

ROOKWOOD, GREYFRIARS, ST. JIM'S!

The
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Popular**

No.
257.

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & Co.—JIMMY SILVER & Co.—TOM MERRY & Co.



BILLY BUNTER IN WARLIKE MOOD!

(An Amusing Incident from the Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co.,
contained in this issue.)

A Grand
Long Complete
Story, dealing
with the
Early Adventures
of
Jimmy Silver & Co.

THE MIXED MATCH!

By
Owen
Conquest

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Accepting a Challenge.

JIMMY SILVER, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby, known as the Fistical Four at Rookwood School, had assembled in the end study to reply to a letter which contained a challenge of an unusual order.

It had come about in this way. A few days previously Raby had met in the train a friend of his of the name of Sullivan.

In the course of the conversation which ensued Raby had dilated to some considerable extent upon the football prowess of the Rookwood juniors.

The result was the following letter from Sullivan, who was captain of the Muggleton Wanderers:

"Dear Raby,—You may remember the piffle you were talking in the train the other day about Rookwood juniors being able to wipe any other team of the same age off the face of the earth. We're going to give you a chance.

"When I got home to Muggleton, I asked the fellows about you, and they all said they had never heard of Rookwood, and didn't believe there was such a place. But they agreed to give you a lesson, if you did exist, and we're setting aside Wednesday afternoon for you, and we'll be glad to hear by return if you want to make your words good. We shall have the finest pleasure in the world in running you off your legs and sending you home on an ambulance!—Kindest regards,

"PATRICK SULLIVAN."

Needless to say, the Fistical Four were not a little perturbed by this epistle, especially the sentence which stated that the Muggleton Wanderers had never heard of Rookwood.

They immediately decided to accept the challenge, and had secured the support of Tommy Dodd & Co., the Modern chums of the Fourth, in order to make success a certainty.

Jimmy Silver had remarked that a letter like Patrick Sullivan's couldn't be replied to offhand; it needed a little thought.

"A curt, formal note would look as if we'd got our backs up," Jimmy Silver remarked. "At the same time—"

"Let's think it out," said Lovell, with a wrinkle in his brows. "Suppose you begin: 'Dear Sullivan,—Your bosh to hand—'"

"Well, that's good. 'Bosh' is strong, but the 'Dear Sullivan' shows we mean to be polite," agreed Jimmy Silver. "I think that will do. 'Dear Sullivan,—Your bosh to hand—' Next?"

"We shall be happy to accept your challenge for Wednesday afternoon. We had a match on, but are putting it off

for the special purpose of knocking some of the conceit out of you—"

"That's coming to the point!" said Raby.

"As for sending us home on an ambulance, we'll see that you want all your ambulances for home consumption—"

"That won't do, Lovell."

"Why not? Consumption's a good word."

"Yes; but that means eating, doesn't it? They don't eat ambulances."

Lovell looked thoughtful.

"It might be misunderstood," he admitted. "We want the letter to be crushing, with nothing at all funny in it for them to giggle at."

"That's so."

"Well, then, 'we'll see that you want your ambulances for yourselves. We hope that you will be able to last out the game, so that we can have a good chance of wiping you off the earth.'"

"Off the earth. Good! Next?"

"We must be careful not to make the letter at all bombastic," said Lovell thoughtfully. "Nothing's more rotten than a fellow bragging about what he can do at footer. Let's see. Suppose you say next: 'We hope that after the game is over your friends will be on the spot to collect up what is left of you—'"

"Ha, ha! Good!"

"Don't forget that we've never heard of Muggleton," said Raby.

"But you have, ass!"

"Well, I'm not writing the letter, am I? Besides, if they've never heard of Rookwood, it would be beneath our dignity to have heard of Muggleton."

"Good! I'll put that in. I've never heard of the place, anyway. Anything else?"

"That's all, I think. Put in 'kindest regards.'"

"Good! That will do, I think."

Tommy Dodd & Co. looked into the study, and grinned good-humouredly at the Fistical Four.

"Got that letter written?"

"We've just finished it," replied Lovell.

"I'll read it out to you," said Jimmy Silver. "We've tried to keep our end up, you know, without saying anything that might be construed into boastfulness."

"Go ahead!"

"Dear Sullivan,—Your bosh to hand.

We shall be happy to accept your challenge for Wednesday afternoon. We had a match on, but are putting it off for the special purpose of knocking some of the conceit out of you. As for sending us home on an ambulance, we'll see that you need all your ambulances for yourselves. We hope you will be able to last out the game, so that we can have a good chance of wiping you off the earth. We hope that after the game is over, your friends will be on the spot to collect up what is left of you. We have never

heard of Muggleton.—Kindest regards, etc."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tommy Dodd. "That will hit the mark, I think. What I like about it is the way you avoid anything like boasting."

"Ha, ha, ha! Quite so!"

"We've got to keep our end up, you know."

"Oh, of course! That letter will do. They haven't fixed the time in theirs, so you had better tell them we shall be over at three. Make it a P.S."

"Good!"

Jimmy Silver added the postscript, and the letter was sealed up. Lovell cut across to the school letter-box to post it. It would get to Muggleton on the following morning, in plenty of time to let the Wanderers know that the Rookwood fellows were coming.

"Now, about the team," said Tommy Dodd. "We'd better put our heads together over that. I've got a list here of about sixteen for you chaps to look over."

"Good! Hand it over!"

Lovell returned to the study, and the seven juniors conned over the list of the junior footballers. Almost every member of the Fourth Form at Rookwood belonged to the Fourth Form Football Club.

It was always possible for the Fistical Four and the Modern chums to get up a twenty-two for a match among themselves. And so they had a good selection for making up a combined Form eleven.

Knowing nothing whatever of what the Muggleton fellows were like, or what Form they might be in, the Rookwood leaders were naturally anxious to put the best possible junior team in the field.

They went over a long list of names, selecting and rejecting. They wanted four fellows beside themselves, and slowly they made up the four from the list.

"We'll put Towle in goal," said Jimmy Silver. "He's been improving very much lately, since he's given more attention to footer. Lacy and Hooker for the backs; Jones minor, Dodd, and Doyle, halves; Silver, Lacy, Lovell, Newcome, and Cook, forwards. How does that strike you?"

"I reckon that's about the best we can fix up."

"Quite so!"

And so it was settled.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Beaumont is Amused.

THE next morning both the Fistical Four and the Modern chums were down early, and they brought down with them Towle, Jones minor, Lacy, and Hooker, the other selected members of the junior eleven. It was a fine, fresh morning, and Jimmy Silver, who was junior football captain, meant to give his team some hard practice before breakfast.

The footballers were in good condition, but when they were going to face an unknown team, Jimmy Silver naturally wished to put them through their paces at least once first.

On the football-ground the mutual chipping of the Fistical Four and the Modern chums ceased from troubling, and they threw themselves into the play with their whole hearts.

The result of the practice satisfied them. They were fit to face any team of their own age and weight, or even a little bit over, and they were quite prepared for the tussle with the Muggleton Wanderers.

"I think we shall do!" Jimmy Silver remarked, as they walked back to the House, glowing with the splendid exercise. "Muggleton Muscatchers will have to be in very good trim to walk over us, anyway!"

The junior footballers were in high spirits. They met Beaumont, the prefect, in the hall as they went in. Beaumont was the most unpopular fellow in the Sixth, and on very ill-terms with the heroes of the Fourth. He looked at them as they came in, apparently taking exception to their high spirits.

"Hallo, you noisy rats!" he said, in his amiable way. "What mischief have you been up to now to make you so jolly?"

"It's all right!" said Tommy Dodd. "We're going to play Muggleton Wanderers this afternoon, and we're going to lick them!"

Beaumont stared at them. "You're going to play Muggleton Wanderers?"

"That's so!" said Jimmy Silver.

"At football?"

"Yes. Why not?"

Beaumont's face relaxed into a grin. The juniors looked at him in surprise. They could see nothing in the matter to excite the merriment of the prefect.

"Nothing surprising in that, is there?" asked Lovell. "By the way, you know Muggleton, don't you, Beaumont? I've heard you speak about it, now I remember!"

"Yes," said Beaumont. "I've got a cousin there—in the Muggleton senior team."

"We're playing the juniors, of course! Do you know anything of their form?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to laugh at in that, Beaumont!" said Tommy Dodd. "I asked you if you knew anything of their form?"

"Well, I do!" said Beaumont, still laughing. "They're hot stuff—very hot!"

"Perhaps you think they'll lick us!" said Lovell, turning red. "I don't see any reason why we shouldn't play them, Beaumont!"

The Sixth-Former roared. "Ha, ha, ha! Perhaps you will when you get on the ground!"

Jimmy Silver looked at the prefect keenly. He could see that Beaumont's mirth was not assumed. It was genuine enough; the prefect was almost weeping with merriment. But for the life of him Jimmy Silver, cute as he was, could not see where the laugh came in.

"I don't see it!" said Lovell. "Why shouldn't we meet them?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you think they're above our weight?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear! Ho, ho, ho!"

"Well, we'll show you, anyway!" said Lovell; and he marched on into the dining-room.

Beaumont held to the wall and roared again. Bulkeley came along, and stared in surprise at Beaumont and then at the juniors.

"Hallo! What's the joke?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I know!" said Jimmy Silver. "Beaumont's got a pain somewhere, I think, and he's trying to laugh it off!"

"Oh, it's nothing!" gasped Beaumont. "Only those young rotters are going to play Muggleton Wanderers this afternoon!"

"Well, why shouldn't they?" demanded Bulkeley.

"Ha, ha, ha! No reason at all, if they want to! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Beaumont almost staggered away, with tears of laughter in his eyes. Bulkeley stared after him, and then went into the dining-room. The junior footballers looked at one another rather uncomfortably.

"What the dickens does it mean?" muttered Tommy Dodd. "I don't see why Beaumont should cackle like that at the idea of us playing Muggleton!"

"Blessed if I do, either!"

"I reckon he thinks they're above our

Muggleton was a considerable distance from Rookwood, and the admirers of the junior team were not inclined to spend the railway-fare to see the match, apart from the other attractions of the afternoon—a Sixth Form match being in progress on the home ground, and attracting general attraction. A crowd of juniors gave the team a cheer at starting, and they set out.

A swift train bore them on their way, and after changing twice—Jimmy Silver having carefully looked out the route in a railway-guide—they entered the local train for Muggleton.

"Here we are at last!" exclaimed Lovell, as the slow train stopped in a sleepy little station. "This is Muggleton!"

"Muggleton" was visible on the station wall, and the juniors poured out of the train and took their bags. They left the station, and found a somewhat ancient-looking brake standing outside.



Sullivan, who was playing three-quarter, captured the ball, and with the leather under his arm, sped up the field. There was a wild yell from Rookwood. "Hands!"

weight, and we've bitten off more than we can chew! We'll show him!" said Jimmy Silver, with a gleam in his eyes. "Anyway, Beaumont's cackling won't make any difference to us. We're going to play Muggleton, and either lick them or get licked!"

And the juniors went in to breakfast. But some of them could not help remembering that curious outburst of merriment on Beaumont's part, and wondering what it meant, and they looked forward with curiosity—not without a tinge of anxiety—to their arrival on the Muggleton ground.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
A Surprise for Rookwood.

WEDNESDAY was a half-holiday at Rookwood. Immediately after the midday dinner the junior footballers prepared for the journey to Muggleton. Most of the other fellows were busy at football practice, and the eleven went on their journey alone.

A lad of about fifteen was sitting in it, with his feet over the side.

He jumped down as the Rookwood fellows came in sight. He was a pleasant-looking lad, but he did not look like a schoolboy. Lovell remembered that the Wanderers were a town team, and he guessed who the youth was.

The stranger came towards the Rookwood team, and lifted his cap slightly.

"From Rookwood?" he asked.

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver.

"Good! I've brought the brake to take you to the ground. Sullivan sent me, you know. I'm Harris—Jack Harris—very much at your service!"

"I'm Silver. Thanks awfully for the brake! Is it far?"

"About a quarter of an hour's walk, or twenty minutes in the brake!" said Harris sarcastically. "But it will save your legs. You'll want 'em this afternoon. Hallo, there, Johnny! Wake up! Your passengers have come!"

"Werry good, sir!" said the driver, clambering up to his seat.

Harris looked the Rookwood fellows over with a quick eye.

"Where are the others?" he asked.
 "The others?" said Jimmy Silver.
 "What others?"

"The other fellows?"
 "Oh, nobody's come with us!"
 "But—but—" Harris looked puzzled.
 "I mean haven't you any more players?"
 "Oh, no! We haven't brought any reserves, if that's what you mean!"

"But—" Harris broke off. "Well, jump in! There's room for the lot of you with squeezing. If there had been any more you'd have had to sit on one another's knees. I expected—but never mind; you can settle that with Sullivan. I've got my bike here. Drive on, Johnny!"
 "Yes, zur!"

Harris jumped on his machine and shot ahead. The brake followed. The Rookwood footballers gave one another puzzled looks.

"Anybody know what he was driving at?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"I believe he's grinning," said Tommy Dodd, looking after the cyclist. "What the dickens does it all mean? What was Beaumont laughing at, too?"

"Oh, hang Beaumont!"
 "With pleasure! But I'm beginning to feel a bit uneasy about this match. What

large crowd already gathered round the ropes.

It was a fine, clear afternoon, and it had evidently tempted out a large number of the Muggleton folk. Doubtless the locals took a great interest in the doings of their junior team. There was a shout in the field as the brake turned in at the gate and drew up.

Jimmy Silver stared in blank amazement at the goal-posts. A glimmering of the truth dawned upon him.

"There's Sullivan!" exclaimed Raby.
 A number of fellows were already punting a ball—an oval-shaped ball—about. They stopped, and looked towards the brake. A big, handsome fellow of about sixteen came quickly towards the Rookwood fellows as they alighted.

"Glad to see you!" he exclaimed heartily. "But—what—why—faith, where are the rest of you?"

"That's the lot!" yelled Harris.

"How many did you expect?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "I suppose eleven is the right number for a footer match, isn't it? Unless I don't know anything about footer!"

Sullivan stared blankly at the Rookwood crowd.

"Holy Moses!" he yelled. "And do you mean to say that ye didn't know we were a Rugby team?"

"Well, it can't be helped now," said Lovell, shaking his fist at Raby.

"I could have told you," said Tommy Dodd, but—

"Well, you didn't, anyway."
 "I mean I could have told you, you fellows were bound to come a mucker somehow."

"Oh, ring off, Doddy! Don't you start! I say, Sullivan, it's rotten, but I don't see what's to be done. We don't play Rugger. Some of us know the ropes, but some haven't played the game in their lives. And there's only eleven of us."

"Sure, we could get you some of our reserves, and make up a fifteen."

"And then wipe us up," said Lovell.
 "No, thanks! I'll tell you what—drop four of your players, and then make it a Soccer match."

Sullivan grinned, and shook his head.
 "Bedad, but it can't be done! You see, most of my fellows never played Soccer, and you'd win hands down."

"Well, it seems rotten to come all this way for nothing!"

"I guess so."
 "Play up!" came a yell from the spectators, who were waiting impatiently for the kick-off.

"Why don't you start?"
 Sullivan looked uneasy.
 "Faith, and I forgot the crowd!" he

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did that chap mean by saying we could settle it with Sullivan? Settle what with Sullivan?"

"He seems to be keeping something back."

"Well, he's grinning at something or other."

"I fancy there's something wrong somewhere, somehow," said Tommy Dodd, with a shake of the head. "First Beaumont, who knows Muggleton, went off into a fit at the idea of us playing the Wanderers, then this chap grins like a hyena when we arrive! There's something fishy about it somewhere. I suppose, as a matter of fact, you fellows have made a muck of it."

"I reckon—"

"It was Raby who fixed it up, and you know what he is."

"But I—"

"Well, we shall soon see," remarked Lovell.

The brake drove on after the cyclist. There was no doubt that Harris was grinning, for they caught full sight of his face at a corner of the road. He was wearing, as Tommy Dodd expressed it, a grin of the largest size.

The brake came in sight of the football-ground—a pleasant-looking field, with a

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
A Curious Compromise.

"RUGBY!"

"Rugger!"

"A Rugger team!"

"Great snakes!"

"My only hat!"

These, and various other exclamations, burst from the amazed Rookwooders. Then, with one accord, they turned upon Raby. They grasped him, and they jammed him, breathless, against the brake.

"You howling lunatic!" roared Jimmy Silver. "You lunatic! Why didn't you tell us Muggleton was a Rugger team?"

"Well, I—"

"You dangerous lunatic!" shrieked Lovell. "Fancy bringing us all this way to play a Rugger team! So that is what Beaumont was laughing at!"

"But I—"

"Scrag him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" yelled Raby. "I didn't know! Sullivan never told me! How was I to guess it was a Rugger team?"

Sullivan burst into a roar.
 "Ha, ha, ha! I never thought of mentioning that. He was bragging about wiping us up, and, sure, I never thought he was talking about Soccer!"

"Well, I didn't know you were talking about Rugger!"

exclaimed. "You see, they've come out to see the match. A lot of them have had to get off from business on purpose, and they'll be wild at having to miss the sight. I don't know what's to be done."

"Suppose you adopt my suggestion, and make it a Soccer match?"

"Suppose you adopt mine, and make it a Rugger?"

"Can't be did!"

"I've got a ripping idea!" exclaimed Tommy Doyle. "Sullivan can cut down his team to eleven, and we'll play the match on mixed rules!"

"Eh?"

"We'll play Soccer, and they can play Rugger, and—"

"You utter ass!"

"Faith, and it's not such a bad idea!" exclaimed Sullivan eagerly. "It's the only way out of the difficulty, anyway, without missing the match. And the people yonder have a right to be considered. I'll explain to them—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if they take it as a joke, sure it will be an entertainment, anyway! Suppose I put it to them, as the best thing we can do not to disappoint them? I'll explain that it was a misunderstanding."

"Well, of all the ideas—"

"I guess we can manage it," said Jimmy Silver, grinning. "It will be fun, anyway—and a record match."

We'll play by Soccer rules, and you fellows play by Rugger rules. Of course, you'll play an equal number of men."

"Oh, of course; equal numbers, and different rules!"

And so it was settled. Sullivan made a speech to the impatient spectators, which was received with stares of blank amazement, and then with yells of laughter.

And the Rookwood fellows went into their dressing-room to prepare for the most peculiar match they had ever played in.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Rather Mixed Match.

THERE was a cheer from the crowd as the Rookwood footballers came out, in the pink-and-white shirts of Rookwood School. Most of the spectators were laughing, which was not to be wondered at. A football match played with Association rules on one side, and Rugby rules on the other, was likely to be a curious one.

The kick-off fell to the visitors. Lovell kicked-off the ball, and the game started.

"Play up, Rookwood!"

Rookwood played up. The forwards were on the ball in no time, and rushing it through the Muggletonians. But Sullivan, who was playing three-quarter, captured it, and, with the leather under his arm, sped up the field.

"Hands!"

"It's all right!" gasped Lovell. "It's Rugger—on their side!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Jimmy Silver.

"After him!"

The Rookwood player sped after Sullivan. The Wanderers' captain was very near to getting a try. But Towle was in goal—according to Soccer rules—and he was ready. Sullivan was accustomed to dodging a full-back, but Towle was standing under the posts.

The Wanderers swerved off to touch the ball down behind the goal-line, but Towle dashed forward, and biffed against him, and he rolled over.

Harris picked up the ball ere it touched the ground, and rushed on, and amid a roar of cheering from the crowd, scored a try.

"Try! Try!"

"My hat!" gasped Lovell. "It seems

to me that Rugger gets all the advantage in a game of this sort."

Harris brought the ball out to take his kick. As he had to get it over the bar, the goalkeeper hadn't much chance of interfering with him. But the try had been taken well towards the touch-line, and the angle was too great. The ball bounced back among the players.

Rookwood's chance came then. The forwards dashed away with the ball at their feet, passing in beautiful style, and brought it right through the opposing side.

The full-back raced up to defend his goal, but was charged over by Doyle, and Lovell dribbled the ball straight on, and kicked it between the posts. As he was playing Soccer, he put it under the bar.

"Goal!" shouted the crowd, in great delight. "Hurrah!"

The sides had played about equally, so far. The struggle continued, but most of the players were laughing too much to play hard. There was no doubt that the Rugby players, with the privilege of handling the ball, had the advantage.

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Still, in passing, the Soccer party considered they scored. Jimmy Silver thought he had the better team of the two, apart from the game. But the Muggletonians were hot stuff, as Beaumont had warned the Rookwood juniors.

The score remained at a try for Muggleton, and a goal for Rookwood, when the interval came. After a brief rest, the players turned out again with renewed ardour. They were getting more used to the curious phases of the mixed game now, and the second half was more serious and more like football than the first.

Sullivan dropped a goal from mid-field, and shortly afterwards one of the Wanderers scored a try, which, however, failed to materialise.

Then Jimmy Silver put in a goal for Rookwood, and it was followed by one

from Tommy Dodd, after a brilliant run up the field.

As the game wore on, the footballers warmed to their work, and the interest of the crowd grew very keen. Loud cheers greeted every bit of good work on either side.

The second half had been slogging, and both sides looked red and breathless, and in need of a rest. Both, however, played up splendidly to the finish.

With Towle under the bar, tries on either side of goal were not difficult for the Wanderers, and they mounted up at an alarming rate. Dropped goals, too, were not rare.

At the same time, the Rookwood forwards frequently went right through the defence, passing the ball splendidly, and put it into the home goal.

The score mounted up on either side.

"Seven tries, three goals, and four dropped goals!" gasped Sullivan, when the shriek of the whistle at last announced the close of that very mixed match. "Holy mother of Moses, that's fifty-two points!"

"Eight goals!" howled Tommy Doyle.

"My hat! We've won, then, I guess!"

"I say, fifty-two points——"

"Eight goals!"

"Who's won this blessed match?" demanded Sullivan. "If you go by points, we've won it!"

"Ha, ha! If you go by goals, we've won it!"

"I guess we've both won!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Muggleton's won according to Rugby rules, and we've won according to Association rules!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then if we've both won, there's nothing up against either side!" grinned Sullivan. "It's a case of honours divided."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The result was more entertaining than the game had been. But if both sides had won, both had reason to be satisfied; and satisfied they were.

The Rookwood footballers laughed most of the way home; and when they related their adventures at Rookwood, all Rookwood laughed, too. But it had been fun, anyway; and the chums of the Fourth Form often enjoyed a hearty laugh over the remembrance of that mixed match.

THE END.

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