

# FOR THE GOOD OF THE TEAM!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Story of JIMMY SILVER & Co. at Rookwood.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Not Wanted.

THE bright May sun shone in at the windows of the Fourth Form-room at Rookwood. Jimmy Silver, captain of the Fourth, glanced towards the sunny windows many times with an expression of great satisfaction.

It was a beautiful May day; and the weather perfect for cricket. Jimmy Silver was in high spirits.

It was Wednesday, a half-holiday, and that afternoon St. Jim's were coming over for the match with Rookwood Juniors.

Jimmy Silver had reason to feel very "chippy."

His team, selected with great care from the cricketers on both sides of Rookwood, Classical and Modern, was in great form. The St. Jim's match was one of the hardest fights of the season, and Jimmy Silver liked a well-fought game. And the weather was ideal.

Hence the cheery smile that dwelt on Jimmy Silver's pleasant face, even while Mr. Bootles was waxing sarcastic over his constructing.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome, his chums, shared his high spirits. So did Tommy Dodd & Co., the heroes of the Modern side. So did every fellow who was playing in the match that afternoon.

And, curiously enough, Mornington and his friends, the slackers of the Fourth, seemed remarkably cheery, too, though as far as cricket was concerned they were hopelessly "out of it."

Smiles were exchanged among Mornington, Townsend, Topham & Co., and sometimes they glanced at Jimmy Silver and winked at one another.

Something seemed to be "on" among the "Nuts" of the Fourth, as Jimmy Silver might have noticed had he been less occupied with his own affairs.

But Jimmy had no eyes or thoughts for the "Nuts" of Rookwood now. Least of all had he a thought to waste upon the sullen, arrogant Mornington. Mornington was not looking so sullen as usual now, but his smile had something sardonic in it.

Mr. Bootles found his class somewhat trying that morning.

In such weather, and with such a prospect for the afternoon, the Rookwood Fourth found the class-room intolerably stuffy and boresome, and they would gladly have dispensed with the valuable knowledge their Form-master was imparting to them.

But everything comes to an end at last; and so did morning lessons that day—to the relief of the Fourth, and probably of their master as well.

The juniors streamed out of the Form-room in great spirits.

"That's over, thank goodness!" said Jimmy Silver. "I thought Bootles would be detaining some of us once or twice. But he's a brick! The way Mornington construed was enough to make a hippotamus weep."

"What is the beggar grinning about?" asked Lovell.

"Is he grinning?" said Jimmy carelessly. "He's been grinning like a singed cat all the morning," said Raby. "He's got something in his mind."

"Sure, it's some dirty trick he's got in his head," said Flynn. "I know that look in his chivvy."

"Oh, blow Mornington!" said Jimmy Silver. "He's have half an hour at the nets before dinner. St. Jim's will be here early this afternoon."

"Good egg!" "Hold on a minute, Silver!" exclaimed Mornington, coming quickly towards the captain of the Fourth. "I want a word with you."

"Buck up, then!" "I've asked you to play me against St. Jim's this afternoon."

"My hat! You're not beginning that again, are you?" said Jimmy Silver, in a tone of patient remonstrance.

"Yes, I'm going to play." Jimmy grinned.

"What are you going to play—the giddy ox?"

"I'm going to play cricket against St. Jim's. You can't deny that I've been stickin' to practice, and I'm in pretty good form."

"You're improving," admitted Jimmy Silver. "Nothing like form for the eleven, though."

"I'm goin' to play!" said Mornington coolly. "Whether I like it or not?" asked Jimmy, grinning.

Mornington nodded. "Yes, if you put it like that."

"Well, I don't quite see how you'll manage it," said Jimmy. "If you come on the field, you'll be kicked off."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders, as Jimmy looked at him in a puzzled way. Townsend and Topham were grinning.

"If you don't choose to play me, you'll be made to," he explained.

"My hat! How will you work that?" asked Jimmy, more surprised than angry.

"You know my guardian, Sir Rupert Staapole, is chairman of the governing body of Rookwood—"

Jimmy Silver yawned portentously.

"Yes; you've told us often enough. We're fed-up with the noble baronet. Fed-up to the chin!"

"He has influence with the Head—"

"We've had that, too, lots of times. Put on a new record."

Mornington flushed angrily.

"Very well! You can play me of your own choice, or you can be ordered to do it, just as you like," he said.

"Ordered to do it?" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Yes."

"By whom?"

"The Head."

"Rats!"

"Look here, I've had enough of this cheek!" exclaimed Lovell wrathfully. "Get out of the way, Mornington!"

"I tell you—"

Lovell did not wait to be told. He took Mornington by the collar and swung him out of the way.

Mornington went reeling along the passage, and collapsed against the wall, with a gasp.

The Fistical Four went out, grinning, into the quadrangle.

"What the dickens do you stand that cheeky rotter's jaw for, Jimmy?" exclaimed Lovell.

"No law against jawing," said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "He can jaw himself purple in the face if he likes. It won't make any difference."

"I suppose that was only gas, all he was saying?" remarked Newcome.

"I suppose so," said Jimmy, laughing.

"The Head isn't likely to take a hand in junior cricket arrangements. The silly ass is so full of swank that he doesn't know what he's talking about!"

"Towny and Topy seemed to think there was something in it," remarked Raby thoughtfully.

"Pair of silly asses!" said Jimmy. "Let's get down to the cricket."

The Fistical Four dismissed Mornington from their minds. But they were destined to be reminded shortly of him. There was a surprise in store for Jimmy Silver.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### By Order.

"SILVER!"

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, called to Jimmy, as the juniors were leaving the dining-room after dinner.

"Step into my study, please," said Mr. Bootles.

"Certainly, sir!" said Jimmy, wondering what was the matter.

He followed the Form-master into his study.

Mr. Bootles sat down, and coughed his little cough, and blinked at the captain of the Fourth over his glasses.

"I understand, Silver, that you are—ahem!—playing a cricket-match, or something of the sort, this afternoon."

"Something of the sort, sir," smiled Jimmy. "I mean, yes, sir. We're playing a visiting team from St. Jim's."

"Dr. Chisholm has spoken to me on this subject."

"It's very kind of the Head to take an interest in our cricket matches, sir," said Jimmy, in surprise.

"Ahem!" said Mr. Bootles. "Yes—exactly. The fact is, the Head has received a communication from a governor of Rookwood—"

in short, from Sir Rupert Staapole, the chairman of the governing board."

Jimmy Silver started a little.

"You may be aware, Silver, that Sir Rupert is the guardian of one of your Form-fellows—Mornington, in fact."

"Mornington's told us so, sir."

"Precisely. It is Sir Rupert's wish that his ward should—er—take up cricket, and—ah—football, and so on," said Mr. Bootles, rather vaguely. Mr. Bootles' knowledge of games was not extensive. "It appears that he has received complaints from his ward—that, in short, Mornington is not allowed to take part in the games."

Jimmy's eyes glinted.

"Mornington is a duffer at cricket, sir," he said. "He can take part in the practice as much as he likes, and if he would stick to it, he could share in practice matches. He's not good enough form to be put in the regular fixtures."

"However, Sir Rupert has made a very special request to the Head," said Mr. Bootles. "He regards Mornington as being passed over. The Head does not dictate to you in this matter, Silver. He realises that juniors have rights of their own, and that cricket is not a suitable matter for direct interference by the headmaster. For this reason, he does not care to exert his authority. He does not wish, however, to refuse Sir Rupert Staapole. He would be glad if you would allow Mornington to play in the match this afternoon, at Sir Rupert's request."

Jimmy set his lips.

A request from his headmaster was tantamount to a command.

But a junior had his rights, and Jimmy Silver, as cricket captain, had his duties as well as his rights to consider.

The St. Jim's match would be touch-and-go, anyway. Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, were always a hard nut to crack. Playing even one "duffer" in the Rookwood team would be throwing away victory. A single wicket lost for nothing would make all the difference between victory and defeat.

It was not easy for a junior in the Fourth Form to refuse a request from his headmaster, conveyed through his Form-master. But Jimmy felt that he had no choice in the matter.

"You will oblige the Head in this little matter," added Mr. Bootles. "I may add—er—that I am much obliged to you, Silver. You may go."

Jimmy Silver did not stir.

"Excuse me, sir," he said quietly and respectfully, but very firmly. "I can't play Mornington this afternoon."

"What—what!"

"Mornington's no good, sir. I can't take my eleven out to be licked by St. Jim's because that clumsy duffer wants to play."

Mr. Bootles looked hard at the junior.

"I am not an authority upon cricket," he said. "I know little of the—er—game. But I suppose that one-boy is much the same as another."

"Not quite, sir," said Jimmy. "Mornington is an ass at cricket. I think he would make a pretty good bat if he stuck to practice, but he doesn't. He would be only a passenger in the team. I can't face the fellows and tell

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them that I'm playing a duffer like that against a strong team."

Mr. Bootles coughed.  
"I trust, Silver, that you have no intention of refusing to accede to a special request from your headmaster?"

"I've got no choice, sir."  
There was a pause.  
"You surprise me, Silver," said Mr. Bootles, at last.

"I'm sorry, sir."  
"The fact is, Silver, that a junior cannot be allowed to refuse his headmaster's request," said Mr. Bootles somewhat sharply. "I hoped to see you consent without demur."

"I can't, sir."  
"You must!"  
Jimmy set his lips.

"I cannot go to Dr. Chisholm and tell him that you have refused to meet his express wishes. I therefore order you, Silver, to play Mornington in the cricket-match this afternoon. I am sorry to have to do this, but there is no alternative."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.  
"Nobody has a right to order me to do that, sir," he said quietly.

"Silver!"  
"Any of the fellows would tell you so, sir."  
"Enough! I am sorry to have to give you this order, but I expect to see it carried out. You may go, Silver."

There was no more to be said.  
Jimmy Silver quitted the study, his eyes gleaming under his knitted brows. Mornington had scored after all. Jimmy Silver had received his orders. It remained to be seen whether those orders would be obeyed.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Mornington in Luck.

"HOWLY Moses! What's the matter interiore?"

"What's the row, Jimmy?"  
"Not detained?" exclaimed Lovell anxiously.

Jimmy Silver's look, as he came out into the quad, drew his chums around him at once. It was easy to see that something untoward had happened. Never had the captain of the Fourth looked so furious.

"What the dickens is it?" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "Give it a name, Jimmy."  
"I'm ordered to play Mornington this afternoon."

"What!"  
"Rot!"  
"Gammon!"  
"Piffle!"  
"Bootles has ordered me, from the Head!"  
"Great Scott!"

There was a howl of astonishment from the juniors.

For the headmaster to interfere in cricket matches, which concerned only the fellows themselves, was unheard of. The Rookwood juniors stared at Jimmy Silver in blank astonishment.

"Ordered to play Mornington!" gasped Lovell. "It's impossible!"

"So that's what the cad was grinning at?" exclaimed Raby. "That's what he's been keeping up his sleeve."

"Ordered!" said Tommy Dodd. "Ordered! What right has the Head to give orders about cricket?"

"Or Bootles either?"  
"Shame!"  
"Rotten!"

"We jolly well won't stand it!"  
"The cad sha'n't be played! We'll scrag him instead!"

Voices were rising in wrath. Interference with the sacred rights of the junior cricket club was simply intolerable.

Jimmy Silver smiled bitterly.

"The rotter has been complaining to his guardian that he's left out of junior cricket. I suppose he hasn't mentioned that he's a slacker and a cad. Old Stacpoole has put it to the Head."

"Blow old Stacpoole!"  
"He's chairman of the governors, and, of course, he has a lot of influence with the Head," said Jimmy. "I was asked to play the cad, and refused. Then Bootles ordered me to do it."

"Shame!"  
"Like his cheek!"

"The Head has no right to interfere in our business!" exclaimed Lovell passionately.

"We're not going to stand it! If you play that cad, Jimmy Silver, we'll scrag you!"

"I leave it to the team," said Jimmy. "I won't play him of my own accord. But a Form-master's order is an order, and if I don't do it, you know what it means."

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"A flogging, perhaps!" said Tommy Dodd, with a whistle.

"It's a rotten shame!"  
"The Head don't understand much about our little games," said Jimmy. "I dare say he thinks it doesn't matter much who's played, and he may believe there's a set made against Mornington. I don't suppose he thinks it's of much consequence whether we beat St. Jim's or not. Same with Bootles—what he doesn't know about cricket would fill books."

"Silly asses!" said Lovell.  
"It's rotten!" said Tommy Dodd. "But you'll have to play him, Jimmy. It will be carrying a passenger in the team, that's all."

"All!" exclaimed Lovell furiously. "It means a licking for us. St. Jim's don't have passengers in their teams."

"I'd refuse fast enough," said Jimmy, "only—only—"

"Only what?" growled Lovell.  
"It isn't only the licking—though that's not pleasant. But if Mornington is left out now, he's cad enough to go straight to Bootles and tell him."

"Let him!"  
"But what would Bootles do?"  
"Blow Bootles!"

"Fathead! He would come down to the ground, and order us to play Mornington there. We should have to do it, or stop the match."

"Oh crumbs!"  
"Pretty scene before the St. Jim's chaps!" grunted Rawson.

"We couldn't stand that," said Tommy Dodd, with a shake of the head. "There's no way out; you've got to play the cad, Jimmy!"

Lovell clenched his fists furiously.  
"The rotter! I'll smash him for this!"  
"Here he comes!" said Oswald.

Mornington walked up to the group, with Townsend and Topham. The two latter were grinning gleefully. The Nuts of the Fourth were very pleased to see Jimmy Silver & Co. "dished" in this way.

Mornington wore an arrogant smile.  
His view was that Jimmy Silver & Co. had been brought to reason at last, and that they had been made to knuckle under, which was quite right and proper in his eyes.

The black looks cast at him by the juniors did not affect him in the least. He fixed his eyes upon the captain of the Fourth with a supercilious expression.

"You've heard from Bootles?" he asked.  
"Yes."  
"You know you've got to play me?"

"Bootles says so," said Jimmy very quietly.  
"You might as well have made up your mind to it, without givin' me the trouble of puttin' the screw on!" said Mornington insolently.

"You cad!" shouted Lovell.  
"Rotter!"  
"Outsider!"  
"Scrag him!"

"Sure, the thafe of the worruld ought to be scragged intiore!" yelled Flynn. "Collar the baste!"

"Hold on!" said Jimmy Silver. "That's no good. And there's Bootles at his window!"

But Patrick O'Donovan Flynn was not to be denied.

He rushed at Mornington, hitting out right and left.

Mornington was fairly swept off his feet, and he went to the ground with a crash. Townsend and Topham backed away, but Flynn was not finished yet. Townsend caught his hard knuckles on his nose, and joined Mornington on the ground, and Topham went reeling from a terrific upper-cut on the chin.

"Bravo, Paddy!" chuckled Tommy Dodd.  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look out! Cave!"  
Flynn danced round his fallen foe, brandishing his fists, careless of the fact that Mr. Bootles had thrown up his window.

"Gerrup and have some more, ye thafe of the worruld!" roared Flynn. "Gerrup and be licked, ye spalpeen!"

"Flynn!"  
Mr. Bootles' voice was like thunder. Patrick O'Donovan Flynn ceased suddenly his excited war-dance.

"Yis, sorr?"  
"How dare you, Flynn!" thundered Mr. Bootles.

"Oh, sorr—"

"Go into the House! You will remain in-doors till tea-time, and take two hundred lines!"

"Howly Moses!" ejaculated Flynn, in dismay. "Sure, I was only lickin' a rotten spalpeen, sorr—"

"Obey me at once, Flynn!"

"Yis, sorr!" groaned Flynn.  
And he went disconsolately into the house.

"Let there be no more of this!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, frowning at the juniors. "Any further interference with Mornington will be punished severely!"

Mornington picked himself up, gasping for breath. Townsend and Topham rose, panting and dusty.

"The beast!" groaned Townsend.  
"Ow! My chin!" murmured Topham.  
Mornington laughed sardonically.

"It's nothin'! They've got to toe the line!"  
Which was cold comfort, however, to the Nuts of the Fourth, whose noses and chins felt decidedly out of gear.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### Rawson to the Rescue.

THERE was dismay and fury among the Rookwood junior cricketers.

But there was no help.  
Furious as they were, they felt that they had to "toe the line."

Jimmy Silver would have stood out at any risk; but there was no possibility of standing out.

Mornington, left out of the team, would have gone to Mr. Bootles at once, and the Form-master would have stepped in.

The juniors, naturally enough, shrank from having a "scene" in the presence of the visitors from St. Jim's. Moreover, the game would have been stopped, for if Jimmy had still persisted in disobeying, he would have been ordered into the House. It was impossible to resist.

With gloomy looks and gleaming eyes, the youthful cricketers made up their minds that they had to "stand it."

The keenness with which they had looked forward to the match was gone now.

With such a "passenger" in the team, they had little hope of beating St. Jim's; a straw was enough to turn the balance between the two elevens, and Mornington was something more than a straw in the scale.

Everybody agreed that it was "rotten," but everybody had to agree also that there was no help for it.

The time was getting close, too, for the arrival of Tom Merry & Co. from St. Jim's. The Fistical Four and the three Tommies stood in a gloomy group on the cricket-ground, waiting for the arrival of the Saints. They were feeling inclined to "scrag" Mornington, but even that consolation was denied them. Rawson came up to the group, with a thoughtful look on his rugged face.

"You're leaving somebody out to put that cad in, Jimmy?" he said.

Jimmy nodded.

"Must leave out a Classical as you're putting a Classical in," remarked Tommy Dodd casually.

"I'm leaving out Lacy," said Jimmy Silver.  
"But he's a Modern."  
"Can't be helped."

"Now, look here, Jimmy Silver—"  
"Oh, don't jaw!" said Jimmy peevishly.  
"Bad enough without jaw. Blessed if you ain't like Nero fiddling while Rome was burning. Don't worry!"

"I've got an idea," said Rawson, in his quiet, stolid way. "Leave me out."  
"That's a good idea," said the three Tommies at once.

"We want Rawson," said Jimmy. "Rawson's a better bat than Lacy."

"I tell you—"  
"Oh, cheese it!"  
"Look here—"

"You don't want to be left out, I suppose, Rawson?" said Jimmy Silver crossly. "It's bad enough without my own team turning tail!"

Rawson shook his head.  
"I'd rather play," he said; "but I've got an idea. I think I could persuade Mornington not to be such a rotten cad."

"Bow-wow!"  
"I think I could," said Rawson. "I needn't go into particulars. But I think I could do it, if you leave me out of the team."

Jimmy Silver stared at him.  
"You think you could persuade Mornington not to shove himself into the team?" he exclaimed.

"I think so."  
"What utter rot!" said Tommy Dodd.  
"He's simply bent on it. He's chortling with glee over getting us into a fix."

"I know that. But I might be able to do it."  
"I don't see how," said Jimmy. "But if





"Tommy Dodd! Good old Tommy!" Tommy Dodd was on the ball. He backed away with his hands raised, his eyes fixed upon the ball as it came floating down gently, as it seemed, towards his outstretched hands.

you think you could make Mornington act decently, you're welcome to try. But you needn't stand out of the team to do that."

"I should have to keep him company this afternoon," said Rawson.

"Look here, what are you driving at? You're not pally with Mornington?"

"No. He doesn't like scholarship kids!" said Rawson, with a grin. "But I might get pally with him for once, and he might prefer my company to playing in the match."

"You're talking out of your hat!" "Well, leave it to me," said Rawson. "Fill my place, and if Mornington doesn't claim his place, put another man in."

"I'll do that fast enough. I can't play Flynn; he's detained. Jones minor would do very well. But—"

"I really think I could persuade Mornington," said Rawson. "Leave it to me. I can be very eloquent sometimes."

"Well, if you can do it you're a giddy jewel!" said Tommy Dodd. "But I'll bet ten to one on doughnuts you can't!" Rawson smiled, and walked away.

"Blest if I understand Rawson," said Jimmy Silver peevishly. "He could talk like a minister at the Guildhall till he was high and dry, but Mornington wouldn't take any notice."

"Well, I wish him luck," said Tommy Dodd. "Where is Mornington now?" Jimmy's lip curled.

"They're having a smoke in their study," he said. "Ripping way of getting ready for a cricket-match! Of course, the fool's wicket will go down first ball. It will be like playing a man short."

"Against a team like St. Jim's—rotten!" "Br-r-r-r!" growled Jimmy discontentedly. There was a shout from the direction of the gates.

"Here they come!" St. Jim's had arrived.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Looking After Mornington.

**R**AWSON looked into Flynn's study. The Irish junior was seated dolefully at his table, writing lines.

He was "gated" for the afternoon; and, worse than that, ordered to remain indoors, which meant that he could not go down to the cricket-ground to watch the match. It was hard lines upon Patrick O'Donovan Flynn, and his chubby face was very dismal. He gave Rawson a disconsolate look.

"St. Jim's come yet?" he asked. "Not yet. Are you busy?"

"I'm doing lines!" groaned Flynn. "Two hundred lines for punching that spalpeen! Sure, it's rotten!"

"Will you come and help me?"

"Phwat's the game?"

"I'm going to persuade Mornington not to play."

"Arrah, and ye can't do it intoirly!"

"I think I can, if you'll lend a hand." Flynn jumped up.

"I'm your man!—But ye can't do it!"

"Come along!" said Rawson.

He strode away to Townsend's study, followed by the astonished Flynn. There was a haze of smoke in the study when Rawson threw open the door.

Mornington and Townsend and Topham were there, enjoying a smoke after lunch, and in great good-humour.

Jimmy Silver had been completely "downed" this time, and great was the satisfaction of the Nuts of the Fourth.

Mornington looked insolently at the two juniors in the doorway.

"Hallo! Is it time to get on the field?" he said lazily. "I'll come when I've finished my cigarette."

"Don't hurry," said Townsend, grinning. "Let Jimmy Silver wait. He dare not play without you."

"I'm not goin' to hurry, dear boy," said Mornington. "Go and tell Silver I'm coming along soon, Rawson."

Rawson did not reply. He pushed Flynn into the study, and closed the door, and locked it. Then he put the key into his pocket.

The three Nuts watched that proceeding in great astonishment.

"What the dickens are you doin' with our key?" exclaimed Topham. "Open the door at once, you outsider!"

"I'm an insider now," said Rawson cheerfully. "This is my study, I believe, as well as yours."

Mornington rose, and threw the stump of his cigarette into the grate.

"I'll be off now," he said. "You fellows had better come down and see the match."

"I don't know about the match; but Jimmy Silver's face will be worth watchin'," chuckled Townsend.

"You're not going just yet," said Rawson. "I've got something to say to you, Mornington."

"Keep it to yourself," said Mornington, shrugging his shoulders. "I don't care to chat with beggarly scholarship bounders!"

"You've got to hear it, all the same."

"Let me pass!"

"You've shoved yourself into the team by using your guardian's influence with the Head," continued Rawson. "You know it's a dirty trick."

"Let me pass, confound you!"

"You may, or ought to know, that it may lose Rookwood the match."

"Will you let me pass?" shouted Mornington, clenching his fists. His savage temper was rising; but he hesitated to attack the burly Rawson.

"No," said Rawson calmly. "I haven't finished yet. I want you to promise me not to shove yourself into the team."

Mornington laughed savagely.

"Well, I'm not goin' to do anythin' of the sort. Now let me pass, you cad!"

"You're going to play?"

"Yaas!"

"Although you know the whole team is against it, and you may lose us the match?"

"Will you get out of the way?"

"Hardly," said Rawson. "I've given you a chance of doing the decent thing. You've refused."

"Sure, the baste hasn't any decency in him!" said Flynn. "I could have told ye it was no good, Rawson darling!"

"But it is some good," said Rawson. "As Mornington refuses to do the decent thing, he's going to stay here and keep me company this afternoon!"

"What!" yelled Mornington.

"Getting deaf?" asked Rawson pleasantly.

"You're going to stay here and keep me company this afternoon."

"You utter fool! I shall do nothin' of the sort."

"We shall see!"

"Will you let me pass?" shrieked Mornington passionately.

"No!"

"Then I'll knock you flyin'!"

"Go ahead!"

Flynn burst into a roar. Rawson's plan dawned upon him at last. He gave the scholarship junior a terrific thump on the shoulder.

"Sure, it's a broth av a bhoy ye are!" yelled Flynn. "Hurray! We'll keep the spalpeens here safe and sound! You look after that cad, and I'll look after these two!"

"That's the game!" said Rawson.

Mornington clenched his hands convulsively. This high-handed proceeding on the part of the scholarship junior took him completely by surprise. He had expected Jimmy Silver to try every means of getting out of the fix. But he had not looked for this.

"Look here, you can't do it!" exclaimed Townsend. "Do you think you're goin' to keep us shut up in this study all the afternoon?"

"Exactly."

"We won't stay here!" shouted Topham.

"Good! Get out if you can!"

"Faith, and ye're welcome to thry!" chortled Flynn. "Are ye spoilin' for a fight, Topham, dear boy?"

"Keep off, you wild Irish idiot!" gasped Townsend, jumping up and dodging round the table.

"Do you want an up-and-a-downer, Topy?"

"Leave me alone, you beast!"

"Sure, it's as peaceable as lambs they are, the dear boys!" chortled Flynn. "They won't give us any trouble."

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"I'll yell out of the window if you don't open that door!" shouted Townsend despairingly.

"Will ye intoirely?" said Flynn, planting himself at the window. "Come and thry! Sure, I'll give ye something to yell for!"

Mornington glared at his chums.

"Back me up!" he shouted. "Rush that low brute, and get the key!"

"Rush away!" said Rawson.

Mornington sprang at him like a tiger. In a second they had closed, and were struggling fiercely.

Townsend and Topham made a movement to back up their pal.

Flynn chirped in promptly.

The athletic Irish junior was more than a match for the two weedy, seedy slackers of the Fourth. He fairly hurled himself upon them, and gripped each of them by the collar.

Crack!

Townsend's head came in contact with Topham's with a resounding concussion.

"Yaroooh!"

"Whoop!"

"Leggo, you beast!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rawson and Mornington were rolling on the floor. Mornington was fighting like a tiger. But he had no chance against the burly Rawson.

He went over on his back, and Rawson's knee was planted on his chest. Mornington glared up at him with speechless fury in his face.

"Kape him down!" grinned Flynn. "I'm looking after these spalpeens. Are you going to be peaceable, me bhoy?"

"Yaroo! Leggo!"

"You're tearing my collar!" shrieked Townsend.

"Faith, and ye're lucky it's not yere neck!"

"I give in!" roared Topham. "Let go!"

Flynn swung the two unhappy Nuts into the corner of the study, where they collapsed, gasping for breath.

"Kape there, thin," said Flynn. "You can sit on the floor, and, sure, if ye get up wan instant, I'll knock ye down again!"

"Oh, you beast!" mumbled Townsend.

"Oh, you rotter!" groaned Topham.

But they did not get up. Flynn sat on the table, ready to pounce upon them if they did. The two slackers decided that discretion was the better part of valour. They remained where they were.

Mornington, who did not want for pluck, whatever his other failings, was struggling under Rawson's heavy knee. But he could not displace that knee. He was pinned down as helplessly as a moth on a pin.

"Will you let me go?" shrieked Mornington breathlessly.

"No fear!"

"I—I'll smash you!"

Rawson laughed.

"You beggarly workhouse hound, how dare you touch me!"

"Faith, and it's civil and polite he is!" grinned Flynn. "Rub his noble napper in the carpet, me bhoy!"

"Help!" shrieked Mornington.

Rawson jerked out Mornington's handkerchief, and jammed it into Mornington's mouth. Mornington's yells died away in a gurgle. He tore at the handkerchief with his hands; but his wrists were grasped, and held tightly together.

"Are you going to be quiet?" said Rawson coolly.

"Gerrooh!"

"Then I'll tie your hands!"

"Yurrrghh!"

Rawson jerked off Mornington's necktie. In spite of the junior's frantic struggles, he bound it round his wrists, fastening them together.

"Will you keep quiet now? Nod your head if you mean yes."

Mornington did not nod his head. Evidently he did not mean yes. His eyes flamed at Rawson.

"Throw me your necktie, Townsend," said Rawson.

"Look here, you're not goin' to have my necktie—"

"I give you one second!"

Townsend, with a furious look, jerked off his necktie, and hurled it to Rawson. Mornington's ankles were dragged together, and bound with it.

Then Rawson rose to his feet.

"That settles Mornington," he remarked.

"He won't give us any more worry."

"Jimmy Silver put you up to this!" exclaimed Topham furiously.

"Jimmy Silver doesn't know a word about it," said Rawson. "I told him I'd try to persuade Mornington to stand out. That's all. I've persuaded him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Flynn. "Ye have, intoirely!"

"We've got to waste an afternoon on them, Flynn," said Rawson. "You don't mind?"

"Divil a bit—it's 'delighted I am! Besides, I can do my lines here. I'll borrow some of yer impot paper, if ye don't mind, Towy."

Townsend only snorted by way of response.

"Kape in that corner," said Flynn. "If ye move, ye'll have me on yer necks! Thanks for the impot paper!"

"Look here—"

"Don't jaw while I'm writin' me lines, bedad!"

"We're not going to stick here—"

"Well, get up, if you like. You know what you'll get if you do."

Townsend and Topham did not get up. Now that Mornington was tied up, the struggle would have been two against two, and it was more hopeless than ever. Towy and Topy had to grin and bear it. Flynn cheerfully proceeded to write his lines. Rawson sat down at the table to work at Greek. On the floor Mornington lay, writhing in his bonds, his face black with rage. But his teeth had been drawn, and he was powerless now.

About ten minutes later hurried steps came along the passage, and the door was tried from the outside.

"You fellows comin'?" called out Peele of the Fourth. "St. Jim's are here, and they'll be beginnin' without you, Morny! What the dickens is the door locked for?"

Flynn gripped Townsend by the neck with his left hand, and clenched his right under Towy's terrified eyes.

"Tell him ye're not comin'," he said; "and if there's any trouble, sure I'll make mince-meat of yez!"

Townsend gasped.

"We're not comin', Peele!" he called out.

"My hat! Isn't Mornington comin'?"

"No!" gasped Townsend.

"Why not? They'll be playin' without him?"

Why don't you let me in?" called out the mystified Peele.

Flynn's grip closed tighter on Townsend, and his big fist pressed on Towy's unhappy nose.

"Can't let you in!" gasped Townsend.

"We're busy—a—little game! You cut along and—see the match."

"Bridge?" asked Peele through the key-hole.

"Ye-es."

"Then I'll make a fourth. I don't care for watchin' the match."

Topham made a movement, but Rawson's eye was on him, and Rawson's heavy fist was ready. Topham remained silent.

"Can't let you in," said Townsend. "Cut along!"

"Look here, don't you want me?"

"No!"

"Well, you pig," said Peele, in disgust, "go and eat coke!"

And he kicked the door, and stalked away angrily.

"Oh, you rotters!" mumbled Townsend.

Flynn chuckled.

"Sure, it's a broth av a bhoy ye are," he said. "And if anybody else comes, Towy, ye'll answer in the same way, or it's a wreck ye'll be!"

"Hang you!"

Flynn sat down to his lines again, and Rawson to his Greek. Down at the cricket-ground the match was going on merrily. But it was not a merry afternoon to the Nuts of the Fourth.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### The St. Jim's Match.

**T**OM MERRY & Co. had arrived, and Jimmy Silver greeted them as cheerfully as he could.

Jimmy had little faith in Rawson's "persuasion," and he did not believe for a moment that Mornington would fail to appear and claim his place in the team. He was, of course, unaware of the drastic measures Rawson intended to use.

St. Jim's were in great form, as Jimmy could tell at a glance. Rookwood would have had their hands full, anyway. With a duffer instead of a good man in the team, the game was up, though Jimmy intended to put up the hardest fight he could.

But, to his surprise, Mornington did not appear on the scene.



The two elevens were ready, and Jimmy tossed for choice of innings with Tom Merry, and won the toss.

Still Mornington was absent. Jimmy's spirits began to rise.

Was it possible that Rawson had succeeded, after all—that Mornington had a rag of decency left, and had forborne to "muck up" the match?

Lovell pressed Jimmy's arm. "Buck up!" he said. "Mornington isn't here. That's no fault of yours. Begin without the beast!"

Jimmy nodded. "We bat first," he said, in the hope of getting the innings over, at least, before Mornington came on the scene.

The St. Jim's fellows went into the field. Mr. Bootles came down on the cricket-ground, with a genial nod to the juniors. He beckoned to the captain of the Fourth.

"You are—er—playing Mornington, Silver?" he asked.

"I've put him in the team, sir," said Jimmy quietly, repressing his feelings. "He hasn't turned up yet. I suppose I'm not to go and hunt for him, and bring him here by his neck?"

Mr. Bootles coughed. "Ahem! Certainly not, Silver. If it is open to him to play if he comes—"

"It is, sir." "Then he must please himself. Perhaps you had better send him word, however, as he may not be aware you are beginning."

"Very well, sir," Jimmy turned to Raby. "Raby, cut off, and see if you can see Mornington, will you? Say we're beginning."

"Certainly!" said Raby. "You fellows mind waiting a minute?" asked Jimmy. "One of my men hasn't come down yet."

"All serene," said Tom Merry. "Yaas, wathah, deah boy!" said D'Arcy. "Wait as long as you like."

Raby ran to the School House, with a grin on his face. He ran in, and put his head into Mr. Bootles' study—which, of course, was empty—and said:

the dickens did he manage to persuade the beast to keep off the grass?"

Tommy Dodd chuckled. "He's done it," he said. "Perhaps he did more than persuade him—may have taken him by the neck."

Jimmy Silver burst into a laugh. "I never thought of that." "I shouldn't wonder," said Tommy Doyle. "More power to his elbow, bedad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Well, he can't bat now!" grinned Tommy Dodd, "Rawson ought to have a prize medal, anyway. Good luck to him!"

St. Jim's opened their innings. Tom Merry & Co. were good batsmen; but Jimmy Silver had been hard at practice of late, and his bowling had been brought really to a pitch of perfection.

Tom Merry was dismissed with 8; and D'Arcy, much to his surprise, was sent bootless away with a duck's egg to his credit.

The innings was fast, and the last wicket fell with the score at 60.

The afternoon was not half over yet. On the first innings Rookwood was an easy winner; but there was plenty of time to finish. And still Mornington was conspicuous by his absence.

That he was either staying away of his own accord, or was being kept away somehow by Tom Rawson, was by this time abundantly clear, and Jimmy Silver ceased to think about him at all. He dismissed him from his mind, and devoted all his thoughts to the game.

In the second Rookwood innings the luck was not so good.

Fatty Wynn was in tremendous form, and he performed the hat trick amid cheers from the crowd. Jack Blake also put in some good bowling.

The last wicket went down at 50. The Rookwood total was 128 for the two innings. St. Jim's had 60 in hand. They looked quite confident when they commenced their second innings.

And their confidence seemed well founded. Tom Merry seemed to have "got on" to

The ball whizzed away, and the batsmen ran.

"Licked!" muttered the Rookwood fellows. Then there was a yell: "Tommy Dodd! Good old Tommy!" Tommy Dodd was on the ball.

He was backing away now, his hands raised, his eyes fixed upon the ball as it came floating down gently, as it seemed, into his outspread palms.

Click! Then all Rookwood roared. "Caught! Oh, well caught, sir!" "Good man!"

"Bravo, Tommy Dodd!" Tommy Dodd grinned, and tossed up the leather, and caught it again as it came down straight as a rule.

"How's that?" "Out!" "Rookwood wins! Hurrah!"

Rookwood had won! And, as Jimmy remarked very humorously, it was Mornington who had won the match for Rookwood—by staying away!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### After the Match.

LOUD cheers ringing from the cricket-field reached the School House and floated in at the window of Rawson's study. The sun was sinking behind the old beeches.

"That's the finish!" said Rawson. He rose and stepped to the window. A merry crowd was in the quadrangle below.

Rawson shouted down: "Game over, Oswald?" Oswald looked up, grinning. "Yes, over and won! Won by a run!" "Hurrah!"

"Mornington didn't turn up!" called out Oswald. "That's what won the match for us!"

Rawson grinned. "Lucky Mornington didn't turn up, then." "Yes, rather. Hurrah!"

**NOTE.—A special long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., at Rookwood School, appears next Monday in "The Boys' Friend," entitled: "A STOLEN NAME!" by Owen Conquest. Don't miss it! [Editor.]**

"Are you here, Mornington?" Naturally, there was no reply.

Raby looked round the study solemnly, to north, south, east, and west. Then he departed, and hurried back to the cricket-field.

"Seen him?" asked Jimmy. "No. I looked on every side," said Raby. "Then we must begin without him." "Dear me," said Mr. Bootles, "this is very, very careless of Mornington, after—Ahem! However, it is his own affair!"

And the Form-master, feeling that he had done quite enough, walked back to the House. "Where did you look for him?" asked Jimmy Silver, meeting Raby's eyes.

"In Bootles' study," said Raby demurely. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver felt much more cheerful now. He went on to open the innings with Tommy Dodd. Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's bowled the first over.

Fatty Wynn was in great form, but so was Jimmy Silver. The match started well, with 10 for the first over.

Rookwood fellows were crowded round the ground, some of them wondering why Mornington was not there. As Mornington was certain to be last man in, he was not wanted yet. Only Peele took the trouble to give him a call, with the result that Peele came back in a bad temper, after his rebuff at the study door.

Jimmy Silver's spirits were rising all through the innings. Twenty-five runs came off his own bat before he was caught out by Figgins of St. Jim's.

Tommy Dodd added 10, and Lovell 11, and Tommy Cook 10. Wickets fell at a good rate, but there was not a single duck's egg. Every batsman knocked up a good average of runs, and the score stood at 70 when the word was passed, "Last man in!"

Last man in should have been Mornington. But Mornington was conspicuous by his absence.

Jones minor went in to bat. Fatty Wynn knocked away his wicket for 8, and the innings came to an end, 78 all down.

"Not so bad!" said Jimmy Silver. "What a ripping stroke of luck that Mornington wasn't here! Rawson's not here either. How

Jimmy Silver's bowling, and Jimmy did not succeed in touching his wicket.

Before Tom Merry was caught out by Tommy Dodd he had knocked up 40 for his side, and the Saints looked jubilant.

For, meanwhile, 20 more had been piled up for three wickets, so that St. Jim's wanted only 8 to tie, 9 to win, with seven wickets in hand.

"For goodness' sake, pile in, Jimmy!" said Raby. "They'll mop us off the earth at this rate, with wickets to spare!"

Jimmy Silver nodded, and went on to bow again, with the expression of a fellow who was prepared to do or die.

What followed elicited loud cheers from the Rookwood crowd.

Wynn of St. Jim's was dismissed with a duck's egg, and Herries followed him, and then Lowther and Kerr. Four wickets for four balls made the Rookwooders yell, and changed the aspect of the game once more. Talbot of St. Jim's was keeping his end up well, but in the next over he was caught out by Newcome.

"Last man in!" Figgins and Noble were last at the wickets. Eight to tie and 9 to win, with Jimmy Silver bowling again!

But the mighty Figgins lifted the ball away for 4, and cut away the next for 2, and St. Jim's hopes rose again.

"Bai Jove, 3 to win!" said D'Arcy, looking on from the pavilion. "Figgay will do it all right, you know!"

"Right as rain!" said Tom Merry. But he watched anxiously, all the same.

The match was touch-and-go now. Figgins had no chance with the rest of the over. The field crossed, and the bowling came to Noble from Tommy Dodd. Tommy Dodd was doing his level best, and so was the batsman. A single run was the result of the over.

"Only 2 to win!" said Jimmy Silver, as the field crossed for the last over—they all knew it would be the last over. "Look out for catches!"

Jimmy delivered his next ball to Noble, who had the batting again after the single. The Cornstalk junior let himself go at it.

"Faith, and it's a win for us—and, sure, it's us that have done it intirely!" said Flynn. "The afternoon hasn't been wasted, bedad! And I've done me lines, too. Hurrah!"

"Now let us go, you rotters!" mumbled Townsend.

Rawson unlocked the study door. "You can go as fast as you like," he said. "Buzz off!"

Townsend and Topham were glad to go. They were quite fed up with sitting on the study carpet. They hurried away, to pour their tale of woe and wrong into the sympathetic ears of their nutty friends.

Rawson stooped over Mornington, and released him. Mornington, cramped, furious, panting with rage, staggered to his feet. He shook his fist at the scholarship junior. "I'll make you suffer for this!" he said, between his teeth, striding from the study.

Rawson and Flynn went to see Tom Merry & Co. off. The St. Jim's party had a train to catch, but they had time for a hurried refreshment. The brake rolled away with St. Jim's on board, and Jimmy Silver & Co. came back into the quadrangle in high good-humour.

Jimmy clapped Rawson on the shoulder. "How did you do it?" he demanded.

Before Rawson could reply, Bulkeley of the Sixth came out, and beckoned to him. "Mr. Bootles wants you," he said. "Flynn, too!"

"Right-ho!" said Rawson. The two delinquents proceeded to Mr. Bootles' study, where they found the Form-master looking astounded, and Mornington white with rage. He had duly reported the whole occurrence to the master of the Fourth. Mr. Bootles had his cane in his hand.

"I have received a most astounding complaint from Mornington, Rawson," he said. "He declares you kept him by force in your study, and prevented him from playing in the cricket-match."

"Yes, sir," said Rawson quietly. "Ahem! Why did you do this, Rawson?" "To keep Mornington from losing the match for us, sir."

(Continued on page 18.)

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**FOR THE GOOD OF THE TEAM!***(Continued from page 17.)*

"It was Silver put him up to it, Mr. Bootles!" hissed Mornington.

"Did you act upon Silver's instructions, Rawson?"

"No, sir!"

"It's a lie!" yelled Mornington.

Mr. Bootles frowned.

"Mornington, you must not use such expressions in my presence! Take fifty lines!"

"I—I—I—"

"Rawson's assurance is quite enough for me. Silver had nothing to do with it."

"I—I tell you—"

"Silence! Rawson, I shall cane you, and you also, Flynn, Mornington, you may go!"

"But I—I—"

"Leave my study!" thundered Mr. Bootles. And Mornington left it.

Mr. Bootles' manner was a sufficient indication what he thought of the sneak, but he could not pass over the matter. Rawson and Flynn were duly caned.

In the passage they exchanged a grin. Jimmy Silver & Co. swooped down upon them, eager for an explanation. There was a roar of laughter as Rawson explained the methods of "persuasion" he had used with Mornington.

Jimmy thumped him on the back ecstatically.

"Good man! Who'd have thought it! You've saved the match for us! But you've been licked!"

"That's nothing—it wasn't very bad," grinned Rawson. "Bootles doesn't think much more of that cad than we do, and he laid it on softly."

"Good man!"

There was a feed in the end study after that in celebration of the victory over St. Jim's and of the defeat of Mornington. His knavish tricks had been frustrated, and he suffered a ragging at the hands of the Classics for having sneaked to the Form-master. At the celebration in Jimmy Silver's study Rawson and Flynn had the place of honour. They had not played in the match, but it was agreed on all hands that they had won the match with St. Jim's by sacrificing themselves—and Mornington—for the Good of the Team!

THE END.

*(Another grand story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next Friday.)*

**THE PHOTO THAT FAILED!***(Continued from page 12.)*

quickly. "This'll be a fine photo—a shorter—a regular buster! Now—"

Manners' fingers were upon the rubber bulb that worked the shutter. He held his breath, and so did Tom Merry and Lowther.

At that critical moment there was a sudden rush of feet, and a burly figure came flying round the corner, crashing into Manners from behind, with a devastating crash!

There was a terrific howl from Manners, as he was precipitated through the air, and a yell from Tom Merry and Lowther together, as Manners landed upon them headfirst, camera and all.

Fatty Wynn, of the New House, sat upon the ground, and gasped. It was he who, pursued by his chums Figgins and Kerr, had suddenly dashed round the corner, and caused all this devastation.

It was an accident, and Fatty Wynn felt quite sorry for what he had done. But he did not stay to make his apologies. While the groaning chums of the Shell were still sorting themselves out, Fatty Wynn jumped up with surprising agility. He stood not upon the order of his going—but he went.

Gasping, he fled to the New House, where he was safe from the vengeance of Tom Merry & Co., for a time at least.

Tom Merry, and Lowther, and Manners were left to vent their groans and threats upon the desert air—especially Manners. His photo, after all the trouble he had taken, had failed. There is no doubt, however, that it had been, to use his own words, a regular buster!

THE END.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 70.

**A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR**

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASSED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "PENNY POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

Our splendid new serial, the first instalment of which appears in this issue, is one which I am confident will have a great reception from my readers. Nat Fairbanks, the author, is my latest "discovery," and I freely predict that he will take a high place among present-day writers of thrilling "mystery" stories. Next week he relates how Dick Tulliver gains a footing in the Western Super Film Company, and how the new inhabitants of the old Grange became aware that very mysterious happenings are going on around them. You must tell all your friends to be sure and read

**"THE MYSTERY MAKERS!"**

By Nat Fairbanks.

In our next long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. a curious situation arises, owing to strained relations between Wingate, the school captain, and the majority of the members of the Sixth Form. Wingate appears to be in a nasty hole, but, as Mr. Frank Richards' story will show, it is a case of

**"THE REMOVE TO THE RESCUE!"**

The next splendid complete story of the chums of Rookwood deals with an amazing development of the campaign conducted by Mornington against Jimmy Silver, the junior captain. It is a case of "Where is Jimmy Silver?" Don't miss

**"THE MISSING CAPTAIN!"**

By Owen Conquest.

**A SENSE OF HUMOUR.**

Should we have another deaf character in the tales? Yes, says a correspondent at Lincoln. He tells me he is deaf, and he has a good deal of humour in his composition, on which I beg to congratulate him, for it shows a fine sporting spirit to make light of what is, all said and done, a somewhat serious handicap in the race.

He points out that many deaf folks provide entertainment without knowing it. He does so himself, but he joins in the laugh. Dutton is the same. He jumps at things he fancies Mr. Quelch has said, and—well, we all know what happens with Tom Dutton imagining Mr. Quelch is asking kindly about mutton. Dutton has often proved a good friend to Bunter in this way, though one darkly supposes that the deaf fellow knows more than he admits. All this is harmless enough, but, candidly, I dislike much fun-making at the expense of an infirmity.

**BUNTER IN BUCKS.**

One of these days we must have a rollicking yarn dealing with Bunter lost in the country, appealing for aid from the fair folk, being recruited in a troupe, getting in the cart, tumbling out on his own again, and becoming thinner in the process. I feel there is an excellent story in such happenings.

Bunter was never intended by Nature to be alone in the wide, wide world. He is too artless and childlike, too innocent altogether. Perhaps it would be somewhat uncharitable to give the porpoise a fortnight on the road—a bout of tramping, and with folks getting disgusted with him—but such a narrative in the capable hands of Frank Richards would be full of fascination. I was pretty well convinced of the soundness of the idea by a letter from R. Patchett, of Blackburn, who speaks of the steady improvement in the "P. P." yarns.

**THE BLARNEY STONE.**

Miss Ida A. Jobson is unkind. She wrote me a splendid letter, and then kept it back for a week, not liking to send it! Think of

that, now! Go to—go three and four! To this moment I do not understand why, unless it was that her brother had mentioned the Blarney Stone; but folks speak of that institution without meaning anything by it, as we all know.

It is all very interesting. Come to think of it, what a lot is to be learned from a correspondence-bag. You find quaint little characteristics lurking beneath the postmarks. As the late Mr. Charles Dunphie wrote:

"One impulse from a chimney-pot

Will teach you more of man—

Of what you've learned, and what forgot,  
Than all that Wordsworth can."

This is all very well in its way, but the letters people write teach you more still. For instance, I am thinking of a very weighty and serious-minded communication which comes from Barrow, and the writer says he is so glad to find that I am a real live person, not a myth.

Oh, there is nothing of the myth about me, I can assure him. He is good enough to say that a note I sent him, answering a few questions, was full of encouragement, and makes him want to do better every time.

Now, that is just my chum's generous style. We will not take much notice of that point. But what one does want to bear in mind is the need for encouragement, for enthusiasm, for all the uplifting things on the part of writers of letters as well as everybody else. There is a lot of trouble always knocking round, and surely it is the work of those who are free from this special trouble to try and cheer up the rest.

Have you noticed the way some fellows have of waiting to see what happens next before acting? What a mistake! They may not have the chance in five minutes' time. They only pass through the flying hour once. The world is changing. They are changing with it. Next day or to-morrow week won't do. Do it now! Say the useful thing now! It is the present moment that matters! Knowing this—and they do know it!—the marvel is that some individuals can consent to be parties to wry words, unpleasant actions, bad turns, and so forth. But, there, I won't bother you!

**THANKS, "CORNSTALK."**

What is the price of a ventriloquist outfit? The figure varies just as the size and elaboration of the dummies vary. Messrs. Gamage, of Holborn, London, supply the equipment.

This answer is intended for a New South Wales friend, who asks me to reply in the paper if I think his note worth answering. It is the only thing I can do—no other way! A letter addressed to "Cornstalk, New South Wales," would be promptly turned down by the Post Office. You know what the Department is. It simply will not deliver letters addressed to "Dear John Smith—Friday Night."

Sheer laziness, I take it. My Australian correspondent feels sorry, because he feels that any comments he may make on the stories will be behindhand when his note reaches me. He likes things up to date. But with a few thousand miles of sea between, how is it to be managed? The useful reflection comes, however, that cheery words such as his are never out of date, but always welcome as the flowers in May.

**EARLY RISING.**

It is good in its way. Of course, early risers are disposed to be a nuisance. They amble round the world afterwards, and talk like this: "Why, I was in my tub at 4 a.m.! You ought to be up with the sun!" Ought we, really? I am not so sure. It is all very well for the poet to trot out things like this:

"Rise before the sun,

And make a breakfast of the morning dew.

Served up by Nature on some grassy hill,

You'll find it nectar."