

SCORING OFF THE SNOBS!

A GRAND LONG COMPLETE STORY
OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. AND
TOM RAWSON AT ROOKWOOD.

By . . .
OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Impertinent to Uncle James!

"**H**A, ha ha!" Adolphus Smythe, the ornament of the Shell Form at Rookwood, burst into that hearty laugh quite suddenly.

Apparently—so far as Jimmy Silver could see, at all events—there was no cause for the merriment of the great Adolphus.

Smythe of the Shell was sunning himself on the steps outside the School House, and he had appeared to be buried in thought.

Jimmy Silver, captain of the Fourth, was leaning on the stone balustrade, chatting with Rawson, the scholarship junior.

Rawson was telling him things about making a rabbit-hutch—a subject which Rawson had at his finger-tips, as Rawson, senior, was a carpenter, and Rawson had worked with him before he won the scholarship which had brought him to Rookwood School.

Jimmy Silver glanced round as Adolphus Smythe burst into that sudden cackinnation. There was a glint in Jimmy's eye.

Smythe of the Shell was the fellow who was most "down" on Rawson, though Townsend of the Fourth was a good second. To the Nuts of Rookwood the presence of Tom Rawson seemed a shocking thing.

"Wherefore that cackle, Adolphus?" asked Jimmy Silver very quietly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some awfully good joke—what?" asked Jimmy Silver.

Adolphus made an effort to control his merriment.

"Yaas," he said, "the joke of the term! Ha, ha, ha!"

"And what is it?"

"You'll be seein' that later," said Adolphus. "I'm not tellin' you that at present. Don't let me interrupt your chat about rabbit-hutches. Rawson knows all about those things. I dare say he's made 'em."

"I've made a good many," said Rawson.

"I thought so!" said Smythe, with a curl of his lip. "It's rather a pity, Rawson, that you didn't stick to your pater's workshop instead of coming to Rookwood!"

Smythe stepped elegantly down the steps towards the quad, but he came to a sudden halt as Jimmy Silver's knuckles were jammed into the back of his neck.

With a firm grip on his collar, Jimmy twisted the dandy of the Shell round, gasping.

"Grooh!" gurgled Adolphus. "Let go, you cad!"

"You haven't told us the joke yet," said Jimmy Silver affably.

"Grooooh! Leggo! I'm not tellin' you now!"

"Not keeping secrets from your Uncle James, surely!" said Jimmy Silver pleasantly. "That won't do, Adolphus!"

"You rotter! Leggo!" yelled Smythe, struggling furiously to release his neck. "It's nothin' to do with you!"

"Your mistake—it is!" said Jimmy Silver. "You mustn't burst into a cackle like an old hen, Adolphus, when Rawson is telling me how to make a rabbit-hutch. It's disrespectful to my pal, Rawson!"

Rawson grinned.

"Oh, I don't mind," he said. "Let the idiot cackle!"

"But I mind," said Jimmy Silver. "As his Uncle James I am bound to keep Adolphus in order. Adolphus, I am going to rub your adolphine nose on the steps!"

"Gurroooh!"

Smythe of the Shell made a desperate effort to tear himself loose, but he could not do it. His somewhat prominent nose was forced down to the stone steps and rubbed there—hard.

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"Cave!" murmured Rawson. "Here comes Bootles!"

Jimmy Silver let go the wriggling, gurgling Adolphus.

"Now wait a minute while I kick you," he said.

Adolphus did not wait a minute. He shook his fist at Jimmy Silver, and sprinted into the quadrangle.

The next minute Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, looked out of the doorway, with a severe frown, at the cheerful Jimmy.

"Silver!" he rumbled.

"Yes, sir?"

"I do not approve of this horse-play, Silver, especially in such a public spot. You appear to have been handling Smythe in a very—ah—rough manner. Silver, you will follow me to my study!"

"If you please, sir—"

"What—what! If you have an excuse to offer, Silver—"

"Smythe was impertinent to his Uncle James, sir," said Jimmy Silver meekly. "I felt that I ought to take notice of it, sir!"

Rawson nearly exploded, but he managed to turn his laugh into a cough at the right moment. Mr. Bootles looked puzzled.

"Indeed! If Smythe was guilty of impertinence to an avuncular relative, it is certainly most reprehensible," said Mr. Bootles. "But it hardly rests with you, Silver, to administer correction. However, as your motive appears to have been good, I will say no more about the matter."

And Mr. Bootles passed on majestically.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Adolphus Has a Great Idea!

TOWNSEND and Topham greeted Smythe with lurking grins as he joined them under the beeches in the quadrangle.

They had beheld the little scene on the School House steps.

Adolphus was very much ruffled. His collar was rumbled, and his necktie was disarranged—great worries to a Nut like Adolphus. He jammed an eyeglass into his eye, gleaming with wrath.

"I've been lookin' for you, Towny," he said. "I've thought of a wheeze—a rippin' good wheeze! This time we'll take that cad Rawson fairly down!"

Townsend looked doubtful. As Towny and Topham shared Rawson's study, and had to "stand" the scholarship junior at close quarters, they were more "up against" Tom Rawson than any other of the noble society of Nuts. But in their contests with the scholarship junior they had had so decidedly the worst of it that they were beginning to think it was "not good enough."

"Well, what's the idea?" asked Townsend cautiously. "The fact is, Smythey, I'm afraid it's N-G. The fellows are all taking to Rawson, especially since it came out about his Brother Dick."

Smythe sniffed.

"A private in the Army!" he said.

"Well, he was taken prisoner by the Russians," said Topham. "The fellows seem to think it's a big distinction for Rawson."

"What rot!" said Adolphus.

"Well, I know that," said Topham, hesitating a little. "Dick Rawson was in the Middlesex Regiment, and saw a lot of hard fighting. After all—"

"I suppose you're not standing up for that cad Rawson, Topsy?"

"Well, no. All the same—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Adolphus. "Look here, I've got a wheeze. It came into my head while I was listenin' to that cad talkin' to Jimmy Silver. He was tellin' Silver about his father teachin' him to make rabbit-hutches."

"Nice for a Rookwood chap's father!" said Townsend, with a sneer. "They might have the fellow put on the Modern side, at least!"

"I suppose nobody's seen his pater?" said Smythe.

Townsend laughed.

"No jolly fear! You can bet Rawson will keep his people jolly dark! Some awfully boozey ruffian, most likely!"

"Most likely!" agreed Adolphus. "An' that's where my wheeze comes in!"

"What the dickens—"

"Your uncle is comin' to see you on Wednesday, Towny."

"Yes," said Townsend.

"Major Townsend of the Middlesex Regiment?"

"That's right."

"Good! Now, suppose Rawson's pater came here the same afternoon?"

"He won't."

"Suppose he did?" grinned Adolphus. "Suppose the boozey old ruffian came here and met your uncle face to face? Major Townsend is one of the governors of the school, isn't he?"

"Yes; but—"

"What would he think of Rawson—and especially Rawson's pater?" chuckled Smythe. "If they're here on the same afternoon we can easily manage for them to meet. The major would be simply knocked over at the sight of the old ruffian—what! He would be shocked to fits to find there was a Rookwood fellow with a pater like that. Wouldn't he jaw the Head about it? Why, it might lead to Rawson gettin' the boot out of the school!"

"By gad!" said Townsend.

"Anyway, it would be a fearful show-up for Rawson, havin' his pater here for all the fellows to see!" grinned Adolphus.

"But he won't come. Rawson's too jolly cute to bring any of his people to Rookwood."

"That's where my idea comes in. Suppose old Rawson gets a telegram from the young hopeful, tellin' him to come at once, because Rawson's ill—"

"But he ain't ill—" said Topham.

"Fathead! Old Rawson could get the telegram all the same!"

"Phew! You mean—"

"Any fellow could drop into the post-office and drop a wire."

"It means trouble if it came out!" said Topham uneasily.

"How can it come out? We needn't send it from Coombe, where we're known. One of us can bike over to Lantham and send it from there. Rawson's people can't know how far Lantham is from Rookwood, so they couldn't smell a rat."

"Know Rawson's home address, though?" said Townsend. "Not much good askin' for it?"

"You can find that out, as you're in his study. He's bound to have it written down somewhere—in his books, perhaps."

"Well, I'll try. I'll get you the address, and you can send the telegram immediately after lessons on Wednesday."

"Perhaps you'd better take it to Lantham."

"Lil leave it to you, Smythey."

Smythe grunted. He had pointed out carefully that there was no risk involved in sending the telegram, but somehow he would have preferred to let Townsend send it. But Townsend was quite firm on that point.

"Oh, all right!" said Adolphus at last, ungraciously. "I'll send the blessed thing! You get me the address."

"Right-ho!"

And so it was agreed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Treacherous Trick!

JIMMY SILVER was a little puzzled. Jimmy generally had his eyes wide open, and even if he had not been very observant, he would have noted that there was something unusual "on

among the Nuts of the Classical side at Rookwood.

He remembered that mysterious cachination over an unknown good joke, which had led him to rub Adolphus' lordly nose on the steps. Since that incident there had been an extraordinary amount of nodding, whispering, shrugging, and grinning among the "Giddy Goats."

Smythe and Howard and Tracy and Selwyn of the Shell, Townsend and Topham and Peele of the Fourth evidently had the secret among them.

And the next day several more members of the noble society seemed to have been let into the secret, judging by their nods and winks and chuckles.

There was something "on"—that was certain.

But whatever was on the Nuts kept their own counsel about it. But from the way they glanced at Rawson it was pretty clear that Rawson was the object of their pleasantries, whatever it was.

Rawson himself did not note it. The manners and troubles of the Rookwood Nuts did not trouble his serenity. And he had other matters to occupy his mind. He had taken up footer very keenly, and at the same time he was "swotting" hard.

Between footer and swotting Rawson had no time to waste on Smythe, Townsend & Co. And he had still another matter of concern—his brother Dick—Private Rawson, of the Middlesex Regiment, who was now a prisoner in Russia.

Most of Tom's meagre allowance went in the shape of parcels to feed the hapless prisoner in the hands of the Bolsheviks.

It was the plight of brother Dick, as much as anything else, which had brought the Classical Fourth round in favour of Rawson.

The Fistical Four had been his good pals from the start. Now there were very few fellows left to follow the lead of Cecil Townsend, and persecution of the scholarship junior was a thing of the past.

On Wednesday morning it was easy for Jimmy Silver to see that the Nuts were in a high feather.

Townsend & Co. were smiling with great elation as they came into the Form-room for first lesson.

There was a good deal of whispering among them in the Form-room, and Mr. Bootles came down on them heavily more than once.

But even the shower of "lines" did not abate the satisfaction of the Nuts. They were looking forward with keen enjoyment to the happenings of the afternoon.

When morning lessons were over Townsend & Co. joined Smythe of the Shell in the quadrangle.

"Better cut off before dinner, Smythey," Townsend remarked. "The sooner that wire goes the better."

"Can't get back from Lantham in time for tiffin," said Smythe. "I'll see if I can get excused. The wire must go."

"Got the address safe?"

"Yaas, that's all right!"

Ten minutes later Smythe of the Shell was sauntering down to Coombe to take the train for Lantham.

He was excused attending at dinner, having invented a relative in Lantham with whom he was to lunch.

He arrived at Lantham and hurried to the post-office.

There, he meditated a little at the telegraph desk. His conscience was not troubling him in the least, but he wanted to word the telegram in the best manner to avoid suspicion.

He settled it at last to his satisfaction. It ran:

"Your son badly injured in football match. Come at once to Rookwood."

There was little doubt that the telegram would bring Mr. Rawson to Rookwood School as fast as he could get there, and there was little in the message that could betray the elegant hand of Adolphus.

Suspicion could scarcely point its finger at him; and if it did, a denial of any knowledge of the telegram would not cost him much.

Smythe of the Shell had a very easy-going and accommodating conscience.

He addressed the telegram and despatched it, writing the message in a disguised hand, and filling in a false name and address on the back of the form.

Then he strolled out of the post-office, and took the train back to Coombe in a satisfied mood.

plus hunched at the tuckshop, and the Nuts sauntered back to Rookwood in great sniffs.

The arrival of Mr. Rawson and his meeting with Major Townsend seemed a certainty now, and Smythe & Co. rejoiced at the prospects.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Classicals v. Moderns!

JIMMY SILVER clapped Rawson on the shoulder after dinner. Rawson was hesitating in the passage when the captain of the Fourth bore down on him.

"Footer!" said Jimmy.

"Well, I was going to put in some slogging at Latin this afternoon. I want to get on, you know."

"Rats!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "We

not taking a passenger in this team, thanks!"

"My uncle's coming this afternoon," growled Townsend. "I'd like him to see me in the team."

"Well, if that's the case, I'm sorry I can't play you, if it would please him. But it can't be done; you're not good at footer," said Jimmy.

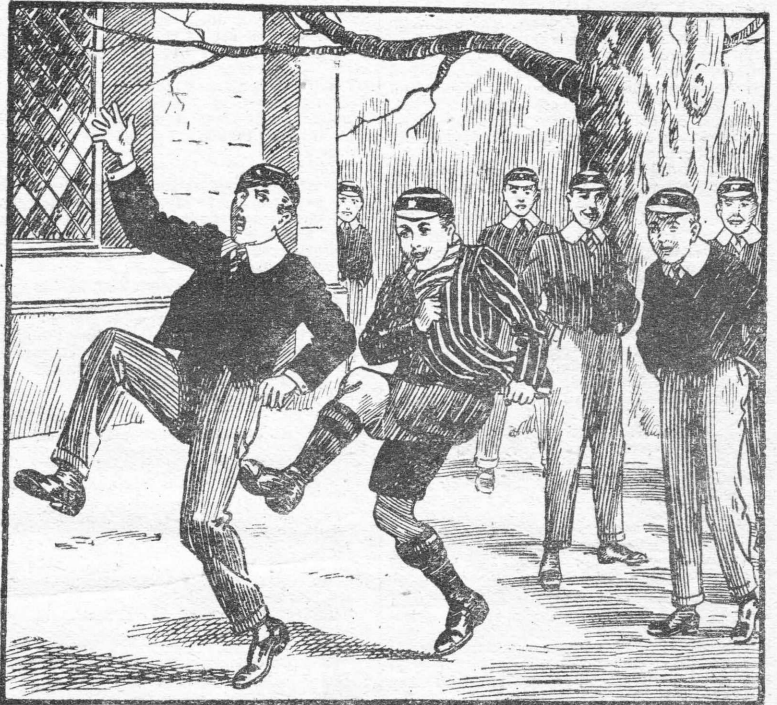
"Who are you playing at right back, then?"

"Tom Rawson."

"You're puttin' that outsider into the Classical eleven!" said Townsend. "It's simply sickenin' leavin' out a decent chap to put in that howlin' rotter!"

"You've got it wrong," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "I'm leaving out a howling rotter to put in a decent chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



Jimmy Silver's football-boots came into play upon the person of the unfortunate Townsend. "Off the field!" snapped Jimmy. Townsend fled, yelling.

want you to play at back, and you're coming!"

Rawson laughed and nodded.

"Well, I'd rather play, of course, than swot."

"Done! Come on!"

Rawson joined the crowd of Classicals making for the football-ground.

Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, were already there.

Moderns and Classicals were very keen about that last match to wind up the season. Each was determined to leave the other side with a thorough licking to remember.

"Here we are," said Jimmy Silver cheerily; "and we've brought our shooting-boots, Duddy! Are you ready to be scalped?"

Tommy Dodd grinned.

"We're ready to mop you Classical duffers off the face of the earth," he replied. "I see you're not playing Smythe or Townsend."

"Hardly. We want to win."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Townsend of the Fourth had just come in with Smythe & Co. He came down to the footer-field and hurried up to Jimmy Silver.

"Glad I'm in time!" he remarked.

"Yes; you're in time to see the kick-off," said Jimmy.

"I mean in time to play."

"Don't be funny now, Towny. Keep your little jokes till tea-time," said Raby.

Townsend scowled.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, I specially want to play this afternoon."

"If you specially wanted to play, my infant, you should have specially given up smoking and slacking, and specially done some practice," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm

"Don't talk to him, Towny, dear boy," said Adolphus Smythe. "Treat 'em with contempt."

"My uncle will have something to say about that cad when he comes!" growled Townsend.

Jimmy Silver was turning away, but he paused and turned back as the exasperated dandy made that remark.

"What has your uncle to do with Rawson?" he asked quietly.

"He's a governor of Rookwood," said Townsend between his teeth, "and he's major in the Middlesex Regiment. And we'll see what he's got to say about the brother of one of his privates bein' at Rookwood."

"I don't see what he can have to say about it," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "Unless he's, as rotten a snob as his nephew, he can't have anything to say. Get off this field!"

"Wh-a-at!"

"Get off! You make me ill!"

"I'll get off when I like!" yelled Townsend.

"You won't! You'll get off when I like!" snapped Jimmy Silver, and he brought his football-boots into the argument.

Townsend fled, yelling. There was no arguing with football-boots. Jimmy Silver followed him, dribbling him as far as the quadrangle, amid yells of laughter. The dandy of the Fourth was feeling decidedly sore and dusty when he escaped at last, and Jimmy returned, smiling, to the football-ground.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, Duddy!"

"Oh, don't mench!" said Tommy Dodd.

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heartily. "If you wait a minute or two for me, I'll do the same to Adolphiis!"

Adolphiis retired hurriedly from the football-ground without waiting for "the same" from Tommy Dodd.

The two junior captains tossed, and Tommy Dodd won. Jimmy Silver & Co. were given the wind to kick off against, and the match started.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Rawson Arrives.

JIMMY SILVER had been given some food for thought by Townsend's remarks on the subject of his uncle, the major. He thought he understood now the meaning of the whispers and nods and winks among the Nuts for the last day or two. If Townsend's uncle was the same kind of character as Townsend, it was possible that he might make things uncomfortable for Townsend's enemy, being a governor of Rookwood, to whom the Head was bound to listen with some respect.

It was probably a new trouble for Rawson, who bore his troubles already with such a calm courage and equanimity. If a new and more dangerous "set" were against Rawson, however, he had friends to stand by him—Jimmy Silver & Co. were quite ready to rally round him.

But Jimmy had not time to think about the matter just then. All his attention was wanted in the football match.

Jimmy was determined on a victory. His team was in great form—Lovell and Raby and Newcome, Oswald, Conroy, Errol, and Rawson, and the rest. Not a single member of the "Giddy Goats" was in the team. Jimmy could not afford to take chances in the last match of the season.

Smythe of the Shell, and the rest of the Nuts sometimes watched the matches, from which they were excluded on the grounds of slackness and unfitness. But on this occasion they did not grace Little Side with their presence.

The Nuts of Rookwood were lounging round the gates, eagerly watching for the arrival of Mr. Rawson.

While the junior footballers closed in strife Smythe & Co. were indulging in great anticipations.

They formed many conjectures as to what Mr. Rawson would look like.

Townsend opined he would be in cord trousers, tied at the knees.

Topham considered it certain that he would be smoking a black clay pipe, turned downwards in equally black teeth. Smythe was inclined to surmise that he would put on his Sunday clothes to visit Rookwood—that is to say, if the wretched individual had any Sunday clothes.

"Loud checks, dear boy, and a billycock hat," said Smythe. "It will be a sight worth seein', and somethin' quite new for Rookwood."

"Ye gods! Suppose the Head sees him!" said Peele of the Fourth.

"We must try to work that somehow," said Smythe. "Besides, he's bound to call on the Head, as he's here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, he'll drop his aitches," remarked Howard, "and speak with an awful twang most likely. That will delight the Head!"

The Nuts chuckled joyously.

Rawson, all unconscious of the trick which was to bring his father post-haste to Rookwood that afternoon, played up in the Classical ranks, thoroughly enjoyed himself. Rawson was a keen footballer, and his sturdy build and weight made him very useful at back. The Moderns found him very difficult indeed to pass, and the Classics found him a tower of strength on the defence.

The first goal came to the Classics after half an hour's struggle that was "gruelling" to both sides. Jimmy Silver put the ball in amid loud cheers from the Classical juniors round the field.

Tommy Dodd & Co. pressed hard until the whistle went, and just on the stroke of time the ball reposed in the Classical net, and the score was equal.

"Jolly good game!" remarked Jimmy Silver, as he sucked a lemon at half-time. "The Modern bounders are playing up!"

"What-ho!"

"And Rawson's a giddy prize-packet," said Jimmy Silver. "The Nuts aren't honouring us with their presence. Where are the Nuts?"

"They're all at the gates," said Oswald, nodding his head in that direction. "They seem to be expecting somebody."

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"Towny's uncle, I suppose," said Jimmy, his brow clouding for a moment.

He wondered whether Major Townsend's coming would mean trouble for Rawson, as Towny evidently anticipated with confidence.

Jobson, of the Fifth, who was referee, blew the whistle, and the Classics and Moderns piled into the game again.

The second half was a hard struggle. The Modern attack was hot; but the Classics defended well, and the goalkeeper had little to do. The Classical forwards got going at last, and the Modern citadel was assailed, but Towle kept the ball rolling. The second half wore on, and the match began to look like another draw.

It was not far from the finish when the station cab from Coombe came rumbling up the road to Rookwood.

Smythe & Co. spotted it at once, and exchanged joyous grins.

"Here comes Rawson senior!" chuckled Smythe. "Your uncle isn't due yet, Towny."

"No, not till five, I think. And he'll come in a car. You can bet this is the Rawson bird!" said Townsend.

"We'll walk him all over Rookwood," said Tracy, "and show him to all the fellows. We'll take him to see the footer, so-as to get him in the crowd. I hope he's in cord trousers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The hack stopped at the gates. The juniors drew back a little to give it room. A middle-aged gentleman descended at the porter's lodge, and the Nuts stared at him curiously, certainly not politely.

"Was this Rawson senior?"

He was a somewhat stout, respectable man, with a kind and intelligent face, dressed quietly and simply, with a bowler hat and heavy, thick boots. His face was troubled, doubtless as the result of Smythe's heartless telegram. He glanced at the juniors, and knocked at the porter's door.

Old Mack opened it.

Mack looked rather curiously at his visitor. "This is Rookwood School?" asked Mr. Rawson.

"Yes," said Mack, undecided whether to say "sir" to the plainly-dressed man, and deciding finally not to.

"I am Mr. Rawson. My son is here."

"Oh!" said Mack.

"I have received a telegram to say he has been injured in a football match. Will you tell me where to find him, please?"

Mack stared.

"Master Rawson of the Fourth, do you mean?" he asked.

"Yes. I am his father."

"Then there's some mistake," said Mack. "Master Rawson's all right. I see him only half an hour ago, going on to the football-field, sir!"

Mr. Rawson gave a start.

"Then he is not injured!" he exclaimed.

"Not unless he's injured in that there game going on now," said Mack, with a gesture towards the distant football-field.

"That is very strange!" said Mr. Rawson. "This telegram was sent me from Lantham. That is near here, I suppose?"

"Ten mile," said Mack.

"It must have been sent more than two hours ago, yet you say—"

"Must be a mistake," said Mack. "If you want to see the Head, you go across to that there door and ring."

And Mack, feeling he had spent quite enough time on a person who did not wear a silk hat, retired into his lodge.

Mr. Rawson stood looking very puzzled and troubled. Smythe of the Shell exchanged a wink with his comrades, and advanced, raising his topper very politely to the worried gentleman.

"Excuse me, sir, perhaps I can help you?" he said urbanely.

"Thank you kindly, young gentleman!" said Mr. Rawson, looking at him. "Perhaps you can tell me where to find my son Tom?"

"Rawson of the Fourth, I think?"

"That's right!"

"A very great friend of ours," said Smythe.

"He's playin' footer now. Perhaps you will allow me to show you the way, sir?"

"Thank you!"

With another wink at his chums, Smythe led the way to Little Side. The whole army of Nuts followed up in the rear, chuckling and grinning.

But they were a little disappointed.

Mr. Rawson was by no means the "out-and-outer" they had fondly anticipated. His clothes were cheap, and were not fashionably cut, but they were quiet and respectable, and not likely to attract the mocking looks

the Nuts had expected. His manner was quiet and grave. He looked what he was—a solid, respectable, self-respecting workman dressed in his best, worthy of the respect of any but the foolish and unthinking Nuts.

The party arrived at the football-field, where the Classical-Modern match was at its climax.

"Ha! There's Tom!" exclaimed Mr. Rawson, in great relief.

The sight of his son, in blue-and-white, in the ranks of the Classical footballers was reassuring.

Tom Rawson did not observe his father in the crowd.

The Moderns were attacking, and the Classical back had plenty to do, and Rawson was very busy.

"Yes, that's Tom," said Townsend. "That's the dear boy! You must be very proud of Tom at home, sir?"

"Yes, we are," said Mr. Rawson simply.

"Are there any more like him at home?" asked Peele, closing one eye at his chums.

Mr. Rawson shook his head.

"No. His brother's a prisoner in Russia," he answered.

"Ah! Captain Rawson, I think?" murmured Smythe.

Mr. Rawson smiled.

"No; my elder son is not an officer, young gentleman."

"No?" said Smythe, elevating his eyebrows.

Mr. Rawson paused and coloured.

He wondered, in his simple mind, whether it would be harmful to his son to reveal the fact in this high-class school that Tom's brother was a private soldier.

But the thought immediately followed that he would be wronging them by such a supposition.

"No; Dick is a private," he said. "He is in the Middlesex Regiment, and he would have been made a corporal if the Russians hadn't taken him."

"What a distinction!" said Smythe.

"Yes; we were proud to hear it when his officer wrote to us and told us," said Mr. Rawson. "He saved his officer's life at Loos against the Germans."

"Did he, by gad?" rawned Smythe. "I suppose his officer was grateful, and gave him something for his trouble—what!"

Mr. Rawson looked hard at Smythe.

To his simple mind it was almost impossible to suspect this elegant, well-dressed, gentlemanly young fellow of speaking caddishly. He concluded that Smythe meant no harm.

Before Smythe could proceed, there was a roar from the crowd round the football-field.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Rallying Round Rawson.

BRAVO, Rawson!"

Mr. Rawson watched the game again, his eyes glistening. It was a deep pleasure to hear his son cheered by that Rookwood crowd.

The Modern attack had, for the moment, broken up the Classical defence, and the right-back who had the ball was beset. But Rawson was not to be beaten. Three Moderns were right upon him, when he cleared with a powerful kick to midfield, going over under a charge the next moment. Jimmy Silver & Co. were on the ball in a twinkling, rushing it away towards the Modern goal.

Jobson of the Fifth was looking up at the clock-tower.

The Moderns fell back to defend. But Jimmy Silver's attack was not to be beaten. Right home to goal they went sweeping, with short passing of the ball, and Lovell sent it in with a shot that beat Towle to the wide. Then the Classical crowd roared.

"Ggal!"

The whistle went after Towle had tossed the leather out. The match was over, and the Classics had won.

"Jolly close thing!" growled Tommy Dodd, as they came off the field. "We should have had you that time but for that boulder Rawson!"

Jimmy Silver clapped Rawson on the shoulder.

"Good man!" he said. "We've won, thanks to you!"

Rawson nodded and smiled, and then, as he caught sight of a burly figure in the crowd he uttered a startled exclamation.

"Father!"

"Hallo! Your father here!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes."

Rawson ran through the crowd to greet his

father.

"Fancy seeing you here, dad!" he exclaimed in surprise and delight.

"Jolly glad to see you, sir!" said Jimmy Silver, as he came up with his cap and muffer on.

Then Jimmy's brow darkened ominously. Townsend, standing behind Mr. Rawson, had been busy. A number of fragments of paper, tied together like the tail of a kite, had been pinned to Mr. Rawson's coat-tails, and whisked about as he moved—the good-natured gentleman quite unconscious of it. The Nuts were giggling, and most of the fellows could not help grinning.

"Did you come down to see the match, father?" asked Rawson, having presented Jimmy to his father.

"No, Tom; I came down because of this telegram," said Mr. Rawson. "I was told you were injured."

"My hat!"

Rawson looked at the telegram, as his father held it to him, in amazement. Jimmy Silver looked at it and understood. The whispering and chuckling of the Nuts were explained now.

"Blest if I know who could have sent that," said Rawson. "I've not been injured, dad. I don't look like it, do I? Some silly ass must have done this for a rotten joke!"

"I don't see where the joke comes in," said Mr. Rawson simply. "I've been feeling very anxious until I got here. I'm glad I didn't tell your mother anything about it. I meant to see you first, Tom, and see how bad it was. A very cruel joke, it seems to me!"

"Unfeelin', I call it!" said Smythe of the Shell.

"Horrid!" said Townsend. "But it's a great pleasure to see you here, sir. It's an honour for Rookwood!"

"But I wish you'd brought your saw and jack-plane with you, sir," said Smythe, in a tone of urbane politeness.

Rawson flushed, and his eyes glistened, while his father looked puzzled.

"I couldn't bring it with me, young gentleman," said Mr. Rawson. "But if you're interested in carpentry, I can tell you a good deal about it."

"I'm more interested in that than in anything else, except chimney-sweepin'!" said Smythe seriously. "Perhaps you could tell me somethin' about chimney-sweepin'!"

The Nuts giggled, and Smythe howled as Lovell took him by the ear with a firm grip and walked him away.

"Let me go, you fool!" muttered Smythe furiously.

"You're coming for a little walk with me," said Lovell.

"I'm not!"

"Your mistake; you are!"

And Smythe did. He had no choice about it.

"Come into the house, father!" said Rawson, with burning cheeks.

He understood clearly enough from the false telegram and the looks of the Nuts that his father had been tricked into coming to Rookwood for the special purpose of being "guyed" by Smythe & Co.

So far as he was concerned, their design did not affect him; but he shrank from letting his father see that he was being deliberately made an object of ridicule.

Mr. Rawson was looking very grave; perhaps he was beginning to see.

He nodded, and walked with his son towards the School House. The kite's tail attached from his coat-tails dangled and whisked behind him, and there was a shout of laughter.

Fortunately, Rawson spotted the adornment, and jerked it off. But his cheeks were burning as he went into the School House with his father, and he mentally promised Smythe & Co. a warm time later.

The Fistical Four looked at one another grimly.

"What a rotten trick!" said Raby, in a low voice. "One of those cads sent the old chap a wire, of course."

"And they've got him here to rot him, and make Rawson feel an ass," said Lovell.

"Come on, you chaps!" muttered Jimmy Silver.

The captain of the Fourth ran to the School House. Mr. Rawson had entered with his son, and Mr. Bootles had met him in the Hall. Rawson presented his father, and Mr. Bootles shook hands with him.

"Now, come up and see my study, father," said Rawson. "You don't want to hurry away now you've come. You're going to have tea in the study."

Jimmy Silver joined them breathlessly.

"I say, Rawson, old fellow—"

"Hallo!" said Rawson.

"We've got a spread in the end study," said Jimmy. "Will your pater come to tea with us?"

Rawson gave the captain of the Fourth a grateful look. He understood. In his own study Mr. Rawson would have been exposed to the pleantries of Townsend and Topham. True, Rawson could have slung out the two Nuts without the slightest difficulty; but he did not want his father to see that he was on such terms with his study-mates. Of all the troubles the scholarship junior had met at Rookwood, not a word had reached his humble home.

"Thanks!" said Rawson. "You'll have tea with my friends, father?"

"Thank you kindly, young gentlemen!" said Mr. Rawson.

"This way," said Tom.

And he piloted the distinguished guest to the end study.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Adolphus Has No Luck.

SMYTHE & Co. were in a state of utter disgust.

Smythe had been highly pleased with his scheme.

The only doubtful point had been whether his telegram would bring Rawson senior to Rookwood.

It had brought him; and that point being settled with all the rest ought to have gone swimmingly.

But it hadn't.

Smythe & Co. had looked forward joyously to showing off a rank outside to hundreds of mocking eyes—to see Rawson crimson with rage and shame—to triumphing over the scholarship junior by that trick of hitting below the belt.

But all had gone awry.

Rawson's friends had rallied round Rawson. Every fellow who knew or suspected the treacherous trick played by the Nuts followed Jimmy Silver's lead in making much of Rawson's family.

Mr. Rawson was placed in an armchair in the end study, and settled down there very comfortably. Jimmy Silver and Lovell and Raby and Newcome vied with one another in showing him polite attentions.

Oswald and Flynn came in to join the party and to help get the tea. Then came Tommy Dodd & Co. from the Modern side.

"Bit crowded here, what!" grinned Tommy Dodd, as he looked in.

"Room for Rawson's friends," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, we're all Rawson's friends," said Tommy Cook, "especially at tea-time, with such a ripping cake as that on the table. How do you do, Mr. Rawson?"

"Top of the afternoon to yez, sir!" said Tommy Doyle.

"Sure, we're glad to see yez at Rookwood!"

Smythe of the Shell looked in at the door. His scheme of "rotting" the simple gentleman was evidently "off" while Mr. Rawson was in the charge of Jimmy Silver & Co. But Smythe, feeling that the chums would not care to proceed to rough measures under the eyes of the visitor, made a last attempt.

"I suppose we are all welcome, dear boys," he remarked. "I've been lookin' forward to a chat with Rawson's pater, y'know. He's goin' to tell me all about carpentry."

Rawson stepped to the door.

"I'll tell you about it, Smythe," he said. "Come along to my study a minute."

"Look here—"

"This way," said Rawson, taking Smythe's wrist in a grip like a vice.

Jimmy Silver shoved the door shut, and thus cut off Mr. Rawson's view. Rawson jerked Smythe along the passage.

The dandy of the Shell was alarmed now. He did not like the look on Rawson's face.

"Let go my wrists, you low cad!" he muttered.

Without replying, Rawson drew him into his study and closed the door. Then he put up his fists. Smythe backed round the table in alarm.

"I—I—say—" he stammered.

Rawson's lip curled.

"You thought I couldn't hammer you because my father's here!" he said contemptuously. "That was a mistake. I'm going to hammer you. Put up your paws!"

"I—I'm not going to fight you!" stammered Adolphus, with a longing glance at the door. But the sturdy Rawson was between him and the door.

"I'm going to thrash you," said Rawson coolly. "You, or one of your pals, sent my

father a spoof telegram, and made him anxious, and wasted his time."

"I suppose he had to leave his work to come here, what?" Adolphus could not resist a sneer.

"Exactly—and it's a loss to him!"

"Oh, I'll give him five shillings, if you like!" jeered Adolphus.

Rawson's eyes glistened.

"You'll put up your hands," he said.

"I won't!" snarled Smythe.

"Then you'll take a licking without."

"Look here— Yaroooooh! Help! Oh! Yah!" yelled Adolphus, as Rawson commenced operations right and left.

The next few minutes was like a dream to Adolphus. He put up his hands as there was no help for it; but his hands, though delicately manicured and quite pretty to look at, were not of much use in a "scrap." He was knocked right and left, and finally collapsed into a corner, his nose streaming red, his left eye closed and his other eye blinking dimly.

He looked, and he felt, a wreck.

"Had enough?" snapped Rawson.

Adolphus groaned.

"Yow-ow! Yaas! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"You can clear off, then. Come near my father again as long as he's here and I'll knock you flying at sight!"

Rawson returned to the end study. His father glanced at him as he entered a little curiously. But Rawson smiled in his cheery way, and went on helping to get tea.

Adolphus crawled away down the passage, feeling that life was not worth living.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. A Surprise for Towny.

MAJOR TOWNSEND descended from his car. He was a tall, thin, angular gentleman in khaki, with grim, bronzed face, that looked as if it were wrought in hard metal.

The hard face still showed traces of the rigours of the long campaign in Flanders. On one weather-beaten cheek was a white scar, where a German bullet had ploughed its way.

Townsend of the Fourth greeted his military uncle rather nervously.

As a matter of fact Towny was more than a little afraid of the grim old major.

The major's manner, however, was quite cordial as he shook hands with his elegant nephew. He was shown into the Head's study, leaving Townsend and his friends in the Hall.

"Looks a savage old sport, by gad!" murmured Howard of the Shell. "I shouldn't like to have him on my track."

"He's as hard as nails," said Townsend. "Just the man to be down on a sneaking upstart cad like Rawson!"

"Blest if I'm not sorry for Rawson's brother, if he was in your uncle's regiment!" grinned Topham. "His men must love that face—I don't think!"

"Just the johnnie for us!" grinned Peele.

"Get him to come up to the study for a jaw, Towny, and we'll all pitch it to him about that cad Rawson."

"That's the idea!" agreed Tracy. "We'll all be there, and you can trot him in, and we'll back up whatever you say!"

"Good egg!" said Townsend.

They proceeded to Townsend's study, to wait for the major there. In about ten minutes he appeared.

The Nuts rose to their feet as the major entered with his nephew. The major's grim old face relaxing now.

"So these are your quarters, Cecil?" he said, glancing round the study.

"Yes, uncle. These chaps are my friends." Townsend presented the juniors to his uncle.

"Topham shares the study with me and another fellow; but I hardly like to mention him to you!"

"Hey! Why not?" said the major.

"Well, I think you would hardly think it right for me to associate with such a character," said Townsend diffidently. "He's not the kind of chap you would approve of; in fact, he's rather a low hound."

Major Townsend frowned.

"I don't understand this, Cecil. Do you mean to say that Dr. Chisholm has admitted to this school a boy you can justly describe as a low hound?"

Townsend coughed. He felt he was on rather delicate ground.

"Well, sir, you see, he wedged in here on a scholarship," explained Townsend. "I believe he's got some legal right to shove himself into Rookwood; and, of course, the masters

don't see what a beast he is. We can't exactly tell them. That would be sneakin'."

"Quite right, Cecil. But if this boy is really objectionable, who is he?" asked Major Townsend abruptly.

The Nuts exchanged surreptitious glances; they felt they were getting on. The grim frown on Major Townsend's brow looked promising.

"Well, he—he's an awful ruffian!" said Townsend. "He's got a brother who was a private soldier in your regiment, uncle, and yet I'm expected to associate with him."

The major did not look horrified, as Townsend expected. Instead of that he frowned grimly at his nephew.

"What do you mean, sir," he exclaimed, "by stating that it is against this boy to have a brother in my regiment? Is there anything to be ashamed of in a boy who has the courage to fight for his King and country?"

"I—I didn't mean it exactly like that!" stammered Townsend. "I—I mean—"

"Well, what do you mean?"

Peele & Co. exchanged glances, and stepped quietly from the study, and departed. They had had enough of the major. It was only too clear that Major Townsend was not going to answer their charitable purpose, after all. It was one more disappointment for Smythe & Co.

The Nuts cleared off precipitately, leaving the unfortunate Townsend to face the terrible old soldier alone.

Gladly enough would the dandy of the Fourth have followed them. But the major was fixing him with an eye like a gimlet.

"I have asked you what you mean, Cecil?" rumbled the major.

"I—I mean, he is really a rank outsider!" stammered Townsend. "He's got the cheek to bring his father here. He's here now, in the end study—a carpenter, you know. And—and, of course, we're disgusted!"

"At what?"

"At—at everything connected with such people!" said Townsend. "We—we think it rotten to have Rawson here at all!"

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Major Townsend started.

"Rawson!" he repeated.

"Yes. His name's Rawson."

"By gad!" said the major. "Rawson! You say he had a brother in the Middlesex Regiment?"

"Yes, uncle."

"Is that brother Private Richard Rawson who has been captured by the Russians?"

"Yes."

"By gad! Where's he?"

"I'll take you to see him uncle, if you like," said Townsend, a little more hopefully.

"You'll see his father, too—an awful old codger!"

"Silence! Take me to them!"

Townsend, much puzzled, and wondering what was to come of it, led the way down the passage. He pointed to the open door of the end study.

"They're in there, uncle."

"Follow me, Cecil."

"Ye-es."

Major Townsend strode into the study, the juniors outside respectfully making way for him. The merry party in the end study rose to their feet at the sight of the bronzed old major. They know, of course, that this must be Townsend's uncle.

Jimmy Silver's brow grew grim. Towny had evidently been at work, and the major had come to see Rawson.

"Is Master Rawson here?" asked the major, in his deep voice.

"I am here, sir," said Rawson quietly.

"You are Richard Rawson's brother?"

"Yes, sir."

"Give me your hand, my lad!"

"My only sainted aunt!" murmured Jimmy Silver, in utter astonishment, as the major shook hands with the surprised Rawson.

"Is this gentleman your father, Rawson?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Rawson.

"You know my name, Mr. Rawson," said the major. "I wrote to you when your son was captured by the Russians."

"Major Townsend!" said Mr. Rawson.

The major held out his hand.

THE POPULAR.—No. 92.

"I am very glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Rawson! As I told you in my letter, your son saved my life at Loos. He was one of the best soldiers in my regiment, sir! A splendid young fellow, of whom his father and his brother may well be proud!"

"Hurrah!" chirruped Jimmy Silver involuntarily.

Townsend's face was a study.

"Come here, Cecil," said the major, after shaking hands with Mr. Rawson.

Townsend came in reluctantly.

"It appears that you are not on good terms with Master Rawson. I should be glad to see you shake hands and make friends."

"I am quite willing, sir," said Rawson simply.

And he held out his hand to his old enemy.

Townsend took it with a hand that was like a cold fish. Under the grim eye of his uncle he did not dare to refuse.

"That is better," said the major. "Pray excuse me for intruding in this way, gentlemen, but I was anxious to make Mr. Rawson's acquaintance."

"Don't mench, sir!" said Jimmy Silver. "Would you honour us, sir, by joining us? It would be a great honour to have a chap who's been to the Front—I mean— Excuse me calling you a chap! I mean—"

The major smiled.

"I should be very pleased!" he said. "I should like a chat with Mr. Rawson, and I should like to make Master Tom's acquaintance."

"Here's a chair, sir!"

"Please sit down, sir!"

"Here you are, Towny, you sit here."

Townsend dropped into the chair. But he did not enjoy that feed in the end study, though the "tuck" was plentiful, and of the very best. But the major unbent, and it was evident that he was in a high good humour. The feed in the end study was an even greater success than Jimmy Silver had ever expected.

When Mr. Rawson left Rookwood at last, Major Townsend gave him a lift to the station in his car. Tom Rawson was left looking very happy. And when they were gone Jimmy Silver grinned at his chums.

"Looks to me as if the Giddy Goats' luck is out," he remarked. "I rather fancy Towny's uncle has frustrated Towny's knavish tricks—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

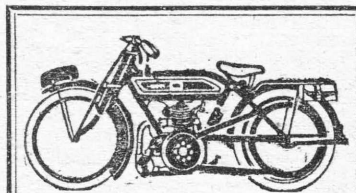
Smythe & Co. were furious. But their teeth were drawn, so to speak.

It was evident that they were helpless to cause the scholarship junior further trouble now that Townsend's uncle, from whom they had hoped so much, had followed Jimmy Silver & Co.'s lead in making much of Rawson.

Smythe's ill-natured scheme had only ended by Rawson and Jimmy Silver & Co. distinctly "Scoring Off the Snobs."

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "PEELE'S IMPERSONATION!" By Owen Conquest. Order EARLY!)



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FOR NEXT FRIDAY:

Now that the summer season has finished I have been hard at work preparing a new lot of stories for the winter numbers, and I think I may claim to have got out a programme which will meet with the hearty approval of all my chums.

For next Friday I have an extra-fine number. Mr. Frank Richards has come up to the scratch in fine style, and has given us a really ripping, long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., the popular chums of Greyfriars. This yarn will contain many humorous episodes, and plenty of excitement. Some of you will doubtless guess, from the title, the identity of the Form with the bad name, and others will perhaps be surprised when I tell them that it happens to be the Remove Form!

The whole trouble starts when Dennis Carr lights one of those fireworks known as jumping-crackers in the Form-room. After that things begin to hum! I shall not disclose more than to say that the title of this grand story will be

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Next, Owen Conquest will give us another splendid story of Jimmy Silver & Co., at Rookwood School, which will go to make the number an especially attractive one. The title of the story will be

"PEELE'S IMPERSONATION!"

By Owen Conquest.

Last, though not least, will be the continuation of the famous Eddie Polo's life story. I am glad to say this serial enjoys great popularity, and has been voted as being one of the best of its kind so far written. Don't miss

"FIGHTING FOR FAME!"

"THE MAGNET."

The "Magnet," true to its name, always attracts, but just now its drawing powers are stronger than ever. I hope all my chums have duly taken note of the Grand Free Illustrated Cinema Booklet which is given away with this week's number. The "Magnet" Film Supplement is a splendid publication in every respect, and as all the world goes to the pictures, so will all the world delight in this beautiful souvenir of the Cinema Stars.

Your Editor