

By OWEN CONQUEST

A Rattling, Rollicking Yarn of Rookwood School!

THE FIRST CHAPTER Disturbers of the Peace!

"Yan! Call yourself a cricketer?"

Jimmy Silver flushed angrily.

He spun round, bat in hand, and glared in the direction from which that sarcastic shout had come.

A practice-match was in progress on the junior ground, and Jimmy Silver, the leader of the Classical Fourth, had been batting brilliantly. He generally did. Jimmy was well set now, and the bowling had no terrors for him. He knew he had made a good score—he was somewhere in the sixties—and it was very annoying to be constantly interrupted in this way.

"I'll go and slaughter those bounders, in a minute!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Faith, an' they deserve it, entirely!" said Tommy Doyle, who was keeping wicket. "They seem to be tryin' to put you off your game, bedad!"

Sprawling on the grass, under one of the beech-trees which hordered the cricket ground, were four fellows. Their faces were not familiar to the Rookwood juniors.

Jimmy Silver surmised that they were new boys.

One of the four—a big, burly youth in Etons—had fallen asleep. That, in itself, was an insult. It suggested that Rookwood cricket was not lively enough to keep him awake.

The second member of the quartette was also a burly youth. He lay at full length, with his chin resting in his hands.

The other two were under-sized, cheeky young rascals. These were the two who had been making uncomplimentary remarks at the expense of Jimmy Silver. Jimmy's glare, which was intended to freeze them into silence, had quite the opposite effect. Making megaphones of their hands, they continued to shout abusive remarks.

" Bah!"

"You're no batsman!"

"Better chuck cricket, and take up ludo!"

Jimmy Silver's flush deepened.

"The—the cheeky young sweeps!" he snorted. "I feel like tanning their hides for them! If they're new kids—as I believe

-they'll soon have to learn better manners."

Tommy Dodd, who was waiting to bowl,

made a gesture of impatience.

"Don't take any notice of those bounders, Silver!" he called out. "You can deal with them afterwards. Play!"

And Tommy Dodd gripped the round red

ball tightly and started his run.

Jimmy Silver went on batting, rather more recklessly than usual. He was anxious for his innings to come to an end, so that he could deal with the interrupters. But he had hopes of reaching his century first. He knew that he was well on the road to it.

Of course, Jimmy's chums, who were looking on from the pavilion, could have handled the cheeky strangers. But they knew that Jimmy would prefer to deal with them himself, so they refrained from interfering.

Jimmy Silver was laying about the bowling with great vigour. He opened his shoulders to a half-volley, and sent the ball speeding to the boundary.

"Fluke!" came a shrill squeak from one

of the undersized young rascals.

Jimmy Silver looked grim.

"All right, my beauty!" he murmured. "Just you wait till my innings is over!"

"Shure, an' we'll give the spalpeen a polly good bumping!" growled Tommy Doyle.

"Yes, rather!"

Tommy Cook, who happened to be fielding on the boundary line, within a few yards of the strangers, turned to admonish them.

"Keep quiet, can't you?" he said angrily. "It isn't cricket, to keep bawling rude remarks, and to put a batsman off his stroke."

"Rats!" growled the burly youth, who

was awake.

"Go and eat coke!" chanted the two under-sized infants in chorus.

Tommy Cook clenched his hands hard. He felt like hurling himself at the strangers, and knocking their heads together. But he reflected that their punishment could safely be left to Jimmy Silver.

At that moment, Jimmy skied a ball in Tommy Cook's direction. The fieldsman was unprepared for it. He ran hard, but he was too late. The ball eluded his frantic clutch, and dropped in the grass.

" Yah!"

" Butterfingers!"

"You can't catch for toffee!"

Tommy Cook gathered up the ball and threw it in. Then he glared at his critics.

"I'll tell you what you'll catch before long," he said, "and that's a thundering good hiding!"

The only response to this threat was a

shrill cackle.

"He, he, he!"

The game went on, and so did the interruptions. They were getting on Jimmy Silver's nerves, and causing him to make some very reckless strokes. On two occasions the ball came off the edge of the bat, and was nearly held in the slips. But Fortune smiled on Jimmy Silver, and his score rose merrily, until it stood at 99. Jimmy was on the threshold of his century!

There was a shout from the pavilion.

"Only one more for your hundred Jimmy!"

"Go easy, old chap!"

Tommy Dodd was still bowling. He had been punished terribly, but he had not despaired of taking Jimmy Silver's wicket. There was a resolute gleam in Tommy Dodd's eye as he took his run.

It was at this critical moment that the under-sized infants on the grass started to sing:

"He's out, he's out, without a doubt!
This ball will beat him hollow!
He's out, he's out, he's put to rout—
Next man, prepare to follow!"

The song was prophetic. Jimmy Silver, with that din ringing in his ears, could hardly be expected to keep his wicket intact. He lunged forward wildly, and there was an ominous clatter behind him.

The middle stump lay flat. The leg stump lay beside it in silent sympathy. Jimmy Silver stood glaring down at the wreckage.

"Rough luck!" murmured Tommy

Doyle, gathering up the bails.

Jimmy Silver made no reply. It was a time for action, not for speech. Gripping his bat-handle in a business-like manner, Jimmy went striding away in the direction of the beech-tree, under whose leafy shade the four strangers sprawled.

Jimmy was snorting like a war-horse by

the time he reached his objective.

The burly youth who had been slumbering was now wide awake. He blinked at Jimmy Silver in surprise.

"Hallo! You seem to be out for scalps,"

was his comment.

"I am!" was the grim rejoinder. "I've no quarrel with vou-nor with you," Jimms added, indicating the other big fellow. "You've been fairly quiet. But as for these two brats, they've put me off my game, and stopped me from getting my century. I don't know who they are, and I don't care. They ought to know better than to interrupt a cricket match. I'm going to give the pair of them a jolly good hiding!"

"Pardon me," said the burly youth who had been asleep, "but we belong to the Society for the Protection of Small Boys. Algy and Cuthbert are our young brothers. We must request you, therefore, to keep off

the grass."

The burly fellow spoke flippantly enough, but there was a menacing gleam in his eye.

Jimmy Silver, however, was not to be turned from his purpose. In his present mood, he would cheerfully have tackled the whole quartet, in spite of the fact that two of them were bigger than himself. Jimmy took a quick step towards the two cheeky infants. Instantly their big brothers jumped up, with the intention of dragging Jimmy back.

But at that moment Jimmy Silver's chums came sprinting on the scene. Lovell and Newcome and Raby, Erroll and Teddy Grace and Conroy, came hurrying to the spot.

"Going to lick these cheeky bounders,

Jimmy?" panted Lovell.

"Yes, if you'll look after their big brothers for a minute."

"All serene!"



Jimmy's chums promptly hurled themselves at the two burly youths, and restrained them by force from interfering.

Lovell and Newcome dealt with one big brother, and Erroll and Raby saw to the other.

Teddy Grace and Conroy pounced upon one of the small boys, and spread-eagled his arms and legs, pinning him to the grass. Then Jimmy Silver got busy with the cricketbat.

Whack, whack, whack! "Yarooop!"

A wild yell of anguish floated on the summer air.

"Go it, Jimmy!" chuckled Conroy.

"Give the little beggar beans!"

Jimmy laid on the willow good and hard, and the dust rose in clouds from the small boy's trousers. He had asked for trouble, and now he had got it, with a vengeance!

Six strokes were sufficient, in Jimmy Silver's view. They were more than sufficient, in the victim's view! His yells of anguish could be heard at a considerable distance. They were heard, in fact, by Mr. Manders, who went to his study window to investigate.

The Housemaster gazed across the wide expanse of greensward. Then he frowned, and his lips were compressed in a hard line.

"This is outrageous!" muttered Mr. Manders. "That boy Silver appears to have taken leave of his senses! He must be stopped at once!"

And the Housemaster hurried from his

study

When Mr. Roger Manders arrived on the scene, the second victim was getting it "in the neck"—or, rather, in a lower portion of his anatomy. His yells of anguish were even more loud and shrill than those of his brother.

Jimmy Silver, flushed with his exertions, was so intent upon his task that he failed to notice the arrival of Mr. Manders. And his chums, who were equally busy, also failed to notice the Housemaster's presence, until his harsh voice grated on their ears.

"Stop!"

It was only one word, but it was enough.

Jimmy Silver spun round with a start,
and the cricket-bat slithered from his grasp.

"How dare you, Silver?" thundered Mr. Manders. "How dare you castigate my nephews in this brutal manner?"

"Your-your nephews, sir?" stuttered

Jimmy Silver, aghast.

"Yes!" stormed the Housemaster.
"These four boys arrived this afternoon, and are temporary guests at this school. Is this the way to treat your guests, Silver?"

"Oh, crumbs!" faltered Jimmy. "I-I

Mr. Manders frowned.

"I have no doubt the assault was entirely unprovoked," he said. "It is disgraceful—monstrous! In the ordinary way, I should report the matter to your own Housemaster, Mr. Dalton. But as these boys, whom you have ill-treated, are my own nephews, I feel justified in dealing with this matter myself. You will write a thousand lines, Silver!"

"Oh, make it a billion!" murmured

Lovell, under his breath.

Every other boy concerned in this outrage will write five hundred lines!" snapped Mr. Manders.

The Housemaster then turned to his

snivelling nephews.

"Algernon! Cuthbert! I am extremely sorry this has happened, my dear boys. Why did not Jack and Joseph protect you?"

"We hadn't a chance, uncle," said Jack—the youth who had been asleep for the

greater part of the afternoon.

"These fellows grabbed hold of us, and

held us back," said Joe.

"Disgraceful!" snorted Mr. Manders. "However, I have amply punished them for their complicity in this affair. You had better come in now, my dear boys. Tea is ready."

So saying, the Housemaster stalked away, followed by his four nephews—the burly Jack and Joe, and the under-sized Algernon

and Cuthbert.

Jimmy Silver & Co. gazed gloomily after the retreating procession.

THE SECOND CHAPTER Comical Cricket!

"You're wanted, Jimmy!"

Tommy Dodd popped a beaming face round the door of the end study, where

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at tea.

"Who wants me?" growled the leader of the Classical Fourth. He was in a far from angelic mood, just then. When a fellow makes 99 in a cricket match, and then loses his wicket through no fault of his own, he can be excused for feeling annoyed. Moreover, when that same fellow has collected an imposition of a thousand lines, he can be



Jimmy Silver moodily made his way to Mr. Mander's study, and found Roger Manders and his four precocious nephews seated round the tea-table. (See this page.)

excused for feeling not only annoyed, but homicidal.

"Manders sent me to find you, Jimmy," said Tommy Dodd. "Don't look alarmed! He's not going to dole out any more impots. He's quite simmered down; he's like a cooing dove, in fact."

"What's he want me for?" grunted

Jimmy Silver, rising to his feet.

"He's going to offer you a job as cricket coach to his nephews," said Tommy Dodd, with a grin.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

There was blank dismay on Jimmy Silver's face. He did not relish the idea of putting Mr. Manders' nephews through their paces.

Jimmy's chums chuckled over their teacups; and Tommy Dodd's grin was exasper-

ating.

"Aren't you feeling awfully, fearfully bucked at getting the offer of such a job?" asked the Modern junior, in mock surprise.

"Indeed I'm not!" growled Jimmy

Silver.

"Oh, I say! That's jolly ungrateful of you, you know. It was I who got you this job."

"You?" howled Jimmy

Tommy Dodd nodded cheerfully.

"Old Manders sent for me, and asked me who was the best junior cricketer at Rookwood. My reply was as prompt as a pistol-shot. I said, 'Jimmy Silver, sir!'"

"You-you-"

"So Manders said, 'Very well, Dodd. Kindly find Silver, and ask him to step along to my study. I wish him to coach my nephews at cricket.' Jolly decent of me to recommend you, Jimmy, wasn't it?"

Jimmy Silver didn't seem to think so. He seemed to think it positively horrible of Tommy Dodd. And the glance he bestowed upon that cheery youth was far from

amiable.

"You've let me in for something now!" he groaned. "I feel like wiping up the floor with you!"

"Don't!" pleaded Tommy Dodd. "Such a nasty mess for the maid to sweep up in

the morning."

" Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better toddle along to old Manders, Jimmy," counselled Newcome. "He doesn't like to be kept waiting."

Jimmy Silver moodily made his way to Mr. Manders' study on the Modern side. When he got there, he found Roger Manders and his four precocious nephews seated round the tea-table. Algernon and Cuthbert were bolting jam-tarts for all they were worth.

"Ah! Come in, Silver!" said Mr. Manders. "I have no wish to resurrect the painful episode which occurred this afternoon on the cricket ground. I have sent for you because my nephews need a certain amount of tuition at cricket."

"They seem to know the game inside-out, sir, judging by the way they criticised my batting this afternoon," said Jimmy Silver drily.

"You can't bat for monkey-nuts!" mumbled Cuthbert, with his mouth full.

Mr. Manders frowned.

"Be silent, Cuthbert! Now, Silver, I am going to request you to act in the capacity of cricket coach to my nephews."

Jimmy Silver made a grimace.

"Afraid I couldn't teach them much, sir," he said. "I'm a very moderate player."

" But Dodd said -- "

"Ahem! Dodd's rather given to flattery, sir."

Jimmy Silver tried hard to wriggle out of the job which Mr. Manders was imposing upon him. But the Housemaster was firm—so firm that his request became a command. He would not take "No" for an answer.

"You must take my nephews to the nets after tea, Silver, and impart to them the necessary tuition," he said.

Jimmy groaned inwardly.

"You understand, Silver?" said Mr. Manders sharply.

"Yes, sir," came the reluctant reply.

"Very well. Your imposition of a thousand lines is reduced to five hundred, to compensate you for the time taken up by this tuition."

Jimmy Silver brightened up a little at that. But the prospect of coaching Mr. Manders' tribe of nephews was not a happy one. Jimmy felt like seeking out Tommy Dodd, and punching him with great violence on the nose.

Jimmy went back to his study and finished his tea. Then, still wearing his flannels, he went down to the nets. His chums followed, eager to see the fun.

Mr. Manders' nephews were awaiting Jimmy Silver's arrival. Jack and Joe were looking bored; and Algernon and Cuthbert were looking decidedly spiteful. They were still smarting from the castigation they had received at Jimmy Silver's hands.

Jimmy addressed the quartette.

"I don't know why your uncle foisted this job on to me," he growled. "Still, I've got to go through with it. Put on your pads, one of you, and let's see how you shape at the wicket."

It was Joe, one of the burly ones, who took first knock. Jimmy Silver bowled, and sent down some simple stuff, but Joe was all at sea. His batting was of the rustic order, such as may be seen on village greens, when the blacksmith goes in with the avowed intention of knocking the cover off the ball.

Joe swiped savagely at every ball, but he was seconds too late, in his timing. The stumps were knocked down every time, and the little group of onlookers, standing behind the net, were chuckling with merriment.

"Coconut-shies, three a penny!" chortled Lovell.

" Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is this cricket, or a slogging competition?" murmured Raby.

Jimmy Silver shbuted some instructions to the batsman.

"You're there to defend your wicket, not to give an exhibition of bat-swinging! Keep your eye on the ball, and note where it pitches, and then make your stroke."

"I'm playing the correct game," grunted Joe. "Jessop was a slogger, wasn't he?"

- "Yes; but not a blind slogger. He didn't shut his eyes and swipe wildly. What you want is a little more self-control."
- "Oh, shut up!" growled the batsman. "I'm not going to be dictated to by a kid." Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders.
- "No use trying to teach a fellow who obstinately refuses to learn," he said.

"Your brother Jack had better take a turn."

But Jack, who evidently believed in taking his sleep in large and frequent doses, was sprawling on the grass, slumbering placidly. He seemed to regard cricket as the most boring thing in life. Jimmy Silver tried to rouse him, but he was told, in a drowsy voice, to run away and pick flowers.

"Well, you're a bright lot, I must say!" snorted Jimmy. "What you might call apt and eager pupils—I don't think! Now, Algernon, let's see what you can do with the bat."

All that Algernon could do with the bat was to knock down his own wicket. He succeeded in performing this feat several times, and the onlookers were in a state bordering on hysterics.

Never had the Rookwood juniors seen such arrant duffers at the wicket. They had always regarded Tubby Muffin, the fat fellow of the Fourth, as a comical cricketer; but Tubby was a Jack Hobbs by comparison with Mr. Manders' nephews.

The wretched Algernon, jumping back in alarm at every delivery, continued to amuse the audience by knocking down his wicket.

With a snort of disgust, Jimmy Silver called upon Cuthbert to perform.

Cuthbert proved a bigger comedian than his brother. His knowledge of cricket was not extensive, but it was certainly peculiar. He seemed to think it was the correct caper to pull an off ball round to leg, and to cut a leg ball in the direction of point. It was whilst attempting to perform the latter feat that he stopped the ball with his hip.

A fiendish yell rang out, and Cuthbert

danced wildly in the air.

"Yow! I believe you did that on purpose, you rotter! I'll tell my uncle!"

"Sneak!" came a contemptuous chorus

from behind the net.

"Oh, let him tell Manders the fale, if he wants to!" said Jimmy Silver scornfully. "He can mention, at the same time, that he's the biggest booby that ever handled a cricket-bat! Of all the duds and duffers, these bright beauties take the biscuit! And yet they had the brazen nerve to sneer at my batting this afternoon!"

"Calm yourself," said the burly Joe.
"You haven't tried us at bowling yet.
We're hot-stuff with the ball. I can
generally manage to put one straight one

down in every six!"



Joe's third ball came whizzing down at express speed, straight for the batsman. Jimmy Silver sprang clear, but it would have been easier to dodge a bullet than to dodge that cricket ball. It smote the batsman full on the thigh. (See next page.)

" Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver walked to the wicket, and relieved the whimpering Cuthbert of the bat.

"Carry on!" he said. "See if you can

spread-eagle my stumps!"

Joe started to bowl. His bowling was worse than his batting, and that was saying a great deal. The first ball trickled along the ground at a gentle pace, as if a game of marbles was in progress. The second ball shot into space like a sky-rocket. And it inspired Lovell, who was looking on, to make a quotation:

"I chucked a ball into the air,
It fell to earth—I know not where!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Joe's third ball brought tragedy in its train. It came whizzing down at express speed—straight for the batsman. Jimmy Silver sprang clear, but it would have been easier to dodge a bullet than to dodge that cricket-ball. It smote the batsman full on the thigh, and Jimmy sat down with a bump and a roar.

"Yaroooooo! You dangerous madman!

Are you trying to take my life?"

"Sorry" began Joe.

"Bless your sorrow! I shall have a fearful bruise where that ball biffed me! You ought never to be allowed to try and play cricket. You ought to be shut up in a safe place. I'm fed-up with this coaching job. I resign, here and now!"

"Swelling the ranks of the unemployed,"

said Lovell sadly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver was in earnest about resigning. He would not have gone on with his duties, even if Mr. Manders had offered him ten shillings an hour on account of the perilous nature of those duties.

Whatever Mr. Manders had to say about it, Jimmy Silver was finished. He picked himself up, and limped away towards the

building.

Straight to Mr. Manders' study he went, and he told the Housemaster, politely but firmly, that he was unable to continue his duties as a cricket coach.

Mr. Manders didn't like it. He was, in fact, quite nasty about it. But Jimmy Silver remained firm—obstinate, Mr. Manders called it—and the Housemaster had to accept his resignation. He could not have taken the matter to the Head, because there was no law which compelled a junior to act as cricket coach to a master's nephews.

Jimmy Silver was relieved of his duties. And Jimmy himself was greatly relieved in

consequence!

THE THIRD CHAPTER A Surprise for Rookwood!

"THUNDERING cheek, I call it!"
Thus Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was Saturday morning, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were chatting in the sunny quadrangle. They had a cricket fixture with Greyfriars in the afternoon.

"Cheek?" echoed Jimmy Silver. "It's something more than cheek! It's absolute, brazen, cast-iron nerve! I've never heard anything to equal it in all my days!"

Jimmy spoke as if he were a doddering octogenarian, instead of a youngster of

fifteen.

"Does Manders really insist upon it,

Jimmy?" asked Newcome.

"Yes. I've pleaded with him, and entreated him—on my bended knees, almost. But he won't budge from his attitude. He's ordered me—ordered me, mark you—to play his four precious nephews in the team this afternoon!"

"But he's got no right to do it!" pro-

tested Raby.

"I know that, fathead," growled Jimmy Silver. "He's no right to do anything of the sort. But he's done it!"

"Can't we appeal to the Head?" sug-

gested Lovell.

"Head's away for the day."

Lovell groaned. And the others groaned in dismal chorus.

Mr. Roger Manders was certainly acting in a very high-handed manner. He had actually ordered Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Rookwood team, to find places in the eleven for his four nephews. In vain Jimmy had protested; in vain he had



The Greyfriars' eleven arrived after dinner. Harry Wharton & Co., who had made a long charabane journey in order to play the fixture, were always welcome visitors to Rookwood, and they received a hearty greeting. (See next page.)

pointed out that Jack and Joe, and Algernon and Cuthbert, could hardly tell a cricket-bat from a maiden over. The fiat had gone forth, and it was decreed that the Housemaster's four nephews should take part in the cricket match against Greyfriars.

"Think what it means!" said Jimmy Silver, aghast. "I shall have to kick four fellows out of the team, to make way for those fearful duffers! Conroy and Van Ryn will have to stand down. So will Rawson and Lacy. It-it almost makes me weep!"

"Greyfriars will lick us hollow," said Lovell lugubriously. "Why, we shall only have half a team!"

The juniors exchanged moody glances. There was no way out of the predicament, that they could see. It would be no use appealing to George Bulkeley, captain of games. Mr. Manders was a greater power than Bulkeley. It was no use appealing to Mr. Dalton, the Housemaster of the Classical Side. Mr. Manders, by virtue of seniority, was a greater power than Mr. Dalton.

Small wonder that Jimmy Silver & Co. viewed the forthcoming match with deep dismay. How could they hope to beat Greyfriars, with four hopeless duffers in the team?

Somebody suggested that the team went on strike, and refused to play the match at all. But Jimmy Silver pointed out that this would be most unfair to the Greyfriars fellows, who were making a long charabane journey in order to play the fixture.

"We must bear it," said Jimmy, "though it's hard to grin. We shall be whacked to the wide, of course, but we'll at least put up a fight."

"Yes, rather!"

The Greyfriars eleven arrived after dinner. Harry Wharton & Co. were always welcome visitors to Rookwood, and they received a hearty greeting.

Mr. Manders' nephews turned out in their flannels. They seemed amused at Jimmy Silver's discomfiture. Jimmy found it difficult to speak a civil word to them. He suspected that they had begged their uncle to let them play with the sole object of helping Rookwood to lose, instead of win the match.

It was to be a single innings affair. Time would not permit of the teams having a couple of innings apiece.

Harry Wharton won the toss, and elected

to bat first.

It was a good wicket, and the Friars made the most of it. They scored runs at a merry pace, and they received valuable assistance in the field from Mr. Manders' nephews, who muffed catches galore, and were very slack in their fielding.

However, Jimmy Silver and Teddy Grace bowled really well, and wickets fell at

intervals

The Greyfriars total reached exactly 100. But for bad blunders in the field, they would have been skittled out for half that total.

Jimmy Silver looked very thoughtful

during the tea interval.

"There's just a chance that we shall pull it off, after all," he said. "I won't pretend it's a rosy chance; still, it's a chance. It means that seven of us—we can safely leave out those four duffers—have got to get a hundred and one runs between us."

"A tall order," said Lovell. "Still,

we'll do our best."

Rookwood started their formidable task

in the true sporting spirit.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell laid the foundations of a good score. They rattled up thirty runs before Lovell left, caught in the slips.

Tommy Dodd came in, and hit a couple of boundaries before being caught at third man.

Thirty-eight for two!

Newcome took up the running, and he gave Jimmy Silver valuable assistance before a fast ball from Hurree Singh whipped off his bails.

Fifty-five for three!

Tommy Doyle, eager to snatch a run where no run was, had his wicket thrown down by a smart return. Raby also failed to score.

Fifty-five for five!

Matters looked very black for Rookwood now. There was only Teddy Grace to come in; for Mr. Manders' four nephews were not expected to make a single run between them.

Jimmy Silver beckoned to the incoming

batsman.

"Keep your end up, Teddy," he said. "Leave the hitting to your Uncle James."

Teddy Grace followed out this injunction to the letter. He put a straight bat in front of everything.

The Greyfriars bowling was brilliant, and the fielding was almost superhuman in its smartness. But Teddy Grace was firm as a

rock

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver, who was now complete master of the attack, continued to pile up the runs. The faces of the spectators brightened considerably. There was still a faint hope that Rookwood would pull the game out of the fire.

But the partnership between Jimmy Silver and Teddy Grace was severed at last. Teddy planted his leg in front of a straight one, and a sharp "Huzzat?" went up from the eager fieldsmen.

The umpire's hand was raised, and Teddy Grace walked ruefully back to the pavilion.

Seventy-six for six!

Rookwood required 25 runs to give them the victory, and there were only four frabjous fatheads to go in, as Lovell expressed it.

"It's all over, bar shouting," said Newcome dismally. "Jimmy Silver would hit off the runs, if only he could get somebody to stay with him. But Manders' nephews will be skittled out like rabbits."

It looked as if Newcome's gloomy prophecy would be fulfilled.

The burly Joe lumbered to the wickets. He made a herculean swipe at his first ball, with the fixed intention of despatching it to the farthest limits of the horizon. But the best-laid schemes of mice and men—and cricket sloggers—sometimes go astray. Joe's bat swept through the air, and the next moment he was sadly surveying a wrecked wicket.

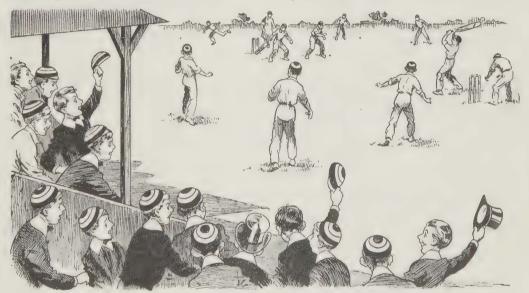
Cuthbert came in next. He spooned his first ball feebly into the air, and the wicket-keeper calmly put out one hand and caught it.

to be able to keep his end up when necessary. And it was necessary now.

To Jimmy Silver's surprise, the last man in did not fall an easy prey to the bowling. He faced it fearlessly, and played out the over with the utmost coolness and composure.

Now came Jimmy's turn. He hit a couple of boundaries, and he scored a single off the last ball of the over, which gave him the bowling again.

Ten more runs were added, by means of powerful driving; and Rookwood needed only six more to win.



The batsman, lunging forward with a smile, clumped the ball hard and true to the boundary. "Hurrah!" The air was rent with cheering. The miracle had happened, and Rookwood had snatched victory from the very jaws of defeat! (See next page.)

The wretched Algernon followed on, and was clean bowled.

Jimmy Silver groaned.

"It's all up!" he murmured. "There's only one more man to come in, and he might as well stay in the pavilion, for all the use he'll be!"

But that was where Jimmy Silver was wrong. He had never seen Jack play. Jack was the Tired Tim of the tribe of nephews. He spent all his spare time—and a good deal that was not spare—in slumber.

However, Jack knew enough about cricket

But Jimmy Silver no longer had the bowling. It was Mr. Manders' nephew who held the fate of Rookwood in his hands. He faced Hurree Singh with confidence, and drove the first ball through the covers. The batsmen crossed twice.

There was a roar from the pavilion.

" Well hit, sir!"

"You can get three there!"

But the batsmen were taking no risks. The Greyfriars fielding was too smart to allow of liberties being taken.

The next ball was a scorcher, and Jack did well to stop it dead. But the next delivery pitched a trifle short. The batsman, lunging forward with a smile, clumped it hard and true to the boundary.

" Hurrah!"

The air was rent with cheering. The miracle had happened, and Rookwood had snatched victory from the very jaws of defeat—thanks to Mr. Manders' nephew!

Jimmy Silver, his face radiant, pelted down the pitch, and grasped his partner warmly by the hand.

"Jolly well played!" he said. "I thought you were a dozey sort of merchant who didn't know one end of a bat from the

other; but I'm dashed if you haven't made the winning hit!"

"It was a fluke," murmured Jack. But Jimmy Silver knew better.

It was a merry party of cricketers that assembled in the end study that evening, to celebrate the sensational victory.

Mr. Manders' nephews were there, and Joe and Algernon and Cuthbert were forgiven their sorry exhibition. Jack's brilliance had made up for their shortcomings.

The celebration went with a rousing swing from start to finish; and there were radiant faces and beaming smiles in the Rookwood camp.

THE END

FOOTBALL GOSSIP AT ROOKWOOD

By GEORGE BULKELEY, Head of Games.

Rookwood football has had its "miracle matches," as well as cricket. In my own day, a match was played between our First Eleven and our rivals in the next county—St. Jim's. The "Saints" seemed determined to give us a thorough trouncing, for, playing irresistible football with the wind at their backs, they rattled in four goals in the first half. The game was too one-sided for words. Hampered by the wind, and bewildered by our opponents' dazzling manœuvres, we could not get our attack going; and it looked any odds on St. Jim's winning in a canter. On our own pitch,

For what happened in the second half, we had to thank the wind—now in our favour—and Neville of the Sixth. You know what happens when a player suddenly gets inspired? It is infectious! Well, old Neville, who had been right off his form in the first half, suddenly woke up. Five-footen of football fearlessness, he went through the St. Jim's defence like a knife through

cheese. Many of his shots were saved or charged down, but he found the net twice, and this gave new heart to us all. We girded up our loins, so to speak, and gave the St. Jim's defence no peace. I popped in another goal from Neville's pass, and then Neville dashed through on his own again, and brought the scores level—4—4.

With only ten minutes to go, both sides played up desperately. All seemed lost when Kildare, the St. Jim's skipper, scored with a powerful drive from long range; but in the closing minutes we again rallied, and two goals in swift succession settled the issue. Eleven goals in one game, and Rookwood claimed six! And we had been four down at half-time! Can you wonder that the crowd swarmed on to the pitch, and carried Neville shoulder-high to the dressing-room? And can you wonder that even the ranks of Tuscany—in other words, the ranks of St. Jim's-could not forbear to cheer? That great game will be an abiding memory!