" snapped Knowles. Knowles' sharp manner with the fags was a contrast to old Bulkeley's cheery, good-natured way. Strictly among themselves, the Modern juniors were not proud of their captain.

"If you please, Knowles," said Tommy Dodd meekly, and trying to look as if butter or cream would not melt in his mouth, "we've come to be licked."

Knowles stared, and Catesby burst into a laugh.

"Well, isn't that what you want I'll soon oblige you?" said the captain of the

Modern side. "Hand me a cane. But what do you want to be licked for?"

"We don't want to be, please, Knowles, but Bulkeley says you're to lick us."

Knowles' face flushed a little.

Tommy Dodd, noting it, could hardly repress a chuckle.

The Modern captain's back was going up at once. Tommy Dodd, with a great effort, maintained his meek-and-mild expression. And his chums, beginning to understand in what manner he intended to pull the prefect's leg, backed him up loyally, assuming expressions of sorrowful indignation with happy effect.

"What's that?" rapped out Knowles.

"Bulkeley's orders," said Towle, improving a little on Tommy Dodd.

"Bulkeley's orders—eh?" said Knowles, with a gleam in his eyes. "Bulkeley knows very well that he can't send any orders here!"

"Pretty cool, I must say!" remarked Catesby.

"What have you been doing?" remarked Knowles, with a magisterial air. Instead of caning the young rascals all round, he was prepared now to hold a strictly fair inquiry, and even stretch a point in favour of the culprits.

"Nothing really," said Tommy Dodd. "We had a bit of a talk with Smythe about the footer. You know, those Classical cads are very aggravating."

"They've got no manners—you've noticed that yourself, Knowles," said Tommy Cook solemnly.

"How could they have?" said Tommy Doyle. "They haven't got a prefect like Knowles on their side. They simply run wild."

"One of your rags with the Classics—eh?" said Knowles. "I don't see why I should be bothered about that."

"Bulkeley often said it's best to take no notice," remarked Catesby. "I should really recommend taking no notice."

"You've done a lot of damage—what?" asked Knowles.

"Oh, no! Only a bit of a dust-up in Smythe's study. But you know what rotten those Classics are," said Tommy Dodd, in an aggrieved tone. "Perhaps there was a bit of a row; but Smythe made most of the row. He was simply yelling. In fact, it was Smythe's row that

brought Bulkeley there. All the chaps will tell you so."

The Moderns nodded as solemnly as owls.

Tommy Dodd's statement was strictly true. He did not consider it necessary to add what had been the cause of Smythe's yelling. It was no good giving too much information.

"You went to Smythe's study to talk footer, and there was a row, and Smythe made most noise. Is that it?" asked Knowles.

"That's it, Knowles, exactly!"

"Then you can clear off," said Knowles. "I don't want to be bothered with it."

"Oh, thank you, Knowles! We knew we should get justice from you," said Tommy Dodd. "Oh, I—ahem—forgot! Here's a note from Bulkeley!"

"You should have given me that first," said Knowles.

He opened the note, and passed it to Catesby.

It ran:

"Dear Knowles,—These fags"—here followed the names—"have been kicking up a shindy on this side. I leave their punishment in your hands.

"G. BULKELEY."

Knowles pursed his lips a little. Even he could not find fault with that note. But as he had already told the juniors they could clear off, they were clearing off. Knowles did not call to them to come back.

Tommy Dodd & Co. lost no time. They simply scuttled out of the study, and Dodd shut the door after him.

Knowles looked at the note again, and looked at Catesby.

"Let Bulkeley go and eat coke!" said Catesby. "You can deal with your own fags how you like, I suppose. I dare say they deserve a licking. But Bulkeley's said lots of times, don't take too much notice of these fag rows. Take him at his word."

"He'll speak to me about it," said Knowles.

"All the better. It will be one in the eye for him when he finds you've let them off."

"H'm!" said Knowles. "Of course, my business is to pull with Bulkeley so far

as possible, for the—the good of the school."

Catesby winked at the ceiling. "Exactly!" he assented. "Call 'em back and whack 'em, then!"

Knowles laughed.

"I dare say they're far enough away by this time," he said.

And the subject was dropped.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were indeed far enough away. They had not lingered in the dangerous precincts of their captain's study. They had fled promptly to their own quarters.

In their own study the three Tommies executed a war-dance of triumph round the study table.

"Hurray for us!" chortled Tommy Dodd. "Didn't I pull his leg a treat—what!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You did!"

"What do you say now, young Towle? Will you trust your Uncle Tom next time?" demanded Tommy Dodd severely. "Why, a chap can always work on Knowles; he's as jealous as a cat, and he'd let us burn down the giddy lab if he thought it was one up against Bulkeley. What price that licking?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the young rascals yelled with laughter over their success in pulling the august leg of the Modern captain. Which would have been very gratifying indeed to Knowles of the Sixth if he could have known it.

CHAPTER 23.

The Greyfriars Match!

AS Jimmy Silver remarked, more in sorrow than in anger, that ragging hadn't done Smythe of the Shell an atom of good. It was really hard lines, because the ragging had been very thorough, and might have been expected to have some good results. But it hadn't!

For the same evening the football list appeared on the board again—without a change.

During the next few days there were fiery meetings in the end study on the subject. There were equally fiery meetings in Tommy Dodd's study over the war. But, excepting for the relief afforded to their personal feelings by blowing off

steam, the meetings came to nothing. The egregious Smythe was past reasoning with. Not a jot, not a tittle would he alter to please the rebellious fags of the Fourth.

The day of the Greyfriars match arrived, and the Fistical Four had to confess that they had made no progress. Smythe and his precious team were going to meet Harry Wharton & Co., from Greyfriars—and they were going to get it right in the neck; there wasn't a shadow of doubt about that.

All the other fellows could do was to stand by and see the Rookwood team licked out of its boots. It wasn't a pleasant prospect.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were especially furious. The Fistical Four had been the principal means of electing Smythe to that responsible post. And the four hadn't a word to say for themselves. In private they sorrowfully confessed that they had made a dreadful howler. It would have been better to have a Modern for junior skipper—anything, in fact, would have been better than this.

But it was too late; there was no helping it now, and they weren't inclined to confess their repentance to their old rivals. When the three Tommies demanded what kind of a match it was going to be, all through their fatheadedness, they replied that the Modern rotters could go and study "stinks" in the lab. It was not a logical reply, really, but it had the effect of enraging and exasperating Tommy Dodd & Co., and that was the important point.

And Tommy Dodd, quite furious, declared that if Rookwood were licked the end study should be licked, too—all four of them should have the whopping of their lives! That was a threat that did not bother the Fistical Four in the least. They were fully prepared to meet an equal number of Modern youths with the gloves on—or without the gloves on, for that matter. Indeed, the arguments on the subject of the Greyfriars match were so warm that before Wednesday came there was quite a crop of thick ears and swollen noses in the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

After morning lessons on Wednesday all thoughts were turned to the Greyfriars match. The Greyfriars juniors were coming early in the afternoon.

Soon after dinner the football-field on Little Side was thronged with juniors. They had come there to see Rookwood win. But, as Tommy Dodd said bitterly, it would be interesting to see just how many goals they were licked by. Tommy Cook prophesied that it would be a round dozen. Tommy Doyle said a baker's dozen at least.

The Fistical Four took up a good position near the ropes in the midst of a crowd of Classical juniors. Tommy Dodd & Co. were well to the fore, with an army of Modern fags. They improved the shining hour while they were waiting for the match by hurling opprobrious epithets at one another, and indulging in catcalls and yells.

Master Smythe and his friends were in no hurry to come down to the ground. Indeed, they seemed to take a pride in showing how carelessly they regarded the game. What did it matter who won and who lost, so long as their lofty serenity was not disturbed? When they came down at last, with coats and mufflers over their football clobber, they were greeted with a general groan. But they did not mind—not in the least. They were perfectly satisfied with themselves.

A brake bore the visiting team from the station. Jimmy Silver looked with keen interest at the Greyfriars players when they arrived. He had not seen them before, though most of the other fellows knew them well enough. He saw at a glance that they were a good team. And he saw, too, that they did not take the Rookwood match with any great seriousness. Of course, they did not say so, but it was easy enough to read what they thought of Smythe and his team of slackers.

And there were really good footballers standing round the ropes, fellows who could have given the Greyfriars team the tussle of their lives. It made them almost gnash their teeth to think of Rookwood being walked over, because that ass Smythe had made up almost the rottenest team that could have been "dog up" within the walls of Rookwood. And the Fistical Four were feeling conscience-stricken as well as furious. They had done it—they had got the egregious Smythe elected. In their exasperation, they could hardly restrain themselves from charging Tommy Dodd & Co. on

the spot. They decided that it was all, somehow, the fault of the Moderns.

Harry Wharton of Greyfriars shook hands with Smythe of the Shell. Smythe gave him three fingers in a languid way. Smythe's expression was that of a fellow who found it almost too much trouble to live, let alone play footer.

"How do do?" said Smythe. "I fancy you're booked this time—what!"

"Booked for what?" asked Wharton, with a smile.

"Oh, a licking, you know!"

"Well, it would be rather a change," said Wharton. "You never know your luck. Come on, you fellows, and get changed!"

The smiling fellows from Greyfriars went into their dressing-room, and when they emerged, and ran lightly into the field. Jimmy Silver looked lugubriously at his chums.

"They're a topping team," he said. "Anybody can see that. They'll simply make rings round our duffers."

"And we've got to stand by and watch 'em do it!" said Lovell, breathing hard through his nose. "Look at Smythe! Looks as if he can just crawl down to the line."

"Satisfied now, you fatheads?" hooted Tommy Dodd. "Oh, won't we lick you after this!"

"Bow-wow! All your fault!" growled Lovell.

"My fault!" exclaimed Tommy indignantly. "Didn't you elect that howling ass? Weren't we all against it?"

"Yes; all your fault!" said Lovell obstinately. "If you Modern cads would have voted for me, I'd have put up against Smythe, and then it would have been all right."

"Catch us voting for a Classical cad!" said Tommy Dodd disdainfully. "You're not much better than Smythe!"

"What!" yelled Lovell.

That was a little too much, and he was about to rush on Dodd, when Jimmy Silver caught him by the arm.

"Not while the Greyfriars chaps are here, kid," he said. "We'll lick those rotters after the match. It's all their fault, of course. I'd have put up as a candidate myself if they'd have voted for me."

"There goes the whistle."

Fowler of the Fifth, a Classical senior,

was refereeing the match. Harry Wharton had won the toss, and he gave the Rookwood side the advantage of the wind. He ran no risk in giving them advantage. Jimmy Silver & Co. understood well enough that Wharton felt a profound contempt for the Rookwood side as footballers, and it enraged them.

He was willing to give them even advantage, simply to make the match a little more interesting for the visitors. And Jimmy Silver knew that he could have made up a team that it would have taken Harry Wharton & Co. all the time to beat. It was intensely exasperating. The only consolation was the prospect of "whopping" the Moderns after the match. It was all their fault.

Smythe kicked off, and the Rookwood followed up the kick-off with a rush. The Slackers as they were, Smythe & Co. fancied themselves as footballers. They might as well have rushed a stone wall as the Greyfriars side.

Wharton captured the ball, and he carried it through the Rookwood side like a knife through cheese. His two near wings, Nugent and Vernon-Smith, ran with him almost as regardless of the Rookwood as if they hadn't been there. They shouldered the defenders away, and rushed for goal, and Harry Wharton put the ball in, scoring a really beautiful goal.

"Goal!" groaned Jimmy Silver.

"By gad!" said Smythe of the Shell, picking himself up rather dazedly. "Gad, it's a goal! Tough and rough lot, these Greyfriars fellows, Towny!"

"Oh, rotten!" groaned Townsend.

The teams lined up again. Harry Wharton & Co. were grinning; they could not help it. The Rookwood crowd shouted furiously to their men.

"Play up, you slackers!"

"On the ball, Rookwood!"

"Get a move on, Smythe, you fathead! Don't go to sleep! Do you think you're in the dormitory?"

"Wake up, Townsend, you ass!"

"Stop them!" "Run!" "On the ball, you silly jabberwocks!"

Such were the encouragements the Rookwood side received from their crowd. They did play up, as well as they were able. For a time Smythe succeeded in packing his goal, and keeping the visitors from scoring. But just before half-time Bob Cherry of Greyfriars sent the ball

agent, and Nugent centred to Wharton, slammed it in. Lake in goal hadn't chance of stopping it. Indeed, until it was in the net he didn't know it was going!

The whistle went before the Greyfriars could score again. Smythe & Co. were looking rather breathless and puzzled. They confided to one another that the visitors were a set of rough beasts. But it was pretty plain that the high beasts were going to score a sweeping victory.

In the second half Smythe and his merry men—who did not look very merry—had bellows to mend. The ball went in again. Tommy Dodd tore his hair. The Rookwood goalies seemed to be asleep. Jimmy Cook in goal could have saved it shot as easy as winking. But it beat the of the Shell to the wide.

"Oh, you villains!" growled Tommy Dodd, glaring at the Fistical Four. "Don't we wallop you after the match! Won't we!"

"All your fault!" yelled Lovell. "I am satisfied now! Oh, won't we wallop your hair presently, that's all!" "Oh, you Classical chump—" "Oh, you Modern worm—"

"There goes the ball again!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Give the fellows a cheer! They deserve it for taking the trouble to be a team of hopeless idiots!"

But the Rookwood juniors were too dispirited to cheer. It was the fourth goal. Rookwood had not yet broken their backs. The very referee was grinning. It was not over yet. Harry Wharton kicked the ball in again, and then, before the final whistle blew, Vernon-Smith jammed it into the net. Then Fowler, cheering heartily, blew the whistle for the end.

"Six goals to nil!" groaned Lovell. "This is too rich, even for Smythe. In Smythe will make some changes in the team after this. Oh, crikey!"

Smythe and his merry men were staggered off the field. They were completely tired. Harry Wharton & Co. trotted quite cheerfully. Sounds of laughter might have been heard from their dressing-room while they were changing—audible, were heard.

Around the ground Classics and Moderns were very nearly at fighting-

point. Each party persisted in maintaining that that egregious fiasco was the fault of the other. Lovell's view was that he'd never have got Smythe in as skipper, if the Modern cads would have voted for him, Lovell. That was right enough.

Tommy Dodd's view was that he—Tommy Dodd—would have been skipper, if the Classical cads hadn't backed up that howling ass Smythe. Which was also right enough.

And the two parties were equally exasperated by the untoward outcome of their rivalry, which had caused the ineffable Smythe to be "planted" on them as football captain. They could hardly keep the peace until the Greyfriars fellows were gone.

When the brake rolled away to the station at last, with Harry Wharton & Co. in it—all of them smiling—Tommy Dodd rushed up to Lovell, and shoved a business-looking set of knuckles within an inch of his nose.

"After tea, in the gym!" he howled.

"Jolly glad of the chance to lick you!" said Lovell. "Pretty disgrace you Modern cads have brought on Rookwood, haven't you?"

"We—we— You—you—" Tommy Dodd stuttered with wrath. "Oh, you worms! Oh, you rotters! Six goals to nil! If I'd been skipper—"

"If I'd been skipper—"

"After tea in the gym, four of us against four of you, and we'll lick you right out of your socks!" shouted Raby.

"Here comes Smythe! Rush him!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

The rival juniors looked as if they would not wait till after tea. But at Jimmy Silver's yell they ceased slanging one another, and turned their attention to Smythe. The Shell fellow had seen the Greyfriars team off at the gates, and was walking back to the House with Howard and Townsend. The three nuts lounged along gracefully, evidently not in the least perturbed by their crushing defeat.

But they were perturbed enough when the excited Fourth-Formers rushed on them. The indignant juniors wasted no time in words. They collared the three nuts, and banged them in the quadrangle, in spite of their frantic yells.

"The fish-pond! This way!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, crumbs! Leggo!"

But Jimmy Silver's suggestion was taken up with a roar.

"Duck them!"

Away went the unfortunate nuts at a rush for the doctor's fish-pond. Topham was met and gathered up on the way. There were four heavy splashes in the fish-pond, which must have startled the fish considerably. There were four sputtering yells from the unhappy victims.

Then the crowd surged off, somewhat satisfied. They had shown their football champions what they thought of them, at all events. Four draggled nuts crawled out of the pond, and blinked at one another in a watery way.

"Ow!" gasped Townsend. "The rotters! You don't seem to be popular, Smythey. Ow!"

"Groo!" said Topham. "They're talking about holding a new election for skipper. You did play rather like an idiot, Smythey!"

Smythe of the Shell did not reply to that ungrateful remark. He crawled away, leaving a trail of water after him, and his comrades followed disconsolately. Truly it was probable that Smythe's days as junior skipper were numbered—if only the Moderns and the Classics could have agreed upon a candidate. Just at present, however, there did not seem much agreement among them. The war of the rival sides of Rookwood was raging more fiercely than ever.

CHAPTER 24.

A Four-handed Mill!

LOVELL eyed Jimmy Silver in a doubtful way at the tea-table in the end study.

"Can you box?" he asked suddenly.

Jimmy grinned into his teacup.

"You see, this is important," remarked Raby. "Tommy Dodd can box—he's knocked me out, as a matter of fact. Cook and Doyle are topping. And young Towle is all there. They can put up a good four. And if we're licked, it means no end of kudos for those Modern cads. They'll call themselves the top side at Rookwood, if they knock us out."

"You three all right?" asked Jimmy Silver. "You can keep your end up?"

"Ain't we called the Fistical Three?" demanded Lovell. "But what about you? Can you box? I know you squas Smythe; but Smythe's a slacking to. Could you stand up against a real pug? If you can't, just you say so at once and I'll pick another fellow along the same. Jones minor ain't bad."

"Well, I can box," said Jimmy Silver. "You've got some mittens here. Suppose we have a round or two before we go down to the gym. Then you can see."

"Jolly good idea," said Lovell, reluctantly. "I'd like to have you in the mill."

And when tea was over, the table was dragged into a corner, and Lovell fitted out a pair of boxing-gloves.

"If you can stand up to me, you stand up to any of that tribe," he remarked. "I'd undertake to whop any Modern in Fourth or the Shell, excepting per Tommy Dodd. I admit he's a corker in the gloves."

"Leave him to me," suggested Jimmy Silver.

Lovell snorted.

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"Yes, I'm likely to leave him to you, I don't think. I expect he'd knock you out in a round. I'm taking Dodd on myself, all, let's see what you can do."

They removed their jackets and donned gloves. Raby and Newcome sat on the side to watch. Lovell began with a rather hesitating attack, to ascertain whether his new chum could stop him. This he soon discovered. He found his guard knocked down, and a hard glove planted on his chin, and he sat down with a shock that shook the study.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Lovell.

"Sorry if I hit rather hard," said Jimmy Silver, as he helped his study-leader to his feet. "I forgot! Not hurt?"

"Nunno! You try that again." Lovell was much more cautious this time. He was a good boxer, and he played up to it. But it was no use. He soon discerned that what Jimmy Silver did not know about boxing was his own art of self-defence was not worth anything. Jimmy Silver's hand and eye were as quick as lightning. Lovell, much to his astonishment, found himself driven back in the study, and he brought up in the end, where Jimmy Silver proceeded to give a series of taps on his nose and forehead.

"Hurrah!" shouted Raby. "He's got it, Lovell! Chuck it now or you'll be hurt! You've got to be in form for the Moderns."

Lovell peeled off the gloves, regarding his conqueror with wonder.

"Blessed if I thought you had it in you!" he confessed. "Why, you young ass, when we were first here, and I was looking for a fight with you, I thought you were a kid, because you didn't want to have it. And you could have licked me all right!" Jimmy Silver laughed.

"So long as I lick Tommy Dodd, that I'll be all right," he said. "Leave Tommy Dodd to me, won't you?" Lovell nodded.

"You bet! You'll handle him better than I could."

One minor looked into the study, with an excited expression. The boxing-match between the rival champions was causing a great deal of excitement in the Lower school.

"You fellows ready?" he exclaimed. The Modern cads are in the gym. I don't like saying that you're afraid to show

"We'll jolly soon show 'em whether we're afraid," growled Lovell.

The Fistical Four strolled out of the study. Jimmy Silver had proved his right to be a member of that select circle, and to share that honourable title. The chums of the end study, in fact, had recognised the fact that their new comrade was considerably more "fistical" than they were themselves. And the new fellow had been so modest about it that they had never suspected. They felt their liking and respect for him increase with the unexpected discovery.

There was a tremendous crowd of juniors in the gym. Both parties were well represented, and keenly interested in the boxing-match. Tommy Dodd & Co. had come over with an army of Moderns. The Moderns were keener on gymnastics than the Classics, as a rule, but in the Fistical Four they had foemen worthy of their steel.

"Here they are!" sang out Lacy. "Here's the rotters who chucked a footer match away."

"You Modern cads chucked it away!" shouted Lovell.

"Well, and now we'll chuck you after it," said Tommy Dodd. "You're jolly well going to have a thumping good hiding for planting that idiot Smythe on us!"

"It was your fault!"

"Rats! We're ready, if you are!"

"Ready to knock you right off the earth," said Raby disdainfully.

"Sort yourselves out," said Tommy Dodd with a snort. "Give me any man you like. I'll undertake to knock spots off any rotten Classic at Rookwood. Who's my man?"

"I am," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha! They're putting the new kid up against me!" roared Tommy Dodd. "Is that a little joke of yours, Lovell?"

"Exactly," said Lovell. "You'll find it a thumping good joke, too! I'll take you, Cook, and Doyle can take Newcome, and Towle can have Raby!"

"Sure, fix it how you like," said Tommy Dodd. "I'll whop any Classical in the school."

"Fowler's keeping time," said Tommy Dodd. "Where's Fowler? I say, Fowler?"

The big Fifth-Former came through the eager crowd of juniors. Fowler of the Fifth was a boxer, and he had kindly consented to take that contest under his wing. He took out a big silver watch.



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"Off with your jackets! Get the mittens on! Sort yourselves out! Three-minute rounds, and one-minute rests," said Fowler of the Fifth. "I'll stop you before any damage is done; but if you don't put up a good fight, I'll whop you all round myself. Now then!"

"And the side that wins is Top Side of Rookwood for the rest of the term," said Tommy Dodd quickly.

"Done!" said Lovell at once.

The juniors formed a wide ring, crowding round to see the four-handed mill. The two quartettes faced one another, Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver measuring each other with their eyes. Fowler of the Fifth gazed his watch, and gave the word, "Time!"

"Go it, Classics!"

"Go it, Moderns!"

And Classics and Moderns went it. Most of the spectators expected to see Jimmy Silver knocked out in the first round by Tommy Dodd, who was well known to be a mighty man with his hands. But they were disappointed. Jimmy held his ground well enough that round and the next he held his own, but without doing much attacking. At the sapient ones observed that Tommy Dodd's attacks did not materialise. In the fourth round Jimmy Silver seemed as fresh as ever, and Tommy Dodd was getting a little excited. He had expected to knock out the new boy very quickly. But the new boy was turning out a hard nut to crack.

The fourth round finished the contest between Newcome and Tommy Doyle. The Classical champion had put up a good fight, but the Irish junior was a little too good for him. And there were loud Modern yells when the Classical was counted out. It was a first victory to the Moderns.

But there was a change of fortune in the fifth round. Lovell knocked Tommy Cook out with a mighty swipe, and Cook was able to toe the line for the next round. Then it was the turn of the Classics to bludge and yell they did till the gymnasium rang.

"Level so far," Jimmy Silver remarked Lovell, as he rested after the fifth round. "Looks all right for our side—what!"

"How are you going?" asked Lovell anxiously.

"Right as a trivet!"

"Time!"

Two pairs of combatants stepped up for

the sixth round at the call of time. Both finished, and the seventh started amid great excitement. The seventh round was the finish for poor Raby. Towle was pretty nearly finished, but he was able to toe the line for the eighth round, and Raby wasn't. Another victory for the Moderns, and they made the gym ring with their jubilation.

Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver stepped up again. The excitement was tense now. Both the champions were showing signs of damage, in spite of the gloves, but both were determined and full of pluck. The hopes of the Moderns were high; they had every faith in Tommy Dodd, and if he knocked the new kid out the Moderns were secure of the coveted title of Top Side at Rookwood for the rest of the term.

These were thrilling moments. The Classics were agog with anxiety. Would their man succeed in knocking out the great Tommy Dodd and making the four-handed mill a draw? All depended on Jimmy Silver.

"Time!"

The combatants separated. Jimmy Silver sat down on the knee Lovell made for him, and Lovell fanned his heated brow. Webb was performing a similar service for Tommy Dodd.

"They'll be Top Side if he beats you," said Lovell to Jimmy.

"He won't beat me!"

"Time!"

Breathless silence as the ninth round started. Tommy Dodd piled in for all he was worth. The Classics scarcely breathed as they saw their man give ground. He seemed to sink back, and Lovell groaned as Tommy Dodd rushed in. But it was only a feint. The apparently fagged boxer stiffened up. Tommy's blows were well guarded, and Silver closed in, hitting hard.

Crash, crash, crash came left and right, right and left, and Tommy Dodd went down with a heavy bump.

"Bravo!" roared the Classics.

Fowler of the Fifth began to count:

"One—two—three—four—five—six—"

Tommy Dodd staggered up. Jimmy Silver could have knocked him out as he rose. But he kept his hands down till Tommy was fairly on his feet. There was a growl from some of the Classics. This wasn't a time for their champion to be taking chances. But he had lost nothing. Tommy Dodd was groggy, and another right-hander laid him on the floor again.

"Time!"

Tommy Dodd had never been so glad to hear the call of time. He staggered to Webb's knee.

"That will do," said Fowler of the Fifth. "You can't go on, Dodd."

"I'm as fit as a fiddle!" howled Tommy Dodd. "I tell you I can lick any Classical kid that ever came to Rookwood!"

"Well, time!"

It was the tenth round. Tommy Dodd put into it all he was worth. But one of his eyes was closed, and with the other he did not see very clearly. Jimmy Silver met his attack with counter-attack and his drives came out like steam-hammers. In less than a minute Tommy Dodd was on his back, gasping.

Fowler began to count. Tommy Dodd made an effort to rise, and sank back again. He was "done."

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine—out!"

Then from the Classical crowd burst a roar that made the roof almost shake.

"Bravo! Hurrah! Classics win! Hurrah!"

"It's a draw!" said Fowler of the Fifth. "Two wins on each side. Now shake hands."

Tommy Dodd had staggered up, leaning

heavily on Cook. He grinned a twisted grin as Jimmy Silver held out his hand. He took it readily enough.

"You're a good man!" he gasped. "We try it over again some time. But you've done me now, and it's a giddy draw. C'my eye!"

Tommy Dodd's friends helped him away. He had put up a gallant fight, and the four-handed mill had ended in a draw. The great question as to which was Top Side Rookwood remained unsettled. Probably never would be settled. But it had been tremendous mill.

The Classics surrounded Jimmy Silver as he put on his jacket with Lovell's help. The Fistical Three were brimming over with delight. Well had their new champion upheld the honour of the end study.

"Shoulder high!" shouted Hooker.

And Jimmy Silver, with one eye closed and his nose very bulbous, was mounted upon the shoulders of the cheering juniors and marched out of the gym. in triumph. Right into the House and up the stairs to his room. He did not put him down till they reached the end study. Then, with a final cheer, the Classical juniors departed, and for the next half-hour the bathing eyes and noses was the principal occupation of the Fistical Four.



GOING UP!

The Growth of the Skyscraper!

To leave a warm, well-lit office or workshop, step into a lift, and be whisked in five seconds to the bosom of the family, is a prospect calculated to appeal to most city-dwellers in this country. In winter the wind and slush, the crowded trams and trains, make getting to work and getting home again in a city like London anything but a pleasure.

The skyscrapers in New York City are fast developing on lines which will abolish that tiresome part of the day's routine for the City worker. As the advantages of this type of building become manifest, cities other than New York will have their thirty-five-storey towers of steel rising to the sky.

Say it in Stone!

The prospect of skyscrapers in London may alarm the old-fashioned, to whom a skyscraper is a flat, uninteresting structure, with nothing to recommend it but its size. Actually, the modern skyscraper is a thing of beauty as well as utility. What is called the "set-back" has opened up great possibilities in this type of structure. The upper portion of the skyscraper rises up in the form of one or more towers, set back from the base, which will often occupy a whole city square. The tower is rounded off artistically, and sometimes with an eye to advertisement, as in the case of the American Radiator Building, one of the beacons of New York City. This building, designed by a clever architect named Raymond Hood, is built of black brick on a base of black granite, and the tower is crowned with a crest of glowing gold and red, which not only looks very effective, but cunningly suggests the warm glow of the heating apparatus the company manufactures. One can think, readily enough, of instances where this form of advertisement could be employed with less happy results, but there are strict laws regulating the use of advertising on these buildings in New York, and no one is allowed to disfigure the sky-line for commercial gain.

To walk into the entrance-hall of a skyscraper is to be impressed by the spaciousness and beauty of the design. The ceiling is in colour, the metal work is executed with great skill and finish. Large lamps of coloured glass hang from the ceiling. At night, flood-lights on the set-backs bathe the upper towers with light, and with the growing use of coloured tiles in harmonised masses, the City of Skyscrapers in the near future will glow with an Oriental splendour.

Looking Down—and Ahead!

Imagine, in fifty years' time, the tired business man being whisked to his home on the thirty-fifth floor, having just left his office on the tenth. He will look down from his windows on to flower-beds and terraced walks laid out on the set-back, and should he take a stroll, further below he will watch motor-cars, shaped something like inverted bullets, rushing along at a hundred miles an hour. These cars will be at least twenty-five feet long, severely stream-lined, with the driver inside the nose, and the engines and fuel stowed in the tail. The road itself will be used only for vehicular traffic, while pedestrians will use an arched side-walk above the street. The road will have a concrete base and a bituminous surface, the traffic will be controlled by lights, and the garages and parking places will all be underground. Landing-places for aeroplanes will be provided at convenient levels, and the 'plane, rather than the car, used for long-distance travel.

In the core or centre of the skyscraper will be theatres, recreation-rooms, gymnasiums, libraries, everything needed for a jolly communal life, and all without having to cross the road.

Such buildings are actually rearing skyward in New York City, where Big Business has seen the benefit of having the worker near his work, in surroundings that stimulate him in his leisure time.