

“LONGBOWS TO THE RESCUE!” GRAND ROBIN HOOD ROMANCE INSIDE!

The

EVERY TUESDAY.

POPULAR

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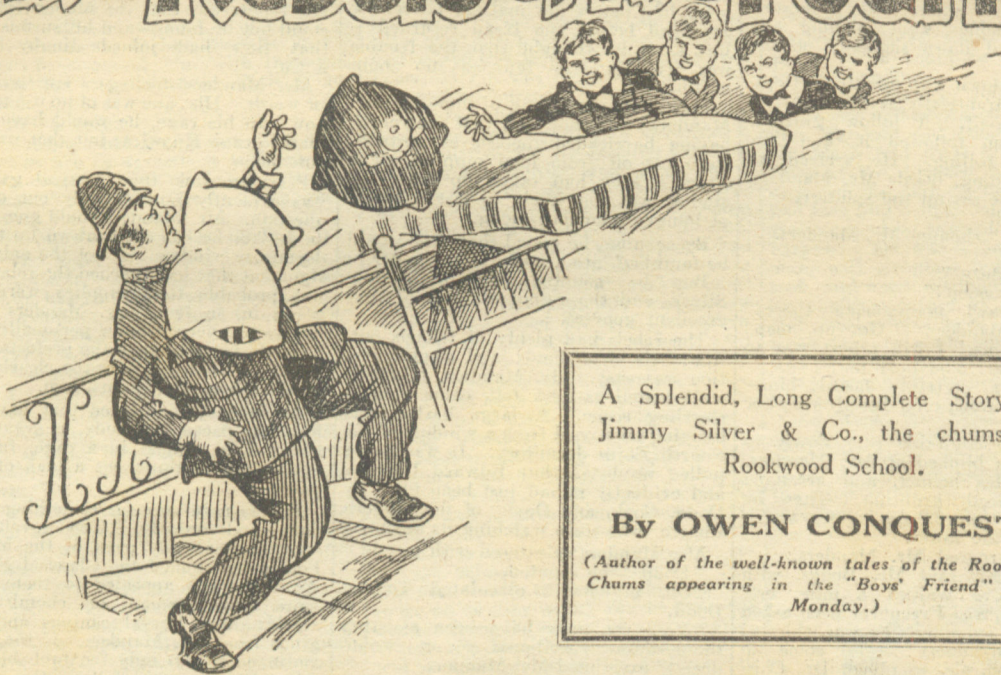
ROBIN HOOD BARS THE PATH OF THE NORMAN SEA-ROVERS!

(A Dramatic Episode from the Grand Old-time Romance Inside.)

THE ROOKWOOD REBELLION!

quell the Rookwood rebellion, he makes a great mistake. In his desperate attempts to bring the rebels to book he brings upon himself more trouble!

The Rebels of the Fourth!



A Splendid, Long Complete Story of
Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of
Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the well-known tales of the Rookwood
Chums appearing in the "Boys' Friend" every
Monday.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Majesty of the Law!

"PEELERS!"
"It's a bobby!"
"Look out, you fellows!"
said Jimmy Silver quietly.

The rebels of Rookwood were looking out!

Never had the apparition of P.-c. Boggs, of Coombe, caused so much excitement as it caused that afternoon at Rookwood School.

Mr. Boggs was a portly and imposing gentleman, with a considerable diameter and a still more considerable circumference. In Coombe and its vicinity he was the terror of evil-doers—of small boys who projected snowballs at harmless and necessary old gentlemen, and of canine offenders that had the temerity to stray in the summer-time.

But he failed, somehow, to strike terror into the Fourth Form fellows who grinned at him down the dormitory staircase in the School House at Rookwood. Even his helmet and uniform failed to produce the desired effect.

P.-c. Boggs came up the lower stairs with a heavy tread—the heavy, official tread which, on the beat at midnight, warns the festive crackman that it is time to pack up and get moving.

Mr. Manders, temporary Head of Rookwood, came up with him.

The Rookwooders were in the Form-rooms, with the exception of the Classical Fourth.

The Classical Fourth were "on strike"; the dormitory staircase was barricaded, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were holding the fort behind the barricade.

Mr. Boggs halted on the landing and surveyed the barricaded stairs above,

and blinked under his helmet at the garrison.

Jimmy Silver, over a row of stacked bedsteads, waved a kindly hand at him in greeting.

"Good-afternoon, Bogy!" he called out.

"Top of the afternoon, old tulip!" said Arthur Edward Lovell affably. "Mind the step, Bogy! If you started rolling you'd never stop."

Mr. Boggs' plump, red face grew redder. Mr. Manders set his thin lips in a tight line. He had counted upon the official uniform of Mr. Boggs to strike terror. But the rebels' greeting did not sound terrified.

"You see how the matter stands, Bogy!" he said in his acid tones. "These boys—these young rascals—are in rebellion—open rebellion!"

"My word!" murmured Mr. Boggs.

He blinked at the garrison and he blinked at Mr. Manders. He had come up to the school in answer to Mr. Manders' urgent summons by telephone. But exactly what he was to do now that he was there Mr. Boggs did not know. If his eye of command struck terror to the rebels, well and good; but if it didn't, P.-c. Boggs did not see what was to be done. And only too obviously it didn't!

"You will—er—deal immediately with these young rascals!" said Mr. Manders. "I desire you to take Silver into custody and—"

"Forty bob or a month, Jimmy!" said Newcome.

"Ho!" said Mr. Boggs.

"Kindly proceed at once, Bogy!" said Mr. Manders.

"Ho!" said Mr. Boggs again.

Tipped or untipped, he was willing to do his best. He advanced two steps

up the upper staircase. The stairs almost trembled under the official tread.

"You young rips, come out o' that!" said Mr. Boggs.

"Bow-wow!"

"In the name of the lor!" said Mr. Boggs.

"Oh, lor!" ejaculated Putty Grace, and there was a loud chortle.

"Which it will be the worse for you if you don't!"

"Take Silver into custody!" shouted Mr. Manders. "I will be responsible."

"Take Manders into custody, Bogy!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Wot?"

"I give him in charge," said Jimmy cheerily. "He is charged with butting into matters that don't concern him, and obstructing the Fourth Form in the execution of their duty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My word!" murmured Mr. Boggs. "You young rip! If you don't come out of that, I'll come for you and fetch you out!"

"Stand clear, Manders!" shouted Lovell. "We're going to roll Bogy down!"

Mr. Boggs came on valiantly, and reached the stacked bedsteads on the edge of the upper landing. He could no more have climbed over the barricade than he could have flown out of the window. He had far too much weight to lift. But the juniors did not wait for him to attempt to clamber over.

A cricket-stump lashed out, and Mr. Boggs' helmet was cocked over his left ear, giving him a very rakish look. At the same time, a dozen pea-shooters started in.

Phip, phip, phip!

The missiles fairly rained on Mr. Boggs' fat face.

"My word!" gasped Mr. Boggs. "You young raskils—ow! Wow! Leave off! 'Ow dare you 'andle a constable on dooty like this 'ere? Yow-ow-woop!"

"Seize that boy Silver!" shouted Mr. Manders.

Bump!

Arthur Edward Lovell leaned over the barrier and smote with a bolster. Mr. Boggs' helmet went spinning, and Mr. Boggs sat down suddenly on the stairs.

He rolled down two or three steps, and clutched frantically at the banisters to right himself. A pillow whizzed, and a cushion followed it, and Mr. Boggs went rolling. He arrived on the lower landing, beside Mr. Manders, in a heap. He sat up and spluttered.

"Ooooooh!"

"Boggs—," shouted Mr. Manders.

"Wooooop!"

"Do your duty!"

"Yow-ow-wooop!"

"Don't sprawl malingering there!" raved Mr. Manders. "Get up, man! Get up at once! I will report you to your superiors! You hear me?"

Mr. Boggs certainly heard him—everyone at Rookwood heard him, for that matter.

The plump constable rose slowly to his feet. He blinked at Mr. Manders. He fielded his helmet, and arranged it on his head, grunting. Then he turned—not towards the upper stairs, but towards the lower.

"Boggs!" roared Mr. Manders.

"I'm going!" said Mr. Boggs, with dignity. "I've walked a mile 'ere, Mr. Manders, and I've never been asked so much as whether I was thirsty! This ain't my dooty! I'd come up 'ere any time, sir, to oblige Dr. Chisholm—the 'ead's a gentleman, sir! It ain't my dooty to manage your school for you, Mr. Manders."

"Boggs! I shall report this insolence—"

"Report, and be blowed!" said Mr. Boggs.

"What? What?"

"I'm hoff!"

And the heavy official tread thundered down the lower staircase. Mr. Boggs had had enough!

And as a couple of pillows whizzed down from the rebels' stronghold, Mr. Manders felt that he could not do better than follow him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Manders takes Measures!

ROOKWOOD SCHOOL was seething with excitement for the remainder of that day.

There had been trouble ever since the Head went; and the trouble had culminated in Jimmy Silver & Co.'s barring-out.

The sympathy of the whole school was with the rebels.

Even the masters were not displeased to see Mr. Manders "up against" an insuperable difficulty. Since Mr. Manders had taken the Head's place, his airs of authority had irritated the whole staff; there was not one master with whom he had not interfered, not one Form-room in which he had not meddled. He had set the prefects against him, too—Bulkeley and the rest firmly declined any further responsibility in the matter. Mr. Manders was left quite alone to deal with the rebellion he had aroused. Mr. Manders

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was rather in the hapless situation of the magician in the story, who succeeded in calling up the evil spirit, but could not control him when called.

The police—his last resource—had failed him. After the departure of Mr. Boggs, Mr. Manders telephoned to Rookham, to Inspector Sharpe. To his amazement and wrath, the inspector pooh-poohed the whole business, and declined to interfere in it. He even hinted that Mr. Manders, for his own sake, had better get matters peacefully arranged before the Head returned!—just as if he thought that the trouble was Mr. Manders' fault—as no doubt he did!

There was one gleam of hope for Mr. Manders—and that was, that the rebels, having barricaded themselves upstairs, were cut off from food supplies. The "tuck" they had taken up from the studies was not likely to last a crowd of hungry schoolboys long.

By evening, he hoped that they would be famished into a mood of surrender.

But he counted without Jimmy Silver, and the resourcefulness of that excellent general.

The rebels had plenty of friends outside their stronghold; and communication was easy. Mr. Manders, taking a walk round as dusk fell, came upon a startling scene. A large basket was hanging on a cord from a window of the Fourth Form dormitory. It was being pulled up by Arthur Edward Lovell—and evidently it had just been filled by Dodd, Cook, and Doyle, of the Modern Fourth, who were watching its ascent.

Mr. Manders spluttered with wrath.

"Dodd!" he shouted.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tommy Dodd.

"You—you—you have been assisting those—those rebellious young scoundrels!" exclaimed Mr. Manders.

"Only sending them up some grub, sir!" said Tommy Dodd meekly. "They let down the basket with some cash in it, sir—"

"You have dared—," gasped Mr. Manders.

"No law against fetching a chap things from the tuckshop, is there, sir?" asked Tommy Dodd.

"Follow me to my study!" snapped Mr. Manders.

"What for, sir?" asked Tommy Doyle. "I am going to cane you with the utmost severity."

"Are you?" murmured Tommy Dodd. "Follow me instantly!"

Mr. Manders stalked away.

The three Tommies followed him, exchanging whispers—but only as far as the School House door. There they went in. A minute later, they were scudding up the staircase.

"Jimmy Silver!" shouted Tommy Dodd.

"Hallo, old top!"

"We're joining up!"

"Good man!" exclaimed the captain of the Fourth. "It's time you did! Hop over!"

And willing hands assisted the three Tommies over the barricade into the stronghold.

So far, the rebellion had been confined to the Classicals. Tommy Dodd & Co. were the first recruits from the Modern Fourth.

But they were not the last.

Towle and Lacy and half a dozen other fellows followed their example, dropping quietly into the School House, and climbing over the barricade to join the defenders.

The feud between Classicals and Moderns was quite forgotten—it was the whole Fourth Form now against the

tyrant of Rookwood, and the hatchet was buried deep.

Mr. Manders, in his study, selected his stoutest cane; but he waited in vain for the three Tommies to arrive. He left his study at last, and called to Knowles of the Sixth in the corridor.

"Find Dodd and Cook and Doyle, Knowles, and send them in to me at once!" he snapped.

It was a quarter of an hour before Knowles of the Sixth came in to report. His report was that the Modern juniors could not be found—and his surmise was that they had joined Jimmy Silver & Co.

Mr. Manders' feelings were too deep for words. His cane was of no use to him now. In his rage, he would have been glad to cane Knowles; but that was impossible.

Starving out the Classical garrison was evidently now entirely out of the question. Mr. Manders could guess that the basket he had seen drawn up to the dormitory window was not the only consignment that had reached the rebels. It was probable that supplies were still going in, in fact. Mr. Manders could not watch every window personally; and he could not rely upon the prefects to do so; and he realised only too clearly that all the school was against him.

As darkness descended that day, Mr. Manders paced his study, a great deal like a wild animal in a cage, fuming, and trying to think out a plan of campaign.

It was necessary for something to be done—and quickly. The revolt was spreading—already most of the Modern Fourth had joined the Classical Fourth. A barring-out appealed to them much more than German or chemistry or algebra, and liberal canings and naggings from Mr. Manders. If the revolt continued it was only too probable that other Forms would follow the rebels' example and go "on strike." Which would have been a pretty kettle of fish for the tyrant of Rookwood to deal with. And Mr. Manders was greatly uneasy lest news of the barring-out should reach the Head. He did not blame himself for what had occurred; but he felt very uneasily that it was essential to restore order before Dr. Chisholm returned to Rookwood.

Force, and more force, was the only remedy Mr. Manders could think of. Like many gentlemen who have a very tender regard for the safety of their own personal skins, he was of the militaristic turn of mind, and believed in the strong hand, and plenty of it. Conciliation did not enter his mind at all. Force was the remedy, and the only difficulty was to command it and apply it.

Apparently Mr. Manders came to a decision at last, for he donned hat and coat, and left the school, and was absent for a couple of hours. When he came in there was a grim look of satisfaction on his hard face. Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth met him as he came in.

"One word with you, Mr. Manders," said the Fifth Form master. "May I ask what measures are being taken to deal with the—ah!—unprecedented state of affairs at present obtaining in this school?"

Mr. Manders gave him a cold glare.

"You may not!" he answered curtly.

"Hem!"

"Measures are being taken," said Mr. Manders. "Measures of a drastic nature. That is all."

He made a sign of dismissal. But Mr. Greely did not go.

"This state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue," he said.

"It will not be allowed to continue, Mr. Greely. But the matter is in my hands."

"Disorder is spreading in the school."

"I am aware of it. It is partly due to the fact that I have not received, from the masters, the support I had a right to expect."

"I do not agree with you, Mr. Manders. I have this to say—that unless order is restored, the staff cannot remain idle spectators. I understand that the Head is now on the road to recovery from his illness. As soon as he is able to hear the news, I shall consider it my duty to acquaint him with this—this unheard-of state of affairs, if it is not ended."

"Mr. Greely!"

"I mean what I say, sir! The other masters are in agreement with me—we have discussed the matter in Masters' Session!" said Mr. Greely, with great dignity.

Mr. Manders compressed his lips.

"The lower Forms are becoming uncontrollable," said Mr. Greely. "Mr. Bohun has had difficulty in keeping certain members of the Third from joining in the barring-out."

"That is enough, Mr. Greely."

"We are of opinion, sir—"

"I do not desire to hear your opinion."

"Nevertheless, I shall state it," said Mr. Greely. "We are of opinion that Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, should be sent for, to deal with his Form."

"I have dismissed Mr. Dalton, and have no intention whatever of rescinding my decision," said Mr. Manders. "Good-evening!"

And Mr. Greely, choking down his wrath, went his ponderous way. In the Masters' Room, that evening there were comments upon Mr. Manders which would have made that gentleman's scanty hair curl, if he had heard them. But Mr. Manders went to bed that night in a satisfied mood. He had taken his measures—drastic measures—and on the morrow the rebels of Rookwood were to be crushed. And Mr. Manders dreamed a happy dream of flogging the Fourth Form from end to end, and wearing out the Head's birch in the process!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Army!

"CAMPING out—what?" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"And regular watches," said Lovell.

Supper was over in the stronghold of the Rookwood rebels. There had been a general "shell-out" of cash for supplies—and the supplies were ample, for a day or two, at least. Quite a large consignment had been smuggled in before Mr. Manders discovered what was being done—and after, for that matter.

Even Tubby Muffin was satisfied with the dinner, though it was rather mixed—and still more satisfied with the tea. It was better than tea in Hall, Tubby declared—and quite as good as tea in the study. And there was plenty left for supper, and for brekker the next day; so Reginald Muffin was as cheery as any rebel in Rookwood. Beyond breakfast the next day his fat thoughts did not travel.

There was rather a crowd in the Classical Fourth dormitory. Most of the Modern Fourth were there now. And no bedsteads were available—they were all stacked up in the barricade on the staircase, with most of the washstands. But Jimmy Silver & Co. had camped out before, and they were ready to camp out again. There were plenty of blankets, at all events—and that was the chief thing. Beds were made on the floor of

the dormitory, and the cheerful rebels turned into them.

Sentries kept on the go during the night—nodding at their posts occasionally, perhaps. Still, they certainly would have been on the "qui vive" if anybody had attempted to clamber over the barricade. Nobody did. The night passed without alarm.

The garrison disdained to take notice of the rising-bell in the morning. Other Forms had to turn out—not so the Fourth! They yawned, and sat up in bed, and chatted, and did not turn out till a good half-hour after the rising-bell had ceased to clang. By that time even Tubby Muffin was ready to get up; he was getting hungry.

Breakfast in the corridor was a cheery meal that morning. There were half a dozen spirit-stoves for cooking, brought up from the studies, and there was a large grate in the dormitory—never used, it is true, but ready for use—and the rebels lighted a huge fire in it. Coal there was none; but the juniors had access to a box-room where there was lumber, and several old packing-cases were found and promptly confiscated. Between the wood fire and the spirit-stoves in the passage, the cookery went on gaily, and the rebels enjoyed that rather disorderly meal, much more than they would have enjoyed a more orderly meal under a master's eye downstairs.

After breakfast, there was football in the passage—not very scientific footer, certainly, but very energetic and considerably noisy. It kept the rebels warm, and it gave them exercise. But Jimmy Silver was careful to see that a watch was kept on the barricade. He did not believe for a moment that Mr. Manders would, or could, allow matters to go on as they were; and he expected a move from the enemy at any moment. Where Mr. Manders was to raise forces was a mystery, since the prefects had

abandoned him, and the majesty of the Law had proved of no avail. But Jimmy Silver sagely opined that Manders had something up his sleeve; and the event proved that Uncle James of Rookwood was right.

It was about half-past ten in the morning when Arthur Edward Lovell, looking from the corridor window, uttered a shout.

"Come here, you fellows!"

"There was a rush to the window.

"What's on?"

"Look!"

Lovell pointed across to the distant gates, which could be seen from this especial window.

A burly man in thigh-boots and a sou'wester had appeared in the gateway. Mr. Manders was standing there, and old Mack had come out of his lodge. Even at the distance Jimmy Silver recognised the man in the big boots—he had seen him before. His name was Bill Harker, and he worked on the Latcham barges. He was a brawny, powerful man, with a square jaw and a bulldog look, and much distinguished locally for his exciting career as a fighting-man. Bill Harker had been "run in" more times than he could remember; and it was probable that he would be run in many times more, before old age damped his ardent spirits.

Old Mack, the porter, blinked at Mr. Harker—as Jimmy Silver & Co. were blinking from the distant window. Mack would certainly not have opened the gate to Mr. Harker, though he was thundering at the bell. But Mr. Manders—evidently expecting the call—had



RUSHING THE BARRICADE! Harker, half stunned by the crashing blows he received, rolled back off the barricade. George was sent whirling back with black bruises all over him. But Alf came on savagely and clambered right over, in spite of raining blows, and dropped on the corridor landing. (See Chapter 4.)

come along, and curtly ordered the porter to admit Harker.

"My heye!" murmured Mack. He did as he was bid, and Mr. William Harker stamped in. He was followed by two other bargees.

They were both powerful fellows, extremely rough and ready in their looks. They touched their hats awkwardly to Mr. Manders.

"Good-morning—good-morning!" exclaimed Mr. Manders.

"Mornin', sir!" mumbled the three bargees together.

"I am very glad to see you here. You understand what is required of you—"

"I've told my mates, sir," said Bill Harker. "They know what's on. Bless your 'eart, sir; we'll work the blooming oracle for you in two shakes of a blinking rat's tail, sir."

Mr. Manders coughed. Bill Harker's mode of address was really hardly suited to the scholastic precincts of Rookwood. Old Mack, staring at the three bargemen as if they were three horrid phantoms, backed into his lodge. He guessed now what the bargemen had come for, and Mack was shocked at Mr. Manders. It wasn't his place to tell Mr. Manders so; but he was shocked and he disapproved strongly.

"Of course, you are not to use—er—unnecessary violence," said Mr. Manders to his extraordinary recruits.

"Just so, sir!" said Bill Harker. "Jest knock 'em about a bit, that's all, ain't it?"

"Hem! Not exactly that. Reduce them to obedience—force them to leave the place they have barricaded themselves in—"

"You leave that to us, sir," said Harker reassuringly. "Arter we've got among 'em, they'll be as quiet as lambs."

"They better!" said one of Mr. Harker's comrades. "Their blooming mothers won't know 'em arter, else."

"I believe you, Alf!" said the third.

"We're going to earn our 'arf-quad each, sir, don't you fret," said Bill Harker. "Let's git at the young blighters!"

"Ahem! Follow me," said Mr. Manders.

He led the three bargemen across the quadrangle. Bill Harker & Co. looked round them with interest, and with grinning faces. In their own rough way, they were good-humoured fellows, and they looked on their expedition to Rookwood as a rough sort of "lark." Certainly they were surprised at being called in by Mr. Manders. It was undoubtedly the first time in history that a Rookwood master had gone to the Red Cow at Latham for help in dealing with rebellious Lower School boys. But Harker & Co. were quite prepared to earn half a sovereign each by thrashing a mob of naughty boys for Mr. Manders.

The Rookwooders were in the Form-rooms, otherwise, Mr. Manders' progress across the quad with his army would have caused huge excitement. As it was, some of the masters spotted the army from the Form-room windows. And when Mr. Manders entered the School House with them, Mr. Greely came whisking along from the Fifth Form room.

"Mr. Manders," he exclaimed, flushed with anger and indignation, "is it possible? Do my eyes deceive me?"

"I cannot answer for the state of your eyes, Mr. Greely," said the Modern master acidly. "If you are doubtful about them, I suggest your consulting an oculist. For the present, kindly

return to your Form-room and do not interfere here."

"Are these—these—these men sent for to deal with the Lower School boys, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Greely.

"They are!"

"Then I protest, sir!" exclaimed the Fifth Form master excitedly. "I seriously protest against anything of the kind! You have no right, sir, to introduce hooligans into the school for any such purpose!"

"Ooligans!" ejaculated Bill Harker. "Oo's a 'ooligan, sir?"

Mr. Greely backed a little.

"No offence, my man!" he said amicably. "I do not blame you!"

"You called me names!" roared Mr. Harker.

"I did not mean—"

"You go 'ome!" said Mr. Harker.

He took the portly Fifth Form master in one powerful, grimy hand and spun him round. Mr. Greely was a big gentleman, and he had been an athlete at his University in his day. But he was like an infant in the muscular grasp of the bargeman. He went spinning and brought up against the wall with a bump.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped.

"You go 'ome, old gent!" said Bill Harker. "I ain't going to 'urt you! But you ain't calling me names! See?"

"I—I—I—" Mr. Greely spluttered.

"Mr. Manders, I protest! This is—is unheard-of—brutal—lawless! I shall acquaint the Head! Bless my soul!"

Mr. Greely broke off abruptly, and retreated to his Form-room as Bill Harker made a belligerent move towards him. The Form-room door slammed behind him.

"Follow me, my men!" said Mr. Manders.

"We're arter you, sir!" said Alf.

And the grinning bargemen followed Mr. Manders up the staircase.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Fighting for It!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. exchanged glances.

At the sight of the bargemen at the gates, Jimmy had suspected the truth at once. But it really seemed too bad to be true. When Harker & Co. crossed the quadrangle with Mr. Manders, and disappeared into the School House below, there could be no further doubt.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a long, expressive whistle.

"Three giddy bargees!" he said. "My only aunt Sempronia! Manders has been down to Latham and tipped them to come up here for us."

"The awful rotter!" said Mornington. "What would the Head think of that, I wonder?"

"Probably he's rather anxious to get it over before the Head can hear anything!" remarked Erroll.

"They're hefty roughs, those three!" said Raby. "But we've got the advantage of position. We've licked the prefects! We can lick the bargees!"

"We can try, at any rate!" said Newcome.

"We're going to hold out to the bitter end!" said Jimmy Silver, between his teeth. "We're going to hold out, if Manders gathers up every hooligan along the river from Coombe to Latham."

"Hear, hear!"

"Stand ready—bats and stumps!" said Jimmy. "We've got to hit hard! If those roughs get among us, there'll be damage done!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The heavy boots of the bargemen rang on the stairs.

Bill Harker, Alf, and George came tramping up, and they grinned more widely at the sight of the bedstead barricade and the row of determined boyish faces over it. Behind them Mr. Manders followed, with a cruel smile on his hard face. He had no doubts this time. These three hulking fellows could have made hay of the Sixth Form, let alone the Fourth. His only uneasiness was that they might get excited and do a little too much damage.

A few black eyes, swollen noses, and bruises would not matter to Mr. Manders. But if teeth were knocked out, or anything of that kind, the matter would want a great deal of explaining away. But Mr. Manders felt that he had to chance that. The barring-out had to be crushed before the Head could hear of it, and this was "the only way."

"Ere, they are—wot? grinned Bill Harker, halting on the landing, and staring up at the barricade. "These 'ere the coveys, sir?"

"They are the rebellious young rascals!" said Mr. Manders.

"Bless your 'eart, sir! We'll bring 'em to time!"

"One moment!" exclaimed Mr. Manders. "Silver—Lovell—all of you—listen to me!"

"Can't be done, sir!" interjected Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the rebels. Mr. Manders crimsoned.

"Listen to me!" he roared. "Unless you descend at once, and surrender, and return to your duty, these men will compel you to do so! I desire to avoid violence! I give you the opportunity to surrender. Take advantage of it! Now—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Rats!"

"Go home, Manders!"

Bill Harker burst into a gruff chuckle. "Leave 'em to us, sir," he said.

"We'll 'andle them."

"We're arter you, Bill."

Up the top staircase came the three bargees, tramping heavily. Over the barricade, the Fistical Four and their comrades looked at them grimly. It was an unequal struggle—once the big bargees were among the juniors, the latter certainly would not have the ghost of a chance. All depended upon holding the barricade, and stalling off the attack—and the rebels realised that this was a much more hefty task than in the case of the prefects or Mr. Boggs. When Bill Harker was on the war-path in the Latham pubs, three constables were required to get him to the station. He was a most redoubtable foe for Lower School boys to tackle. But Jimmy Silver & Co. faced the enemy with cool determination.

"Stand back!" rapped out Jimmy, as the bargemen reached the barricade. He flourished a cricket-stump.

"You 'it me with that there stick, and you'll never know arter wot's happened to you," said Mr. Harker.

"I shall hit you fast enough if you come on!" retorted Jimmy Silver.

"We'll see about that there!" grinned Bill.

He grasped the barricade and came on; and he saw about "that there" very quickly indeed. Jimmy Silver brought the stump down on his head with a crash.

The roar that broke from Bill Harker would have done credit to the Bull of

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THE REBELS OF THE FOURTH.

(Continued from page 22.)

Basham in the most strenuous period of his career.

He was hurt, but he was more surprised and enraged than hurt. He reeled on the stairs, cursing wildly. His flow of language was decidedly more suited to the Red Cow at Latham than to Rookwood School. All the good-humour was gone from his rugged face now—he was in the mood now in which he was accustomed to make warm work for three policemen on a Saturday night. And his look told the juniors only too plainly what would happen to them if the ruffian came over the barricade, and even Peele and Gower and Townsend and Topham backed up desperately in the defence.

Bill Harker came clambering on, and his comrades clambered with him. The barricade shook and trembled under their heavy weight.

Blows rained on them from within.

It was no time for ceremony or half-measures.

Cricket-bats and stumps, fives-bats and pillows and bolsters and chair-legs crashed and smashed on the bargemen

as they clambered over. If the defence had weakened for a second, if the juniors had hesitated to do hard damage, the attack would have carried the day. But the desperate defence stood them in good stead.

Bill Harker, half stunned by the crashing blows he received, rolled back off the barricade and collapsed on the stairs.

Crash, crash, crash!

George was sent whirling back, with black bruises nearly all over him, and seeing more stars than ever glittered in the firmament.

Alf came on savagely and clambered right over, in spite of raining blows, and dropped on the corridor landing.

Fortunately, he dropped headlong, and the juniors were able to tackle him before he could rise. Mornington jumped on him, landing in the small of his back, fairly squashing him to the floor. Lovell sat on the back of his neck, Raby on his head, Oswald and Flynn captured his arms and hung on to them.

Harker and George reeled back to the landing below, covered with bruises, with noses streaming red, swearing furiously. They had faced punishment at which many men would have balked, and they were hurt badly. And they were beaten.

"They're going!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"Thank goodness!" murmured Erroll. "Fix up that brute!" exclaimed

Jimmy. "Get a rope or something—quick!"

A cord was forthcoming, and as a dozen juniors held the struggling Alf, Jimmy Silver bound his wrists together behind his back, and then tied his legs at the ankles and the knees.

"Shove him into the dorm!" said Jimmy.

It had been a breathless struggle, but they had had the best of it. One of the enemy was a prisoner; the other two, battered and bruised, were driven back. Mr. Manders was almost beside himself. He did not dare to "rag" his terrible auxiliaries. Bill Harker would have knocked him down the staircase without ceremony at a word.

"Perhaps—perhaps you had better go!" gasped Mr. Manders.

"We ain't going without Alf!" roared Mr. Harker. "And we ain't going till we've walloped that crowd of young 'ounds black and blue! George, my 'earty, you 'ike off to the Red Cow, and bring along some of our pals!"

"Wot-ho!" said George.

And he strode away.

Harker sat on the stairs to wait for reinforcements from the Red Cow. And Mr. Manders, in utter dismay, wondered what on earth was going to happen when they came?

THE END.

(You must not miss, "A Rumpus at Rookwood!" next week.)

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