

A BOYS BEST FRIEND IS—

The BOYS' FRIEND 1st

(WITH WHICH IS AMALGAMATED "THE DREADNOUGHT.")

No. 750, Vol. XV. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

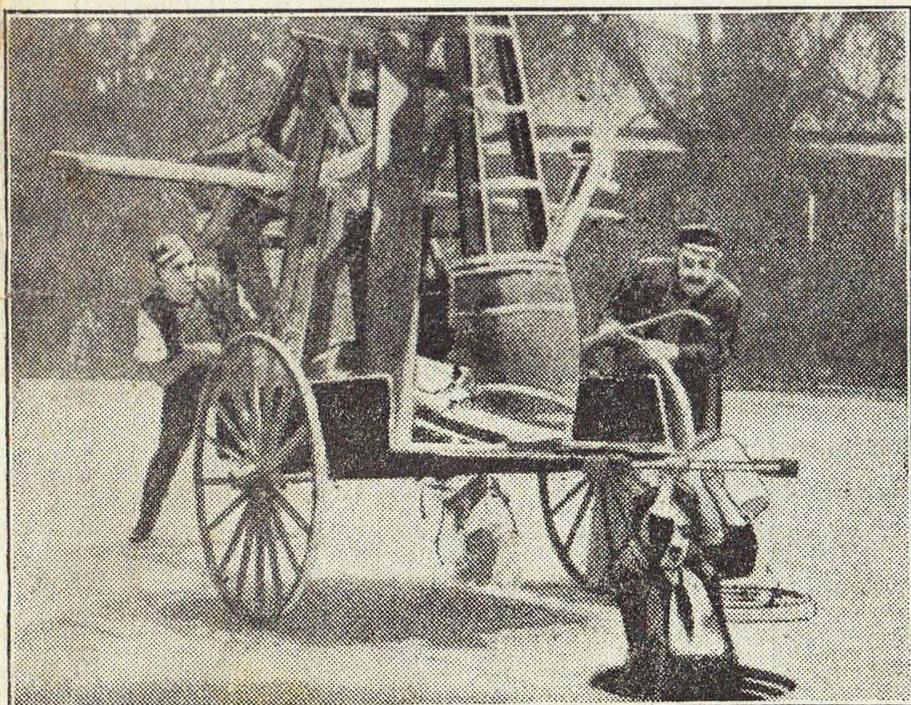
[Week Ending October 23rd, 1915.

STUPENDOUS NEW FEATURE!

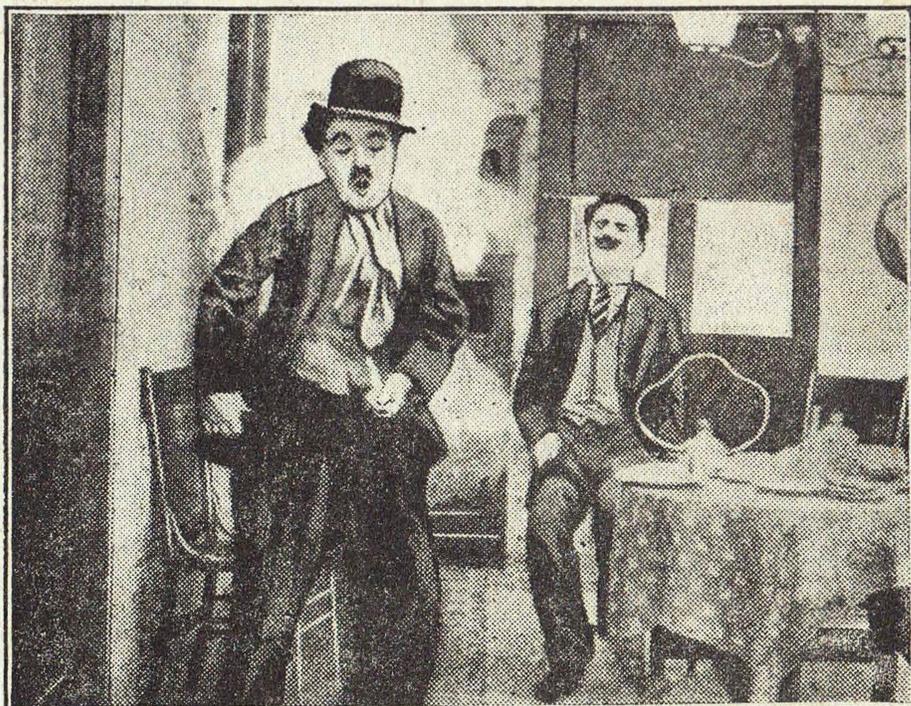
(By Special Arrangement with the Essanay Film Company, London.)

OUR MAGNIFICENT CHARLIE CHAPLIN FILM-PHOTO STORY.

This Week: CHARLIE AT WORK!



CHARLIE, the man who makes millions smirk,
Thought, for a change, he would tackle some work.
Trundling a well-laden cart on the road,
He grunted and growled at his terrible load.
A manhole gaped under him—weren't his nerves shaken!
But he clung to the handcart, and thus saved his bacon.



When Charlie arrived at his fixed destination
The house-owner met him in great desperation.
"The gas is escaping like fury!" he raved,
"And if you don't stop it, no lives will be saved!"
Then our hero, of course, came up to the scratch,
And commenced operations by striking a match!



The thunder of battle, the clamour of sport,
Was nothing compared with that blinding report;
And minutes elapsed before Charlie appeared,
When his irate employer looked on him and jeered:
"It's no bloomin' good to start paintin' a ruin,
So shift to the next 'ouse, and see what wants doin'!"



Here Charlie fared better, away from his master,
And, feeling industrious, dabbed on the plaster.
But alas! his labours were unduly delayed
By the talkative pranks of a pretty young maid.
And the boss coming in on the scene unawares,
Promptly ordered his love-lorn assistant downstairs!

THE FINISH OF THIS PICTURE STORY WILL BE FOUND ON PAGE 352 OF THIS ISSUE!

WHO SHALL BE SKIPPER?

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story, dealing with the Adventures of
JIMMY SILVER & Co. - - - **By OWEN CONQUEST.**

The 1st Chapter.

Smythe's Little Scheme.

"Not an earthly—not a blessed earthly!"

Jimmy Silver of the Fourth mumbled those words discontentedly. The usually cheerful Jimmy was looking, and feeling, morose.

He was seated upon a lump of masonry in the old abbey ruins of Rookwood. He had a pencil in his hand, which he was gnawing, and a sheet of paper open on his knee. The paper was scrawled with figures.

Jimmy Silver had retired to that secluded spot to think out the problem.

It was a difficult problem, and the solution was hard to find. It was a half-holiday that day at Rookwood School; and that afternoon a junior election was to take place—nothing less than the election of the junior football captain.

The old rivalry of the Classical and Modern sides at Rookwood came out keenest at election times.

Jimmy Silver was going over the figures, again and again, in the faint hope of working out a possible majority for himself.

Jimmy Silver was good at figures. But these figures were too much for him. He added, divided, and subtracted in vain. The result was always the same—a majority for Tommy Dodd, the Modern candidate.

No wonder Jimmy Silver was morose. For in the junior football club there was a majority of Classical votes. Had there been only one Classical candidate, he would have romped home, so to speak. The Modern man would have been beaten to the wide. On the carefullest computation, the Classics had at least six votes more than the Moderns.

And every Classical would vote Classical, of course—just as every Modern would vote Modern.

Tommy Dodd had been cricket captain for the season, but Jimmy Silver would indubitably have been elected footer captain, in his turn, if he had been the only candidate.

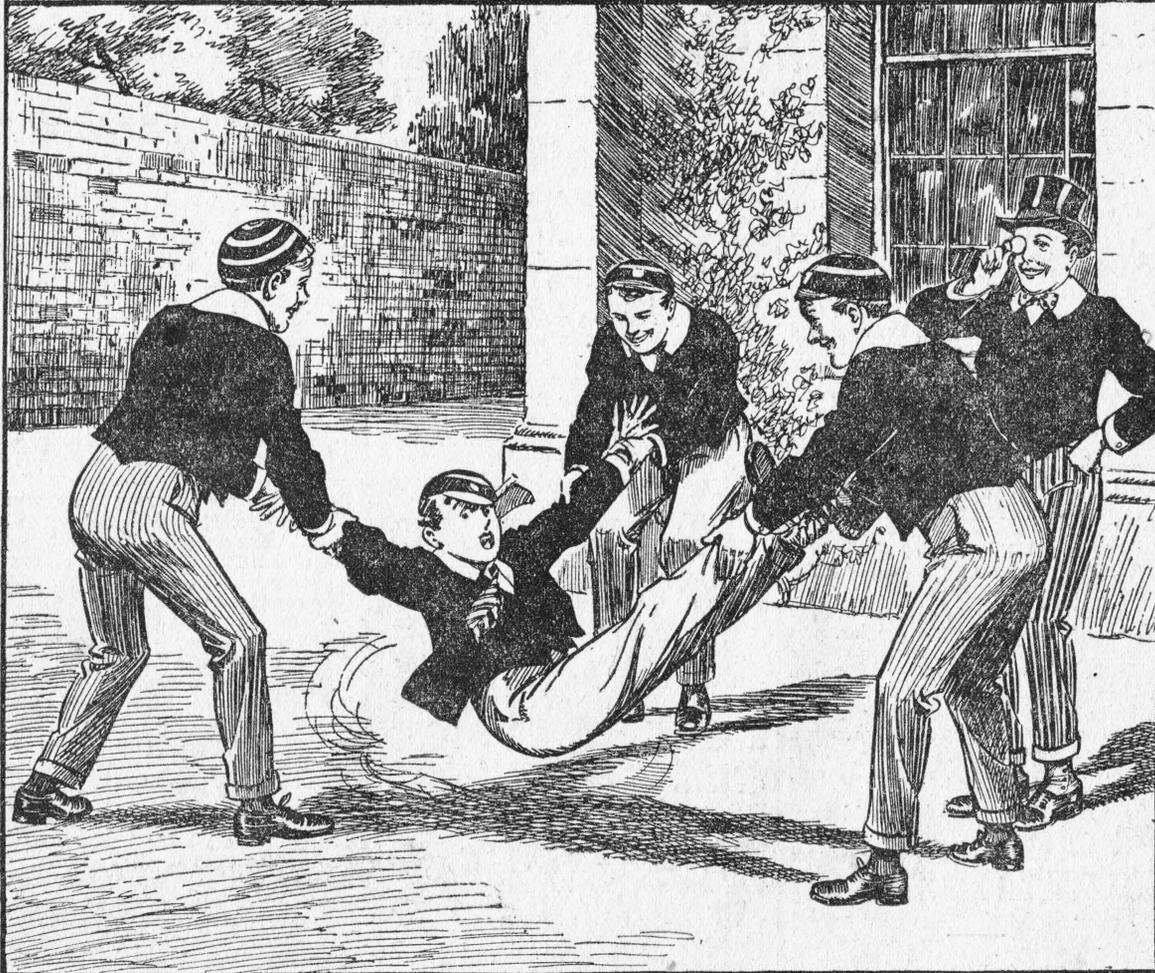
But Smythe, of the Shell, on the Classic side, had chosen to put up as a rival candidate. His candidature brought great joy to the Moderns, for there wasn't the slightest chance of his getting in—only his personal friends, the nuts of Rookwood, would vote for him. But he split the Classic vote—the dozen or fifteen votes polled for Smythe would knock Jimmy Silver right out—and Tommy Dodd would romp home with a majority, for the Moderns could be depended upon to vote as one man.

Hence the moroseness of Jimmy Silver, as he wrestled with the figures. It was too bad to be beaten in the election by the useless candidature of the egregious Smythe. To be beaten by a Modern majority wouldn't have been so bad. But to be beaten by a Modern minority was intensely exasperating, all because that fathead Smythe had chosen to split the vote.

"Not an earthly!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "We should be six or seven ahead, if all the fellows turned up, and I'd scrag 'em if they didn't. But with Smythe bagging a dozen votes, I get it right in the neck! Why don't some dashed Zeppelin drop a bomb on Smythe?"

Jimmy gnawed his pencil once more, and conned over the figures again. If all the Moderns didn't turn up—But they would be sure to—Tommy Dodd & Co. would take care of that. Some of them might be under detention—old Manders was a tartar—but not sufficient to turn the scale in Jimmy's favour. The only consolation Jimmy had was the prospect of getting Smythe's head in chancery after the election.

"Here we are, dear boys!" Jimmy Silver started as he heard that remark. It came from the other side of the mossy old wall he was leaning against. It was the voice of Smythe of the Shell, and Jimmy gave a scornful grunt. Smythe was the great chief of the "Giddy Goats,"



Jimmy Silver roared as he came into violent contact with the hard and totally unsympathetic quadrangle. "Give him another!" yelled Tommy Dodd. Bump! "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Adolphus Smythe, unable to contain his glee and merriment. "Ha, ha, ha!"

and Jimmy knew their habit of sneaking into the ruins to smoke. There was the scratch of a match on the other side of the mossy wall, and a scent of tobacco in the air.

"Yaas, here we are!" said the voice of Tracy, Smythe's study-mate. "What's the little game, Smythe? We ain't come here simply to smoke, I suppose?"

"I've got somethin' to say to you chaps," came Smythe's voice again. "The election's this afternoon."

"We know that!"

It was Howard's voice this time. Jimmy Silver grunted again. The voices on the other side of the wall came as an interruption to his abstruse calculations.

It was not Jimmy's business, of course, to interfere with the Giddy Goats if they chose to smoke cigarettes in the ruins. A word to their Form-master would have earned them a well-deserved licking; but it was not Jimmy's place to utter that word. He grunted and went on with his calculations.

"I've been thinkin' it out," resumed the voice of Adolphus Smythe. "We're goin' to win the election, dear boys!"

"What rot!" said Tracy. "You won't get more'n fifteen votes at the outside, Smythe. That cad Silver will bag nearly the lot!"

"If he's there!" said Smythe.

"Eh?"

"Suppose he ain't there?"

"But he will be there," said Howard, in a puzzled tone. "You don't think he would be ass enough to miss the election, do you?"

"Not if he could help it, dear boys. But he might be made to."

"Oh, my hat!"

And Jimmy Silver, who heard every word, murmured sotto voce "My hat!" too. Jimmy Silver was not an cavesdropper by any means, and if the nuts had begun to talk of private affairs in his hearing, he would have called out to them. But as they were evidently discussing a scheme for keeping him away from the election that afternoon, he sat tight.

Smythe of the Shell had a heavy "down" on Jimmy Silver, and

Jimmy had supposed that the Shell candidate was simply splitting the vote to keep him out. It appeared now that Smythe had other intentions. By fair play he had no chance of bagging the captaincy. It looked as if he were turning to foul play to serve his turn.

There was a buzz of surprise from Howard and Tracy after Smythe's remark. It was evidently the first they had heard of it.

"How could he be made to?" said Howard.

"Easy as rollin' off a form," said Smythe. "The election's at five. Well, that cad Silver has been making up to me lately, trying to persuade me to stand down. It came to a row, and I—I licked him."

Jimmy Silver grinned as he heard that. The licking had been gathered in entirely by Adolphus Smythe on that occasion.

"But if he thought I was comin' round," went on Adolphus, "he would be as chummy as you like! Suppose I mention to him that I'm rather doubtful about puttin' up and splittin' the vote, after all—"

"But you ain't."

"Fathead! I could tell him so, couldn't I?"

Evidently Adolphus Smythe had not been brought up on the same lines as the late lamented George Washington.

"Well, you could," said Tracy.

"But what good would that do?"

"I can ask him to come for a little stroll, and talk it over," said Smythe.

"He'll do it like a shot. I stroll him in this direction—chattin', you know. We stroll into the ruins."

"Well?"

"You two chaps will be lyin' low here, and when I get the beast here, we all three pile on him suddenly—"

"Great Scott!"

"We'll bring a rope with us. We tie him up hand and foot, and put a bag over his head," chuckled Smythe; "then we shove him into a corner, to stay there till after the election."

"My aunt!"

"The election's held without him. Now, the Classical chaps will all vote Classical—they won't let a Modern

get in if they can help it. They'll vote for me!"

"I—I suppose they will!" agreed Tracy, after some thought. "Even Lovell and Raby and Newcome would come round, I think, rather than let the Modern cad in. But if they didn't, we should have a majority without them. The fellows would be ratty at Jimmy Silver staying away from the election."

"They'd all have their backs up," agreed Howard. "I fancy they'd all vote Classical, and as you'd be the only Classical candidate, Smythe—"

"They'd vote for me," said Smythe.

"Good egg! But it's rather risky," said Howard. "Jimmy Silver ain't an easy kid to tackle."

"Three to one—easy enough."

"Well, yes."

"There'd be a row afterwards," said Howard.

"That don't matter, so long as I'm elected skipper. We can stand a row. The rules are plain enough—any chap who don't turn up for the election is out of it. It's never possible for everybody to be there. Some are detained or ill or away every time. This time Jimmy Silver will be away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows get the rope, and be here at exactly half-past four," continued Smythe. "Leave the rest to me. Not a word about it—not a single syllable in case we get overheard. Can't be too careful. And you fellows had better keep clear of me till I meet you here—we don't want those cads to have a chance of suspectin' that there's anythin' on."

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy Silver opened his mouth as he heard the Shell fellows moving. He was about to call out to Smythe, to tell him that his little scheme was known, and to advise him humorously to try again.

But a sudden thought flashed into his mind, even as he was about to speak.

His mouth closed again, and he was silent.

On the other side of the old wall the three nuts moved away, leaving a scent of tobacco behind them.

They separated as they went back to the quadrangle. Smythe was being awfully careful. The Fistical Four of the Fourth were not to be given a chance of suspecting.

In the abbey ruins, Jimmy Silver sat and chuckled silently. Whatever was the idea that had come into his mind, it was clearly amusing, for Jimmy had to stuff his fist into his mouth to keep back a yell of laughter.

The 2nd Chapter.

—And Jimmy Silver's!

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, frowned as Jimmy Silver came in to dinner. Jimmy was several minutes late. Lovell and Raby and Newcome, his chums, were wondering what had become of him.

"Silver," said Mr. Bootles severely, "you are—er—late! I do not approve of unpunctuality, Silver. You will—er—take fifty lines, Silver."

"Yes sir," said Jimmy Silver meekly.

"Where have you been, you fathead?" whispered Lovell, as Jimmy began his dinner. "I've been looking for you."

"You disappeared after lessons," said Raby. "Blessed if I didn't begin to think those Modern cads had got at you."

Jimmy Silver grinned. The Moderns had not thought of "getting" at him; it was the nuts of the Classical side that had thought of that. Jimmy wondered a little whether he would have fallen blindly into Adolphus Smythe's little trap if he had not been forewarned. Certainly Smythe's scheme was very carefully laid. Jimmy Silver would have jumped to accept the olive-branch if Smythe had offered it, in the hope of inducing the dandy of the Shell to refrain from splitting the Classical vote.

He might have walked right into the trap, chatting with Adolphus—might have stayed tied up in the ruins during the election. Assuredly, he would have hammered Adolphus black and blue afterwards. But Adolphus would have been football captain, all the same. Any amount of hammering would not have undone that.

For there was little doubt that, if Jimmy Silver had cut the election, most, if not all, the Classical voters would have plumped for the only Classical candidate available.

Perhaps a few, knowing well that Tommy Dodd was a good skipper, and Smythe a hopeless duffer, might have voted Modern. But the probability was that Smythe would have got his majority.

It was really a very clever scheme, and decidedly unscrupulous; but that trifle did not worry Adolphus. He was not generally bothered with scruples.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were puzzled during dinner by Jimmy Silver's peculiar conduct. Jimmy seemed incessantly on the point of bursting into a laugh, and only checked himself in time.

Several times, indeed, he did chuckle irresistibly, and on one occasion the severe eyes of Mr. Bootles dwelt upon him.

"Silver!" rapped out Mr. Bootles. Jimmy became grave again at once.

"Ye-es, sir."

"The dinner-table, Silver, is not a proper place for cachinnatory ebullitions of merriment," said Mr. Bootles. "If this occurs again, Silver, you will be detained this afternoon."

Jimmy Silver was as grave as a judge for the rest of the dinner. The mere thought of being detained that afternoon made him shiver.

Dinner was over at last, and the juniors marched out; and in the hall Lovell and Raby and Newcome surrounded their study-leader.

"Now, you silly ass, what's the joke?" demanded Lovell.

"What's the cackle about?" asked Newcome.

"Give it a name, you fathead!" said Raby.

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"Come up to the study," he said.

"Why can't you tell us here?" said Lovell.

"Bow-wow! Follow your leader!"

Jimmy Silver walked away to the end study, and the Co. followed him. They were curious, and a little exasperated.

"Well?" snapped Lovell, when they were in the end study and the door closed. "What the merry thunder is all the mystery about?"

"We're going to win the election," said Jimmy calmly.

Lovell snorted.

"We can't. Smythe's splitting the



WHO SHALL BE

(Continued
from
the
previous
page.)

SKIPPER?

vote. Since you licked him, the rotter is keener than ever on keeping you out."

"I know you've been scowling over the figures," remarked Raby. "But you can't turn a minority into a majority by adding and subtracting. It's simply no go. We'll turn up and vote, but it won't be any good."

"This evening, I shall be junior captain of Rookwood," said Jimmy tranquilly. "I've got a new ally."

"Some of the Moderns going to do the decent thing and vote Classical?" asked Newcome eagerly.

"Rats! No!"

"Then who—"

"Smythe."

"Smythe!" yelled the three juniors.

"Exactly!"

"Do you mean to say he's come round?" exclaimed Lovell, in amazement. "I don't believe it. He's pulling your leg."

"He's going to pretend to come round," grinned Jimmy Silver, "and he's going to take me for a stroll to talk it over. In the old abbey, Howard and Tracy are going to pile on me—"

"Wha-a-t!"

"And they're going to tie me up and hide me till after the election—"

"Great pip!"

"And as the Classicals are sure to vote Classical, Smythe will romp home. That's the little game."

"How do you know?" gasped Lovell.

"Because they sneaked into a quiet place to plot the little plot, and I happened to be within two yards," chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, the scheming cad, we'll scrag him!" shouted Lovell, striding to the door. "We'll frog-march him round the quad, the unscrupulous rotter!"

"Hold on—"

"Look here," roared Lovell, "we're not letting Smythe off after that! We're going to make an example of him, the cad!"

Lovell jerked open the door. Jimmy Silver jumped at it, and slammed it shut again. He pushed Lovell back into the study.

"Hold on, you ass!" he said. "Smythe don't know I know. He's not to know yet. Don't you see, you duffer? What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

"I don't see—"

"Tracy and Howard are going to be ambushed in the old abbey at half-past four, to collar me when Smythe walks me in. Well, you three chaps, and Oswald and Flynn and Hooker and Jones are going to be ambushed there at four o'clock—"

"Wha-a-t!"

"You'll lie low—awfully low. If you give yourselves away, the game's up."

"What game?" ejaculated Lovell.

"Our little game. When Smythe & Co. collar me—"

"Well?"

"You fellows collar them."

"C-c-collar them!"

"Yes, rather," grinned Jimmy Silver, "and tie them up instead of me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the giddy gander, isn't it? Somebody's going to miss the election, and it won't be little me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four roared in chorus. The end study rang with merriment. Jimmy Silver's scheme for out-scheming the schemer exactly suited the ideas of his chums. They howled. The door opened, and Dick Oswald looked in.

"Hallo, what's the joke? I can hear you at the end of the passage."

"Come in, my son—we shall want you," said Jimmy Silver. "Pass the word to Hooker and Jones and Flynn, and bring 'em here."

"Jape against the Moderns?" asked Oswald.

"No fear—more important than that."

"I'll bring 'em!"

Dick Oswald hurried away, and in a few minutes returned with his flock. Flynn and Hooker and Jones minor of the Fourth came into the study, looking surprised.

"Well, phwat's the little game intoirly?" asked Flynn.

Jimmy Silver proceeded to explain the little game, and his explanation was greeted with a howl of glee.

"Sure, it makes it a cert for you, Jimmy darling," chuckled Flynn. "Smythe is going to be useful for once, bedad. But what an awful spalpeen!"

"Mean cad, plotting to keep a chap away from an election!" said Lovell. "Just like that cad Smythe!"

"Just like him," agreed Oswald, with a grin.

"Well, what are you grinning at?"

"Ahem! I was thinking that it's just what we're going to do to Smythe!"

"Oh, that's different, of course!"

"Quite different," said Raby emphatically.

"Utterly different," said Jimmy Silver. "Sauce for the gander, you know. Smythe's scheme was simply caddish, but what we're going to do is the right thing."

And all the Fourth-Formers agreed that there was a great difference. Adolphus Smythe couldn't complain if his own "wheeze" was carried out, with variations.

It was probable that he would complain, certainly; but his complaints would not disturb the equanimity of the Classical heroes. Adolphus had asked for it, and Adolphus was going to get it.

The 3rd Chapter.

Tommy Dodd is Alarmed.

"My only chapeau!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

Tommy Dodd, from the doorway of Sergeant Kettle's tuckshop, stared across the Rookwood quad.

"His comrades, Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook followed his example.

The three Moderns looked grave. Two juniors had come out of the School House. They were Jimmy and Adolphus Smythe.

That Jimmy Silver and Adolphus Smythe were fairly at daggers drawn was no secret.

Upon that fact rested the whole of Tommy Dodd's hopes of getting in at the election as junior skipper. If Smythe did not split the vote, the Classicals would carry the day, and the Moderns would be nowhere.

Hence Tommy Dodd's disquietude as he spotted Silver and the dandy of the Shell strolling together in the most amicable manner, and chatting as if they were on the best of terms, and had been pals all their lives.

Tommy Dodd could scarcely believe his eyes. A "rapprochement" between Smythe and Silver meant ruin to his hopes, but he had never dreamed that it was possible.

He knew very well what a tremendous "down" Adolphus had upon the end study. He knew that the design of splitting the vote had been thought of, in the first place, simply with the object of dishing the Fistical Four.

"My hat!" murmured Tommy Dodd. "My solitary chapeau! Have—have—have they made it up?"

"Oh, howly Mother av Moses!" groaned Doyle. "That baste Silver is deep enough for anything! If he gets Smythe's vote—"

"If Smythe stands down, Silver romps in," said Cook, "and Rookwood will go to the dogs! Nice for the football club to have a Classical skipper!"

"Lickings all through the season," said Doyle, with a sad shake of the head.

"It's rotten!" Dodd grunted. "Smythe has no right to make it up with Jimmy Silver. Where's his pride, I'd like to know? Silver licked him yesterday!"

"Oh, he's a rotter!" said Tommy Cook. "He's come round simply to dish us. I'd like to scrag him!"

"We jolly well will scrag him if he dishes us like that!" said Tommy Dodd indignantly. "I noticed yesterday that Silver was making up to him; but I heard it came to a fight in the evening, so I thought that was knocked on the head. Why, look at Smythe now; he's got a mouse under his eye!"

"And look at his nose intoirly." The three Tommies, in great uneasiness, watched Jimmy and the dandy of the Shell.

Certainly they appeared to be on the best of terms. They strolled by the tuckshop, and some of their words were audible to the Moderns as they passed.

"Yaas, I'm thinkin' of standin' down, Silver," drawled Adolphus. "I feel that it's up to me to save the Classical side, y'know!"

"That's awfully decent of you, Smythey," Jimmy Silver replied gravely.

Tommy Dodd looked at his comrades eloquently. The very worst had come to the worst!

"All up!" mumbled Cook dispiritedly. "Who'd have thought it?"

Tommy Dodd rushed out of the tuckshop, and intercepted the two Classicals. His two chums followed him.

They were in a mood to wipe up the quadrangle with both Adolphus Smythe and Jimmy Silver. What the deuce did they mean by making it up like this, at a moment so utterly inopportune for their rivals?

"Look here!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

Adolphus Smythe jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and surveyed the excited Modern junior.

"Hallo!" he yawned. "Where did you get that necktie, Dodd? My word! What neckties you Modern chaps wear!"

"So you've made it up, you two rotters!" shouted Tommy Dodd.

"Looks like it, don't it?" grinned Jimmy Silver, with a deep inward chuckle.

Smythe was making up to him for the noble purpose of entrapping him in the abbey ruins; and Jimmy was allowing himself to be made up to for the purpose of entrapping Smythe there. But appearances are deceptive, and had deceived Tommy Dodd.

The rage and dismay of the three Tommies tickled Jimmy Silver.

"Ain't you glad to see us chummy?" he asked. "Smythe's condescended to take notice of me—so good of Smythe. I'm letting him beam on me. You ought to be jolly pleased to see it! Naughty to want to see us quarrel!"

"So that grinning ass is going to vote for you, is he?" snorted Tommy Dodd. "After you gave him that nose?"

"Smythe's an awfully forgiving chap!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

Smythe put his hand involuntarily to his nose. Smythe rather prided himself on his Greek nose. It had not looked very Greek since his last encounter with Jimmy Silver. It looked like a fat bulb.

"And that eye!" sniffed Tommy Cook.

Smythe rubbed his eye. He did not look very forgiving as he rubbed it. A mouse under the eye marred the good looks of the chief of the nuts.

"Worm!" said Tommy Doyle.

"Ain't you glad to see us so nice and friendly?" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"No, we ain't," roared Tommy Dodd. "It's just a rotten game to dish us at the election. Bump 'em, you fellows!"

"Oh, by gad!" ejaculated Smythe. Smythe backed away as the three exasperated Tommies advanced.

Jimmy Silver stood his ground.

"Cheese it, dear boys!" he said. "It's election in an hour or less, and we don't want to show Bootles a crop of thick ears!"

"Collar the Classical chump!"

"Hands off! Why—my hat!"

Jimmy Silver struggled in the grasp of the three Moderns. "Leggo, you fatheads! Rescue!"

"Bump him!"

Smythe of the Shell did not come to Jimmy's aid. As a matter of fact, he was quite pleased that Jimmy should be bumped by the Moderns, and he was very averse to encountering such fighting-men as the three Tommies of Rookwood.

He blinked through his eyeglass with a grin, as the Tommies grappled with Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy struggled furiously.

There was no rescue at hand. Jimmy's own special followers in the Fourth Form were in ambush long ago, and were not to be seen.

The three Tommies had been lucky in catching him without Lovell or

Raby or Newcome or Oswald in sight.

They proceeded to wreak their wrath by bumping him in the quadrangle, under the beeches.

Jimmy Silver roared as he came into violent contact with the hard and totally unsympathetic quadrangle.

"Yow! Chuck it! Modern cads! Wow!"

"Give him another!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

Bump!

"Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Adolphus Smythe, unable to contain his glee and merriment. "Ha, ha, ha! By gad! Ha, ha!"

Tommy Dodd paused in the congenial occupation of bumping Jimmy Silver to stare at Adolphus. That roar of laughter from the dandy of the Shell did not look as if his friendship with Jimmy Silver went very deep.

"Leggo!" yelled Jimmy, struggling furiously.

Bump!

"He, he, he!" cackled Adolphus.

"Give Smythe one!" shouted Tommy Cook.

Adolphus hurriedly retired from the scene. He did not want "one." The three Tommies bumped the struggling Jimmy again, and shoved his cap down his back, rumbled his hair, and pulled up his jacket over his ears, and then left him, gasping, on the ground and walked away, grinning.

Jimmy Silver sat up, struggling with his jacket, and gasping for breath. For once the Modern heroes had downed Jimmy Silver completely.

Tommy Dodd chuckled as he walked away with his chums, leaving Jimmy Silver trying to get his second wind.

"It's all serene," he said confidently. "Smythe's only pulling his leg. He was as pleased as Punch when we bumped that worm Silver! He don't mean to vote for Silver; he's only spoofing him!"

"Cad's trick!" said Cook.

"Yes, just like a Classical—especially Smythe," said Tommy Dodd. "But all the better for us. Time we got an eye on the chaps now. The election's at five. That worm Leggett won't vote unless we run him in by the collar. We've got to see that nobody keeps out."

And the three Tommies, reassured on the subject of Smythe and his vote, went into Mr Manders' house, on electioneering bent. Tommy was a little puzzled. It was quite clear to his keen eyes that Smythe was spoofing Jimmy Silver, and had no intention whatever of really backing up the Fourth-Former at the election. It was odd that so keen a fellow as Jimmy could not see it, too.

But Tommy Dodd hadn't much time to think over the matter. He had his voters to whip up for the election. He dismissed Adolphus Smythe and his spoofing little game from his mind, and attended to business.

As the hour of the election drew nearer, crowds of juniors made their way into the common-room, and on the Modern side there was not a single voter missing. The three Tommies seemed to be all eyes, and by dint of persuasion and dire threats, and a few punches, they brought the whole of the Modern flock into the fold. And they gleefully anticipated victory—the sweeping Modern victory that was to be the result of Smythe splitting the vote.

The 4th Chapter.

The Spider and the Fly.

"Hurt, dear boy?"

Adolphus Smythe blinked rather dubiously at Jimmy Silver as he asked that question.

Jimmy was dusting himself down under the beeches. The three Tommies had disappeared, or Adolphus would not have been there.

Jimmy glared at the dandy of the Shell.

"You rotten funk!" he roared.

"Why didn't you lend me a hand?"

"Ahem!"

"You funky worm! I've a jolly good mind—"

Jimmy paused.

"I—I—I was just comin' back to help you," stammered Adolphus. "I—I really went to fetch help, you know. I—I couldn't see your pals anywhere, so—so I came back to mop up those Modern cads myself."

Jimmy Silver was greatly inclined to take Adolphus by the neck and knock his head against the nearest beech. But he refrained.

As a matter of fact, it suited both parties to get on amicable terms again.

Smythe had to be friendly with Jimmy, to lead him into the ambush; and Jimmy had to be friendly, to be led there.

So Jimmy Silver choked down his wrath and disgust, consoling himself with the thought of what was shortly to happen to the egregious Adolphus.

"All serene!" he said, with an effort.

Smythe looked relieved. A row with Jimmy just then would have completely mucked up all his plans.

Fortunately, there was to be no row.

The dandy of the Shell took out his scented handkerchief and dusted Jimmy Silver down in the friendliest possible manner.

Considering the treachery he was planning, and which Jimmy was perfectly well aware of, his effusive friendliness was a little nauseous. Again Jimmy was almost overcome by an intense desire to bang Smythe's head on the nearest beech. Again he controlled himself with a mighty effort.

"That's better!" remarked Smythe.

"Sorry you're hurt!"

"Oh, I'm not hurt so much as all that," grunted Jimmy. "I'm not made of putty."

"Let's talk that over what we were talkin' about," said Adolphus.

"Time I got in, I think," said Jimmy.

Jimmy could play a part quite as well as Adolphus could. It was his game to appear unsuspecting.

"Oh, there's heaps of time," said Adolphus hastily. "Tain't a quarter-past four yet."

"Nearly half-past," said Jimmy, looking up at the clock-tower over the trees.

Smythe gritted his teeth. The interruption by the Moderns had wasted time. Was he to lose his victim after all?

"Well, the election's not till five, you know," he urged. "Bootles won't come into the common-room till five's struck. The—the fact is, there's some points about the election I—I want to discuss with you, Silver. Of course, if you don't want my vote—"

That, Smythe considered, would bring Jimmy round it did.

"All right, Smythe, take your own time," said Jimmy. "After all, there's no hurry."

Smythe suppressed a chuckle, and they sauntered on together under the beeches. The dandy of the Shell, as if by chance, directed his steps by the path round the School House, in the direction of the abbey ruins.

The fact is, I shall have to persuade my pals to vote for you," he remarked. "It won't be so jolly easy, you know. Still, I'm goin' to do it."

Smythe was simply talking to gain time. They were near the ruins, and in the ruins Tracy and Howard were in ambush, with the rope, Smythe was on tenterhooks.

Jimmy Silver was generally so keen that he was amazed at taking him in so easily. He felt that he had betrayed his real feelings during the scene with the Moderns. Yet Jimmy's eyes had not been opened.

Doubtless, in his eagerness to secure Smythe's vote, he was blind to everything else. But Smythe was on tenterhooks until Jimmy should be seized and safely disposed of.

"Going into the ruins?" asked Jimmy, looking at his watch.

"Just stroll through," said Smythe. "Out the other side, and round, you know. Then we'll get in."

"Oh, all right," said Jimmy, with apparent reluctance.

"No giddy rush for the election, you know," said Smythe. "Lots of time. Tain't five minutes from here. And it's goin' to be a walk-over for you, Silver—what!"

"I hope so," said Jimmy demurely.

"Interestin', these old ruins, ain't they?" said Smythe, pausing in the midst of the old masses of masonry and shattered windows. "Sort of remind you of historical days and things, and so on, you know Jolly old, I should say."

"Must be," said Jimmy. "Turned half-past now, Smythey."

"Yaas. Is it?"

Smythe grinned. Behind Jimmy Silver, Tracy and Howard were stealing out from their cover among the mossy fragments. They were closing on Jimmy from behind.

Smythe's heart thumped.

Jimmy had no eyes in the back of his head, so he did not see them. If he heard them he gave no sign.

"About time we got in," said Jimmy calmly. "You've got to see your pals, too, Smythe, and tell 'em you're standing down, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What's the joke?"



WHO SHALL BE

(Continued
from
the
previous
page.)

SKIPPER?

"You are!" chuckled Smythe.

"Collar him!"

"My hat!"

Tracy and Howard sprang upon Jimmy together from behind, and Smythe leaped upon him at the same moment, making a frontal attack.

Three pairs of hands grasped the Fourth-Former at the same moment, and he was borne to the earth.

"Pin him!" panted Smythe.

"Got him!"

The three nuts of Rookwood were prepared for a terrific struggle. They were three to one, certainly, but Jimmy Silver was a mighty man with his hands. He would, under ordinary circumstances, have given the three slackers a run for their money, so to speak, and his capture would have been dearly purchased.

But, wonderful to relate, Jimmy Silver was as mild as a lamb in the grasp of the Shell fellows.

He did not struggle.

He simply caved in, without a blow, without a wriggle, and Tracy and Howard sat upon him successfully, amazed by the facility of their victory.

"By gad!" said Tracy. "Not much trouble, by gad!"

Smythe chuckled gleefully.

"Got the cad!" he said. "Hold the rotter tight! Mind he don't bolt! Never mind if you hurt him!"

"We don't mind," grinned Howard.

"What's the little game?" asked Jimmy Silver, with perfect coolness, looking up with mild inquiry. "Is this what you call friendly, Smythe?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Changed your mind about voting for me?" asked Jimmy innocently.

"Oh, my hat!" roared Tracy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I haven't changed my mind, you cheeky fag," drawled Smythe, "because I wasn't intendin' to do anythin' of the sort. I was leadin' you by the nose, you see—gettin' you here to be collared, by gad!"

"Like a lamb to the slaughter," smiled Howard.

"I must say I pulled the wool over your eyes rather neatly," said Smythe, with considerable satisfaction. "Case of the spider and the fly, you know. You're the fly and I'm the spider."

The nuts chuckled gleefully.

"I see," remarked Jimmy, apparently still undismayed. "But you're not going to sit on me here all the time the election's on, I suppose?"

"Hardly, dear boy. We're goin' to tie you up and leave you here. Got that rope, Tracy?"

"You bet!" said Tracy.

"And as you don't turn up for the election, Silver, I rather fancy the Classical vote will be solid for me," yawned Smythe. "I rather think so, don't you know. Sort of surprise for you—what?"

"Not at all," said Jimmy cheerfully. "I was expecting this."

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"The spider and the fly is a game that two can play at, you know," said Jimmy agreeably. "You ain't much of a spider, Smythe, and you're not very fly. You're not quite up to the weight of the end study. Would you mind getting off my chest, Howard? You're rather bony!"

"Tie him up," said Smythe. "He's only gassing. He wouldn't have come here if he'd expected anything of the kind, I rather think, what!"

"Not likely!" grinned Howard.

"Rescue!" rapped out Jimmy Silver suddenly.

He did not shout, he simply called out, just as if he expected friends to be within easy hearing. Smythe stared at him blankly.

"You silly ass!" he said. "Who's goin' to rescue you? You could yell at the top of your voice, and you wouldn't be heard from here. Tie him—oh, my hat! What the thunder—Oh, crumbs!"

There was a sudden rush of feet.

The silent old ruins became suddenly alive with juniors.

From their cover seven fellows had suddenly appeared as Jimmy Silver

called for rescue, and they rushed upon the nuts from all sides.

Before Smythe & Co. quite knew what was happening, each of them was seized in two pairs of hands, and they were struggling wildly.

The 5th Chapter. Turning the Tables.

Jimmy Silver sprang to his feet. The tables had been turned quite suddenly.

Tracy and Howard had had to release him, as they were collared by Oswald and Flynn and Hooker and Jones minor.

Lovell and Raby had hold of the great Adolphus, and were rubbing his bulbous nose in the dust.

Jimmy Silver looked on smiling.

Smythe. "Of course, I—I didn't mean—"

"You didn't mean to be nailed like this?" queried Jimmy Silver. "Quite so—of course you didn't. I mean it."

"I—I—I—"

"You can use their own rope!" remarked Jimmy. "Use our own, too—nothing like making sure. Tie 'em up quite safely. It doesn't matter if you hurt 'em, as Smythe remarked a few minutes ago."

"I—I—leggo!" panted Smythe. "You rotten cad! You're not going to make us miss the election?"

"Your own idea, Smythe," said Jimmy sweetly.

"Even you have ideas sometimes, and I'm borrowing that one; it's a good one. You had your dear pals here at half-past four ready to nail me. I had mine here at four o'clock, ready to nail you and them. What do you think of the spider and the fly now?"

"Oh, by gad!" groaned Smythe.

"Dished!" mumbled Howard.

"Oh, you ass, Smythe!" moaned Tracy. "What did you let it out for?"

"I didn't let it out!" howled Smythe. "I don't know how these young rotters got on to the idea, by gad. Look here, Jimmy Silver, you let us go. If you tie us up, I'll complain to your Form-master!"

"Oh, Adolphus!" said Jimmy Silver, in a shocked tone. "Did you

Smythe ventured to yell for help once, although, as he had warned Jimmy Silver, there was no chance of a yell being heard from the secluded ruins. But he yelled only once. Lovell rubbed his nose on the ground till he left off, and he did not venture any more. He groaned instead.

"Quarter to five!" said Jimmy Silver, looking at his watch. "Most of the fellows will be in the common-room by this time. Let's look at those knots!"

Jimmy Silver examined the knotted cords, and expressed himself satisfied with them. The Fourth-Formers had done their work thoroughly.

Then Jimmy jerked out the handkerchiefs of the prisoners, and proceeded to stuff them into their mouths. It was not likely that a call for help from the ruins would be heard, especially as most of the fellows were indoors now, but Jimmy Silver left nothing to chance. The junior dormitories in the School House looked towards the ruins, and a fellow who happened to be there might have heard a yell, and learned what was on. It was safer to gag the prisoners. And there was no need to stand upon ceremony with them.

"That looks all right," said Jimmy, surveying the prisoners. "Feel all right, Smythe?"

"Mmmmm!" mumbled Smythe. That was all he could say, with his

They were feeling extremely satisfied with themselves.

That they were fully justified in turning Adolphus' little scheme against himself, they were quite assured. And the Classical vote would be no longer split, and the Moderns would not be able to snatch a victory from the Classical divisions. Tommy Dodd could not be blamed for intending to snatch that victory; but the Moderns were not really entitled to it on their numbers, and it was only justice that the majority should count.

"Good egg!" chuckled Raby, as the victorious Fourth-Formers made their way to the School House. "The vote won't be split now. It was a dirty trick of Smythe's, anyway, to split the vote, and get his own side beaten."

"We're entitled to win, and we're going to win," said Jimmy Silver. "And we're much obliged to Smythe for thinking of this wheeze to avoid splitting the vote."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Co. trooped into the house, extremely satisfied with themselves and things generally. Smythe & Co. were not feeling satisfied, naturally; but, as Jimmy Silver remarked philosophically, it was impossible to please everybody.

The 6th Chapter.

Puzzle—Find Adolphus!

The junior common-room was crowded.

It was close upon five o'clock when Jimmy Silver & Co. strolled in. They found the room swarming with juniors.

Mr. Bootles had not yet arrived, and the room was in a buzz of voices. The master of the Fourth was to preside at the election and count the votes. But for his majestic presence the counting of heads might have been changed for the punching of noses, as the feelings of the rivals of Rookwood grew more excited over the contest.

Nearly every fellow in the Shell, the Fourth, and the Third who was a member of the club had turned up to vote.

The three Tommies had shepherded in their voters with great care. The Moderns were solid for Tommy Dodd, and they were there in all their force.

The number of electors was very considerable. The room was swarming. The Moderns kept together, and they were looking in great spirits. They had at first looked forward to the election with great uneasiness, knowing that there was a majority of Classicals in the club. But Smythe's candidature had turned it into a walk-over for them. With the Classical vote split, they were certain to bring their man in. So they were in high feather.

"Hallo, here's our candidate!" said Brown of the Third, Classical, as Jimmy Silver came in. "Just on time, Silver."

"All here?" asked Jimmy.

"All our chaps seem to be here," said Lovell, looking round.

"Smythe hasn't come in yet," said Townsend of the Fourth, one of the nuts, and a great backer of the dandy of the Shell. "Seen him, Silver?"

"Hasn't he come? I should have expected him to be early," said Jimmy calmly. "No, he's not here—his beautiful countenance couldn't be hidden."

"Better cut off and look in his study," said Raby solemnly. "Perhaps he's smoking, and forgotten the election."

"Cut off, Topsy," said Townsend.

Topham left the common-room. He came back in a few minutes.

"Smythe ain't in his study," he said. "I can't find Howard or Tracy either. The silly asses can't have gone out, surely?"

"There's races on at Coombe today," murmured Newcome.

"Oh, my hat!" said Townsend. "Smythe must be an awful ass. P'raps he's decided to stand down after all, though. He knows he won't get in."

"That must be it," said Selwyn of the Shell, another of the nuts. "But Smythe was very keen, all the same."

"Well, he's not here."

"Jolly odd!" said Jimmy Silver, with owl-like gravity. "Perhaps we'd better postpone the election."

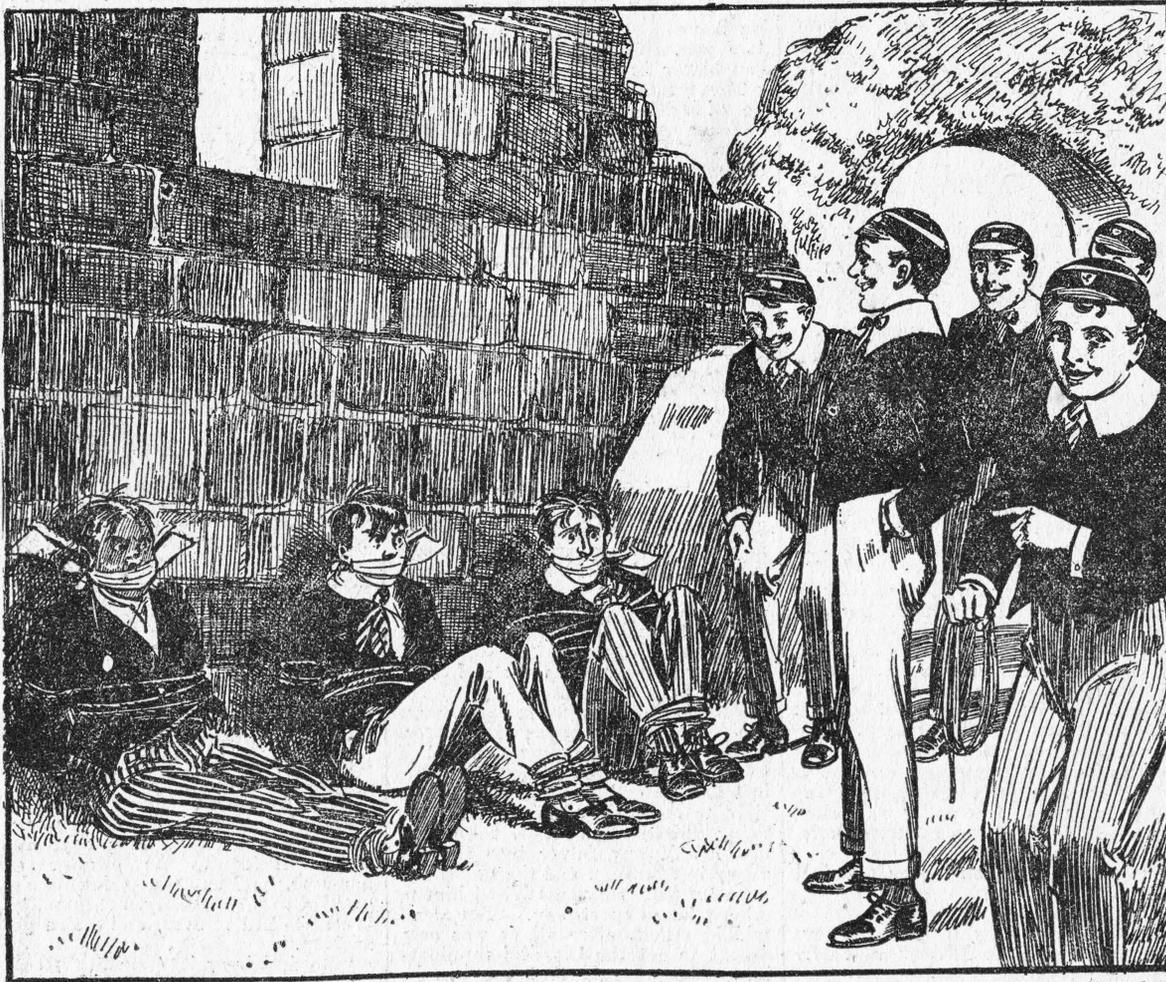
"Why, you ass—" exclaimed Lovell, in alarm and astonishment.

Jimmy Silver closed one eye at his chum.

"Let's ask the Moderns," he said.

"But—"

"Oh, leave it to your uncle!" said Jimmy; and he crossed over to where Tommy Dodd was chatting with his numerous followers.



"That looks all right," said Jimmy Silver, surveying the prisoners. "Feel all right, Smythe?" "Mmmmm!" mumbled Smythe. "How do you feel, Howard?" "Mmmmm!" "You all right, Tracy?" "Mmmmm!"

The change of scene had been quite kaleidoscopic.

"Yow-ow-ow!" came in mumbling tones from Adolphus Smythe. "You beasts, leggo! Yow-ow-woop!"

"Groooh!" stammered Howard. "Gerroff my neck, Flynn, you wild Irish beast!"

"Get off my head!" moaned Tracy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is where we gloat!" chuckled Newcome. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sit on the cads!" said Jimmy Silver, dusting his trousers. "Don't grind your teeth like that, Adolphus. Ain't this a pleasant little surprise to you?"

"Oh, by gad!"

"I mentioned that I was expecting your little jape!" smiled Jimmy Silver. "You gave me sauce for the goose, and I'm giving you sauce for the gander. One good turn deserves another, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Classical Fourth-Formers chuckled joyously. Three dusty nuts lay under their feet, and glared daggers.

"How—how—how did you know?" stammered Howard.

"Sort of found out!" said Jimmy carelessly. "You can't jape the end study, you know. Rather above your weight."

"I was only j-j-joking!" stammered

think I would have complained, if you had tied me up?"

"Dirty sneak!" snorted Lovell.

"Give him an extra rub for that!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" came in loud, anguished tones from Adolphus, as the noble nose was rubbed in the dust, still further marring its beauty.

"Still, you can complain to Bootles if you like, Smythe!" said Jimmy Silver generously. "Of course, you'll be ragged bald-headed and sent to Coventry for sneaking, and it won't make any difference to the election."

And as I shall explain to Bootles that it was your own little game, and that I simply turned the tables on you, you won't get much more than a lecture from Bootles. Still, please yourself. Mind you tie those ropes tight, kids!"

The Fourth-Formers were tying up the three nuts in the most effective manner.

There was plenty of cord, the nuts having brought a supply for Jimmy Silver as well as the supply the Co. had brought for the nuts.

The juniors used all of it, and they wound it round the prisoners and knotted it, till Smythe and Tracy and Howard looked like bundles of cord and knots.

Jimmy Silver watched the operations with a serene smile.

scented handkerchief stuffed into his mouth.

"How do you feel, Howard?"

"Mmmmm!"

"You all right, Tracy?"

"Mmmmm!"

"They seem to be satisfied," remarked Jimmy Silver. "Shove 'em down the steps, and leave 'em to meditate on their sins. They can think over that beautiful recitation, 'The Spider and the Fly.' On another occasion, Adolphus, I suggest that you bear in mind that you are a very cack-handed spider, and that I am awfully fly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mmmmm!" mumbled the wretched nuts.

The Fourth-Formers jerked them up, and bundled them down the stone steps that led to the cellars under the old abbey. At the bottom of the steps, they laid them on the accumulated rubbish, and left them. Jimmy Silver kissed his hand as he departed, followed by three deadly glares from the three prisoners.

"We'll come back for you after the election," grinned Lovell.

"And we'll give you early news of the result," chuckled Oswald. "Don't worry, it will be a Classical win!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. sauntered out of the ruins.



WHO SHALL BE

(Continued from the previous page.)

SKIPPER?

The Modern leader greeted him with a grin.

"Close on five," he remarked. "Only waiting for Bootles. Are you anxious to get it over, Silver?"

"I suppose you wouldn't care to put it off a bit?" remarked Jimmy.

"Some of our side don't seem to have turned up—"

"Put it off be blowed," said Tommy Dodd instantly.

"If your Classical slackers can't turn up to time, they can do the other thing. We're not putting off this election. Not if I know it!"

"No jolly fear!" chuckled Tommy Cook.

There was a step in the passage, and everyone looked towards the door.

But it was not Adolphus Smythe—it was Mr. Bootles. The master of the Fourth came in with a benignant smile.

"Ah! We are all here, my young friends!" said Mr. Bootles, glancing at his watch. "It is time for the election—what, what! Let us proceed."

"We are not all here yet, sir," said Selwyn of the Shell.

"Smythe hasn't come in, sir. He's one of the candidates."

Mr. Bootles frowned.

"I am afraid I cannot waste time waiting for Smythe, Selwyn," he said drily. "Smythe knows the time of the election, I presume?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Then why is he not here? If Smythe does not attach sufficient importance to the election to arrive in time, I am afraid we have no alternative but to proceed without Smythe," said Mr. Bootles.

Tommy Dodd did mental arithmetic at a marvellous rate. Without the third candidate the Classical vote would most likely be solid for Silver.

Unless Smythe was there to egg them on, the nuts would back up their own side—or most of them, at any rate.

Was there a chance for Tommy to pull it off without a split vote amongst his opponents. Smythe and Tracy and Howard couldn't vote, anyway, and one or two might decline to vote, and—and— Tommy Dodd's brain almost whirled with calculations.

Mr. Bootles glanced at his watch and frowned.

"Master Smythe does not seem to be coming," he said. "We will now proceed without him."

And they proceeded.

The 7th Chapter. The Election.

The door was closed, and the meeting proceeded to business.

Tommy Dodd was proposed by Cook and seconded by Doyle. Jimmy Silver

was proposed by Lovell and seconded by Raby. The third candidate wasn't proposed at all, as he was not there.

What had become of Smythe was a mystery. But certainly his supporters couldn't vote for him as he wasn't there.

As a matter of absolute fact, some of them felt relieved. They had agreed to back up Adolphus. But some of them had felt very uneasy at their own disloyalty in splitting the Classical vote, and thus giving the election into the hands of the Moderns. So Smythe's absence came as a relief to some.

"After all, he's doin' the decent thing in stayin' away," Townsend remarked to Topham. "He couldn't have got in. I don't like that cheeky cad Silver, but we don't want a measly Modern skipper."

"Just what I think," said Topham, with a nod. "Smythe's thought better of it, I suppose."

"Keep out the Modern cad, anyway," said Townsend.

"That's it!"

The Modern vote was counted first. The Classics stood and watched as Mr. Bootles called for hands up for Thomas Dodd.

Every Modern hand went up. Smythe's most intimate backer wouldn't have dreamed of voting Modern unless Adolphus had driven him to it. Mr. Bootles counted the Modern hands and announced the result:

"Fifty-five votes for Master Dodd."

"Fifty-five!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "We shall beat that if we stick together. Your man isn't here, Selwyn? You're backing up the Classic side, I suppose?"

Selwyn nodded.

"And you, Towny?"

"Oh, yaas!" said Townsend. "Not on your account, you know, but to keep that Modern bounder out."

"Any account you like, so long as you do keep the Modern bounder out," chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"It's decent of Smythe to stay out, I think," remarked Topham. "That idea of splittin' the vote was rather thick. I'm glad he's decided to stick out and let us beat the Modern."

"Topsy, old man, you're a giddy patriot!" said Jimmy Silver affably.

"Smythe kept it up right to the last minute, though," remarked Chesney. "Only this afternoon he was as keen as ever."

"Better late than never," smiled Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, yaas!"

"Kindly put up your hands, voters, for Master James Silver," said Mr. Bootles.

Master James Silver smiled serenely

as a forest of hands went up. Tommy Dodd didn't smile. He was looking daggers. His eyes searched the ranks of the Classics in the hope of finding some friends of Smythe's keeping their hands down.

"There's one!" whispered Cook. There was one—Norton of the Shell, one of the nuts, was keeping his hands in his pockets. But there was only one. Selwyn whispered to him.

"Better stand by the side, Norton."

"I'm keepin' out," said Norton.

"You do as you like."

The Classics looked daggers at Norton. But every other Classical hand in the Common-room was up, and the Form-master was counting.

"Fifty-four—fifty-five—"

The Moderns hung on his words.

"Fifty-six—"

Tommy Dodd gasped.

"Fifty-seven—"

"Oh!" groaned Tommy Cook.

"Fifty-eight!"

The Moderns looked as black as thunder. The Classics chattered.

"The votes registered for James Silver number fifty-eight," said Mr. Bootles.

"For Thomas Dodd, the number is fifty-four. James Silver is elected by a majority of three votes."

"Hurray!"

"Hip-pip-hurray!"

The Moderns gave a deep groan of disgust.

"I declare Master James Silver duly elected," said Mr. Bootles, with his benevolent smile. "I congratulate you, Silver. Now the meeting had better break up."

The meeting broke up, under the eye of Mr. Bootles. He did not mean to leave the rival juniors together to discuss the result of the election. The discussion would have been warm.

The Fistical Four walked out arm-in-arm, surrounded by a triumphant crowd of their friends. The Classics were in high feather.

"What ripping luck!" grinned Oswald. "We ought to give Smythe a cheer for this. He's won the election for us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And on the Classical side there were great rejoicings, while the Moderns had to hide their diminished heads.

Half an hour after the election, three dusty Shell fellows came in. Jimmy Silver, when he had had time to think of them amid the general rejoicing, had kindly sent a fellow to untie them. The three nuts came in—in vile tempers—to find the election over, and Jimmy Silver junior captain of Rookwood.

"We're not goin' to stand it!" howled Smythe.

But Smythe's furious remarks were greeted only with howls of laughter. Jimmy Silver—after the election—had told the story. And even the nuts had to admit that Adolphus had no right to complain of his own scheme being visited on his own head. He had led Jimmy Silver into the old abbey to trap him, and the tables had been turned. Selwyn advised him to take it like a sportsman. Townsend told him that, after all, it was only decent to get the Classical candidate in. Chesney said that the less he said about it the better. Smythe, in fact, found no sympathy anywhere.

But he was furious.

"I'm goin' over to see Dodd," he told Tracy and Howard. "I'll get Dodd to lodge an objection, and have a new election. I can't complain to Bootles, because that villain Silver will tell him that it was my own idea, and that I collared him first. But Dodd can put in an objection when he knows."

And Adolphus forthwith hurried over to the Modern side, where he expected to find more sympathy than he had found among the Classics. But he found the Moderns already in possession of the story. The

three Tommies glared at Smythe when he came into their study.

"Well, you're a precious idiot!" said Tommy Dodd. "You haven't even sense enough to know how to play a dirty trick, though you're rotten enough to play it if you had sense enough!"

This was not the reception Adolphus wanted. He scowled.

"Look here, that election's got to be called off," he said. "Silver kept me out of it."

"You tried to keep him out," growled Tommy Dodd. "We know all about it. And he turned the tables on you, you silly ass!"

"Look here, you can demand a new election," said Smythe. "If you go to Bootles and complain, he'll order a new election. And next time I'll take jolly good care to be on the scene, and split the vote, and keep that cad Silver out."

Tommy Dodd rose from his chair. It was, perhaps, a strong temptation. Tommy Dodd wanted to be captain, and he was firmly convinced that Rookwood was in danger of going to the dogs with a Classical junior skipper. But, to Tommy's credit be it said, he resisted the temptation manfully.

"You worm!" he said. "You crawling worm!"

"Oh, by gad!" said Adolphus. "Silver only turned the tables on you," said Tommy Dodd. "You've got no right to complain. And do you think I'm a worm like yourself, to go complaining to Bootles? It was a dirty trick of yours to think of splitting the vote at all—"

"Look here—"

"I wasn't quite satisfied in my mind about takin' advantage of it," said Tommy Dodd. "It was a crawling trick, Smythe, and your own pals were really down on it. If a cad on our side had tried it on, we'd have scragged him. Jimmy Silver scragged you, and serve you right! And now I'll show you what I think of a fellow who comes here and asks me to sneak!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Smythe. Tommy Dodd's "showing" took the form of applying his boot forcibly to Adolphus Smythe's elegant person. Smythe of the Shell departed from the study on his neck, and Tommy Dodd slammed the door after him.

A little later there were more callers in Tommy Dodd's study. Jimmy Silver & Co. came in.

"Pax!" said Jimmy, as Tommy Dodd reached for the ink-bottle. "Look here, Diddy, we've bagged the election."

"Bow-wow!"

"We did to that worm Smythe exactly what you'd have done in our place—"

"Admitted."

"You wouldn't have let a cad on this side split the Modern vote—"

"No fear."

"But we want to give you the fairest possible show," said Jimmy Silver. "There's a Classical majority, and we're entitled to the election on numbers. But we think we're entitled to it on quality, not quantity. We've talked it over, and we've got an idea."

"Go and bury it!"

"The idea," said Jimmy Silver, unheeding, "is this. You pick a Modern eleven—"

"Eh?"

"I'll pick a Classical eleven—"

"Well?"

"And we'll play it out."

"Play it out!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Yes. Play it out on the football-field. If your team beats mine, you're junior captain for the season. If my team beats yours, I'm captain. How does that strike you?"

"My only hat!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"Sure, it's a broth av a boy ye are!" exclaimed Tommy Doyle.

"Jump at it, Tommy!"

Tommy Dodd grinned.

"It's a real sporting offer!" he said. "Of course, I accept. You're not called upon to make it, but I'm glad to accept it. Of course, we shall beat you!"

"Bow-wow! The age of miracles is past," said Jimmy Silver.

"Why, you Classical fathead—"

"You Modern duffer—"

And with that exchange of compliments, they parted. The great question, who shall be skipper, remained yet to be decided—on the football-field. And on both sides there was the serenest confidence as to the result.

THE END.

(On no account should you miss the magnificent story of Jimmy Silver & Co. and Tommy Dodd & Co. which appears in next Monday's issue. Order early!)

TALES TO TELL!

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SAVING EXPENSE.

Mr. Moses had a son whose name was Ikey. The last time Mr. Moses took his Ikey for a walk it was a broiling hot day. The sun streamed down from above, and simply forced the perspiration out of Ikey's head.

"Oh, fader," wailed poor Ikey, "I do feel so warm! I wish you'd puy me some ice-cream!"

Mr. Moses knitted his brows, and gazed at his son in astonishment. If Ikey had asked his father for the world he could hardly have surprised the latter more.

"Ice-cream!" growled Mr. Moses.

"Ice-cream! No, Ikey, my poy, ve have no money for ze ice-cream. Vat extravagance, to pe sure! If ze are zo hot, I vill tell ze some nice leetle ghost stories vich vill make your blood run cold!"—Sent in by J. R. Roulston.

QUITE RIGHT.

Tom: "I say, Jack, do you know who I saw this morning?"

Jack: "I don't know, Tom. Who?"

Tom: "Everybody I looked at!"—Sent in by C. Hyslop, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

MARY'S MISTAKE.

A teacher at a large school in the East End sent one of her scholars to buy a pound of plums from one of the costers outside, and as she handed the little girl sixpence, she said:

"Be sure, Mary, before buying the plums to pinch one or two of them to see that they are ripe and wholesome."

After about a quarter of an hour the little girl returned with flushed face and a triumphant look in her eyes. She handed the teacher a parcel of plums, and at the same time banged a sixpence down on the desk.

"What ever have you brought the sixpence back for, Mary?" asked the teacher.

"Why, mum," explained Mary, "I pinched one or two of them as you told me, and when the man wasn't looking I pinched the lot!"—Sent in by F. Cowlshaw, Sheffield.

VERY CUTTING.

Several members of the Slushton Women's Club were chatting together when up came the little daughter of their hostess.

"Well, dearie," said Mrs. Brown, "I suppose you are a great help to your mother?"

"Yes," murmured the little girl. "And what do you do to help your mother," pursued Mrs. Brown.

"Oh," said the hostess' daughter, "I count the knives after the company has gone!"—Sent in by A. Tomes, Southampton.

EXACTLY.

Several Irishmen were sitting round a camp-fire, relating their experiences. At last it came to Mike's turn to relate his most exciting experience.

"Sure," he said, "I had a narrow squeak only a few days ago. I was walking by a railway when an express dashed right over me!"

"What a fibber you are, Mike, to be sure!" exclaimed Murphy.

"Bejabers, and I'm noi!" cried Mike. "I was walking under a bridge when the express dashed over me—so there!"—Sent in by H. Josephs, York.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send on postcard storyettes or short interesting paragraphs for this feature. For every contribution used the sender will receive a money prize. All postcards must be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND and "Gem" Library, Gough House Gough Square, London, E.C.

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