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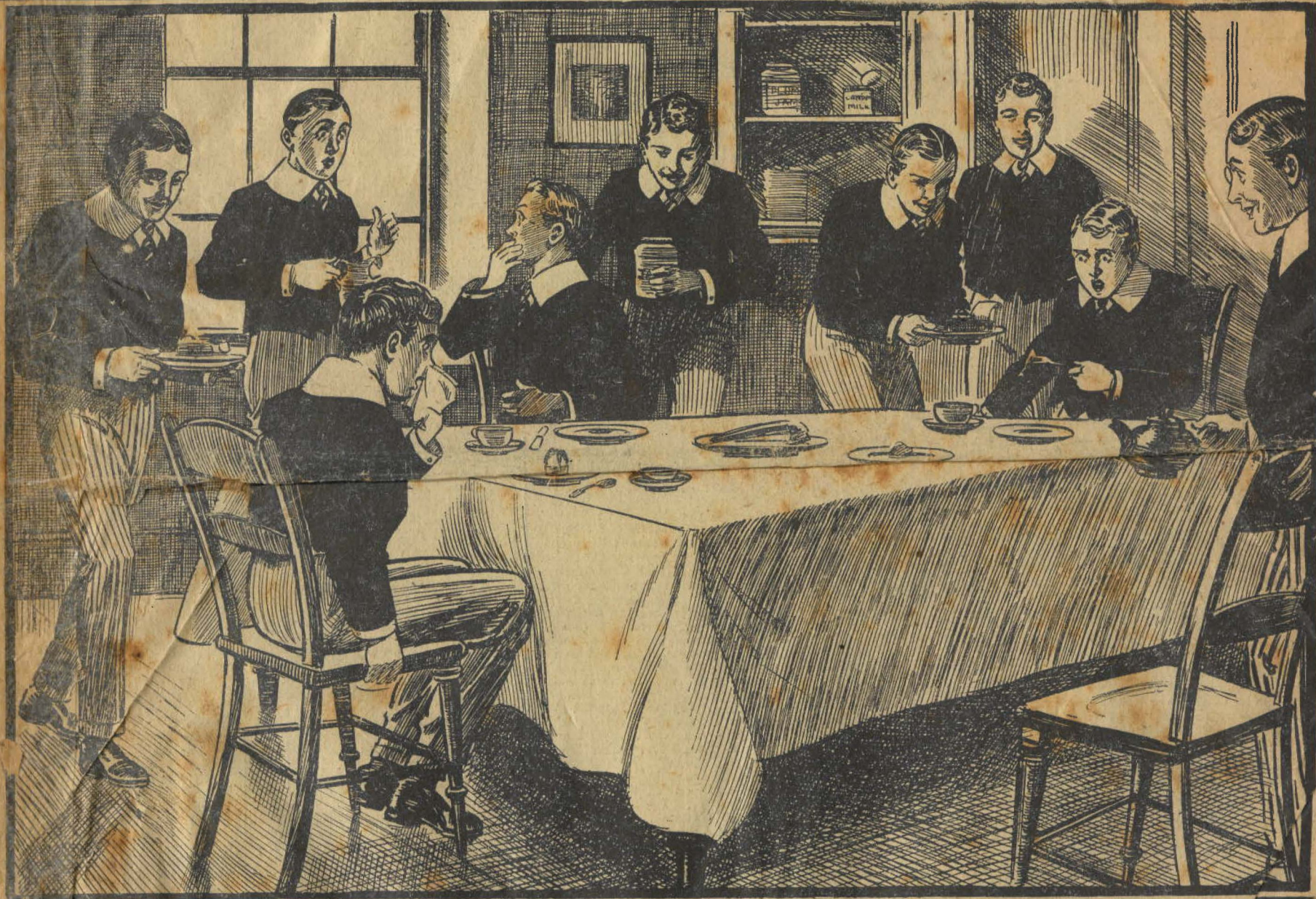
You Should Make the Acquaintance of
JIMMY SILVER & Co. AND TOM BELCHER, THE BOY BOXER!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d

No. 728, Vol. XIV. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending May 22nd, 1915.]



"Pile in!" said Smythe, in the most hospitable manner, as the three Tommies seemed to hesitate. "Ahem! I'm not over-fond of fish," murmured Tommy Todd. Tommy Cook had turned quite pale. "You fellows object to having the window open?" he asked. "I—I'm nuts on fresh air!"

SMYTHE'S LITTLE SWEEP!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale, introducing
JIMMY SILVER & Co. at Rookwood.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Thrown Out!

A four-handed mill was going on in the old study when Smythe of the Shell looked in. Smythe of the Shell stood in the study doorway and sniffed. Certainly there was a great deal of life, and the four heroes of the earth looked decidedly red and athletic and dusty. Jimmy Silver, Lovell and Raby and Newcome were keeping up their reputation as

the "Fistical Four." They were enjoying themselves.

The study table was pushed into a corner, the chairs had been knocked over in the tussle, the fender was kicked out of place, the curtains were down, and the carpet was badly rumpled. But as Jimmy Silver would have remarked, what was the odds so long as one was happy?

But Adolphus Smythe, the overdressed and dandified slacker of the

Shell, sniffed. He disapproved of the Fistical Four anyway. Jimmy Silver & Co. paused in their warlike operations upon one another. That sniff annoyed them. They bestowed four separate and distinct glares upon Smythe of the Shell.

"Well, you fathead?" said Lovell.

"Well, you ass?" said Raby.

"Well, you burbler?" said New-

"Well, you funny jabberwock?" said Jimmy Silver.

"I came here to speak to you," said Smythe. "If you've done turning your study into a bear-garden, I'll come in."

And Smythe came in.

Jimmy Silver cheerfully stepped between the Shell fellow and the door.

"But we haven't done," he remarked. "Go it, you fellows!"

Silver bestowed a wink upon his chums as he spoke. The Co. understood at once—and they went it! Four pairs of boxing-gloves started work at once, and as Smythe of the Shell was in the midst of the Fistical Four, it was Smythe who had all the benefit of it. Boxing-gloves buffed on the elegant Smythe on all sides, and Smythe roared with pain and indignation.

"Chuck it! You silly asses—stop it! Yow-ow! Yah! Oh, my nose! My eye! Will you leave off! Yaroooh!"

Smythe of the Shell sat on the study floor, looking as dusty and

rumpled as the Fistical Four themselves.

"You—your silly young beasts!" gasped Smythe.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! You young rotters!"

"Get up and sniff again," said Jimmy Silver encouragingly.

"This is much better fun than sogging one another, you chaps. Smythe has dropped in just in the nick of time. Gerrup Smythe!"

"Pax!" roared Smythe.

"Oh, rats!"

"I've a jolly good mind to thrash you all round—"

"Ha, ha! Woe in!"

"But I came here to speak to you in a friendly way," gasped Smythe.

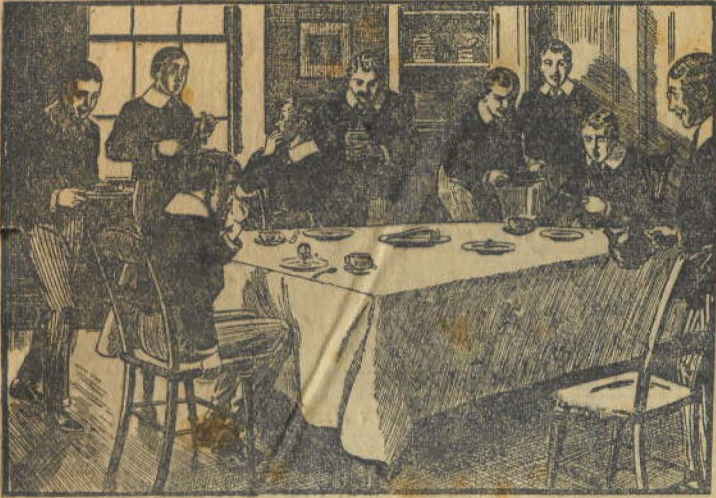
"It's an important matter, you young rotters. Ow! Look at my nose! Yow!"

Smythe of the Shell staggered to his feet. The Fistical Four reluctantly held their hands, as the Shell fellow had called "Pax!" Smythe snorted with indignation as he dabbed his hair and straightened his tie before

(Continued on the next page.)

SMYTHE'S LITTLE SWEEP!

(Continued from previous page.)



the glass. Smythe had until recently been the junior captain at Rookwood, and it was like the neck of the Fistical Four to hand him in this disrespectful manner. But the Fistical Four were celebratory for their cheek.

"Well, get it out," said Jimmy Silver. "Don't keep us waiting while you part your hair, you ass! This isn't a toilet saloon."

Smythe frowned wrathfully at the chums of the end study. As he was very far from being on good terms with them, they wondered what he could have to say. It was evidently something important, or the lordly Smythe would not have honoured the end study with a visit. His hair being satisfactorily tidied, his tie re-tied, and his jacket dusted, Smythe condescended to come to business.

"It's a little thing we're getting up in the Shell," he explained. "I thought I'd let you Fourth Form fags into it—"

"Us what?" demanded Jimmy Silver, with a threatening motion of his right-hand glove.

"You Fourth Form chaps—"

"That's better. Get on."

"It's a sweepstake."

"A which?"

"Sweepstake!" snorted Smythe. "I suppose you know what a sweepstake is?"

"I know what it is," assented Jimmy Silver. "Some beastly gambling, such as you nuts in the Shell go in for. You've come to the wrong study."

"Just listen to me," said Smythe impatiently. "Some of the chaps were against letting you kids into it at all. But I thought—"

"You thought our money was as good as anybody's?" asked Lovell.

Smythe coughed.

"Ahem! It's not exactly that. But of course the more that enter the bigger the whack will be for the winner. If I can't get enough takers on this side, I shall go over and see some of the Moderns. There are some sportsmen among them."

"Gambling isn't sport," said Raby.

"It's not what you'd call gambling," said Smythe. "Lots of fellows go in for sweeps on the races. 'Tain't really like backing a horse."

"Would the Head see the difference, if he knew?" asked Silver.

"Blow the Head! The Head won't know! Lots of things go on that Dr. Chisholm don't know anything about," said Smythe, opening a cigarette-case and selecting a smoke, as if to give point to his remark.

"Got a match?"

"I've got a match," said Silver, "but I've got a boxing-glove, and you'll get it in the eye if you light that tag here. This isn't a tap-room."

Smythe closed his case again impatiently.

"Oh, you're too good to live," he sneered. "Well, about that sweep. The idea's a bob a time in the result of the Derby which comes off on Wednesday. Billiard Ball is the favourite, and he's pretty certain to romp home—"

"To what?"

"Rompe home!" said Smythe.

"Do racehorses romp?"

"Oh, my hat! Where were you brought up?" said Smythe, in utter disgust. "That means that he'll be an easy winner."

"Oh! I see! Well, suppose he romps home, what then?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Well, then the fellow who draws Billiard Ball in the sweep collars the shekels," said Smythe. "Of course,

Nobby Nick or Father O'Flynn may win—they're both good horses—or an outsider may come in. That's where you take your chance. It won't cost you much to enter—a shilling each for the tickets. If we get a hundred fellows into it, that will be a five-pound note."

"And the chap who draws the winner takes the whole shoot?" asked Raby.

"That's it. The draw will be held in my study, and you get just as much chance of drawing Billiard Ball as anybody else does. All the tickets put into a hat, you know."

"And that isn't gambling?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Well, no; you'd hardly call it that. Just a little flutter. Of course, you can take as many chances as you like, at a bob a time. That'll see you safe if you happen to draw blanks," said Smythe.

"Oh, there's blanks?" said Newcome.

"Of course, fathead! You don't suppose there are a hundred horses entered for the Derby, do you?" said Smythe.

"The Derby is a sweepstake, isn't it?"

"Of thing as you are," yawned Newcome. "I seem to remember that you had a little sweep on last term, Smythe. Somebody was dissatisfied about the result, I believe."

"Yes, there was a mistake—the winner's name got written twice, somehow," said Smythe. "But it won't happen this time; I shall keep it in my own hands, and be very careful. Now, how many slips are you fellows going to take?"

"Got 'em with you?"

"Of course not!" roared Smythe.

"You draw 'em out of the hat. You pay me a bob now for every chance you want, and draw so many times in proportion. I'll make a note of it in my pocket-book, and give you a receipt. You turn up in my study at six to-morrow for the draw."

The Fistical Four looked at one another. Smythe could say what he liked, but putting money on racehorses was gambling pure and simple, and as such was strictly forbidden by all the rules of Rookwood School. The sweepers, in fact, were pretty certain to be flogged if the matter came to the ears of those in authority. It was not the fear of a flogging, however, that worried the chums of the Fourth. Without being in any way Good Little Erics, they drew the line at gambling.

"Well," said Smythe, "what are you going to give me?"

Jimmy Silver made a sign to his chums.

"We're going to give you a thumping hiding, Smythe, for coming to this study with your blessed sweepstakes," he said.

"Why, you cheeky young cad—"

"Pile in!"

"Hands off!" yelled Smythe of the Shell. "Why, you—Yah! Oh! Leave off! Leggo! Yooop!"

Under a perfect shower of boxing-gloves, Smythe of the Shell staggered out of the study, and as he fled Jimmy Silver's boot caught him in the rear, and he went head first along the passage.

"Oh! Oh, crumbs! Yow!"

"What-ho, she bumps!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

Smythe sat up in the passage, and shook a furious fist at the grinning juniors in the study doorway. The door of the end study slammed, and a trampling of feet and gasping of breath told that the four-handed mill was in progress once more.

Smythe of the Shell limped away furiously; and in the end study Jimmy Silver & Co. went on enjoying themselves in the manner of the Fistical Four—with their shillings still in their pockets.

The 2nd Chapter.

Not a Success.

"What luck!"

Quite a little chorus greeted Smythe of the Shell as he came into his study. There were half a dozen fellows there—Shell fellows of the Classical side at Rookwood. They were all members of Smythe's set—slackers and dandies like the great Adolphus himself, much given to secret smoking, and risking their pocket-money upon "dead certs" and "sure snips." That select circle rejoiced in the title, bestowed by themselves, of the "Giddy Goats"—a title they were proud of. All the noble order of the Goats were deeply interested in Smythe's little sweep. But their faces fell as they caught the expression on Adolphus's face. Adolphus Smythe did not look as if he had had any tremendous success.

"It doesn't seem to catch on," said Smythe discontentedly. "One would have thought that a sporting side like ours would have jumped at it. But I've only got fifteen fellows to put their names down."

"Oh, rotten!" said Tracy. "What's the good of fifteen bob in a sweep? Not worth the trouble of a draw!"

"We shall have to get some more fellows into it," said Howard. "I'm afraid it's that little mistake over the sweep last term that's done it, Smythe. Young Higgs of the Third thought he was the winner, and there was a lot of jaw."

"A mistake! Couldn't be helped!" growled Smythe. "Somehow, the winner's name got written twice, and I had it as well as young Higgs. Of course, he ought to have had a blank. I explained that to him."

"Ahem! Yes, of course; but it made a lot of jaw. Young Higgs said out plain that you'd written your slip out fresh after you'd got news of the winning horse!"

"Lying little cad!" said Smythe.

"Still, it was very unfortunate," said Chesney. "It made a bad impression. I know you whacked out young Higgs handsomely. Smythe was left feeling pretty wild, and he kept on talking about it to other fellows."

"I thought it had all been forgotten," grunted Smythe. "But I've agreed this time that if there should be a mistake like that, the prize is halved. Not that it's likely to happen, because I shall take more care."

"Well, that ought to make it all right," said Selwyn. "I don't see what the fellows have got to grumble at. Whoever draws Billiard Ball will get the whole sweep, and it's a fair chance all round. The favourite's sure to win."

"Oh, certain!" said Smythe. "But it doesn't seem to go, somehow."

"Have you tried the end study? They've got a lot of influence among the Fourth kids."

Smythe scowled.

"Yes, I've tried them; and they were cheeky. I expect they can't raise a bob each, to come to the truth. All the fellows seem to fight shy of it somehow. No good having a sweep for fifteen bob. Blessed if I haven't a mind to try over on the Modern side."

The nuts of Rookwood looked serious. They had a high and mighty contempt for the Modern side—wretched "swots" who were learning German and book-keeping and such things, with the intention of going into business life. For the business world Smythe & Co. had a tremendous disdain.

"Rather a come-down to talk to those cads," said Howard. "They're a cheeky set of beggars, too!"

Smythe sniffed.

"I don't care what they say, so long as they hand out their bobs," he said. "I'll tell you what. Let's have the cads over here, and butter them up a bit—"

"Oh, Smythe!"

"It's a good idea," said Smythe.

"Those cads who call themselves the Three Tommies run the show on that side. The rest of the worms follow their lead. If we could get Dodd and Cook and Doyle into the sweep, the rest of the Modern Fourth would follow like lambs. And Modern bobs are as good as Classical bobs, if you come to that!"

"Well, that's so," agreed Tracy, after a little thought. "I suppose you're not thinking of feeding them?"

"In for a penny, in for a pound," said Smythe resolutely. "Let's go the whole hog. If they get twenty or thirty fellows on their side to come into the sweep, it's worth it. We can stand them something—those tarts that we left over from the day before yesterday, and a hunk of cake I've got left from last week—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's some sardines in the cupboard. I'll trot 'em in," said Howard. "They're getting a bit strong."

"And I've got some jam," said Chesney. "Some beast put some pickles into it the other day, and I can't eat it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, good!" said Smythe. "Get the things here! Any old thing will do! The honour of feeding with us is enough for those Modern cads. You run over and tell them to come to tea, Selwyn. Put it nicely; and, remember, you chaps, you're to be fearfully polite. Pile it on. Words don't cost anything!"

"Hear, hear!"

Selwyn assented, and he started for the Modern side, while the rest of the select circle proceeded to prepare that charming feed for Tommy Dodd & Co. Selwyn made his way to Mr. Manders' House—the Modern wing of Rookwood. It was not really a separate building, but it had a separate entrance, and the Modern fellows liked to call it their "House."

Three cheerful-looking juniors of the Fourth Form—Modern side—were adorning the steps with their persons, and discussing a forthcoming cricket match. But they dropped cricket as Selwyn came up.

"Hallo! Here's a Classic worm!" said Tommy Dodd. "Have you come over here looking for a bumping, you outsider?"

Be it noted, that the lofty disdain of the Classics for the Moderns was fully reciprocated by the latter young gentlemen. Not a Modern at Rookwood would have been found dead on the Classical side, if he could have helped it.

"What do you mean by bringing that face over here?" demanded Tommy Cook.

"And that nose, bedad!" said Tommy Doyle aggressively.

Selwyn smiled in a sickly way.

"No nose, you chaps," he said, in Smythe's study.

The three Tommies almost fell down.

"To what?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"To which?" gasped Cook.

"It's pulling our leg he's after!" said Doyle. "Bump him!"

"Honest Injun!" exclaimed Selwyn. "The fact is, Smythe's had a lot of stuff from home—ripping stuff—and we've been having a jaw, and—and we think it's time we stopped ragging you Modern chaps. There's a limit, you know. Come over and have a feed with us, and bury the hatchet, you know!"

"No larks?" said Tommy Dodd suspiciously.

"No larks!" said Selwyn, with great solemnity.

"No ragging us when we get into your study—what?"

"Honour bright!"

"Well, I don't understand it," said Tommy Dodd. "Last time I saw Smythe I knocked his hat off. But if you mean biz, we'll come."

"Come on, then!" said Selwyn.

"Sure there's some little game on!" murmured Tommy Doyle distrustfully.

"Well, we could knock out the whole Classical side, if it came to that!" said Tommy Dodd.

Thus reassured, Tommy Dodd's chums assented, and the three Moderns marched off with Selwyn. They came up to the junior passage on the Classical side in the most friendly manner.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were surprised—but, as it happened, they were hungry, and funds were short in their study.

They were on fighting terms with all Classics, especially the Fistical Four; but in their encounters with the Fistical Four, there was good-humour on both sides. It was different with Smythe & Co., whose swank was quite intolerable to fellows outside their own select circle. Still, the three Tommies were not fellows to bear malice, especially at tea-time when funds were short. So they came into Smythe's study in the most amicable way in the world.

The great Smythe was there, with Howard and Tracy and Merton and Chesney, Townsend and Topham of the Fourth were there, too—they

were loyal followers of the great Adolphus.

All the nuts saluted the Modern juniors very politely, and Tommy Dodd was more and more puzzled. The table was laid for tea, but laid only for three.

There was a slight scent in the study of a fishy nature—perhaps emanating from Howard's sardines, which he had generously contributed to the feed on account of their somewhat stale.

"Sit down!" said Smythe heartily. "Jolly glad to see you, Doddy!"

"You're awfully good!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Not at all. Kind of you come," said Smythe. "Time we lay off ragging for a bit, I should think."

"Faith, it's a jewel ye are, Smythe!" said Tommy Doyle, as he sat down. "You fellows are having tea, too, I suppose—what?"

"The fact is, we've finished," said Smythe. "Then—then the things came, and I thought of you chaps. We're going to wait on you."

"Oh, my hat!" said Cook.

The three Moderns were more and more astonished. It was surprising that the Classical nuts should ask them to tea at all, but that they should wait on them while they fed—that simply took the cake. However, Tommy Dodd & Co. prepared to pile in. Smythe helped them generously to sardines, and Howard poured out the tea.

The tea was weak, but that was more than compensated for by the sardines, which were decidedly strong.

"Pile in!" said Smythe, in the most hospitable manner, as the three Tommies seemed to hesitate.

"Ahem! I'm not over-fond of fish," murmured Tommy Dodd.

Tommy Cook had turned quite pale.

"You fellows object to having the window open?" he asked. "I—I'm nuts on fresh air!"

Howard obligingly opened the window. The Shell fellows were feeling that they would like it open, too.

"Don't care for the sardines?" said Smythe blandly. "Well, try the corned beef."

The three Tommies tried the corned beef, but they found it quite inedible. It had been overlooked in his study cupboard for some weeks, and Topham didn't care for it himself. Tommy Dodd & Co. wanted to be civil, as they had been asked to tea, and they did not like to turn up their noses at the provender provided, so they made an heroic attack upon the corned beef.

"There's something I was going to mention to you chaps," said Smythe, in a casual sort of way. "We were thinking of a little sweep—What's the matter, Dodd?"

"N-n-nothing! I—I don't think I'll have any corned beef," said Tommy Dodd. "I—I'm not really hungry, when I come to think of it."

"Oh, pile in!" said Howard encouragingly.

"No, really."

"Same here," said Tommy Doyle.

"I really couldn't."

"Well, go for the cake," said Smythe. "Help yourselves. Now, about that little sweep we were thinking of—"

The three Tommies looked at the cake, and then at one another. It was quite a large piece of cake. Unfortunately, it had been lying for some time in a damp place, and was getting greenish at the corners.

The Modern juniors did not start on it. It came into their minds that either Smythe was doing this feed remarkably on the cheap, or he was doing it by way of pulling their Modern legs. They thought they began to understand the reason why Smythe had asked them to tea.

"Thanks, I won't trouble the cake," said Tommy Dodd, in a dangerously polite tone.

He only wanted to be sure that was a joke before he proceeded "mop up" the whole study.

"Why, you're not making ar at all," said Smythe remonstratingly. "Well, try the jam. You Mo. kids are a bit particular, but there's plenty of jam. Waden!"

The jam looked all right, and the three Moderns helped themselves liberally. They began to think that they had misjudged Smythe, after all; but as soon as the first consignment of jam reached Tommy Dodd's mouth, he started to his feet, coughing and spluttering.

"Halle! What's the matter?" exclaimed Smythe in surprise.

"Grooh! Grooch! Don't te



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SMYTHE'S LITTLE SWEEP!

the jam, you chaps; there's vinegar in it! Ooooooh!"

"Vinegar, bodad!" roared Tommy Doyle.

"I-I assure you—" stammered Smythe.

"You rotters!" roared Tommy Dodd, when he had cleansed his mouth with a handkerchief. "So you were pulling our leg, were you?"

"No, no; 'pon honour—"

"Sure, it's a jape!" howled Tommy Doyle. "Be the piper that played before Moses, we'll tache you to jape us, you spalpeens!"

"Go for the cads! Give 'em socks!"

"Here, I say," exclaimed Smythe, in alarm, "hold on! 'Tain't a jape—honest Injun, I—I tell you! Ow, you Modern cad! Yow-ow!"

Smythe staggered back, crowned with jam. Tommy Dodd had deposited the dish on his carefully-parted hair. The next moment ancient sardines and stale corned beef flew in all directions, with fragments of mouldy cake.

The nuts of Rookwood howled and yelled as they dodged the unpleasant missiles. Smythe sat on the floor, clutching jam out of his hair. Top-ham struggled with a sardine that was thrust down his back. The table was cleared in a few seconds by the indignant Modern youths, who were convinced that the feed was an elaborate jape, and meant to show the Classical nuts that they could not be japed with impunity.

"Kick the little beasts out!" yelled Townsend.

The enraged nuts made a rush at the Modern juniors. All the savoury ammunition had been expended; but Tommy Dodd caught the table by the side, and pitched it over towards the enemy.

There was a terrific crash of crockeryware, and anguished yells from the fellows who caught hot tea on their legs. Wild confusion reigned in Smythe's study, and the three Tommies promptly dodged out at the door, and fled. Sounds of woe and wrath followed them; but the nuts did not follow.

They were fed up with Tommy Dodd & Co. Once safe outside the Classical quarters, the three Tommies linked arms, and strolled back to their own side, chuckling.

"Fancy that duffer Smythe thinking out a jape like that!" grinned Tommy Dodd. "But I rather think we had the best of it at the finish—what!"

"We did! Ha, ha, ha! We did!"

In Smythe's study there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and furious recriminations. The great Adolphus had certainly not got any "forrarder" with his little sweep!

The 3rd Chapter.

Patriotic.

Leggett of the Fourth looked into Smythe's study later that evening. Smythe and Tracy and Howard were doing their preparation. The three nuts were in extremely bad tempers.

The feed generously bestowed on Tommy Dodd & Co. had not really been intended as a jape at all; but the nuts had certainly overdone it in using remnants for the occasion. And it was useless after that to think of getting the three Tommies into the sweep.

Smythe was angry and disappointed. He was very set on bringing off that sweep, doubtless for excellent reasons of his own.

"Can I come in?" asked Leggett.

The Classical Shell fellows scowled at him. Leggett belonged to the Modern side, and he was not a pleasant character. He was more than suspected of sneaking to the

prefects, and he was always hard up, and sometimes guilty of sharp practice in dealing with fellows who were not quite so keen as himself.

If any fellow at Rookwood had a knife that wouldn't cut, or a cricket-bat that was badly sprung, or a rod that was cracked, it was safe to surmise that he had purchased the article from Leggett. If a fellow found a bad shilling among his cash, he was sure to remember that he had lately "changed a bob" for Leggett.

Leggett had a reputation for unscrupulousness, and he was not popular, but he was certainly clever. He had his nicest smile on as he looked in on Smythe and Howard and Tracy,

"I can make it go all right without your help!" said Smythe contemptuously.

Leggett grinned. "From what I hear, you can't," he said. "I've been asking questions, you see. Only a dozen fellows have come in!"

"Fifteen!" snapped Smythe.

"Well, fifteen isn't a lot. You see, most of the chaps remember the way you diddled young Higgs last term—"

"Do you dare to say that the sweep last term wasn't conducted on perfectly fair lines?" roared Smythe, clenching his fists and advancing upon Leggett.

Leggett was not a fighting-man; he backed quickly round the table.

"Hold on! I—I meant to say, owing to the mistake last time," he said. "It—it makes the fellows think there might be another mistake. Don't get ratty. I tell you plainly, you won't get anybody to come into this sweep unless you take my tip. I can tell you a dodge to get half the school into it!"

Smythe paused. Young rascal as Leggett was, he was as clever as he was unscrupulous, and Smythe knew it. If Leggett had such a "dodge" as he declared, it was worth while giving him a hearing.

"Well, go ahead!" said Smythe

want the sweep to be a success if we can work it. It's up to us now! Our giddy prestige is at stake now we've started the thing."

"Yes, give him a chance," said Tracy. "A half-quid won't hurt you, Smythe, if you win—and very likely you won't."

"Well, go on, Leggett," said Smythe. "It's a go. If your dodge is any good, and if I win the prize, and it's over five quid, I'll stand you half a sovereign."

"Good enough," said Leggett at once. "Honour bright! These fellows are witnesses."

"Honour bright!" said Smythe. "Now, what's the wheeze? Blessed if I can see it."

"If you could see it, you wouldn't need me to tell you. The idea is to appeal to their patriotism."

"Their what?" asked the perplexed Smythe.

"Patriotism."

"What the dickens has patriotism got to do with my sweepstake?"

"Lots," said Leggett, with a chuckle. "You announce that the winner of the sweep undertakes to send twenty-five per cent. to the Red Cross Fund for the wounded."

"My hat!"

"It won't hurt the winner to stand a quarter of his winnings," said Leggett. "And, for the losers,

fund, you can make out that you've got up the whole thing simply as a scheme for raising money for the wounded in the war."

"By gad, you are a deep beast!" said Smythe. "What do you fellows think?"

"Topping!" said Howard. "The chaps will crowd in, I should say. I'll take an extra bob's worth myself."

"Same here!" said Tracy.

"Well, if you do, I will," said Smythe. "It's a go. After all, as patriots we ought to raise something for the fund—ahem!—and this is an easy way. The winner ought not to object to handing out a quarter of the prize, if it comes to over five pounds."

"Quite so; I wouldn't."

"Are you taking a ticket, Leggett?"

"Hard up," said Leggett. "You can give me one on tick, if you like."

"Yes, I know how you settle up loans," sniffed Smythe. "No fear! There's no tick in this sweepstake."

"Then you can leave me out. If you win, you stand me half a quid. If you don't win, you have the wheeze for nothing—for the good of the cause. The fact is," said Leggett, "I only thought of this because I was turning it over in my mind how to help the fund a bit, and I can't afford a subscription."

"Done!" said Smythe.

Leggett nodded, and quitted the study.

"Seems a good idea," said Smythe, looking at his study-mates.

"Jolly good, idea!" said Tracy.

"But—but—"

"Well, what?"

"I don't like the way Leggett put it. He seems certain that you're going to win, Smythe. He intends to bag that half-quid, and he can't unless you win. It's as good as saying that he thinks you're going to work it somehow."

"What does it matter what a cad like that thinks?" said Smythe. "He's always cheating somebody, and he thinks other chaps are tarred with the same brush. I suppose you don't think that I'm going to wangle it?"

"N-no! But—"

"How could I?" demanded Smythe angrily. "Nobody knows the winner till the race is run."

"Well, there's no real doubt about Billiard Ball. The favourite will win—there isn't another gee-gee in the list what's got an earthly. Whoever draws Billiard Ball is certain of the prize."

"Well, admitting that, anybody might draw Billiard Ball. The names will be written on slips, and put into a hat, and drawn by chance."

"Well, if it should turn out like last time, that the winner was written down twice, and you had one of them—"

"That was a mistake. This time you can write down the names in your own fist, and Howard can put them into the hat."

"Well, that's all right," said Tracy, and Howard nodded. "Don't mind my speaking out plain, Smythe—I know you're straight—but some of the fellows were mighty suspicious last time, and if anything of the kind happened again—"

"Well, it won't happen again!" growled Smythe. "Every fellow who draws a blank will grumble, of course. That can't be helped. I won't have a hand in the draw at all, excepting to look over the slips and see that you've got all the names down. I draw with the rest—all square and above board."

"Right-ho! Don't be ratty!" said Tracy pacifically.

Smythe grunted, and went on with his preparation.

The 4th Chapter.

All in!

"You in it!" Jimmy Silver stared at the speaker, who was Flynn of the Fourth. It was the day after Leggett's visit to Smythe's study.

"In what?" asked Silver.

"The sweep."

"Oh, Smythe's little sweep! No fear!"

"Well, I am," said Flynn. "I'm taking three bobs' worth. And I think it's pretty mean of anybody to keep out, considering."

"Rot!" said Jimmy Silver. "It's gambling, and there would be an awful row if it got to the prefects. If Bulkeley or Knowles got wind of it, you'd hear something drop."

"If you're afraid of a row—"

"I'm not afraid of a row, you ass!" said Jimmy Silver wrathfully. "It isn't that. But it's a rotten thing to do."

but they did not respond. Smythe pointed to the door with his pen.

"Outside!" he said briefly.

"I want to speak to you chaps," explained Leggett.

"The want is entirely on your side. If you don't travel at once—"

Smythe half rose from his chair.

"It'll be a good thing for you," urged Leggett.

"Got a pocket-knife to sell?" sneered Tracy.

"I've got nothing to sell. It's about your sweep."

"Oh!" said Smythe, changing his manner at once. "You can come in, Leggett!"

Leggett closed the door behind him as he came in. Smythe was quite civil immediately.

If a Prussian Uhlan had come to his study with a "bob" for the sweep, Adolphus Smythe would have been civil to him.

"How many do you want?" asked Smythe.

"Eh? How many what?"

"Are you putting up a single bob or more, I mean?"

"Oh, I'm not putting up anything!" said Leggett.

"You're not!" Smythe's civility dropped from him like a cloak.

"Then get out, you Modern worm!"

"Better listen to me," said Leggett.

"I can tell you how to make it go."

ungraciously. "What's your blessed idea?"

"That's telling," said Leggett coolly. "I'm not giving it away. You stand me a whack in the prize, and I'm at your service!"

"How do I know that I shall win the prize, fathead? I stand an equal chance with the rest."

"I'll chance that," said Leggett.

"Stand me a whack in the prize if you win it. That's good enough for me!"

Smythe gritted his teeth, and Howard and Tracy looked a little queer. It certainly seemed to be Leggett's belief that Smythe would bag the sweepstake. He was willing to make his reward contingent upon that.

"I won't have anything to do with you," said Smythe. "Get out of my study!"

"Well, you're losing a good thing," urged Leggett. "I tell you, my dodge will make the whole crowd keen after the sweep. If it doesn't you needn't use it, and you don't give me anything. I take the risk of your not winning, too. If you win, you hand me half a quid; and the sweep will come to five or ten pounds, if you work it my way!"

"Give him a hearing, Smythe," said Howard. "He's a cunning beast, always up to some dodge. We

they'll have the satisfaction of knowing that a part of their losses has gone to the Red Cross Fund. See? It's a way of raising money for the wounded without costing a chap anything."

"Without costing anything! It's going to cost a quarter of the prize, at that rate."

"But, don't you see, if it brings a crowd in, the prize will be bigger. Fifty fellows—that's more than you'll get—would only make up a purse of two pounds ten shillings. Well, a hundred fellows would make it five pounds. The winner hands out a quarter—twenty-five bob—and has three pounds fifteen shillings left. Well, three pounds fifteen shillings is more than two pounds ten shillings, isn't it?"

"By gad!" said Smythe.

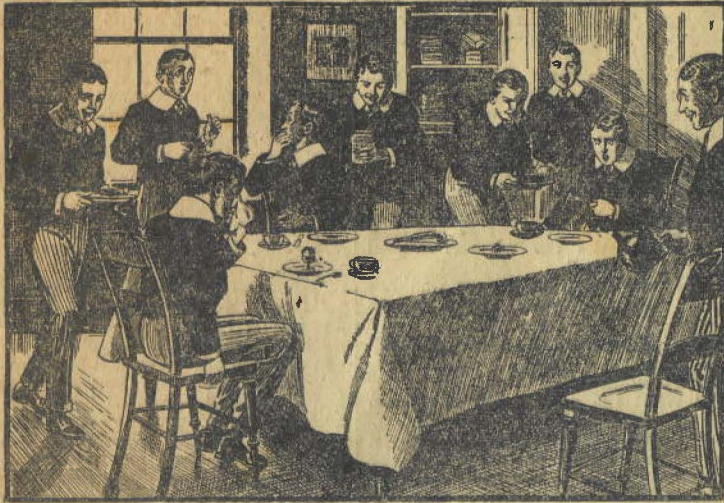
"And with a wheeze like that you might get a hundred and fifty fellows into it," said Leggett; "or the fellows with plenty of tin might take a dozen chances each. The idea of raising money for a patriotic fund and at the same time standing a chance of winning the prize will bring them round. And the fellows who call it gambling, and turn up their noses at it, will have to come in, or we'll call 'em mean and unpatriotic. With twenty-five per cent. going to the



Higgs inserted a grubby hand into the hat, and drew out a slip of paper. He held it up and snorted as he saw that it was a blank. "Oh, rotten!" he growled. "Just my luck!"

SMYTHE'S LITTLE SWEEP!

(Continued from previous page.)



"Rats!"

"And I'm surprised at you," went on Jimmy Silver indignantly. "You ought to know better. It's all very well for Smythe and his set—they're rotters, anyway. I thought you were keeping out of it."

"So I was," said Flynn. "But Smythe hadn't explained then. It's only decent to take a whack when the whole thing is being got up for the wounded."

"The—the what?"

"That's the idea entirely. A quarter of the prize goes to the Red Cross Fund, and every fellow who enters the sweep has to agree to that, and to send the cash off in the presence of the other fellows. Smythe says that a couple of quid may be raised for the fund if it's a big sweep. So I took three."

Jimmy Silver wrinkled his brows.

"Well, that's put a different complexion on the matter," he agreed. "If Smythe's doing it for that, it's not so rotten. Still, I don't like it!"

"Oh, don't be a baste!" said Flynn. "I wouldn't have taken shares, only Smythe pointed out it's an easy way of raising something for the fund, as well as a prize for the winner. I think it's ripping. You ought to take a share."

"Well, I'm not going to."

"Br-r-r-r!" said Flynn.

Jimmy Silver walked away with his brows wrinkled, and joined his chums in the tuck-shop. Sergeant Kettle was handing out ginger-pop to the juniors. The school shop had lately been the scene of a barring-out, and it still showed traces of the rough usage it had received on that occasion. But the Fistical Four were among the old sergeant's best customers, and the ancient warrior willingly let bygones be bygones.

"Here you are," said Lovell. "Another pop, sergeant. Wherefore that worried brow, my youthful friend?"

"I'm thinking," said Silver.

"Painful process?" asked Raby sympathetically. "Do it by degrees, a little at a time, till you get used to it."

"Oh, rats!" said Jimmy Silver. "I want to talk to you chaps. Come on!"

The four juniors finished their ginger-beer, and quitted the tuck-shop. Jimmy Silver's chums regarded him with surprise. It was not often a cloud was seen upon his sunny face. "What's the row?" asked Lovell. "It's about that rotten sweep of Smythe's. It turns out that he's doing it to raise money for a fund—at least, that's what he says now. A quarter of the prize is to go to the Red Cross, and the fellows seem to be taking it up."

Lovell chuckled.

"Second thoughts are best," he remarked. "Smythe never said anything of that to us. He's thought of that since, as a dodge to make the chaps come in."

"That's what I thought," said Silver. "But—but under the circumstances, it looks a bit mean to stay out. We shall be chipped about it."

"Might take a bob's worth," said Newcome.

"Rot! Let's stay out of it, all the same," said Jimmy Silver. "That's what I wanted to speak to you about. It's just a trick to get fellows into the gamble, and I don't like it. It's simply disgraceful to mix up gambling with a thing like a fund for the soldiers. I think Smythe's a black-guard."

"And he isn't square," said Raby, with a shake of the head. "He had a sweep last term, and there was a lot of talk about it."

"Then we're sticking out?" said Silver. "That's agreed?"

"Done!" said the Co. together.

Jimmy Silver felt relieved in his mind. He did not want the Co. to be mixed up with the Giddy Goats and their precious gamble. But it was not so easy to "stick out," and that the Fistical Four soon discovered.

For Smythe's little sweep had caught on.

Fellows who would have had nothing to do with it gave it their cordial support when it was explained that the whole thing was a dodge to raise money for the wounded soldiers. Smythe explained airily that by means of that little sweep a goodly sum would be raised for that excellent purpose without any fellow missing the money. For his "bob" each chap would have his chance in the sweep, as usual. And as for a quarter of the prize being handed out to the fund by the winner—well, that wouldn't hurt the winner. He could be generous without its costing him anything.

Generosity on the cheap seemed to be popular. Every fellow in the Shell had taken at least one share; some had taken two or three. Smythe himself had taken four. Fags in the Second and the Third had clubbed together to share out a share.

Money was rolling in, in fact.

Fellows who stood out received many unpleasant hints and sniffs. The whole thing being a patriotic scheme, it was mean to stand out. It looked as if they weren't willing to "dub up" twenty-five per cent. of their winnings for the fund.

And the doubtful Thomases who remembered the little mistake in Smythe's last sweep were reassured by being told that Howard and Tracy were managing the whole affair. Howard and Tracy were decided "Goats," but they were straight enough, and the juniors trusted them.

Even Tommy Dodd & Co. had "come in." They had resisted at first, because it was a Classical sweep, and therefore they were up against it; and secondly because they were up against gambling in any shape or form. But they gave in, finding opinion on the Modern side against them. They did not like to be considered either mean or unpatriotic.

And, having given in to their adhesion, the three Tommies naturally considered it was everybody else's duty to follow their example, and they promised a thick ear to every junior on the Modern side who didn't take a share in the sweep.

The result was a rush of custom in Smythe's study which kept that young gentleman very busy most of the afternoon. It was a half-holiday, and Smythe was nobly devoting it to the sweep.

"How many shares have you fellows got?" Tommy Dodd inquired when he encountered the Fistical Four in the quadrangle.

"None!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Not standing out?" exclaimed Cook.

"Yes."

"Well, it's a mane baste ye are!" said Tommy Doyle indignantly. "Sure, ye're only Classical worms, but ye might play up to help a patriotic fund."

"It's rotten gambling," grunted Jimmy Silver.

"Well, it isn't," said Tommy Dodd angrily. "Do you think I'd have a hand in a gamble?"

"What is it, then?" said Silver. "Well, it's a sweep," said the Modern junior, "and—and the fact that it's for the benefit of the fund makes it all right."

"Oh, rot! It's gambling."

"If you call me a gambler I'll dot you in the eye, you Classical waster!" said Tommy Dodd excitedly.

"Bow-wow! Yow!" roared Jimmy Silver, as the exasperated Modern suited the action to the word.

The next moment he was piling on Tommy Dodd, and they were rolling in the quadrangle, apparently trying to collect as much dust as possible in the shortest space of time. Bulkeley of the Sixth spotted them and bore down on them, and separated them by the simple process of using his boots as if he were kicking for goal. The youthful heroes released one another and fled.

Jimmy Silver came into the house very dusty and in a bad temper. In the junior passages, where he went for a clothes-brush, he met Smythe and Tracy of the Shell.

"Getting late to take your share," Silver, said Smythe. "You'll get left out if you don't hurry up."

"I'm not taking my share, hang you!"

"Oh, don't talk to the blessed Shyllock!" said Tracy. "Lot he cares about the wounded, so long as he keeps his rotten money in his pocket."

Jimmy Silver turned crimson with wrath. He did not argue with Tracy. He hit out, and Tracy sat down with a roar. As he seemed in no hurry to get up again, Jimmy Silver went on to the end study to brush his clothes. There he caught sight of a chalked inscription on the looking-glass that made him almost gnash his teeth:

"Mean cads! Why don't you go and join the Prussians?"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome followed him in, and they looked a little sickly as they saw the inscription on the glass. Lovell took a cap and rubbed it out.

"This is getting rather thick," said Lovell uneasily. "The fellows all think we're standing out because we're mean. After all, you know, it's for the wounded."

"Might have a bob's worth," said Raby hesitatingly. "I don't like the fellows thinking we're a set of prigs."

"Let 'em think what they like, blow 'em!" growled Jimmy Silver. "I'd rather be a prig than a gambler, if it's a choice between the two—though it isn't. We've agreed to stick out of it, us four."

"Well, if you hold us to that—"

said Newcome.

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver. "You needn't put it like that. I don't want to hold you to it against your will, you know that."

"Well, it's a patriotic thing, isn't it?" argued Lovell. "And—and I hate to look like a prig. Yes, yes, I know it isn't so; but the fellows think so, and—and it's rotten to set up to be better than everybody, you know. It looks as if we're a set of dashed Ericas, and afraid of being found out, and—and mean. I don't like it."

"Do as you like," said Jimmy Silver. "Don't let me stop you."

"Well, we three might take a bob's worth. It's our risk if there's a row."

"Hang the row!" said Silver. "I'll go into it if you do, in case there's a row. If there's any trouble we'll stand it together. Come on, then, and let's see Smythe, blow him!"

And a few minutes later the Fistical Four had parted with a shilling each and were subscribers to Smythe's little sweep. Leggett of the Fourth had calculated well. There was no doubt now that the sweep would be a tremendous success, and the lucky winner would find himself the possessor of a very substantial sum. And as nobody doubted that the favourite would win, it all depended upon who should draw that celebrated gee-gee, Billiard Ball.

The 5th Chapter.
The Draw.

Adolphus Smythe was in a state of great satisfaction after tea that evening. He was very busy with Howard and Tracy in his study as the time drew near for the draw for the sweep-stake.

Tracy had consulted the latest racing news obtainable, in a certain pink paper with which the "Goats" were very well acquainted. He sedately marked off the names of the horses who had been "scratched" up to date. There would doubtless be more scratchings before the race was run on Wednesday, but the chance had to be taken of that.

Scratched horses would be the same as blanks, and there would be an enormous number of blanks, for fully a hundred fellows had entered.

There were only twenty names to write on the slips. The rest of the slips were blank, to the full number of the entrants. Every fellow would draw a slip, but it was unanimously recognised that only one slip would be of value—that bearing the name of Billiard Ball, the favourite.

Tracy finished writing the twenty slips. Smythe was keeping his word and leaving it in the hands of his study-mates. That was to place the sweep entirely above suspicion of being manipulated.

"That's done!" said Tracy. "How many blanks, Smythe?"

Smythe consulted a list of names with numbers attached.

"Hundred and seventy altogether," he said. "Hundred and five fellows in the sweep, and some of them have taken two or three. I've taken four, but quite a lot have three. That means a hundred and fifty blanks."

"Oh, crums!" said Tracy.

"And you've got a hundred and seventy bobs here?" said Howard.

"Yaas," said Smythe—"eight pound ten."

"Eight pound ten, by gum! That means two pound two-and-six for the fund and six quid seven-and-six for the winner," said Howard. "What a whacking prize! That chap Leggett has his head screwed on the right way."

"It was a good idea," said Smythe. "Even those cads in the end study have taken a share each. They had to come in; they were chipped into it."

"Goody-goody rotters!" growled Tracy. "They were in a funk about the prefects getting on to it, I suppose. I hope they'll get blanks. It would be a rotten sell if one of them bagged Billiard Ball."

"Must chance that," said Smythe. "They've got as good a chance as anybody."

"Oh, of course!"

"What about the draw?" asked Howard. "Everybody will want to be present. We can't pack a hundred fellows into this study."

"We'll get into the abbey ruins," said Smythe. "No chance of being spotted there, and room for everybody. We'll pass the word round just before dusk."

"Right-ho!"

As dusk was beginning to fall upon Rookwood, fellows might have been seen, as a novelist would say, making their way to the abbey ruins. Though within the school walls, the dismantled abbey was a secluded spot, a considerable distance from the School House and the other buildings and separated from them by a thick clump of beeches. There was little danger of the "sweepers" being spotted there.

They did not go all together, but in ones and twos and threes, sauntering away carelessly until they were out of view of the schoolhouse, and then dodging into the abbey.

Smythe & Co. were first in the field, and after them the participants came dropping in till a crowd was gathered.

Owing to the unfortunate incident remembered in connection with Smythe's little sweep of the previous term, a good many of the fellows wanted to see all the proceedings with their own eyes before the draw was made, and to see that Howard and Tracy managed it all. Smythe raised no objection whatever. The twenty slips upon which were written the names of the horses entered for the handicap were spread on a flat stone, open to the general view. The exact number of blanks were counted out beside them. Any fellow who wished was at liberty to examine and count them.

"Better buck up with it," said Tommy Dodd. "We should look rather queer if a prefect dropped in."

"Serve us jolly well right if one did," growled Jimmy Silver.

Silver had not come there in a good temper. He had been driven, as it were, into participating in the sweep, and he knew that he had yielded to an unworthy weakness in being so driven, and it made his temper a little rusty.

"Oh, you're here!" said Tommy Dodd. "You don't call it gambling now—what!"

"Yes, I do."

"Then what are you here for?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"Because I'm as silly an ass as you are," said Jimmy Silver morosely. Tommy Dodd laughed.

"It's for the fund, you know," he said.

Jimmy Silver only grunted in response to that. He was not easy in his mind.

"All ready," said Smythe of the Shell. "Your topper this way, Howard."

"Here you are!"

Smythe collected up the slips of paper from the stone, one by one, and then took up the blanks in a heap. He shuffled them together, and dropped them into the hat. The hat was well shaken up, all the crowd looking on with great interest. Leggett of the Fourth was looking on, though he was not in the sweep. He was grinning, for some reason known only to himself.

"That's enough," said Smythe. "Now cover it with a handkerchief. Leave just room for a paw to go in."

"Right you are!"

"Now then, take your turns," said Smythe, consulting his list. "Fags first. Young Higgs, you can begin."

"Well, it looks all straight this time, I will say," remarked Higgs of the Third, as he advanced to draw from the hat, and there was a laugh. Higgs was the much-injured youth, who considered that he ought to have won Smythe's last little sweep.

"Don't waste time," said Smythe, frowning. "We can't stay here all night to hear you jaw. You're entitled to one draw—pile in!"

Higgs inserted a grubby hand into the hat, and drew out a slip of paper. He held it up, and snorted as he saw that it was blank.

"Oh, rotten!" growled Higgs. "Just my luck. I ought to have had it last time, though!"

"Clear off and make room for somebody else!" snapped Smythe. "We shall have a prefect down on us soon. Look here, you fellows, don't stop here to look at your slips—take 'em away and look at 'em. We've got to buck up."

"All serene—keep your wool on!"

The fags drew one after another. Most of them, of course, drew blanks, but some had gee-gees, but the coveted Billiard Ball did not come to light. The fellows cleared off as fast as they obtained their slips, getting quietly out of the ruins and strolling away to the School House.

The Fistical Four took their turns one after another. Lovell drew a blank, and then Raby, and then Newcome, but there was a name on the slip that Jimmy Silver drew out.

"Twin-Screw!" he read out.

There was a loud laugh.

"The rankest outsider in the whole bunch," grinned Smythe. "I wish you joy of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver shoved the slip into his pocket and walked away with his chums. The crowd was dwindling down now, and only the Shell fellows remained. So far as had been noticed, Billiard Ball had not come to light. Only Leggett of the Fourth stayed to see the finishing of the draw, though not directly concerned in it. He seemed curious.

"Buck up!" said Smythe. "It's getting dark. Go for it!"

The Shell fellows drew one after another. Smythe of the Shell was the last to draw, and the other fellows cast envious looks at him. It was pretty certain that Billiard Ball was still in the hat. Unless he had been drawn by one of the fellows who had hurried off without looking at his paper or announcing what was on it, it was certain that the favourite remained still to be drawn.

As Smythe had four chances for his four "bobs," he had to draw the final four slips from the hat. He drew them out quite methodically, however, one after another. One two—three blanks came to light, his companions looking on eagerly. Was it possible that the favourite had been already drawn, after all?

Smythe drew out the last slip. He looked at it, and gave a whoop.

"My hat!"

"What is it?" exclaimed Howard.

"Look!"

"Billiard Ball!" roared Howard.

"What luck! You'll have to stand a feed out of it, Smythe, anyway."

"I'll stand the biggest feed that ever was stood in the Shell at Rookwood," said Smythe jubilantly.

"Bravo!"

The draw was over, and Howard put on his hat, and they left the abbey ruins. Leggett of the Fourth strolled after them. He was still smiling.

The 6th Chapter.
Shell Out.

Later that evening, Smythe of the Shell was indulging in a cigarette in his study, when Leggett came in. Howard and Tracy were downstairs in the common-room. The great Adolphus did not seem pleased to see the cad of the Fourth, for he frowned through the haze of cigarette smoke.

"What the dickens do you want?" he demanded. "Do you think I'm going to have you wedding into my



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the
previous
page.

SMYTHE'S LITTLE SWEEP!

study like this, because you gave me a tip about the sweep." "I'd like my half-quad," said Leggett.

"You can wait." "But you've drawn the winner," said Leggett.

"I've drawn the favourite," said Smythe. "He's pretty certain to be the winner. But you can wait till he wins, for your half-quad."

"I'd rather have it now." "Go and eat coke! There's always a chance that Billiard Ball may be beaten, though it's not likely. Anyway, I don't pay till after the race. Get out!"

"I think I'll have it now," said Leggett, with quiet persistence. "Do you know, quite a queer idea came into my head while I was watching the draw."

Smythe started violently. "What do you mean, you cad? What are you trying to insinuate?" "Oh, don't get ratty!" said Leggett coolly. "I've waited till your study-mates weren't here—I specially came to see you alone."

"There's nothing you can say that my study-mates mayn't hear." "I'll tell you the queer idea that came into my head—"

"I don't want to hear it." "I'll tell you all the same. Suppose a chap wanted to make sure of bagging the sweep, and suppose he had already used the dodge of a slip being twice written, and couldn't use that again—keep your temper, Smythe, I'm only putting a case, you know—well, suppose the chap I'm speaking of made another fellow write out the slips, and had 'em counted in public to prove that all was fair and above-board—"

"Well, it would prove it," said Smythe.

"But suppose the chap, when he collected up the slips to put them in the hat, slipped one of them into his sleeve while he was shuffling them together—"

"You lying cad!" "And suppose he left himself to draw last, and that when he put his hand into the hat he had a slip in it already—"

"I—I—" "And suppose he left it there while he drew three blanks one after another, and then fished out the slip he'd dropped in after all the other fellows had drawn—"

"You bound—" "And suppose that special slip was the one that had the favourite's name written on it," pursued Leggett imperturbably.

Smythe's face was deadly pale. "Do you mean to say that anybody thinks—anybody has mentioned—" he stammered.

"Nobody, so far," said Leggett smoothly. "Nobody was thinking of anything of the sort, you see."

"But you were?" hissed Smythe. Leggett nodded.

"Yes, I was. You see, I knew that that you got up this sweep, the same as last time, with the intention of winning it. That's why I gave you my wheeze for making it a success, on condition that you shelled out if you won—you see, I knew you would win. As you couldn't do it quite so openly as you did it last time, I was curious to see how you would work it, and I watched you close. But you did it so well that I hardly spotted you—shouldn't have spotted you at all, if I hadn't known exactly what you were doing. You see, I guessed how you meant to work it."

"It's a rotten lie," said Smythe furiously, "and if you say a word about it outside this study, I'll—I'll smash you!"

"But I don't mean to say a word about it outside this study," said Leggett. "It's not my business, I've only come here for my half-quad. As

you've bagged the favourite, it's all the same to you whether you hand it out now or next Wednesday. And I'm hard up."

Smythe looked at him long and hard.

"Billiard Ball may not win," he said at last.

"Well, he's favourite," "I'll have nothing to do with you, Leggett."

"Just as you like," said Leggett, moving towards the door.

Smythe breathed hard.

"As a personal favour, I don't mind letting you have the half-quad now," he said. "But it's understood that it's purely a personal favour, and not

away with his quiet, almost stealthy tread, with a smile on his face.

Leggett was a wise youth in some things, and he knew that the warmest favourites do not always win as expected, and he had intended to make sure of his half-sovereign. Leggett was satisfied, and he had no intention of saying anything about what he had seen—or, rather, what he had suspected—at the draw. As a matter of fact, it was a trick quite after his own heart, and the peculiar youth quite admired Smythe of the Shell for his astuteness.

But Smythe of the Shell did not look satisfied after Leggett had left him. He had parted with a half-sovereign, and he would be that much out of pocket if Billiard Ball, by any chance, did not win on Wednesday. And that was not all that worried him. So long as his rascality was known only to himself, somehow it had not worried him; but now that it was known to another, it seemed to strike him more plainly, and the wretched swindler realised much more clearly what a worm he was. He was looking decidedly down in the mouth when Howard and Tracy came up to the study for something to eat before going to bed.

"Hallo! Anything wrong?" asked Tracy.

"Oh, no! Too many cigarettes—feel a bit seedy," stammered Smythe.

The 7th Chapter.

The Winner.

There were twenty fellows in the Lower School at Rookwood who looked forward with keen interest to Wednesday evening.

The sweepers who had drawn blanks weren't interested at all. They were fed up with sweeps, though they had the consolation of knowing that they had helped on the fund. That was a considerable consolation for the losers. They had stood their chance of drawing the favourite—or they thought they had—and a quarter of their losses went to the Red Cross fund, so it was not so bad, after all.

The fellows who possessed the twenty slips bearing the names of horses, however, had something to look forward to. As the holder of the favourite, Smythe was the object of great envy. But the other fellows declared sagely that it was not at all unknown for outsiders to "romp home" quite unexpectedly; so everybody who "had a horse" still hoped.

Some of the hopes were extinguished by degrees as the day of the race drew nearer. For geegees after geegees was scratched, as became known by means of that valuable pink paper surreptitiously imported into Smythe's study. On Wednesday there were only twelve runners left, and so there were only a dozen

he won't, too. I'd like to kick you fellows for squeezing me into that rotten sweep at all! I can't help thinking, too, that there's something queer about Smythe getting the favourite—and it's rotten uncomfortable to feel like that. It's a beastly bizney altogether, and if Twin-Screw should win, it would make me feel ill."

"Well, you'd be entitled to the cash," said Newcome. "Smythe's got it locked up in his drawer, all ready for the winner."

"All ready for himself!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"Think what a spanking feed we could stand in the study," said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver laid down his pen, and looked directly at his study-mates.

"We'll have this quite plain," he said. "I'm not satisfied about having had a hand in that rotten sweep, and you feel the same, only you won't own it. If my outsider should win by any chance, I shall send the whole whack to the Red Cross, and get rid of it. Then I shall have lost a bob like the rest. I won't keep a penny."

"Well, 'tain't a bad idea," said Lovell, after a pause; and Raby and Newcome nodded. "Why don't you cut off and see if there's a chance?"

"Oh, rot! There isn't!"

And Jimmy Silver went on with his preparation. The four juniors were busy, when there came a knock at the study door.

"Come in!" sang out Lovell.

Smythe of the Shell came in.

"Busy?" he asked.

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver bluntly.

"I won't keep you a minute. I've been thinking," said Smythe, in a halting voice. "You fellows were really rushed into the sweep, practically against your will—"

"We were!" snapped Jimmy Silver.

"And it comes hard on you, too, because—because I've drawn the favourite," said Smythe.

"Has he won?" asked Newcome.

"I—I can't say till I've seen the evening paper. But I've come here to make you a fair offer. Seeing that you didn't want to be in the sweep, and that you've had such a rotten draw, I'll take your slips off your hands, if you like. I—I can afford it, as I'm winning eight-pound-ten. I'll take them for what you gave for them."

The Fistical Four stared at Smythe in amazement. This was a decidedly generous offer—an offer they would never have expected of the chief of the Giddy Goats.

"You'll take three blanks and a rank outsider off our hands at a bob a time?" exclaimed Lovell.

Smythe nodded.

"I feel it's only the decent thing to do," he explained. "I didn't really like the way you were rushed into it. Fellow has a right to keep out of a sweep if he likes. There's the money, and call it square."

Smythe of the Shell dropped four shillings on the table.

"You mean it?" said Raby.

"There's the money."

"Well, I don't see why you shouldn't have my blank, if you're willing to shell out a bob for it," said Newcome. "I've chucked it away, as a matter of fact, but I'll make you a new one out of this impot paper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smythe laughed, too, though there was a strained expression about his face.

"Well, the blanks don't matter much," he remarked. "But I'll have your slip, Silver, as it happens to have a name on it—a rotten outsider, of course; but I suppose you've kept it."

"Yes; I've kept it," said Jimmy.

"Where is it?"

"In my pocket."

"Well, hand it over. There's the bob."

"You can keep your bob!" said Jimmy Silver deliberately.

His chums looked at him inquiringly.

"I don't see why you shouldn't accept Smythe's offer," said Lovell.

"It's quite true what he says; we were rushed into it, and if he chooses to take the waste-paper off our hands it's only the decent thing for him to do."

"That's how I look at it," said Smythe.

"If it were wastepaper, I fancy Smythe wouldn't be so jolly keen to take it off our hands," said Jimmy Silver drily.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome jumped all at once.

"Why, what—"

(Concluded on the next page.)



The nuts of Rookwood howled and yelled as they dodged the unpleasant missiles. The table was cleared in a few seconds by the inignant Modern youths, who were convinced that the feed was an elaborate jape, and now they meant to show the Classical nuts that they could not be japed with impunity.

on account of that rot you've been talking."

"Certainly!" said Leggett, with a nod. "And it's very kind of you to do me a little favour like that, Smythe, as I'm hard up."

Smythe paused, and then extracted a half-sovereign from his pocket and laid it on the table.

Leggett picked it up.

"Thanks!" he said. "That's really good of you, Smythe!" Soft words cost the cad of the Fourth nothing, and he did not want to quarrel with the Classical dandy so long as he gained his point—and the half-sovereign. "Much obliged, really! This will come in very useful."

"You needn't mention that I've handed it out before the race," said Smythe.

"Certainly not; it's quite between you and me. Nobody's business but ours," said Leggett. "If Billiard Ball should not happen to win, it needn't be mentioned that you've handed it to me at all. I sha'n't say anything. No need to start fellows talking and suspecting. You may be getting up another little sweep one of these days, and I may be able to help you again. Good-night, Smythe!"

"Good-night!" growled Smythe.

Leggett left the study, and walked

"Well, you ought to be bucking up, I should say, with that whacking sweep dropping into your lap on Wednesday," said Howard. "You have the best of luck, Smythe; and this time nobody can say that it wasn't all fair and square."

"I—I say, I'll stand a thumping feed out of it," said Smythe uneasily. "We'll have all the Shell, and everything of the best, and as much as any fellow wants."

"Hear, hear!" said Tracy. "That's doing it in style, Smythe."

"And I'll tell you what," said Smythe miserably. "I'll stand each of you fellows a quid out of it."

"My hat!"

"Gammon!"

"I mean it," said Smythe eagerly.

"You—you had a lot of the trouble, and I'm going to whack it out a bit. A quid each for you out of the sweep. Dash it all, you're my study-mates, and you ought to have a whack."

Howard thumped him on the back, and Tracy almost hugged him. And their hearty appreciation of Smythe's generosity made the dandy of the Shell feel a little more at ease with his conscience.

"You're a sport, Smythe!" said Tracy.

"One of the best!" agreed Howard.

fellows who looked forward to the news of the evening.

Smythe had arranged for an evening paper to be brought to him that evening—on the grounds that he was anxious to follow the movements of the troops in Flanders, where he had a relation. His real object, of course, was to see the result of the race without waiting till Thursday. And he had generously invited the holders of the geegee slips to turn up in his study to see the winners at eight o'clock, when he would receive the paper.

The Fistical Four were doing their preparation in the end study when Lovell drew Jimmy Silver's attention to the clock.

"Just on eight," he remarked.

"Well?" said Silver.

"Smythe's got his evening paper by this time."

"Blow Smythe and his evening paper!"

"Aren't you going?"

"No."

"But there's a chance," said Raby.

"Outsiders get home sometimes—romp home, as Smythe calls it. Twin-Screw hasn't been scratched, anyway. He's in the running."

"Oh, rot!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Twin-Screw won't win and I hope

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

I would like all my readers to look upon me as their real friend, someone to whom they can come for help and advice when they are in doubt or difficulty. It is never "too much trouble" to me to be of use to my boy and girl friends if they feel they would like to write to me. . . .

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Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of THE BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

A PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Why Your Editor is Not With the Colours.

THE photograph of your Editor, which recently appeared at the head of this page, has lately been the cause of cynical remarks from a few of my readers, who are—not unnaturally, perhaps—puzzled that one so comparatively youthful as myself is not in Flanders enduring with others the inferno of the trenches.

In justice to these readers I have ventured upon a personal explanation of this matter—an explanation which amply proves that no insinuations as to lack of patriotism can be laid at my door.

For the information of those readers of THE BOYS' FRIEND who desire to know the facts of the case, I would say that the explanation appears in the issue of our companion paper, "The Magnet" Library, No. 379, published last Monday.

NEXT MONDAY'S FINE FEATURES.

"Magnificent" is the only word which will adequately describe next week's issue of the good old "B. F." Apart from two exceptionally fine instalments of our serials, there will be a grand complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood, entitled:

"THE MODERNS' MISTAKE!"

A stirring story of Tom Belohor, the boy boxing marvel, will also appear; and W. Murray Graydon contributes a rare treat in his intensely absorbing story of "The Circle of 13."

All things considered, I am of the opinion that the British boy would have to go a long, long way before he discovered another journal with such an altogether attractive array of features as those contained in

NEXT MONDAY'S SUPERB ISSUE.

SMYTHE'S LITTLE SWEEP.

(Continued from previous page.)

"You don't think—" "I jolly well do think," said Jimmy Silver. "Smythe was to get his precious evening paper at eight o'clock. It's nearly half-past now. Haven't you had that paper yet, Smythe?"

"N-n-no!" "Then it's late," said Jimmy Silver. "You'd better go and inquire for it."

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were looking at Smythe very suspiciously. The evening paper at eight o'clock was decidedly uneasy under their looks.

"Look here, I'll make it two bob for your slip, Silver," said Smythe desperately.

"Two bob for a slip of waste-paper," said Jimmy Silver. "You're getting too generous in your old age, Smythe. Why don't you make it a quid?"

"Will you sell or not?"

"Not!"

"What's the good of it to you? A rank outsider—not a chance in a thousand—"

"That's why you want to give two bob for it, is it?"

POSTCARDS ONLY, PLEASE!

I have a little grumble to make this week in connection with the "Tales to Tell" Competition, which is progressing in conjunction with our famous companion paper, "The Gem" Library.

One of the rules governing this feature provides that all jokes are to be sent in on postcards only—otherwise they cannot be considered. A good many readers have ignored this rule, with the result that hundreds of entries have had to be disqualified through non-adherence to it.

Let me urge those readers who compete for our grand little money prizes to bear this detail in mind for the future.

I much regret that owing to lack of space I have been unable to include any storyettes in this issue, but I promise my chums that they will appear in next Monday's number.

WHY BE PATRIOTIC?

"Why should I be a patriot?" asks H. W., of London, E. "I do not own one foot of land, and I find there are thousands starving in the land which I am asked to love. If you can show me the path of patriotism clearly, then I shall be pleased to follow it, and take pleasure in singing 'God Save the King.'"

Let me answer H. W.'s question by asking him another. What if we were not patriotic? Just think for a moment of the state of chaos we should soon be in if everyone took the selfish view, and refused to acknowledge himself or herself part of the whole nation. Why, the entire British Empire would gradually break up!

Now, supposing we liken our Empire to a vast and mighty business. For a business to be a success, it is necessary that everyone—from the highest director to the lowliest office-boy—shall be loyal, enthusiastic, and a part of the great machine that keeps things going. The fact that the office-boy is not a shareholder should make no difference. He will be one day, if he perseveres. It is the same with our Empire. If

the Empire falls, we fall—like the Greeks and Romans of old time. If the Empire succeeds, we succeed. As a class, I mean, of course, for in the most wonderfully-organised affair, be it nation or business, there will always be some who are dissatisfied—no doubt through no fault of their own.

The fact that H. W. has seen starving people has no bearing on the question of his patriotism—except, perhaps, to make him a greater patriot, so that by increased patriotism he links himself still more closely to the cause.

Yes, H. W., be a patriot. Be loyal to your flag, and sing "God Save the King" as heartily as you like. Patriotism is worth all other keynotes put together.

IS BAD LANGUAGE EXCUSABLE?

This is the question recently asked me by a Newcastle reader, who signs himself "Independent."

My chum says that it is all very well for pious parsons and suchlike to be everlastingly condemning the use of bad language, but in many cases it is absolutely unavoidable. His own work, for instance, is of a very trying character—trying, that is, to the temper—and he sometimes finds himself giving vent to bad language. "I know you are not in the habit of preaching to your boys," writes "Independent," "and hope you will find room on your chat page to say a few words in my favour."

If "Independent" imagines I am going to take up the cudgels on behalf of violent language, he is sadly in error. There is absolutely no excuse for this vice—for a vice it most assuredly is. It is the result of a badly-trained mind.

When a man finds himself upset by

some little happening, sometimes trifling, sometimes serious, if he gives vent to bad language, it because he lacks the proper ability to control himself.

Let us look at it from another point of view. Is swearing of any help to you if, when you find yourself confronted by some trouble, you express words unfit for decent ears? What possible good do you do yourself? How do you further the matter which has brought about your ejaculation? In what possible way do you do anything or anybody good? Not at all. You simply give vent to a burst of unrestrained passion; and the boy who wants to get on in the world does not help himself a bit by allowing his temper to get the whiphand of him.

One of the secrets of success is self-control, and no fellow can say that he controls himself whilst he is guilty of the habit of bad language, even under provocation.

As for the boy or man who uses indecent words for the mere pleasure of hearing himself say them, for such a person only contempt and loathing can be felt. The English tongue is rich enough to express in a thousand forms, without the need to resort to foul words, whatever emotion a human being can feel. Let "Independent" bear this fact in mind, and drop a habit which, apart from being most reprehensible, can do no possible good to himself.

TRUE BLUE.

The following excellent verses, telling of a young hero who fought and died for his country, will probably awaken in the minds of my older readers happy recollections of the days when they worked and played with their chums in the great world of school.

The Duke of Wellington said, a hundred years ago, that "on the playing-fields of England the battles of England are won," and it cannot be denied by anyone that in the present mighty conflict—the men from our public schools are playing a great and noble part. The spirit of discipline and sportsmanship which is fostered in our scholastic institutions is bear-

ing rich and glorious fruit on the stern fields of duty, and everyone knows that many of the most stirring and heroic deeds in the war redound to the credit of young officers whose schooldays ended but a very few months ago.

Here is the poem:

MY BEST CHUM.

He was my first and nearest friend,
And many a long, long year
Has rolled away since last we stood
In the dear old playground here.
Tall and fair, with slim white hands,
And blue, unclouded eyes,
Beautiful as a girl in which
The soul of honour lies.

First in class and first in the field,
Gentle and bold was he;
I called him my Bayard, my beau-ideal

Of boyish chivalry.
And if ever in aught my own heart failed,
Or my effort felt faint and slack,
His cheery voice said, "Buck up, kid!
Be true to your colours, Jack!"

Loyal friend, and generous foe,
Ready to weep or laugh;
Gay with the glad, and grave with the sad,

He never did things by half.
Scorning a lie, and scorning a sneak,
On his word he ne'er went back;
"In woe or weal be true as steel,
And stand to your colours, Jack!"

His grave lies lone on Belgian soil,
By Hunnish hands laid waste;
No stone is there to mark the spot,
Which could not now be traced.
Leading a forlorn hope he fell,
The sword in his small white hand,
Flashing a path to Fame—and Death,
In the forefront of his band.

And still I see his noble face,
Hear the young voice silver-clear,
Of my dear old chum of bygone days
Still echoing in my ear.
Like the soft refrain of a long-lost song

His words oft times come back,
As though 'twere only yesterday—
"Be true to your colours, Jack!"

YOUR EDITOR.

fair play. And the miserable young rascal had the additional bitter reflection that, if he had played the game, he might have drawn the winner after all. His wretched swindle had, as it turned out, simply deprived him of his chance of drawing Twin-Screw—the outsider that had "romped home."

Smythe unlocked his drawer, and the money was counted out. Eight pounds ten shillings, in all sorts of coins, were handed over to Jimmy Silver.

"There's luck, if you like!" growled Haward enviously.

"Luck for the Red Cross," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm not keeping this. We'll call it a subscription for the Red Cross. All the fellows who had a hand in the sweep can consider that they subscribed a shilling each—and I'm the treasurer. And I'm going to change this into paper money, and post it to the Red Cross Fund this evening, and you fellows can come and see me do it, if you like."

"My hat!" "Faith, it's a broth av a boy ye are!" said Flynn. "Then—as it's a giddy subscription—we haven't gambled at all, any of us, and sure our conscience is clear—except Smythe's. Faith, I shouldn't like to have to slape with his conscience. Come on!"

It did not take long to collect currency notes in exchange for the

silver; and the notes were promptly placed in an envelope, with a letter, addressed, and despatched. Jimmy Silver would not even wait till the morrow to register it. He was anxious to get the money out of his hands. And when the letter had been dropped into the school box, the Fistical Four returned to their study to finish their preparation in an easier and very satisfied frame of mind.

In Smythe's study there was deep gloom. Smythe's half-sovereign paid to Leggett he was never likely to see again, and he was that much out of pocket, as well as his losses in the sweep. It was galling in the extreme—and to make it worse, the fellows, having heard of his attempt to possess himself of the winning slip after he had seen the name of the winner, they were not slow to tell him what they thought of him. Even Howard and Tracy looked very coldly on their wretched study-mate.

But in the end study there was complete satisfaction. The Fistical Four were well out of an affair that they justly regarded as "rotten," and they had helped the Red Cross Fund to the tune of eight pounds ten shillings. And so they had no reason to be dissatisfied with the result of Smythe's Little Sweep!

THE END.

("The Moderns' Mistake!" is the title of next Monday's splendid long complete tale of the Rookwood Chums.)

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