

TROUBLE FOR THE NEW SKIPPER!

In bad odour as he was with the Fourth at Rookwood, some people would not have expected Mornny to get the support of Jimmy Silver—But Jimmy is a sportsman, true blue, and he lets personal prejudices go overboard when it is the question of duty to his school and skipper!

BACKING UP MORNINGTON!

Jimmy Silver to the Rescue!



This is one of the best cricket stories ever written and deals with a match between Rookwood and Greyfriars.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mornny's List!

"JIMMY—"
"Oh, buzz off, Tubby!" said Jimmy Silver crossly.

Jimmy Silver was dabbing his nose with his handkerchief in the end study. There were stains of crimson on the handkerchief. And Jimmy was not in his usual sunny temper.

But Tubby Muffin of the Classical Fourth did not buzz off. He rolled into the study instead.

"I say, Jimmy—" he persisted.

"Br-r-r!"

"Roll away, barrel!" said Lovell. "Can't you see that you're superfluous, Tubby? The charms of your fascinating society have palled. Roll away!"

Tubby did not heed.

"I want you to lend me your bat, Jimmy!" he said.

Jimmy Silver stared at the fat Classical over the crimsoned handkerchief. His nose was feeling rather painful.

"My bat?" he exclaimed.

"That's it!"

"What the thump do you want a bat for at nearly bed-time?" demanded Jimmy.

"I don't want it to-night, of course. To-morrow, I mean," explained Tubby Muffin. "You won't want it, as you're not playing at Greyfriars to-morrow, Jimmy. I've sold my bat—I sold it to Jones minor, you know, when I was stony last week. Of course, I never foresaw that I should be asked to play in the junior eleven to—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You never asked me to play for Rookwood when you were junior captain, Jimmy," said Tubby Muffin reproachfully. "I offered my services more than once, and you always refused. It's different now Mornnington's captain. Mornny knows a good man when he sees him."

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at the fat junior.

They could not speak for a moment.

Tubby Muffin, as a member of the junior cricket team, took their breath away.

Tubby was a great man in his own line; he was the very best customer at the tuck-shop; he was the best cook in the Fourth Form, and what he didn't know about frying sausages wasn't worth knowing. But as a cricketer Tubby did not shine. As a cricketer he was probably more hopeless than even Smythe of the Shell.

"You in the junior eleven!" ejaculated Arthur Edward Lovell, at last.

"You!" howled Raby.

"You!" stuttered Newcome.

"Oh, my only hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Mornny must have gone fairly off his rocker, I think!"

Tubby Muffin blinked indignantly at the Fistical Four. He could not see anything surprising in his inclusion in the Rookwood junior team.

THE POPULAR.—No. 230.

"The fact is, Jimmy, Mornny's a better skipper than you ever were!" he said. "He's giving me a chance. You can cackle if you like, but you'll see! You wait till I'm knocking up runs at Greyfriars to-morrow!"

"Oh dear!"
"But I want you to lend me your bat, Jimmy! Of course, I can't knock up runs without a bat."

"Nor with one, you howling ass!" exclaimed Lovell. "I'd like to see you facing the Greyfriars bowlers! Has Mornny gone potty? First he puts Smythe and Howard and Tracy in the team—three born idiots. Now he's picked out the fattest chump in the Fourth—"

"Look here—" roared Tubby, in great wrath.

"Greyfriars will have something to chortle over to-morrow!" snorted Lovell. "They had some comic cricket when Smythe took a team over. Mornny's team will be funnier than Smythe's, at this rate! What is Rookwood cricket coming to?"

"I suppose Mornny's potty!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"You silly ass!" roared Tubby Muffin. "You're ratty because Mornny punched your nose; that's what's the matter with you, Jimmy Silver. Serve you right if he'd licked you! He would have if Erroll hadn't interfered! Yah!"

"Oh, dry up, fathead!"

"I'll borrow a bat somewhere else," said Tubby Muffin; "I won't have yours now if you offer it!"

And he rolled out of the end study in a state of great indignation.

Jimmy Silver dabbed his nose again thoughtfully. Mornnington's knuckles had landed there an hour before with painful effect. Jimmy Silver had been resolved to keep on good terms with the fellow who had taken his place as junior skipper, but it had not worked out like that. Mornnington had made a bad beginning, and he was already in bitter conflict with the former skipper.

"Well," said Lovell, with a deep breath, when the fat Classical was gone, "this takes the cake, and no mistake! I'm jolly glad we're not in the eleven! Greyfriars will cackle themselves to death over this match!"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Mornny's in a fix, of course," he said. "He's determined to play Smythe and Howard and Tracy, which means throwing away the match. Every other fellow has resigned from the team in consequence, except his own chum, Erroll, and Mornny must make up an eleven somehow, if he's going over to Greyfriars at all."

"And what's he playing Smythe & Co. for?" hooted Lovell. "Because he promised them places in the team for voting for him at the election! A dirty trick!"

"Rotten!" growled Raby.

"Caddish!" snorted Newcome.

"It was rotten enough," agreed Jimmy Silver. "But Mornny doesn't seem to think

so. He looks on it as an electioneering trick. It wouldn't do for this study—"

"I should jolly well say not!"

"But Mornny's a queer fellow, and he never meant to put those silly asses into a good match. It's really an accident that the Greyfriars match comes off to-morrow. He can't get any good man to play, with Smythe & Co. in the team, but he's got to make up the number. But fancy falling back on Tubby Muffin!"

"I dare say he's put up a new list by this time!" growled Lovell. "It ought to be interesting to read. Let's go down and see."

"That's a good idea."

The Fistical Four left the end study and went downstairs. They found a good many juniors gathered before the notice-board, upon which was the list of players for the Greyfriars match in Mornny's elegant hand. The comments that were being passed on the list were very emphatic.

"Look at this!" said Conroy, as the Fistical Four came up. "What do you think of this merry menagerie?"

Jimmy Silver read down the list.

It ran:

"Mornnington, Erroll, Smythe, Tracy, Howard, Muffin, Leggett, Townsend, Topham, Peele, Lattrey."

"My only hat!" said Jimmy Silver, almost overcome.

The list contained two names of cricketers—Mornnington and Erroll. The rest were hopeless cases. Mornnington had evidently been driven to desperation by the resignations from his team. He had filled the places anyhow he could, and the result was deplorable. So far from being fit to play Greyfriars Remove, the team was not "class" enough to stand up to an eleven chosen from the Second Form.

"Well, that puts the lid on!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, with a snort. "That's the skipper you've changed Jimmy Silver for! My word! I hope you're pleased with him now you've got him!"

The Rookwood fellows certainly were not looking pleased!

"This won't do!" said Jimmy Silver abruptly.

"You can't help it," said Raby. "You can't interfere, Jimmy. Let the silly ass make a fool of himself. He will be booted out of the captaincy for this, anyhow, and that will be to the good."

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

He did not want to see Mornnington "booted" out of the captaincy, though many of the fellows did not give him credit for his good wishes towards his successful rival.

"Something's got to be done!" he said.

"Br-r-r!" grunted Lovell.

Jimmy Silver walked away, leaving an excited crowd commenting on the remarkable cricket list. Jimmy Silver was thinking deeply. He wanted to save Rookwood from a crushing defeat at Greyfriars, and he wanted to save Mornny, if he could, from

the results of his obstinacy and folly. But that was a big problem, even for the astute "Uncle James," of Rookwood.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver to the Rescue.

"MORNY, old man!" Valentine Mornington was pacing to and fro in his study, when Erroll came in, closing the door after him.

Morny was looking angry and perturbed. He was quite conscious of the bad break he had made in beginning his career as junior captain of Rookwood. He was aware, too, that he had made matters worse instead of better by his fight with Jimmy Silver in the end study. Everything seemed to be going wrong for Morny, and his feelings towards the late junior captain were bitter enough.

He stopped his restless pacing and looked round sullenly as Erroll came in.

"Well?" he snapped.

Erroll took no notice of his savage tone. His patience seemed inexhaustible in dealing with his obstinate and wilful chum.

"I've just seen the fellows looking at your list, Morny."

"What are they saying?"

"They don't like it, of course."

Mornington sneered.

"I didn't expect they would! It's all Jimmy Silver's doin'. He's determined that I sha'n't make a success of it as captain."

"You know I don't agree with you there, Morny."

"Hadn't you better desert me, like the rest, and back up Jimmy Silver," broke out Mornington, bitterly and scornfully. "I shouldn't be surprised if you did."

"I think you would be surprised, Morny; and you know I sha'n't do it, anyhow. It won't be pleasant to play in such a team; but I'm sticking to you, of course. If you're determined to keep on like this—"

"What can I do?" exclaimed Mornington savagely. "Jimmy Silver set the example of standing out of the team. The other fellows followed it. Even the Modern fellows did. I'm left to make up a team the best way I can, and nobody who can play cricket will come into it. Do you want me to go over to Greyfriars to-morrow with a team of two—you and me?"

"You must take a full team, of course."

"Then how am I to make it up without paying those duffers, if the cricketers boycott the team?"

"By doing the right thing, Morny," said Erroll quietly. "The trouble began by your putting Smythe and Howard and Tracy into the eleven. They can't play cricket, and everybody knows they can't. It's asking for a licking to play them. Cut them out!"

"I can't!"

"If you dropped them, as you know you ought, the other fellows would come round, and Jimmy Silver would be the first. You can't expect him to play in a match he knows must be a defeat, because you persist in putting in three silly fools who don't know a wicket from a wicketkeeper."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"You know why I put them in!" he snapped. "I promised them places in the next match for their votes at the election. I was fixing up a fag match for to-morrow, so that I could keep my word without any damage being done. Then Wharton offered to replay the match to-morrow—the one Smythe mucked up by his trickery last week. I was forced to accept Wharton's offer, and we're booked to play Greyfriars. I've got to keep my word to Smythe, and play him and his friends."

"You oughtn't to have made such a promise."

"It's easy enough to say that. I know it as well as you do, and I'm sorry I did it, if you come to that. But I've done it now, and I can't break my word. Do you advise me to do that?"

Erroll was silent for a moment.

"Couldn't you make some arrangement with Smythe, and buy him off somehow?" he asked.

"I've tried."

"And he refuses?"

"Yes. He's jolly glad to pin me down. The silly fool thinks he can play cricket, and he's dead set on figuring in the Greyfriars match."

"It's a rotten position," said Erroll, after a pause.

"I know it is. But we had a chance of winning, even carrying three passengers, if the other fellows had backed up."

"You couldn't expect them to, under the circumstances. And there wasn't a chance, Morny. The match will be touch and go, anyway. With three hopeless duds in the team we haven't an earthly!"

Mornington grunted.

"Still, the fellows ought to have backed up," he said. "Jimmy Silver said he was going to support me as captain. This is how he's doing it, hang him!"

"I can't blame him. You put three fumbling fools into the team, for a reason you can't explain in public. No wonder all the decent fellows clear out of it."

"Go it!" said Mornington bitterly. "Pile it on!"

"I don't want to do that. But—I wish you'd let me give you some advice, Morny."

"I'd be glad if you would. But it's no good preaching at me. What's done can't be helped."

"Suppose you go to Jimmy Silver?"

Morny rubbed his nose.

"I've been to him already!" he said grimly.

"That was a silly thing to do, Morny—you pitched into Silver for nothing at all. It was your own fault, not his, that everything's gone wrong. Go to Jimmy Silver, and put it to him frankly—tell him you're in a scrape, and ask him, as a friend, to help you out of it."

Morny set his lips.

"After punching his nose an hour ago!" he said.

"Never mind that. He will do the best he can for Rookwood, if not for you."

"I'm not goin' to humble myself to him."

Erroll looked impatient.

"Look here, Morny, you're in the wrong, and you ought to own up to it," he said.

"You can't take that team of prize idiots over to Greyfriars to-morrow, just to satisfy your silly pride."

Mornington started.

This was unusually plain language from his patient chum.

There was a tap at the door in the pause that followed, and Jimmy Silver looked into the study.

Mornington gave him a grim look.

"Come in," he said, with a sneer. "Have you come to finish that little affair that Erroll interrupted in your study? I'm ready!"

Jimmy Silver gave him a cold, quiet look.

"I haven't come here to row with you, Mornington," he said. "If you're in that temper, I'd better go, and nothing said. But—"

"Don't go," said Erroll quickly. "We were

just speaking of you, Jimmy. I think you ought to help Morny out of the scrape he's got into."

"I'm willing."

Mornington compressed his lips. He was trying to overcome his savage temper, but he found it hard.

"Well, if you can do anythin', I'll be glad," he said ungraciously. "I'm in a scrape, no mistake about that. I don't want to take a team of duds over to Greyfriars to-morrow. But what's to be done? Everybody else has cleared out of the eleven—including yourself."

"You're still determined to play Smythe & Co.?"

"I've got to. I've promised the cads. You needn't tell me I'd no right to make such a promise, for such a reason. I've had that from Erroll a dozen times. Besides, I know it." Morny paused a moment.

"Look here, Silver, I know it was a rotten trick, baggin' votes at the election by such methods. I did it carelessly, without thinkin'—never meanin' to let Smythe into a match that mattered. I know I oughtn't to have done it. I wouldn't do it over again. But it's his done. I can't break my word to the rotters; an' you wouldn't advise me to do that?"

Jimmy Silver's face softened a little. A confession of wrong-doing from the lofty Morny was rather unexpected; and Jimmy knew it cost him a good deal to make it.

"Well, I've been thinking the matter over," said Jimmy Silver slowly. "You mayn't believe it, Morny, but I really wish you well, and I'd like to see you make a success of your job. I think I can help you."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Erroll.

Mornington looked at the late junior captain very curiously.

"If you mean that—" he began.

"I shouldn't say it if I didn't mean it."

"Well, go ahead, then."

"It all hinges on Smythe & Co.," said Jimmy. "I'm not going to preach. We'll let it go that you've landed yourself to play them. But if they play, the match is a goner. No good anybody else going over to Greyfriars with them to gather up a trumping licking." But if those three fools would stand out—

"They won't!"

"They might be persuaded to."

"I've tried that," said Mornington impatiently.

"Leave it to me, then," said Jimmy Silver. "I think I can persuade them to see reason on the subject."

"My hat! You must be a giddy magician, then!"

"Leave it at that," said Jimmy Silver. "I'll speak to the fellows, and get them to join up again. You can depend on Lovell and me, and the other fellows will come round when they know Smythe & Co. are not in the team. You can rely on that."

Morny drew a deep breath.

"But they won't stand out, and I can't turn 'em down," he said.

"Leave that to me, I tell you. Now, we've got to get off early to-morrow," said Jimmy. "Smythe & Co. have permission to leave early, as members of the team. They'll start with us. On the way, I'm going to use my eloquence on them, and I'm certain I can persuade them to see reason. We shall have to get leave for three extra players to go as reserves. That's easy enough. And now, Morny, draw up a fresh list, for goodness' sake, and put it on the board before the fellows talk themselves into a fit."

Morny grinned faintly.

"You're asking me to leave a lot to you, he said, "and you're not explainin' very clearly. I don't believe Smythe will give in for any consideration whatever."

"I guarantee that."

"You've got some hold on the rotter, do you mean?"

"You'll have to leave all that to me. But I answer for it that if you're willing to do so, I'll see that you reach Greyfriars with a good team."

Morny laughed.

"I can't do better than accept that offer, Erroll," he said.

"Jump at it!" said Erroll.

"Well, I'll jump at it, then," said Mornington. "Done, Jimmy Silver!"

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy Silver left the study, and Morny knitted his brows in deep thought.

THE POPULAR.—No. 230.



VAL MORNINGTON.

The New Cricket Skipper of the Fourth.

"Hansom's Mistake!"—A Rollicking Tale of Rookwood Next Week!

"He must have some hold over Smythe," he said slowly. "Smythe wouldn't let up simply for bein' asked."

"You can trust him, anyway."

"Oh, yes; I suppose so."

Just before bed-time there was a new list on the board—which caused fierce indignation in the fat breast of Tubby Muffin. Muffin's name no longer adorned the list, and Tubby was no longer in need of Jimmy Silver's bat, with which to knock up centuries at Greyfriars. There were other indignant duds as well as Reginald Muffin. But nobody heeded them or their indignation.

The new list gave satisfaction. There were fourteen names in it. Jimmy Silver had induced the cricketers to join up again, on the assurance that Smythe & Co. would be standing out. Smythe & Co.'s names still figured in the list, making it up to the unusual total of fourteen, which was rather a puzzle to all who read it.

For Adolphus Smythe, consulted on the subject, loudly declared that he hadn't the faintest intention of standing out, and Howard and Tracy heartily concurred.

"But Silver says you're going to stand out!" Conroy told them.

"Silver's an ass!" was Smythe's reply.

Whereupon the Australian junior hurried back to Jimmy Silver.

"Smythe says he's still in the team!" he announced.

"His name doesn't do any harm on the board, does it?" asked Jimmy.

"Not if he doesn't play to-morrow."

"Well, he won't play to-morrow."

"He says he will!"

"Let him!"

"Look here, you're sure of it, Jimmy Silver?"

"Quite!"

"Blessed if I understand this game!" said Conroy, in perplexity.

"You'll understand to-morrow."

"Oh, all right!"

And so the matter ended for that night.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Perplexing Position!

MORNY's face was clouded the next morning in class.

He was worried. Erroll's advice and his own common-sense led him to rely upon Jimmy Silver to rescue him from the scrape he had fallen into. But he could not see light. Jimmy Silver, certainly, was not the kind of fellow to "take out of his hat." But it really looked as if Jimmy had been talking out of his hat this time.

Classes did not last long for the cricketers that morning. The members of the junior team had leave to quit classes early, on account of the long journey to Greyfriars, and leave had been given for three reserves to go with the rest.

At eleven o'clock fourteen fellows came out of the Form-rooms and prepared for the journey.

There was Morny, Erroll, Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, Conroy, Van Ryn, Selwyn, Tommy Dodd, Cook, and Doyle, and Smythe, Howard, and Tracy.

The nuts of the Shell looked self-satisfied and supercilious as usual.

Evidently they had, so far, no intention of standing out of the Greyfriars match.

Mornington looked at Jimmy Silver.

"All ready!" said the latter cheerily.

"Are we all startin'?" asked Morny.

"Why not?"

"Look here, Jimmy Silver," said Mornington, sinking his voice, "I'm relying on you, an' you know it. If you're pulling my leg—"

"I'm not!"

"You said that Smythe & Co. are standin' out!" muttered Mornington. "I can't turn them down, and you know it! But if they play at Greyfriars, the other fellows won't!"

"That's so."

Mornington knitted his brows.

"Are you makin' a fool of me?" he muttered fiercely.

"No."

"Well, I suppose I've got to see it through, as I've agreed," said Morny. "I don't understand what you've got up your sleeve, Jimmy Silver."

"That doesn't matter. Let's get off."

Fourteen juniors walked down to Coombe

to take the train for Latcham Junction, where there was a change.

Smythe & Co. walked with the rest.

The party was very silent; most of the fellows were more or less perplexed by the strange state of affairs.

Only Jimmy Silver, Lovell, and Raby seemed quite placid.

Jimmy Silver's chums were evidently in his confidence, and had faith in the persuasive powers he intended to exert upon Smythe & Co. before they arrived at Greyfriars.

It was a bright and sunny morning, glorious weather for cricket, and Jimmy Silver & Co., at least, were in great spirits.

The cricketers turned into the short cut through the wood. Jimmy Silver looked at his watch as they walked along the leafy footpath.

"You're taking the tickets, Morny?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Cut ahead and take them, then. There may be a crowd, and we don't want to risk losing the train. If we lose the connection at Latcham, we're dished."

Morny glanced at him.

"Does that mean that you're goin' to jaw to Smythe now?" he asked in a low voice.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"Well, yes," he said, also in a low tone. "I'd rather everybody didn't hear what I've got to say to Adolphus. It's private—in fact, very private."

"You've got some hold on the cad, and you're goin' to make him give in!" muttered Morny.

"I'm not going to explain. You've agreed to leave it to me."

"Oh, I'll leave it to you fast enough, if you can induce that fool to let up on me, and keep out of the team, and I'll be your debtor for life into the bargain!"

"Done!" said Jimmy.

"Come on, Erroll!" called out Mornington. "We'll get ahead and see about the tickets."

"Right-ho!" answered Erroll.

The two chums quickened their pace, and soon disappeared in the windings of the footpath.

Jimmy Silver & Co. sauntered on in a more leisurely way.

Smythe and Howard and Tracy were chatting to one another; the rest of the party had nothing to say to them.

Adolphus was expatiating on the game he intended to play at Greyfriars, rather enjoying the restive looks of the other fellows as they heard him.

"We stop here!" said Jimmy Silver suddenly.

Adolphus Smythe glanced round.

The juniors had reached the middle of the wood, and there certainly seemed nothing to stop there for, so far as Adolphus could see.

"What are we stoppin' for?" asked Smythe.

"For you, my dear infant!"

"I'm not stoppin'!"

"Your mistake! You are, old bird!" answered Jimmy Silver cheerily. And he put his arm through Smythe's. "This way!"

Adolphus struggled.

"Let go, you fool!" he shouted.

"This way!" repeated Jimmy coolly.

He drew Adolphus, in spite of his resistance, off the footpath into the wood, much to the surprise and indignation of the dandy of the Shell.

Lovell had taken Howard's arm, and Raby performed the same service for Tracy.

In the grip of the three chums, the nuts of the Shell were led off the path, wriggling and loudly expostulating, and the rest of the party stared at the scene in blank astonishment.

"What on earth's this game?" demanded Conroy.

"Leggo!" yelled Smythe. "I'll punch you, Jimmy Silver!"

"You'll lose the train!" called out Tommy Dodd.

"Oh, we'll soon be after you!" said Jimmy Silver. "We're going to have a heart-to-heart talk with Smythe. We're going to urge him to stand out of the team, for the sake of the side."

"I won't!" yelled Adolphus.

"Well, we'll see what eloquence will do. You other fellows keep on. Tell Morny we're coming in time for the train."

"Oh, all right!" said the amazed Conroy. The cricketers walked on, while Adolphus

Smythe & Co. struggled in vain in the grasp of Jimmy Silver & Co. In a few minutes Conroy and the rest were out of sight.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver's Way!

JIMMY SILVER watched the cricketers out of sight along the footpath, still keeping an iron grasp on Adolphus' arm.

Then he turned to Adolphus, with a smile. "Now we're going to have a little talk!" he remarked.

"Let go my arm!" roared Adolphus.

"I'd rather keep hold, if you don't mind," smiled Jimmy Silver. "You see, you might bolt. You're such a slippery customer!"

"But I do mind!" snapped Adolphus.

"Same thing, old nut; I'm keeping hold!"

"You cheeky cad—" began Tracy.

"Keep that ass quiet, Raby! Knock his head against a tree!"

"What-ho!" grinned Raby.

Bump!

"Yooop!" roared Tracy. "You rotter! Ow!"

"Now, Adolphus—"

"I'm not goin' to talk to you!" said Smythe fiercely. "I know what you want, and there's nothin' doin'! I'm goin' on to Greyfriars!"

"Let's have it out—"

"I'm goin' on, I tell you, and if you don't let go my arm, Jimmy Silver, I'll punch your head!"

"Punch away!" answered Jimmy cheerily.

"I'd just as soon thrash you before I talk to you!"

Smythe of the Shell clenched his hands, but he unclenched them again. He had no chance in a fistic encounter with the chief of the Fistical Four, and he knew it. He had tried that before, and the results had been too painful.

"Oh, you rotter!" he mumbled.

"I'm quite at your service!" smiled Jimmy Silver. "Are we going to have a talk or a fight first?"

"I—I don't mind talkin' to you, hang you!" mumbled Adolphus.

"That's better! Now, the matter stands like this. About a week ago you dished us over the Greyfriars match. You spoofed us into getting into a motor-car, and sent us wandering, while you took a team of born idiots to Greyfriars to play as the Rookwood junior team. They walked all over you, as anybody but a born idiot might have expected."

"Look here—"

"Wharton's offered to play the match over again now he knows the facts, and the offer's accepted. You've got the check and impudence to stick yourself in the team, after the exhibition you made a week ago on the same ground! You've pinned down Morny on a rotten promise he made you at the election. Now, I put it to you, Smythe, that this isn't playing the game."

"Rats!"

"I request you, as a decent chap, to stand out of the team, as Morny isn't in a position to turn you down. Leave the match to fellows who can play it."

"Rot!"

"Will you stand out?"

"No!" howled Smythe. "An' now let me go, you rotter!"

"Do you fellows say the same?" asked Jimmy, glancing at the angry faces of Howard and Tracy.

"Yes!" said Tracy at once.

"Just the same, word for word!" growled Howard.

"And now let us go, and get after the fellows!" said Adolphus. "You're only wastin' time, Jimmy Silver! I told you there was nothin' doin'!"

"That's your mistake, Adolphus. I've given you a chance to do the right thing. As you won't, you'll be made to!"

Jimmy Silver fumbled in a pocket with his left hand, and drew out a coil of thin but strong cord.

Smythe & Co. stared at it.

For the first time a suspicion of Jimmy Silver's little scheme dawned upon them.

"Wha-a-at's that for?" stammered Adolphus.

"That's for you, old bird!"

"Why, you—you—"

Jimmy Silver looped the cord round Adolphus' wrists. At that the dandy of the Shell began to struggle again. An iron grip

on his neck forced him to his knees in the grass, and there was a loud rap as his head came into contact with the trunk of a tree.
 "Yaroooh!"
 "Better take it quietly, Smythey! You've got to take it, you know!" said Jimmy Silver, with deadly earnestness.
 "Ow, ow!"

Adolphus made no further resistance. He had to give in, and he did not see any use in getting a thrashing first.

Jimmy Silver tied his wrists together securely, and then ran the cord round the tree-trunk and tied it there.

Tracy and Howard watched that proceeding with dire apprehensions, aware that their own turn was coming.

But Lovell and Raby held the Shell fellows fast, and there was no escape for them.

Having finished with Smythe, Jimmy Silver turned to his comrades.
 "Look here—" began Tracy furiously.
 "Enough said! Give me your paws!"
 "I won't!" howled Tracy.

"Knock his head, Raby! He wants another!"
 "Bump!"
 "Ow! Yow! Stoppit!"

"Have another, old nut?" asked Raby affably.
 "Yow-ow! No! Oh!"

Tracy's hands were tied together, and then to the cord on the tree where Adolphus Smythe stood, with a scowling countenance.

Howard was the next victim, and he did not venture to resist.

In a couple of minutes he was secured with his nutty pals.

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned as they looked at them. The three nuts of the Shell were standing round the tree, secured by the cord round the trunk. There was no escape for them. Jimmy had done his work too well for that.

Certainly, they could call for help; but they had been taken off the footpath into the wood, and the path was not much frequented. It was not likely that help would come to the hapless nuts.

"I think they'll do!" remarked Jimmy Silver.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You horrid rotters!" groaned Adolphus.
 "You're not goin' to leave us here like this! You dare not!"

"I rather think we do!" grinned Jimmy Silver.
 "Try to imagine that you're playing at 'Babes in the Wood,' old top!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I've asked Newcome to give you a look-in after lessons," continued Jimmy Silver.
 "He will come along presently, and let you loose—after dinner. When it's too late for you to bump along to Greyfriars, you know!"

"Oh, you rotter!"
 "Don't call me names when I've been so good to you!" said Jimmy Silver reproachfully.
 "I've asked Newcome to bring you some sandwiches, as it won't be safe to let you loose in time for dinner."

"Hang Newcome!"
 Adolphus Smythe was evidently not in a grateful mood, in spite of Jimmy Silver's thoughtfulness.

"Well, ta-ta, old beans!" said Jimmy Silver.
 "I hope you'll have a good time studying Nature's beauties, and all that! Come on, you fellows!"

The chums of the Fourth turned away and walked back to the footpath, followed by wrathful yells from Smythe & Co.

They did not heed the yelling of the hapless nuts.
 "Uncle James" was not likely to be turned from his purpose by the objections of the nutty pals of the Shell.

In a cheerful mood, the three Fourth Formers trotted along the footpath, and arrived in the village.
 "Lots of time!" remarked Jimmy Silver, glancing at the station clock. "Hallo! Here's Morny!"

Valentine Mornington was waiting for them at the entrance to the station, with a cloud upon his brow. He stared at the three juniors, evidently surprised to see them arrive without Smythe & Co.

"Where's Smythe?" he ejaculated, as they came up.
 "Staying behind," answered Jimmy Silver carelessly.

Mornington drew a deep breath.
 "You—you've persuaded him?" he stammered.
 "Yes."

"And—and Howard and Tracy?"
 "The whole merry family! They're standing out of the match, and everything in the garden is lovely!"
 "Blessed if I know how you managed it! Smythe was dead-set on playing at Greyfriars. You must have a hold on him somehow."
 "Well, I had a hold on him, certainly!" said Jimmy Silver, with a grin. "You don't know what a persuasive chap I can be, too, when I begin. After a little argument they yielded the point, as I thought they would. Let's get in, Morny; the train's nearly due."

They went into the station.

"Feeling merry and bright—what?" he asked, with a smile.
 Mornington smiled and nodded.

"Toppin'!" he said. "I don't know how you worked it to get me out of my scrape, old fellow, but I'm no end obliged! And—and"—Morny paused, and lowered his voice—
 "I'm sorry we had that trouble in your study last evenin', Silver! It was my rotten temper! I'm sorry!"

"All serene!" answered Jimmy cheerfully.
 "And—and about that election bizney," said Mornington, colouring. "I really acted without thinkin' much in bribin' Smythe & Co. to vote for me. I really didn't realise at the time that it was a low-down trick. It didn't make any difference to the result, as it happens, as you stood out of the election. But—but I wish I hadn't done it; it wasn't playing the game, an' I know it. I'd like you to believe that, Silver."

"Of course I believe it," answered Jimmy.
 "It's jolly good of you to back me up



BOWLED AND CAUGHT SILVER!—Jimmy Silver sent down the next ball. Smack came the bat, and the ball flew. Then the bowler was seen to spring into the air, and there was a faint "click," as the ball rested in his palm. "Caught and bowled Silver!" cried Lovell. (See Chapter 5.)

Mornington was still in a puzzled mood, but his handsome face was very bright now. It was a very cheerful party of cricketers that crowded into the train for Latcham. And most cheerful of all was Valentine Mornington, looking forward eagerly to the match in which, for the first time, he was to figure as captain of Rookwood juniors.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Morny's Match!

HALLO, hallo, hallo!" The powerful voice of Bob Cherry of the Greyfriars Remove greeted the Rookwooders as they poured from the train at Courtfield.

Bob Cherry and Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had come to meet the cricketers at the station.

"Jolly glad to see you chaps!" said Harry Wharton, as he shook hands with Jimmy. "The last match was rather a joke, but there will be a different sort of game this time."

"The differentfulness will be terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh—a remark that made the Rookwooders smile.

"It will!" said Jimmy Silver. "By the way, you know Mornington—he's our skipper now. Is that your brake?"

"That's it! Tumble in!"
 In a few minutes the cricketers were rolling away cheerily to Greyfriars School. After a hospitable lunch they repaired to the cricket-ground.

Jimmy Silver clapped Mornington on the shoulder.

in this way, considering that I've bagged your job, in a way!" muttered Mornington. Jimmy Silver laughed.

"All serene!"
 "Wharton's ready for you, Morny!" chimed in Erroll.

"Right-ho!" said Morny.
 He tossed with Wharton for the innings. It fell to Rookwood to bat first, and Mornington opened with Jimmy Silver at the other end.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh bowled the first over for Greyfriars.

The dusky junior was at the top of his form, as he soon showed. Morny knocked away a couple of balls, and then one for 2 runs. But the fourth ball whipped his leg stump from the ground.

Morny's face was a study as he looked down at his wrecked wicket.
 "How's that?" sang out half a dozen voices.
 "Out!"

Morny seemed to gulp something down. It was cruel luck, at the beginning of his innings. He suppressed his feelings as he came back to the pavilion with his almost unused bat.

"Man in, Erroll!" he muttered.
 "Hard cheese, old chap!" muttered Erroll. "It's all right. Get in!"

Erroll went to the wicket.
 Mornington stood looking on with a clouded brow. The Greyfriars bowlers seemed in great form, and their field was very much on the alert. Rookwood wickets went down rather fast. Erroll put up 10 runs, and Jimmy Silver the same number; but after them there was a "procession." There were

There is a Top-hole Yarn of Jimmy Silver & Co. in This Week's "Boys' Friend."

no "duck's eggs" scored for Rookwood, but there were several ones and twos. All down for 36 was the result after quite a brief innings.

"Better luck next time!" Jimmy Silver remarked to his skipper. "Keep smiling!"

Mornington nodded without speaking. Greyfriars batted well. Jimmy Silver, the champion bowler of the Rookwood team, did well; but the other bowlers did not seem quite up to the form of the Greyfriars bats. Harry Wharton & Co. totalled 56 for their first innings.

"Oh, my hat!" was Arthur Edward Lovell's comment.

Jimmy Silver and Erroll were put on to open the second innings for Rookwood.

This time the bad luck came Jimmy's way, and he was caught out by Frank Nugent for 4 runs.

Erroll was dismissed for 8. Lovell was keeping his end up, when Mornington came in to join him.

Then there was a turn of the tide, exemplifying once more the glorious uncertainty of the great summer game.

Four, and four more, from Morny, brought cheers from the Rookwooders. Hurree Singh tackled his wicket in vain, and it was tackled in vain by Nugent, Squiff, Linley, and Wharton.

Other bats came and went; but Mornington remained "set" at his wicket, piling up the runs.

Erroll watched him with a smiling face. He rejoiced more in his chum's success than he would have rejoiced in any triumph of his own.

"Good man!" said Jimmy Silver heartily. "Oh, good man! There he goes again—they can't touch him."

"That was a narrow squeak!" remarked Conroy, as Morny got back to his wicket, a second before it crashed under a rapid throw from the field.

"Not out!"
"A miss is as good as a mile!" said Jimmy Silver. "A batsman who never takes chances never gets anything."

"Bravo, Morny!"
It looked as if Morny was set for the rest of the innings; and so it turned out. There were 40 runs to his credit when Rookwood were all down for 85—Morny not out.

Then there was an adjournment for tea.

After tea came the Greyfriars second innings, with Wharton and Bob Cherry at the wickets. Mornington and his men went into the field, and Jimmy Silver was given the ball for the first over.

"Mop 'em up, old chap!" said Mornington; and Jimmy Silver smiled. Complete cordiality reigned now between the old rivals of the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

But Jimmy did not succeed in "mopping" them up in the first over. The Greyfriars innings opened well, and runs piled up, by way of a start. Wharton was joined by Squiff, and the two of them made the running at a great rate.

The Rookwooders looked serious when the score stood at 30 for one wicket down. Greyfriars wanted only 35 to tie, with a heap of wickets in hand to do it with, and Bob Cherry was heard to remark that they would do it "on their heads."

At that point Morny caught Wharton out, and his place was taken by Vernon-Smith, who began with a four. There was a cheer from the Greyfriars crowd. Six more for the over made the Greyfriars fellows remark that it was all over bar shouting, and the Rookwooders were rather inclined to agree with them.

"For goodness' sake give them gyp, Jimmy!" said Mornington, as he slung the ball to Jimmy Silver for the next over.

"I'll do my best, old chap."

"Put your beef into it. We're beaten to the wide if you fall us."

Jimmy Silver nodded; he knew that. With nine wickets in hand, Greyfriars wanted only 25 to tie. But again there came a turn of the tide. Jimmy Silver was in great fettle now. Squiff went down, and then Tom Brown, and then Linley, and loud cheers from Rookwood greeted the hat-trick. But Jimmy Silver was not finished yet. Two more wickets fell in the over, only 5 runs being scored.

Mornington clapped Jimmy on the shoulder as the field crossed over, his eyes glistening.

"Great, old chap!" he said joyfully. "Simply great! I wish I could give you the next over, by gad!"

"Seven down for 45!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell. "We may do it yet, with luck. Go it, Morny!"

Mornington was bowling now.

Vernon-Smith's wicket fell, and the Bounder of Greyfriars went out. There were 5 runs in the over; eight down for 50! Then Jimmy Silver had the ball again.

All eyes were on Jimmy as he went on. Greyfriars wanted 15 to tie, 16 to win, and they had two wickets to do it with. Jimmy's manner was very quiet, but there was a gleam in his eyes.

Mornington watched him anxiously.

Upon his old rival depended whether his first match was a win or a defeat; and the difference meant a great deal to Mornington.

"Bravo!" he almost gasped, as the wicket fell.

"Nine down!" chortled Lovell.

Frank Nugent stole a single run for Greyfriars. Then he hit the ball to the boundary for a 4! 55! There was a breathless hush on the field as Jimmy Silver gripped the round red ball again.

Whiz!

Smack came the bat, and the ball flew.

Then the bowler was seen to jump, and run, and spring into the air, and there was a faint "click" as the ball rested in his palm.

Mornington gave a yell of delight as Jimmy Silver held up the ball, hot from the bat.

"Caught and bowled Silver!" roared Lovell. "Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Jimmy!"
"Rookwood wins! Hurrah!"
Mornington rushed across to Jimmy Silver, and smote him on the shoulder with a mighty smite.

"Good man! Good man!" he gasped. "The goodness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin. "It was touchful and goful, but the esteemed Silver had snatched victory from the jawfulness of defeat."

"Bravo, Jimmy Silver!"
"Good man!"

Rookwood had won by 10 runs! Morny's first match was a success, and he owed it to his old rival. It was Jimmy Silver who had snatched victory from the jaws of defeat.

"How did it go?"
That was the question a score of voices asked, as the Rookwood cricketers returned in the summer dusk.

"My dear chaps, how could it go?" smiled Jimmy Silver. "We won, of course. What with Morny's batting, and—ahem!—somebody else's bowling—"

"Swank!" grinned Newcome. "What did you beat them by? An innings?"

"Not quite."

"Fifty runs?" asked Oswald.

"Less than that."

"How many, then?"

"Ten!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "But ten was as good as a hundred, under the circumstances. Has Smythe come home?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, they're home," chuckled Newcome.

"I let 'em loose after dinner, the dear boys. They seemed in a bad temper about something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smythe says he is going to thrash you and Morny—"

"The dear man," said Morny. "What does he want to thrash me for?"

"He didn't like being tied to a tree."

"Tied to a tree!" yelled Mornington.

"Was that how you persuaded him not to come to Greyfriars, Jimmy?"

"That was it."

"Oh, gad!"

"The only way, as the chap says in the play," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "As we beat Greyfriars by ten runs, Morny, you can calculate how many they would have beaten us by if Smythe & Co. had been there. But if he wants to thrash us, we'd better go and be thrashed. Come on!"

And Morny and Jimmy Silver repaired to Adolphus Smythe's study. But on their arrival there, it transpired that Adolphus had changed his mind about the thrashing—which was a very fortunate circumstance for Adolphus.

THE END.

(There will be another splendid story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next Tuesday, entitled "Hansom's Mistake!" Do not miss this gripping yarn of Rookwood, boys!)

£1000
IN CASH
AWARDS
See this week's
Wireless
Review
AND SCIENCE WEEKLY
The new AUTHORITATIVE and responsible weekly magazine which deals with "Wireless" from every point of view.
3D. Every Tuesday 3D.
Of All Newspapers

BOXING	BEST BOYS' BOOKS!	SCHOOL
THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY. Fourpence Per Volume.	No. 669.—THE VENGEANCE OF THE TONG. A Real Tip-Top Thriller of Roving Adventure in Foreign Lands. No. 670.—THE FOURTH MAC. A Superb School Tale of Jimmy Mack & Co. at Haygarth. By JACK NORTH, Author of "Alexander the Great," "A Troubled Term," etc., etc. No. 671.—THE LAD FROM THE LOWER DECK. A Breezy Nautical Yarn of Dare-devil Adventure at Sea. By STANTON HOPK. No. 672.—RENEGADE CAMP. A Full-of-Punch Story of Boxing and Lumber Camp Life. By ERIC W. TOWNSEND, Author of "Outlaws of the Yukon," "The Man from Brooding Wild," etc., etc.	
THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY. Fourpence Per Volume.	No. 287.—THE OUTLAW OF YUGO-SLAVIA. A Tale of Sexton Blake and Tinker, introducing GRANITE GRANT (King's Spy) and MILE JULIE. No. 288.—DOWN EAST; or, Tracked through the Slums. A Tale of Sexton Blake, Tinker, and a Novelist in Thrilling Phases of Life and Adventure in East London. No. 289.—THE GREAT REVUE MYSTERY; or, The Fourth Wall. A Romance of the Stage and Detective Adventure, involving a Threefold Mystery. No. 290.—THE LAST CLUE. A Fascinating Story of Baffling Mystery and Clever Deduction. By the Author of "The Case of the 'Wizard' Jockey," etc., etc.	
MYSTERY	OUT ON FRIDAY!	ADVENTURE

"The Big Bunter Mystery!" is Next Week's Splendid Story of Greyfriars, Boys!