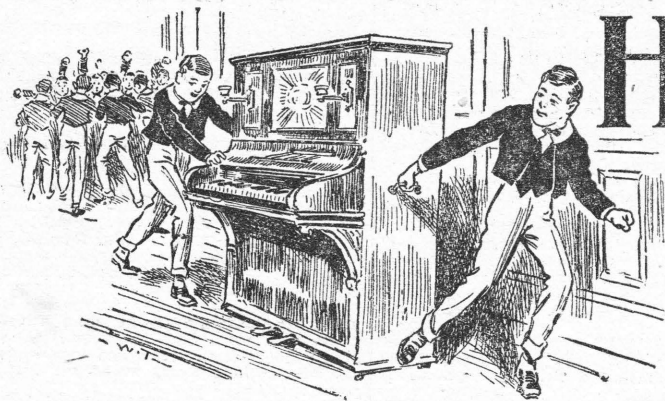


THE TALE OF DEADLY RIVALRY AT ROOKWOOD, AND OF A RECORD CELEBRATION!



HONOURS EVEN!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of JIMMY SILVER & Co. at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the Famous Tales of Rookwood, now appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Burying the Hatchet.

"SOMETHING extra special!" said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "Very extra special!" agreed Lovell.

And Raby and Newcome nodded approval. The Fistical Four were quite agreed on that.

It was a special occasion—a very special occasion.

There was to be a celebration, and the celebration was to be something extra-special.

For the Fistical Four of the Fourth were about to retake possession of their old quarters, the end study in the Fourth Form passage.

Rookwood School had been under canvas for some time, but while the school work had been carried on *al fresco*, workmen had been busy on the school buildings.

The work was finished at last. Rookwood School presented its old appearance, save that here and there touches of newness showed among its ancient stones.

School under canvas had been an agreeable change, but all the fellows were glad to get back to their old quarters.

And such an occasion demanded that there should be a celebration, and when Jimmy Silver proposed a house-warming, his chums backed him up heartily.

Tubby Muffin, who was listening to the discussion under the beeches, nodded his head in emphatic approval.

"Jimmy, old chap, you've fairly hit it!" he said. "Of course, there must be a house-warming! A big spread—a regular feast of the gods, you know!"

Tubby's eyes rolled at the vision. "Fathead!" said Lovell.

"You can't have a house-warming without a spread," said Tubby warmly. "It wouldn't be a celebration unless there was a feed. Don't be an ass, Lovell! I'll help!"

"There'll have to be a—a cold collation," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "Funds won't run to anything more elaborate."

"Oh!" said Tubby, disappointed.

"All the same, we must do the thing in as much style as possible," added Jimmy. Tubby brightened again.

"And, without exceeding the speed-limit there's no reason why there shouldn't be a handsome tea!" said Jimmy.

Tubby beamed.

"And a little music," said Lovell.

"Eh?"

"A little music."

"Are you thinking of moving the grand piano out of the music-room into the end study?" asked Raby, with a grin.

"Well, that couldn't be done," admitted Lovell. "But there's the cottage piano that the fags thump on. We could get that along."

"By Jove, that's not a bad idea!" said Jimmy Silver. "Rawson can play the piano in great style. We'll get him on the music-stool, and lots of the fellows can sing."

NEXT TUESDAY

"A ROOKWOOD MYSTERY!"

"I don't mind giving you a song," said Arthur Edward Lovell modestly.

For some reason Lovell's chums did not look enthusiastic. Jimmy Silver went on rather hastily:

"It's a good idea. We'll have a little music, and we can managed to bag the small piano. I think we'd better speak to the Moderns about this."

"Oh, blow the Moderns!" said Newcome. "It's going to be a Classical celebration!"

The captain of the Fourth shook his head.

"No," he answered firmly. "Of course, as Classics, we take the lead. That's understood. But on an occasion like this both sides at Rookwood ought to pull together. We'll ask the Moderns to join up."

"They haven't rebuilt the end study a dozen sizes larger," hinted Raby. "It won't hold half the Classical chaps we want."

"My dear man, we're going to ask them, all the same. There will be an overflow gathering in the passage."

"Oh!"

"The end study will be the headquarters, and the Fourth Form passage will accommodate all who can't get inside," said Jimmy Silver. "I really think that the Moderns ought to appear in this, to make it more-representative, you know. On such an occasion we bury the hatchet. Afterwards we make the Modern cads sit up as usual."

"Oh, all right!" said Lovell. "I don't mind. Let's go and speak to Tommy Dodd."

The chums of the Fourth entered Mr. Manders' house, and proceeded up the staircase to the study tenanted by Tommy Dodd and his friends of the Modern Fourth.

The three Tommies had just taken possession of their study, which was looking cleaner and tidier than it had ever looked before during their tenancy.

Dodd and Cook and Doyle were deep in discussion there when the Classics presented themselves.

Tommy Doyle gave them quite a cordial look.

"Trot in, you chaps!" he exclaimed. "Just talking about you."

"Oh, good!" said Jimmy Silver. "And we were just talking about you. We're thinking of giving a house-warming, Duddy."

"My hat!" ejaculated Tommy Dodd.

"Nothing surprising in that, is there?" asked Lovell.

"Well," said Tommy Dodd, grinning, "we were just thinking of the same thing, that's all. We were going to ask you fellows."

"And we were going to ask you!" said Jimmy, laughing. "On this occasion we thought we ought to bury the hatchet."

"Same here, old top!"

"Begorra, jist what I was saying," said Tommy Doyle. "We're going to manage a real spread somehow."

"Exactly," said Jimmy Silver. "My idea is to pool resources."

"Mine, too!" agreed Tommy Dodd.

"The end study will accommodate the chief guests, and there's the passage—"

"The end study?" repeated Tommy Dodd. "That's on the Classical side."

"Yes, that's the place for the house-warming."

"Oh! Our house-warming will be in this study, of course."

"Yes, rather!" said Tommy Cook decidedly.

"Well, if you Moderns want to play the goat," said Jimmy Silver, "go ahead and play it. You're missing a good thing. We're bagging the small piano for our celebration, and it will be rather in style."

"You can't get the piano to your study—you won't get permission."

"We're not going to ask. We can manage it."

"What cheek!"

"By gad, if the piano can be bagged, we'd better bag it!" exclaimed Tommy Doyle. "Chaps on this side can sing."

"Good egg!" said Tommy Dodd heartily. The Fistical Four glared.

This cold proposal to adopt their scheme, and bag their piano, was neither grateful nor comforting.

"Why, you cheeky asses!" exclaimed Newcome wrathfully. "Let us catch you laying your Modern paws on that piano!"

"You won't catch us," grinned Tommy Dodd. "Now, look here, Jimmy Silver, leave the matter in our hands. We can run it successfully. We undertake to make a really good, successful house-warming of it. What's the good of you fellows trying it on and making a mess of it? I put it to you as a sensible chap."

"Ass!"

"We'll give you a fair show," added Tommy Dodd. "Everything you like, excepting letting Lovell sing."

"What!" roared Lovell. "Why shouldn't I sing?"

"Well, that wouldn't do, of course, as we want the party to enjoy themselves—Here, stoppit!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

But Arthur Edward Lovell did not "stoppit." He collared Tommy Dodd, and yanked him out of his chair, and the Modern junior sprawled on the carpet.

"Now, can I sing?" yelled Lovell. "Yaroooh!"

"Can I sing?"

"Like a siren!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "I mean a steamer's siren."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang!

Tommy Dodd's head smote his carpet, and Tommy Dodd roared.

The next instant Cook and Doyle had hold of Lovell, dragging him off, and the three rolled on the floor together.

Naturally, Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed to the rescue, and in a moment more there was a terrific scrap raging in the study.

The four Classics had the best of it till Towle and several other Modern juniors rushed in to the help of the three Tommies. Then the tables were turned.

The Fistical Four were overwhelmed, and they departed from the study in a succession of bumps.

There was a chorus of howls as they landed in the passage outside.

They sat up breathlessly.

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"Sock it to them!" gasped Lovell, scrambling to his feet. "Give the Modern cads beans!"

"Kick them out!" roared Tommy Dodd. The Fistical Four were rushed to the stairs.

There they descended at a great rate, with a crowd of Moderns yelling and hooting above.

By that time the unfortunate Classical had realised that a strategic retreat was the wisest possible step, under the circumstances, and they dodged into the quadrangle.

Under the beeches they gathered again, somewhat dusty and very breathless. Jimmy Silver dabbed his nose with his handkerchief.

"I don't think we'll have the Moderns at the house-warming," he remarked.

"Only a silly ass would have thought of having them!" grunted Lovell. "Look at my nose!"

"Oh, blow your nose!"
"I say, you chaps look dusty," said Tubby Muffin, coming up. "Jimmy, old man, about the grub—"

With one accord, the Fistical Four turned on Tubby Muffin. They had been desirous of meeting some victim upon whom to wreak their wrath, and Tubby had come up in the nick of time.

"Grub!" howled Lovell. "I'll grub you, you grubby little beast!"

And Tubby, for the second time, sat down, and when the Fistical Four left him he was making frantic efforts to extract the cap that had been shoved down the back of his podgy neck; and for some minutes, at least, Tubby Muffin's thoughts were not dwelling upon "grub."

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Moving Job.

DINNER that day was in the old dining-hall, and Jimmy Silver, at the Fourth Form table, was looking very thoughtful.

The house-warming having been decided on, naturally Jimmy wanted it to be a success, and he gave a good deal of thought to the matter.

Most of the Classical Fourth had entered into the scheme, and as it was agreed that the occasion would not be complete without a spread, a spread there was to be.

A shopping committee had been appointed already, consisting of Erroll, Oswald, and Conroy, to collect subscriptions in the Fourth, and lay out the cash to the best advantage.

Tubby Muffin had begged, almost with tears in his eyes, to be on the committee, pointing out that what he didn't know about grub was not worth knowing, but Tubby had been unceremoniously ejected.

Tubby might have been useful as a shopper, but it was certain that a considerable amount of the provender would have been lost in transit.

Nearly all the Classical Fourth were coming to the house-warming; only Townsend and Topham, Peele and Gower, keeping out.

They were going to a little celebration in Adolphus Smythe's study, in the Shell—a much more select party, according to Towner.

But the nuts of the Fourth were not likely to be missed.

The Fourth Form party would be numerous, in any case, and probably there would be "standing-room only" for any guests who came late.

After dinner, Jimmy Silver dealt with the matter of the piano.

He had been thinking whether it would be wise to ask his Form-master for permission to remove the small piano to the end study for the occasion.

On reflection he decided not.

If Mr. Bootles refused permission, the piano could not be moved, that was certain, and the juniors wanted it.

So Jimmy decided to forget to ask permission, and he hoped to get the "moving job" over without being observed.

The music-room, fortunately, was upstairs, and there was only one small upper staircase to be negotiated, as well as a long passage with a turning in it.

The Rookwood School House was an ancient building, with all sorts of odd passages and staircases that seemed to lead to hardly anywhere.

Unfortunately, one of those wandering passages gave access to the School House from the Modern side, on the same floor as the

music-room, and if the Moderns attempted to carry out their design of bagging the piano that was the way they would come.

Immediately after dinner, Pons and Van Ryn, and Flynn were posted at the door in the passage, to watch for an advance of the Moderns on the music-room.

That was the first necessary step; still more necessary because it was discovered that the big dividing door was unlocked, and the key missing.

Tommy Dodd had evidently taken care of that, to leave a way open into the Classical quarters.

"Those bounders will come after the piano after lessons, most likely," Jimmy Silver said to his chums. "They'll find it gone. We're going to bag it at once, and leave it in the end study all through the afternoon. See?"
"Phew!" said Lovell. "Supposing it's wanted?"

"Must risk that."
"Oh, all right! Let's get it going, then; it will be rather a hefty job getting it away."

Jimmy Silver and six or seven Classics proceeded to the music-room without loss of time.

Strains of music greeted them as they neared that apartment.

"Some silly ass thumpin' now!" remarked Lovell.

The juniors marched in.

Jobson of the Fifth was seated at the big piano, fingering away busily.

Jobson was rather serious on music, though in class work he did not give much satisfaction to the master of the Fifth.

He glanced round impatiently at the juniors.

"What do you kids want here?" he exclaimed, suspending his operations on the keys for a moment.

"Don't you worry, said Jimmy Silver. "We're after the other piano."

"You can't practise while I'm at practice!" said Jobson warmly.

"We're going to move it."
"What!"

"Borrow it!" explained Raby. Jobson jumped up from the music-stool.

"Clear out!" he exclaimed. "You cheeky fags! Who ever heard of such a thing? Get off the grass!"

Some of the juniors looked rather doubtful. Jobson was a Fifth-Former, and, therefore, a senior.

He was not much respected in the school, being a slovenly fellow, generally more or less out at elbows. But he was a senior.

But Jimmy Silver was not to be daunted. He closed the door, as a first step.

"You can go on thumping, Jobson," he said. "We don't mind you making a row while we're here!"

"Making a what?" roared the musical Fifth-Former.

"Row," said Jimmy innocently. "You cheeky young sweep!"

"But we can't have you interfering. Sit down and thump, and shut up!" said the captain of the Fourth.

Instead of sitting down and thumping, Jobson advanced wrathfully upon Jimmy Silver, with the evident intention of performing a different kind of thumping.

"Back up!" called out Jimmy.

And, as the Fifth-Former collared him, the whole party of juniors collared the Fifth-Former, and Jobson went to the floor with a bump.

"Sit on him!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who cares for the Fifth?" chuckled Lovell. "Sit on his head!"

"Yow—woop!" roared Jobson, struggling under a swarm of juniors. "Lemme gerrup! I'll pulverise you! Yah! Oh!"

"Are you going to mind your own business?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"I'm going to put you out of this on your neck!" roared Jobson.

"Wait and see!" grinned Jimmy. "Some of us can sit on him," remarked Higgs.

"No time for that. I've got a cord here. Yank him over to the piano!"

Jobson, struggling and resisting, was "yanked" over to the grand piano, and Jimmy Silver produced a whipcord from his pocket.

In spite of his resistance, Jobson was forced to sit on the music-stool, with his arms behind him.

Then Jimmy Silver tied him securely to the music-stool.

The Fifth-Former gasped with wrath, while the juniors yelled.

His aspect was certainly not dignified, sitting on the stool, with his arms bound behind him, and escape was impossible.

"You young villains!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me loose at once!" roared Jobson. "No fear!"

"I'll yell for a prefect!"
"Yell away! You play the piano, Lovell, and then nobody'll hear him—or the moving job, either. Put in plenty of the bass!"

"I'm your man!" said Arthur Edward.

Jobson was yelling; but his yells were soon drowned by Arthur Edward Lovell's performances as a pianist.

Leaving Lovell thumping out discords that would have made a modern German composer green with envy, and Jobson still yelling, Jimmy Silver & Co. proceeded to the other end of the long room, where the cottage piano stood.

This was an upright, and, although heavy, it could easily be removed by six or seven sturdy juniors.

They started on it at once, and it was rolled along quite easily to the door, and slid into the passage without.

There it crashed into the opposite wall like a battering-ram, owing to having too much "way" on it.

Jimmy Silver, who was guiding it, had a narrow escape of being pinned between the piano and the wall, and he roared:

"Look out! Mind what you're up to, you asses!"

"Why not keep out of the way?" suggested Higgs.

"Fathead!"
"Ass!"

"Look here—"
"Well, you look here—"

Van Ryn came speeding along the corridor from the communication-door.

"Look out, they're coming!"
"Eh! Who's coming?"

"The Moderns!"
"Buck up!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

Evidently Tommy Dodd & Co. were not leaving the moving job till after lessons.

Tommy was as good a general as Jimmy Silver, and he was after the piano early.

There was a shout down the passage as the Moderns came on the scene in force.

Jimmy Silver & Co. steered the piano away from the wall, and rushed it up the passage, towards the little staircase that gave access to the Classical Fourth Form quarters.

The instrument ran well on its castors, and, with an occasional bang on the wall, it sailed on at a good speed.

Behind, in hot pursuit, came the Moderns. "Stop them!" roared Tommy Dodd.

"They've got our piano, the Classical rotters!"

"Bump!"
The piano reached the little stairway.

There were only three steps up; but the instrument had to be lifted there, and carried, and long before the Classics could even lift it, the Moderns were upon them.

"Back up!" yelled Jimmy Silver.
"Go for 'em!" roared Tommy Dodd.

And the piano stood deserted, while round it raged a battle.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Hard Cheese.

FROM the music-room there still came a roar of discords in the bass, Arthur Edward Lovell slamming away at the keys like a hero.

There was an accompaniment of fierce yells from Jobson of the Fifth. The effect out-Wagnered a Wagner orchestra.

In the corridor there was a din of trampling, scuffling, yelling, and pommeling and bumping.

The result of the scrap seemed rather doubtful at first; but Tommy Cook, with great astuteness, disengaged himself from the combat, and ran back, reappearing in a couple of minutes with reinforcements.

A crowd of Moderns were now on the scene, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were driven back beyond the piano, the bone of contention, and forced up the stairs.

Lovell ceased his musical efforts at that stage, and came speeding out of the music-room to join in the combat, as he heard the triumphant hootings of the Moderns.

He found himself in the midst of a Modern crowd, and he was buffeted on all sides before he reached his comrades.

The Classics made a rush, but the odds against them drove them back, and they were forced up the stairs again.

Then Tommy Dodd and Doyle grasped the brass handles of the piano, and rushed that instrument away on its castors down the passage, while the rest of their party kept the infuriated Classics at bay.

With a shrieking sound, the piano sped away down the passage, amid shouts of victory from the Moderns.

It crashed into the communication-door, and sent it flying wide open, and slid through, and then Tommy Dodd yelled: "This way!"

The Moderns rushed after their leader, and the Classics at once rushed in pursuit.

At the door there was another tussle; but again the odds told, and the Classics were driven back, and the door slammed.

Then a key turned.

Jimmy Silver hurled himself on the door, but in vain. It was locked on the Modern side, and the piano was on that side.

The Classics raged on the wrong side of the door.

"They—they—they've got it!" stuttered Lovell.

"We're done!" said Mornington, laughing. "This is where the Moderns do us in the eye!"

Jimmy Silver breathed hard.

There was no doubt that his old rivals had done him in the "eye." The piano was bagged beyond hope of recapture.

Modern voices were yelling derision and scorn through the keyhole.

But suddenly those yells died away.

A deadly silence reigned on the other side of the big oaken door.

Through the silence, quite audible to the Classics through the big door, came a sharp and penetrating voice—the unpleasant voice of Mr. Manders, the senior Modern master.

"What is this? What is this dreadful disturbance? How dare you take that piano from the music-room? I repeat, how dare you?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Lovell chuckled softly.

"It's old Manders! He's heard the row, and come up!"

"This is where we clear!" murmured Mornington. "The old bird will report us to Bootles if he sees us."

"Buzz!" said Jimmy Silver tersely.

And the Classics promptly "buzzed."

In half a minute there was not a Classical near the scene, excepting Jobson of the Fifth, still tied to the leg of the grand piano in the music-room, and yelling for help.

Jimmy Silver & Co., in the hurry of the moment, overlooked Jobson, and he stayed there.

The unfortunate Moderns could not flee.

Mr. Manders had come on them crowded round the Modern side of the communication-door, which was locked, and they were fairly cornered with their prize.

The Modern master's eye almost seemed to bulge through his spectacles at the sight of the piano, which was showing signs of harder usage than it had been accustomed to.

Tommy Dodd & Co. blinked at him in utter dismay.

From the point of view of the Modern Fourth, they were more than justified in "dishing" the Classics by any means that came to hand, but they were not sanguine enough to expect Mr. Manders to see eye to eye with them on that subject.

They blinked at Mr. Manders, who stared at them grimly and angrily.

"I repeat, what does this mean?" snapped Mr. Manders. "Dodd, I presume that you are the ringleader in this."

"Ye-es, sir," stammered Tommy.

"You have taken that piano from the music-room. Have you the permission of a master to do so?"

"Nunno, sir."

"Where are you taking it?"

"To—to—our study, sir."

"Boy! Are you out of your senses?"

"I—I—I hope not, sir."

"You are removing that piano from the music-room to your study!" roared Mr. Manders. "How dare you!"

"Ahem! I—I— We—we—" said Tommy Dodd helplessly.

"How did you contrive to open that door, which is always kept locked by order of the Head?"



PREPARING FOR THE HOUSE-WARMING!—The piano came up to the end study with a shriek and a rush, and Lovell guided it round and it was rushed in to the accompaniment of a fiendish yell from Jimmy Silver, who was brushed off the top. (See Chapter 4.)

"I—I found a key, sir."

"The key is kept by Mack. Where did you find another key, Dodd?"

"I—I found it in Mack's lodge, sir."

"Dodd! You abstracted the key from Mack's lodge in order to take this instrument from the music-room to your study?"

"I—I—"

"Open that door at once, and return the piano to its place!"

"Yes, sir!" groaned Tommy Dodd.

"I will deal with your outrageous conduct afterwards!" added Mr. Manders sternly.

In the deepest depression of spirits the unfortunate Moderns, no longer elated with their victory, opened the big door, and the piano was wheeled back.

As it was conveyed into the music-room the yells of Jobson smote on their ears, and, worried as they were, they grinned at the sight of the undignified-looking Fifth-Former.

"Come and let me loose!" yelled Jobson, as they came in.

"Go and eat coke, you Classical worm!" growled Tommy Dodd, in response.

"I'll smash you!"

"Rats!"

"I—I say, come and let a chap loose, will you?" mumbled Jobson, changing his tune, as it were.

The soft answer turneth away wrath, and Tommy Dodd was not proof against that appeal.

He cut through the whipcord, and the Fifth-Former was released. He did not stay to thank his rescuers.

He went to look for Jimmy Silver & Co., and he appeared to be pressed for time.

The Moderns pushed the small piano back into its place, and returned to the spot where Mr. Manders was awaiting them.

"Go to my study, all of you!" said the Modern master severely. "Give me that key, Dodd! I will take charge of it."

With glum faces the unhappy Moderns trooped away.

Mr. Manders locked the communication-door very carefully, put the key in his pocket, and followed them.

In Mr. Manders' study there was quite a painful scene.

In the faint hope of touching the Modern master's heart, Tommy Dodd ventured to explain about the intended house-warming in his study.

"A house-warming!" said Mr. Manders. "Utter nonsense!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I forbid anything of the kind taking place in your study, Dodd!"

"Oh!"

"And now hold out your hand!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The Moderns quitted Mr. Manders' study squeezing their hands, and with feelings in their breasts too deep for words.

The Modern house-warming was off.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tommy Dodd is Equal to the Occasion.

JIMMY SILVER came out of the School House with a smile on his cheery face about half an hour later.

Having allowed a discreet interval to elapse, to make sure that Mr. Manders was off the scene, Jimmy had gone to his comrades in the quad with good news.

"Well?" said Lovell and Raby and Newcome together.

"All serene!" said Jimmy. "Manders must have dropped on 'em heavy. The piano's been put back, and we can bag it when we like."

"Bravo!"

"The big door's locked, too, and you can bet Manders has taken away the key," added Jimmy. "The Modern worms won't be able to wriggle in again. We can bag the piano any time we choose."

"Good egg!"

"Ripping!"

Jimmy glanced up at the clock-tower.

"Plenty of time before lessons," he said.

"Nothing like striking the iron while it's hot! Come on!"

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"A ROOKWOOD MYSTERY!"

The Fistical Four proceeded to the School House, with Erroll, Mornington, Conroy, and Pons and Van Ryn.

They were enough for the "moving" job. Before they reached the house, however, Jobson of the Fifth bore down on them.

He had an ashplant in his hand, apparently borrowed from a prefect's study.

"I've been looking for you!" he announced. "Well, now you've found us!" said Jimmy Silver affably. "Do you want to be tied up again? If so, come along to the music-room!"

"I'm going to give you a jolly good hiding!" roared Jobson.

"I don't think!" grinned Jimmy.

And Jimmy was right.

Jobson of the Fifth had time for one "lick" with the ashplant, and then he found himself sitting in the quad, with the stick shoved down his back, and his cap stuffed into his mouth.

The juniors left him there to sort himself out, surrounded by a grinning crowd, and when he sorted himself out Jobson of the Fifth wisely decided to let the matter drop.

The Fistical Four were rather too tough a handful for him to deal with.

The Classical juniors reached the music-room in great spirits.

They had had rather the worse of the contest with the Moderns, but the intervention of Mr. Manders had turned the tables for them, and there was no danger of any further conflict with Tommy Dodd & Co.

The cottage piano was wheeled out again, and wheeled along the passage to the little stairway.

There it was lifted up, and bumped down in the upper passage with great success.

To run it along the Fourth-Form passage to the end study was quite easy, and Jimmy Silver sat on it in transit, giving orders from the bridge, as it were, to his crew.

It came up to the end study with a shriek and a rush, and Lovell guided it round, and it was rushed in to the accompaniment of a fiendish yell from Jimmy Silver, who was brushed off the top as it flew into the study, and crashed on the table, leaving Jimmy Silver sitting in the passage, roaring.

The table was deposited in the fender, but the piano was brought to a halt at last, and dragged round to the window.

"You silly chumps!" roared Jimmy Silver, following his comrades in. "Couldn't you give a chap time to get down before you pushed the dashed thing in the doorway!"

"Looks as if we couldn't!" remarked Raby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Jimmy, old chap!" said Lovell, pulling a chair to the piano, and sitting down. "It's ripping to have the thing here—don't grumble! Now be quiet, and I'll give you a song!"

Lovell ran his fingers along the keys, and started his song, to his own accompaniment.

There was a sudden rush of feet.

Arthur Edward Lovell, in surprise, stopped at the third bar, and looked round.

The study was empty.

Lovell put his head out of the doorway; Jimmy Silver & Co. were vanishing towards the staircase.

"You silly chumps!" roared Lovell, in great wrath.

But his comrades were gone, and Lovell closed the piano-lid with a slam like a cannon-shot, and followed them, snorting.

His chums smiled as he rejoined them in the quadrangle; but Arthur Edward did not smile.

He frowned.

"I rather think the house-warming is going to be a success," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"We've bagged the johanna—I mean, the piano. Not much good those silly Moderns trying to compete with us."

"Not a bit," agreed Raby and Newcome.

"Not if Manders chips in, anyway," grunted Lovell morosely. "Don't swank! It was Manders got the piano for us, if he only knew it."

"Lovell, old chap, you let your chin wag too much!" said Jimmy Silver reprovingly.

"We've got the goods, and that's the main thing. And the shopping committee have done rather well. There will be something like a spread."

"Good!"

"And those blessed Moderns don't look as if they're enjoying life," added Jimmy Silver, glancing towards Tommy Dodd & Co., who were walking lugubriously under the beeches.

The three Tommies were looking very glum.

"You'll be pleased to hear that we've landed the piano all right, you chaps!" called out Raby, with a grin.

"Only through Manders shoving in his oar!" growled Tommy Dodd. "We had it."

"You had it—but we've got it!" said Jimmy Silver. "Fortune of war, old scout. I'll tell you what; we'll let you come to the house-warming if you'll behave yourselves and wash your necks!"

"Go and eat coke!"

The three Tommies walked away, leaving the Classical smiling. The fortune of war certainly seemed to be in favour of the Classical side now.

"Sure, we're done in the eye!" groaned Tommy Doyle. "Those swanking asses are having it all their own way—and all through Manders intirely!"

"It wouldn't matter so much if we could have our house-warming," said Cook. "But we can't have even that."

"Not on the Modern side!" said Tommy Dodd thoughtfully.

"We can't have it anywhere else, I suppose," grunted Cook. "Thinking of picking up the study and carrying it somewhere else?"

"Don't be funny, kid!" said Tommy Dodd severely. "I've been thinking a bit. As

matters stand, the Classical win all along the line. But we're not quite beaten yet. We can't house-warm in our own study. But Jimmy Silver is going ahead with the Classical house-warming—"

"Sure, we know that!"

"We get out of the Form-room an hour before those Classical chumps!" went on Tommy. "It 'stinks' this afternoon, you know, with Manders."

"What the thump difference does that make?"

"Lots."

"Faith, and what are ye driving at intirely?" demanded Tommy Doyle impatiently. "Give it a name, ye gossoon!"

"Don't you see?" chirruped Tommy Dodd.

"There's no end of preparations for a terrific house-warming in the end study, on the Classic side."

"Don't we know it, ass?"

"They've got the biggest spread they can get, and the piano, and so on."

"Well, ass?"

"And they'll be in the Form-room right up to the usual time, digging into cheery old Classics with Bootles, while we shall be doing chemistry with Manders."

"Come to the point!" yelled Cook.

"I'm coming, dear boy!" smiled Tommy Dodd, and he lowered his voice. "We shall be finished 'stinks' before they finish in the Form-room. We get out early, don't we?"

"We usually do, so I suppose we shall; but what the thump—"

"Don't you see now? We're out, and they're in, and what's to prevent us from strolling up to the end study—"

"Eh?"

"And walking into it?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"And fastening the door!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Oh!"

"You see!" Tommy Dodd chuckled. "Easy as falling off a form! That's the game for us, my innocent infants." He lowered his voice deeply and mysteriously, and said, in a thrilling whisper:

"BAG THE HOUSE-WARMING!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bagged.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. turned up to classes that afternoon in cheery spirits.

From the Classical point of view all was going well.

True, the juniors felt that, upon such an occasion, the Head would have done well to grant Rookwood a whole holiday, or, at least, a half.

That had not seemed to occur to Dr. Chisholm, however. Perhaps he was not keen on such celebrations as house-warmings.

But though a holiday would have improved matters, Jimmy Silver & Co. felt that all was going well; in fact, all was for the best in the best of all possible schools.

As soon as they were free from classes, the house-warming was to begin; and, considering the preparations that had been made, it could not fail to be a great success.

The Moderns were simply nowhere.

Indeed it was known by this time that Mr. Manders had prohibited a house-warming on the Modern side, so manifestly there was nothing left for the three Tommies to do but to hide their diminished heads.

Some of the Moderns were looking glum when they came into the Form-room, but the three Tommies, strange to say, seemed to have recovered their spirits.

Classicals and Moderns had the first lesson together, with Mr. Bootles; and then the Moderns left the Form-room, to go to the chemistry class under Mr. Manders.

The Classical were left with Mr. Bootles to pursue more Classical courses, chemistry not being a Classical subject.

It was customary with the fellows on the older side of Rookwood to proclaim the superiority of Classical studies, while turning up their noses at such subjects as German and chemistry and book-keeping, but it must be admitted that Jimmy Silver & Co. did not display a pronounced interest that afternoon in the tongue of Horace and Livy.

Their thoughts wandered to the house-warming, especially Tubby Muffin's. Tubby being in a state of beatitude at the mere thought of the estates accumulated in the end study.

The shopping committee had done well.

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By OWEN CONQUEST.

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"A ROOKWOOD MYSTERY!"

A GRAND STORY OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL. By OWEN CONQUEST.

and all the "house-warmers" had shelled out manfully for the purchase of supplies.

And as yet Tubby Muffin's greedy fingers had not been allowed to touch the good things; he had only seen them and yearned for them, like a podgy Peri at the gate of Paradise.

When the house-warming started, Tubby meant to distinguish himself, though there were some other fellows who meant that Tubby should not distinguish himself so much as he intended.

Seldom had good Mr. Bootles seemed so prosy as he did that afternoon; very seldom had the Classics seemed so terrific a bore.

But all things come to an end at last, and so did afternoon classes for the Classical Fourth of Rookwood.

In great relief, the Fourth-Formers trooped out when Mr. Bootles at last gave the word to dismiss.

"Blest if I thought it would ever end!" yawned Arthur Edward Lovell. "Bootles really seemed to be wound up."

"Hallo! Where are you going, Tubby?" roared Jimmy Silver.

The fat Classical was already scudding off. "I—I'm just going to see that it's all right in the end study, Jimmy," stammered Tubby.

"Take hold of his ear, Lovell."

"Yarrah!"

"Gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver, "we're going to get ready now. Guests will begin to arrive ten minutes from now."

"Rely on us," said Oswald.

"Hear, hear!"

And the Fistical Four proceeded to the end study to give the finishing touches to the preparations before the great celebration started.

Tubby Muffin followed them with a hungry gleam in his eyes.

The door of the end study was closed, and, to the surprise of the Classics, sounds of merry music proceeded from the room.

"Somebody's playing our piano!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, in astonishment.

"My hat!"

They ran on to the study.

Jimmy Silver turned the handle, but the door did not open. It was locked on the inside.

Within, someone who had apparently not completed his studies as a pianist, was thumping out a triumphant march.

It bore some distant resemblance to the prelude to the Third Act of "Lohengrin," and was probably intended for that, but the pianist was putting in a good many things Wagner had never dreamed of in his most Wagnerish moments.

But it certainly expressed great joy and jollity, and was played with terrific energy.

Jimmy Silver thumped on the door wrathfully.

"Who's in there?" he shouted.

The blare of the cruelly-used piano ceased.

"Hallo!" came back a voice from within, the well-known voice of Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth.

"Dodd!" yelled Lovell.

"What are you doing there?" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"Eh? This is our house-warming," was the reply.

"What?"

"House-warming!"

There was a roar of laughter in the end study, following that explanation.

Evidently Tommy Dodd was not alone there.

He had brought his friends with him, and, judging by the roar, the end study was pretty well crowded.

Jimmy Silver stood petrified.

"The—the Moderns!" he stammered.

"They—they—they've bagged our study!"

"And our piano!" said Lovell sulphurously.

"And our house-warming!"

"And our grub!" wailed Tubby Muffin, looking on the verge of tears. "Our grub, you know! I—I say, they've bagged the grub!"

Lovell kicked furiously on the door.

"Let us in, you Modern rotters!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash! Thump! Bang!

The music recommenced, while the Fistical Four raged impotently outside. And now the guests began to arrive.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Lion and the Lamb.

"WHAT'S the row?"

"What's up?"

"What the dickens—"

The Classical Fourth, as they arrived on the scene, were apprised of the state of affairs, and there was towering wrath in the Fourth Form passage.

Mornington laughed, and Erroll smiled, but most of the juniors were furious.

The house-warming had been bagged. There was no doubt about that, and the Moderns were enjoying it—and enjoying still more their triumph over their old rivals.

The enraged Classics held an excited council of war in the passage, what time merry strains of music proceeded from the end study.

The Moderns, in the exhilaration of triumph, were letting themselves go.

"They'll bring somebody up with that row, if they don't draw the line," remarked Mornington. "Hallo! Talk of angels—here comes Bootles!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Classical juniors vanished into the studies as Mr. Bootles was seen by the staircase at the end of the passage.

Evidently the somewhat reckless celebration in the end study had disturbed the Form-master, and he had come to inquire into the cause—probably very much surprised by the sound of a piano from the Fourth Form passage.

The Classics had vanished as Mr. Bootles came along, and the little gentleman blinked round him over his glasses in surprise.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "I am sure I heard voices here—several voices, and in somewhat excited tones! Dear me!"

He walked on to the end study, from which a terrific din was proceeding, and tapped at the door with his knuckles.

"Oh, buzz off!" came Tommy Dodd's voice from within. "Get a move on, you duffer, and hop it!"

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles. "What! What! Is that you, Dodd? How dare you address me in such a manner!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tommy Dodd, recognising the Form-master's voice. "Is—is that Mr. Bootles?"

"Certainly it is Mr. Bootles!"

"Sus-sus-sorry, sir! I—I thought it was Jimmy Silver!"

"There is a very extraordinary noise proceeding from this study, Dodd. The door appears to be fastened," said Mr. Bootles, trying the handle. "Kindly open it at once, and admit me!"

"Oh, jiminy!"

"What—what did you say, Dodd?"

"N-n-nothing, sir! Just a minute! We—we'll open it!"

There was a sound of dragging furniture, and then of a key turning. The door of the end study opened.

And just at that time, too, a good many other study doors opened, and the Classical Fourth swarmed into the passage again.

Now that the disputed door was open, they did not mean to let it be closed again after Mr. Bootles was gone.

The Form-master's arrival was a godsend to Jimmy Silver & Co. They were not responsible for it—in fact, it was the Moderns' uproar that had brought him there, but they were quick to seize their advantage.

As Mr. Bootles walked majestically into the study, Jimmy Silver & Co. could be seen grinning behind him.

Mr. Bootles glanced round the study in surprise at seeing only Modern juniors there, and he was still more surprised to see the piano.

"Bless my soul!" he said. "This is—is

extraordinary! How did that piano come to be in a Fourth Form study, Dodd?"

"It—it was brought here, sir," stammered Tommy.

"I am aware that it was brought here, Dodd," said Mr. Bootles. "But by whom; and for what purpose, was it brought here?"

"We—we—we're having a house-warming, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Jimmy Silver was kind enough to bring the piano in for us, sir," said Tommy Dodd meekly.

Some of the Moderns grinned, and Jimmy Silver shook his fist at Tommy Dodd behind Mr. Bootles' back.

Mr. Bootles glanced round at the same moment, and Jimmy hurriedly turned his threatening gesture into scratching his nose, just in time. Mr. Bootles looked at him curiously.

"We—we thought we'd have the piano, as—as it's a special occasion, sir," said Jimmy, crimsoning.

"You should have asked permission, Silver," said Mr. Bootles. "However, there is no objection for this occasion only, though you should certainly have asked leave. But you must not make so much noise here. I heard the piano in my study, and was very much surprised and disturbed."

"I should be sorry," continued Mr. Bootles, in his benevolent way, "to throw cold water upon a harmless celebration, but, really, you must keep yourselves within bounds."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"Yes, sir!" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"Pray continue with your little celebration," said the benevolent Mr. Bootles. "I will not interfere with it; but, at the same time, I request you not to make too much noise."

"T-t-thank you, sir!"

"Not at all, my boys!" said Mr. Bootles graciously. And he retired from the end study, and the rustling of his gown died away down the passage.

Tommy Dodd held the door for him as he went out, and would gladly have shut it when he was gone, but three or four Classical boots were in the way.

That door was not destined to be shut again.

Classicals and Moderns glared at each other in the doorway till Mr. Bootles was gone.

The Moderns drew together for defence, but they were well aware that they had no chance, with nearly all the Classical Fourth swarming to the attack.

"Rush the rotters!" exclaimed Lovell. "Hurray! Sling them out!"

But Jimmy Silver held up his hand. In the hour of triumph Uncle James was generous.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed.

"Rats! What is there to hold on for?" exclaimed Jones minor. "Kick those Modern rotters out on their necks!"

"Order!" said Jimmy Silver sternly.

"Gentlemen, this is a house-warming, not a dogfight! Under the—the circumstances, we extend the olive-branch to these Modern rotters—I mean, to these gentlemen of the Modern side! Tommy Dodd, old scout, the invitation still holds good! Bury the hatchet, and let's have the house-warming together!"

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a snort.

"Isn't that just like Jimmy, when we've got them fairly by the neck?" he exclaimed.

"Order!"

Tommy Dodd grinned.

"Jimmy, old scout, you're a Briton!" he said. "We accept the invitation, with thanks! We'll call it a draw, and we'll house-warm together—the giddy lion and the merry lamb! Walk in, gentlemen!"

And so it was settled, and the gentlemen walked in, as many of them as could find room, the passage accommodating the rest. For once the hatchet was successfully buried, and Classicals and Moderns celebrated together—and great was the celebration thereof!

THE END.
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