

A Splendid Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood
By OWEN CONQUEST

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Trouble in the Family

TOMMY DODD gave a snort. He was very annoyed.

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, peering over their chum's shoulder, snorted also. They, too, were very annoyed.

The Three Tommies of the Modern Side at Rookwood were standing before the notice-board in the hall.

The following announcement, in the bold, familiar handwriting of Jimmy Silver, leader of the Classicals and junior captain of football, greeted their gaze:

"ROOKWOOD v. GREYFRIARS.

"This very important fixture will be played this afternoon on our own ground. The teams will be as follows:

GREYFRIARS.—Bulstrode; Bull, Brown; Cherry, Todd (P.), Linley; Vernon-Smith, Penfold, Wharton (capt.), Nugent, H. Singh.

ROOKWOOD.—Cook; Rawson, Raby; Doyle, Conroy, Van Ryn; Lovell, Newcome, Erroll, Silver, and Dodd.

"(Signed) **JAMES SILVER,**
 "Captain."



Bad news for Tommy Dodd!

"If this is Jimmy Silver's idea of fairness, I don't think much of it!" growled Tommy Dodd. "Just look at the composition of our team! Isn't it enough to make a fellow's blood boil?"

"Faith, an' it's a scandal!" said Tommy Doyle.

"It's an insult to the Moderns!" declared Tommy Cook warmly. "Only three of us are given a show. Rawson and Raby are Classicals. Conroy and Van Ryn are Classicals. All the fellows in the forward line are Classicals, except Tommy Dodd. It's a howling shame!"

"I'm going to see Jimmy Silver about this," growled Tommy Dodd. "I'll give him a piece of my mind!"

"Fire away, then," said a cheery voice.

The three Tommies turned, to find themselves confronted by the Fistical Four—Silver, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby.

"Look here, Silver, I've got a bone to pick with you," said Tommy Dodd. "Do you call this a representative team?"

"I call it the best we can muster," said Jimmy Silver; "and that's all that matters."
 "But there are only three Moderns in it—"

"As those three Moderns happen to be yourselves," said Lovell, "why grumble?"

"Because we want fair play for the others."
 "What others?" asked Jimmy Silver.
 "Well, there's Lacy, and Towle, and Wadsley, and McCarthy—all topping players."
 "But hardly worth places in the eleven," said Jimmy Silver.

"In your opinion!" said Tommy Dodd bitterly.

"Well, it's my opinion that counts. I'm skipper."

Football arguments between Classicals and Moderns always led up to that indisputable fact—that Jimmy Silver was skipper. Jimmy's word was therefore law. The Moderns could protest and plead and persist, but all to no purpose. It was Jimmy Silver who selected the team, and his decision, like that of the editor, was final.

"When I picked the team," said Jimmy, "I didn't take any notice whether a fellow was Classical or Modern. Only one thing counted with me, and that was merit. I selected the players strictly according to ability. A skipper who adopts any other method is not doing his duty."

The three Tommies were scowling.

"You can't get away from the fact that there are only three Moderns in the side," said Tommy Dodd.

"And you can't get away from the fact that I'm skipper, and have the final say in everything," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"More's the pity," growled Tommy Dodd.

"Look here, don't let's be at each other's throats on the morning of the match," said

Newcome. "We've got to go all out to lick Greyfriars. That's the great point."

"Then why doesn't Silver choose the best team?" demanded Tommy Cook.

"It's chosen," said Jimmy Silver. "Here endeth the merry argument."

And the Fistical Four linked arms and strolled away.

The three Moderns glanced after them with frowning faces.

"Faith, an' Jimmy Silver's always ridin' the high horse like this," said Tommy Doyle.

"It would sarve the spalpeen roight if we went on stroike, an' refused to turn out for the match."

"We can't do that," said Tommy Dodd. "There's the honour of Rookwood to consider. We must knuckle under to Jimmy Silver, and let him have his own way. It won't be for long. One of these days, when we get licked by about six to nix, the fellows will be crying out for a new skipper. Hallo! There goes the gong for lunch."

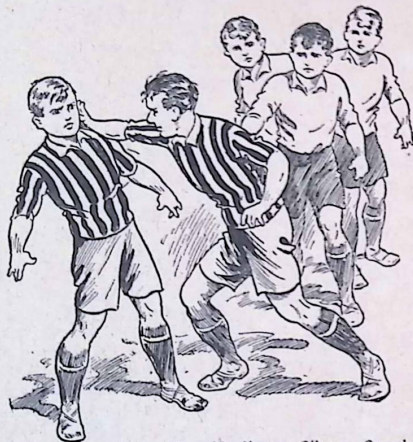
The three Tommies made their way to

the dining-hall. The footballers were lunching early, for the Greyfriars eleven was due to arrive shortly.

Tommy Dodd found a letter on his plate. It had come by the midday post.

"It's from the pater," he mused, glancing at the handwriting on the envelope. "Hope there's a remittance inside. I want cheering up."

But there was nothing of a cheering nature in Mr. Dodd's letter. Decidedly the reverse, in fact.



"You are a traitor!" said Jimmy Silver. Smack! Tommy Dodd unclenched his right hand, and brought it, with a report like a pistol-shot, across Jimmy Silver's cheek (See Chapter 2)

"Your mother has been taken suddenly ill," ran the letter. "Her condition is not at present dangerous, but it may become so. In that event, I will send you a telegram, so that you may come home at once."

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered Tommy Dodd, in dismay.

Cook and Doyle were busily engaged in reading letters of their own. They failed to observe that there was anything amiss with their chum. And Tommy Dodd did not enlighten them.

"The mater ill!" he muttered to himself. "I might be wired for at any moment. It's rotten!"

It certainly was. Tommy Dodd would need to be at his very best that afternoon. He was to partner Jimmy Silver on the left wing, and Jimmy would expect great things of him. Yet how would he be able to give his mind to the game when there was a crisis at home!

At first, Tommy Dodd thought of standing down from the match. He could explain the position to Jimmy Silver, who would play a substitute in his place.

But would Jimmy Silver understand? He might think that Tommy Dodd was "showing off," as the result of the argument which had taken place.

True, Tommy could have shown his father's letter to Jimmy Silver; but he didn't care to. Tommy Dodd was sensitive about his home affairs. He tucked the letter away in his pocket, without even taking Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook into his confidence.

On reflection, Tommy Dodd decided to play. Although haunted by the thought of

his mother's illness, he hoped to be able to banish it from his mind for ninety minutes, during the tussle with Greyfriars.

"I'll try and forget it for a time!" he muttered.

But Tommy Dodd had as much chance of forgetting his mother's illness as of forgetting that he was on the earth. His play was bound to suffer. He would have been wiser to have explained the position to Jimmy Silver, and cried off the match. But he had made up his mind to play; and there was nothing more to be said.

The Greyfriars team, skippered by Harry Wharton, arrived after lunch. And three-quarters of the population of Rookwood School wended its way to the football ground.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

An Amazing Match!

"PLAY up, Rookwood!"

"On the ball, Jimmy Silver!"

The teams were lined up in readiness for the great tussle.

Bulkeley of the Sixth was the referee. He sounded the whistle, and the ball was

kicked off from the centre.

The Friars were the first to make ground. Their forwards raced away in splendid formation, and Tommy Cook, in the Rookwood goal, crouched forward anxiously.

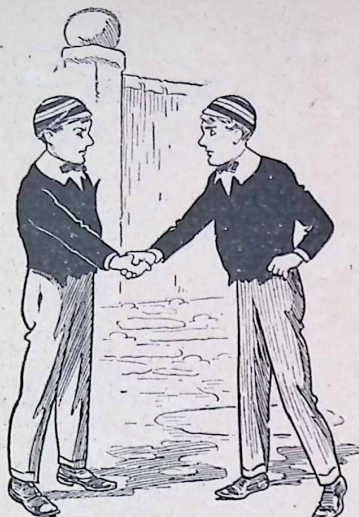
"Look out, Tommy!"

"Keep your peepers open!"

The spectators were no less anxious than Tommy Cook. The Greyfriars forwards were very dashing and dangerous. They swung the ball from wing to wing in a businesslike manner.



The Captain of Rookwood pointed towards the dressing-room. "Silver! Dodd!" he rapped out. "Get off the field" (See Chapter 2)



"Forgive me, Tommy!" said Jimmy Silver simply. "I didn't know the facts." Tommy Dodd wrung Jimmy's hand warmly. "That's all right!" he said cheerily (See Chapter 3)

Raby, at back, had a thrilling duel with Vernon-Smith, the speedy Greyfriars winger, and the Rookwood junior was left standing.

Vernon-Smith whipped the ball across to Frank Nugent, who fired in a great shot.

The ball eluded Tommy Cook's grasp, and landed in the roof of the net.

"Goal!"

There was no jubilation in the cry. The Rookwood supporters were looking very worried. This was a disastrous start, from their point of view.

"Buck up, Rookwood!"

"This will never do!"

Kit Erroll, playing at centre-forward for the home team, did his best to put a better complexion on matters. He and Jimmy Silver made headway by means of clever passes, and eventually Jimmy Silver, hard pressed by an opposing back, put in a deft

touch, which placed Tommy Dodd in possession.

Tommy had a clear run through, with nobody to hamper him. But he could not keep his thoughts on the business in hand. Those thoughts were far away. Instead of cutting in towards goal, Tommy Dodd dallied with the ball—stood looking at it with a vacant air, as if puzzling what to do with it—and while he dallied, Tom Brown of Greyfriars sent him reeling with a powerful charge, and punted the ball well up the field.

There was a chorus of groans from the touchline.

"Buck up, Dodd!"

"Pull yourself together!"

Tommy Dodd flushed crimson. And Jimmy Silver frowned at the offending junior.

"You threw away the chance of a lifetime," he said irritably. "Wake your ideas up!"

That was not exactly the proper way for a football captain to speak. But there was some excuse for Jimmy Silver. His side was a goal down; there had been a glorious chance of equalising, and Tommy Dodd had bungled badly.

After that incident, Tommy could do nothing right. He kept glancing towards the entrance to the ground, expecting at any moment to see a telegraph-boy approach with a wire, summoning him home.

Now, it is impossible to look out for telegraph-boys and play football at the same time. And Tommy Dodd's play suffered. He went all to pieces, and was little more than at passenger.

Jimmy Silver grew more and more annoyed as the time went on. He was tired of urging Tommy Dodd to pull himself together. The fellow seemed hopeless. He was beaten every time by Tom Brown of Greyfriars, who dispossessed him of the ball with the greatest ease.

Tommy Dodd's poor play disorganised the whole of the Rookwood forward line. They were accustomed to playing in harmony, and a weak link in the chain affected the whole line.

Not once in the first half did Rookwood ever look like scoring.

Greyfriars, on the other hand, applied

heavy pressure, and but for the sterling work of Rawson and Raby, at back, they would have added to their score.

Half-time came, with Greyfriars leading by a goal to nothing.

Jimmy Silver was angry, and he made no attempt to conceal the fact.

"Dodd's playing a putrid game!" he growled. "He's had plenty of openings, and made a hash of the whole jolly lot."

"What's the matter with the fellow?" asked Kit Erroll. "Is he ill?"

"Ill? Of course not!" snapped Jimmy Silver. "He's doing this deliberately!"

"Phew! Draw it mild, Jimmy! You're accusing him of wilfully letting the side down, and that would be rank treachery. Why should he want to let the team down?"

"Because I'm only playing three Moderns, and it doesn't meet with his approval. Unless Dodd bucks up in the second half I'll tax him to his face with his treachery!"

Kit Erroll sighed. He realised that Jimmy Silver was too furious to be reasoned with.

There was trouble in the team, and it looked like developing. Which was not a happy augury for Rookwood's success. A team divided against itself cannot hope to win matches.

Bulkeley blew his whistle for the game to be resumed.

The second half was a repetition of the first.

Tommy Dodd did nothing right. He was feeling desperately unhappy, and he could not fix his mind on football. Time and again he was robbed of the ball. A fag in the First would have showed to better advantage.

The climax came when the second half was twenty minutes old.

Kit Erroll raced away with the ball at his toes, bent upon redeeming Rookwood's fallen fortunes. He tricked three men in succession, and then Johnny Bull came charging towards him. He could not hope to beat Johnny, who was a tower of strength in the Greyfriars defence. But he saw Tommy Dodd standing in an unmarked position, and he promptly touched the ball across to him.

"Now, Dodd!"

"You've an open goal!"

"Don't miff it!"

Tommy Dodd certainly had the goal at his mercy. He had only to tap the ball into a corner of the net. But to the horror of the onlookers, he ballooned it high over the bar.

There was a positive howl from the touch-line.

"Rotten!"

"Call yourself a footballer?"

This crowning blunder on the part of Tommy Dodd caused Jimmy Silver's rage to overflow. Jimmy was long-suffering up to a point, but that point had been passed. He strode angrily towards the offending Modern.

"You cad!" he cried hotly. "You are deliberately trying to lose the match for us!"

At this accusation—one of the worst that can be levelled at any fellow who prides himself on being a sportsman—two flaming spots of colour appeared on Tommy Dodd's cheeks. He spun round upon his captain, his hands clenched, his face pale and set. It was a



Harry Wharton won the toss, and he set Jimmy Silver and Co. to face a strong wind (See Chapter 3)



In the last minute of the game Tommy Dodd ran through on his own and, drawing Bulstrode out, fired into the empty net. "Goal!" "Five up, be jabbers!" roared Tommy Doyle (See Chapter 3)

pretty problem to decide which was the angrier of the two.

"Are you accusing me of treachery?" asked Tommy Dodd, in a low tone.

"Yes. You are a traitor!"

Smack!

Tommy Dodd unclenched his right hand, and brought it with a report like a pistol-shot across Jimmy Silver's cheek. The next instant the two juniors, completely forgetting themselves, were fighting like tigers.

The spectators stood dumbfounded.

Fighting on the field of play was the sort of thing that only hooligans indulged in. Such a scene was unprecedented on the Rookwood ground.

Instantly there was a rush of feet towards the combatants.

"Scragging!" gasped Kit Erroll, in dismay. "Stop them!"

"Drop it, you two!"

"You must be potty, fighting in front of the Greyfriars fellows!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth, his jaw set stetnly, came striding on the scene.

"Silver! Dodd!" he rapped out.

At the sound of Bulkeley's voice, Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd came to their senses. They realised, in a flash, the enormity of their conduct. Whatever their quarrel, whatever hot words had passed between them, they should have deferred this scene until afterwards.

But it was now too late to undo the mischief.

The two combatants dropped their hands to their sides. Jimmy Silver's nose was swelling visibly. There was blood on Tommy Dodd's lips. Neither of the juniors were able to meet Bulkeley's stern, reproachful gaze. They hung their heads.

The captain of Rookwood pointed significantly towards the dressing-room.

"Silver and Dodd, get off the field!"

Consternation broke out among the players. The Rookwooders were dismayed; even the Greyfriars fellows were distressed.

Harry Wharton came up, and touched Bulkeley on the arm.

"Can't you overlook it, Bulkeley?" he asked. "They only did it in the heat of the moment, and they're both sorry."

Bulkeley shook his head.

"Ungentlemanly conduct on the football field must be punished," he said. "As referee, it is my duty to put down that sort of thing with an iron hand."

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd walked slowly from the field, amid a profound silence. It was the first case of ordering-off that had occurred that season.

Rookwood were left with only nine men. Not that they would miss Tommy Dodd. But Jimmy Silver's absence would be a calamity.

"We will now get on with the game," said Bulkeley curtly.

Never was a more one-sided display than that which followed.

The Greyfriars forwards ran riot, and there was no stopping them. They put on four goals before the end came, and eventually ran out winners by five to nil.

A cloud hung over Rookwood that evening, a cloud of gloom.

Everybody lamented that regrettable scene on the football field. It had dealt a damaging blow at Rookwood's reputation of being good sportsmen.

There was a good deal of sympathy for Jimmy Silver, but none for Tommy Dodd. It was Dodd who had struck the first blow. It was Dodd's appalling play which had been the cause of the trouble. And Tommy Dodd was far and away the most unpopular fellow at Rookwood that evening.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Turning the Tables!

TOMMY DODD was called away next morning by telegram.

Nobody knew the why and wherefore

of the sudden summons, excepting Tommy Dodd himself and Leggett of the Fourth.

Leggett was a Paul Pry and a Peeping Tom rolled into one. He picked up the crumpled telegram which Tommy Dodd had thrown away, and read it.

The message was brief and to the point.

"Come at once. Mother worse.—FATHER."

Now, Leggett was a talker and a tale-bearer; which was rather fortunate in this instance, for he told Jimmy Silver the whole story.

"I say, Silver," he said, going up to Jimmy in the quad. "Where do you think Dodd's gone?"

"Don't know, and don't care!" said Jimmy curtly. He was feeling very sore about the events of yesterday.

"He's been called home. His mater's awfully ill."

Jimmy Silver gave a sudden start.

"Are you sure of that, Leggett?" he asked quickly.

"Yes. I saw the telegram. And, by the way, Dodd had a letter by the midday post yesterday. It was to tell him of his mater's illness, I expect."

"Great Scott!"

Jimmy Silver speedily began to put two and two together.

This accounted for Tommy Dodd's wretched display against Greyfriars. He had been too concerned about his mother's illness to be able to concentrate on the game.

"No wonder Dodd was off-colour yesterday!" said Jimmy. "Wish I'd known this before the match!" he added miserably.

He felt that he had done Tommy Dodd a grave injustice. He had suspected treachery where no treachery was. He had called Tommy Dodd a traitor to his face. The remembrance of these things made Jimmy Silver feel very wretched.

Jimmy nodded shortly to Leggett, and strolled away to inform his chums of what he had heard. They were astonished when Jimmy explained.

"I've done Dodd a fearful injustice," he said, "and I must make it up to him when he comes back."

"Why didn't the silly duffer explain that his mater was ill?" said Lovell.

"I don't suppose he cared to," said Newcome. "He's a bit touchy about his home affairs."

"Well, I'm jolly glad I know the facts," said Jimmy Silver, "or I might have gone on supposing Tommy Dodd to be a traitor."

Two days elapsed before Tommy Dodd came back to Rookwood. He returned to the school with a lighter step and a happier face than when he had left it. His mother had come successfully through a brief but critical illness, and Tommy could look on the world with a smiling face once more.

Jimmy Silver was the first to greet him on his arrival. Jimmy looked very contrite as he held out his hand.

"Forgive me, Tommy," he said simply. "When I taxed you with treachery on the footer field; I didn't know the facts. I know them now, thanks to Leggett poking his nose into your affairs."

Tommy Dodd wrung Jimmy's hand warmly. "That's all right," he said cheerily. "We'll say no more about it."

"I've written to apologise to the Greyfriars fellows for making that scene on the field," said Jimmy Silver. "And Wharton wants us to play them again on Wednesday, on their own ground."

"Ripping!"

"I've altered the team slightly," Jimmy Silver went on, flushing a little. "There are five Moderns in it this time. I'm giving Lacy and Towle a show."

"That's awfully decent of you, Jimmy."

"Not at all. Newcome's twisted his ankle, and he's standing down, and Van Ryn's hardly up to form. So Lacy and Towle will take their places. We shall give the 'Friars a good run for their money, this time."

"Yes, rather!" said Tommy Dodd heartily.

When Wednesday came, Jimmy Silver's eleven was given a hearty send-off from Rookwood. They were determined to avenge that 5-0 defeat.

Harry Wharton and Co. gave the Rookwooders a cordial reception.

"I promise you there shall be no scrapping on the field this time," said Jimmy Silver. "It was all due to a rotten misunderstanding, and it shan't happen again."

"It had better not!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Gwynne of the Sixth is referee, and Gwynne's method of dealing with players who get out of hand is to pick them up and knock their heads together!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a merry party of players that gathered on the Greyfriars football ground.

Harry Wharton won the toss, and he set Jimmy Silver and Co. to face a strong wind.

But the Rookwooders played up gallantly from the start, and after a sustained attack Kit Erroll headed a grand goal.

The Rookwood forwards were full of life and vim. It was a fast-moving, fleet-footed line, with Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd the star performers.

Lacy filled Newcome's place to advantage, and it was from Lacy's pass that Jimmy Silver scored the second goal.

Greyfriars then set up a whirlwind attack and after Wharton had hit the cross-bar, Dick Penfold beat Tommy Cook with a fast low drive.

The interval came with Rookwood leading 2-1.

In the second half, with the wind in their favour, the Rookwood forwards played as if they were inspired.

Tommy Dodd's dashes down the wing, and his deft passes to Jimmy Silver, were the outstanding features of the game. Tommy was bang on top of his form, and no one would have recognised him as the same player who gave such a feeble display on the previous occasion.

"Come along, my merry men!" said Jimmy Silver buoyantly. "We want more goals!"

And more goals they soon got.

Tommy Dodd forced a corner. He took the flag-kick himself, and lobbed the ball on to the head of Lovell, who headed it into the net.

"Goal!"

"Faith, an' that's the stuff to give 'em!" chortled Tommy Doyle, who was acquitting

himself manfully at centre-half. "Keep it up, Rookwood!"

Harry Wharton and Co. were surprised and alarmed. This was a different Rookwood from the Rookwood they had met before. Every man-jack of them seemed to be playing the game of his life.

Tommy Cook, in goal, had an easy time. He was well covered by Rawson and Raby, whose tackling and volleying were beyond reproach.

The Rookwood halves were rare spoilers. They broke up the desperate rushes of the Greyfriars forwards again and again.

As for the Rookwood forward line, it was dazzling. Bulstrode, the Greyfriars goalie, said afterwards that he felt as if he had been under a bombardment. Jimmy Silver and Co. gave him neither rest nor respite. They simply swarmed around him, and he was for ever fisting out shots.

With ten minutes to go, Jimmy Silver scored Rookwood's fourth goal with a lightning drive.

Bulstrode dashed across to save the shot, but he had simply no chance. The ball crashed into the net, and there was a shout from the Rookwooders.

"Goal! Good old Jimmy!"

This did not complete the scoring. In the last minute of the game, Tommy Dodd ran through on his own, and, drawing Bulstrode out of his goal, fired into the empty net.

"Goal!"

"Five up, be jabbers!" said Tommy Doyle, clapping his chum on the back as the final whistle sounded.

"We've licked Greyfriars 5-1 on their own pitch," said Kit Erroll. "Whoever would have thought it?"

The crowd, although disappointed and amazed at the result, gave the winning team quite an ovation.

It was a very happy family that journeyed back to Rookwood, to acquaint their eager schoolfellows with details of that thrilling game in which they had succeeded in getting quits with Greyfriars!

THE END

The Greyfriars MASTERS' GALLERY



No. 2—Mr. QUELCH

The master with the "gimlet eyes,"
Now claims our keen attention;
His rule is very sound and wise—
Strict, also, I might mention.
When he discovers japes and larks
There's always trouble brewing.
As many of our gay young sparks
Have found to their undoing!

He has a heap of common sense
And lots of understanding;
His store of knowledge is immense,
His presence most commanding.
When he rebukes unruly ones
And loudly thunders "Silence!"
His voice is like the boom of guns—
It might be heard a mile hence!

He often burns the midnight oil
In writing reams of history;
Though when he will complete his toil
Remains a deep-set mystery.
He's been engaged on it for years
With vigour undiminished;
In spite of which, we all have fears
That it will ne'er be finished!

We rather like the "Quelech bird,"
As Cherry calls him gaily;
We hang upon his lightest word,
And do his bidding daily.
Despite the canings we receive
(Our palms have often smarted)
I fancy most of us would grieve
If Mr. Quelch departed!