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THE BOYS' FRIEND!

The Object
or
THE
BOYS'
FRIEND
is
To Amuse,
To Interest,
and
To Advise
British Boys.



THE FISTICAL FOUR!

A Rousing Long Complete School Story
of the Boys at Rookwood, introducing

JIMMY SILVER & Co.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.
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 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 reptile who squashed my topper on my head? By gad!"

"He will expect a place in the eleven against Greyfriars after that," said 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 youth, 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 boy, had had the unexampled cheek to "squash" his topper on his head—an action that was equally astonishing and exasperating to the great Smythe. True, he had "cheeked" the new kid, but that was no reason whatever why the new kid should cheek him!

Jimmy Silver's face was very cheery as 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 in time to take the centre, but I never 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 was resumed—just in time to prevent it from turning into one of the old familiar "rags" between Moderns and Classicals.

Tommy Dodd & Co. put all their beef 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 Classicals in the school team as he could. And they were determined that he should have no good reason for leaving out the 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 of the school inspired Tommy Dodd. If the great Bulkeley approved of his play, even that slacker—
(Continued on the next page.)

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When finished with, please hand this grand number to a friend, and oblige—
YOUR EDITOR.

THE FISTICAL FOUR!

(Continued from the cover.)

Smythe couldn't very well leave him out of the junior eleven.

And Tommy Dodd played up like a regular International. He simply streaked through 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 Classicals were determined to make a win of it.

The struggle was hard, and it swept away to the Modern goal, and then came whirling back to mid-field.

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. Right 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 rushed it on, eluding a leaping half, and getting round a stumbling back. But the other back was on him like a shot, and he centred just in time to Lovell. Lovell had 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 passed, Silver!" "Well kicked, sir!" "Hurrah!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth dropped his hand on 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 drawl.

"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.

"Cheek!" 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 Classicals had won the match, and, as a rule, the Moderns beat the Classicals—the Classical side at Rookwood being, generally, much more slack 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 Classicals 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.

The 2nd Chapter.

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 set of boiled owls!"

"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 moodily, "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 with Greyfriars they simply walked over us. Everybody walks over us. We could make up a junior team that would lick them all right, but not so long as Smythe's skipper. Last term we had only one win. Smythe's an ass! What he doesn't know about footer would fill big books."

Jimmy Silver stared at his study-mates. 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 hadn't happened to come to Rookwood it would have been a tie. You see, the Shell fellows wouldn't vote for a Fourth-Former, so it 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 in that election and turned the scale in favour of the Classical candidate. He had not thought much about the matter, excepting 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 for 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 such friends as Smythe had in the Fourth were of the same sort, like Townsend and Topham. If Smythe made up an eleven of that sort 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 he'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 ox. 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 shall vote against Smythe, whether we get a Modern skipper or not."

"Blessed if I sha'n't feel inclined to!" said Lovell. "It's sickening, the way we get 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 to be 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 big 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 sublime 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 simply crimson with rage.

"Here they come!" howled Tommy Dodd. "Let 'em see the list and the result of their giddy election victory! Look at it, you silly chumps! What do you think of 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!" hooted 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, Classicals 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.

The 3rd Chapter.

Remonstrating with Smythe.

Smythe of the Shell was at tea in his study.

He had guests there—quite a number of guests, all Classicals, 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 on the "gentlemanly" side at Rookwood. So did all the other Classicals, as a matter of fact, but most of them took that attitude more or less humorously. Smythe of the Shell took it with deadly seriousness, 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 lofty 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.

Slugging 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 it to give it a leg-up. And the many licks they received did not abate their self-satisfaction in the least.

"There'll be some grousing 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.

The door was hurled open.

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, Classicals and Moderns, crammed in the doorway and the passage without.

"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!"

"Arc 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, ye-es; 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 scoundrels, 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 fathedness, 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 raggers, 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.

"Yow! 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?"

"Grooh! Help!"

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 Lovell. "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.

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 swiping 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's 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

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, Newcome 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 Fistical Four and their friends returned 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!"

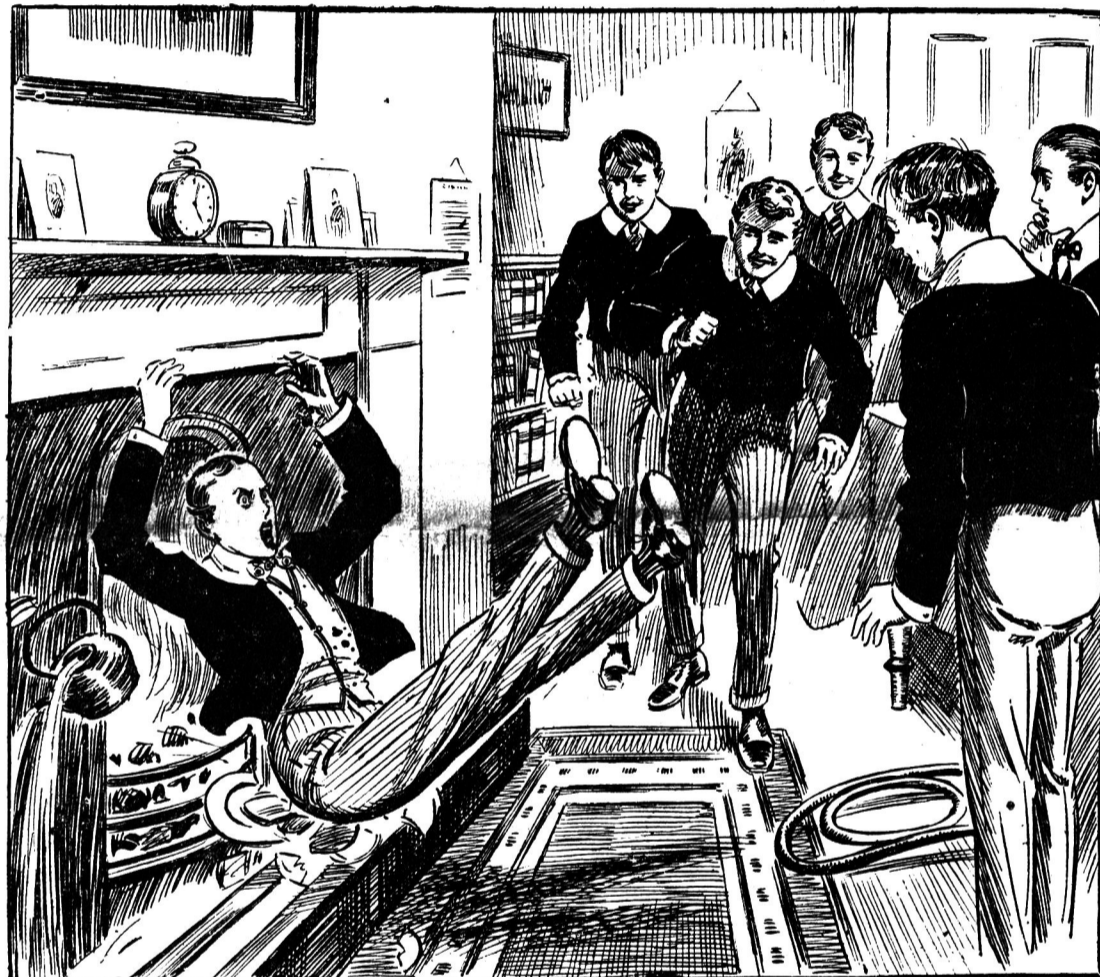
"And the way it ended, that ragging won't do him any good," grumbled Raby. "The cad won't alter the list now."

"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-trying Classical heroes.



Smythe collapsed in a dish of toast that was lying on the fender, and the howl that he gave might have been heard as far as the Sixth-Form passage.

"Give him the pickles!"

"Bravo!"

"Ooo-ohhh!" gurgled Smythe, as he received the pickles, some on his head, but most down his neck. "Oh, crumbs! Oh, yow! Help!"

"Give some to 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, Towsny, 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.

The 4th Chapter.
No Luck.

"You young rascals!" roared Bulkeley.

"Oh, Bulkeley!"

"Blessed set of hooligans!" exclaimed Neville. "This is a

"They rushed the study. Didn't they, Towsny?"

"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 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!"

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 mucked 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

The 5th Chapter.
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's 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 rote 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's biznez, 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 touching 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's 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's 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's 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's 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, if that's 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's 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?" resumed 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 rotters 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 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.

The 6th Chapter.

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 way. 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 fathadness, 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

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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 "dug 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 to 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. 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 advantages. 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 every 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 their 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 Rookwooders followed up the kick-off with a rush. Slackers as they were, Smythe & Co. fancied themselves as footballers. But they might, as well

have rushed a stone wall as the Greyfriars side.

Wharton captured the ball, and he came through the Rookwood side like a knife through cheese. His two near wingers, Nugent and Vernon-Smith, ran with him, almost as regardless of the Rookwooders 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. "By gad, it's a goal! Tough and rough old 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 fat-head! 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 to Nugent, and Nugent centred to Wharton, who slammed it in. Lake in goal hadn't a chance of stopping it. Indeed, until it was in the net he didn't know it was coming!

The whistle went before the Greyfriars fellows could score again. Smythe & Co. were looking rather breathless and rumped. They confided to one another that the visitors were a set of rough beasts. But it was pretty plain that the rough 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 goalie seemed to be asleep. Tommy Cook in goal could have saved that shot as easy as winking. But it beat Lake of the Shell to the wide.

"Oh, you villains!" growled Tommy Dodd, glaring at the Fistical Four. "Won't we wallop you after the match! Oh, won't we!"

"All your fault!" yelled Lovell. "I hope you're satisfied now! Oh, won't we comb 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 play a team of hopeless idiots!"

But the Rookwood juniors were too dispirited to cheer. It was the fourth goal, and Rookwood had not yet broken their duck. The very referee was grinning. And it was not over yet. Harry Wharton put the ball in again, and then, before the final whistle blew, Vernon-Smith slammed it into the net. Then Fowler, laughing heartily, blew the whistle for time.

"Six goals to nil!" groaned Lovell.

"Oh, this is too rich, even for Smythe. Even Smythe will make some changes in the team after this. Oh, crickey!"

Smythe and his merry men were staggering off the field. They were completely winded. Harry Wharton & Co. trotted off quite cheerfully. Sounds of laughter might have been heard from their dressing-room while they were changing—and, in fact, were heard.

Round 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 bumped 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 spluttering 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 dragged 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, Smythe. Ow!"

"Groo!" said Topham. "They're talking about holding a new election for skipper. You did play rather like an idiot, Smythe."

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 football 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.

"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 squashed Smythe; but Smythe's a slacking toad. Could you stand up against a real good pug? If you can't, just you say so at once, and I'll pick another fellow along the passage. 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, relieved. "I'd like to have you in the mill."

whop any Modern in the Fourth or the Shell, excepting perhaps Tommy Dodd. I admit he's a corker with the gloves."

"Leave him to me," suggested Jimmy Silver.

Lovell snorted.

"Yes, I'm likely to leave him to you, I don't think. I expect he'd knock you out in one round. I'm taking Dodd on myself. Still, let's see what you can do."

They removed their jackets, and donned the gloves. Raby and Newcome sat on the table to watch. Lovell began with a rather pressing attack, to ascertain whether his new chum could stop him. This he soon discovered. He found his guard knocked up, and a hard glove planted on his chin, and he sat down with a shock that almost 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 well. But it was no use. He soon discerned that what Jimmy Silver did not know about the manly art of self-defence was not worth knowing. Jimmy Silver's hand and

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 it. 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 there, 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!"

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 regarded 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. Through that round and the next he held his own, but without doing much attacking. But 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

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'll try it over again some time. But you've done me now, and it's a giddy draw. Oh, 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 at Rookwood remained unsettled. Probably it never would be settled. But it had been a 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 chum 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 they marched him, and 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 of eyes and noses was the principal occupation of the Fistical Four.

THE END.



"Duck them!" shouted the juniors. And in a moment there were four heavy splashes in the fish-pond, and four spluttering yells from the unhappy victims.

eye were as quick as lightning. Lovell, much to his astonishment, found himself driven round the study, and he brought up in the fender, where Jimmy Silver proceeded to deliver a series of taps on his nose and chest.

"Hurray!" chortled Raby. "He's got you, Lovell! Chuck it now, or you'll be tired! You've got to be in form for the Moderns."

Lovell peeled off the gloves, regarding his vanquisher with wonder. "Blessed if I thought you had it in you!" he confessed. "Why, you young ass, when you were first here, and I was looking for trouble with you, I thought you were a funk, because you didn't want to have it out. And you could have licked me all the time!" Jimmy Silver laughed.

"So long as I lick Tommy Dodd, that will 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."

Jones 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. Legget's saying that you're afraid to show up."

"We'll jolly soon show 'em whether we're afraid," growled Lovell.

"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 Doyle. "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.

"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

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 the 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 unable to toe the line for the next round. Then it was the turn of the Classics to yell, and yell they did till the gymnasium rang.

"Level so far," Jimmy Silver remarked to 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

—NEXT MONDAY'S STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO.