

BF-735

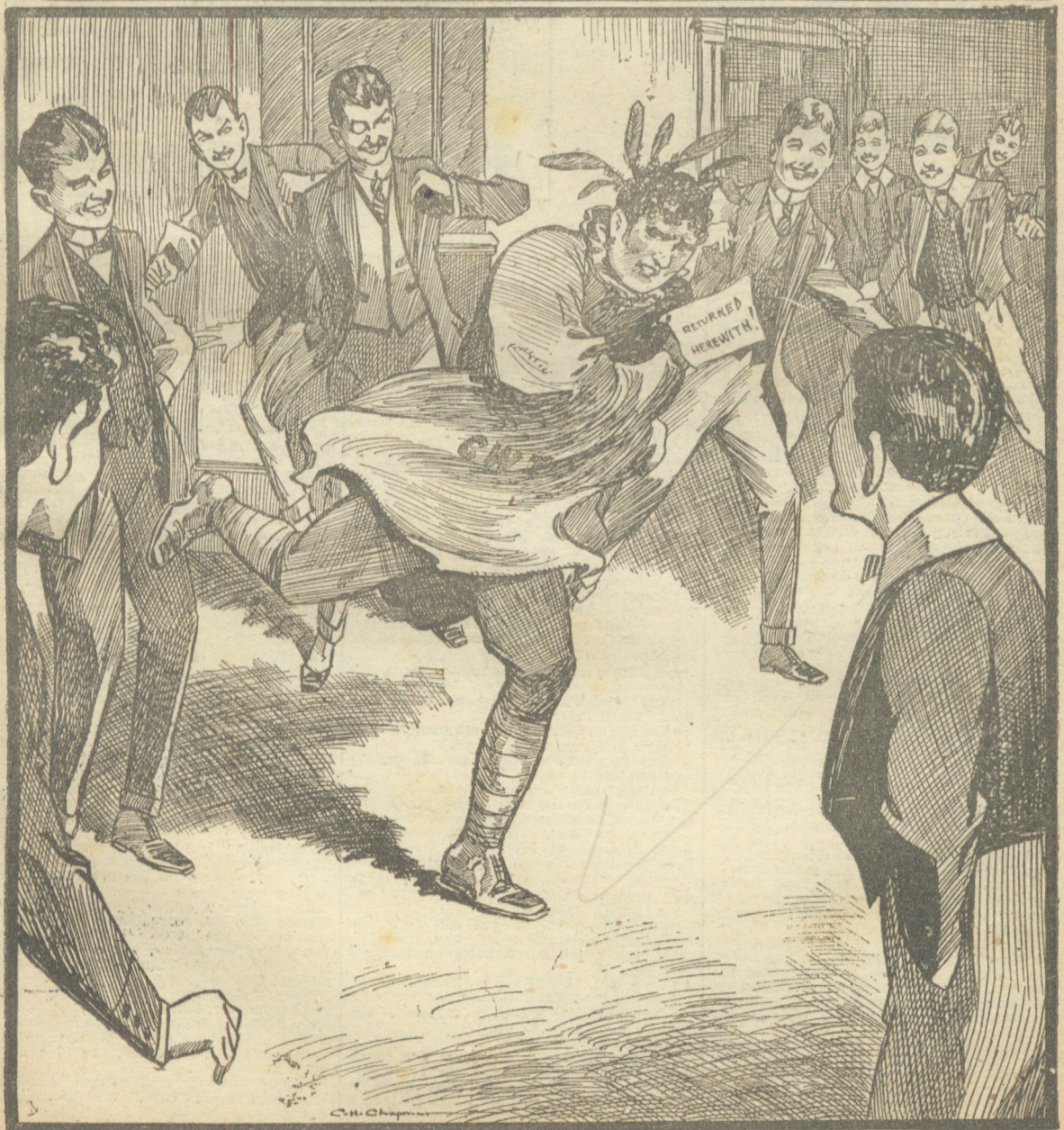
LONG STORIES OF GREYFRIARS, ROOKWOOD, AND ST. JIM'S.

The Penny ^{1 1/2} Popular

Week Ending
November 8th, 1919.

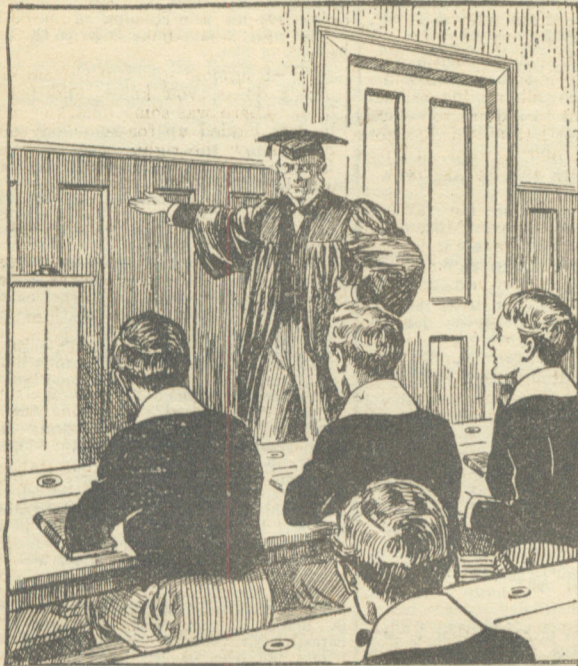
No. 42.
New Series.

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & CO.—JIMMY SILVER & CO.—TOM MERRY & CO.



WIBLEY IN THE WARS!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

All in Coventry.

BULKELEY, the captain of Rookwood, spotted Smythe of the Shell in the passage, and beckoned to him.

"Smythe!"

Smythe came reluctantly.

Smythe of the Shell did not like being called up like a fag. Adolphus Smythe was a great personage in the Shell, and he really thought that Bulkeley might have known better. Bulkeley, the captain of the school, seemed somehow quite oblivious of the greatness of Adolphus. He beckoned to him as he might have beckoned to an inky-fingered fag of the Second Form.

"Yes, Bulkeley?" said Smythe as sullenly as he dared.

"Tell Silver I want him."

Smythe scowled.

"Silver of the Fourth?"

"Yes."

"I—I say, Bulkeley—" stammered Smythe.

"Well, why don't you go?"

Smythe did not quite like the look in Bulkeley's eye, but he stood his ground. He did not intend to go upon that errand to Jimmy Silver's study if he could help it.

"I—I—I say, Bulkeley, I can't, you know. Silver's in Coventry—nobody's speaking to him, you know. The cad's been cut by the whole school."

Bulkeley nodded.

"Yes, I've noticed that," he remarked.

"What's the trouble?"

"He's acted like a rotten rotter!" said Smythe. "Everybody's disgusted with him, by gad!"

"But what's he done?"

"Everythin' that he shouldn't," explained Smythe. "He's a cheeky young cad, you know, and his pals are cheeky young cads, and we're givin' 'em a lesson. I really can't speak to him, you know. He's in Coventry."

Bulkeley's ashplant slid from under his arm into his hand.

Smythe of the Shell eyed it uneasily.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—NO 42.

"Do you want a hiding, Smythe?" asked the captain of Rookwood pleasantly.

"N-n-unno, Bulkeley."

"Then go and tell Silver to come to my study."

Bulkeley stepped back into his study, and Smythe stood in the passage, his hands clenched and his eyes gleaming.

He was greatly inclined to defy the authority of the prefect. Jimmy Silver & Co. were in Coventry, and Smythe wasn't going to speak to any of them—not if he knew it. But—there was a big "but"—Bulkeley's ashplant was not to be argued with. In the Shell the dandy of Rookwood was monarch of all he surveyed, but Bulkeley would have thought nothing of licking him like any fag.

Smythe decided to obey orders. He took his way towards the Fourth Form studies in a bad temper.

He reached the end study—the famous apartment which was the headquarters of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Fistical Four of the Fourth. He did not trouble to knock at the door; he kicked it open, and glared into the study.

The Fistical Four were all at home.

For fellows who were sent to Coventry by all the Lower School, Jimmy Silver & Co. looked pretty cheerful.

They were having tea in the end study—a rather late tea—having just come in from footer practice. Oswald of the Fourth, the new boy, was having tea with them. The five juniors were chatting cheerily when Smythe of the Shell looked in.

Jimmy Silver stared at the dandy of the Shell. Lovell and Raby and Newcome, his chums, stared too. They had not expected a visit from their chief enemy, the leader of the movement against them in the Lower School at Rookwood.

"Silver!" rapped out Smythe.

Jimmy Silver did not answer. He poured out tea.

"Another cup, Oswald?" he inquired.

"Yes, thanks," said Oswald.

"Sam's here," remarked Lovell, pushing forward his cup. "I wonder what

that image is blinking into our study for? Did you ever see a face like that?"

"Never!" said Raby. "Never, excepting a gargoyle!"

Smythe scowled furiously.

"Silver!" he roared. "Bulkeley wants you!"

"Sugar, Oswald?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes," said Oswald, laughing.

"Bulkeley wants you in his study, you young cad!" howled Smythe. "Don't think I've come here to speak to you! I've just brought Bulkeley's message, that's all!"

"Pass the milk over to Oswald, Lovell."

"Here you are, Oswald."

"Anybody say cake?" asked Newcome.

"Cake!"

Smythe of the Shell clenched his hands. It was bad enough for so dignified a person as Adolphus to be sent on a message like a fag to fellows who were in the cold shades of Coventry. But to be treated like this was a little too much. The Fistical Four and their guest ignored his presence and his remarks.

"I suppose you think that's awfully clever, you young sweeps?" said Smythe bitterly.

"They've forgotten to put the currants in this cake," said Raby.

"I've found one," said Jimmy Silver.

Smythe glared at them. Jimmy Silver & Co. being sent to Coventry by the Rookwood juniors, they had retorted by the novel idea of sending the Shell and the Fourth to Coventry in their turn, so they could not speak to Smythe. He and the rest of the Lower School were all in Coventry so far as the Fistical Four were concerned.

It was rather an original idea, and just like Jimmy Silver. Jimmy Silver was famous for striking ideas.

"This tea's too jolly weak!" said Jimmy Silver. "I think I'll chuck this lot away and make some more."

Jimmy Silver picked up his teacup and "chucked" his tea away. It was certainly a slovenly proceeding to empty a

Standing BY THE Outcast!

A Magnificent Long
Complete Story of
JIMMY SILVER &
Co., the Chums of
. . . Rookwood. . .

By . . .

OWEN CONQUE ST.

full teacup by slinging its contents through the doorway into the passage. Jimmy Silver was not accustomed to emptying his teacup in that manner. Perhaps he did it this time because Smythe of the Shell was in the doorway. Splash!

The steaming contents of the teacup smote Adolphus just under the chin.

Smythe of the Shell staggered back with a gasping howl.

"Wow!"

"Now we'll make some more tea," said Jimmy Silver, without even a glance at Adolphus Smythe.

His companions chuckled irresistibly as Jimmy Silver rose and jammed the kettle on the fire.

Smythe's face was a study. His face, his necktie, and his elegant waistcoat were streaming with tea.

"You—you—you young villain!" yelled Smythe.

"Where's the tea-caddy?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smythe gave a whoop of wrath, and rushed into the study. Adolphus was not a fighting-man as a rule, but there were limits. He made a bound like a tiger at Jimmy Silver.

"You young cad, I'll smash you!" roared Smythe.

The chums of the Fourth were on their feet at once. But Jimmy Silver did not need any assistance. He closed with Adolphus, and in a twinkling Adolphus was on his back on the floor, descending there with a heavy bump. Jimmy Silver picked up the kettle again and proceeded to pour the water over Adolphus. Fortunately it was barely warm.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth-Formers shrieked as the stream descended upon the unfortunate Smythe.

Smythe gasped and spluttered, and wriggled away, and made a wild dive for the door, already repenting his rash entry into the study. He was drenched by the time he reached the door and escaped into the passage. He paused there for a second to shake a furious fist at the study, and bolted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Curious that that fellow can't understand that he's in Coventry, and we can't speak to him!" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better go to Bulkeley, all the same," grinned Lovell.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Right-ho! We haven't sent Bulkeley to Coventry yet—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Jimmy Silver left the study to obey the Rookwood captain's summons—following a wet trail left in the passage by the drenched Adolphus.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Loyal Jimmy.

JIMMY SILVER presented himself cheerfully in Bulkeley's study.

The captain of Rookwood wore a thoughtful frown. He fixed his eyes upon Jimmy Silver with a peculiar expression. Jimmy stood by the table, quite meek and modest, looking as though butter or cream would not melt in his mouth, but inwardly wondering what was "up," and which of his many delinquencies had happened to reach the ears of the great man of the Sixth.

"You sent for me, Bulkeley?" said Silver meekly.

"Yes, I want to speak to you."

"Nothing wrong?" ventured Jimmy.

"I've not sent for you to lick you, if that's what you mean."

"Oh, good!" said Jimmy Silver, in great relief. "All serene! Only the pleasure of a little conversation—what!"

"I've had my eye on you for some days," said Bulkeley, unheeding Jimmy Silver's cheery remark. "What's up with you young duffers lately?"

"Up!" repeated Jimmy vaguely.

"Yes. There's some nonsense going on, and I want to get to the bottom of it. You fags are all at loggerheads. Now, I don't want to inquire too closely into fag affairs, but I think this has gone on long enough, and I want to know what's the matter, and set it right, if possible. See?"

Jimmy Silver nodded. He saw! It was just like old Bulkeley. Most of the Sixth were loftily and serenely indifferent to what went on in the ranks of the Fourth, and probably would not have noticed if a junior had been sent to Coventry for terms on end. But old Bulkeley took a keen interest in all the youngsters who were under his authority; and though he seldom or never interfered, he had often helped to compose little disputes by a kindly and timely word of advice.

"It seems that you and your friends have been sent to Coventry by the juniors, and it's been going on for a week or more," continued Bulkeley.

"Well, in a way," assented Jimmy Silver. "The fact is, we've sent the Shell and the Fourth to Coventry, and we're not speaking to them."

Bulkeley stared.

"Oh!" he said, after a pause. "That's it, is it?"

"Yes, that's it."

"And what's it all about?"

Jimmy Silver hesitated.

"Well, they're duffers!" he said.

"I've heard a good deal of chatter," said Bulkeley. "It seems that there's been a set-to against the new kid, Oswald, and we've taken his part."

"Well, yes."

"And your friends are backing you up?"

"Yes."

"What has Oswald done?"

"Nothing."

"I mean what is wrong with him?"

"Nothing. He's really a decent chap."

"Then why are all the juniors down on him?"

Jimmy Silver was silent.

"Now, I want to get at the facts of this matter, Silver," said Bulkeley quietly. "It's getting serious, and the masters will begin to take notice of it soon. You needn't mind telling me what there is against the new kid. I can learn it easily enough by inquiring."

"I—I suppose so. Well, he's a good sort," said Jimmy. "But there is something against him. I suppose any of the chaps would tell you if you asked them—Smythe would be glad to. The fact is, he was at Minhurst before he came here—that's a school in Yorkshire. Well, Smythe happens to have a brother at Minhurst, and he wrote to Smythe that Oswald had been sacked from there."

"Expelled?"

"Yes."

"Is it true?"

"Well, yes," said Jimmy reluctantly. "Oswald admits it."

Bulkeley pursed his lips.

"What was he sacked for?"

"He—he was accused of rotten things—breaking bounds at night, and pub-haunting, and that kind of thing," said Jimmy. "But I know there was some mistake, and so I'm sticking to him."

"How do you know there was a mistake?"

"Well, I know a decent chap when I see one, you know. Besides, he's been here for weeks now, and he's done nothing of that kind here. There isn't a more decent chap in the school. A leopard can't change his girdle spots, you

know. If he was that kind of rotter at Minhurst, he would be the same kind of rotter here. But he isn't."

"I suppose the Head of Minhurst knew what he was about when he sacked him?"

"I—I suppose so. But Oswald says he didn't do it, you know, and I believe him. There was some mistake. I fancy he was hauled up for somebody else. I don't know the rights of it, and Oswald is very close about it; but I know he's all right. But the fellows think it's a check of him to come here after being sacked from his own school; and they think he must have deceived the Head somehow, or he wouldn't have been let into Rookwood. So they're down on him."

"And you're standing by him?"

"Yes, rather! I'm not going to go back on him, when I know he's all right. My pals think the same as I do. They didn't at first, but I brought 'em round."

Bulkeley looked very thoughtful. "It's nonsense about Oswald having deceived the Head," he said. "Dr. Chisholm must know the circumstances—he would know all about the fellow before he was admitted here. He must have seen some reason to give Oswald a new chance at Rookwood."

"Just what I think," said Jimmy Silver. "But Smythe and the rest don't think so. They won't have Oswald at any price, so they've sent him to Coventry—and us, too, because we stand by him. So we've sent the whole crowd of 'em to Coventry, on our side, and—

and there we are."

Bulkeley smiled.

"I see—Don Quixote of the Fourth!" he remarked.

"I don't quite know about that; but I think it's the only decent thing," said Jimmy Silver. "I dare say the fellows will come round in time. If they don't, they can go and eat coke!"

"It's a queer business," said Bulkeley. "Don't you find that this state of affairs interferes with the football?"

"Yes," said Jimmy ruefully. "It means that the matches will be played by a Modern side, and, of course, that means defeat. We've got to stand out of the junior team while this rot goes on, and that leaves only one or two Classics in the eleven. But it can't be helped. We're not going to throw Oswald over."

Bulkeley nodded, and the interview being at an end, Jimmy Silver quitted the study. The captain of Rookwood was left in a very thoughtful mood. Jimmy Silver returned to his own quarters to finish his tea.

"What did Bulkeley want?" demanded four voices as he came in.

"It was about Oswald."

"About me?" said Oswald, colouring.

"Yes; it dawned on his mighty brain that there's something going on in the Fourth, and he wanted the whole story. He thinks that Dr. Chisholm must have known all about you before you came here, Oswald."

"He did," said Oswald. "My father told him all about it, of course. I shouldn't be likely to wedge in under false pretences."

"The other fellows won't believe that," said Lovell with a shake of the head. "What the dickens did you get sacked for, you young duffer? While this rot goes on, we're shoved out of the football."

"I'm sorry," said Oswald, his flush deepening. "I—I shouldn't mind if you dropped me, you know. I've no right to expect—"

"Oh, rot!" said Jimmy Silver. "We're sticking to you until the fellows come round. But it's rotten, there's no mistake about that. The St. Jim's match is coming off soon, and it will

mean a licking if we're not in the team. Tommy Dodd is ratty about it, and so am I. But it can't be helped. Pass the jam."

Jimmy Silver finished his tea quite cheerfully. It was a worry about the football, and the attitude of the Fourth was a worry, too; but Jimmy Silver seldom or ever allowed worries of any sort to affect his spirits. Whatever might happen, Jimmy Silver's motto was "Keep smiling!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A One-sided Conversation.

"COME on!" said Tommy Dodd. "Won't be any use," said Tommy Cook.

"Sure, they won't even spake to us!" said Tommy Doyle. "The silly gosscoons have sent the whole school to Coventry, you know."

"Bow-wow! Come on!"

Tommy Dodd was looking very determined. When Tommy Dodd was determined, he always had his way. Tommy Dodd's word was law on the Modern side at Rookwood, so far as the juniors were concerned.

The three Tommies crossed over to the Classic side. They were going to see the Fistical Four—on business!

Cook and Doyle looked very doubtful. But Tommy Dodd was in a grim humour. Tommy Dodd was now junior football captain, and the well-being of the junior football team came before everything else with Tommy Dodd.

Plenty of fellows on the Modern side advised him to leave the Classical four to stew in their own juice, as they elegantly expressed it. They advised him to make up a School eleven wholly of Moderns. They carried their generosity so far as to offer their own services to fill the places left vacant by the Classical fellows who were in Coventry.

But Tommy Dodd wasn't taking any.

He was a patriotic Modern, but he wanted to play a winning team, and so he needed players like Jimmy Silver and Lovell, and he didn't intend to leave them out when he took his men over to St. Jim's to play Tom Merry & Co.

But it was a difficult position. The Fistical Four could not be let out of Coventry, so to speak, for the occasion of the match, and then sent to Coventry again. They weren't likely to play on those conditions. But Tommy Dodd's idea was that it had to be arranged somehow.

So the three Tommies presented themselves at the end study in the junior passage on the Classical side.

It was a couple of days since Smythe's visit there, and during that time the Fistical Four and their new chum Oswald had languished in the shades of Coventry, without, however, seeming much depressed by it. Indeed, they seemed to flourish in Coventry.

It was evening, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were at work on their preparation. They did not suspend their work as the three Tommies looked in. They appeared oblivious to the existence of the three Tommies.

Tommy Dodd frowned at them.

"Busy?" he asked.

"Pass the dick, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver.

"I've come about the footer," roared Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver calmly opened the dictionary and sought for the word he was in need of.

"You know we're playing St. Jim's next week," said Tommy Dodd. "Now, it would serve you Classic worms right if I left you out of the eleven. But I want Silver to play."

Having found his word, Jimmy Silver went on with his work.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—NO 42

The three Moderns looked at one another with exasperated expressions. The Fistical Four seemed stone deaf.

"Do you hear me?" bellowed Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver looked up with a pained expression.

He did not reply, but he rose to his feet, took a stump of chalk, and chalked on the looking-glass, by way of answer:

"CAN'T TALK TO YOU!"

"Why not?" demanded Tommy Dodd angrily.

Jimmy Silver wrote again:

"YOU'RE IN COVENTRY!"

Tommy Dodd gave an expressive snort.

"How long are you going to keep this rot up?" he demanded.

No reply.

"Do you hear me, Jimmy Silver?"

Silence

"Are you deaf too, Lovell?"

Lovell's pen scratched away. It was the only sound that came from him. The Fistical Four were very grave and serious, and very much in earnest. The three Tommies might have been three flies buzzing away in the doorway for all the regard they received from the Classical quartette.

"Look here, I'm fed up with this!" yelled Tommy Dodd. "I want to know whether you are going to play next Saturday. If you are, you've got to practise with the team."

Frozen silence.

Tommy Dodd clenched his hands. He was inclined to commit assault and battery upon the spot. That would certainly have been an effectual way of breaking the icy silence in the end study. But it would not have secured the services of the Fistical Four for the junior team.

"I tell you I've had enough of it!" said Tommy Dodd. "We're willing to let you out of Coventry. You'd never have been sent there if you hadn't been silly, obstinate asses. We'll let the whole matter drop."

Jimmy Silver chalked on the glass again:

"NOW YOU'RE TALKING!"

"Well, is it a go?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

The chalk chalked again:

"OSWALD TOO?"

"No!" roared Tommy Dodd. "Oswald's a rank outsider, and you know it! Wasn't he kicked out of his own school for disgracing it? What right has he to come here and disgrace Rookwood too? We're not going to take any notice of him. You know you can't expect it. If you've got a taste for blackguards, we haven't!"

Again Jimmy Silver had recourse to the chalk:

"THEN IT'S NO GO!"

Tommy Dodd gave a snort like an infuriated war-horse.

"You thumping ass! You silly Classical chump! I've a jolly good mind to wade in and wipe up the study with you!"

Jimmy Silver smiled, and chalked:

"WADE IN!"

Tommy Dodd clenched his hands. "We're willing to be reasonable!" he howled. "You can talk to your pet pub-haunter till you're black in the face. Don't ask us to talk to him, that's all.

We're not going to swallow him. That's reasonable. And I can jolly well tell you if you don't do the right thing you'll jolly well be ragged!"

"RATS!"

chalked Jimmy Silver.

"Sure, we'll call a meeting to deal wid ye!" said Tommy Doyle.

"We'll scrag him, and make him clear out of Rookwood!" said Cook.

"You hear that?" roared Tommy Dodd.

The chalk chalked once more.

"BOW-WOW!"

That was too much for Tommy Dodd. His temper was already at breaking-point. He made a rush at Jimmy Silver. Cook and Doyle rushed in after him.

Like one man the Fistical Four rose to the occasion.

Four Classics piled upon three Moderns, and three Moderns went flying into the passage, where they landed with three heavy and painful bumps.

"Yow!"

"Ow!"

"Wow!"

Jimmy Silver chalked on the door and slammed it. Tommy Dodd & Co. picked themselves up, gasping, and blinked at the door. On it appeared the single word, in chalked letters:

"GOOD-BYE!"

"Come on!" gasped Tommy Dodd, with concentrated fury. "We'll hold a meeting, and get the whole Form to deal with the bounders. Come on!"

The three Tommies limped away, breathing fury. In the end study Jimmy Silver & Co. went on cheerfully with their preparation.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Order of the Boot.

THE junior Common-room was crowded.

Nearly all the Fourth and the Shell were there, Classical and Modern Sides being equally represented.

For once, Classics and Moderns met without a row.

They were at one for once.

All the junior footballers were angry, all the fellows who were down on Oswald were furious, and all the enemies of Jimmy Silver crowded to the meeting, glad of a chance to score against him. Smythe & Co. came along in great force. The "Giddy Goats" of Rookwood were keen for a chance of scoring off the end study.

It was felt on all sides that the present state of affairs couldn't go on.

As a rule, sending a fellow to Coventry was considered a heavy punishment, and the unlucky sufferer was wont to take it very seriously and sadly. But that irrepressible fellow Silver actually seemed to be enjoying it. Instead of being properly crushed, beaten, defeated, reduced to reason, and utterly downhearted, he had had the unparalleled nerve to retort by sending the Lower School to Coventry in his turn. And it was not merely "gas"; he was keeping it up. Such unheard-of cheek could not possibly be tolerated.

Every fellow who had a down on Jimmy Silver was enraged, and the fellows who really liked him—the great majority—felt that the cheeky bounder ought to be brought to reason. If only for his own sake, he had to be brought to reason. Only Jimmy Silver could possibly have thought of sending the



The raggers, with Oswald in their midst, reached the fountain. "Duck him!" Oswald was swept into the air. "Stop!" It was the voice of the Head. With fluttering gown and angry brow, Dr. Chisholm swept down upon the angry crowd. (See page 13.)

junior Forms to Coventry, and Jimmy Silver had to be taught a lesson.

Tommy Dodd mounted upon a chair to address the excited meeting. So did Smythe of the Shell. Smythe of the Shell felt that it was up to him to take the lead. But the juniors were in no humour to listen to Adolphus' drawing voice.

"Shut'up, Smythe!" shouted Tommy Cook.

Smythe turned his eyeglass for a moment upon Cook, but did not deign to reply.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I've called this meetin'—"

"No, you haven't!" roared Tommy Dodd. "I've called this meeting. And it's a meeting, not a meetin', you stuttering ass!"

"I've called this meetin'—"

"Knock him over!"

"Shut up!"

"Shove that duffer over, somebody!"

Jones minor kicked away the legs of Adolphus' chair, and the great Adolphus came to the floor with a bump and a yell.

"Go it, Tommy Dodd!" shouted a score of voices—Classical as well as Modern.

Tommy Dodd went it.

"Look here, you fellows, this rotten state of things is sickening! We want those silly idiots in the footer team."

"Hear, hear!"

"They're standing out against the whole school for the sake of a fellow who was kicked out of his show—"

"Shame!"

"They're good sorts enough, and it's only pigheadedness. They've got to be taught that they can't treat the Fourth like this."

"Hear, hear!"

"As for that worm Oswald, he's got to go!"

Loud applause.

"I'm not the chap to be down on any fellow without reason," pursued Tommy Dodd. "But you all know how it is. That fellow Oswald was kicked out of Minhurst in disgrace. He had the nerve to come here. Sooner or later he'll break out and disgrace us, too. Not that I want to judge anybody; but we can't swallow a blackguard like that."

"Never!"

"He ought to have cleared off when he was found out. Is Rookwood a refuge for seedy blackguards who're kicked out of their own school?"

"Shame!"

"He must have taken in the Head. It stands to reason that Dr. Chisholm wouldn't have let him in if he'd known the facts. Now, we can't sneak to the Head about him, rotter as he is. But we're not going to stand him here."

"Bravo!"

"He ain't satisfied with sneaking into

our school and disgracing us with his beastly presence here, but he's got four of our best footballers under his rotten influence somehow, and set them against us. Shows he's an awfully deep beast—in fact, a dangerous character."

"Rotter!"

"Outsider!"

"Worm!"

"Yaas, a regular blackguard," said Smythe. "A dangerous beast, you know. Maybe leadin' them into his own goin's on."

Smythe was determined to have something to say, even if he was not allowed to make a speech.

"So I put it to this meeting," said Tommy Dodd. "We take as our motto—'O.M.G.'"

"What the thunder does that mean?" demanded Hooker.

"Oswald must go."

Roars of applause.

"It's sickening!" said Tommy Dodd. "We're not standing it! It's a disgrace to have him here, considering what he's done. Rookwood isn't going to take in a rotter like that! That fathead Silver says there was some mistake, and Oswald must have been innocent all the time. No blessed evidence, you know. Must be so because Jimmy Silver thinks it is so, and we've got to think the same."

"No fear!"

"Besides, if he's got anything to say for himself, why doesn't he say it? Smythe's brother at Minhurst says he

was caught outside his school at midnight. He hasn't denied that. If he was innocent of what they accused him of, what was he doing outside his school in the middle of the night? He hasn't said a word about it—not a blessed word!"

"It's clear as daylight," chipped in Adolphus. "My minor at Minhurst has given me the whole story. They'd known for a long time that a Minhurst chap was hauntin' pubs and dealin' with bookies, and goin' out at night, and had been seen squiffy, too—seen staggerin'—and they set a watch to catch him, and caught Oswald. He hadn't a word to say. My brother says he never even opened his lips. All the fellows there were down on him. Even his own pal, the headmaster's son, hadn't a word to say for him, though they'd always been awfully pally. Dr. Frye just booted him out, and serve him right!"

"Nothing could be clearer than that," said Tommy Dodd. "Now, I put it to the meeting—Oswald must go!"

"Oswald must go!" chorused the juniors.

"Hands up for O.M.G.!" Every hand went up. Some of the fellows, in their enthusiasm, put up both hands. The meeting was unanimous.

"Good!" said Tommy Dodd, surveying the meeting. "That's settled. Now we've got to tell him so. Fetch him in, somebody."

"He won't come," said Lacy.

"Yank him in by the hair if he won't come." A dozen fellows rushed out in search of Oswald. A few minutes later there was a sound of a scuffle in the passage, and the new boy came hurtling in, with a dozen fellows grasping him.

The prisoner was fairly hurled into the crowded Common-room, and the door slammed shut. He was received with hoots and jeers, as he stood panting, his handsome face flushed.

"Oswald!" rapped out Tommy Dodd. Oswald looked at him, still panting.

"We've put in to the vote about you," said Tommy Dodd. "We don't want you at Rookwood. We want you to go."

"Get out!"

"Clear off!"

Oswald crimsoned.

"I cannot go," he said quietly. "I cannot ask my father to take me away."

"Why not?" demanded Cook.

"I can't let him know the trouble I've got into here for one thing, and I can't give him such a disappointment for another."

"You can wedge into some other school where they don't know you," sneered Smythe.

"I mightn't be able to. Dr. Chilsolm was very kind, but—"

"You mean you've taken him in?" roared Cook.

"No, no! But—"

"Enough said! You've got to go!" said Tommy Dodd. "Now, you can't be very comfy here. You'd better clear off for your own sake. You're a worry to everybody, and you're getting Jimmy Silver and his friends into trouble. It's up to you to ask your people to take you away."

"I can't!"

"You mean you won't, I suppose?" bellowed Tommy Dodd.

Oswald's lips set.

"Well, I won't, then," he said.

There was a roar of wrath. The angry juniors closed in round the Outcast, but Tommy Dodd jumped off the chair and waved them back.

"No ragging—yet!" he said. "We'll give him a day to think it over. If he isn't gone by to-morrow night we'll make him go."

"Better start by raggin' the cad," said Smythe.

"You shut up!" said Tommy Dodd autocritically. "I'm running this show! You've heard the verdict. Oswald—you've got twenty-four hours. Time enough for you to write to your people and clear off. If you're here after to-morrow you'll be regularly ragged till you get out. We're fed up with you! You're not going to disgrace Rookwood as you did your own school. That's final. Now kick him out."

Oswald was forthwith bundled into the passage.

Then the meeting broke up excitedly, discussing the situation. Oswald of the Fourth had received the order of the boot. It remained to be seen whether he would go.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

"O.M.G."

THOSE mysterious letters the next day attracted a good deal of attention at Rookwood, especially on the Classical side.

The seniors observed them, written or chalked up in various places, and wondered what they might possibly mean.

But all the juniors knew.

Those letters appeared everywhere. In Oswald's study they were chalked on the glass and inked on the walls, and even cut into the door with a pocket-knife. That study had been shared by the new junior with Jones minor and Hooker, but his study-mates never entered it now. They preferred to leave the Outcast severely alone, and they did their prep in other studies. Oswald was always welcome in the end study, but the fear of bringing more trouble upon his four friends caused him to keep away.

"O.M.G."

It was chalked up in the passages, in the quadrangle, even in the Form-room. In the afternoon Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, found that cryptic legend confronting him when he entered the Form-room. In big chalked letters it looked at him from the blue-washed wall.

Mr. Bootles adjusted his glasses very carefully, and blinked at it in astonishment. Then he turned to the Fourth Form, who were all in their places, and waiting.

Mr. Bootles pointed a finger at the inscription on the wall.

"Is that the work of any member of my Form—what, what?" asked Mr. Bootles. No reply.

"Can any boy here tell me what it may mean?"

Apparently there was no information to be gained from the Fourth. Nobody opened his lips.

Jimmy Silver was looking savage, and Lovell and Raby and Newcome frowned. The three juniors were backing up their leader against the school, in spite of their very strong doubts of the wisdom of Jimmy's proceedings.

Oswald sat pale and troubled.

Mr. Bootles waited a full minute for a reply, and as none was forthcoming, he knitted his brows.

"I presume that this is a joke of some kind," said the Form-master. "Jokes of any kind must not be played in the Form-room. Silver, you will take a duster and obliterate those letters."

Jimmy Silver obeyed promptly.

"Every member of the Fourth Form will take a hundred lines of Virgil!" added Mr. Bootles.

There was an angry murmur, and dark looks were cast at Oswald. Somewhat unreasonably, the juniors put the hundred lines down to his account. He was the cause of all the trouble, anyway.

But there were no more inscriptions in the Form-room. But outside that apart-

ment the letters caught the eye at every turn.

"O.M.G."

It was chalked up everywhere, and Jimmy Silver, who had taken to carrying a duster about with him to rub out the inscriptions, gave it up at last. They re-appeared faster than he could rub them out.

Bulkeley called to him a little later, and pointed to the "O.M.G." chalked up on the library door.

"Is that one of your little jokes, Silver?" he asked.

"No fear!"

"What does it mean?"

Jimmy Silver assumed a thoughtful expression.

"The letters stand for something, I suppose, Bulkeley," he said.

"I suppose they do. I'm asking you what they stand for?" said the captain of Rookwood.

"O.M.G.," said Jimmy Silver, very thoughtfully. "Only Muddling Geese, Bulkeley."

Bulkeley looked astonished.

"And what is that chalked up all over Rookwood for?" he demanded.

"Better ask some of the geese," said Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley looked at him very hard, and soon afterwards he was seen inquiring of Smythe of the Shell. Adolphus enlightened him at once as to the true meaning of "O.M.G." Bulkeley walked away, looking very thoughtful.

Presently a notice appeared on the board, in the handwriting of the captain of Rookwood.

"Any junior found chalking on doors, walls, etc., will be gated for two half-holidays.

G. BULKELEY."

That put a stop to the inscriptions. "O.M.G." gradually disappeared, and was not seen again. But everyone at Rookwood, even the Head, had seen it, and knew what it meant. So insignificant a person as a new boy in the Fourth Form was the subject of conversation from one end of the school to the other.

Oswald himself felt that it could not last. It was probable that even the Head would send him away, if only for the sake of peace. In his study the Outcast of the Fourth sat wearily at work, but hardly seeing what he read. He knew that the blow was coming. Whispers and footsteps in the passage warned him that the threatened ragging was at hand.

He drew a letter from his pocket—a letter in a sprawling schoolboy hand, and read it through, for perhaps the tenth time. His eyes lingered on a few lines:

"You stood by me like a brick, Oswald; I sha'n't ever forget it. If you hadn't done it, I couldn't have faced the pater—I should have run away. I hope you're getting on all right at Rookwood, and that you've found a better pal than I was to you."

Oswald sighed.

"Thanks for your good advice," the letter went on. "You know I never was like you, and it ain't easy for a leopard to change his spots, you know. But I'm jolly careful, anyway, and you needn't be afraid that I shall get into trouble. I'm really going to do as you advise, only it ain't easy to begin—Your old pal,

TED FRYE."

Oswald crumpled the letter into his pocket again.

"It wasn't worth while," he muttered miserably—"it wasn't worth it! And now I've got to go through it again! What will the pater say if I have to go!"

He took up his pen again, and strove to fix his attention upon Latin declensions. But his brow was clouded, and his thoughts wandered.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. A Regular Riot.

OSWALD started as the door of his study suddenly opened, and four juniors came hurriedly in—the Fistical Four of the Fourth.

He rose quickly to his feet. "They're coming!" said Jimmy Silver briefly.

"I know! Don't you fellows stay!" said Oswald. "No good your going through it, too!"

"Rats!"

"I don't want to get you into it," said Oswald, in great distress. "I can stand it, but there's no reason why you—"

"Rot!" said Lovell. "We're standing by you! We'll lock the door for a start." He turned the key. "Now we're going to stand a siege!"

"They're awfully wild," said Newcome. "They'll bust the lock!"

"Then there'll be a scrap," said Jimmy Silver.

"I'd rather face it alone," said Oswald.

"Bosh!"

There was a rattle at the handle of the door a few minutes later, and a loud tramp of feet in the passage. The raggers had arrived.

"Why don't you open the door, Tommy Dodd?"

"It's locked!"

"Bang on it!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Hallo!" called out Jimmy Silver.

"So you're there, are you, Silver?"

"You bet!"

"Open this door!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Oswald, are you going to let us in?"

"We are not going to let him!" said Jimmy Silver.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Don't make that thundering row!" came Smythe's voice. "You'll have the masters here, Dodd! Get something and bust the lock!"

"I'll get my screwdriver," said Hooker.

"And a hammer," said Tommy Dodd.

There was a pause, and the garrison of Oswald's study exchanged glances. The enemy were evidently in deadly earnest.

"Better leave me alone, you fellows!" said Oswald, in a low voice.

"Oh, cheese it!"

There was a grinding sound at the door, and the blows of a hammer. A screwdriver was being driven in between the door and the jamb. Then there was a loud snap.

"Oh, you ass, you've broken my screwdriver!"

"Blow your screwdriver! The rotten thing must have been made in Germany!" growled Tommy Dodd. "I'll jolly well smash the lock! No good fooling about!"

Crash, crash, crash!

The lock was not a weak one, but it was not built to stand assaults from a heavy hammer, wielded by a powerful arm. It crashed to pieces, and the door flew open.

There was a rush of juniors into the study.

They halted as they found themselves confronted by the study table and other furniture piled across the room, and behind that barricade five juniors ready for battle. The two parties glared at one another across the barricade.

"Rush 'em!" yelled Smythe from the passage. Adolphus was very wisely keeping out of the war zone. The Fistical Four were dreadfully hard hitters, and Adolphus, like the celebrated Duke of Plaza Toro, preferred to lead his regiment from behind, because he found it less exciting.

"Now, we haven't come here to jaw,"

roared Tommy Dodd. "We want Oswald."

"Go and eat coke!" said Oswald.

"We're standing by him," said Jimmy Silver.

"If you don't get out of this study, there's going to be trouble."

"Rush the rotters!"

"Don't jaw! We shall have the prefects here soon."

"Collar that cad!"

"You can hand Oswald over, or you can be ragged along with him," said Tommy Dodd.

"We're going to frog's-march him round the quad and duck him in the fountain, and jam him all over! That's for a start, just to warn him what to expect. If he don't go, we shall begin on him in earnest after that!"

"I'm not going!" said Oswald.

"Hark at the cad! Rush 'em!"

There was a wild rush, led by Tommy Dodd. The raggers came scrambling over the furniture. The defenders hit out at once. Jimmy Silver's right and left came out, and Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook rolled over among the feet of their friends. Doyle dragged the table away, and the raggers rushed on. There was furious hitting on all sides. All the juniors were angry and excited now.

Never had the Fistical Four put up so tremendous a fight. And Oswald, too, showed himself a mighty man with his hands.

But the odds were too great.

Numbers told.

The raggers fairly swarmed over the defenders of the study. Tommy Dodd, with a streaming nose, scrambled up and came on. Jimmy Silver, fighting like a hero, was borne to the floor and pinned there. Lovell and Raby and Newcome, resisting desperately to the last, went down.

The raggers swarmed over them, and the unfortunate four simply disappeared from view under their swarming assailants.

Oswald, struggling furiously, was dragged out of the study.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were still resisting, but they were held down by numbers. They had done their best, but their best had not availed them.

Oswald was flung into the passage, and caught there by the crowd and rushed away. His collar and tie were torn off, his jacket split, his hair like a mop. But he was still fighting, till numberless hands grasped him on all sides, and he was frog's-marched helplessly down the passage, amid yells of triumph.

"Got him!"

"Give him the frog's-march!"

"Hurrah!"

Down the wide staircase went the swarming juniors, with Oswald in their midst.

They reached the lower passage with a rush, and found Bulkeley and Neville there, with their ashplants in their hands.

"Stop that at once!" roared Bulkeley.

For once the juniors were deaf to the voice of their head prefect, the popular captain of Rookwood. They rushed on pell-mell to the door and streamed out into the quadrangle.

"Do you hear me?" yelled Bulkeley, amazed and furious.

The juniors heard, but they did not heed. Round the quad they went in a yelling throng, frog's-marching the Outcast of the Fourth.

"My only hat!" gasped Neville of the Sixth. He had been shoved aside as unceremoniously as a fag. "It's a giddy revolution!"

Bulkeley strode out angrily into the quad, gripping his ashplant. The raggers were streaming away, their victim in their

midst. They had reached the fountain, and there was a halt.

"Duck him!"

"Hurrah!"

Oswald was swept into the air.

"Stop!"

It was not Bulkeley's voice this time. It was the Head's. With fluttering gown and angry brow, Dr. Chisholm swept down upon the excited crowd.

Then the raggers stopped.

"Put that boy down at once!"

Oswald, panting, was set upon his feet.

"Now, tell me, what is the meaning of this disgraceful scene? Smythe, I presume that you are the leader."

"By gad!" murmured Adolphus, in dismay.

"No, he isn't. I'm the leader, sir," said Tommy Dodd. Smythe was only too glad to retire into the background. He hadn't the least desire to dispute Tommy Dodd's claim to the leadership just then.

Dr. Chisholm fixed his stern glance upon the Modern junior.

"So you are the leader, Dodd?"

"Yes, sir," said Tommy Dodd sturdily.

"Tell me what this means."

"We don't want that cad here, sir," said Tommy Dodd.

"What—what!"

"He's been sacked from his own school, and he'd no right to come here," called out a voice from the rear.

Dr. Chisholm compressed his lips.

"So you take it upon yourselves to judge in that matter. Do you think I was unaware of that boy's history when I admitted him to Rookwood?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Tommy Dodd.

"We—we thought—we—we believed he had—had taken you in, sir."

"Indeed! I presume you mean you believed that I had been deceived?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"There was nothing of the kind. I had reason to suppose that an injustice had been done to Oswald, and I deemed it right and expedient to give him another chance here. You have acted disgracefully!"

Tommy Dodd's face set sullenly.

"We don't want a fellow here who's been kicked out of his own school, sir. If he's not good enough for Minhurst, he's not good enough for Rookwood."

"That is not for you to decide, Dodd. This boy was unfortunately expelled from Minhurst. At the present moment, Dodd, you are perilously near to being expelled from Rookwood yourself."

"Oh!" said Tommy Dodd blankly.

"Oswald, you will go into the house and make yourself tidy at once. I shall deal with you later," added the Head, his eye scanning the rioters. "If this scene should recur, every participator shall be flogged and the ringleaders expelled."

Dr. Chisholm swept away, leaving the raggers dumb. After that the most truculent ragger of them all was not inclined to continue. But as the rioters dispersed there were furious mutterings among them. Their remarks were not loud, but deep. There could be no more ragging, that was evident. But, as Tommy Dodd said between his teeth, there were other ways of getting rid of the outsider. The motto of the Lower School at Rookwood was still "O.M.G."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. The Clouds Roll By.

"WHAT'S on?"

That question was on nearly every lip at Rookwood on the following day.

The order had gone forth for the whole school, Classics and Moderns, to

assemble in Big Hall after lessons, to be addressed by the Head.

Tommy Dodd and Adolphus Smythe and other leaders of the ragging outbreak heard the news with great inward misgivings. No punishments had been handed out yet, and they had only too much reason to fear that the order meant a flogging for somebody—they could guess whom.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were feeling somewhat downhearted that day. The terrific "scrap" in Oswald's study had left its mark on them. Fistic as they often were, they had never before shown such signs of combat. They were aching all over, and their damages were great. And they felt that, in spite of their efforts, it was all up with Oswald. The authority of the Head had checked another outbreak, so far. But there were signs that it would not be long delayed. The feeling against Oswald was more bitter than ever. In spite of even the Head, another ebullition must come soon.

Jimmy wondered whether Dr. Chisholm had already decided to send the new boy away, for the sake of order in the school. There was certainly something to be said for the attitude of the rioters. They didn't want a fellow at Rookwood who had disgraced his own school and been kicked out of it. They were determined that they would not stand it, and the Lower School was in a ferment. Unless Oswald went, the state of affairs would grow dangerous. Fellows were talking of writing home to their people and getting a deputation of them to visit the Head.

When the school assembled in Big Hall Oswald's appearance in the ranks of the Fourth was greeted with loud hisses. It was in vain that Bulkeley and Knowles and the other prefects shouted for silence. It was not till the Head came in that the hostile demonstration died away.

Dr. Chisholm held up his hand, and there was silence at last. All the fellows wondered what was coming.

"Boys, I have called you together to make a communication to you," said the Head. "It concerns the new boy in the Fourth Form, Richard Oswald."

Tommy Dodd drew a breath of relief. It wasn't a flogging, at any rate. Some of the fellows looked very hopeful. They hoped that the Head had decided to "sack" the Outcast, and relieve Rookwood of his presence.

"When Oswald came here," resumed the Head, "I was aware that he had been compelled to leave his former school, Minhurst. I will explain why. For some time the headmaster, Dr. Frye, had been aware that a certain boy belonging to that school had been seen in disreputable haunts, and, indeed, under the influence of liquor, and he resolved to discover the identity of the boy in question, and expel him from the school. A watch was set, and Oswald was found outside the school at a late hour of the night. He had no explanation to make, and he was condemned and expelled."

There was a deep groan for Oswald. "Silence!" exclaimed the Head. The groans died away. Tommy Dodd looked very satisfied. He felt that the Head must be coming to the point now, and that it meant the "sack" for Oswald.

"A considerable time has passed since then," the Head resumed. "Mr. Oswald called upon me, and asked me to take his son here. He explained the whole circumstances to me, with the addition that his son had confessed to him that he was shielding another boy, whose name he refused to give.

"Knowing both Mr. Oswald and his

son very well, I was inclined to believe this story, and I resolved to give Oswald a chance in this school. The other masters and myself have observed Oswald very carefully during the few weeks he has been with us, and he has shown no sign whatever of any vicious tendency, which confirmed me in my opinion."

The Rookwood fellows stood silent and wondering. It was evidently not the sack for Oswald that was coming, after all. But what on earth was coming?

"To-day," continued the Head, "I received a letter from Dr. Frye, at Minhurst. He has told me a very painful story. It appears that soon after Oswald left that school it was discovered that a Minhurst boy was again acting in the disgraceful manner for which Oswald had been expelled, and only yesterday he was discovered in a low public-house, and the truth came out. This boy was Edward Frye, the headmaster's own son!"

"Oh!" murmured the Rookwood fellows.

Oswald gave a start, and bit his lip hard.

"The boy, thus completely exposed, made a full confession. He was the only culprit, and Oswald, who had been his best friend, had made every effort to win him from his evil ways, but without success. On the night when Oswald was caught out of bounds he had learned that a watch was being kept, and, knowing that Frye was in his usual haunts, he had gone out to warn him. This, of course, was very injudicious of Oswald, but it was not a crime. He was caught, and he was condemned, and for the sake of his friend he kept silent. Perhaps he expected Edward Frye to have the courage to own up to the truth; but Frye kept silent to save himself, and allowed Oswald to suffer in his place. Oswald said no word to betray him from a mistaken sense of loyalty."

"My hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

Tommy Dodd's face was a study.

Even Adolphus Smythe looked a little shamefaced.

"Frye, having made this full confession when silence served him no longer, has enabled tardy justice to be done to the boy who suffered for his sake," said the Head. "Dr. Frye has acquainted me with the whole story, and informed me that Oswald is welcome to return to Minhurst as soon as he chooses, where he will be received with every honour!"

"Oh dear!" murmured Tommy Dodd. Jimmy Silver's face glowed.

"What did I tell you, you silly asses?" he demanded, in a voice that could be heard by everyone in Big Hall. "Didn't I tell you he was as straight as string? Why couldn't you trust your Uncle Jimmy?"

The Head smiled.

"Oswald, come here!"

Dick Oswald, with a crimson face, came up the hall; but there were no dark looks cast at him now. The boy who had suffered so much rather than betray a chum was the kind of fellow Rookwooders could admire. Bulkeley patted him on the shoulder as he passed up the hall, and there was a subdued cheer.

"Oswald," said the Head, "your character is completely cleared. You acted impulsively and somewhat recklessly, and you took an exaggerated view of your duty to your friend. That is all that can be said against you. The choice is now open to you of remaining at Rookwood or of returning to your old school. And I trust that the boys who could not rely upon their headmaster's judgment, and who have treated you with contumely, will properly express their regret."

"It's up to you, Tommy!" murmured half the Fourth, with one voice.

Tommy Dodd stood out, red but resolute.

"We're all sorry, sir!" he exclaimed. "I beg Oswald's pardon, for one. If—if we'd known this, it would have been different. We're sorry!"

The Head made a gesture.

"Very well. If Oswald elects to remain at Rookwood, I trust you will make some endeavour to show your regret for what you have done. Dismiss!"

Jimmy Silver and Lovell caught Oswald's arms, and marched him in triumph out of Big Hall, with the rest of the Fourth thronging round him. Oswald's face was flushed, and his eyes were bright. He had thanked the Head in faltering tones, but he could not fully express his gratitude. The Head's public explanation had set him right with Rookwood, and the juniors were all eager to testify their repentance, and to shower congratulations upon him. Even the great Adolphus told him that he was sorry, by gad!

Jimmy Silver, at one bound, had jumped back into more than his old popularity.

Jimmy Silver had been in the right, after all—right all along the line. He had stood by the Outcast; and the Outcast had been cleared, and proved to be the right sort. It was a triumph for Jimmy Silver; but, in his great glee and satisfaction, he nobly forbore to say, "I told you so!"

"It's all over now," said Tommy Dodd, shaking Oswald's hand for the fifth time. "I'm sorry—we're all sorry! We couldn't guess, you know. You see, you were an ass to stand by a rotter like that chap Frye—an awful ass! Jolly lucky he's got spotted at last! Why, what are you scowling about?"

Oswald smiled faintly.

"I'm not scowling. Only—I'm sorry for Ted. I—I hoped he'd have sense enough to run straight after such a narrow escape; but—but—"

"Oh, rot! It's lucky it's come out," said Jimmy Silver. "The question now is are you going back to Minhurst, or sticking to us? Better stick to us!"

"I—I don't care about going back," said Oswald. "There's rather painful associations at Minhurst for me now. I—I'd rather—"

"Stick to us!" said Tommy Dodd. "I'll tell you what—you stick to Rookwood, and I'll put you in the eleven for the St. Jim's match!"

Oswald laughed.

"Done!" he said.

And Oswald stayed. His name was cleared at the old school, and that was all he cared about. He did not want to leave Jimmy Silver & Co.—especially Jimmy Silver, who had been his firm friend in time of trouble. And that evening the list for the St. Jim's match was posted up on the board, and after the names of the Fistic Four came that of Dick Oswald.

The clouds had rolled by at last. "Coventry" was no more heard of, and any fellow who suggested ragging Oswald would certainly have been ragged himself, and Oswald and his friends rejoiced—especially Jimmy Silver; for Jimmy Silver had stood by the Outcast through thick and thin, and upheld the reputation of the end study for never making a mistake; and Lovell and Raby and Newcome declared solemnly that never, never again would they doubt the judgment of their Uncle Jimmy.

THE END.

(Another extra long complete tale of Rookwood School, entitled "Up Against Pankley!" By Owen Conquest. Order your PENNY POPULAR in advance.)