

500 GRAND PRIZES—YOUR LAST CHANCE THIS WEEK.

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

No. 727, Vol. XIV. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending May 15th, 1915.]



Tom Belcher knew that the helpless black boxer was being swept along by the swirling waters, and without a thought to his own safety, he dropped from the parapet of the bridge. Down, down, down he dropped, feet foremost, into the water below.

TRUE TO HIS RIVAL!

A Grand New Long Complete Tale of Adventure, introducing
TOM BELCHER, THE BOY BOXER.

BY ARTHUR S. HARDY.

The 1st Chapter. The Rival Show.

"I say Tom, lad, just slip along to Posh Powell's booth, will you, and see how things are shaping there?" It was Ben Adams, showman and boxing-booth proprietor, who spoke, and the words were addressed to a diminutive and lively-looking boy who was sitting at the end of a rostrum looking down at the faces of the few countrymen who had deigned to cross the fair ground and have a peep at Adams' Booth, which, un-

happily for Ben, had been allotted a very bad pitch at Carrington Fair.

Ben had just been exhausting himself in a strenuous appeal to the public to "come in and see the finest boxing show that ever went upon the road," and the net result of a ten solid minutes' harangue had been the addition of but five persons to the small but select crowd inside the booth.

The noise of steam organs and the skirl of pipes and beating of drums

and cymbals came from different parts of the fair ground.

Over there in the neighbourhood of the big travelling circus business was brisk enough.

Ben Adams was one of the unfortunates who did not seem to be able to get a move on at all.

Hence his appeal to Tom Belcher, and his anxiety to know how things were going in the rival boxing-booth.

Tom Belcher rose briskly.

"Right you are, Ben," he said

cheerfully, and he at once jumped down from the rostrum, pushed his way through the crowd, and hurried on his mission.

Tom Belcher was wearing a loose-fitting suit of somewhat shabby clothes, which he'd drawn on over his shirt and boxing knickers.

He wore a pair of ordinary boots, and a neckerchief was tied about his throat. A cap set sideways on his curly head completed the outfit.

With hands in pockets Tom strode briskly onwards, until he eventually arrived at Posh Powell's booth.

Powell's tent was a larger one than that which Ben Adams travelled.

It was newer and smarter-looking. The gaudy and elaborately-carved and gilt front with its grotesque oil-painted panels depicting various incidents of the boxing-ring caught the eye.

Certainly the uninitiated would always have preferred to enter this booth, after comparing it with Ben's. And there was a goodly crowd gathered around the rostrum now.

Posh Powell was in his element. He'd got himself up in theatrical style. His silk hat, with broad,

curling brim, was set on the back of his head. He wore a heavy overcoat fitted with fur collar and cuffs. Patent boots encased his feet.

His suit was of worsted material, possessing a broad and conspicuous stripe. He had swung his overcoat open in order to display the fur lining, and the heavy gold Albert which festooned his waistcoat.

He was red in the face from shouting, and Tom Belcher stood by for some minutes listening to the nonsense he was talking with an amused smile on his face.

According to Posh Powell, he was the only honest showman on earth; all his boxers were champions; he was the only booth proprietor who offered genuine money prizes to anyone who could beat any of his boxers, and if anyone was dissatisfied with the show, he could have his money back.

He mentioned each of the boxers who stood with folded arms at the back of the rostrum by name.

There were seven of them, six white men of various weights and sizes, and one black. The black was

(Continued on the next page.)

THE FALL OF THE MIGHTY!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of School Life dealing
with the Adventures of

THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. The Junior Eleven.

"Here he comes!"
A buzz of voices greeted Smythe of the Shell as he came down the passage. An excited crowd of juniors were collected before the notice-board in the hall at Rookwood. They were waiting for Smythe. The gaze of all was concentrated upon Adolphus Smythe as he appeared.

It was really very flattering for Smythe. He was the cynosure of all eyes. At that moment everybody was interested in Smythe. Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Classical side, and Tommy Dodd and his chums of the Modern side, were equally interested in Smythe. Both parties agreed heartily that Smythe of the Shell was an ass, a duffer, a swanker, and innumerable other things. Yet at that moment they were intensely interested in Smythe.

A disinterested observer would probably not have considered Smythe a very interesting person in himself. True, he dressed very nicely, he sported a diamond pin, he parted his hair with extreme precision, and his necktie was tied in a masterly manner. He wore an eyeglass in his eye, and he walked with a little swagger; his nose was elevated, partly by Nature, and partly by a lofty sense of self-satisfaction. It needed only one glance at Smythe to see that he was several sorts of an ass. Yet the Lower School was deeply interested in Smythe. As he came down the passage, with his nose a little more elevated than usual, every eye turned upon him, and rested upon him. Smythe of the Shell filled the whole horizon, so to speak. And Smythe's expression showed that he regarded that as a very natural and proper state of affairs.

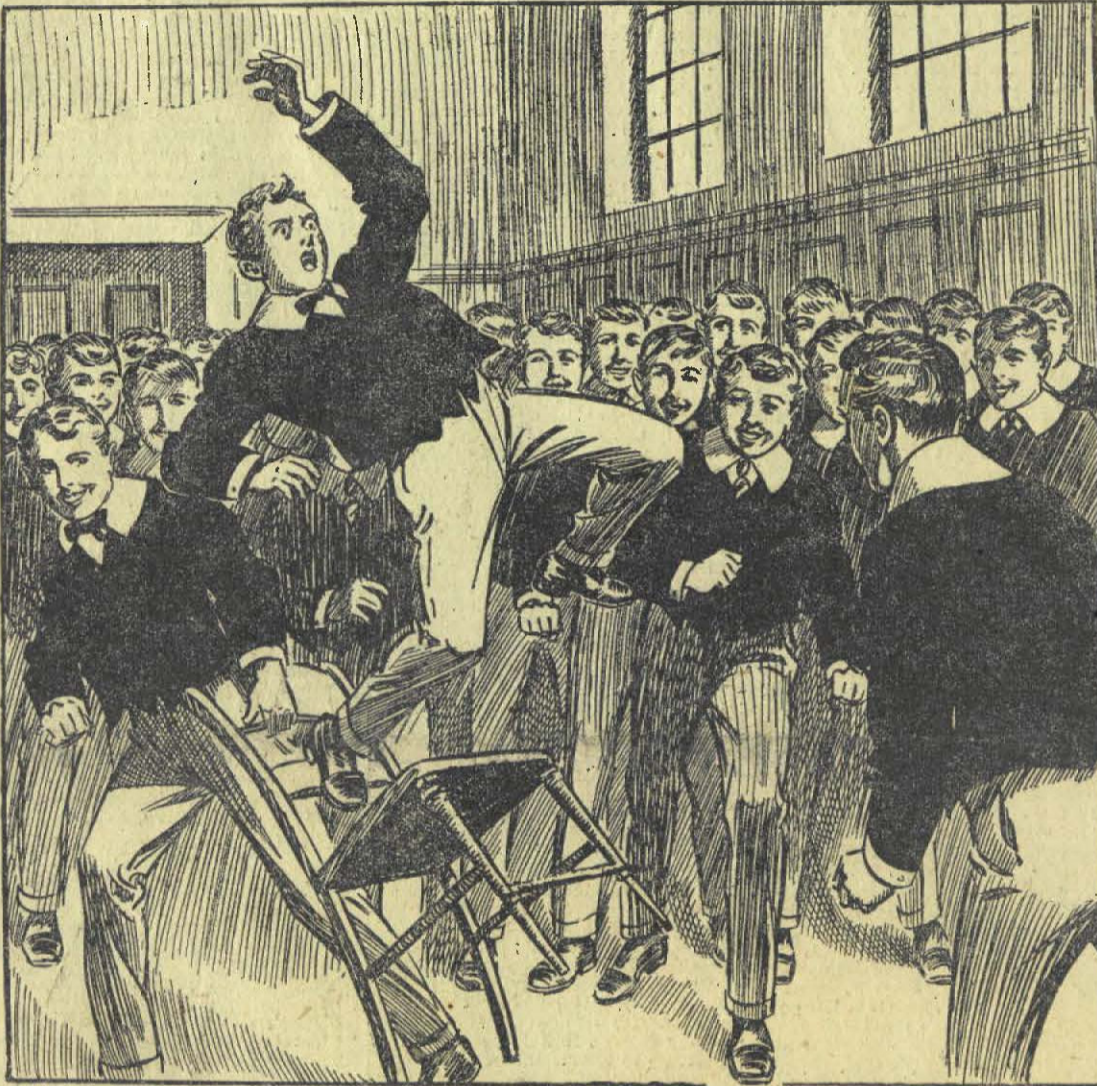
But the explanation was simple. For Smythe himself nobody cared two pins. But Smythe was captain of the junior cricket club, and upon Smythe depended the selection of the team which was to meet a visiting eleven from St. Jim's on the morrow.

Hence the deep, intense interest in Smythe.

Smythe had a paper in his hand, which he was about to pin on the notice-board. Upon that paper hung the fate of the match—and the fate of Smythe himself. For it was agreed on all hands that if Smythe played the giddy ox, as usual, Smythe was to be immediately visited with dire vengeance. Jimmy Silver had a cricket-stump under his arm, Tommy Dodd had an Indian club, Lovell had a knotted handkerchief. Other fellows were provided with other weapons of offence. Smythe, quite unconsciously, was walking into the lion's den.

Smythe was not a cricket captain of the common or garden variety. He owed his election to the fact that the rivals of Rookwood, Moderns and Classicals, could not possibly agree upon a candidate. The "nuts" on the Classic side backed up Smythe, and so Jimmy Silver & Co., who were not at all "nutty," had backed him up, too, to save themselves from getting a Modern fellow as junior skipper. But when Smythe, exercising with a high hand, his undoubted right of selecting a team according to his own judgment, played his personal pals and excluded all others, and scored crushing defeats in consequence, even the juniors who had elected him turned upon him, and Smythe had suffered severely at their hands.

The question now was whether the lesson had done him any good, and



"Jintlemen," said Tommy Doyle, "I call upon you to save Rookwood from going to the dogs by rallying round me friend Tommy Dodd, and I say, and I repeat—Yarooooooop!"

whether he was going to make up a team that could play. If so, well and good. If not, the youthful cricketers of Rookwood were prepared for prompt and drastic action.

They watched Smythe as if mesmerised, as he came with a leisurely swagger down the passage, and paused before the notice-board.

Smythe understood the intense interest of which he was the object, and he seemed to take a delight in keeping the juniors upon tenterhooks. Instead of sticking the cricket list on the board, he paused there, and glanced over the notices that were already up, in a casual sort of way. Then he chatted with Tracy of the Shell, affecting to be oblivious to the growing impatience and anxiety on all sides.

"I see Bulkeley's got the list up for the senior match," remarked Smythe, adjusting his eyeglass. "Three Modern cads in the team, by gad!"

"Never mind the senior match!" broke in Jimmy Silver. "Let's see the list for the junior match, Smythe."

Smythe of the Shell turned his eyeglass upon Jimmy Silver for a moment, yawned, and went on speaking to Tracy.

"Let's see that list!" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Stick it up, Smythe!"

"Looks like bein' decent weather for the match—what!" remarked Tracy of the Shell.

"Yaas," said Smythe. "By gad, I wish these fags wouldn't crowd round so! Don't crowd round so, you young sweeps!"

"Are you going to put that list up?" bellowed Tommy Dodd.

"Yaas; all in good time," said Smythe. "I was saying, Tracy—"

"The silly ass has been playing the giddy goat again!" said Lovell.

"He's got a set of dummies there, I'll bet you, same as last time. Scrag him!"

"By gad! Yow!" roared Smythe, losing his aristocratic nonchalance all of a sudden, as Jimmy Silver jabbed him in the ribs with the business end of the cricket-stump. "Yoooop! You young villain! Wooooop!"

"Let's see that list!"

"Grooh! Pll—Pll—"

Jimmy Silver made another telling thrust, and the dandy of the Shell roared. The juniors were fed up with Smythe's nonchalance. They made a rush, and Smythe was jammed up against the notice-board. Tracy was swept aside, and the excited juniors devoted all their attention to Adolphus Smythe.

Tommy Dodd and Tommy Doyle seized his ears, and his head was brought against the notice-board with a resounding whack. Jimmy Silver's stump caught him in the waistcoat at the same moment, and Smythe gurgled wildly. His eyeglass fell from his eye, and his beautiful tie

came undone as he wriggled in the grasp of the Fourth-Formers.

"Grooh! You cheeky young rotters! Leggo! Pll—Yaroooh! Keep that club away, Dodd, you mad idiot!"

Tommy Dodd was flourishing the Indian club within an inch of Smythe's nose. Smythe jerked his head back, and it cracked again on the notice-board. Then half a dozen pairs of hands clawed him down, and he collapsed on the floor. Jimmy Silver jerked the list from his hand. He set one foot on Smythe's chest to pin him down, while he prepared to read out the list.

"Keep still, you wriggling fat-head!" said Silver. "If this list is all right, why, all right. If it isn't, you're going to be slaughtered! Listen, you chaps! Lend me your giddy ears!"

"Gurrroooooh!" came from the unfortunate Smythe.

"Shut up, Smythe!"

"Gurrroooooh!"

"Go on, Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver read out the list of the junior eleven. While Smythe gasped and wriggled, under half a dozen feet that pinned him down, the juniors listened to Jimmy with deep attention. It was an undignified position for a cricket captain; but Adolphus had brought it upon himself.

"Smythe, Tracy, Howard, Selwyn, Townsend, Topham—"

read out Jimmy.

He was interrupted by a howl of wrath from the juniors. The names, so far, were all those of the "Giddy Goats," Smythe's own select circle—the egregious nuts who had brought defeat and shame to the Rookwood club too often already.

"Same old game!" roared Tommy Dodd. "Scrag him!"

"Bump him!"

"Scalp him!"

"Lemme get at him!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Tain't all so bad as that. Dodd is the next—"

"Oh, good!" said Tommy Dodd. "That's better!"

"Doyle—"

"Sure, that's betther intiorely!" assented Tommy Doyle.

"Lovell."

"Hurray!"

"Raby."

"Oh, good!"

"And Silver!"

"Bravo!"

"Six idiots and five good men!" said Lovell. "I suppose it's as much as we could expect of Smythe."

"Grooooooh!" came from Smythe. "You young beasts! Lemme gerrup! Grooh!"

"Twon't be so bad," said Raby. "Mind, Smythe, you'll have to give Silver most of the bowling. Bear that in mind!"

"Grooh!"

"We may pull it off," said Tommy Dodd. "If we don't, it will be the fault of you Classical mugs for electing that prize idiot!"

"Your fault, you Modern ass!" said Lovell. "If you'd have voted for me, we'd have dropped that idiot Smythe sharp-enough—"

"Catch me voting for a Classic ass—"

"Yooooowwoowwo!" spluttered Smythe. "Will you lemme gerrup, you young ruffians? Oh, my hat! Pll—Pll—"

"Dear me, I'm standing on Smythe's all this time," said Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind, Smythe—we thought you were playing the giddy ox as usual—"

"Gerroooooh!"

"But as you're showing a little sense for once—"

"Will you take your hoof off my chest?" shrieked Smythe.

"Certainly. There you are," said Jimmy Silver graciously.

He removed his boot, and the dandy of the Shell staggered to his feet, dusty and dishevelled, and crimson with rage.

"You cheeky young beasts! I've a jolly good mind to scratch you out of the eleven! I—I—I—"

"If you'd left us out, we'd have bumped you bald-headed," growled Jimmy Silver.

"Bump him anyway, for keeping us in suspense," said Raby.

"Good egg!"

"Why, you—you—you—yaroooh! Help!"

"Bump, bump!"

The juniors cleared off, grinning, leaving Smythe of the Shell sitting on the floor, in an extremely dusty and breathless state. Smythe sat there for a full minute before he found breath enough to move. Then he limped away in a fury. He was strongly tempted to "scratch" Jimmy Silver and the rest from the list. He was only restrained by the knowledge that, if he did so, his last state would be worse than his first. It was not all "lavender" to be cricket captain in the Lower School at Rookwood.



THE FALL OF THE

MIGHTY!

(Continued from the previous page.)

different kind of cricketer, as he soon showed.

Smythe placed his men in the field, and put Howard on to bowl. Jimmy Silver opened his lips to speak, and closed them again. Although the Rookwooders had been forced by circumstances to "rag" their captain, it would hardly have done to dispute with him in the field. It appeared that Silver, the best bowler in the Lower School at Rookwood, was to be used only as a change bowler. It did not yet dawn on Jimmy that the great Adolphus did not mean to use him at all.

Tom Merry knocked Howard's bowling all over the field, and the batsmen crossed and recrossed. That over counted 10 for St. Jim's. When the field crossed over, Jimmy Silver fixed his eyes inquiringly upon Smythe.

Smythe seemed to be totally unaware of his existence.

"Go it, Tracy, old scout!" he said.

Tracy bowled the second over.

His bowling had no more effect on St. Jim's wickets than water on a duck.

Tom Merry or D'Arcy knocked it right and left, according to which was batting, as they ran mostly 3's.

In the third over Howard took the ball again. For several overs Howard and Tracy alternated. At last, when the field was changing over once more, Lovell yelled out to Adolphus Smythe:

"Put a bowler on, you fathead!"

Adolphus seemed deaf.

"By gad, it's time we changed the bowling!" he remarked to Selwyn.

"Go in and try your luck, dear boy!"

Selwyn went in and tried his luck.

His luck, apparently, was out. He could not touch the wickets, and the batsmen gave no catches.

Jimmy Silver & Co. fumed. Jimmy was a first-class bowler, and Raby was a very good one. But it was clear by this time that they would not have any bowling to do.

The crowd were beginning to snout to Smythe.

"Put Silver on, you idiot!" roared Newcome from the pavilion.

"Give Raby a chance, you howling ass!" bawled Jones minor.

"Let Tommy Dodd have the ball, you imago!" shrieked Tommy Cook.

But the great Adolphus went on his way, and made no sign.

The first wicket that fell was D'Arcy's—to a lucky catch by Jimmy Silver. St. Jim's had taken 50 runs by that time.

While the new batsman was coming in five infuriated fieldsmen surrounded Adolphus Smythe.

"Look here, Smythe," said Lovell, in a tone of concentrated rage. "Are you going to put on a bowler, or are you not?"

"Got to your places!" said Smythe.

"Will you put Jimmy Silver on to bowl?" shrieked Lovell.

"No, I won't!"

"Will you put Raby on?"

"I'm quite satisfied with my bowlers, Lovell!"

"Your bowlers! You're satisfied! You—you idiot! Will you put me on?"

"No!"

"Oh, my hat! We—we'll scrag you!"

"You'll get to your places!" said Smythe calmly. "You're keeping the bats waiting. If you don't know how to behave yourselves in the presence of a visiting team, I shall leave you out of the team next match, by gad!"

Lovell doubled his fists, but Jimmy Silver dragged him away. The St. Jim's fellows were looking on, in considerable surprise. In the presence of the Saints, it was scarcely feasible to bring Smythe to his senses by means of a ragging.

"We've got to stand it!" muttered Jimmy Silver. "Look pleasant!"

"I—I—I'll slaughter him presently!" stuttered Lovell. "He's chucking away the match! What's the good of making him put a good bowler in the team if he won't let the bowler bowl?"

"Can't be helped now. Take it calmly; they're waiting for us!"

"Are you slackers going to get to your places?" drawled Smythe. "Buck up! I'll have no dawdlers in my team!"

The fieldsmen went to their places with feelings too deep for words.

The astute Adolphus had beaten them again. As he remarked to the nuts in his study, they could take a horse to water, but couldn't make him drink.

All that Jimmy Silver & Co. could do was to watch for chances in the field, and the batsmen did not give them many chances.

"Well," said Jimmy Silver, "you're not! Understand that! You're not leaving me till last, to pair with that idiot Topham again! I'm opening the innings!"

"By gad!"

"With Tommy Dodd," added Silver.

"Who's captain of this team?" roared Smythe.

"You are—till we hold a meeting this evening!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"But we're fed up! See? I'm going in first with Tommy Dodd! You show your nose on the field till I tell you, and I'll brain you with my bat!"

"You—you—you cheeky cad!" growled Smythe. "Do you think I'm going to be dictated to? Do you think—"

"By Jove, I'm not going to stand it, either!" said Howard. "I'm certainly going in to open the innings!"

"Do," said Jimmy Silver grimly, "and you'll get such a thundering hiding that you'll be glad to crawl off again!"

"Look here—" protested Smythe.

Jimmy Silver & Co. turned their backs on him. Smythe and Howard looked at one another in fury and dismay. For a member of the team

show the visitors that Rookwood were not all duffers.

Smythe made a motion to go in, and the Modern juniors shoved him back without ceremony.

"Next man in, Tommy!" he said; and Tommy Doyle went in to join Jimmy Silver.

Anarchy was evidently reigning in the Rookwood junior team. But the team seemed all the better for it. Smythe had passed the limit.

"You cheeky cads!" gasped Adolphus. "I sha'n't play you again! Mind that, I sha'n't play you in the team after this!"

"You howling jackass!" said Lovell. "We sha'n't play you again!"

"What! Who's captain?" shrieked Smythe.

"Oh, go and eat oake!"

"I jolly well tell you, by gad—"

"Shut up, I tell you!" snapped Lovell; and he gave Adolphus a shove with his bat which had the effect of shutting him up like a pocket-knife.

The batsmen were keeping the field busy now. Jimmy Silver had done very well by the time Tom Merry caught him out.

Again Smythe made a motion to

Tom Merry & Co. departed in their brake, satisfied with their victory, but somewhat puzzled by that peculiar match. The difference in form among the players astonished them. Some of the Rookwood players were tip-top, the others duffers of the first water, as they could not help noticing.

But Jimmy Silver was determined that there should be a big change before the time came for the return match with St. Jim's.

The 5th Chapter.

The Fall of the Mighty.

"Meeting in the common-room, Smythe."

Smythe carefully jammed his eye-glass into his eye and stared at Jimmy Silver, with the most disdainful expression he could assume.

The St. Jim's brake had rolled away, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were preparing for business. Classics and Moderns were equally exasperated with Smythe. Some fellow had chalked up in big letters on the pavilion "S. M. G." even before the St. Jim's team had gone. A waggish junior had surreptitiously chalked the same legend on Smythe's back. That was now the motto of both Classics and Moderns—those mysterious letters implying "Smythe Must Go!"

"A meetin'?" drawled Smythe. "Did you say a meetin', Copper—I think your name's Copper?"

"Never mind my name!" said Jimmy Silver. "There's a meeting of the club in the common-room, and all members are required to turn up."

"Sorry! Got an engagement!"

"You're coming to the meeting," said Jimmy Silver.

"Can't be did!"

"You're going to be called upon to resign."

"By gad!"

"And the meeting's going to be held at once. Come on!"

"Thanks! I'm not resignin'. And I'm not comin'."

"You hear the bleating idiot?" said Jimmy Silver to his comrades.

"Take his other arm, Lovell!"

"Look here," roared Smythe, "I'm fed up with the cheek of you fags! Who are you to call a meetin' of the club, by gad? I don't recognise the meetin'! And I won't come! When I want a meetin' I'll call it myself. Let go my arm!"

"Come on!"

"I tell you I won't! I—"

Jimmy Silver and Lovell, having secured an arm each, marched Adolphus towards the School House.

Adolphus wriggled, whereupon they cheerfully twisted his arms till he howled with pain; and after that he went like a lamb.

The common-room was already crowded when they arrived.

Smythe having joined the meeting—by force majeure—the rest of the nuts turned up to stand by him. It was known that Smythe was to be called upon to resign, and the Giddy Goats were prepared to resist the deposition of their leader.

Tommy Dodd had whipped up every Modern member of the club, and the Classics had turned up to the last man.

The common-room was crowded.

"Everybody here?" asked Jimmy Silver, looking round.

"Every man-jack," said Lovell. "I've seen to it that all our chaps are here. And I believe all the Modern worms have wriggled in."

"You can bet we're all here!" said Tommy Dodd warmly. "I should think even you duffers are fed up with a Classical skipper by this time!"

"I don't recognise this meetin'!" roared Smythe.

"Shut up!"

"I'm goin' out—"

"Lock the door, Hooker!"

Hooker of the Fourth turned the key.

Jimmy Silver jumped on a chair to address the meeting. Smythe and the rest of the nuts drew together in a group, with indignant and angry faces.

"Gentlemen—" began Jimmy Silver.

"Hear, hear!" shouted the Classics.

"Silence for the chair!" roared the Moderns.

Tommy Dodd had jumped on another chair, also to address the meeting.

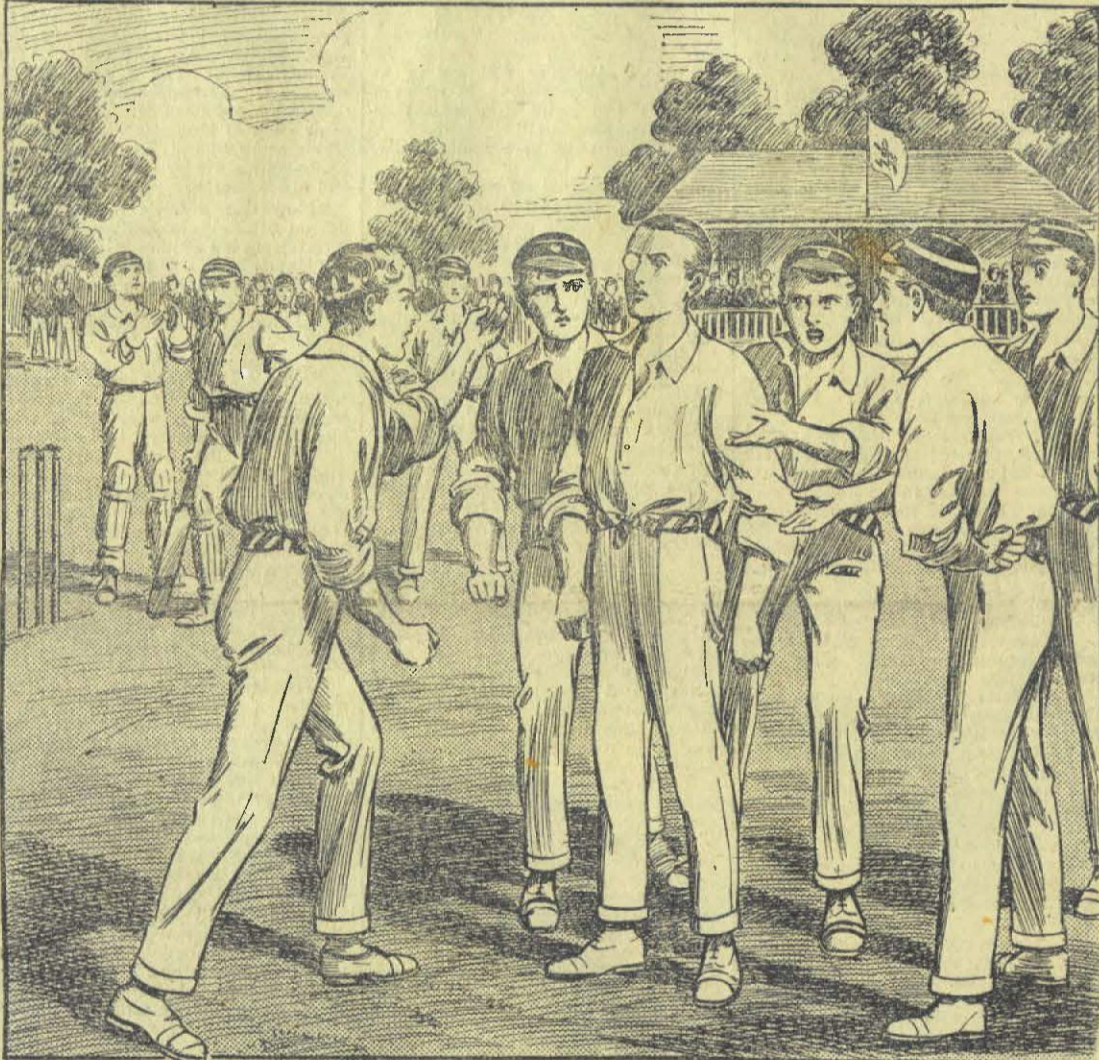
"Gentlemen—" shouted Tommy Dodd.

"Shut up, Dodd!"

"Shut up, Silver!"

"Look here," yelled Jimmy Silver, "this meeting is called—"

"Gentlemen, this meeting is called—"



"Look here, Smythe," said Lovell in a tone of concentrated rage. "Are you going to put a bowler on or are you not?"

However, Tom Merry was stumped at last, and Figgins was caught out; but by that time the score was 80. It mounted up and up. The infuriated chums gave Smythe imploring and threatening glances alternately; but Adolphus was blind to them equally. Howard and Tracy and Selwyn did all the bowling, excepting for an over or two delivered by the great Adolphus himself.

Wickets fell slowly. The score mounted up at a rate that was almost comic. St. Jim's were six down for 150, when Tom Merry decided to declare his innings at an end. There was little doubt that St. Jim's could have gone on batting till dark if they had liked.

Jimmy Silver had given up hope of winning the match by that time. Rookwood had made 55 in their first innings, and if they equalled that in their second, they were hopelessly beaten, and St. Jim's would not have to bat again. There was a pause in the proceedings for refreshments, and during that pause Jimmy Silver hurriedly consulted his chums; and they bore down on Smythe.

"Who's opening the innings?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"I am," said Smythe.

"With whom?"

"Howard."

to give orders to his captain in this manner was utterly unheard-of. But on reflection, Smythe decided to take it quietly.

Jimmy Silver's blood was at boiling-point, and Smythe did not want to astonish and amuse the St. Jim's team with the extraordinary sight of himself being kicked off the field by one of his own followers.

When the Saints were in the field again, Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd went on to open the innings, without so much as a look at Smythe.

Adolphus shrugged his shoulders.

Fortune smiled a little upon Rookwood now. Tommy Dodd was a mighty bat, and though Jimmy was better with bowling, he was reliable, and could be depended on to keep his end up at the wicket.

Quite forgetful of the feud between Classical and Modern, he devoted himself to stonewalling, to give Tommy Dodd every chance.

Even Fatty Wynn's bowling long failed to make any impression. The score was going up for Rookwood at last. It stood at 40 when Fatty Wynn at last succeeded in knocking Tommy Dodd's bails off.

Tommy Dodd came out, feeling pretty well satisfied. The match was a "goner," but at least they would

go in, and again he was shoved back, and Raby was sent in. And when Doyle came out Lovell took his place.

The infuriated nuts glared and scowled and frowned, but it was no use. The five players were in the mood to mop up the ground with them if they raised objections. So they did not raise objections.

The score was at 90 when Lovell fell.

"Now you blessed idiots can go on!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Only 5 wanted to tie, and make St. Jim's bat again; but I'll bet you won't get them."

Jimmy Silver was right; they did not get them. After Lovell came out it was a regular procession of falling wickets. Four runs were added, when the last wicket fell.

The total for the two innings was 149. There was no need for St. Jim's to bat again. They had won by an innings and 1 run.

"Hard luck!" said Tom Merry to Adolphus Smythe, when the last wicket was down.

Smythe nodded.

"Yaas," he remarked. "I've had some trouble in my team. My mistake, playing Fourth Form fags, you know. I sha'n't make that mistake another time. You've beaten us, by gad!"



THE FALL OF THE

(Continued from the previous page.)

MIGHTY!

"Precious gang of ragging fags, by gad!" said Smythe, disdainfully. "Oh, let 'em rip!" said Townsend. "They'll be scraggin' one another in a minute or two."

"Gentlemen, I address you—"

"Gentlemen, give me your attention, and don't take any notice of that Classic ass—"

"Tommy Dodd, you chump—"

"Jimmy Silver, you fathead—"

"Toss up for it," said Jimmy desperately. "One of us will have to chuck it."

"Done!" grinned Tommy Dodd. Jimmy Silver won the toss, and Tommy Dodd loyally descended from the chair. The speech was for Jimmy Silver, the Modern chief reserving himself the right to interrupt.

"Gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver, "as members of the junior sports club of Rookwood, you have been called together—"

"Hear, hear!"

"To consider the important question of a new election for the captaincy. I put it to the club that Smythe is called upon to resign, and that if he doesn't resign he be forthwith kicked out!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo!"

Classicals and Moderns vied with one another in greeting that proposition with the wildest enthusiasm.

Adolphus Smythe's fate was sealed. "You hear that, Smythe?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Yaas; I'm not deaf," yawned Smythe.

"You will now hand in your resignation—"

"I decline to recognise this meetin'—"

"Same here!" said Howard.

"My dear ass, you can please yourself about that. Gentlemen, as the fathead Smythe refuses to resign, I put it to the meeting that he is deposed, dismissed, discarded, and kicked out."

"Hear, hear!"

"Passed unanimously!"

"Kick him out!"

"Look here," shouted Smythe, "I warn you, you cheeky fags, if I'm not captain, I resign from the club altogether!"

"All the better for the club!" chirruped Tommy Dodd.

"And my friends will resign along with me!" said Smythe.

"Yaas, we back you up, Smythe," said Townsend.

"Let 'em resign, and be blowed!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Kick 'em out!"

"Well, we'll resign!" said Smythe savagely. "That'll leave a Modern majority in the club. You chaps will get a modern skipper, and I wish you joy of him. Come on, you fellows; let's leave 'em to their blessed election!"

Smythe & Co. made a movement towards the door.

Tommy Dodd and the Moderns exchanged looks of satisfaction. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another in consternation. This was not exactly what they wanted.

"Hold on, Smythe!" said Lovell, with more civility than he was accustomed to show to the dandy of the Sholl.

"Thinkin' better of it?" sneered Smythe.

"Ahem! There's no reason why you should resign from the club, you know," said Jimmy Silver. "You don't want to chuck up cricket. With a bit more bucking-up, there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to play!"

"Yes, don't be a cad, Smythe," urged Raby. "Stay here to vote Classical!"

"Oh, let him go!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "The sooner he clears out of the club, the better for the club!"

"That's all very well for you, you Modern bounder. Will you agree to vote for me for skipper?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"No jolly fear!"

"We can't have a Modern skipper!"

"Rats! That's just what you want!"

"You Modern ass—"

"You Classical duffer—"

"Well, what's it going to be?" demanded Smythe triumphantly. "If I go I go, and my friends go with me. And you'll get a Modern cad for captain. I don't care!"

"Stay and vote Classical," urged Newcome.

"Rats!"

"You jolly well will!" said Jimmy Silver grimly. "You're still members of the club till your subscriptions run out. You'll stay and vote. Collar the cads!"

"Hands off!" roared Smythe, making for the door.

"Collar them!"

"Hold the rotten traitors!"

"Let 'em alone!" roared the Moderns. "Let 'em clear out! Let's have a fair vote!"

Smythe & Co. struggled for the door, but the Fistical Four were upon them. There were a dozen of the Giddy Goats, and their withdrawal would have left matters hopelessly in the hands of the Moderns. Jimmy Silver & Co. did not intend to stand that.

Each of the hapless nuts was promptly collared by a Classical junior, and held fast.

They resisted at first, but they soon left off resisting. Jimmy Silver & Co. did not handle them gently.

"Let's rescue the rotters," suggested Towle, of the Modern side.

"They're not going to pack the meeting like that. Those fellows ain't going to vote, if they don't want to, Tommy Dodd."

But Tommy Dodd shook his head.

"Fair play's a jewel," he said.

"Tain't fair play to make those cads vote if they don't want to," urged Cook.

"Yes, it is. What'd we do to a Modern chap who wouldn't vote?"

"Scrag him, of course; but—"

"Well, then, leave 'em alone!"

"But, I say—"

"Rats!" said Tommy Dodd. "We want to win the election, but fair play's a jewel, I tell you. Let the Classicals alone!"

Tommy Dodd's word was law. The Moderns held back from the tussle, and Smythe & Co. were soon reduced to order.

Each of the unhappy nuts, looking very untidy, was held in the firm grip of a follower of Jimmy Silver, and there was no escape for them.

"Now, Smythe," said Jimmy Silver, "I don't want to ride the high horse, of course. I don't want to dictate to anybody. But you can see that it's your duty as Classicals to vote for the Classical candidate!"

"Hang you!"

"You're deposed, Smythe!"

"Then I sha'n't vote!"

"You will vote for me," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "I'm the Classical candidate. Are you going to vote for me, Smythe?"

"No!" roared Smythe.

"Sura?"

"Yes, confound you!"

"Hang on to his ears, you fellows," said Jimmy Silver. "I'll help myself to his nose!"

Jimmy Silver's finger and thumb closed on Smythe's nose with a grip like a vice.

"Now, Smythe, are you going to vote?"

"Groooh! Guggggg!"

"Speak in English. I don't understand German. I'm not a Modern!"

"Gooooog!"

"Are you going to vote?"

"Grrrrrrrr! Yes," howled Smythe. "Let go by dose! Ooooh! Yes, I'll vote! Grooh!"

"I thought you would," smiled Jimmy Silver. "I thought I could persuade you, Smythe. Of course, I wouldn't think of using coercion. You are going to vote of your own free will. You understand that?"

"Groooh!"

"Are you going to vote of your own free will, Smythe?"

"Grooh! Yeb! Let go by dose!" wailed Smythe, in anguish.

"Right-ho!" said Jimmy Silver, releasing Adolphus's nose at last. "You'll be glad afterwards that you did this patriotic thing, Smythe!"

Smythe did not reply. He clasped his nose in anguish, his eyes streaming with water.

"Now, you other fellows!" said Jimmy. "Are you going to vote?"

"Yes," said Howard hastily, as Jimmy Silver's finger and thumb approached his nose. "We—we—we'll vote, of course!"

"We—we'll do as Smythe does!" mumbled Townsend. "Keep off, you beast!"

"Good!"

The nuts having been reduced to order, Jimmy Silver mounted the chair again to address the meeting. Smythe & Co. cast longing glances towards the door. But a crowd of Classicals had their backs to it. There was no escape for the Giddy Goats.

Smythe, still clasping his nose, drew aside with his comrades. Smythe was very much hurt, both in his dignity and his nose. He was almost stuttering with rage.

"Keep your eye on me, you chaps," he whispered. "Vote as I do!"

"That cad Silver will get in as captain," mumbled Howard.

"There's one more Classical than Modern counting us!"

Smythe grinned in a really malignant way.

"I've got a card up my sleeve for the beast!" he said, in a low voice.

"You wait till the voting begins!"

"I don't see—" began Howard.

"We've got to vote!" growled Townsend. "They'll scrag us if we don't!"

"Yes, ass, we've got to vote; but—"

"But what?"

"We'll make that cheeky cad sorry for it!"

"How?" demanded the nuts.

Smythe sank his voice to the lowest of whispers.

"Vote Modern!"

The nuts stared at their leader for a moment. Then they burst into a chuckle. Truly, Adolphus had a card up his sleeve for Jimmy Silver!

The 6th Chapter.
The New Captain.

Jimmy Silver was addressing the meeting once more.

Jimmy was in high feather. Smythe & Co., having been persuaded to stay and vote, there was a Classical majority of one, and that one vote was enough to carry the election.

Tommy Dodd realised that, too, and he was looking very grave. His regard for fair play had prevented him from interfering between Jimmy Silver and the rebellious Classical voters. But it looked as if he would have to pay dearly for it. His chums gave him reproachful looks. They wanted strict fair play, of course; but they wanted their candidate to win, too. They felt that Tommy Dodd had thrown away his chance—his last chance.

"Can't be helped," growled Tommy Dodd. "Fair play's a jewel, I keep on telling you. We don't want to win by a dodge!"

"But we want to win!" growled Towle.

"Perhaps some of the Classicals will vote for me," said Tommy Dodd hopefully. "They must know I'm a better man than that Classic ass Silver!"

"Catch 'em!" growled Cook.

"Gentlemen," Jimmy Silver was saying, "the post of captain now being vacant, an election will be held to fill it. All the electors being present and ready to vote, we will now proceed to business. Mr. Bootles not being available to do the counting, we shall have to do it ourselves. Lovell will propose the Classic candidate!"

"And, sure, I'll propose the Modern candidate," said Doyle.

"Hear, hear!"

Lovell forthwith proposed his friend Jimmy Silver, and was seconded by Raby, the proposing and seconding being greeted with Classic cheers and Modern howls and groans.

Then Doyle jumped up to propose Tommy Dodd, seconded by Cook, with the same kind of greeting—excepting that in this case the cheers proceeded from the Modern crowd, and the howls and groans from the Classicals.

"Jintlemen," went on Doyle, waving his hand for silence, "I have a few more worruds to say."

"Go it, Doyle!"—from the Moderns.

"Cut it short, you ass!"—from the Classicals.

"Jintlemen, you all know me frind Tommy Dodd. Sure, he's one of the best, and a broth av a bhoy intoirely. Jintlemen—but sure I know yez too well to call ye jintlemen—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Comrades and fellow-cricketers," said Doyle, "I make an appeal on behalf of me frind Tommy Dodd. He's the man you want. I hope that any Classical spalpeen present who knows a good cricketer when he sees him will make up his mind to vote for me frind Tommy Dodd. Don't be led away by Classic gas. Tommy Dodd is the man you want. Make up your minds to have him. You've all seen what comes of having a Classic chump captain. We've been licked to the wide. The cup of our humiliations is overflowing. But, jintlemen, it is not yet full."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cheese it!"

"Go it!"

"Jintlemen, I had a few more worruds to say, but, sure, I've forgotten them—"

"Ring off!"

"Knock that duffer over!"

"But jintlemen, I call upon you to save Rookwood from going to the dogs, by rallying round me frind Tommy Dodd; and I say, and I repeat—Yarooooooop!"

Somebody kicked the legs of the chair away at that point, and Tommy Doyle came to the floor with a loud bump and a louder yell. It was the end of his speech.

"Now that duffer's run off, we'll get on to the counting," said Lovell.

"Hands up for Jimmy Silver!"

"Hands up for Tommy Dodd!"

"Classicals first, you cheeky fat-heads!"

"Moderns first, you Classic snobs!"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

Jimmy Silver produced his penny again, and the rivals of Rookwood tossed up for precedence. This time luck favoured Tommy Dodd.

"It's all the same, kids," said Jimmy Silver; "we've bagged the election. We know jolly well we've got one more voter than they have; that came out at the last election. The duffers think they may get a Classic vote, but they won't!"

"Let me see any Classic voting Modern, that's all!" said Lovell, clenching his fists. "He wouldn't be much to look at afterwards."

Cook waved his hand.

"Hands up for Tommy Dodd!" he shouted.

Every Modern hand went up. And there was a whoop of joy from the Moderns as a dozen Classic hands went up also. They were the hands of Adolphus Smythe & Co., the Giddy Goats of Rookwood. Thus were the outraged nuts avenged their wrongs upon Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Hurray!" roared Cook. "Count! Count!"

"Hold on!" bellowed Jimmy Silver, in alarm. "Hold on! Smythe, what are you up to? It's the Modern vote now!"

Smythe grinned.

"Yaas; I'm quite aware of that!" he assented.

"You—you—you're voting Modern!" hissed Jimmy Silver.

"Yaas."

"Why, you—you cad! You villain—"

"Tain't allowed!" roared Lovell. "Scrag 'em!"

"Let 'em alone!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "Every chap has a right to vote as he likes. Of course, they know which is the better man!"

"Look here, Smythe—"

"I'm votin' Modern," said Smythe calmly. "I think Tommy Dodd will make a better captain than Jimmy Silver."

"Hear, hear!" chorused the Moderns. "Bravo, Smythe!"

"You traitor! You—you unspeakable rotter! You—you—"

"Smythe's right!" hooted Tommy Dodd. "You back me up, Smythe! You're not such a silly howler as I always thought, by gum!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were stricken with dismay. To their innocent minds, such treachery on the part of

the nuts had not seemed possible. They naturally expected Classics to back up the Classic side, as ducks take to water. Had they not backed up Smythe themselves at the last election, and thus brought dire disaster on the sports club? The action of the turncoats completely took the wind out of their sails.

The Moderns proceeded jubilantly with the counting. The Fistical Four held a hurried consultation. But there was nothing to be done—for once even Jimmy Silver was beaten.

The nuts could be forced to vote, but they voted as they chose—to compel them to hold up their hands for the Classicals' candidate was not feasible, in the presence of the Moderns. Besides, it would have made the election null. Kicking them out would not have improved matters, since it would have left the Moderns with a big majority.

The Classical chums looked at one another with sickly expressions.

Jimmy Silver had declared that he would rather see a Modern candidate elected than allow the egregious Smythe to remain cricket captain. He was taken at his word now with a vengeance.

The Moderns counted away in great glee.

"Sixty-six!" shouted Tommy Cook. "Do you want to count, you Classic bounders?"

Jimmy Silver shook his hand despondently.

"We'll take your word for it?" he said.

"Do you want a Classical count?" chuckled Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver grunted. It was not much use counting—however, they counted. The result was forty-three for Jimmy Silver.

A dozen votes taken away from the Classic side, and added to the Modern side made all the difference, and Tommy Dodd's majority was tremendous.

The common-rooms rang with Modern cheers.

"Licked to the wide!" said Lovell dispiritedly.

"Well, it's all the better for the cricket, anyway," said Jimmy Silver heroically. "I'd rather have Tommy Dodd than that fathead Smythe. Duddy, old man, congratulations!"

Tommy Dodd patted him on the back.

"It's all right, Silver, old man! The cricket club is going ahead now. Every chap who can play will have a chance—Classic as well as Modern. You can depend on me to do the fair thing, I think. Your four chaps are going into the eleven, for a start."

And the Fistical Four were somewhat comforted.

There were great rejoicings on the Modern side at Rookwood that evening.

Tommy Dodd was junior captain— a Modern had got in at last! All the Modern juniors were in great jubilation.

But in the end study, on the Classic side, the Fistical Four were looking very serious. They had succeeded in "booting" Adolphus Smythe, and the cricket prospects had brightened considerably. That was so much to the good. And on reflection they agreed that they preferred Tommy Dodd, Modern as he was, in that responsible position, to the ineffable Adolphus.

"But it's a whack in the eye for the Classic side, and for this study!" said Lovell.

"Never mind," said Jimmy Silver. "Next term we'll have another go, and we'll get in a Classical skipper. And, meanwhile, we'll give the Giddy Goats a lesson about turning traitor and voting against their own side! Adolphus has asked for it, and now he's going to get it—where the chicken got the chopper!"

Adolphus did get it. The Giddy Goats were chuckling over the excellent way they had "done" the Fistical Four, when the Fistical Four and a crowd of other exasperated Classicals called in on them. The scene that followed was painful—painful in the extreme.

Jimmy Silver & Co. departed somewhat consoled. They left Smythe's study, and Smythe and the nuts, looking as if a cyclone had struck them. Adolphus had "done" the Fistical Four; but Adolphus & Co., as they sorted themselves out, groaning, from the wreckage, could not help feeling that they had been still more completely and thoroughly "done."

THE END.

(Smythe's Little Sweep is the title of next Monday's magnificent long complete tale of the Chums of Rookwood. Don't miss it!)

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