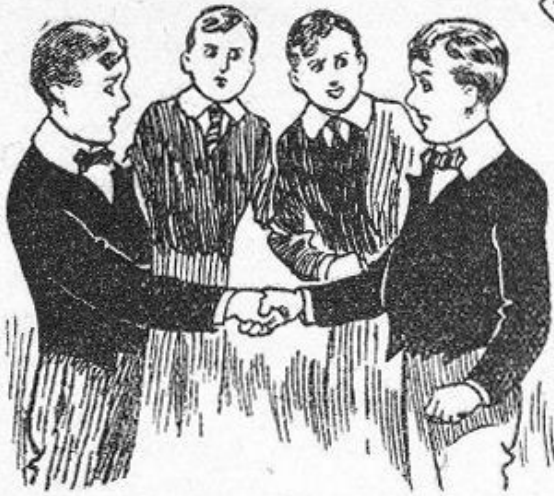


Jimmy Silver's Rival!



A Long Complete Story of
Rookwood School
By Owen Conquest

With Illustrations by W. G. WAKEFIELD

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Serenaders

"COME out!"
Bang!
"Get a move on!"
"Bang! bang!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood School. "Is that a new game?"

Jimmy Silver and Co. were astonished.

The Fistical Four of the Fourth had strolled across the quadrangle from the Classic to the Modern side after lessons. They had nothing particular to do, and Lovell had suggested improving the shining hour by ragging the Moderns. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome agreed at once, they felt that a leisure hour could not be better spent.

But a surprise awaited them when they arrived at Mr. Manders' house. Outside that house, under the windows of the Fourth-form studies, two Modern juniors had taken up their stand. Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook were looking up at the window of the study they shared with Tommy Dodd. Doyle had a saucepan-lid in one hand and a pegtop in the other. He was banging the pegtop on the saucepan-lid with great vigour, apparently with the object of making as much noise as possible. In that object he was succeeding perfectly. Cook had provided himself

with a tin can and a cricket-stump. With these musical instruments he was ably seconding the efforts of his chum.

Jimmy Silver and Co. stared at them. In their surprise they forgot all about their intention of ragging the three Tommies of the Modern Fourth.

Bang! bang! crash! clash! jingle!

"Come out!" shouted Cook.

"Show a leg there!" roared Doyle.

Bang! bang!

"What on earth is the name of that game?" demanded Jimmy Silver, in great mystification. "Are you trying to get Mr. Manders to come out with his cane?"

"You'll succeed!" remarked Lovell.

The two Tommies did not heed. They did not even look at the Classical chums. They continued to bang and shout.

Suddenly at the study window above there appeared an exasperated face. It was the face of Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth. He shook a fist at his two chums far below.

"Clear off!" he shouted.

"Come out!"

"I'm not coming out!"

Bang! bang!

"Will you shut up that row?" roared Tommy Dodd. "How is a chap to work with that shindy going on under his window?"

"Come out!"

"I can't come out!" shrieked Tommy

Dodd. "You know jolly well I'm working at German."

"It's unpatriotic to work at German—after lessons, anyhow," retorted Tommy Cook. "Come out!"

"Chuck up swotting, and come out," said Tommy Doyle.

"Rats! Clear off, or I'll buzz something down on your silly nappers."

Tommy Dodd retired from the window. Apparently he was resuming his work at German, which was a subject in the Modern curriculum at Rockwood; a subject the Modern juniors were not keen upon, and which the Classics declared they wouldn't touch with a pair of tongs.

"Isn't he a bothersome baste intirely," exclaimed Tommy Doyle, in great wrath. "Here's a foine summer's afternoon, and we're ready to take him for a run, and he sticks indoors grinding at rotten German."

"We'll soon have him out," said Cook sagely. "He can't grind German with this serenade going on."

"Go it!"

Bang! bang! bang! The overture recommenced.

"Well, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver with a whistle. "I didn't know Tommy Dodd had taken to swotting. But that's the way to cure him. A chap who could work with that going on would be a giddy marvel. But aren't you afraid of disturbing Manders?"

"Oh, blow Manders!" said Cook crossly. "Besides, he can't hear from his quarters."

"Must be jolly deaf if he doesn't," grinned Lovell.

"Bother him, anyway. Tommy Dodd's got to come out."

"What's the special reason?"

"He's got to keep in form for sports' day," explained Cook. "We're relying on Tommy Dodd to win the two-fifty for our side."

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"My dear chaps, you can save your trouble, then. Let Tommy Dodd swot at German as long as he likes. It won't make any difference. The Classical side is going to win the two-fifty."

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed

Raby warmly. "Why, I'm running in that!"

"And little me," smiled Jimmy.

"We've got a dozen men who could beat anything you could scare up in this mouldy house!" exclaimed Newcome. "Why, Mornington and Erroll and Rawson and Grace—lots, in fact. You Moderns won't have an earthly in that event."

"Or in any other, if you come to that," remarked Raby.

Cook and Doyle gave a simultaneous sniff. They were very far from sharing the Classical opinion as to the Modern chances of sports day.

"You've got one good man on your side," said Cook scornfully. "That's Jimmy Silver. I admit he's fairly good, though a Classical. But, of course, he's not a patch on our Tommy when Tommy's in form."

"Not the ghost of a patch," said Doyle. "Tommy Dodd is going to leave him standing. I don't suppose the spectators will notice that he has moved at all by the time Tommy romps home."

"You cheeky Modern asses!" roared Lovell. "I tell you——"

"Rats! Tommy's going to pull it off for our side, and we're going to see that he does it. And the crass ass," said Cook, in a greatly aggrieved tone, "the burbling chump must select this special time for going in for a mouldy German prize. His people want him to shine in German—so he says. Bless his soul! What's a German prize compared with winning the two-fifty and knocking you Classical dummies out?"

"Let him swot," said Jimmy Silver kindly. "He may bag the German prize, but he won't bag the two hundred and fifty yards. He couldn't."

"I tell you——"

"And I tell you——"

"'Nuff said!" exclaimed Doyle. "We're going to take Tommy for a run this afternoon. He's got to stop swotting, and we're going to serenade him till he does. Go it, Cooky, darling."

Bang! bang! crash! clatter! bang!

The unfortunate youth who was "swotting" in the study above found that swotting was

difficult under the circumstances. His crimson face reappeared at the window, and his clenched fist was shaken at his two devoted chums below.

"Will you ring off?" he roared.

"Not till you come out."

"I can't come out when I'm grinding German."

"If German interferes with business give up German," suggested Tommy Cook.

"You know jolly well——"

"We know jolly well that we're going to pace you as far as Coombe. Come out."

"I can't."

"Then here goes!"

Bang! bang! bang!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver and Co., greatly entertained, especially by the expression on the face at the study window.

"If you don't buzz off, I'll swamp ink over you!" yelled Tommy Dodd. "Mind, I mean that."

Bang! bang! bang!

Tommy Dodd disappeared from the window again.

"Stand from under!" grinned Lovell. "Doddy looked as if he meant business. I don't want any ink."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang! bang! bang!

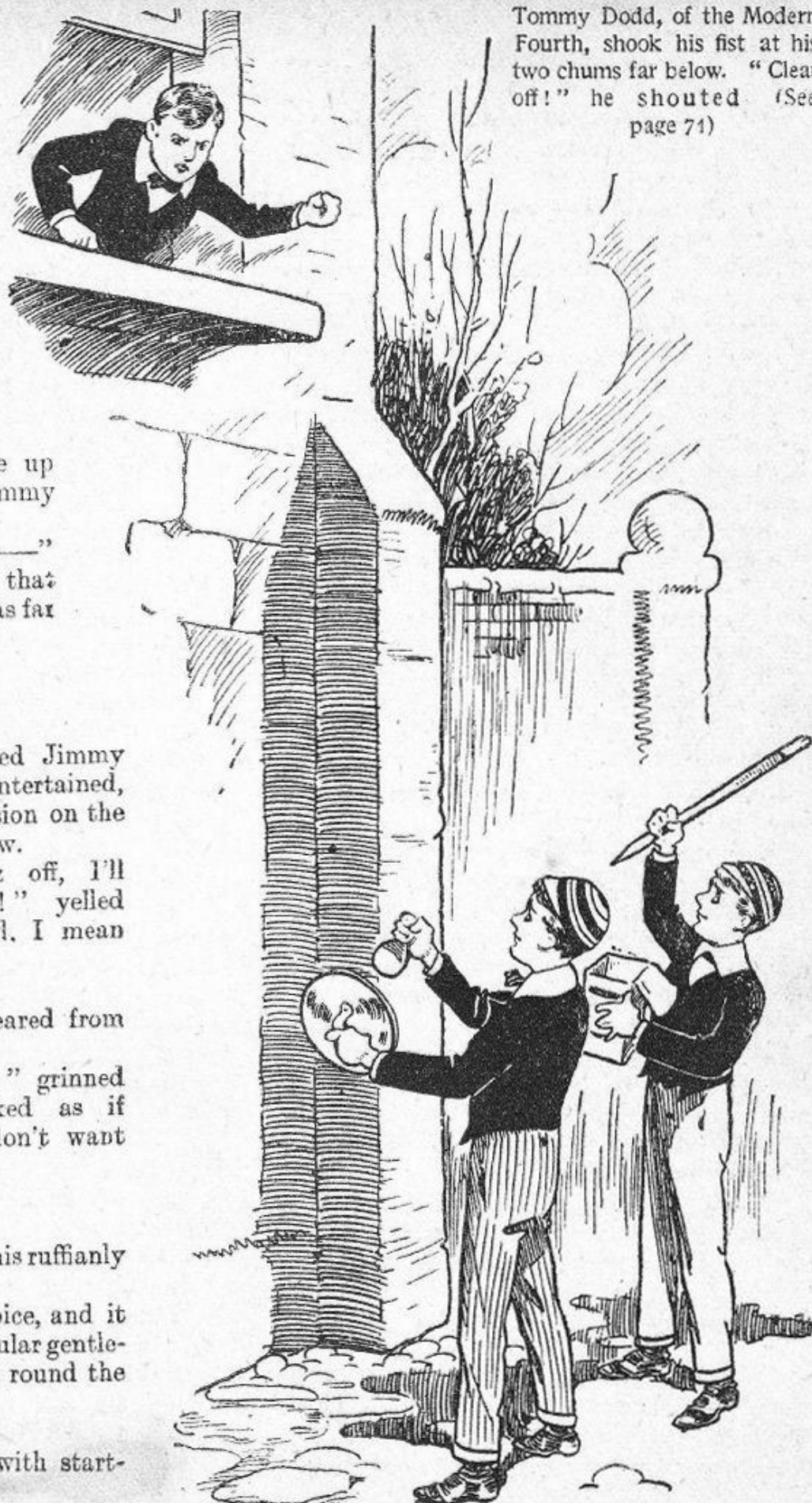
"What is this noise—this ruffianly disturbance?"

It was a sharp, acid voice, and it proceeded from a tall, angular gentleman who came whisking round the corner of the house.

It was Mr. Manders.

The serenade ceased with startling suddenness.

Tommy Dodd, of the Modern Fourth, shook his fist at his two chums far below. "Clear off!" he shouted. (See page 71)



Cook and Doyle bolted round the nearest corner like rabbits bolting for a burrow; and the Classical four bolted with them.

Mr. Manders arrived breathless on the spot, to find it vacant.

The juniors had vanished so suddenly that the science master of Rookwood had no chance of recognising them. He had only caught a vanishing glimpse of Eton jackets and running feet.

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Manders halted, and blinked round him over his glasses. "Disgraceful—who—what—yurrrrrgggh!"

Swoosh!

From the study window above came a sudden swamping of ink.

Tommy Dodd had kept his word.

Unfortunately he was not aware that his tormentors had gone, and that Mr. Manders was standing in their place. He had not the faintest idea that the shower of ink was descending upon his house-master.

But Mr. Manders had.

He knew it only too well.

There was about a pint of ink, but to Mr. Manders it seemed as if gallons and gallons came swamping down on his devoted head.

"Yurrrrrggghhh!"

Mr. Manders spluttered wildly. His spluttering was heard in the study above; and a grinning face looked out of the window. Tommy Dodd knew that he had caught somebody; he did not yet know whom he had caught. He grinned down in great glee.

"There, you noisy bounders! There, you silly asses! Oh, my only Aunt Jemima!"

Tommy Dodd broke off in horror, as he gazed down at the inky face that was upturned to him—the infuriated face of his house-master, streaming with ink!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Three is Trouble

"OH, my hat!"

From the friendly shelter of a beech trunk in the distance, Jimmy Silver was looking on. The other juniors were in cover, near at hand, also watching.

The sight of the ink swamping upon Mr. Manders almost petrified them.

"Tare an' 'ounds!" murmured Tommy Doyle. "Poor old Tommy's been and gone and done it now!"

"Manders!" murmured Cook, in horror. "Manders! Manders' old napper swamped with ink! Oh, dear!"

"There'll be the dickens to pay now!"

"Poor old Tommy!"

Tommy Dodd's horror-stricken face disappeared from the window. Perhaps he nourished a faint hope that Mr. Manders did now know from which window the shower had descended.

For some moments the house-master stood gasping and gurgling. Then he whisked away.

Jimmy Silver and Co. looked at one another.

"What's going to happen now?" murmured Jimmy.

"Something—to Tommy Dodd!" said Lovell.

"Poor old Tommy!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Cook. "It's all Tommy's fault. He ought to have come out when we told him. We told him plain enough! We made row enough to make any sensible chap come out. Didn't we, Doyle?"

"Sure we did!" mumbled Doyle.

"Now Manders will take it out of him——"

"Sure he will!"

"I—I suppose we'd better go in and own up!" mumbled Tommy Cook dejectedly. "We can't leave Tommy to stand it on his own. Come on, kid."

And the two Moderns almost limped away to Mr. Manders's house, to share the fate of their hapless chum.

"Well," said Jimmy Silver, "I always said these Modern bounders were silly asses! And they are!"

"They is!" agreed Lovell.

"We came over here to rag them!" remarked Jimmy reflectively. "I don't think they'll need much ragging after Manders has done with them. He looked annoyed."

"He felt annoyed, I think!" murmured Raby. "Slightly!"

"Just a few!" grinned Newcome.

"Poor old Tommy Dodd! Instead of ragging the silly duffers, we'll try to console them—what Manders leaves of them."

"Oh, rather!"

The Fistical Four remained waiting, in the offing, so to speak, for the reappearance of the Moderns. What was passing in Mr. Manders's study they did not know; but they thought they could guess. They realised that it must be a very painful scene.

"Here they come!" said Lovell, at last.

"What a picture!"

The three Tommies came out of Mr. Manders's house together, and they did indeed present a picture of woe and tribulation.

The three unhappy youths had their hands tucked under their arms, and seemed trying to fold themselves up like pocket-knives.

They were not speaking, but a series of breathless gasps escaped from them. Evidently the unhappy three had been "through it."

The Fistical Four approached sympathetically. All thoughts of ragging the Moderns were at an end. Jimmy Silver and Co. felt only sympathy for the sufferers.

"Had it bad?" asked Jimmy.

The three Tommies glared at him.

"Ow! ow! ow!" was their only reply.

"Hurt?" asked Lovell.

"You frabjous ass!" groaned Tommy Dodd.

"Do you think I'm doing this for fun?"

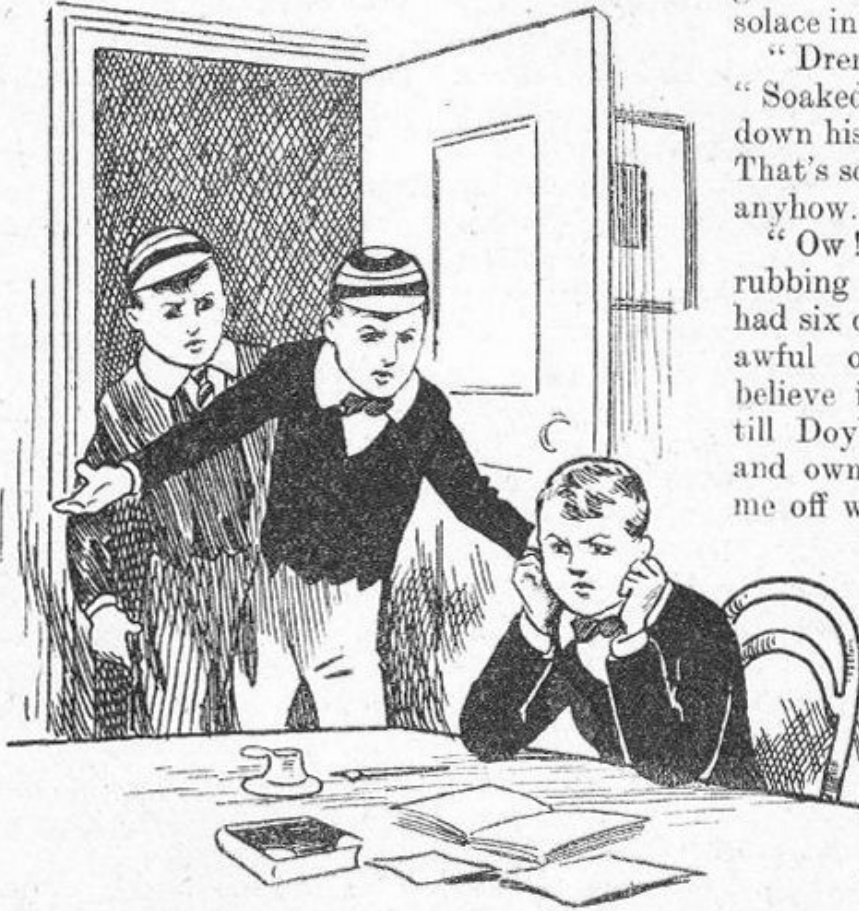
"Well, I only asked——"

"Ass!"

"I'm really sorry——"

"Fathead!"

"Look here!"



"Well, isn't it up to a chap to listen to what his pater says?" demanded Tommy Dodd. (See page 76)

"B-r-r-r! Go and eat coke!"

Classical sympathy did not seem to help the hapless Moderns much. Indeed, they were displaying a black ingratitude.

"Sure old Manders is an awful baste!" groaned Tommy Doyle. "He had Tommy Dodd in his study when we got there."

"Laying into him with a cane" mumbled Cook.

"But he did look a vision with his inky chivvy, though," said Doyle, with a faint grin. He found some slight solace in that reminiscence.

"Drenched," said Cook. "Soaked with it. Running down his collar and his neck. That's so much to the good, anyhow."

"Ow! wow!" said Dodd, rubbing his hands. "I've had six on each paw. The awful old Hun wouldn't believe it was an accident till Doyle and Cook came and owned up. Then he let me off with a round dozen.

Goodness knows how long he'd have gone on if they hadn't blown in."

"And he took the rest out of us!" groaned Cook. "I thought p'r'aps he'd admire a chap coming in and owning up

in a frank manly way. Masters do, in story-books. But not old Manders."

"No fear!" mumbled Doyle. "Not Manders. We explained that it was all our fault Tommy chucked the ink, and he simply laid into us with the cane."

"Oh, dear!"

"Ow-wow-wow!"

"Hard cheese," said Jimmy Silver. "We're no end sympathetic, we are, really. Keep smiling, you know."

"Keep smiling," murmured Tommy Dodd.

"You silly chump, how is a chap to smile with six on each hand—six corks. Go back to your asylum."

Three dispirited Modern youths started for the gates, almost limping. Mr. Manders had not spared the rod, and the three Tommies were likely to feel the effects for some time. Tommy Dodd's unpopular German studies were over for the present; but Doyle and Cook were not feeling inclined for the run they had planned. Even sports day, to which all the Rookwood fellows were looking forward, failed to interest them now.

"Well, I call them ungrateful bounders!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Not much good wasting time consoling them. Let's get out for a run, Jimmy. You've got to keep in form for the two-fifty yourself, though, of course, you'll beat the Moderns hands down."

"I hope so!" assented Jimmy.

"You'd better," said Arthur Edward darkly. "If you don't you'll get a study ragging that you won't forget in a hurry, I promise you that."

"Why, you ass——"

"Come on! Trot!"

And the Fistical Four trotted.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

A Run on the Road

"**BOSH!**"

"Now, look here, Tommy!"

"Rot!"

Tommy Dodd's remarks could not be called polite, but they were emphatic. There was no doubt about Tommy's emphasis.

It was a couple of days after the unhappy incident in which Mr. Manders had involuntarily taken a part. The three Tommies were in their study on the Modern side of Rookwood, and two or three other Modern juniors were lounging about the study—Towle, Lacy, and Wadsley of the Fourth. Tommy Dodd had a very obstinate expression on his face, and the other juniors all looked a little excited.

An argument was in progress.

It was half-holiday at Rookwood, and the opinion of Tommy Dodd's loyal chums and

backers was that it was up to Tommy to spend that half-holiday on Shanks's pony, as Cook termed it. Dodd was of the opinion that it was up to him to spend it at German—or, at least, a good part of it. Tommy Dodd was far from being what the Rookwooders termed a "swot" or a "sap," but he was very keen on the German prize. He had his reasons for that, but his reasons did not seem good to his comrades.

"You'll make a rotten show at the sports at this rate," said Tommy Cook. "You know you will, Tommy."

"Rats!"

"The Classics are bragging that they're going to bag everything."

"Let 'em brag."

"They will bag some of the events, anyhow," said Towle. "But if you take care, Tommy, you'll bag the two-fifty race."

"I'm going to bag it."

"Not if you stick indoors mugging up German."

Tommy Dodd gave an exasperated snort.

"Now, look here, you fellows," he said. "I've promised my pater to bag the German prize, if it can be done. I don't like Huns or their lingo any more than you do; but it's got to be done. We come to Rookwood to learn something, not merely to win races on sports day. Ever thought of that?"

"If Tommy's going to give us sermons——" began Lacy, more in sorrow than in anger.

"He's got that from his pater," said Cook with conviction. "I can hear his pater saying it."

"Well, isn't it up to a chap to listen to what his pater says?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"Oh, yes; I always believe in a chap giving his pater his head," answered Cook. "Let 'em say what they like, and listen respectfully. It's up to a fellow. Now, are you ready to come out?"

"What about the German then?"

"Oh, blow the German!"

"You frabjous ass," hooted Tommy Dodd. "What's the good of listening to what my pater says if I don't take any notice of it?"

"What's the good of asking me conundrums? There's no conundrums in the list

of events on sports day. I know we want to make a good show against the Classics.

"I shall run all right——"

"Not if you don't keep fit."

"I'm keeping fit, ass. I can run you off your legs any day!"

"But you've not got to run me off my legs; you've got to run Jimmy Silver off his legs, and he's a goer."

"Oh, bother!"

"German!" said Tommy Doyle, with a sniff. "Is your pater a blessed pro-Hun, Tommy, that he's so keen on German?"

"Ass! What do we come on the Modern side at Rookwood for?" growled Tommy Dodd. "We come here to learn modern languages and science. If we don't do it, we might as well be on the Classical side, mugging up mouldy old Latin and Greek. This is the commercial side, isn't it? I'm not going to be a dashed tutor when I grow up—I'm going into the pater's business. And the pater's out to bag German trade, and I've got to be a good German scholar. I tell you the pater gave me a lecture last vac. on the subject, twenty minutes by the clock. I don't want another of the same next vac., I can tell you. Besides, he's promised me a canoe if I bag the German prize."

"Oh, now you're talking!" said Cook. "You never told us about the canoe. Still, you've got to make a good show at the sports, canoe or no canoe. Look here, I suppose it would not do if I bagged the German prize instead——"

"Eh?"

"Your pater would give me the canoe——"

"Ass!"

"I'd let you use it."

"Of all the silly chumps——" ejaculated Tommy Dodd.

"Well, we've wasted enough time talking intirely," said Doyle. "Are you ready to come out now?"

"I'm going to mug up German for two hours," said Tommy Dodd determinedly. "Mr. Flinders is giving me extra toot to help me through. It would be beastly ungrateful to have nothing to show up for it."

"What about the race?"

"Bother!"

"You know we're a small House compared with the Classics," said Cook appealingly.

"You know you're our best man, Tommy. We rely on you to get us a show. Come on!"

"I tell you I can beat any Classical at Rookwood. There's not one but Jimmy Silver who can touch me!"

"But he will touch you hard if you don't keep in form. Now come along; we're wasting time!"

"I'm not coming."

"Do you want us to serenade you again?"

"Rats!"

"Serenades are off," said Doyle. "There's too much Manders about for that. Give Tommy a hand if he can't move."

"Hear, hear!"

"Look here——" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Come on!"

Tommy Dodd's chums were tired of argument. They seized the hapless Tommy, and he was marched out of the study, vainly resisting. His voice was heard far and wide in wrathful accents as he went struggling down the stairs.

"Now then, what's that row?" called out Knowles of the Sixth from the lower passage.

And Tommy Dodd was silent. In silence, under the frown of the Modern prefect, he walked out into the quadrangle with his chums.

"Look here, you silly asses!" he said in a suppressed voice, as they came out into the summer sunshine.

"This way," said Cook. "You can mug up German afterwards, Tommy. Keep hold of his arms, you fellows!"

"What-ho!"

There was a group of Classical juniors in the gateway, and they grinned as Tommy Dodd was marched down by his loyal friends. Tommy's face betrayed a plentiful lack of appreciation for their loyalty.

"Oh, gad! What's this game?" asked Mornington. "Your champion runner waitin' to be carried?"

"He, he, he!" gurgled Tubby Muffin.

"Like us to fetch a stretcher?" chuckled Conroy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He will want an ambulance, anyway,

after he has run against our lot next week!" remarked Grace.

"Oh, come on, Tommy!" growled Cook. "You Classical duffers can go and eat coke. Tommy will run your legs off!"

"Trot!" said Doyle. "Sure I'm going to time you to Coombe, Tommy."

"Oh, you silly chumps!" groaned Tommy Dodd.

He submitted to his fate. Evidently there was no argument possible with his determined supporters.

Mornington and his comrades looked after them smiling.

Valentine Mornington detached himself from the group at the gates.

"Race you to Coombe, Doddy!" he called out.

Tommy Dodd gave the dandy of the Fourth a look of supreme scorn.

"Race me?" he said. "You couldn't race Jimmy Silver!"

"I know—I know!" grinned Mornington. "But I'll race you, old top, just to show you that you may as well stay in bed on sports day. I'm in the two-fifty, you know, and I expect to come in second."

"You cheeky ass! If I don't leave you standing half-way to Coombe, you can use my head for a footer!" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Done!"

"Good man!" said Cook with satisfaction. "Now then, I'll give you the signal. When I say go——"

"I'm ready, dear boys."

"Go!"

The two juniors started on the white high road. The Modern juniors followed them at a more moderate pace, in a mood of satisfaction. Morny was the second best runner on the Classical side, and this was good training for Tommy Dodd. And as the spirit of the contest entered into him, he forgot all about his neglected German studies, and put his "beef" into it.

"Keep 'em in sight!" said Cook.

But it was not easy to keep the two sprinters in sight. They vanished round a bend of the lane, going at great speed, Tommy Dodd leading. And the followers dropped into a trot.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Tommy Dodd Loses His Temper

JIMMY SILVER uttered an exclamation. The Fistical Four were out of gates that afternoon, and they were sauntering along the Coombe Road, when the rapid pattering of feet behind made them look round.

The Classical quartette stopped as they sighted Mornington and Tommy Dodd coming up the road.

Neither of the juniors was in running rig, but it was evidently a race. And Morny had drawn level with the Modern junior now.

There was a smile on Morny's handsome face as he ran, but Tommy Dodd was looking morose. He had fully expected to "walk away" from Mornington, and leave him covered with ridicule. But it was not happening. He had shot ahead at first, but Morny had pulled level, and was keeping level with scarcely an effort. It was borne in upon Tommy's mind that the dandy of the Fourth could have pulled ahead had he chosen.

That was a distinctly unpleasant discovery; for Morny was second to Jimmy Silver, whom Tommy hoped to beat on sports day.

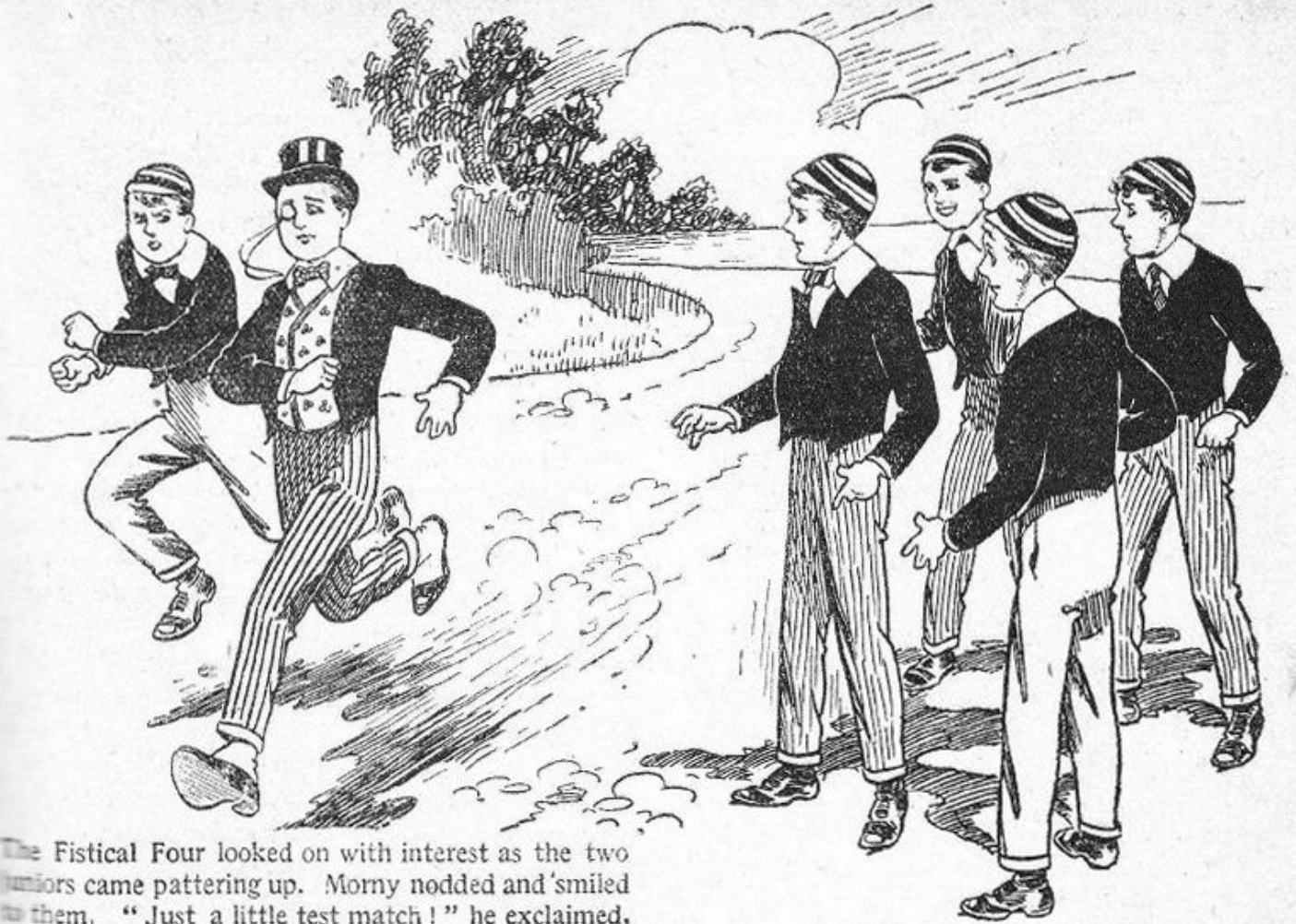
Tommy Dodd was a sportsman through and through, and he could take a beating as cheerfully as any fellow at Rookwood—as a rule. But he was in worried mood now, and somewhat to his own surprise, a feeling of bitterness was surging up in his breast. He had set out to accomplish two objects—to win the German prize to please his father; and to win the two hundred and fifty yards race to please his chums, and for the honour of his House. It looked rather the two objects were incompatible, as, indeed, his chums had told him from the first. Tommy was determined not to give up either; and the thought of a double defeat was bitter.

The Fistical Four looked on with interest as the two juniors came pattering up. Morny nodded and smiled to them.

"Just a little test match," he explained, in passing. "I'm doing Doddy a good turn—showin' him that he'd better save his time on sports day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Dodd did not speak, but his teeth



The Fistical Four looked on with interest as the two juniors came pattering up. Morny nodded and smiled to them. "Just a little test match!" he exclaimed, in passing. (See page 78)

came together hard. He put on a spurt and shot ahead again.

Jimmy Silver glanced at him, and shook his head.

"Dodd's not in the best form," he remarked. "He's pumping himself out, and no mistake. He will have to run better than that at the sports."

"Looks a bit savage!" commented Raby.

"Join up!" grinned Lovel. "We'll trot into the village with them. Rather a joke on the Moderns if we all get ahead of their champion."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It seemed an excellent joke to the Classical chums, and they joined in at once. In a few minutes they were on a level with the runners.

Tommy Dodd glanced at them sourly.

"What the thunder are you fellows doing?" he gasped.

"Getting ahead!" grinned Lovell.

"Lead on, Macduff!" chuckled Newcome.

Tommy Dodd set his teeth hard, and made another effort. Again he shot ahead of his competitors; but the effort tired him, and he slackened again—and then five juniors running lightly, passed him. Jimmy Silver forged ahead, next to him came Mornington, and then Lovell and Newcome. But George Raby, the least efficient of the crowd, was ahead of Tommy Dodd.

It was only too plain that Tommy was not in his old form. He had taken too much for granted, that was clear to him now.

The road was a straight run into Coombe village now; and far behind, Cook and Doyle and the other Moderns come into sight. Their looks were very peculiar as they sighted the race at a distance—with five Classical juniors running ahead of their champion.

Tommy Dodd was breathing hard.

Coombe was in sight ahead, and he was determined to beat the Classicals to the village—and they were beating him. With a

sustained effort he drew past Raby, and then past Newcome. He was running level with Arthur Edward Lovell now; but Jimmy Silver and Mornington were in advance—and they were not running their hardest.

Close on the village, Tommy Dodd shot ahead of Lovell, and reached Mornny's side.

Another effort, and he was level with Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy glanced at him with a smile.

The rivalry at Rookwood between Modern and Classical was too keen for Jimmy not to enjoy the discomfiture of the Modern champion. He did not exert himself to win, but ran level with Tommy; Mornington, exerting himself now, close behind. The perspiration was running thickly down Tommy Dodd's face, and his clothes seemed to be sticking to him. His heart throbbed, and his head was in a buzz. But he stuck gamely to his guns, and for a moment he drew ahead of the captain of the Fourth.

Victory seemed to be within his grasp.

But a moment or two later he discovered that the humorous "Uncle James" of Rookwood was simply pulling his leg. Jimmy shot ahead suddenly, almost without effort, and Tommy was fairly left standing.

He slacked down, gasping.

Mornington passed him, laughing. Tommy Dodd gritted his teeth.

Outside Mrs. Wicks' tuck shop there was a big tree with a wooden bench round it, where the Rookwood juniors often gathered for lemonade and ginger-pop of summer days. Jimmy Silver and Mornington sat down on the bench; and they had had time to order ginger-beer by the time Tommy Dodd came panting up.

Tommy did not sit on the bench—he collapsed on it.

He sat there panting.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Mornington. "The Moderns have put up a merry champion this time, an' no mistake! Here, Doddy, take this. You need it."

He held out a glass of ginger-beer.

The Modern junior did not take it. He struck it angrily aside, and glass and ginger-pop went to the turf together.

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Mornington.

Jimmy Silver raised his eyebrows. He was surprised, and he was shocked, and he did not conceal the fact.

"Dash it all, Doddy——!" he exclaimed.

Tommy Dodd gave him a bitter look.

"You could have beaten me all the way!" he muttered, speaking with difficulty.

Jimmy nodded.

"What did you let me pull ahead for, then?"

Jimmy smiled.

"Only pulling your leg, old scout," he answered.

"You rotter!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Rotter!" panted Tommy Dodd. "That's what I called you!"

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet, and eyed Tommy Dodd grimly. His hands clenched, but he unclenched them again.

"That isn't quite sporting, is it, Doddy?" he asked quietly. "You're out of form, and you've been beaten. Take it like a sport."

"Like a sport, not like a Modern bounder," said Mornington, with a curl of the lip.

Tommy Dodd's eyes blazed. He was fagged out, and he was utterly out of sorts; and perhaps the anticipation of what his friends were going to say troubled his mind. He leaped from the seat, and advanced on Valentine Mornington with his fists clenched.

Jimmy Silver interposed just in time.

He caught Tommy Dodd by the arm, and dragged him back; or Mornington would certainly have gone down under a fierce blow.

Tommy Dodd turned on him savagely.

"Let go—you idiot, let me go——"

"Look here, Dodd——"

"Will you let me go?" shouted Dodd.

"No, I won't if you're going to act the goat!" exclaimed Jimmy, his own anger rising. "You——"

"Take that, then!"

And Tommy Dodd's fist flashed out in passionate anger. And as the crowd of Rookwood fellows came panting up Lovell and Co., and the Moderns behind them, they saw the unexpected sight of Jimmy Silver reeling backwards, to collapse on the turf; and Tommy Dodd standing over him with clenched fists and flashing eyes.



A GREAT OCCASION—SPORTS DAY AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Uncle James Surprises His Chums

JIMMY SILVER sat up dazedly.

There was a red mark on his cheek where the blow had fallen—hard. And the heavy fall had dazed him for a moment. He sat and gasped in the grass.

Tommy Dodd dropped his hands.

The moment the blow had been struck the junior's better nature asserted itself, and he was ashamed. Tommy Dodd would have given a great deal to recall that hasty blow. He was about to stoop and offer Jimmy Silver help to get on his feet, when the Rookwooders came up with a rush. Arthur Edward Lovell was the first to arrive; and his first proceeding was to brandish a formidable set of knuckles under Tommy Dodd's nose. Tommy jumped back just in time to escape contact.

"You Modern rotter!" bawled Lovell furiously.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

He scrambled to his feet.

"Modern cad!" howled Raby. "Just ratty because you're licked in a race. You worm!"

Tommy Dodd crimsoned.

The charge was, in fact, true, and Tommy Dodd's instant repentance of his hasty "rattiness" remained, naturally, his own secret. He was not at all disposed to own up to a fault, under the condemnation of the Classics. His expression changed to dark sullenness.

"Mop him up, Jimmy!" panted Lovell. "Here, I'll hold your jacket! Give him a taste of his own medicine."

"Or leave him to me," said Mornington.

"You back out, Morny. Jimmy's going to lick the Modern cad!"

"A dozen Jimmies would be wanted for that!" snapped Tommy Dodd, all defiance at once.

Jimmy Silver rubbed his face where the blow had fallen. He seemed to hesitate.

Nobody had ever averred that the captain of the Rookwood Fourth was "backward in coming forward" in a fistical encounter. He was the chief of the "Fistical Four" of Rookwood; and that enterprising quartette was

rather too much than too little famed for its fighting qualities. But now Jimmy jerked his jacket loose of Lovell's grasp: he seemed in no hurry to have it off and begin.

Lovell glared at him.

"You're going to mop him up, I suppose!" he exclaimed.

"All in good time, old chap."

"No time like the present. You're not going to let a Modern cad punch your nose in the open street without squashing him, are you?" howled Lovell.

Tommy Dodd looked rather curiously at Jimmy Silver, and then sat down quietly on the wooden bench. Cook and Doyle exchanged odd glances, and sat down with their leader. Although they did not conceal their disapproval of Dodd's hot-headed act, they were ready to back him up in a "row" with the Classics, and a "scrap" with the Classical leader. But the scrap, apparently, was not coming off.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders with a rather sneering smile. Towle and Lacy and Wadsley looked on very uncomfortably.

"Well," said Lovell, at last, as Jimmy Silver did not stir, "when are you going to thrash that Modern cad? Take your time, of course."

Jimmy drew a deep breath.

He looked at Tommy Dodd; but the Modern junior avoided meeting his eyes now.

"I'm not going to fight with Dodd unless he wants me to," said Jimmy Silver, at last.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Jimmy!"

"What the thump——"

"You're going to let him thump your chivvy, and take it like a conchy!" shrieked Lovell.

Jimmy crimsoned.

"I think Dodd will say he's sorry for that, when he's cool," he answered. "If any fellow here thinks that I am funky, I'm ready to meet him in the gym, with or without gloves."

"Look here——"

"Jimmy——"

"You're not going to fight your own pals," howled Lovell. "You're going to lick that Modern worm."

"I'm going back."

"Jimmy, you thumping ass——"

"Rats!"

Jimmy Silver stepped back. Lovell glared at him, not in the least understanding the motives of his leader. Jimmy was rather a more thoughtful youth than the other fellows; but Arthur Edward Lovell was never in danger of having his brow "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

He did not understand, and he was wrathful.

"You won't lick him?" he shouted.

"No."

"Then I will!" roared Lovell. "If you won't stand up for the Classical side you can leave it to me."

Lovell made a fierce stride towards Tommy Dodd; but Jimmy Silver caught him by the arm.

"Hold on!"

"Look out, there's Bootles!" muttered Mornington.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, had just hove in sight in the village street.

All excitement was dropped at once. Angry as Lovell was even he did not care for his Form-master to behold him "scraping" in the open streets of Coombe.

The juniors capped their form-master respectfully as he came by.

Mr. Bootles acknowledged their salute graciously, and paused for a moment to speak.

"A pleasant afternoon, my boys," he said

genially, "I see you are taking a little walk together this pleasant afternoon, what, what?"

"Ye-es, sir," stammered Jimmy.

Mr. Bootles smiled benignantly.

"I am very glad to see Modern and Classical juniors joining in a friendly walk on a pleasant afternoon," he said, "what, what? That is right, my dear boys. Keep your rivalry for

the class-rooms and the playing-fields, and at other times—hem, hem—at other times enjoy the beauties of—er—Nature, in friendly and cordial companionship. What, what!"

And the worthy Mr. Bootles passed on.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Mornington.

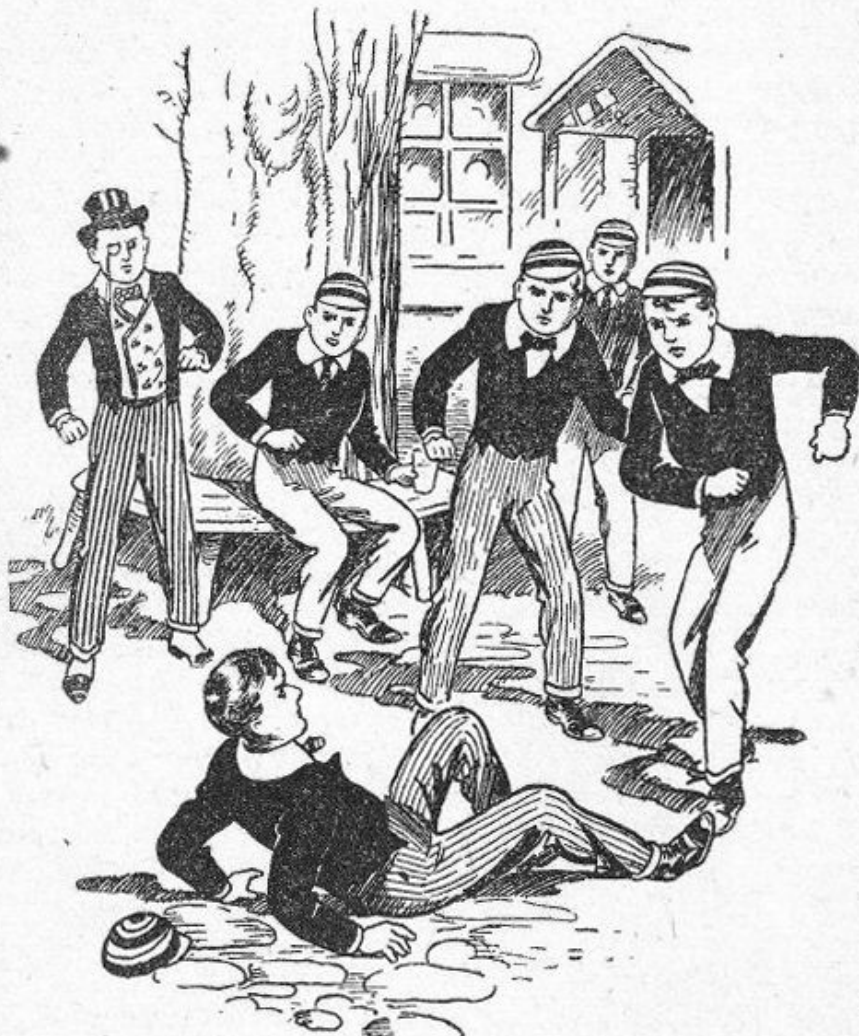
Some of the juniors grinned; little Mr. Bootles' misapprehension struck them as comic. Jimmy Silver turned and started for Rookwood, holding Lovell by the arm. But Lovell had given up his hostile designs on Tommy Dodd's features, while

Mr. Bootles hovered in the offing. Raby and Newcome and Mornington followed them.

The Moderns were left alone under the big tree.

"What's the matter with Silver?" remarked Towle, "I've never known him show the white feather before."

Tommy Dodd looked up with an unexpected scowl.



As the crowd of Rookwood fellows came panting up, Lovell and Co. and the Moderns behind them saw the unexpected sight of Jimmy Silver reeling backwards, to collapse on the turf. (See page 80)

"Don't be a silly ass, Towle!" he said.

"Eh?"

"Deaf?" grunted Tommy Dodd. "Silly ass! Don't be a silly ass! Understand now?"

"Look here, Dodd——" began Towle warmly.

"Silver did seem a bit funky, if you ask me," observed Cook.

"No good asking you—you're a duffer!" retorted Tommy Dod.

"Are you standing up for the Classical cad, after knocking him down?" demanded the astonished Towle.

"Oh, rats!"

"You oughtn't to have done that, Doddy," said Doyle gravely. "It isn't like a sportsman to lose his temper over losing a race."

Tommy Dodd's eyes flashed at him.

"Who's losing his temper?" he snapped.

"Well, you did, didn't you?"

"Bosh!"

"What did you punch Silver for, then?"

"Find out."

With that polished reply, Tommy Dodd detached himself from the bench, and walked away.

"Hallo! Tommy's got his rag out!" remarked Towle.

"Blessed if I understand him, or Silver either," growled Cook. "Let's have some ginger-pop. Looks to me as if we shall get licked in the two-fifty race after all. Dodd's no good unless he pulls himself together—and he don't seem to want to do that. I suppose the Classics will score all along the line—as per usual!"

And having delivered himself of that pessimistic observation, Tommy Cook consoled himself with ginger-beer—an example which was followed by the rest of the Modern juniors.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

A Rift in the Lute

JIMMY SILVER and Co. walked home to Rookwood in a mood of great discomfort.

Jimmy's cheek still burned from Tommy Dodd's hasty blow; and, in spite of the calm temper upon which Uncle James of Rookwood prided himself, he wondered a little whether

he had acted rightly in allowing such an injury to pass unavenged.

There was no doubt what his comrades thought on the subject.

Morny's face wore a sneering look; and Lovell and Raby and Newcome were grimly silent.

Hardly a word was spoken before they reached the gates of Rookwood. Erroll of the Fourth came up to join Mornington there. Before walking away with his chum Morny turned to Jimmy Silver.

"Is there goin' to be a fight?" he asked.

"No."

"Oh!" said Morny.

That was all he said; but his tone brought a hot flush to Jimmy Silver's cheeks.

"If you mean, Morny——" he began.

"Oh, I don't mean anythin'," yawned Mornington, "nothin' at all. Tommy Dodd punched you. You're actin' in a most forgivin' spirit. It does you credit. I hope the Classical chaps will all agree that it does. That's all."

He walked away with Erroll, and the Fistical Four went silently and uncomfortably into the schoolhouse.

"Better have tea, I suppose," said Lovell shortly.

Jimmy Silver nodded, and the chums of the Fourth repaired to the end study for tea.

Tea was a very silent meal.

Although his chums said nothing Jimmy Silver understood well enough their condemnation; and he spoke at last, when tea was nearly over.

"I think you chaps know me too well to think that I'm funky of a scrap with Tommy Dodd," he said, his colour deepening, and his lip curling disdainfully, "I like Dodd well enough, and I don't want to fight him. He acted like a fool, and I am sure that the next minute he was sorry for it. I've no doubt he will say so. We did pull his leg rather, and he lost his temper. Any fellow might do that. I don't want to damage him—and I won't knock the chap out when he's working for a stiff exam."

"Bother his exam.!" growled Lovell. "What's that got to do with the matter?"

"It's coming off soon, and he's slogging for it."

"No bizney of ours."

"No; but——"

"He should have thought of that before he punched a Classical fellow's head."

"I know he should; but he didn't! But I'm not going to dish him for his exam, because he lost his temper for a minute. And it would very likely come to that. He wants to put in every minute, and to keep fit if he's going to bag the German prize."

"And you're worrying about that, when you've still got his mark on your face?"

"Well, you see——"

"I don't see!" interrupted Lovell. "This is all very well for Good Little Georgie in a story-book. It won't do for Rookwood."

"It will have to do!" said Jimmy rather curtly.

"Little Georgie," said Lovell satirically, "loved fellows who punched his nose. If a fellow kicked him Little Georgie used to kiss and make friends. Shall we come over to Manders' house with you presently and see you kiss Tommy Dodd?"

"Don't be an ass!"

"It's you that's an ass. Nobody's ever accused this study of funk before," snapped Lovell.

"Do you mean——"

"Think the yarn won't be all over Rookwood by this time?" exclaimed Lovell scornfully. "I dare say you've got some potty idea of high morality in your silly napper; but the fellows won't understand all that. They'll only think you're afraid."

The door opened at that moment, and the fat face of Tubby Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, looked in.

Muffin was grinning.

"Is it true, Jimmy?" he exclaimed.

"Is what true, ass?" asked Jimmy Silver gruffly.

"The fellows are saying——"

"I don't want to know what they are saying."

"They're saying——"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"They're saying that a Modern bounder thrashed you in the street at Coombe——"

"Dry up, you fat duffer!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Leggett says you went down on your knees to him——"

"Leggett had better say it to me!"

"Peele says you ran away——"

"Will you clear off?"

"Gower says he's heard that you begged the Moderns to let you off, with tears in your eyes," persisted Tubby Muffin. "Is it true?"

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet.

His look was so dangerous that Reginald Muffin decided not to wait for confirmation, or otherwise, of the interesting news he had heard. He closed the study door quickly, and scudded down the passage. Jimmy sat down again, his chums looking at him expressively.

"You see!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, in a tone of patient argument.

"Oh, rats!"

"The yarn's round already, and it's growing. The Moderns will be cackling over this!" said Lovell bitterly. "But you don't care, of course. So long as that Modern cad gets through his putrid exam., the fellows can say we're cowards in this study and you don't care!"

Jimmy Silver rose again, and without replying quitted the end study. He was finding the society of his old pals somewhat jarring.

His face was clouded as he walked down the passage. There was a group of juniors by the window at the end of the passage, in warm discussion, Valentine Mornington among them. Tubby Muffin was speaking in an excited squeak as Jimmy came by.

"It's all true—he practically admitted it! Looked as guilty as anything! He dared not meet my eye, you know."

"What's that, you fat idiot?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver savagely.

Tubby Muffin spun round in alarm.

"Is—is that you, Jimmy? I—I didn't see you, old chap. I—I—I was just telling these fellows that I didn't believe a word of it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Morny saw it!" said Jones minor. "If Morny saw it—look here, Jimmy Silver, have you been letting the Moderns thrash you, and disgracing our side?"

Mornington broke in with a cynical grin:

"Silver has been exercisin' forbearance, an'



"I am very glad to see Moderns and Classicals joining in a friendly walk on a pleasant afternoon," said Mr. Bootles, smiling benignantly. (See page 82)

settin' us all a noble example," he said. "We can't do better than follow Silver's example. Next time a Modern kicks me I'm going to beg him to do it again. Can't do better than follow my leader."

"Shut up, Morny!" muttered Erroll hastily.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

There was a chortle among the Classical juniors, and all eyes were turned very curiously on the captain of the Fourth. Jimmy Silver came a step or two nearer Mornington, his eyes gleaming.

"I've refused to fight Tommy Dodd," he said. "I take it that you mean that I've shown the white feather, Mornington."

"Cap fit, cap wear!" suggested Mornington.

"Very well! I don't allow any fellow to call me a coward. What time will it suit you to meet me in the gym?"

"Any time you like, old bean," answered Mornington at once.

"Now, then!" said Jimmy Silver.

"I'm your man."

"Morny——" began Erroll, looking distressed.

"You're going to be my second, Erroll! Just come along, then," said Mornington, deliberately misunderstanding; and he took his chum's arm and followed Jimmy Silver.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

The Fight

"LOVELL!"

"Hop away, you fat toad!" said Lovell angrily.

Lovell and Co. were in the common-room when Tubby Muffin arrived breathless. The three chums were not looking happy. They could foresee any amount of "chipping" on the subject of Jimmy Silver's singular forbearance towards Tommy Dodd; and it irked them to think of it. They knew Jimmy too well to entertain any suspicion of "cold feet" in the matter. But they did not expect the other fellows to take their view. They felt that the reputation of the end study was at stake.

"I say, Lovell——"

"Kick that fat bounder out!" said Raby savagely.

Tubby Muffin retreated.

"But I say, I've come to tell you—Jimmy Silver's fighting——"

"Oh!" Arthur Edward Lovell's glum countenance brightened up wonderfully; "fighting Tommy Dodd?"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Raby and Newcome, in a breath. "Where are they?"

"In the gym!" gasped Tubby. "But——"

"Come on, you chaps!"

"But he's not——"

Lovell and Co. did not stop to listen. They took it for granted that their chum was fighting Tommy Dodd, and they did not waste time hearing Tubby Muffin explain; they rushed off to the gym at once.

There was a crowd of juniors in a corner of the gym, and two fellows in their shirtsleeves with the gloves on.

"Here they are!" exclaimed Lovell joyously. "Why—what—it's not Dodd!"

"Time!" called out Smythe of the Shell, who was acting as time-keeper with a big gold watch in his hand.

Jimmy Silver and Mornington closed in strife.

Lovell and Co. joined the ring about the combatants, in a state of wonder and surprise.

"What the thump are they fighting about, Erroll?" exclaimed Lovell, catching Morny's

chum by the sleeve. "I thought it was Dodd! What——"

"I'm afraid it's Morny's fault," answered Erroll, with a clouded brow.

"Oh! He's been chipping Jimmy?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Cheeky cad!" growled Lovell, rather unreasonably. "Go it, Jimmy! Give him beans!"

"Play up, Jimmy!" roared Newcome and Raby.

There was no doubt of the loyalty of the end study to its leader; in spite of the little misunderstanding among them. Lovell and Co. assumed the pally privilege of "slanging" their chum as much as they liked; but they were quite ready to resent anyone else slanging him. Their hearts were quite with Uncle James of Rookwood now.

"Go it, Jimmy!"

"Buck up, Morny!" shouted Townsend and Topham.

"Time!" said Smythe.

The combatants separated, both breathing hard.

Mornington was a tough antagonist, even for the chief of the Fistical Four, and both the adversaries had received some punishment in the round.

"But if he's fighting Morny, why couldn't he fight Dodd, who punched his silly head?" murmured Lovell to his chums.

Raby gave a shrug.

"Don't ask me! Jimmy was always a silly ass in some things."

"He'll lick Morny, anyhow," said Newcome, with satisfaction.

The end study had no doubts on that point. But the contest was not the foregone conclusion that they supposed. Round followed round, and Mornington was still holding his own. It was at the sixth round that Morny went heavily down, and was slow in coming up to the call of time.

In the seventh round, the dandy of the Fourth was evidently getting the worst of it; though he stood up gamely to his punishment.

Jimmy Silver's face was very grim.

He was the best-natured fellow at Rookwood; but he could be a hard hitter, and he

was hitting hard now. Morny's cynical taunts had stung him far more than Tommy Dodd's thoughtless and passionate blow; and perhaps he was more grimly bent on avenging the taunts, because he left the blow unavenged.

But the fight was a tough one, and Jimmy's face showed very plainly the signs of punishment, in spite of the gloves.

Mornington went down again, and Adolphus Smythe began to count, with his eyes on his big gold watch.

It was just then that a knot of Sixth-formers entered the gym, and they glanced at once towards the excited group in the corner. Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, came quickly towards the juniors.

Mornington staggered to his feet when Smythe of the Shell had counted nine.

"I'm ready!" he panted.

"Stop!"

It was Bulkeley's voice, as the Rookwood captain cuffed his way through the ring of excited juniors.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Bulkeley, sternly. "Stop at once! Mornington, if you raise your hand again, I shall report you to the Head."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, let him go on, Bulkeley," exclaimed Lovell. "He's only got one kick left in him."

"Disperse at once!" said Bulkeley, curtly. "Silver and Mornington, you will take five hundred lines each. If there is any more of this, you will hear from me. Now clear off."

The Rookwood captain's word was law.

The group of juniors broke up, disappointed. Lovell and Co. gathered round Jimmy Silver as he left the gym, breathing very hard.

"Good man!" whispered Lovell. "But why the thump couldn't you give all that to the Modern cad, instead of walloping a Classical? I don't understand."

"You wouldn't!" answered Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, rats! Come and bathe your eye."

Jimmy's eye needed bathing. When the Fistical Four gathered in the end study for prep., the captain of the Fourth was feeling far from comfortable. Lovell and Co. were more amicable now; they realised that any

more "slanging" was out of place, while their chief was suffering from the effects of a hard tussle.

Prep. was nearly over, when the door of the end study opened, and Valentine Mornington's face looked in—damaged.

Mornington gave a cheery nod in reply to the grim looks the Fistical Four turned upon him.

"Feelin' bad, Silver?" he asked.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Jimmy.

"My dear old bean, I'm askin' in quite a friendly spirit," said Morny, cheerfully. "I'm feelin' aw'fully bad myself. I should have been done in a couple minutes more, if Bulkeley hadn't barged in. Erroll's been jawin' me. I've come to tell you I'm sorry; I never really thought you'd shown the white feather. Only my pretty way, you know."

And with that, and another cheery nod, Mornington walked away.

"Silly ass!" was Jimmy Silver's comment; but he smiled, in spite of himself.

"After all, it will stop the fellows chippin'," remarked Lovell. "They won't want to get a set of features like Morny's."

Arthur Edward was right; chipping on the Classical side was at an end. But there was a good deal of it yet to come from the heroes of the Modern side of Rookwood, as the end study was destined to discover.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Tommy Dodd Puts His Foot Down

"WELL, give 'em beans!"

"Sure we will!"

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle were making those remarks as Tommy Dodd came into his study on the Modern side the following day.

Tommy Dodd frowned.

"You'll give whom beans?" he demanded.

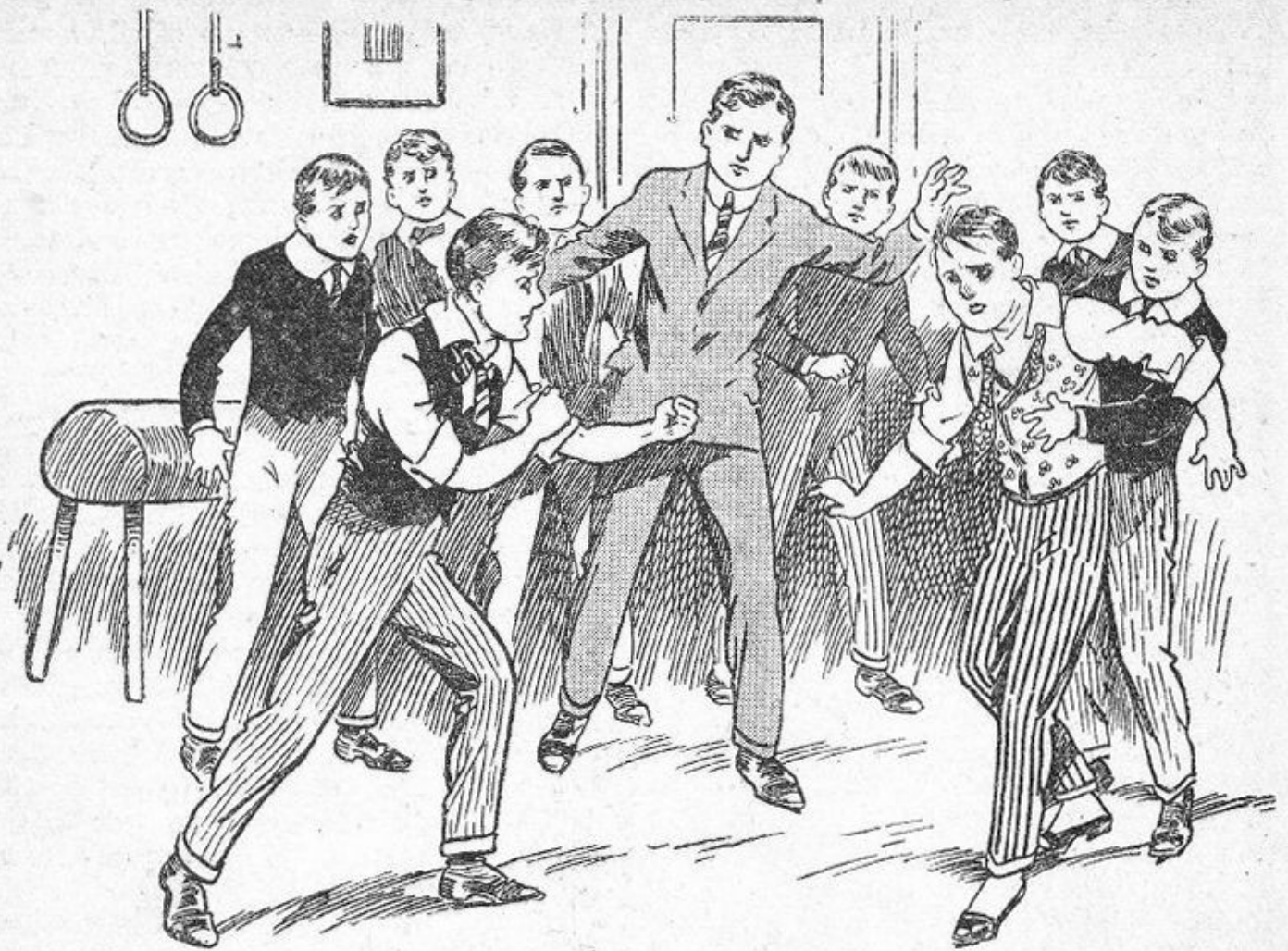
"What's the little game now?"

Cook and Doyle grinned.

"The Classicals!" explained Cook. "Towle's got an idea, it will make them sit up. You see, Silver having shown cold feet—"

"Don't be a silly ass!" said Tommy Dodd gruffly.

"Sure and it's mighty polite ye are," re-



"Stop!" It was Bulkeley's voice, as the Rookwood captain cuffed his way through the ring of excited juniors. (See page 87)

marked Doyle sarcastically. "Yer manners are improving."

"I mean what I say. If you're going to chip the Classics about what happened in Coombe yesterday, you can chuck it. Jimmy Silver came out of that better than I did," said Tommy Dodd moodily.

His chums stared at him.

"He fuked!" exclaimed Cook.

"He didn't, you ass. I'd have told him I was sorry, only that ass Lovell barged in," said Tommy Dodd, flushing, "I acted like a fool and a cad. I'm sorry I did, only I can't say so without the Classics crowing. Let Jimmy Silver alone."

"We're going to chip them about it, I tell you. It's a regular catch," said Cook warmly. "If Silver hasn't got cold feet, why don't he ask you into the gym?"

"Do you think I want a scrap with Silver now, with a dashed exam. to worry about as

well as the race coming off in a few days?"

"I suppose that wasn't why Silver held off?"

"I shouldn't wonder if it was. He's a good chap, and I dare say he knew I was neryv at the time, and acted the goat."

"Oh, rats! We're going to make the most of it," said Cook obstinately. "It's a chance to make the Classics sing small. Towle's got an idea——"

"Bother Towle!"

"And we're going to back him up intirely," exclaimed Doyle.

"Oh, all right," Tommy Dodd closed the study door, and pushed back his cuffs with a warlike air, much to the surprise and alarm of his chums. "Now, which of you is coming on first?"

"You silly ass!" howled Cook. "Do you want to start scrapping with your own pals?"

Tommy Dodd nodded.

"Yes, if you're going to rag Silver about our row."

"Well, you silly spalpeen——"

"Are you going to chuck the idea, then?"

Cook gave a snort.

"We're not going to knock you out for the race, you ass. If you make a point of it, we'll let Silver alone."

"That's settled, then."

"But Towle——"

"Oh, blow Towle! I've just been with Flinders," said Tommy Dodd, changing the subject. "He thinks I've got a good chance for the German prize, and he's told me so."

"What about the race? You've not got much of a chance for that, judging by your show yesterday," said Cook discontentedly. "Nice for us, with the Classicals bagging everything.

Conroy is sure of the long jump, and most of the fellows think that Pons will bag the high jump. That Dutch bouncer Van Ryn will chuck the cricket-ball farther than any Modern can see it. The Classicals are expecting——"

"Never mind what they're expecting," interrupted Tommy Dodd. "We've got to see that they're disappointed. I'm not in the form

I thought I was. I suppose I've been sticking a bit too close to swotting. Couldn't be helped, I've got to bag the prize for German. But there's plenty of time for some training. You fellows coming for a run out?"

Cook and Doyle became amicable at once.

"Now you're talking," said Tommy Cook.

"We're ready. No reason why you shouldn't beat Jimmy Silver if you stick to it."

And the three Tommies quitted Mr. Manders's house in a cheery mood. Tommy Dodd was aware now that he had overestimated his powers, and he was displaying a keenness which delighted his chums. To bag the German prize was a duty, to beat all Classical comers in the two hundred and fifty yards race was both a duty and a pleasure, and Tommy Dodd was determined to accomplish both objects if it was humanly possible to do so.

The Three Tommies passed the Fistical Four in the quadrangle, and there were rather dark looks exchanged between the rival juniors. Jimmy Silver's face was clouded as he glanced at Tommy Dodd.

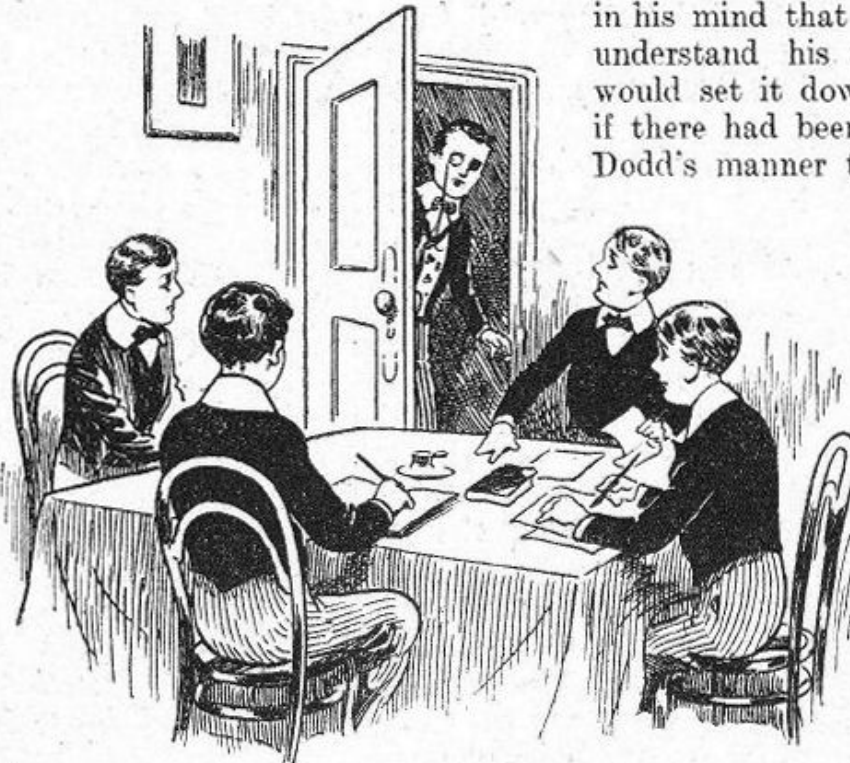
The uncomfortable thought was in his mind that Dodd would not understand his self-control, and would set it down to "funk," and if there had been a sign of that in Dodd's manner there would prob-

ably have been a fight in the quad on the spot. Jimmy's serene temper was suffering a little, and he was growing more and more doubtful as to the wisdom of the course he had taken.

But Tommy Dodd walked on without even looking at the captain of the Fourth, only defiant glances being exchanged

between Cook and Doyle, and Lovell and Co.

The three Tommies disappeared out of gates. The chums of the Classical Fourth sauntered on, Jimmy in a thoughtful mood. He had several aches and pains about him, the results of his fight with Valentine Mornington, and they added, perhaps, to his



"Erroll's been jawing me," said Morny cheerfully, from the study door. "I've come to tell you I'm sorry. I never thought you had really shown the white feather, Silver." (See page 87)

thoughtfulness. The Fistical Four were still near the gates when Towle came along with several other Modern juniors.

James Towle had a parcel in his hand, tied up in brown paper, apparently for the post. He grinned at the Classical juniors, and his companions chuckled, like fellows in possession of a good joke. Lovell gave an angry grunt.

"Let's mop up that crowd!" he suggested.

But Towle and Co. went out of the gates rather hurriedly, and disappeared. Tubby Muffin was lounging in the gateway, and after the Moderns were gone he came rolling up to Jimmy Silver.

"What's Towle sending you, Jimmy?" he inquired.

"Eh? Is he sending me anything?"

"That parcel——"

"What parcel?"

"Didn't you notice Towle had a parcel? I saw the label on it as they passed, and it was addressed to you," said Tubby, eyeing the captain of the Fourth curiously.

Jimmy stared.

"Addressed to me! Why the thump should it be addressed to me?" he asked.

"That's what I was asking you. Queer that Towle should send you a parcel by post, ain't it?" said Tubby. "He could have handed it to you and saved the postage."

"Towle's a silly ass, and you're another, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver gruffly; and he walked away.

But he wondered a good deal what the incident meant. He was destined to discover after lessons that day. In the Fourth Form-room that afternoon, Moderns and Classics were gathered together with Mr. Bootles—and the look of Towle, Lacy, Wadsley, and some other Moderns showed that they were still enjoying their little joke, whatever it was. But it was not till after classes were dismissed that Jimmy Silver and Co. learned what the Modern joke was.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Cold Feet!

"PARCEL for you, Jimmy!"

The Fistical Four were in the junior common-room, when Rawson came in with

a parcel in his hand. It was a brown paper parcel, and looked very like the one seen in Towle's hand earlier in the day.

"Post's just in," explained Rawson. "I thought I'd bring it along to you."

"Thanks, old chap."

Jimmy Silver took the parcel in a perplexed mood.

He remembered Tubby Muffin's peculiar statement, and wondered whether this was Towle's parcel.

He cut the string, and opened the wrappings on the big table, and turned out the contents of the parcel.

"What the thump——" he ejaculated in astonishment.

There was a single article in the parcel.

It was an old, well-worn and frayed foot-warmer. Once upon a time it had been quite a useful article, covered with leather and padded with wool; but it had seen its best days, and had evidently been thrown aside as useless. Whoever had sent it to Jimmy Silver had apparently disinterred it from the recesses of a lumber-room.

Jimmy Silver stared at it blankly.

"What the dickens is it?" exclaimed Lovell.

"A dusty old rag—it's been a foot-warmer when it was anything," said Jimmy Silver.

"A foot-warmer!" howled Lovell.

"Looks like it."

"There's a card with it," said Raby.

Jimmy picked up the card. On the card was inscribed in Roman capitals:

A PRESENT FOR JIMMY SILVER.
WITH KIND REGARDS FROM THE
MODERN SIDE.

"He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin. "That's Towle's parcel. I saw it was addressed to Jimmy Silver."

"But what the thump has Towle sent me an old foot-warmer for?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver glanced at the grinning Classics who had gathered round. The meaning of Towle's little present dawned upon the other fellows sooner than upon Jimmy.

"Well, where does the cackle come in?" demanded Jimmy.

"Can't you see?" muttered Lovell savagely.

"No, I can't!"

"None so blind as those who won't see," murmured Smythe of the Shell, and there was a chuckle.

"Well, what is it meant for, Smythe, as you seem to know all about it?" asked Jimmy, fixing his eyes upon the nut of the Shell, with an expression that made Adolphus step back a pace.

"It's plain enough," said Adolphus. "Foot-warmers are used for cold feet, I believe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver's face crimsoned.

"Cold feet!" He understood now.

"It's a Modern joke," said Newcome. "Cold feet! I suppose you'll go over to Manders' house and see Tommy Dodd now, Jimmy?"

"Or are you going to let the Moderns howl 'cold feet' at us?" demanded Lovell, breathless with fury.

Jimmy set his lips.

"We'll all come over and call on Dodd with you," said Higgs.

"I'm not going to call on Dodd," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I don't believe Dodd has had a hand in this."

"Rats!"

"I'm going to call on Towle, though."

"How do you know it was Towle?" sneered Peele.

"Muffin saw him with the parcel."

"Yes, rather," giggled Tubby Muffin. "I knew it was some joke of the Modern bounders. Ha, he, he!"

"Well, Towle isn't so hefty as Tommy Dodd in a scrap," said Peele, shrugging his shoulders. "Better call on Towle, perhaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver made a stride towards Cyril Peele. The next moment the nut of the Fourth was struggling in his grasp.

"Let me alone, hang you!" howled Peele.

"If you're looking for a scrap there's Tommy Dodd——"

"Yaas, that's so," chimed in Smythe of the Shell. "Let him alone."

"Look here, Jimmy——"

"Hands off!" exclaimed Gower.

Jimmy Silver did not heed. His powerful grasp forced Peele to his knees. Peele was a great nut, but he was no fighting man. Jimmy pinned him down with one hand, wriggling; and with the other he jammed the foot-warmer upon Peele's head. He jammed it well home, till Peele was covered down to the mouth, as if with a helmet.

"That's for you, Peele," said Jimmy. "Now I'm going over to see Towle."

Jimmy walked out of the common-room, followed by Lovell and Co. They were angry with their chum, but it was rather a dangerous business to look for trouble with the Moderns on the Modern side, and they would not let Jimmy go alone.

Cyril Peele struggled frantically with the foot-warmer. But it was not easy to displace. It was rather a small size for Peele's head, and it was jammed on tight. A crowd of juniors surrounded Peele, yelling with laughter, as he struggled with it.

"Lend me a hand, you silly cackling duffers!" howled Peele.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh! Ow! Groogh! Lemme a hand!" gasped Peele, wrenching furiously at the foot-warmer. "Oh, my hat! Yoop!"

He got it off at last disclosing a crimson face and ruffled, dusty hair.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mornington. "You need a wash, Peele!"

"And a brush!" chuckled Conroy.

Peele hurled the foot-warmer across the room and strode out.

"Jimmy Silver's on the Modern side if you want him!" called out Mornington.

But Peele's footsteps did not lead him to Mr. Manders' house. Apparently he did not want Jimmy Silver.

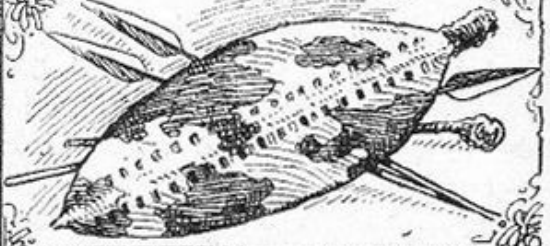
THE TENTH CHAPTER

A Study "Rag"

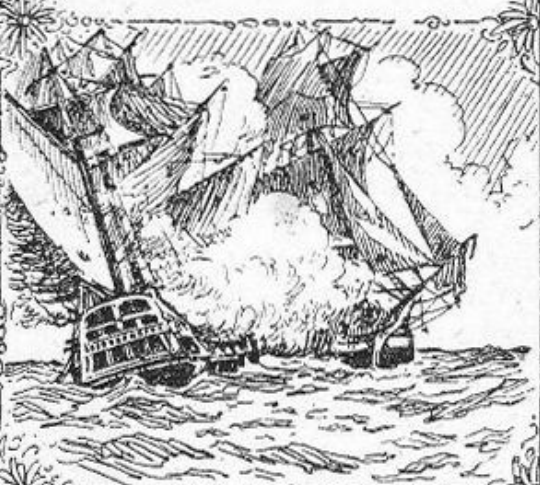
JIMMY SILVER'S brow was dark as he walked into Mr. Manders' house, with Lovell and Co at his heels.

He was growing more and more uncertain as to whether he had taken the right course

Famous Fights for the Flag



The Ashantee War. The Battle of Elmina, on June 13th, 1873, when the Ashantees were repulsed with tremendous losses by a mixed force of British sailors and marines



The Battle of Trafalgar, on October 21st, 1805. A powder-monkey named Albert Huggett, at great risk of being jammed between his own ship and a French man-o'-war, dived to the rescue of a midshipman



in dealing with Tommy Dodd on that disagreeable occasion at Coombe. His pacifism had been cruelly misunderstood, and it had already caused trouble on the Classical side. But if Jimmy Silver had erred on the side of pacifism on that occasion, his looks showed that he did not mean to repeat the error on this occasion.

Without looking to see whether any of his friends had followed him, he mounted the staircase to the Modern Fourth-Form studies.

Leggett of the Fourth howled out "Classical cads" from the distance, but Jimmy took no notice of Leggett. Leggett was not his game.

He arrived at the door of James Towle's study.

Within that study were the sounds of a tea-party, and the sound of chuckling was mingled with the clinking of cups and saucers. Towle and his study-mates seemed to be in a merry mood. Doubtless they were enjoying their little joke on the Classics, unaware that vengeance was at hand.

Jimmy Silver hurled the door open.

Towle, Lacy, and Wadsley jumped to their feet.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Towle. "What the bump——"

Jimmy strode in.

"You sent me a present, Towle!" he said.

"Oh!" ejaculated Towle.

As a matter of absolute fact Towle would have preferred that present to remain anonymous. It was sent with the kind regards of the Modern side, and Towle was not anxious to figure personally in the matter. But his little joke had evidently been brought home to him.

"Is that so, or isn't it?" demanded Jimmy.

"Well, suppose it is?" said Towle, feeling that he could not back out, but feeling far from comfortable at the same time.

"I've come here to show you how I appreciate it, that's all."

"Hear, hear!" growled Lovell, tramping in, followed by Raby and Newcome.

"You clear out of my study you Classical cads!" exclaimed Towle.

"Rescue!" yelled Lacy. "Classical cads! Rescue!"

There was a shout along the passage. Arthur Edward Lovell slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock.

"Who's got cold feet now?" he jeered.

"We're not afraid of you," hooted Towle. "Four to three ain't fair play, though."

"You keep at the door and see that nobody comes in, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver. "Are you ready, Towle?"

"Look here——"

"Are you ready, Lacy?" grinned Raby.

"And what about you, Wadsley?" chuckled Newcome.

Whether the three Moderns were ready or not it was time to begin. There was a rush of the three Classics, and a terrific combat commenced in Towle's study.

Lovell stood with his back to the door and looked on. Fair play was a jewel, as Arthur Edward would have said; and he did not intervene. But his intervention was not necessary.

Towle and Co. were plucky enough, but they were not really equal to holding their own against three members of the Fistical Four.

In three minutes Towle and Co. were strewn on their study carpet, roaring.

Outside the study there was a commotion.

Moderns were gathering there from far and near, in great wrath and indignation at this lawless invasion of their quarters.

But the locked door stopped them. There was no rescue for the hapless modern jokers.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Towle. "I give in! Get up! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Let us in!" shouted Tommy Cook's wrathful voice outside.

"No admission for Moderns!" replied Lovell.

"Yah! Classical cads!"

"Modern fatheads! Rats!"

"Bust that door open!" shouted Cook.

"Bang, bang!"

"Let us in, Towle, can't you?"

"Ha, ha! He can't!" chuckled Lovell. "He would if he could—wouldn't you, Towle?"

"Yow-ow-ow!" was the unhappy Towle's reply.

"Sit on those two duffers!" said Jimmy Silver. "I'm dealing with Towle!"

"What-ho!"

Lacy and Wadsley were promptly sat upon by Raby and Newcome. Towle sat on the carpet and eyed Jimmy Silver apprehensively. He was already repenting of his humorous proclivities, and fervently wishing that he had left that old foot-warmer to repose in the lumber-room.

Jimmy took a jar of jam from the table. That jar of jam had been intended to grace the festive board in Towle's study. It was now designed for another purpose.

"Where will you have it, Towle?" inquired Jimmy Silver politely.

"Yow! Keep off, you beast!"

"Down your neck?"

"Yow-ow!"

"Well, are you sorry you sent me that little present?" inquired Jimmy, holding Towle's collar with an iron hand, while he raised the jar of jam over Towle's hapless head with the other.

"No!" gasped Towle, defiantly. "Cold feet! Yah!"

Bang! bang! came at the door.

Swoosh! The jam descended upon Towle's devoted head in a swamping mass; Towle gave a howl.

"Hand me the margarine," said Jimmy. "Towle isn't satisfied yet."

"Yah! Stoppit!"

"Are you sorry?"

"Yes!" wailed Towle, as the jam ran down over his eyes and ears, and down the back of his neck. "Oh! ah! ow! Yes!"

"Yah! Funk!" came a howl from the infuriated Moderns outside the study. "Stand up to him, Towle."

"Groogh!"

"Are you awfully sorry?" demanded Jimmy Silver, with the margarine poised over Towle's helpless head.

"Yow-ow! Yes!"

"Are you awfully, fearfully sorry?"

"Yes!" gasped Towle.

"Say so, then, for all the Moderns to hear."

"Buck up, Towle!" yelled the Moderns outside. But Towle was looking up at the margarine in horrified dread. The jam was enough for him.

"Ow! I—I—I—I'm awfully, fearfully sorry!" he babbled.

"Good!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver tossed the margarine upon the table again. Towle sat dismally clawing at the jam in his hair.

"Oh, you Classical rotters!" gasped Cook outside. "Wait till we get hold of you."

"Cave!" came a howl along the passage. "Manders!"

The yelling and thumping at the door died away suddenly. In the dead silence that followed the scurrying of flying feet, the voice of Mr. Manders was heard.

"What is this noise—what is this disturbance? I will not allow——"

But there was no disturbance when Mr. Manders arrived on the scene. The disturbers of the peace had vanished into thin air. The Modern master gave a sniff, which was audible in Towle's study, and passed on.

Lovell chuckled softly.

"Good old Manders!" he murmured. "About time we slid, I think, before those rotters come back."

"Just about time!" smiled Jimmy Silver.

Lovell unlocked the door; the passage was clear. The Fistical Four promptly "slid"; and departed from Manders' house in peace. But they did not leave peace behind them.

Ten minutes later, there was a wrathful crowd in Towle's study—where the unhappy Towle was still clawing jam from his hair. And every member of the crowd had something to say to Towle, and what he had to say was not complimentary. Never had an unfortunate humorist repented so deeply and sincerely of his misplaced humour, as did James Towle of the Modern Fourth.

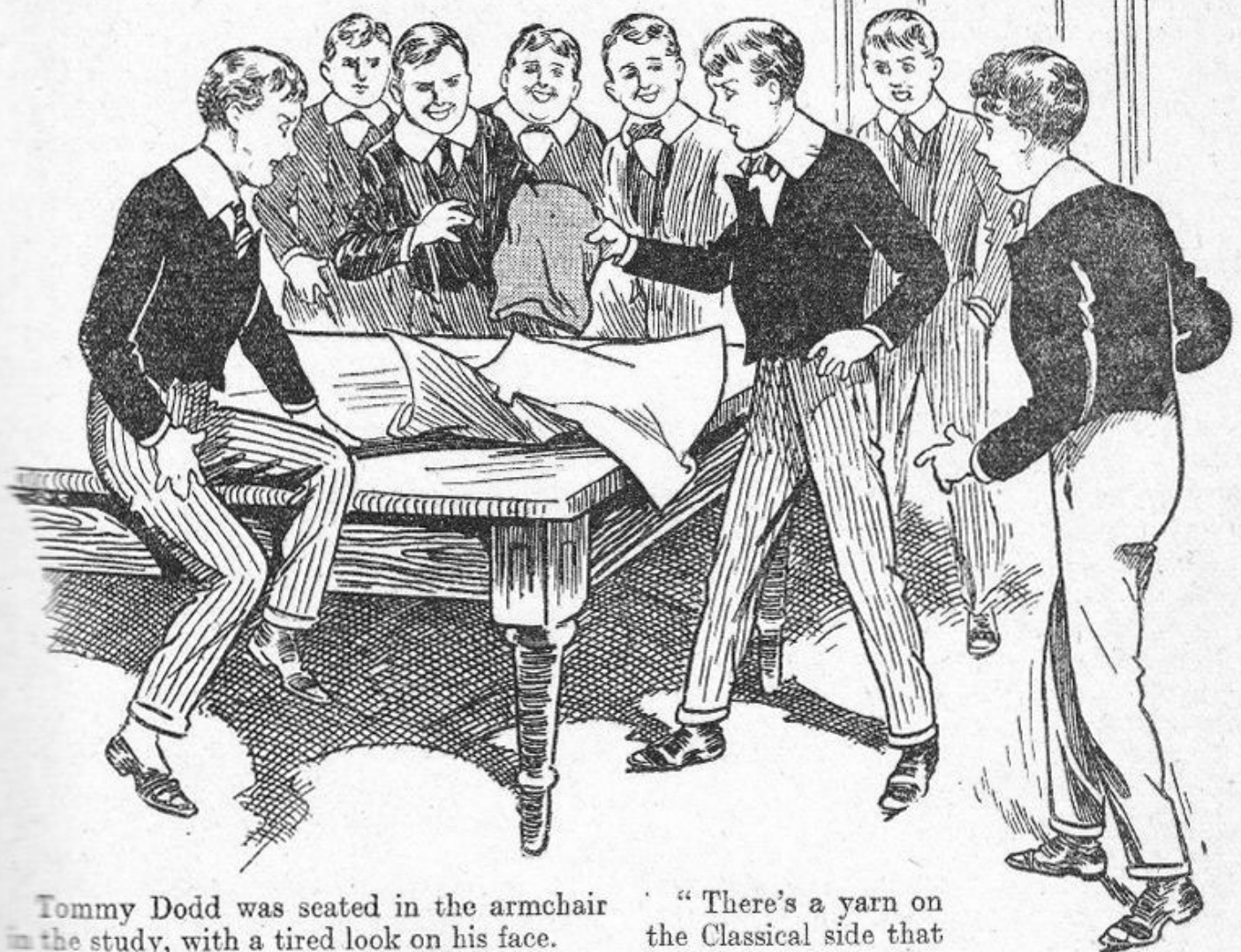
THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

The Right Thing!

"THANK goodness that's over!"

Tommy Cook made the remark in his study, about a week after the little scene in which the Fistical Four had figured on the Modern side. Tommy Cook was alluding to the German exam

"What on earth is it?" exclaimed Lovell. (See page 90)



Tommy Dodd was seated in the armchair in the study, with a tired look on his face.

"Yes, that's over, thank goodness!" said Tommy Doyle. "Howly Jerusalem smoke! but it's been a worry intirely. You'll be all right, Tommy—you're bound to be ahead."

"I hope so!" said Dodd, "I put all I knew into the dashed thing! I think I shall come out all right."

Cook and Doyle exchanged a glance.

"And now it's over——" began Cook.

"Now it's over——" murmured Doyle.

"Well, now it's over?" said Tommy Dodd, looking at his chums. "Are you thinking about the sports? I'm all right for that."

"About Jimmy Silver——"

"Well, what about Jimmy Silver?" asked Dodd, rather gruffly.

"There's a yarn on the Classical side that Silver was letting you off, because he wouldn't wallop you before the exam," said Cook. "It's all rot, of course; they're saying that because they won't own up to cold feet. But now the exam.'s over——"

"I don't think it's all rot."

"What?"

"I thought something of the kind all along," said Tommy Dodd quietly. "Jimmy Silver's a good sort, and I ought to tell him I'm sorry for acting the goat as I did that day in Coombe."

"Oh, don't be an ass, Tommy! Look here, it's pretty clear that the Classics will score over us at the sports, even if you pull off the two-fifty for our side. We want you to wind

up the term by licking Jimmy Silver. That will put the Classicals in their place."

"Hear, hear!" said Doyle heartily.

Doyle's "hear, hear!" was repeated by several other Modern juniors who were in the study. There was no doubt about the Modern opinion on the subject. Towle was the most emphatic. Towle had excellent reasons of his own for yearning to see Jimmy Silver licked by a Modern.

Tommy Dodd glanced quietly at the juniors.

He had his own thoughts on the subject; which probably were not in line with those of his comrades.

"Feeling fit, what?" asked Doyle. "That rotten exam. hasn't taken it out of you?"

"Oh, I'm fit enough!"

"Feel up to a scrap?"

"Quite."

"Good!" said Doyle heartily. "Then let's go along in a crowd and see the Classicals. Now the exam.'s over, Silver won't have any excuse for backing out; and if he does, we'll howl 'cold feet' at him, till he comes up to the scratch."

"Yes, rather!" said Towle, with great emphasis.

"You're coming, Tommy?"

"Say you'll come, old scout."

Tommy Dodd detached himself from the armchair. There was a rather peculiar expression on his face.

"Coming?" exclaimed Towle joyously.

"Oh, yes."

"They're in the gym now," said Lacy eagerly. "We'll catch the bounders before a crowd, and Silver will simply have to back up."

"The more the merrier," said Tommy Dodd. "I'd be glad to have all Rookwood looking on, if it comes to that."

"Bravo!"

"Good old Tommy!"

"That's our Thomas!" said Cook, in great admiration. "I knew you'd play up, old chap, and do the right thing."

"I'm going to do the right thing," said Tommy Dodd. "You needn't worry about that."

"Hurray!" cried the boys joyfully.

"Come on, you fellows."

The crowd marched out of the study with Tommy Dodd. As the news spread, more and more of the Modern juniors joined up, till it was quite a triumphal procession that marched into the gym.

Jimmy Silver and Co. were there, as well as a good many other Classical fellows. The entrance of the Modern procession drew general attention upon them.

"Hallo! Moderns looking for trouble," remarked Lovell. "You're in for it now,

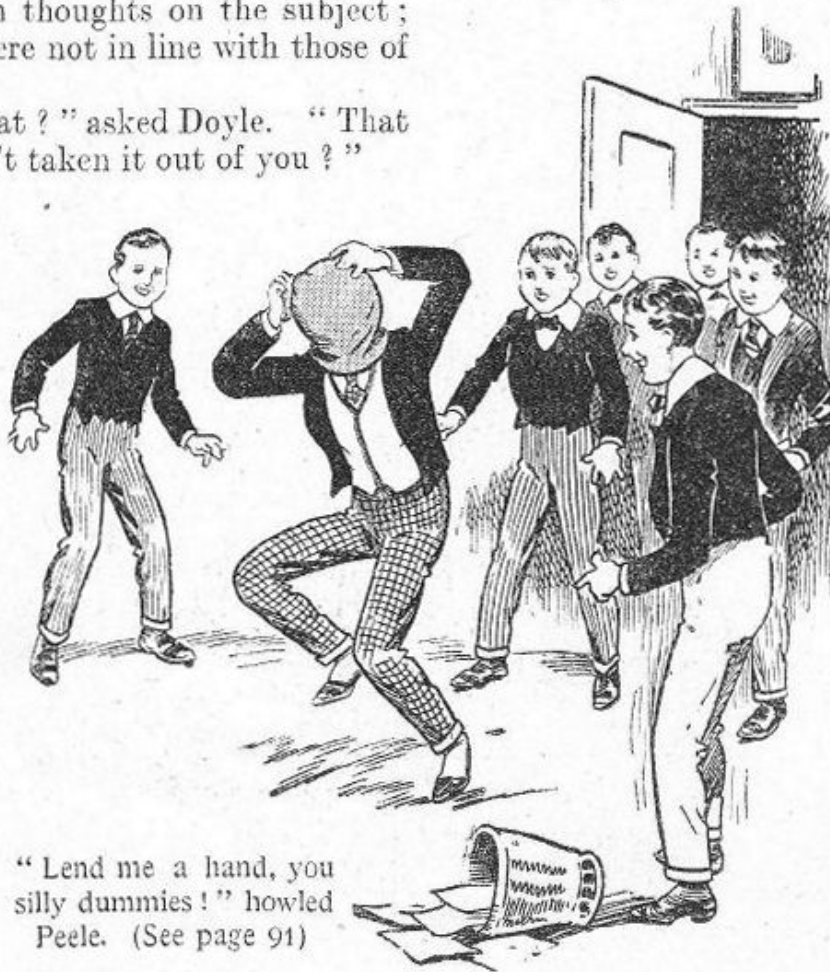
Jimmy, whether you like it or not."

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"If anybody's looking for trouble with me, he won't look without finding it," he answered. "I think I did right the other day in Coombe; but once is enough."

"Quite enough--in fact once is too much!" remarked Lovell.

There was a gathering of the Classical fellows round Jimmy Silver and Co. as the Modern crowd came up in battle array.



"Lend me a hand, you silly dummies!" howled Peele. (See page 91)

Tommy Dodd was at their head, with the other two Tommies on either side of him.

Dodd's face was grave and serious, contrasting with the hilarious looks of his comrades.

The whole Modern crowd was looking forward to a terrific combat, ending in the crushing defeat of the Classical champion: and they looked forward to it with glee. Winding up the term with the defeat of Jimmy Silver in open combat seemed the very best of ideas to the Moderns.

There was a pause, as the rival leaders of the Lower School of Rookwood came face to face.

Jimmy Silver stood with his hands in his pockets, quite unconcerned, though his brow was dark. If Tommy Dodd was looking for trouble, the Captain of the Fourth was more than ready to provide it.

"Go it, Tommy!" sang out Towle. "Tell the Classical bounder what we've come for."

"I'm going to."

"Bravo!"

"On the ball!"

"Jimmy Silver!" began the Modern leader, in very quiet tones.

"Well?" said Jimmy Silver, shortly and sharply.

"Jimmy Silver, I punched you the other day at Coombe," he said. "I was in a rotten temper at the time. I'd been worried over working for my exam., and ragged no end by these silly asses, Doyle and Cook."

"Punch his nose and begin!" murmured Lovell restively. But Jimmy Silver did not

heed that sage advice. He stood with his hands in his pockets, looking steadily at Tommy Dodd.

Tommy's face was a little flushed.

"Oh!" ejaculated Doyle and Co., in unison. The Moderns looked at one another rather queerly.

This was not how they expected Tommy Dodd to begin. And their leader surprised them still more as he went on.

"The fact is, I was nervy, and you'd been pulling my leg, too," continued Tommy Dodd, in the same quiet tones. "I don't say that's an excuse for what I did, but there it is. I acted like a cad and a rotter, and I'd have begged your pardon afterwards, only—only I was ass enough to care about what silly asses might say if I did."

"Oh!" stut-tered Jimmy Silver, quite taken by surprise.

Lovell's expression was extraordinary.

"I beg your pardon now," said Tommy Dodd.

"I acted rotten, and you acted like a really decent chap. I'm sorry. I can't say more than that. There's my fist on it."

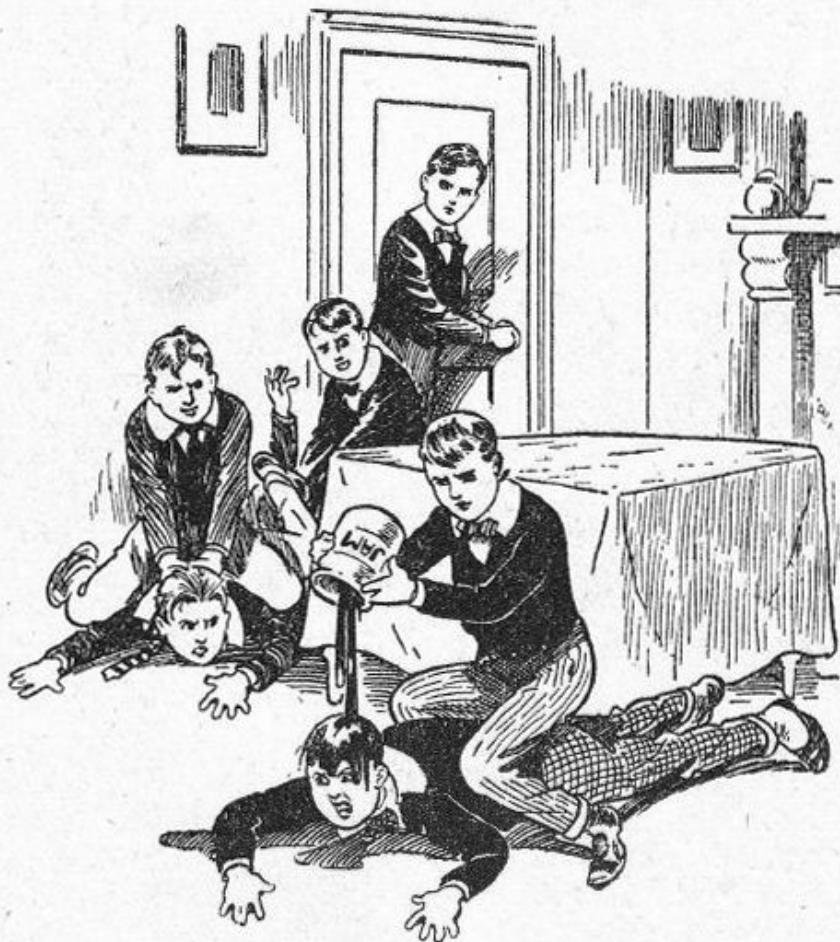
He held out his hand frankly.

"'Tare an' 'ouns!" howled Tommy Doyle. "Is that what ye's brought us here for, Tommy ye spalpeen?"

"That's it!"

"You said you were going to do the right thing!" bawled Cook.

Tommy Dodd nodded.



Swoosh! The jam descended upon Towle's devoted head in a swamping mass. (See Page 94)

"This is the right thing," he answered. "And if Jimmy Silver chooses, I'll let him punch me as I punched him."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I'll shake hands with you instead, old scout," he said.

And he did.

"Well, my only hat!" said Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Tommy——"

"Jimmy——"

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd linked arms and walked out of the gym together. They left their comrades staring.

"My only hat!" repeated Arthur Edward Lovell, and then for a third time he ejaculated "My only hat!"

That was all that Lovell felt equal to saying. But the Moderns found a great deal more to say; though in the long run they came round to the view that Tommy Dodd had, after all, done the right thing.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

A Close Finish

SPORTS Day at Rookwood dawned clear and sunny.

It was a glorious day and a great occasion, an occasion upon which the Rookwooders were accustomed to "spreading" themselves.

Quite early in the day there were many arrivals—of fond and admiring parents, of sisters and cousins and aunts. Jimmy Silver's cousin Phyllis, of course, was there, and she brought with her her friends Marjorie and Clara, of Cliff House School, and Ethel Cleveland, who was escorted by an elegant young gentleman whose immaculate "clobber" revealed at once that he was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's. Pretty dresses and bright hats gave the old school an unaccustomed touch of colour, and crowds of Classical and Modern fellows were inspired to deeds of derring-do under the bright eyes of their sisters—and especially of other fellows' sisters!

That day Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd were seen a great deal together, evidently on the very best of terms; though they were keen rivals in more than one event.

The cloud had blown over, and the rivals of

Rookwood were as pally as if they were not rivals at all. And Jimmy Silver was quite satisfied, now, that he had acted rightly on that hapless occasion in Coombe—and even Arthur Edward Lovell, whose brain worked a little slowly, had come to the conclusion that perhaps "Uncle James" had been right all along.

Space does not allow a full description of the events of that eventful day. Among the juniors the chief interest centred in the two hundred and fifty yards race, in which Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver were the principal figures. The Moderns had done fairly well in the events; but even the three Tommies could not deny that so far the palm lay with the Classics. But Tommy Dodd was expected to win the two-fifty for Mr. Manders' house, while Jimmy Silver was equally expected to win it for the Classical side. There were plenty of other entrants; but it was known well enough that the victory lay between the two champions.

"You've simply got to pull it off, Tommy!" Cook said impressively to his leader. "How are you feeling now?"

"Fit as a fiddle," said Tommy Dodd, smiling.

"Not thinking about blessed German exams" inquired Cook, with a touch of sarcasm.

"No!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Don't remind Tommy of that!" interjected Doyle. "Tommy's got to put his beef into this. We've let you off scrapping with Jimmy Silver, you bounder, on condition that you pull it off. If you don't——"

"If you don't!" said Cook.

"Look out for squalls intirely."

"Yes, rather."

Tommy Dodd laughed.

"You fellows are running, too," he said. "If I don't pull it off it's up to you."

"Don't you be so funny!" said Tommy Cook. "If you don't pull it off, we'll give you such a study ragging that you won't have got over it by next term."

"Faith and we will!" said Tommy Doyle solemnly.

To which Tommy Todd replied flippantly: "Bow-wow!"

Jimmy Silver was also receiving the last remarks of his chums before the runners lined up.

"We're relying on you to beat the Moderns, Jimmy," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "I'm going to do my best, but you're the man. You savvy?"

"Quite!" smiled Jimmy.

"We're going to make a clean sweep of them," said Lovell impressively. "To-day's got to prove that they simply can't touch us in anything. Got that?"

"I've got it!" assented Jimmy.



Under Cousin Phyllis's bright eyes, Arthur Edward Lovell felt that he could beat Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver himself. He meant to try, anyhow! (See page 100)

"That Modern bounder, Dodd, has been pulling up lately. I saw him running yesterday, and he's improved no end," remarked Raby. "But you've got to beat him, Jimmy."

"I shall beat him!" began Jimmy.

"Good!"

"If——"

"Bother your ifs! If what?"

"If I run faster than he does."

"Eh?"

"But if he runs faster than I do——"

"What?"

"He will beat me!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Why, you—you silly ass!" hooted Lovell. "Is this a time to be funny? Is this a time——"

"Line up there, you kids!" called out Bulkeley, of the Sixth.

And Lovell's eloquence was suddenly cut off.

There were more than a dozen fellows drawn up for the two-fifty. They were not all hard runners, however; Adolphus Smythe had entered, in the hope of bagging glory for the Shell, and the general opinion was that Adolphus would finish on his hands and knees, if he finished at all. Adolphus

was an ambitious youth in his way; he had already failed at nearly every event, and he was apparently prepared to add one more failure to his glorious list. But the other fellows meant business, and though it was assured, or nearly so, that the result lay between the rival leaders of the Fourth, they were sure to be given a hard run for their money.

Lovell glanced round at a pretty face under a beautiful hat, and was greatly encouraged by a bright glance from Cousin Phyllis. Under Cousin Phyllis's bright eyes, Arthur Edward Lovell almost felt that he could beat Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver himself. He meant to try, anyhow.

The runners bent for the start, breathlessly awaiting the signal.

Crack!

In an instant the motionless forms sprang into life.

"They're off!"

"Buck up, Jimmy Silver!"

"Put it on, Tommy Dodd!"

Then there was a chuckle as the hapless Adolphus tailed off, cracking up hopelessly in the first twenty yards, and retiring from the scene to hide his blushes in ginger-pop.

But a dozen lightly-clad forms went flashing down the course.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of St. Jim's, to the little crowd of young ladies in the midst of whom he had stationed himself. "They are wunnin' wathah well! Pewwaps not like we should

wun at St. Jim's, but weally vewy well for Wookwood."

"Ass!" said a voice from somewhere, and D'Arcy of St. Jim's looked round in surprise; fortunately without spotting the speaker.

"Silver's ahead——"

"No! Dodd! Dodd! Doddy!" roared the Moderns.

"Morny's out——"

"And Lovell——"

Eyes were strained to watch the flashing figures. Jimmy Silver was leading, but Tommy Todd was close up. The rest of the field were almost nowhere. In the last fifty yards Jimmy Silver was going "all out," but a little figure crept closer and closer—and shot past him.

There was a roar.

"Dodd wins! Tommy Dodd!"

"Good old Tommy!"

"Manders House! Manders House!"

"Bravo!"

In the tumult of Modern triumph, Bulkeley's voice could hardly be heard announcing the result.

"First, Dodd; second, Silver——"

"Hurray!"

"Good old Tommy!"

"Hurray!"

Tommy Dodd had, after all, scored a double triumph; for the German prize was duly "bagged" by "Thomas Dodd, IVth Form."

And no one congratulated him more heartily than "Uncle James of Rookwood."

