

A vintage illustration of a baseball game. In the foreground, a batter in a white uniform and cap is swinging a bat. Behind him, a catcher in a brown chest protector and white uniform is crouching. Another player in a white uniform is visible behind the catcher. In the background, a large crowd of spectators is cheering, with some raising their hands. The scene is set on a baseball field with a dirt infield and a grassy outfield.

CLASSICS TO GO

WINNING HIS GAME

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

WINNING HIS GAME

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**“The ball, curving inward, met his bat fairly and screeched off
into short center”**

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THE ILLUSTRATIONS

"The ball, curving inward, met his bat fairly
and screeched off into short center"

Frontispiece

FACING
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"'You're a sneaky little bounder, that's what
you are!'"

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"'The canoes have gone!'"

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"Jimmy ... was rolling over on the platform
and Dud ... with him"

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CHAPTER I

DUD WONDERS

Jimmy Logan stood his skis in the corner behind the door and, tramping heavily to get the clinging snow from his shoes, climbed the first flight in Trow Hall slowly and then dragged wearied feet down the corridor to Number 19. Once inside the room, he said, "Hello," shied his cap onto his bed and sank exhaustedly in the nearest chair, stretching his legs across the rug and slumping down until the wet collar of his mackinaw came in contact with his ears. Whereupon he muttered, "Ugh!" and sat up another inch or two.

Across the room, one foot on the floor and the other doubled up beneath him on the windowseat, was Jimmy's roommate. His response to the greeting had been brief and delivered in a preoccupied voice, for Dudley Baker had a book open before him on the cushion and held a stained and battered baseball in his right hand. His attention was divided between book and ball and had no room for Jimmy. The latter's gaze presently came away from his shoes, which were trickling water to the rug, and fixed itself on Dudley. He had to sit up still higher in the chair to get an uninterrupted view of his chum, which proceeding elicited a protesting groan from him, and after he had attained it he instantly decided that it was not worth while and deeply regretted the exertion it had caused him. He promptly descended again on his spine, crossed his feet and sighed luxuriously.

The dollar clock on Dudley's chiffonier ticked briskly and loudly in the ensuing silence. Outside the windows tiny flakes of snow were falling. The shadows deepened in the room. In the corridor deliberate footsteps sounded and

suddenly the transom over the door showed yellow and an oblong of light appeared on the ceiling. Mr. Crump, the school janitor, was lighting the dormitories. Jimmy wished that his shoes were off, and his mackinaw, and the woolen socks, but as yet he wasn't equal to the task. When Mr. Crump's footsteps had died away on the stairs Jimmy broke the silence.

"What're you doing?" he asked uninterestedly. There was, however, no reply from the window-seat, possibly because Jimmy's tones had been too faint to reach there. After a moment Jimmy turned his head and stared across a pile of books on the study table at the three or four inches of Dudley's head that were visible. Then:

"*Dud!*" he bawled resentfully.

"Huh?"

"What are you doing, I asked you."

"Oh, me? Oh, just trying to dope out some of this stuff."

"What stuff?"

"Stuff about pitching. How to hold the ball, you know."

"Oh!" Jimmy subsided again and another period of silence followed. Then:

"You don't expect to play baseball for a while, do you?" he asked lazily. "You'd better study how to throw a snowball!" He chuckled faintly at his joke.

"It isn't so long now," responded Dud soberly. "They're going to call candidates the twenty-first."

"Gym work," grunted the other. "Take my advice and keep away from it. Don't go out for the team until it gets out of doors. Are you still thinking of trying for the school?"

"Of course."

Jimmy grunted. "You'll have a fine show, I don't think! Better try for the second, Dud."

"I don't expect to make it, but it's good practice, and maybe next year——"

"You'll stand more chance with the second, and have a lot more fun. The second's going to have a regular schedule this year; five or six games, maybe; going away for some of them, too."

"If I don't make the first, and I suppose I won't, of course, I'll try for the second," said Dud. "I asked Murtha this morning if he thought it would be all right to try for the first, and he said——"

"Guy Murtha said, 'Yes, indeed, Baker, we want all the candidates we can get!' That's what they always tell you, and then, when you get out there, they inform you gently but firmly that you won't do, and hadn't you better stay with your class team this year and try again next? What's the use? I like to play ball, Dud, but you don't catch me putting in a month's grind in the cage and then getting the G. B. as soon as we get outdoors. Me for the second—and safety."

"You're lazy," replied Dud, shutting his book and stowing the ball back of the pillows. "You could make the first this spring if you'd try for it. You ought to, too."

Jimmy shrugged. "Maybe so. But I'd rather have a sure place on the second, thanks. Gee, but I'm tired!"

"Skiing?"

"Yes; Pete Gordon and Kelly and Gus and I. We climbed up to the Observatory and then hiked half-way over to the Falls. It was piles of fun going down the mountain. Gus Weston took a header and turned over about forty-eleven times and then went into a snow bank head-first up to his waist. But we tried to do too much. My legs feel as if they'd never stop

aching! What have you been doing? Been in here all the afternoon? But, of course, you have. I forgot about your tooth. How is it? Any better?"

"Yes. I guess I caught a little cold in it. I wish that dentist chap would yank it out instead of practicing on it!" Dud turned the lights on and perched himself across a chair at the opposite side of the table, his arms on the back, and observed Jimmy in a thoughtful fashion. Jimmy grunted.

"Shoot," he said. "What's on your mind?"

"I—I've been wondering, Jimmy."

"Oh, gee!" Jimmy groaned deeply. "At it again, eh? Well, what is it this time, Dud? The other day you were worrying yourself thin because you were afraid you were costing your folks too much money, or something."

Dud smiled. "Not exactly worrying," he replied. "Just—just wondering."

"There isn't much difference, the way you do it. If I——"

"Not so much about how much I was costing them as whether they're going to get their money's worth, Jimmy. Sometimes I wonder whether I'm really doing any good here. Now you look at it this way——"

"I won't! I refuse! Besides, that's an old one. What's your latest worry?"

"It isn't a worry—exactly. I was only thinking that——" He paused. Then: "Oh, I guess it isn't anything, after all. Say, you'd better get out of those wet things, Jimmy."

"I'm going to just as soon as I have strength to move. But I want to hear your new—er—problem, Dud. Come across. 'Fess up to your Uncle Jimmy."

Dud hesitated, smiling a bit embarrassedly. He was a good-looking chap of fifteen, with clean-cut features, a

rather fair complexion and very bright blue eyes. He was small-boned and slim, and, since he had been doing a lot of growing the past twelve months, he looked a trifle “weedy.” In that respect he was a distinct contrast to his roommate, for James Townsend Logan was a stocky lad, wide of shoulder and broad of chest. Jimmy was sixteen, although only four months divided the two boys in age. Jimmy’s features were nondescript, but the result was pleasing. He wore his red-brown hair rather long—Dud said it was because he was too lazy to have it cut oftener than once every term—and had a short nose and a wide, humorous mouth and a very square chin. He was a member of the upper middle class, while Dud was a lower middler.

“I guess it’s sort of silly,” said Dud after a moment. “But I’ve been wondering”—Jimmy groaned again—“why I don’t know more fellows, Jimmy, why I don’t—don’t ‘mix’ better. I don’t believe I really care a whole lot——” He paused again. “Yes I do, too, though. I’d like to have fellows like me, Jimmy, as they do you, and ask me to do things and go places and—and all that. Of course, I know the trouble’s with me, all right, but—but what is it?”

“Oh, piffle, Dud! Fellows *do* like you.”

“Yes, about the way they like the steps in front of School Hall. That is, they don’t exactly *like* me; they just—just don’t *dislike* me. I guess I’d rather have them do that than not care a fig whether I’m alive or dead. I suppose this sounds silly, but——”

“Honest confession is good for the soul,” responded Jimmy lightly. “But I think you’re wrong about it, Dud. Or, anyway—now look here——”

“I suppose I’m just not cut out to be what you might call popular,” interrupted Dud thoughtfully. “Well, but still——”

“Shut up and let me talk! The trouble with you is that you don’t let fellows find out whether they can like you or not. You don’t—don’t ‘mix’—do you see? If you’d get into things more——”

“But that’s just it! How can I when I see that I’m not wanted?”

“That’s just imagination, Dud. You can’t expect fellows to fall all over themselves and hug you! You’ve got to show ‘em that you’re ready to be friends. You’ve got to make the start yourself. What do you do when someone says ‘Let’s do this or that’? You mutter something about having to dig Latin or math and sneak off. Fellows naturally think you don’t want to do the things they do. Now today, for instance ——”

“I couldn’t have gone, Jimmy, with this plaguey toothache!”

“Why, no, I guess you couldn’t. But, thunderation, Dud, if it isn’t a toothache it’s something else. You’ve always got some perfectly wonderful excuse for beating it about the time the fun begins. Not that you missed much this afternoon, for you didn’t, barring a lot of tired muscles, but you often do miss things. To be what you call a ‘mixer,’ Dud, you’ve got to ‘mix,’ and you don’t know the first thing about it. Fellows like you, all right, what they see of you, but you don’t give them a chance.”

Dud stared thoughtfully at the green shade before him. “Ye-yes, I suppose that’s true, Jimmy. But I don’t like to stick around when fellows are getting up things because I think that maybe they won’t want me in on it and that if I’m there they’ll think they have to ask me.”

“Huh! What if they do have to ask you? Let ‘em! Then when they see that you’re a regular feller they’ll ask you next time without having to.”

“But I wonder if I am.”

“Am what?” asked Jimmy ungrammatically.

“A ‘regular feller.’ Maybe I’m not. I wonder——”

Jimmy threw up his hands in despair. “Oh, gee, he’s at it again! Dud, what you want to do is stop wondering. You’re the finest little wonderer that ever came down the pike, all right, but you spend so much time at it that you don’t get anywhere. Now, you take my advice, old chap, and stop wondering whether fellows like you or don’t like you. Just get out and butt in a little. When you see a crowd walk right into the middle of it and find out whether it’s a fight or a frolic. And, whatever it is, take a hand. Now there’s some mighty good advice, Dud, take it from me. I didn’t know I had it in me! And let me tell you another thing, kid. If you expect to have a show for the first team you want to crawl out of your shell and rub shoulders with fellows. Get hunky with the first team crowd, do you see? Be—be more of a—well, more of a regular feller, like I said before. Don’t try too hard to be popular, though. Fellows get onto that and won’t stand for it. Just—just be natural!”

“I guess I’m being natural,” answered Dud, with a smile, “and that is where the trouble is. I guess I’ll have to wait until next year. A lower middle fellow feels sort of fresh if he tries to mix in with upper middle.”

“Piffle! Lots of your class are thick as thieves with upper middle chaps. Look at young Whatshisname—Stiles. He’s always traveling with upper middle—Ordway and Blake and that bunch.”

“Ned Stiles has more cheek than I have. Besides, I don’t think fellows like him particularly, Jimmy. He sort of toadies, doesn’t he?”

“He’s a perfect ass, if you ask me. But they seem to stand for him.”

“Well, but I don’t want to be ‘stood for’; I want fellows to—to want me.”

“All right. Give ‘em a chance then. You’re all right, Dud, only you’re shy. That’s what’s the matter with you, old chap, you’re just plain shy! Never thought of it before. Look here, now, I’ll tell you what you do. You forget all about your dear little self and get over being—being—gee, what’s the word I want? Being self-conscious! That’s it! That’s your trouble, self-consciousness.” Jimmy beamed approval at himself. “Best way to do it is to—to do it! Tell you what, we’ll make a start tonight, eh? Let’s go out and visit someone. Who do you know that you’d like to know better?”

“I’d like to know Hugh Ordway, for one,” said Dud hesitatingly. “But I guess he wouldn’t care about knowing me, and so——”

“Stow it! That’s just what you mustn’t do, do you see? You mustn’t ‘wonder’ whether a fellow wants to know you or not. You just take it for granted that he does. Say to yourself, ‘I’m a good feller, a regular feller. I’m as good as you are. Of course you want to know me. Why not?’ See the idea?”

Dud nodded doubtfully. “Still, Hugh Ordway’s a bit——”

“A bit what?” demanded Jimmy impatiently.

“I mean he’s awfully popular and has piles of friends and he wouldn’t be likely to—to want to know me.”

“Oh, piffle! Ordway’s just like any of us—except that he happens to be English and have a Lord or a Duke or something for a father. I don’t know him very well myself, but that’s just because he trains with the football crowd—Blake and Winslow and that bunch. But I know him plenty well enough to visit, and that’s just what we’ll do this evening, Dud.”

"Maybe we'd better leave it for some other night," replied Dud uneasily. "I've got a lot of lessons tonight and——"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Jimmy mirthlessly. "Where have I heard that before?" He pulled himself from his chair with a groan and pointed a stern finger at his chum. "You'll start right in with me this very evening, Dud, and be a regular feller! And no more punk excuses, either! I'm going to take you in hand, son, and when I get through with you you won't know yourself. Here, *stop that!*"

"What?" asked Dud startledly.

"You know what! You were beginning to wonder! I saw you! No more of that, understand? The first time I catch you wondering I'll—I'll take my belt to you!"

CHAPTER II

THE ENTERING WEDGE

If you have by any chance read a previous narrative of events at Grafton School entitled "Rivals for the Team" you are sufficiently acquainted with the scene of this story, and, also, with many of the characters. But since it is quite possible that you have never even heard of the former narrative, it devolves on the historian to introduce a certain amount of descriptive matter at about this stage, something he has as little taste for as have you. Descriptions are always tiresome, and so we'll have this as short as possible.

Grafton School, then, occupies a matter of ten acres a half-mile east of the town of that name and at the foot of the hill which is known as Mount Grafton. Like many another New England school, it is shaded by elms, boasts many fine expanses of velvety turf and, so to speak, laves its feet in a gently-flowing river. The buildings on the campus consist of three dormitories, the more venerable School Hall, the gymnasium and the Principal's residence, and of these all save the two latter stretch in a straight line across the middle of the three-acre expanse. The gymnasium is slightly back from the line and the Principal's cottage is a bit in advance, its vine-covered porch looking along the fronts of the other buildings and its rear windows peering down into Crumbie Street. School Hall is in the center. Trow comes next on the left, and then Lothrop. On the right of the older building stands Manning, which shelters the younger boys, and somewhat "around the corner" is the gymnasium.

Graveled walks lead across the campus, under spreading elm trees, to Crumbie Street on one side, to River Street on the other, to School Street straight in front. Beyond School

Street is the Green, a block-wide parallelogram on which, at the corner of School and River Streets, two smaller dormitories stand. These, Morris and Fuller, are converted dwellings of limited accommodations. The main walk from the steps of School Hall continues across the Green to Front Street, beyond which, descending gently to the Needham River, is Lothrop Field. An ornamental wall and gate commemorate the name of the giver. The Field House flanks the steps on the left and beyond lie the football gridirons, the baseball diamonds, the tennis courts and the blue-gray cinder track. The distant weather-stained building on the river bank is the boathouse.

Grafton School looks after slightly over two hundred boys between the ages of twelve and twenty. At the time of which I am writing, February of last year, the number was, I believe, exactly two hundred and ten, of which some thirty-five had attained to the senior class and about eighty were juniors, leaving the upper middle and lower middle classes to share the residue fairly equally. The faculty numbered twelve, beginning with Doctor Duncan, the Principal, and ending with Mrs. Fair, the matron. Doctor Duncan's full title is Charles William Duncan, A.M., Ph.D., but he is better known as "Charley"! There was—and doubtless are—also a Mrs. Duncan and a Miss Duncan, but they are not likely to enter into this narrative. So much then for our stage setting. I might keep on, but I fear you are weary, and I know I am!

Hugh Ordway roomed on the top floor of Lothrop, the newest and most luxurious of the dormitories, sharing the suite of study and two bedrooms with Bert Winslow. Hugh's father was English and his mother American, and, although Hugh had been born on the other side and had spent most of his sixteen years there, he declared himself to be half American. His full name was Hugh Oswald Brodwick Ordway, and in spite of the fact that by reason of his father being the Marquis of Lockely, Hugh had every right to the title of Earl

of Ordway, he was generally known at Grafton as “Hobo,” a nickname evolved from his initials. As he was a straight, well-built, clear-skinned, young chap with quiet brown eyes and an undeniable air of breeding, the nickname was amusingly incongruous if one stopped to consider it. But Hugh had been known as Hobo Ordway ever since fall, when his cleverness as a running halfback on the first football team had surprised and delighted the school, and nowadays the name was too familiar to excite any comment. Hugh’s particular friends were more likely to call him “Ighness,” however.

It was Hugh, alone in the study, who responded to the knock at the door shortly after supper that evening and who successfully disguised the surprise he felt when he recognized his visitors as Jimmy Logan and Dudley Baker. He made them welcome quite as heartily as though he had been expecting them all day, and Dud, who had hung back all the way up the three flights of slate stairs, was vastly relieved. The conversation skipped from one subject to another for the first few minutes, during which time Hugh, perched on the window-seat, leaving the easy-chairs to his guests, hugged his knees to his chin, piloted the conversation and secretly wondered at the visit.

You are not to suppose, however, that Hugh was the only one of the three at his ease. Such a supposition shows on your part a vast ignorance of Jimmy Logan. Jimmy was a stranger to embarrassment. Had Hugh been the President of the United States or the King of England or—well, “Home Run” Baker, Jimmy would have been just as splendidly at ease as he was this moment. He might have assumed a more dignified attitude in the Morris chair and his voice might have held a more respectful tone, but beyond that—no, not Jimmy! Just now Jimmy was humorously recounting his skiing adventures that afternoon and Hugh was chuckling over them. Dud smiled when Hugh laughed,

sitting rather stiffly in his chair, and tried his best to look animated and pleasant and only succeeded in looking anxious and uncomfortable. Jimmy did his best to get Dud to talk, but Dud's conversation consisted largely of "Yes" and "No" and Hugh secretly thought him a bit of a stick. Jimmy was wondering whether to withdraw as gracefully as possible before Dud created any worse impression when the door opened to admit a black-haired, dark-eyed fellow of seventeen who, with less command over his features than Hugh, looked frankly surprised when he saw who the visitors were. The surprise even extended to his voice as he greeted them.

"Hello, Jimmy," said Bert Winslow. "What are you doing up here? Haven't seen you around here for ages." He spoke to Dud then, hesitating a moment as though not certain of the latter's name. Dud, noting the fact, felt his embarrassment increase and wished that Jimmy would give the word to leave. But Jimmy had already abandoned thoughts of withdrawing. He liked Bert Winslow, just as most fellows did, and welcomed the chance to talk to him. Bert and Jimmy were both members of "Lit"—short for Literary Society—and only two evenings ago had been pitted against each other in one of the impromptu weekly debates and had struggled along nip and tuck until Jimmy, abandoning facts, had in a wild flow of rhetoric won the meeting. Bert alluded to it now as he tossed his cap through the open door of his bedroom.

"Jimmy, that was a fine lot of hot air you got off the other night," he said with a grin. "Didn't your folks ever teach you anything about the beauties of truthfulness?"

Jimmy laughed. "Sure, but I had to beat you somehow, Bert. Besides, what I said may be so for all I know!"

"Huh! You just said the first thing that came into that silly head of yours! Did you ever hear such a mess of rot as he sprang, Hugh?"

Hugh smiled. "It sounded all right! Some of the figures were corking. You must have a wonderful memory, Logan!"

"Memory!" snorted Bert, seating himself beside Hugh on the window-seat. "There wasn't a figure that was right! I looked it up afterwards. Did you hear him, Baker? Oh, no, you're Forum, aren't you?"

"Yes," replied Dud. He tried very hard to follow that up with something brilliant or amusing in regard to Jimmy's debating, but couldn't think of anything, possibly because Bert's tone had held some of the careless contempt with which members of a society spoke of its rival, and Dud wished just for the moment that he, too, was "Lit."

Perhaps Hugh thought that his chum had verged on discourtesy, for he observed quickly: "They tell me you chaps have some awfully good talkers in Forum, Baker."

Dud agreed. "I guess Joe Leslie is our best; he and Guy Murtha."

"Murtha's better than Joe, I think," said Jimmy. "Anyway, he did a lot better last year in the debate with Mount Morris."

"Joe's a wonder at hammering home facts," said Bert. "Guy's better at the eloquence stuff, though. Speaking of Guy, Hugh, reminds me that I told him you were going to try for the outfield this spring and he said he was mighty glad because if you could get on the base he was certain you could get around."

"Oh, but I say, Bert, I don't know that I shall! Try for baseball, I mean."

"Of course you will!"

"But I don't know much about it. You say it's quite different from cricket, eh?"

"Quite, 'lghness! You've seen baseball played, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes, once or twice, but——"

"I should think a fair cricket player would easily get the hang of baseball," said Jimmy. "I guess it's as hard to catch a cricket ball as a baseball, isn't it? I suppose you're a rattling good cricket player, Ordway."

"Oh, no, really I'm not," exclaimed Hugh. "I've played a bit at it, of course. You chaps bowl—I mean pitch to the batters so like thunder, don't you? I fancy I'll be scared to stand up there, eh?"

"You might if Gus Weston was pitching," laughed Bert. "You going to play this year, Jimmy?"

"Oh, I guess so. What would the dear old second do without me?"

"Aren't you trying for the first, though? You're as good a fielder as Parker, I guess."

"I may. The fact is, Bert, I'm sort of used to the dear old second. It would be like leaving home to go to the first. Still, I may decide to break home ties and meet you fellows there."

"I fancy you're not likely to meet me there," said Hugh. "I'll be an awful dub if I try it, I know. Do you play, Baker?"

"A little," answered Dud.

"Dud's the coming Mathewson," said Jimmy. "Got to watch him, we have. Some twirler!"

"Really?" asked Bert, evidently not much impressed. "That's fine, Baker. The second rather needed pitchers last spring."

“He’s going out for the first,” said Jimmy. “Dud’s like me, you know. When Duty calls——” Jimmy smiled eloquently.

“I say, though, Logan, who is this Johnnie you spoke of? Mathews, wasn’t it?”

“Not Johnnie; Christopher,” replied Jimmy gravely. “I referred to Mr. Christopher Mathewson, better known as ‘Matty,’ the Dean of American Pitchers. Dud and ‘Matty’ are as thick as thieves; that is, Dud is! Dud reads everything ‘Matty’ writes and can tell you off-hand how many games ‘Matty’ pitched last year and all the other years, and how many he won, and what his averages are and all the rest of it. He has a gallery of Mathewson pictures and he’s the proud possessor of a ball that Mathewson used in a game with Philadelphia back in 1760 or thereabouts. I don’t know how he got that ball, but I suspect that he swiped it.”

“It was given to me,” said Dud defensively. Then he added, embarrassed: “You mustn’t mind what Jimmy says. He talks a lot of nonsense.”

“I say, though,” exclaimed Hugh, “I do hope you get on the first, Baker. It must be a lot of fun to do the pitching, eh? More fun than fielding, I fancy.”

“Have you pitched much?” inquired Bert politely.

“I’ve been trying to for a couple of years,” answered Dud. “I don’t suppose I’ll make the first this year, of course, but Murtha said he’d be glad to have me try, and so——”

“You must make allowances for his modesty,” said Jimmy. “He’s really rather a shark at it. He can tell you just how to pitch any ball ever discovered, from a straight one to a ‘floater.’”

“Question is, I guess,” Bert laughed, “whether he can *pitch* ‘em. I know *how* to pitch a ‘knuckle ball,’ but I can’t do

it. I remember now, Baker, you pitched some on the second last year, didn't you?"

"Only three games, or parts of them, Winslow. I dare say I won't be good enough this year, but—I thought I'd try."

"Of course," said Bert heartily. "Nothing like trying. The trouble is, though, you've got some good ones to stack up against, eh? There's Nate Leddy and Ben Myatt——"

"And Gus Weston," observed Jimmy gravely.

Bert smiled. "Just the same, Gus has pitched some good games for us. But isn't he a wonder when he goes up?"

Jimmy chuckled. "Gus Weston can go up quicker and higher than any fellow I ever saw," he said. "And when he *is* wild——" He ended with an impressive whistle.

"He looked pretty promising last spring," continued Bert. "Remember the game he pitched against Middleboro? They only got six hits off him, I think."

"Yes, and Kelly is another chap that is likely to make good this year," said Jimmy. "Oh, we're pretty well off for twirlers, but you wait until Dud gets going. And speaking of going, Dud, what do you say if we do a little of it?"

"Don't rush off," said Bert. "Well, come around again, Jimmy."

Probably the invitation was meant to include Dud, but Hugh thought that Dud might not interpret it so and added cordially, "Yes, do, fellows!"

On the way downstairs Jimmy said: "Well, we got out of that pretty well, Dud. I thought for a while you were going to spoil everything by monopolizing the conversation the way you did, but——"

"I don't seem to know what to talk about," said Dud ruefully. "I guess Ordway thought me an awful ass."