

AN AEROPLANE FLIGHT, A DRAMATIC ARRIVAL, AND A CRICKET MATCH, are some of the ingredients of this wonderful story. You will read how Jimmy Silver finds himself in an awkward position, and the novel way in which he gets out of it.



Jimmy Wins Through!

This is one of the finest stories ever written, and records the most thrilling cricket match in which Jimmy Silver & Co. ever took part.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Ready for the Fray.

TOPPING day for the match, chaps!" Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, made that announcement in a tone of great satisfaction, as he looked out of the dormitory window as soon as the rising-bell had ceased its strident clanging.

It was indeed a glorious morning, and the dew-soaked grass of the playing-fields was bathed in the early sunshine.

Jimmy Silver felt in high spirits. For to-day was Saturday, and the junior cricket eleven were booked to play one of their first "away" matches of the season against St. Jim's, the famous old school in Sussex.

The journey to St. Jim's was rather a long one, so the cricket team were to start soon after breakfast to catch the 9.9 train from Coombe Station. That meant no morning school, of course—a fact that nowise decreased the popularity of this particular fixture in the eyes of the junior cricketers.

Jimmy Silver and his chums, Raby, Lovell, and Newcome, proceeded to bathe and dress themselves with great cheerfulness.

"If we don't beat St. Jim's to-day, I'll eat my hat!" remarked Raby, as the chums went into the Hall for breakfast. "If you're in form, we'll lick them to a frazzle, Jimmy!"

"I feel in topping form," said Jimmy Silver confidently. "We've got a pretty good team all round, I think."

"It's your bowling we're relying on chiefly, and don't you forget it, old man," said Lovell. "How's your bowling arm feel?"

Jimmy Silver laughed. "Fine, thanks!"

"Good!" said Newcome. "Then we ought to be all right, I think."

The junior eleven were desperately keen on winning the St. Jim's match. Tom Merry & Co. were doughty opponents, and the Rookwooders respected them as such. In the days when Smythe of the Shell had been junior captain of Rookwood, the St. Jim's eleven had simply walked over their opponents. But that was due chiefly to Adolphus Smythe's little habit of putting all his friends into the eleven, regardless of whether they could play cricket or not. Jimmy Silver had got the eleven on a different basis now, and the juniors of Rookwood were looking forward to knocking Tom Merry & Co. into a cocked hat.

But they did not underrate their task. Jimmy Silver was a mighty bowler, and it was to him chiefly that the Rookwood eleven looked to make skittles of the St. Jim's wickets.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER. Left Behind.

COME on, Jimmy! The brake's at the door!" Jimmy Silver grunted.

"Plenty of time, old man! I must finish this letter first."

"Oh, rats!" said Lovell impatiently. "Don't want to miss the blessed brake, do you? Here's your bag!"

"Dry up a moment, old man, do!" said Jimmy Silver imploringly. "The brake won't go for five minutes yet, and I must just finish this letter home. I haven't written for ages, and I want to get it off to-day specially."

"Well, do buck up!" grumbled Lovell. "All the others are down there ready, and if you get left—"

"I sha'n't get left, old man, unless you stay here in the study jawing!" said Jimmy. "Buzz off and take my bag down to the brake, there's a good chap, and I'll be with you in a jiffy!"

"Right-ho! But— Hallo, Smythe! What do you want?"

The elegant figure of Adolphus Smythe of the Shell—and one-time captain of the Rookwood junior eleven—had suddenly appeared in the doorway.

"I want a word with Silver," said Smythe, with dignity. Adolphus was a haughty youth. "My last word, you know."

"Busy!" said Jimmy Silver tersely, writing away at his letter. "Some other time, Adolphus. We're just off to St. Jim's."

Smythe frowned. "It's about the St. Jim's match," he said sharply. "I'm not satisfied; I've told you so before."

"So good of you, dear boy!"

"You've got time to change the team still," went on Smythe, with a glare. "I'll come in now, if you like, at the last moment, and you can put Townsend in, too. You've left us out so far—"

"Go hon!"

"But we'll overlook your cheek for the sake of the team," went on Smythe warmly. "If you like to take us along now—"

"We don't, dear boy!"

"Oh, rats!" shouted Lovell, in a fever of impatience. "Blessed if I'm going to stay here jawing any longer! I'm off! Buck up, Jimmy, for goodness' sake, or you'll miss the blessed brake!"

And Lovell, taking Jimmy's bag and his own as well, stamped off down the Fourth Form passage to join the rest of the team in the brake.

Jimmy Silver only grunted. He was writing away for dear life at his letter, his tongue in his cheek, and his head on one side—quite heedless of the glares the incensed Smythe was directing at the back of his head.

"Then you won't put me in?" shouted Smythe.

"Exactly, dear boy! Travel along!"

"I tell you—"

"Some other time, old man."

"You—you cheeky young cad—"

"Good-bye-ee, Adolphus!"

Smythe glanced at the provoking Jimmy, in a state of great exasperation.

Suddenly a thought struck Adolphus, and his eyes gleamed.

He moved his hands behind him to the lock of the study door and stealthily withdrew the key. Jimmy Silver did not look up.

"I'll go, then," said Smythe at last. "But, understand, Silver, you'll be sorry you didn't put me in the team!"

"Oh, rats!"

The door slammed, and Adolphus Smythe was gone.

Jimmy Silver, finishing off the last few words in a hasty scrawl, chuckled.

The lock of the study door clicked ever so faintly—so faintly that the junior, absorbed in his letter, did not hear it.

Smythe of the Shell stamped off down the passage, and ran down to the school gateway.

There was a crowd of fellows there surrounding the brake, which was packed with the members of the junior eleven, including Tubby Muffin, who was going to score.

Knowles, the Modern prefect, who was going to St. Jim's in charge of the party, was standing by the box, ready to swing himself up beside the driver.

There was a chorus of voices demanding to know where Jimmy Silver was.

"Where's Silver?"

"Where's that ass, Jimmy?"

"The duffer'll be late!"

Smythe sidled up to Knowles and exchanged a few words with him in an undertone. The prefect gave him a peculiar look, and then nodded with a slight smile.

Knowles had had many a rub with Jimmy Silver, and had no reason at all to love him. Whatever it was that Smythe whispered, the prefect did not look at all displeased.

"We must be getting on," said Knowles, looking at his watch. "Everyone here?"

"No!" roared ten voices at once. "Silver isn't!"

"Then where is the young ass? We shall miss the train at Coombe if we don't get off!"

"He's just coming, Knowles!" called out Lovell. "I left him in the study a minute ago. He's just finishing a letter."

There was a howl from the whole brake.

"Blow his letter! Why doesn't the ass come?"

"I'll run up and get him!" said Raby, scrambling up from his seat.

"Nonsense, Raby! Sit down!" said Knowles sharply. "We don't want to leave two of you behind! We must set off!"

"Shall I run up and tell him, Knowles?" called out Smythe. "He was just ready when I left him a moment ago."

"Yes, you go, Smythe," said Knowles, with a slight grin. "Tell him we'll give him one more minute! If he's not here by then, we start!"

"Look here, we can't go without Jimmy!" yelled Lovell. "The ass was ready—"

"We've cut it too fine as it is," said Knowles, with decision. "He'll have to come after us on a bike, that's all. Anyone got his bag?"

"Yes, I have," said Lovell. "Tell him to

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come on to the station on his bike, Smythe!" he yelled after Smythe.

"Right!" yelled Smythe.
"We can't wait another second," said Knowles, swinging himself up beside the driver. "Drive on, there!"
"Very good, sir!"

"Amidst loud cheers" from the school, the brake turned out of the gates and drove off towards Coombe at a spanking pace. There was barely time for it to get to the station to catch the nine o'clock.

Meanwhile, Smythe of the Shell had betaken himself, not to the end study in the Fourth Form passage, but to the cycle shed, where he was busy with a spanner and a screwdriver on Jimmy Silver's cycle.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.
A Race Against Time.**

JIMMY SILVER scrawled the last word of his letter, jammed it in the envelope, already addressed, and stuck the stamp on. Then he seized his cap and coat and made a dash for the door.

He turned the handle—and the door did not budge.

Jimmy Silver stared.
He wrenched at the handle, and gave a terrific pull; but still the door did not open.

He understood in a flash. He was locked in—Smythe had done it, of course! Smythe, not being able to go himself, had intended him—Jimmy—to miss the brake.

Jimmy clenched his hands at the thought. There was no time to waste. He picked up a chair, and battered on the door with it, at the same time shouting for all he was worth. Then he listened. No one came.

The whole of the Fourth Form was doubtless down at the gate, seeing the team off. The passage was empty.

Surely someone would come up for him! Jimmy ran to the window, which looked out on to the school chapel and the playing-fields. The gate could not be seen from it. No one was in sight.

Jimmy yelled again—this time out of the window.
"Hi, hi, hi! Help! Murder!"
Anything to attract attention!

A loud hurrah startled the junior.
It was the crowd cheering the departing brake.
Jimmy took a deep breath. Every second was of value now.

He climbed out over the window-sill, and grasped a pipe that ran down from the gutter on the roof just at the side of the window.

The study was on the second floor of the school building, and the climb was a dangerous one. But he did not hesitate.

The pipe was somewhat flimsy, and cracked ominously as the full weight of the sturdy junior bore on it.

But Jimmy Silver did not flinch, and began to climb steadily down.

There was a sudden shrill shout from beneath.
"Silver! What—what are you doing?"

Jimmy stopped, and clung to the pipe, looking down.

It was young Higgs of the Third, looking up at him with a white face.

"Go back, Silver, you ass! You'll be killed!" shrielled Higgs.

"Rats!" roared back Jimmy. "I'm locked in the study! Buzz around and tell the fellows, and get the door open, Higgy, quick!"

Higgs stared up, open-mouthed.
"Buzz off, I tell you!" roared Jimmy. "I'll go back!"

Higgs pulled himself together, yelled "Right-ho!" and rushed off, while Jimmy Silver began to haul himself up the pipe again to the window.

As he clambered over the sill, a crowd of Fourth-Formers hurled open the door and rushed into the end study.

"Silver!" gasped Peele. "Locked in! Why haven't you gone to St. Jim's?"

"Because I was locked in, ass!" hooted Jimmy Silver. "How did you open the door?"

"The—the key was in the lock outside," stammered Peele. "B-but why?"

"Oh, rats!" said Jimmy tersely. "Stand aside, there! I'm off! How long have they been gone?"

"About five minutes," said Higgs.

"Good! I can catch them on my bike. Post that letter for me, Higgs, there's a good chap!"

And throwing that troublesome letter to

Higgs, Jimmy Silver dashed off down the Fourth Form passage, followed by the wondering glances of the amazed juniors.

Adolphus Smythe of the Shell was conspicuous by his absence.

Jimmy dashed to the cycle-shed and seized his cycle. The back tyre was flat, but he did not heed that. He jumped into the saddle and pedalled off towards the gates at furious speed.

"Seven minutes to nine! I shall just do it!" he muttered, glancing up at the clock in the old tower. "Have to buck up, though! I'll slay Smythe for this when I get back!"

The subject of this kind thought had just emerged from behind the cycle-shed, and was watching Jimmy Silver's furious flight at that moment.

There was a grin on the face of Adolphus Smythe as he watched the furiously pedalling junior turn out of the gates and take the road to Coombe.

"I don't think you'll catch the train after all, my bonnie boy!" he remarked to himself with a chuckle. "If I don't go to St. Jim's, you don't, either!"

Jimmy Silver, unconscious of Smythe's chuckles, pedalled furiously on.

"Both that tyre!" he muttered, as he bumped over the road. "This'll ruin the tube, but—"

Crack!

There was a grating sound, and the pedals suddenly spun round uselessly.

Jimmy Silver gave a groan of despair.

His chain had come off and was lying in the road. One glance at it was enough to show him that it was useless to try and repair it in a few moments. The nut had somehow come off the connecting-link bolt, and the bolt had fallen out. It was hopeless to start a hunt for a small bolt and a tiny nut on the dusty road.

Jimmy Silver was almost daunted, but not quite. The very fates seemed to be working against him, but he would not give in.

He glanced at his wrist watch.

"Two minutes to nine! Perhaps the blessed train will be late!"

Leaving the useless bicycle by the roadside, the junior raced off down the road as if on the cinder-path. He knew he could not get to the station by nine o'clock, but if the train were a few minutes late, he might catch it. Trains at the little station at Coombe often were late—more often than not, in fact.

And on this particular morning the nine o'clock train was no exception to the rule. It was late—some five or six minutes late—but not late enough for Jimmy Silver.

He rushed on to the platform, panting and breathless, at nine minutes past nine exactly—just as the last coach of the nine o'clock was disappearing round the curve in the line!

He had missed it!

The Rookwood junior cricket eleven would have to meet St. Jim's minus their captain.

The reflection was a bitter one to Jimmy Silver. He sat down on a seat on the platform, panting and furious. His thoughts about Smythe of the Shell were simply terrible—for he realised now that the accident that had happened to his bicycle was to be attributed to something more than mere bad luck.

And Jimmy Silver knew that there was not another train for hours.

The little station had already settled down, after the bustle the train had caused, into its usual state of sleepy calm. The sun streamed down upon a scene of undisturbed peace. A steady hum, which the junior recognised as the drone of an aeroplane engine, was almost the only sound to be heard.

Jimmy Silver got up wearily. He had remembered his cycle lying beside the road, and, angry and dispirited as he was, he did not want to lose it.

"No train up before the eleven-thirty, is there?" he inquired of the one porter, as he passed out of the station.

"No, sir. Sorry you missed the train. We kept it waiting a couple o' minutes for you, as the young gents said you was comin'."

"You're a good sort, Wiggs. I—I was delayed," said Jimmy Silver, with a clouded face. "It's rotten, but it can't be helped, I suppose. Now I shall have to go by the eleven-thirty."

And the disappointed junior tramped out of the station.

It was a cross-country journey to St. Jim's. By taking the eleven-thirty, he could not possibly get there in time to take part in the match. He would have to be a spectator only.

Brr! Brr! Brr!
The drone of the aeroplane up above had increased in sound, and Jimmy Silver looked up with interest. The plane was approaching very fast, flying low, and it was now circling round the little station, as if uncertain of its bearings.

Lower and lower it came, till it was flying at barely a hundred feet.

"Coming down low to see the name of the station, I suppose," thought Jimmy Silver, was the plane roared over his head. "I wonder—My hat! It's going to land!"

It was true.

The aeroplane swept over the road leading to the school, and the roar of the engine suddenly ceasing as the pilot switched off, the plane dived straight down into a grass field just off the road, where it landed as lightly as a bird.

Jimmy Silver had a couple of hours to spare, and he was vastly interested in aeroplanes.

He set off at a run at once, making a bee-line for the grass field.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
A Sporting Offer.**

THE aeroplane bumped along the grass to a standstill, and the fluttering propeller ceased to revolve. A tall figure in flying kit jumped out of the after cockpit, while the pilot leaned out of his seat scanning his engine with a practised eye.

"There's an oil-pipe gone, that's why I landed here, old man," said the pilot. "She's lost a lot of oil, and made a bit of a mess. We'll have to fix it up before we set off again."

"Right-ho!" said the passenger.

"We're quite near the school here, as a matter of fact—that's Coombe station just across the road. It's only a walk down to the school!"

"Well, we'll just get the broken pipe down, and I can take it to the village and get it brazed while you walk along to the school."

"Rob, old man, I'm staying with you till we get things fixed up!"

"Don't be an ass, Neville! I can manage all right, and you'll be wanting to get along to see your brother at Rookwood."

The pilot turned to his engine, spanner in hand, when the airman addressed as Neville gave an exclamation.

"Hallo! Whom have we here? A Rookwood kid by his cap!"

It was Jimmy Silver.

"You are from Rookwood, kid?" asked Neville.

"Yes, sir."

"I'm an old Rookwood boy myself, and I have a brother there now—was just going to look him up, as a matter of fact. Do you know a fellow there called Neville?"

"Neville of the Sixth? Rather!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "He's a Classical prefect and a top-hole chap."

Jimmy looked at the airman with admiration. He had heard of Neville's brother in the Royal Air Force—a captain, and holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Captain Neville laughed cheerily.

"You're a Classical yourself, evidently."

"Yes, sir. I'm Jimmy Silver of the Classical Fourth."

"I see. And doesn't the Classical Fourth at Rookwood do any work on Saturday mornings?" said the airman slyly. "They did in my time."

Silver laughed.

"They do now, sir, but the junior eleven have an 'away' match to-day, and I ought to be playing—but I missed the train."

"Pshaw! That's bad luck, kid! Where's the match?"

"At St. Jim's, in Sussex."

"St. Jim's? Hear that, Conway?"

"What's that?" said the pilot, who was busy with the engine. He suspended his operations with the spanner for a moment.

"This kid, Silver, of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, ought to be playing in a junior cricket match at St. Jim's to-day, but he's missed the train."

"St. Jim's, eh? That's funny! I believe my young brother, Gussy, plays in the St. Jim's junior eleven. I used to play in it myself, once."

"You're an old St. Jim's boy, sir?" said Jimmy Silver respectfully.

"Rather! Perhaps you know my brother there—D'Arcy of the Fourth Form?"

"I know him, sir—chap with an eyeglass!" said Jimmy Silver at once.

The pilot grinned.

"That's him—regular young nut, he is!" Jimmy Silver had heard of D'Arcy's brother. The pilot was evidently Lord Conway, the eldest son of the Earl of Eastwood.

"Well, look here, young Silver, how do you stand?" said Captain Neville, laying his hand on Jimmy's shoulder. "Can you get over to St. Jim's by the next train in time for the match?"

"Afraid not, sir! They'll have to do without me."

"Will they beat St. Jim's all right without you?" went on Neville, with a sly glance at the smiling Conway.

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I hope so, sir, but—but I'm captain of our eleven, and St. Jim's juniors are a pretty hot lot."

"Oh, come, that's too bad!" said Neville seriously. "Rookwood can't do itself justice without its captain." He looked thoughtful for a moment. "I say, Conway!"

"Hallo, old man?"

Captain Neville stepped over to Lord Conway, and the two conversed together in low tones for a moment.

Then Lord Conway burst into a laugh.

"It would be a sporting effort, by gad!" he exclaimed. "How far's St. Jim's from here, I wonder?"

"Something under a hundred miles as the crow flies," answered Neville.

"Is there a garage in this village, kid?" was the pilot's next question.

"Yes," said Jimmy. "I can take you to it now. It's quite near."

"Good! Then I could get some more oil and get the pipe repaired in about half an hour."

"Then it's a go?" said Captain Neville.

"Yes, I'll do it—if the kid's game."

"I'm game for anything, sir," said Jimmy Silver stoutly.

"Then would you like to fly over to St. Jim's and be in time for the match, after all?" said Captain Neville, with a smile.

Jimmy Silver gasped.

"My hat! Fly over!"

"Yes! You can have my flying kit. I am going to walk over to the school and see my brother when we've fixed up the machine. Lord Conway will flip you over to St. Jim's and come back for me. What do you say? Are you on?"

Jimmy Silver gasped again.

"My—my only hat! It's ripping of you, sir—top-hole!"

"Then you're game, kid?" said Lord Conway, with a smile.

And Jimmy Silver promptly replied:

"What-ho!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In Full Flight.

"CONTACT!"

Captain Neville stood with his hands on the propeller, ready to swing it over. Lord Conway was in the pilot's seat, and in the seat behind him, enveloped in Captain Neville's flying-kit and wearing flying-cap and goggles, was Jimmy Silver, captain of the junior cricket team at Rookwood, en route to the St. Jim's match by aeroplane.

It was barely eleven o'clock. The match was due to start at twelve.

"Contact!" sang out Lord Conway, giving back the word according to R.A.F. custom.

Swing!

"Switch off!" came from Captain Neville.

"Switch off!" repeated the pilot.

"Contact!"

"Contact!"

This time the skilfully swung "prop" produced a healthy roar from the engine, and Jimmy Silver felt a great draught on the unprotected part of his face from the suck of the big "prop."

Lord Conway waved his hand, and the machine moved slowly off, "taxi-ing" across the field in order to get a good take-off into the eye of the wind. Captain Neville ran by

the side of the machine, steadying her with a hand on the bottom plane.

She swept round in a wide circle, and came to rest, facing the wind, her big "prop" revolving slowly.

"All right, old man?" queried Neville.

"Look out for those trees when you take off!"

"Right-ho!" shouted Conway cheerily.

"Shall be back in a couple of hours, all being well. I'll fly low over Rookwood before landing, to let you know I'm back. So-long!"

Neville stood aside, and waved his hand to Jimmy Silver as the engine quickened up to a roar.

The plane began to bump over the ground faster and faster as she neared the hedge at the far side of the field.

Just as Jimmy Silver began to think a collision with the hedge inevitable, the bumping suddenly ceased, and, looking over the side, the junior saw the ground apparently receding from him at a rapid pace.

They were off!

Up, up rose the plane, "banking" steeply to the right as it climbed, so that it circled the field a couple of times until the pilot was satisfied that his engine was running all right. Then away in a bee-line for the county of Sussex and St. Jim's College.

The exhilaration of flying made the blood dance in Jimmy Silver's veins. He looked over the side of the fuselage at the country below, spread out under his eyes exactly like a map, criss-crossed by hedges, roads, railways, and rivers till it looked like a huge, irregular chessboard. In the distance he caught a glimpse of the towers of Rookwood. He wondered what the fellows there would think if they knew that the aeroplane which they were doubtless watching was conveying a junior of the Fourth Form to a cricket match almost a hundred miles away.

Lord Conway turned his head and shouted. Jimmy Silver just caught his words above the roar of the engine and the whistle of the wind in his ears.

"Four thousand! See if you can follow the country on the map."

Jimmy nodded, and began to study the map mounted in front of his seat. Lord Conway was flying at four thousand feet, to give him a chance of viewing the country they were passing over, and recognising it on the map. The junior was sufficiently acquainted with the art of map-reading to know that rivers and railways were the easiest landmarks to pick up; and, going on this method, he very soon recognised the route they were following.

The engine seemed to be roaring away quite leisurely to the junior, who, in his well-protected seat, had soon got used to the sensation of flying. It was only when he began to follow their progress from the map that he realised the pace at which they must be rushing through the air.

At the end of half an hour's flying they were more than half-way there.

Lord Conway held on steadily, flying on a perfectly even keel, and keeping in a direct line for St. Jim's according to the map.

Jimmy Silver wondered whether he would do one or two "stunts" presently. But the pilot gave no sign that such a thing had ever entered his head. It was evident that Lord Conway considered that he was taking enough responsibility as it was by taking a junior up without the express permission of the school authorities.

Another twenty minutes passed, and the plane still buzzed through the air with the steadiness and more than the speed of a railway train.

Then Lord Conway turned round and pointed down ahead of them.

"Pretty near now!" he shouted. And Jimmy Silver nodded and smiled, and kept an eager watch on the country below.

The nose of the plane was pointing slightly downwards now, and the speed increased until the wind shrieked past the wires and struts. Then the roar of the engine stopped, and the plane began to glide downwards at an easy angle. The pilot had switched off.

"We'll get down a bit!" shouted Lord Conway. "There's Wayland ahead—quite near now!"

Jimmy Silver ran his eye along the main railway-line which the pilot had evidently been following. Yes; there was the little town of Wayland, whence the branch line ran to Rylcombe, the station for St. Jim's.

The pilot switched on the engine again,

and the plane came out of the glide and resumed an even keel again. A couple of minutes' level flying, and Jimmy Silver could see below him the old turreted buildings of St. Jim's. And, yes, he could see white-clad figures streaming out from the pavilion on to the wide green space of the cricket field. The players were evidently just coming on to the field to commence the match.

Jimmy Silver glanced at his watch. It was just twelve o'clock.

He was in time!

Lord Conway turned and smiled, pointing downwards. He was evidently thinking the same thing.

"All O.K.!" he shouted. "We'll get down now! Mind your eye!"

Jimmy Silver grinned and nodded.

"What-ho!" he shouted. But his voice was lost in the roar of the engine.

Now began the descent—the most thrilling part of that wonderful ride to Jimmy Silver. Lord Conway settled himself in his seat. The height now was something under three thousand feet.

With the engine full on, the nose of the plane went down, down, until they were diving at a steep angle and at terrific speed.

Then suddenly the pilot leaned back in his seat and pulled the "joy-stick" right back.

"Hold on!" came his voice faintly above the roar of the engine.

The nose of the machine rose swiftly until it pointed directly upwards—up, up, the roar of the engine suddenly fading away as the pilot switched off at the crucial moment.

The bottom seemed to be falling out of Jimmy Silver's world. Although he was securely strapped in, he clutched the sides of the frail machine as though his life depended upon his grip. Earth and sky seemed to whirl round him in a fantastic dance.

The machine hung in the air, upside down, for what seemed an eternity, while the junior held his breath.

Then down she swooped, the engine cutting in with a roar as she regained her equilibrium. Then a series of steep "banks" and exhilarating swoops earthwards, and the playing-fields of St. Jim's seemed to rush up to meet them. A last turn into the wind, and then down in a long, gentle glide, with the propeller fluttering gently, and the wonderful machine landed on the level greensward as gracefully and lightly as a bird.

And almost before Jimmy Silver realised that he had actually been "looping the loop," the machine was at rest, and the cheers from a crowd of juniors racing over the grass towards the machine were ringing in his ears.

Lord Conway turned a laughing face towards the breathless junior as he pushed his goggles up on his forehead.

"How do you like looping, youngster? I thought you would like me to do just one 'stunt' before we landed."

"It—it was grand—simply grand!" gasped Jimmy. "I wouldn't have missed it for worlds!"

He unbuckled his belt and clambered lightly out of his seat, just as the crowd of St. Jim's boys came thronging up, full of eager excitement to see the airman who had performed that thrilling "loop" before descending.

There was a sudden yell of amazement from two or three of the Rookwood cricket team who had raced up with the crowd.

"Jimmy Silver! It's Silver!"

Jimmy Silver waved his hand and grinned. He did not wonder at their surprise.

"Yes; here I am, chaps! And in time, I hope!"

"Trust the end study to get there somehow!" chuckled Lovell. "Good old Jimmy!"

There was a roar from all the Rookwooders present.

"Good old Jimmy! Hurrah!"

Jimmy Silver was pouring out his thanks to Lord Conway, while the playing-fields of St. Jim's were ringing with cheers for the daring young airman.

"That's all right, kid," said Lord Conway, his pleasant face glowing with good-nature. "You're a young sport, you know, anyway. Better run along and get changed for the match, hadn't you—what?"

"Yes, rather—and thanks awfully, sir! It was simply ripping!"

Lovell and Teddy Grace of Rookwood seized Jimmy Silver and rushed him off towards the pavilion.

"Just in time, old son!" said Lovell, almost hugging his chum. "Mornington and Tommy Dodd are just going to open the innings for us. St. Jim's are fielding."

"Good egg!"
An elegant figure in spotless flannels, with an eyeglass screwed into his aristocratic eye, stopped the hurrying trio and shook hands warmly with Jimmy Silver.

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

"Good work, Silvah, old top!" he exclaimed heartily. "Vewy sportin' effort, your turnin' up by aeroplane like this—what?"

"Thanks!" grinned Jimmy. "It was your brother, Lord Conway, who did the trick. He's a sportsman, D'Arcy—a topper!"

"Bai Jove. My bwother Conway?"
"Yes. He's over there by the 'plane!'"
"Bai Jove! That's wippin'! Excuse me, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus hurried on to greet his brother, who was now walking round his machine, the engine of which was still running gently.

"Hallo, Arthur!" sang out Lord Conway, as the swell of St. Jim's hurried up, his eyeglass gleaming in the sun.

"Hallo, Conway, deah boy! Fancy your turnin' up like this!"

"Yes; just flipped young Silver over from Rookwood, as he had missed the train."

"Vewy sportin' of you, old man!"
"Thanks!" said Lord Conway solemnly. "You playing in the match, Arthur?"

"Yaas, wathah!"
Lord Conway eyed his brother's spotless flannels.

"Mind you don't spoil the crease in those bags, old chap!" he said gravely.

"Weally, deah boy—"
Lord Conway chuckled, and swung himself into the machine again.

"Must get off now, I'm afraid," he said, buckling the strap round him. "Got to go back to Rookwood and pick up Neville. Sorry I can't stay longer!"

"Weally, Conway, you aren't goin' yet, suahly?"

"Sorry, Arthur—must buzz off!" said Lord Conway. "Just keep those kids back while I taxi to the other end of the field, will you, Arthur?"

"Yaas, wathah! But—"
"So long, old man!"

There was a roar from the engine as the pilot accelerated, and the big plane began to move off slowly over the ground.

D'Arcy kept the crowd back while his brother manoeuvred the plane into position, facing up-wind.

Then, with a roar, the engine speeded up, the plane rushed over the smooth turf, and then rose gracefully from the earth.

Lord Conway waved his hand as he flew overhead, and Arthur Augustus waved gracefully back. There was a roar of cheering from the St. Jim's fellows.

Lord Conway's sportsmanship in bringing the captain of a junior eleven over to play in a cricket match had won the hearts of St. Jim's and Rookwood fellows alike, and the fellows cheered him with a will as he flew off.

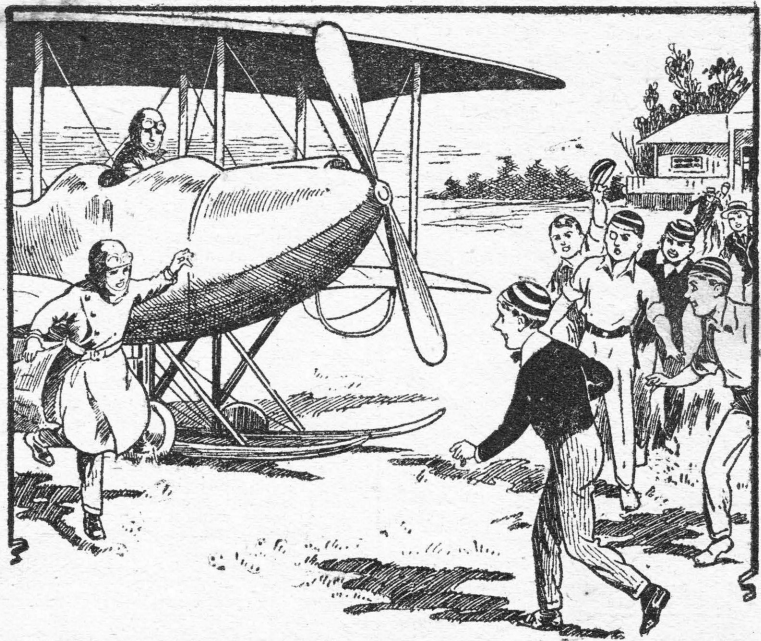
"Hurrah! Hip-hip-hurrah!"
Then there was a rush back to the cricket-field by the juniors, greatly elated by this exciting preliminary to what bade fair to be an exciting match, now that the Rookwood side had been brought up to full strength by Jimmy Silver's timely arrival.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
The Great Match.

THE Rookwood innings did not begin too well.

Mornington had only made four runs when he skied a ball from Jack Blake, which fell into the safe hands of Tom Merry, the St. Jim's skipper. Lovell, the next man in, was clean bowled by Fatty Wynn, the fat Welsh junior, for 2 runs. Van Ryn got 6 before the demon Welshman got him. Tommy Cook, who then joined his chum Tommy Dodd at the wicket, kept his end up for some time while his partner played some very pretty cricket, but finally succumbed to one of Jack Blake's tempting balls, which he put neatly into Noble's hands at mid-off. He retired with the score of 8 runs to his credit.

Tommy Dodd had taken 12 by this time, so that the score was four wickets down for 32.



THE MAN FROM THE CLOUDS! Jimmy Silver unbuckled his belt and clambered lightly out of the aeroplane, just as a crowd of St. Jim's and Rookwood juniors came up. There was a sudden yell of amazement from them. "Jimmy Silver! It's Silver!" (See Chapter 5.)

"Better go in yourself, old man, and get the score up a bit," said Lovell seriously to Jimmy Silver. "We're not doing too well. That chap Wynn's a corker!"

Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful. "I think I'll keep myself in reserve a bit longer, in case anything happens to Tommy Dodd," he said. "He seems well set in now; he's a hilt'er."

But Conroy had bad luck. A deadly ball came down from Fatty Wynn, like a bullet from a gun, and wrecked his wicket.

Patty Grace fared no better. The score was still 32 for six wickets.

Jimmy Silver delayed no longer. He joined Tommy Dodd at the wicket, and the two played merry cricket.

Runs now came freely, and the spirit of the Rookwooders revived greatly. The score was doubled by the time Tommy Dodd snicked a fast one into the hands of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, at slip.

Sixty-four runs for seven wickets! Tommy Dodd had run up the respectable score of 24, and was received with great applause on his return to the pavilion.

Jimmy Silver's score stood at 20. Selwyn joined him, and hit a 2, but Fatty Wynn got his wicket two balls later.

Erroll then went in, and made a duck. The demon bowler of St. Jim's was in his best form.

Tommy Doyle was the last man in, and the score was 66.

He survived an over from Redfern, but without scoring.

Jimmy Silver then had the bowling, and hit out merrily.

Two 4's and two 2's, and then a 3, which just failed to reach the boundary.

Tommy Doyle took a single from a fast ball from Wynn, which was brilliantly fielded by Figgins.

Then, facing Redfern from the other end, he skied a ball into the hands of Kerr, the Scottish junior of the New House at St. Jim's.

The Rookwood innings closed for a total of 65, of which 3 were byes.

Jimmy Silver's score was 35, not out. "Not so dusty!" remarked Tommy Dodd, as the cricketers adjourned for the luncheon interval. "We'll see what St. Jim's can do after lunch."

When play was resumed the St. Jim's first innings produced the fine total of 105 runs, chiefly owing to a splendid second-wicket partnership by Tom Merry and Figgins, which produced upwards of 50 runs.

Noble, the Cornstalk junior, added another twenty from his own bat.

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd opened the second innings for Rookwood. Rookwood were twenty runs behind on the first innings, and Jimmy wanted to leave nothing to chance this time.

But, alas! for his hopes of a long partnership with Tommy Dodd! Fatty Wynn, apparently revived by the lunch interval, was in more deadly form than ever, and whipped Tommy Dodd's middle stump out of the ground after 10 runs had been put up on the board.

Jimmy Silver made a gallant effort, but the only other batsmen to stand up to Fatty Wynn for any length of time were Conroy and Mornington, who made 15 and 12 respectively.

Jimmy Silver himself succumbed to the demon Welshman when he had notched 30, after a fine effort.

The total registered for the innings was 70 runs.

That left St. Jim's with 51 to get to win.

The St. Jim's crowd were jubilant, but Jimmy Silver's face was very serious as the Rookwooders streamed out to field for the second time.

"Fifty-one to win!" said Jimmy to his faithful ten. "It's not much, but we mustn't let 'em get it! We've got to play up, my sons. Gimme the ball!"

And Jimmy Silver grasped the ball with great determination, while his team went to their places with grim expressions on their faces.

And then the junior captain of Rookwood proceeded to do some wonderful things with the ball.

Tom Merry and Noble opened the St. Jim's innings; but after making 2 runs Noble miss-hit a ball from Jimmy, who ran up the pitch and caught it.

Caught and bowled, Silver!
D'Arcy's wicket fell to Conroy in the next over, and then Jimmy bowled Blake and Redfern in quick succession.

Four wickets down for 12 runs. But Tom Merry was still in.

The junior captain of St. Jim's was a fine cricketer, and he was as determined to win the match for St. Jim's as Jimmy Silver was to win it for Rookwood. He played careful cricket, and gave no chances. But the wickets of his faithful followers went down like ninepins before the deadly bowling of Jimmy Silver.

The eighth St. Jim's wicket went down before a deceptive ball from Teddy Grace, as the score of 35 was registered on the board.

Tom Merry was still in, and Figgins and Fatty Wynn had still to bat, and St. Jim's had 16 runs to make to win.

George Figgins, the long-legged junior captain of the New House, came striding to the wicket with a do-or-die expression on his rugged face.

Tom Merry gave him an anxious look. "Careful, Figgy, old boy!"

Figgins nodded as he took centre. "What-ho!" he exclaimed briefly.

Click! The ball flew from Teddy Grace's hand, and Figgins stepped out of his ground and gave it a terrific swipe.

There was a roar from the St. Jim's crowd.

"Boundary!"

"Good old Figgy!"

"Bravo, New House!"

Tom Merry grinned.

This was what Figgy called playing carefully! But it was undoubtedly the stuff to give them.

Jimmy Silver gave Grace an anxious look as that junior grasped the ball again.

"Careful, Putty!"

Putty Grace grunted.

"Right-ho! But this chap's a blessed lessop!"

He took a run, and turned himself into a sort of catharine-wheel.

There was a louder click, as Figgins' bat again met the ball with terrific force, and a still louder roar from the delighted St. Jim's crowd.

The ball flew between the flags, with Tommy Dodd vainly chasing it.

"Well hit, sir!"

"Another four! Go it, Figgy!"

"Hurrah!"

St. Jim's only wanted seven more runs for a tie, eight to win.

And Figgins seemed to be determined to hit every ball to the boundary.

There was a gleam in Grace's eye as he took the ball in his hand for the next delivery. He was called "Putty" at Rookwood, but, for all that, he was not quite so "soft" as he sometimes pretended to be, as a good many juniors at Roodwood had already discovered.

He took a run to the wicket, and just as he delivered the ball he slowed up almost to a walk.

The ball left his hand in an innocent-looking curve, and something like a groan came from Jimmy Silver's lips as he saw that harmless-looking job dropping through the air.

Figgins almost chuckled as he saw it coming. To his eye, that easy-looking ball seemed booked for the boundary.

He jumped out of his ground, and his bat swept through the air with a mighty sweep at the spot where the ball would pitch.

But the musical click of bat and ball did not reward that mighty stroke. There was a click, certainly; but it was made by that innocent-looking ball coming into contact with Figgy's middle stump!

George Figgins was out, and he started for the pavilion with a very surprised look on his honest face.

"You ass, Figgy!" growled Tom Merry, as he passed him. "That was a googlie!"

"Blessed if I know what happened!" muttered Figgins. "I thought I'd hit the thing; but—but it wasn't there!"

And Figgy strode to the pavilion.

The Rookwooders crowded round Teddy Grace, and Jimmy Silver patted him on the back—hard.

"Absolutely topping, kid!" he grinned.

"Fooled him all the way! You're a giddy genius!"

"Bravo, Grace!"

Jimmy Silver seized the ball as Fatty Wynn emerged from the pavilion—last man in!

"Get to your places, chaps—mind your eye! We'll do it or bust!"

Tom Merry faced the bowling.

Jimmy Silver gripped the ball, and sent down a beautiful delivery, dead on the wicket, which the batsman played carefully.

At the next delivery the bowler was approaching the crease when his foot slipped, and the ball sailed from his hand in an easy curve.

There was a gasp of horror from the Rookwooders.

The Popular.—No. 225.

The ball looked a dead easy one—and it was!

Tom Merry stepped coolly out to meet it, caught it full pitch on the drive of his bat, and lifted it to the boundary in front of the pavilion.

"Well hit, sir!"

"Good old St. Jim's!"

"That's the stuff to give 'em!"

"Hurrah!"

The cheers were deafening, and the Rookwooders looked at one another and at their captain gloomily.

Jimmy Silver's face was set and desperate. It was sheer bad luck that his foot had slipped and caused him to send down that easy ball, just when every run was invaluable to the rival team.

"Three to draw," he muttered—"four to win! They shan't do it!"

He sent down a straight ball, which pitched a little short, and Tom Merry played forward and drove it past Jimmy Silver's outstretched fingers.

"Come on!" he called.

Fatty Wynn rolled up the pitch just as a smart throw-in came from Erroll.

Another run for St. Jim's!

Three more for a win!

Fatty Wynn faced the bowling now. He took a careful centre, and faced Jimmy confidently, but with many an inward tremor.

Jimmy Silver sent down a fast ball, and Fatty Wynn waved his bat in a panic—and just nicked it.

It passed just out of reach of Tommy Cook, and Conroy raced for it desperately.

"Come on!" yelled Tom Merry, dashing up the pitch.

Fatty Wynn flew for his life, and Conroy hurled the ball in desperation for Tom Merry's end.

The ball crashed into the wicket just as Tom Merry's bat clumped on the crease.

"How's that?" roared the Rookwood team with one voice.

"Not out!" came the calm voice of the umpire, and a roar of cheering sounded from every side of the ground.

"Well run, St. Jim's!"

"Good old Tommy!"

"Hurrah!"

Jimmy Silver picked up the ball and walked back to take his run.

The situation was desperate.

He had two more balls to complete the over. Tom Merry was facing him, with one run to get to draw—two to win!

Jimmy Silver looked round his field desperately. His eye fell on Mornington, who was fielding out in the country behind the bowler. He motioned to Mornington to go out deeper. Mornington obeyed, with a gleam of understanding in his eye.

Jimmy Silver had decided on a desperate expedient. Tom Merry was now well set, and he had little hope of bowling the St. Jim's skipper before he had taken the two runs necessary to give St. Jim's the match.

But Jimmy Silver had noticed that Tom Merry's favourite stroke was a fine drive straight on the leg side. The boundary was a long way out in that direction, and that's what decided Jimmy Silver to try his stratagem.

He took a run, and bowled deliberately—a ball dead straight on the leg stump, but a half-volley—just the ball to drive.

And Tom Merry stepped out to it and drove it!

There was an audible groan from the Rookwood team, and a yell of exultation from St. Jim's as the ball flew swiftly into the air well on the way to the boundary.

But suddenly there came a hush! For the lithe figure of Valentine Mornington was flying towards the ball on the very edge of the boundary.

On flew the ball, and on raced Mornington, while cricketers and spectators alike watched with bated breath.

For on that ball hung the whole issue of the match.

There was just a chance that Mornington would get there in time, and Morny strained every muscle and sinew to do it.

And he got there.

He sprang desperately at the ball as it was passing over his head, his outstretched palm came into contact with the flying leather, and the ball stuck there.

Mornington staggered on for some yards with his hand stretched high above his head, with the ball safely resting in the palm.

It was a magnificent catch, and it had won the great match for Rookwood.

St. Jim's had lost by one run.

The Rookwood team carried Val Mornington and Jimmy Silver shoulder-high to the pavilion, where the St. Jim's team were the first to congratulate them on their great victory, like the good sportsmen they were.

And great were the rejoicings at Rookwood when the victorious team returned with the news of their exploits! In his elation Jimmy Silver found it in his heart to forgive Smythe of the shell for his treacherous attempt to keep him from the match. But the rest of the team thought differently, and a severe bumping was inflicted upon the shrinking Adolphus before bed-time that night.

Jimmy Silver's aerial trip to take part in the St. Jim's match, and the sensational result of the match itself, formed a nine days' wonder in the junior school at Rookwood.

And even the great George Bukeley, the captain of Rookwood, and hero of the flags, sent for Jimmy Silver to hear the story at first-hand, and gave it as his opinion that it was "a very sporting effort."

Whereat the satisfaction of Jimmy Silver & Co. was complete.

THE END.

(Particulars of next week's fine Rookwood Story will be found in page 2.)

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