

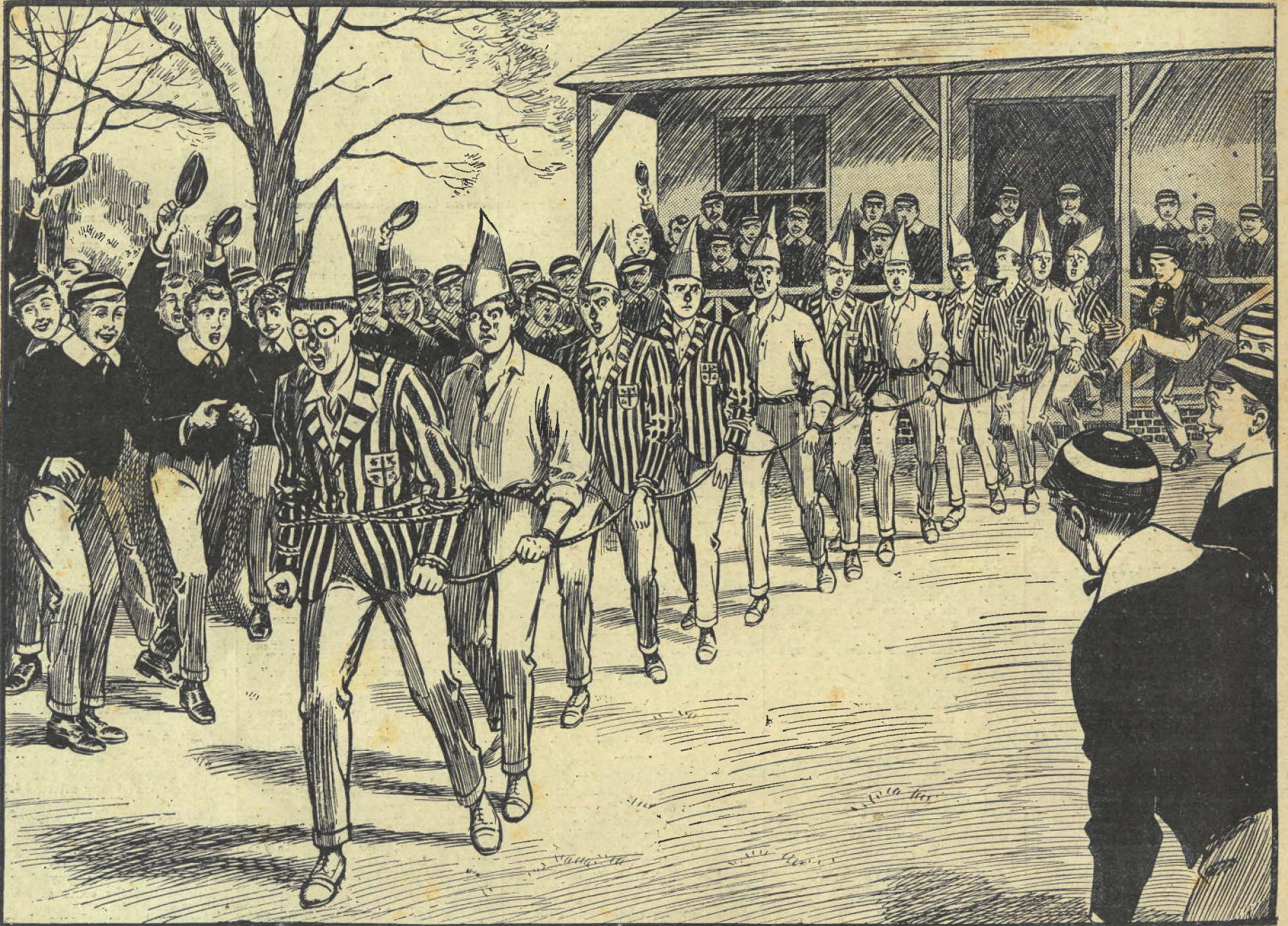
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# The BOYS' FRIEND Id.

No. 723, Vol. XIV. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending April 17th, 1915.]



"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat!" yelled the Greyfriars juniors, as the miserable procession wriggled on like a huge centipede out of the pavilion. The Slackers of Rookwood almost wept with wrath and shame!

## THE SLACKERS OF ROOKWOOD!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale of  
**JIMMY SILVER & CO. By OWEN CONQUEST.**

### The 1st Chapter.

Jimmy Silver Means Business.  
"It won't do!"  
Jimmy Silver brought his fist down on the table in the end study, with a bang that made the table jump, and made his study-mates jump, too.  
Jimmy Silver had been thinking, with wrinkled brows and a glint in his eyes. That bang upon the table was

the outcome of his reflections—apparently of an exasperating nature. But it was certainly an unfortunate moment for that demonstration, even though Jimmy Silver, like the prophet of old, did well to be angry. For Raby was pouring out the tea. The jump Raby gave as the table jumped naturally spoilt his aim with the teapot.

There was a ferocious yell from Lovell as the hot tea came over his knees.  
"Look out, fathead!"  
The startled Raby jerked his arm back to the accompaniment of a wild war-cry from Newcome, who caught the teapot with his chest.  
"Oh, you idiot!"  
"My hat!" gasped Raby, quite

flabbergasted. "Mum-my hat! I  
"Stop pouring out the tea!" shrieked Newcome. "Do you want to drown the study!"  
The tea was still streaming from the pot, fortunately into the sugar-basin now. Raby righted it at last.  
Lovell mopped his knees, and gave Raby looks that ought to have felled him on the study carpet. Newcome mopped his waistcoat, and said things.  
"Twasn't my fault!" said Raby. "How could I help it? When a silly idiot bangs a silly table with his silly fist just when I'm pouring out the silly tea—"  
"Oh, you ass!"  
"Oh, you fathead! I'm scalded!"  
"Look at my bags!"  
"Look at my waistcoat!"  
"Mop the rest of the tea over him!" howled Lovell.  
"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Raby, in alarm. "Mop it over Silver! It

was his fault! The silly jabber-wock made me jump—"  
"So he did," said Lovell, "and he made us jump, too! Now I'll make him jump!"  
Jimmy Silver did jump as the teapot swung round towards him. He jumped up in time to escape the stream, fortunately. But Lovell was not to be denied. His knees were soaked with hot tea, and he was wrathful. And he pursued Jimmy Silver ferociously round the study, teapot in hand.  
"Hold on!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Don't play the goat! Keep that teapot away, you burbler! Gerrot of the way, Raby! Stop, you ass!"  
"Stop him!" yelled Lovell, chasing round the table.  
"Oh, my hat!"  
Raby and Newcome grinned, and  
(Continued on the next page.)

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When finished with, please hand this grand number to a friend, and oblige— YOUR EDITOR.

# THE SLACKERS OF ROOKWOOD!

## BY OWEN CONQUEST.

(Continued from the cover page.)

collared Jimmy Silver. Lovell came up panting with the teapot.

"Now then, where will you have it?"

"Pax!"

"Blow pax! Look at my bags!"

"Look at my waistcoat!"

"Yaroo!" roared Jimmy Silver, as the tea streamed over his trousers.

"Stoppit, you dangerous lunatic! It's hot! Yowowp!"

"Now, his waistcoat!" grinned Newcome. "Fair play all round!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaro-o-o-op! Will you stoppit?"

"Yes—the pot's empty!" said Lovell. "Next time you can moderate your transports when a clumsy chump is pouring out the tea!"

"Oh, you asses!" groaned Jimmy Silver, as he mopped away the warm fluid with his handkerchief, which was soon a stained and limp rag.

"You cuckoo! I've been thinking it out—"

"Thinking what out, fathead?"

"About the Greyfriars match."

"Well, you can think it out next time without banging the table," said Lovell. "All the tea's wasted now, and there isn't any more in the cupboard. That was the last lot."

"Serve you jolly well right for wasting it!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Look here, I suppose you fellows agree that something's got to be done?"

"Yes; we shall have to borrow some tea from Hooker, I suppose."

"Blow the tea!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "I'm thinking of the cricket match!"

"Blow the cricket match!" retorted Lovell. "I'm thinking of the tea!"

Jimmy Silver gave a snort of wrath.

"You silly ass—"

"You burbling cuckoo!"

And, with that exchange of compliments, Lovell left the end study, to borrow a new supply of tea from Hooker of the Fourth.

Jimmy Silver sat down again with a growl. Jimmy had been giving that important subject a lot of hard thinking, and the lack of enthusiasm on the part of his study-mates exasperated him.

It really was an important matter. Every fellow in the Fourth agreed that Smythe of the Shell was about the "rottenest" junior cricket captain that Rookwood could possibly have.

Smythe of the Shell was perfectly indifferent to their opinion on the subject. He went on his way loftily, and made no sign, like Jove of old on high Olympus.

The only thing that could possibly worry Smythe was a new election and a majority against him in the votes of the junior sports club.

And that couldn't happen. For the junior club was almost equally divided between the juniors of the Modern and the Classical sides at Rookwood. And Moderns and Classicals could not agree upon a candidate.

Smythe was a Classical, but then Smythe was in the Shell. The Shell stood upon their dignity as "Middle School," and not a Shell fellow would have voted for a candidate from the Fourth Form. It happened that there were more Classicals than Moderns in the Shell. So Smythe was a safe Shell candidate.

The Fourth Form was more numerous, and could have beaten the Shell easily in an election, if they could have come to an agreement. But no Classical would vote for the

Modern man, and no Modern would vote for the Classical man.

Indeed, at the last election all the Classical Fourth had voted for Smythe to avert the fearful danger of having a Modern junior skipper.

Anything was better than that, from a Classical point of view—the rivalry between the two sides at Rookwood being very keen, especially in the lower Forms.

Jimmy Silver had averted that danger—they had a Classical skipper. But he was a first-class rotter, as the juniors elegantly expressed it, and under his guidance the junior eleven was going to "pot."

Hardly a Modern chap was put into the team, which was a very sore point with Tommy Dodd & Co., the heroes of the Modern side.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. might have pardoned that—they were very much down on the Moderns. But hardly a Classical who could play was put in, and that was the rub. Smythe of the Shell exercised his powers as a skipper to the full, so far as the selection of the team went. And he seemed to regard the making up of a team as a sort of family arrangement. His friends in the Shell filled most of the places. If he took players from the Fourth, they were usually slackers like Townsend and Topham.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had sworn a solemn swear that the cricket season shouldn't be "mucked up" as the footer had been.

But without coming to an agreement with their old rivals of the Modern side, there was no giving Smythe a fall. And all attempts at a "rapprochement" with the Moderns had ended in free fights, so far.

Such was the state of affairs which gave Jimmy Silver food for thought, and caused him to bang the table in the end study with such disastrous results.

Jimmy Silver sat with a gloomy brow. He felt that he was not getting the proper amount of support from the Co. Lovell came back into the study with a fresh supply of tea, borrowed from Hooker, and Jimmy looked at him with a glum eye.

Lovell did not seem to mind. He made the tea, and cheerfully asked Jimmy Silver if he would have some.

"Oh, pour it out!" said Silver misanthropically. "There's nothing to think of in this study except guzzling, I see. It doesn't matter if Greyfriars lick us! We're used to being licked; ain't we? Didn't they go away cracking their ribs over the last footer match? I thought that chap Cherry would have a fit when he got the pass that idiot Smythe intended for that other idiot Tracy. Let's have tea! Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we'll be licked!"

"Well, you are a cheery soul!" said Lovell. "Got any more nice consoling jaw like that? Reel it off, and don't mind us!"

"Something ought to be done!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"I suppose we can't lynch Smythe?"

"I'd like to!" said Jimmy Silver savagely. "The ass wouldn't be so bad if he knew how to make up a team. Tain't that I want to play myself—though I do want to, as a matter of fact! I'd forgive him if he'd put that Modern worm Dodd in. Dodd can play. But what's the good of a set of dummies like Smythe and Howard and Tracy and Townsend and the rest going over to play Greyfriars?"

"Not much good," agreed Raby.

"But they're going, and we can't help it. Smythe's skipper, and we elected him."

"It's all the fault of those Modern cads," said Newcome. "If they'd vote for one of us we'd soon shift Smythe out."

"But they won't, the worms."

"Well, we'll get up a game among ourselves while they're gone," said Lovell. "We'll play cricket while they're playing the giddy ox."

"We're not the junior eleven; it don't count. Smythe has got to be prevented from making a giddy ass of himself."

"Can't be done. He was born, not made," said Lovell. "Asinus nascitur, non fit," added Lovell brilliantly—a little joke quite worthy of a study on the Classical side, where they patronised Latin.

Jimmy Silver declined to grin. He did not feel like grinning.

"Something's going to be done," he said determinedly.

"What?" asked the Co., in chorus.

"Blessed if I know," grunted Silver.

"Same here! Have some of this cake, and stop growling."

Jimmy Silver had some of the cake, but he did not stop growling. It was a little too thick for a topping cricketer like Jimmy Silver to be left at Rookwood while a set of "burlbers" went over to Greyfriars to play the giddy ox.

Jimmy Silver did a big think while he demolished the cake, and suddenly he uttered an exclamation.

"I've got it!"

"The cake?" asked Lovell. "I can see you have. Pass it this way!"

"Fathead! Come along!"

"Whittier, O King?"

"We're going to see Smythe."

"Old Bulkeley came down on us last time we ragged him," said Raby doubtfully.

"This isn't a rag. Come on!"

"Oh, all right!"

The Co. followed Jimmy Silver from the study. They were quite willing to back up their chum, even if it led to a "rag" and having old Bulkeley down on them again.

### The 2nd Chapter. A Warning to Adolphus.

Adolphus Smythe, the ornament of the Shell and junior captain of Rookwood, reposed in an armchair in his elegantly-furnished study. He had a cigarette between his lips. That was one of his little ways. It was a most expensive gold-tipped cigarette. Adolphus was an expensive youth.

Three juniors of the Fourth were in the doorway, talking to Smythe, as the Classical four came along the passage. They were Tommy Dodd and Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook of the Modern side. They were all talking at once, and their voices were not gentle nor were their remarks complimentary. Adolphus surveyed them with calm disdain as he blew out little clouds of smoke. Adolphus looked more Olympian than ever at that moment.

"So they're playing the giddy ox, as usual!" Tommy Dodd was saying.

"It's making a howling ass of yourself you're after," said Doyle.

"You want to give the Greyfriars fellows another cackle," said Cook.

Adolphus Smythe raised a manufactured hand to remove the cigarette from his lips to speak.

"Shut the door after you!" was his remark.

"Let's have him out of that chair and scrag him!" said Cook.

"There's a prefect down the passage," growled Tommy Dodd.

"Run away and play, dear boys!" said Smythe calmly. "Your voices get on my nerves a bit. I can't stand

you Modern fellows, you're so raucous."

"You've really settled about the team?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"Yaas."

"Not a Modern fellow in it!" howled Doyle.

Smythe shook his head.

"I want cricketers," he explained.

"Cricketers! There isn't one of your silly gang who can play cricket."

"By gad, these Modern kids are noisy!" said Smythe. "How's a fellow to put up with these young hooligans, Tracy, old man?"

Tracy shook his head.

"Don't ask me," he replied.

"Why don't they go away and study stinks or mug up German? That's what Modern kids are born for. I wonder what they think they know about cricket?"

Tommy Dodd & Co. shook their fists at the placid Smythe, and debated whether they should rag him and chance the prefect. The Fistical Four arrived in the doorway, and Tommy Dodd glared at them. But the rivals of Rookwood met without a rag for once.

"Don't go," said Jimmy Silver.

"I've come here to talk to that tailor's dummy, and you Modern kids can't back me up."

"I've been talking to him," growled Tommy Dodd. "He hasn't the sense of a bunny rabbit. He's going to let Rookwood down again. All because you Classical worms won't vote for a decent candidate."

"All because you Modern idiots won't, you mean," said Lovell hotly.

"Why, you ass—"

"Why, you fathead—"

"Peace, my infants!" said Jimmy Silver. "Smythe's our game now. I'm going to try to bring the sublime Smythe to reason."

"By gad," said Adolphus, lighting a fresh cigarette, "it's a regular deputation! Any more fags coming here to jaw?"

"I'm going to talk to you like a Dutch uncle," said Jimmy Silver.

"You've made up a rotten team for Greyfriars. You've put in every slacker you could dig up, and left out every fellow who can play. Well, I want you to make some changes."

Smythe yawned.

"I want you," continued Jimmy Silver calmly, "to make seven changes at least. Put in us four and these three Modern chaps."

"We'd be satisfied with that," said Tommy Dodd. "We're willing to be reasonable."

"Well, do you agree, Smythe?"

"Hardly!" yawned Smythe.

"You're going on your own way?"

"Yaas."

"Well, then, now I come to the second point. Do you think that your team can beat Greyfriars Remove?"

"Yaas."

"You don't think they'll beat you with an innings to spare?"

"Very improbable, dear boy."

"It's a dead cert," growled Tommy Dodd. "If Greyfriars bat first they'll declare, and you'll have to follow on your innings, and they'll beat you with runs to spare and without batting again."

"What a pleasant prospect," said Smythe pleasantly.

"Yes, you care a fat lot if Rookwood is let down all through the season," growled Lovell savagely.

"By gad!"

"Now I'm coming to the point," said Jimmy Silver.

"Time you did, dear boy," agreed Smythe.

"We're going over to Greyfriars to see the match."

Smythe shook his head.

"Can't have a lot of fags tagging along after the team," he said decidedly.

"We're coming, all the same."

"You jolly well won't come in the car."

"We shall bike it."

"By gad!"

"And we'll see the match and—"

"What the thunder are you driving at?" demanded Tommy Dodd angrily.

"Do you think I'm going over there to see the Greyfriars fellows cackling at our eleven?"

"Let me finish, my son. Smythe says he can beat Greyfriars Remove. I say that he'll be beaten with an innings to spare. Well, we'll watch the match. If the Greyfriars Remove win by an innings, Smythe—"

"Yaas?" drawled Smythe.

"Then we'll give you the ragging of your life."

"What!"

"And give the Greyfriars fellows something else to laugh at as well as Rookwood cricket," concluded Jimmy Silver.

"By gad!"

The Fourth-Formers burst into a chuckle. Jimmy Silver's scheme just jumped with their inclinations.

"Jolly good wheeze!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd heartily. "We're on."

"Faith, and we are intoirely!"

"Good egg!"

"You savvy, Smythe? You've picked the team, and if you win the match or give the Greyfriars team a good tussle, you're all serene; we'll cheer you no end. But if you have a licking that makes them cackle, we rag you baldheaded."

"By Jove!"

"Now will you make some changes in the team?"

"Hardly."

"Then you know what to expect."

"Thanks!"

"You idiot!"

"Would you mind shutting the door after you?"

The Fourth-Formers retired from the study. They closed the door after them with a bang. In the passage they looked at one another expressively.

"The burlber thinks we're bluffing," said Tommy Dodd.

"He'll find out to-morrow," growled Jimmy Silver. "We're going?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I'll tell Towle," said Tommy Dodd. "That'll make eight of us. Eight will be enough to handle eleven slackers like that crew."

"More than enough," said Jimmy Silver. "All of you get your bikes out after dinner to-morrow. It's a long ride—"

"It's a long, long way to Greyfriars!" sang Newcome.

"But we'll get there; and if they put up their usual funny game, we'll make 'em look funny afterwards!"

"Hear, hear!"

And so it was settled.

### The 3rd Chapter. Two Parties for Greyfriars.

Cricket was the order of the day now at Rookwood.

Rookwood has always been a cricketing school, and the Rookwood First Eleven was famous for its exploits on the playing-fields. Bulkeley, the captain of the school, was getting together a first eleven that was to do wonders that season—if Bulkeley could bring it about. And there was excellent material in the Lower Forms for a first-rate junior eleven.

It was only owing to the unfortunate state of affairs between Moderns and Classicals that the Rookwood juniors had no opportunity of distinguishing themselves in emulation of the seniors.

Smythe & Co. were satisfied with themselves, but nobody was satisfied with Smythe & Co. They did not seem to mind that. They bore their many defeats quite cheerfully. Indeed, Adolphus had been heard to declare that no game was worth a chap's while if he had to fag over it.

Fagging over anything certainly wasn't in Adolphus's line at all. When he was got up for cricket, he was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever to look at. It was quite a

...sight to behold Adolphus lounging down to the wicket, elegantly drawing on his gloves.

It was another sight to see him lounging away again, quite unperturbed, when he had been bowled, stumped, or caught, often without breaking his duck. But it was not a sight to be enjoyed by fellows, who were keen on cricket, and jealous of their school's record in games.

The day after Jimmy Silver's interview with the great Adolphus was the date of the match with Greyfriars. Very soon after dinner Smythe & Co. came out to start. A whacking great car had come round for them. Adolphus always did things in style. He generally had plenty of money, and his friends were in the same fortunate position—for the simple reason that Adolphus declined to know anybody who was hard up.

It Adolphus had suggested paying for the car out of the club funds, Adolphus would probably have been scalped; but he didn't. The Giddy Goats—the name Adolphus & Co. loved to call themselves by—stood the car themselves. And they felt very proud of the big car and of themselves, as it stood snorting outside the School House, waiting for them.

Half Rookwood gathered to see them off. It was a party of twelve—special friends of Adolphus, and most of them Shell fellows. Only Townsend and Topham of the Fourth were included.

The Fistical Four and Tommy Dodd & Co. were there, looking ferocious. They had hoped up to the last moment that Smythe might change his mind. If he took even a few good players with him, they were willing to call it square. But Smythe had made no change.

He did not take Jimmy Silver's threat at all seriously. It was a long way to Greyfriars, and such a bike ride would have killed Adolphus. He did not believe for a moment that the Fourth-Formers intended to undertake it.

"So you're off?" growled Jimmy Silver.

Smythe glanced at him carelessly. "Yaas," he replied.

"Remember what I told you!" Smythe looked reflective.

"Did you tell me anything, dear boy?" he asked. "Excuse me, I've quite forgotten. Shocking memory, by gad! What was it?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Come on, Smythe," said Howard. "Don't waste time talking to fags, old chap!"

"Yaas, I'm comin'."

Smythe & Co. disposed themselves in the car with their cricket-bags. The chauffeur drove the big car down to the gates.

"Well, \*they're off!" grunted Tommy Dodd.

"Right off!" said Lovell. "Off their onions! Off their silly rookers!"

"Get out the bikes," said Jimmy Silver.

Eight juniors rushed for their bikes. They were in their Norfolks, ready for the ride.

They rushed the bikes down to the gates, and mounted. On Big Side a trial match was going on between two senior elevens—Bulkeley's Classical team and Knowles's Modern eleven. At any other time the heroes of the Fourth would have been glad to watch old Bulkeley batting; but they had no time for senior matches now.

The Classical four and Tommy Dodd & Co. were all sturdy fellows, and in the pink of condition. They pedalled away at a great rate on the track of the car.

The big car was still in sight, and as it slackened down to let a market-cart get out of the way in the narrow lane, the cyclists almost overtook it. Smythe & Co., looking back, perceived them.

There was a ripple of laughter from the fellows in the car.

"By gad!" said Smythe, extracting an eyeglass from his pocket, and jamming it into his eye. "Those fags are after us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where are you kids going?" called out Tracy.

"Greyfriars," replied Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha! You've a long way to go!"

"Chauffeur!" called out Smythe.

"Yes, sir."

"Let her go! There are a gang of cycling bounders just behind!"

"Yes, sir."

The chauffeur "let her go," and the big car raced away from the cyclists. It vanished in the distance in a cloud of dust.

"Steady, the Buffs!" said Jimmy Silver. "No good trying to race a

giddy motor-car! Don't pump yourselves out at the start!"

"Yes, go easy with these Classical kids," remarked Tommy Dodd. "We don't want them cracking up on the road!"

"Probably leave you behind fainting about half-way!" snorted Lovell.

"You Classical ass—"

"You Modern worm—"

"Shut up!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Is this the time for ragging, you chumps? We want all our wind for riding, if we're getting to Greyfriars!"

"Right-ho!" said Lovell. "But that Modern ass—"

"That Classical chump—"

"Dry up, you pair of burlbers! Kim! on!"

The rivals of Rookwood, with noble self-restraint, forbore from ragging. Jimmy Silver's remark was just—they needed all their breath for their long ride. They went on at a steady pace, without scorching, but they covered the ground pretty quickly.

The motor-car was long out of sight, and they did not expect to see it again till they arrived at Greyfriars. But half-way to their destination, when they were feeling decidedly warm, a sight burst upon their vision which caused them great joy.

It was the sight of a big motor-car

there's still time to make a change in your team!"

"Last time of asking," said Raby. Smythe frowned.

"Don't be cheeky!" was his reply. "Come on!" said Jimmy Silver. "Leave 'em to worry with their old car. We shall get there first now!"

The cyclists rode on in great spirits. If they did not get to Greyfriars first, it was certain that they would not be far behind. Mile after mile slipped under the flashing wheels.

The loud hoot of a motor-horn behind them drove them to the side of the road, and Smythe's big car came whooping by. Smythe & Co. smiled disdainfully at the warm and dusty cyclists as they passed, and left them choked with petrol and dust.

"Never mind!" panted Jimmy Silver. "There's a giddy milestone—two miles to Courtfield; that's close to Greyfriars!"

They pedalled through Courtfield at last. It was another mile on to the school, they found, and that mile certainly seemed a long one to Jimmy Silver & Co., hard riders as they were.

But the gates of Greyfriars came in sight at last, and they jumped down, a warm, perspiring, and dusty crowd, but greatly satisfied with themselves.

Adolphus that he was regarded in that light.

Smythe gave Harry Wharton two fingers to shake. The Greyfriars fellow bestowed a grip upon them that made Smythe yelp.

"By gad!" said Smythe, gasping. "Eh?"

Smythe rubbed his fingers. He was very glad that he had not given Wharton his whole hand. As a matter of fact, it was the offering of two cold fishy fingers that had earned him that iron grip.

"Any of your fellows coming over?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yaas, I think there are some fags on the road, biking it," said Smythe. "They may get here. I don't know."

"Biking it!" said Bob Cherry, a little surprised. Judging by what he had seen of the Rookwood fellows, he would never have supposed that any of the Rookwooders were keen enough about cricket to ride over twenty miles to see a match.

"Yaas," said Smythe. "I dare say they'll crack up on the road, though."

"Very likely," agreed Bob Cherry. "I suppose you're going to give us a thumping licking this time, and they're coming to see it—what?"

"Yaas."

"Well, it would be worth the ride."

been wide awake. Townsend woke up after the ball was on the ground, and the Greyfriars crowd smiled audibly.

Smythe sent down another ball. Bob Cherry let himself get at that, and the ball soared away, and the batsmen ran. Four times they crossed the pitch before the leather was fielded and sent in.

"By gad!" said Smythe.

Smythe had rested in an easy attitude waiting for the ball. When it came in at last he managed to catch it with both hands. Then he strolled away to take his little run, and delivered the ball once more. It gave Greyfriars three, and brought Squiff to the batting end. There were loud shouts of ironical warning from the spectators, as Smythe grasped the ball again.

"Look out, Squiff!"

"Mind your eye."

Squiff cut the ball away for three, and Smythe bowled to Bob Cherry again. Bob Cherry contented himself with a single that time. Then Squiff knocked away the last ball of the over for four.

Harry Wharton was smiling. He had never had a good opinion of Rookwood play; but this was a little "thicker" than he had ever expected. It looked as if Bob Cherry and Squiff would not require any assistance to finish the match.

However, after a few overs—which gave Greyfriars a total of forty-five—Bob Cherry obligingly gave Townsend a catch, and came out.

"What the dickens did you let that duffer catch you out for?" demanded Wharton.

The batsman chuckled.

"Thought I'd give you a turn, old chap."

Wharton laughed, and went in. Smythe varied the bowling with Howard and Tracy and Townsend. By a miracle, Squiff's wicket fell when the score was at sixty. Mark Linley went in to take his place.

It was just then that eight dusty fellows in Norfolks arrived. Bob Cherry, guessing that these were the Rookwood visitors, gave them a cordial greeting as they came up to the pavilion.

"Come to see us licked—what!" he asked.

Jimmy Silver gave an expressive grunt.

"Come to see our team play the giddy goat," he replied.

"My hat! Was that worth biking twenty miles?"

"Oh, it's funny!" said Lovell. "Too good to miss! I see a lot of your fellows think so. My only summer hat, look at the way Townsend's bowling! Does he take the wicket for a barn?"

Mark Linley knocked the ball away. "Look out in the slips!" shrieked Jimmy Silver.



Dipping the brush into the ink, Jimmy Silver painted Adolphus's nose a brilliant red, and by the time he had finished, Adolphus's aspect was really remarkable.

drawn up beside the road, with a smudgy and sulky chauffeur at work upon one of the wheels, and twelve elegantly-dressed fellows standing round and looking on.

"Hooray!" cried Jimmy Silver. "Smythe's car, by gum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The cyclists put on a spurt, and swept up in fine style. Smythe & Co. stared and blinked at them. They had never dreamed of seeing the juniors so far from home.

"By gad, it's those fags!" said Smythe.

The cyclists jumped down.

"Breakdown—what?" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Beastly puncture, or something!" growled Tracy. "Man doesn't seem to be able to get the tyre off, or something; or he can't get it on, or something!"

Tracy's knowledge of motor-cars was evidently somewhat limited.

"This is what comes of swanking," remarked Tommy Dodd. "A common or garden train would have landed you there without a puncture!"

"We'll expect you at Greyfriars, Smythe," said Lovell. "I'll tell you what—as we've found you,

With red and smiling faces they wheeled their dusty bikes in at the school gates.

The 4th Chapter.  
"Cricket!"

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Greyfriars junior team, greeted Adolphus Smythe with great politeness. Smythe was gratified to see that a goodly crowd of Greyfriars fellows was gathering about the ground to see the match.

He would not, perhaps, have been so gratified if he had divined the reason that drew the Greyfriars juniors to the spot.

Harry Wharton & Co. were keen cricketers, and in the Remove cricket club it had been debated more than once whether they should drop the Rookwood fixture. They did not take that fixture very seriously. But Bob Cherry, a humorous youth, maintained that the Rookwood match was as good as a cinema of the most comic variety; and the other fellows agreed that to see the Rookwood slackers leather-hunting was a sight for gods, and men, and little fishes. It wasn't cricket, but it was an entertainment. But it never dawned upon the sublime

Harry Wharton gave his chum a warning glance. The egregious Smythe could never see when his leg was being pulled, but some of his team might. And comic as the Rookwooders were considered as cricketers courtesy came before everything.

Greyfriars won the toss, and Harry Wharton elected to bat first. He did not think that more than one innings would be needed for his side.

Bob Cherry and a sunburnt youth whom his comrades called Squiff went out to open the innings.

Adolphus led his merry men into the field.

Round the field the crowd was thickening. They had smiling faces. They were prepared to enjoy the acrobatic performances of Smythe & Co. in search of the elusive ball.

Smythe bowled the first over. He fancied himself as a bowler. He also fancied himself as a bats; and he fancied that as a fieldsman he was hard to beat. He had quite a number of fancies. But if he fancied that he could make any impression upon Bob Cherry's wicket, never had his fancy so deluded him.

The batsman knocked the ball carelessly away, giving Townsend at point a pretty easy catch, if Townsend had

"There they go again!"

It was quite an easy catch this time, and Smythe, that brilliant field, looked like getting it. But it passed his fingers and dropped. Smythe did not seem perturbed. He shrugged his shoulders, and remarked calmly:

"By gad!"

"Yah! Butterfingers!" yelled Jimmy Silver, exasperated.

Smythe looked round calmly.

"Hallo! You fags there?" he said. "Don't make a row here, dear boys! Even the Fourth are supposed to have some manners."

The Fourth-Formers of Rookwood were not thinking about manners just then. They were in such a state of exasperation that they were inclined to invade the field, and "mop up" the egregious Smythe on the spot. Fortunately, they restrained their feelings.

What they felt was almost too deep for words, as the picturesque innings went on. To see batsmen strolling across the pitch, while the Rookwood slackers dawdled after the ball, was too irritating. And the sublime Adolphus appeared to have not the slightest inking that he was being "guyed."

It was a relief to Jimmy Silver &

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"The Slackers of Rookwood!"

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**THE SLACKERS OF ROOKWOOD.**

(Continued from previous page.)

"Tie up their paws!" "Tit-tut-tie us up!" gasped Smythe. "Why, what do you mean?" "I mean what I say," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "Didn't I warn you there would be a ragging if Greyfriars beat you by an innings? This is going to be a valuable lesson for you for next time!" "You young rotters—you—" "Thump them if they wriggle!" said Jimmy Silver. "It doesn't matter if you hurt them; it can all go down as part of the lesson!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Some of the wretched victims, in desperation, attempted resistance. Their resistance was quelled sharply and efficaciously. Townsend howled loudly that he wouldn't have his hands tied. But when Lovell had bumped his head on the floor three times, getting harder each time, Townsend decided that he would. And his wrists were fastened together behind his back.

Lovell and Raby did the tying, one after another, while the other fellows were on guard, watchful as cats, to thump the unhappy victim into submission at the first sign of resistance.

Adolphus Smythe was the last. He gave the juniors almost homicidal looks as they secured his hands. But he did not resist. He had had enough of that.

"Get up!" commanded Jimmy Silver.

The dozen slackers scrambled to their feet, with their secured hands behind their backs. They were powerless now, even if they had been inclined to offer further trouble.

"What's the little game, you young villains?" roared Smythe. "What are you playing us this trick for?"

"We—we—we'll smash you for this!" mumbled Howard.

"Rescue!" bellowed Topham. And then he yelled as his head was bumped against the wall.

"Going to be quiet?" smiled Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, dear! Yes."

"Good! We can't have Rookwood fellows making a row on another school's ground!" said Jimmy Silver severely. "Think of your manners, you sweeps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The hapless team were slammed against the wall in a scowling, furious row. Jimmy Silver took a pair of scissors from his pocket. Smythe trembled with apprehension as the junior approached him.

"What—what—what are you going to do?" he panted.

"Cut your hair!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Only a little bit," said Silver reassuringly. "Not enough to give you a cold in the napper! Only that beautiful curl that you put in pins every night!"

"I don't!" shrieked Smythe. "Let it alone! I—I'll smash you—"

"Better keep your head still, or I may have your scalp instead of your curl!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" shrieked Smythe.

Deprived of that beautiful curl, upon which he expended a great deal of time daily, the dandy of the Shell felt that life would not be worth living.

Bump!

Smythe's head knocked against the wall, and he did not yell for help any more. The scissors clipped, and the beautiful curl dropped at his feet.

Jimmy Silver moved along the dismayed and demoralised line of "knuts," who could not play cricket, but who were as skilful as professional hairdressers in looking after their hair.

The scissors clipped and clipped, amid gasps of horror from the victims.

Jimmy Silver had as light a hand as a barber. He simply gave the nuts a "workhouse fringe," as Tommy Dodd called it, along their foreheads.

The change it made in their nutty appearance was considerable, however.

"That do, you chaps?" asked Silver, cocking his eye thoughtfully to survey his handiwork.

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Oh, you beasts!" groaned Adolphus Smythe. "Oh, you awful beasts! I sha'n't get that grown again this term! Oh, you beasts!"

Adolphus almost wept.

"Chuck hairdressing, and start cricket practice!" suggested Lovell.

But Smythe only groaned. It was excellent advice; but there was no consolation in it for Adolphus of the Shell.

Jimmy Silver slipped the scissors back into his pocket. The wretched victims hoped that he was finished. But he wasn't; he had only started.

His next step was to take a bottle of red ink and a brush from his pocket. Dipping the brush into the ink, he painted Adolphus's nose a brilliant red. Adolphus's aspect, when he had finished, was really remarkable.

Eleven more noses were similarly adorned. The slackers mumbled and endured it. But that was not all.

A dozen paper fools'-caps came into view from Lovell's pocket, and he unfolded them while Jimmy Silver was painting noses. The fools'-caps were placed on the twelve wretched heads, and fastened there by a really novel means—Lovell swamping thick gum on the hair, and jamming the paper hat on it.

The Fourth-Formers were almost suffocating with laughter by this time. The aspect of Smythe & Co. was unnerving.

"Now for the specs!" said Raby, gurgling.

Jimmy produced a large pair of

"We do—we does! Ha, ha, ha!" Jimmy Silver flung the door open.

"March!"

"I won't!" shrieked Smythe.

"Kick away!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Luckily, it doesn't matter if they're hurt, as it goes down as part of the lesson. Pile in!"

Kick! Kick! Kick!

"Yow; yow, yow!"

There was no resisting persuasion of that sort. The miserable procession wriggled out of the dressing-room. Still persuaded from behind, the twelve juniors wriggled on, like a huge centipede, out of the pavilion. A wild roar greeted their appearance.

**The 7th Chapter.**

**Adolphus Smythe Sings Small!**

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars fellows stared at the human centipede, and shrieked. Bob Cherry threw himself down in the grass, and kicked. Yells came from everybody within sight, and the yells drew others to the spot.

Smythe & Co. almost wept with wrath and shame. They would have given whole Golcondas of wealth if the earth would have opened and swallowed them up. There were twelve of them, and they had let

nuts of Rookwood, and can guarantee them genuine fibberts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The honourable nuts came here to play the giddy goat, and to cause their school to be guyed by the way they play cricket. We came over here to exhibit them in a get-up suitable for giddy goats! They can't play cricket, but they part their hair beautifully. They can't box, but they have a topping taste in scent. They can't make runs or stop a ball, but they can mop up all the places in the eleven, and play the giddy ox on the cricket-field. Here you behold them suitably attired as giddy oxen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, I leave you to contemplate our happy nuts! Good-bye!"

"You villain! Don't leave us like this!" screamed Smythe.

Jimmy Silver did not reply. The Greyfriars crowd were shrieking and rolling with merriment. The slackers of Rookwood wriggled and panted with fury. Jimmy Silver & Co. gathered up their bikes, which they had left at the lodge, and rushed them out through the gateway.

They mounted their machines, and sailed away gaily for Rookwood.

They did not ride fast. They couldn't. At every turn of the pedals they burst into a fresh roar of laughter.

but they succeeded in getting in before the gates were locked. The cricketers had permission to remain later. Tired, but quite happy, the heroes of the Fourth put up their bicycles, and went in to supper.

In a quarter of an hour nearly all Rookwood had heard the story.

It flew through the junior studies, through the fag Form-rooms, and reached even the august quarters of the great men of the Sixth.

Bulkeley of the Sixth roared when he heard of what had happened to Smythe & Co. Bulkeley had had an eye on the nutty Adolphus for some time, and he was not surprised that he had been called to account—though he could never have anticipated the novel method adopted by Jimmy Silver. Even Knowles chuckled over the story, though not a very humorous fellow as a rule.

Needless to say, when Adolphus's whacking big car came home, nearly all Rookwood turned out to meet the returning heroes.

The quad was swarming with the juniors and the Middle School; and even the Sixth came to their windows to look out, chuckling.

A roar of laughter greeted Adolphus & Co. as they descended from the car.

They were scowling furiously. They had had a fearful time. Harry Wharton & Co. had been very sympathetic. But in the midst of their sympathy, they had not been able to avoid incessant explosions of mirth.

Smythe and the rest of the "Goats" had been released at last. They had been provided with abundant soap and hot water; they had cleaned and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed and cleaned till their arms ached, and they were red with exertion and fury. But they had still brought home a stain of red on their noses, and gum thick in the roots of their hair. And when the big motor-car left Greyfriars, though Harry Wharton & Co. tried to look solemn as they saw the visiting team off, Adolphus knew very well that he had left them in hysterics.

On the way home there had been infuriated recriminations, and a nose or two among the party showed that the rage of the nuts had been wreaked in an internecine combat. It really did not seem probable that all the slackers of Rookwood would be in Adolphus Smythe's team next time he led the junior eleven forth upon its glorious career.

"So you've got back!" howled Hooker of the Fourth. "Why didn't you come home with your war-paint on? Where's your curly curl, Smythe?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Get your hair cut!" The unhappy nuts slunk into the house. They did not reply to a single remark. They had not nerve enough left for that. They slunk away, and shut themselves up in their studies, and locked their doors; and all that evening they "sport" their oak against all comers.

There were plenty of comers. Everybody in the school wanted to speak to Smythe & Co. that evening—especially to Smythe. They wanted to ask him lots of things—about cricket, and ducks' eggs, and pairs of spectacles, and painted noses, and gummy hair, and fools'-caps—but Adolphus was not in a mood to impart any information whatever upon those interesting topics.

For once—probably for the first time in his happy career as a nut—Adolphus Smythe shrank from public gaze, and made himself very small indeed.

On the following Wednesday there was another cricket fixture to come off, and Jimmy Silver & Co. wondered grimly what kind of a junior team was to play. They soon heard some news—news which made it unnecessary for Jimmy Silver to purchase any more gum, red ink, or fools'-caps. One lesson had been enough. Adolphus's beautiful curl had not had time to grow again yet. Perhaps he was afraid of losing his back hair next time. Anyway, there was news.

There were to be changes in the team!

When Jimmy Silver & Co. heard that news, they grinned, they chuckled, but they nobly forebore to gloat over Adolphus. They resolved to give Adolphus a chance, content that the school would no longer be represented in the cricket-field by the Slackers of Rookwood!

THE END.

(Next week's magnificent long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled "The Prefect's Plot." Don't miss it!)



Smythe's off stump went hurtling out of the ground, and the Rookwood captain stared down at his wrecked wicket. "By gad!" he ejaculated. "I'm out!"

spectacles—spectacles of huge size, with rusty, metal frames, which he had evidently picked up cheap. He placed them on Adolphus's nose, and fastened them securely behind his ears, by passing a knotted string round the back of his head. There were no lenses in the spectacles, and they did not impede Adolphus's vision. But they made him extraordinary to look at.

"Oh, you beast!" gasped Adolphus.

"That's to mark your score, you know," explained Silver.

"Oh! I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you—I'll—I'll— Oh—oh—oh, dear!"

"Sort of look well-finished now!" said Jimmy Silver, surveying the hapless dozen with great satisfaction.

"Put 'em in file."

Smythe & Co. were dragged from the wall, and placed in file, one behind another. A cord was run along,

"You villains! You ruffians! You're not taking us out like this!"

"We jolly well are!" said Jimmy Silver. "This is a warning to you! We hereby promise solemnly to do the same over again, every time you lose a match for Rookwood by playing the giddy ox!"

"We swear!" chuckled Tommy Dodd.

eight fellows handle them like this—helplessly. Even the ineffable Smythe realised that it does not always pay to be a hopeless slacker. Some of the care he had spent on parting his hair and curling that beautiful curl—now lost for ever—would have been better expended in the gym, with the gloves on. There was no doubt about that now. Ever so dainty a touch in hair-dressing could not save him from this!

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, hold me, somebody!" groaned Bob Cherry. "I'm having fits! I'm having apoplexy! Oh, my ribs—my poor ribs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"B-b-but what does it mean?" gasped Wharton. "What the dickens—what the thumping dickens—"

"Halt!" sang out Jimmy Silver.

The centipede halted, the different members bumping on one another, and hacking with their heels.

"Look at them!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha! We're looking!"

"Help!" wailed Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"These fellows are the nuts of Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver.

"Gentlemen of Greyfriars, I have great pleasure in presenting the

The ridiculous defeat Rookwood had suffered—the loss of a match wholly due to the fatuity of Adolphus Smythe & Co.—was avenged now. And with the promise of similar attentions to come next time he threw away a match, it was possible that even the egregious Adolphus would begin to consider himself, and see the error of his ways. Certainly he could not want to go through such an experience again.

"Oh, what'll they say at Rookwood?" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pity we couldn't have brought 'em home like that—"

The juniors yelled at the idea.

"And I wonder what the dickens the Greyfriars chaps think of it!" gurgled Raby; and he went off into a fresh roar.

Jimmy Silver released a handle-bar to wipe his eyes.

"It'll show Greyfriars that we're not all fatheaded chumps at Rookwood!" he said. "Smythe has given them the impression that we were. After Smythe's been through this a few times, he'll see light!"

"A few times! Ha, ha, ha!"

The cyclists rode on in happy humour. They had to light their lamps before Rookwood was reached,