

Result of Uncle Paul's Prize Competition Inside!—See page 569.

The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending March 8th, 1924.]



The British Champion in a Bare Knuckle Fight Down East!

(A sensational incident from the magnificent boxing yarn in this issue.)

MORE THRILLS IN THIS STUNNING STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD REBELS!

The Retreat From Rookwood!



By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

The rebellious Fourth-Formers decide on a new plan of campaign!

The 1st Chapter.

Under Sentence!

"Sacked!"
"Jimmy Silver?"
"Phew!"
"Bunked, you know," said Smythe of the Shell. "Bunked from Rookwood. Fact is, I'm not surprised. Cheeky young rotter, you know."

The news spread like wildfire through Rookwood School. Adolphus Smythe of the Shell stated that he was not surprised; but, as a matter of fact, the whole school was surprised, and a little incredulous.

Jimmy Silver, captain of the Fourth—junior captain of the school—sacked!

The Fourth and the Third and the Shell buzzed with the news. Even the great men of the Fifth and Sixth discussed it.

It was almost the one topic at Rookwood.

"The Head's going it!" remarked Hanson of the Fifth. "First he bunks Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth; now he bunks Jimmy Silver! What next, I wonder?"

"What's Silver done?" inquired Talboys of the Fifth.

"Some row with Carker, his new Form master! The Fourth have been kicking up a dust ever since Mr. Dalton was bunched. The fact is," said Hanson seriously, "the Head is a bit of a Tartar. Dicky Dalton was a good man, and Carker is a bit of a rotter. I'd have kicked if I'd been in the Fourth."

"Still, these dashed fags have to be kept in order!" said Talboys, shaking his head.

"Oh, yes!" said Hanson at once. "No doubt about that!"

That was a point upon which all the Fifth could agree.

While Rookwood School buzzed with the startling news, Jimmy Silver & Co. sat in the end study in the Fourth with grave faces. Jimmy was grave, but quite cool; Lovell and Raby and Newcome were dismayed. The Fistical Four were waiting; they expected that Jimmy would be sent for. In times of emergency, "Uncle James" of Rookwood was always cool; but his chums marvelled at his coolness now.

"We're up against it, and no mistake!" Arthur Edward Lovell remarked, for about the tenth time.

"It was bound to come," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "We've agreed on a Form strike till Mr. Dalton comes back. This is only a move in the game."

"But—" said Raby.

"The Head won't give in!" said Newcome.

"And we won't," said Jimmy. "Mr. Dalton stood up for our rights, and was sacked. The Head's too high-handed. We're bound to stand by Dicky Dalton, as he stood by us."

"But the sack—" murmured Raby.

"Of course, Jimmy's not going," said Lovell. "The whole Form will stand by him. I'll jolly well wallop any fellow who doesn't!"

"But—" said Raby again.

To juniors, as a rule, the Head appeared as a dread personage clothed with irresistible authority. That resistance to that authority might be followed by expulsion from the school, was a fact known to all the rebels of Rookwood, and they had risked it. But when the blow came, it seemed to most of the fellows an overwhelming one.

Mornington of the Fourth looked in on the solemn conclave sitting in the end study. Morny was not looking grave; he was smiling, as if he found entertainment in the present critical state of affairs. No doubt he did.

"Well, the chopper's come down, Jimmy," he said cheerily. "Of course, you're not goin'."

Muffin. "There'll be room for another fellow in this study when you're gone. This is a better study than mine. I'm thinking of changing."

Lovell & Co. glared at Tubby Muffin. Jimmy Silver grinned. "You haven't packed yet?" asked Tubby.



THE PREFECTS GET BUSY

Whack, whack, whack! The ashplants whacked on all sides, and there were wild yells from the Fourth Form rebels.

"No!" said Jimmy. "We're all backin' you up, of course."

"Of course!" agreed Jimmy.

"The Head will send a prefect for you, I suppose," said Mornington. "Shall we collar him and roll him down the stairs?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"No; it will be Bulkeley, most likely; and we don't want a row with Bulkeley. If the Head wants to see me, I'll go."

"And tell him who's who, and what's what," said Lovell. "Leave it to Jimmy."

"Well, we're ready, if you want us," said Mornington, and he strolled down the passage, whistling.

Tubby Muffin looked into the end study a few minutes later. Muffin gave the Fistical Four an agreeable grin.

"Sorry for you, Jimmy," he said.

"Thanks!"

"I hear you're going to-night," said Tubby.

"I dare say you've heard that," assented Jimmy.

"It's a bit rough," said Reginald Muffin. "I'm really sorry, and all that. Still, you might have expected it."

"I might."

"There you are, anyhow," said

"Not yet."

"Better got your things together, old man," advised Muffin. "The fact is, I'd like to move my things in here as soon as possible, before somebody else bags the study. I shall get on all right here with Lovell and Raby and Newcome. In fact, some fellows might think they'd made a change for the better."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've asked Mr. Carker," said Tubby. "He says I can change into this study when you're gone, Jimmy."

"You've asked Carker!" roared Lovell.

"Yes. Of course, I don't like Carker any more than you do. But after all, he's master of the Fourth. Isn't he?" said Tubby. "Now, I don't want to hurry you, Jimmy—"

"Thanks!"

"Not at all, old fellow. But really, I wish you'd get a move on. As you're sacked, you won't want the study any more, so I may as well move my things in at once. Will you come and help me, Lovell?"

Arthur Edward Lovell rose to his feet. The expression on his face might have warned a less fatuous youth than Reginald Muffin that trouble was coming. But Tubby never saw trouble till it came.

"That's right," said Tubby. "Come

on, old man. I've asked Putty to help me bring my things along, and he only told me to go and eat coke. Now, you— Oh, my hat! Wharrer you up to! Yaroooooh!"

Lovell grasped the fat Classical by the collar and swung him round. Then he planted his right boot on Tubby's tight trousers, with a terrific concussion. The yell that Tubby Muffin gave might have been heard on the other side of the Rookwood quad.

"Whooooooh!"

Tubby Muffin flew through the doorway. He landed on his hands and knees in the passage, and rolled over and roared.

"Yoo-hoo-hoooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come back and have another!" roared Lovell.

"Oh! Ow! Wow!"

Instead of going back and having another, Reginald Muffin scrambled up and fled along the Fourth Form passage. One, apparently, was enough for Reginald.

The 2nd Chapter. To Go or Not to Go?

"Here's Bulkeley!"
Bulkeley of the Sixth came into the end study with a very grave face. The Fistical Four eyed him.

"The Head's sent me for you, Silver," said the captain of Rookwood.

"I'm ready."

"I'm sorry for this, kid," said Bulkeley kindly. "But you must have known that it would come, after

they chose. But Jimmy Silver's pacifying voice was heard.

"Chuck it, you fellows! It's all right."

"You're not going to be sacked!" exclaimed Rawson.

"No, it's all right!"

And Jimmy Silver walked on with the prefect, through the buzzing crowd, to the stairs. They passed down the stairs and entered the Head's corridor. There Bulkeley paused for a moment, and fixed his eyes on Jimmy Silver.

"What's all this nonsense, Silver? You're bound to go now you're expelled."

"I'm not going, all the same."

"It's hard cheese," said Bulkeley, "but it's no good kicking. You should have thought of all that earlier. The Head's written to your father already to expect you home in the morning."

Jimmy shrugged his shoulders.

"If the other fellows make trouble I'm afraid your expulsion may be followed by others," said Bulkeley uneasily. "The Head's got his back up over this business. If you've got any influence over the Fourth, Silver, and you wish them well, you'd better try to persuade them to take it quietly."

"We're all standing together in this, Bulkeley," answered Jimmy Silver. "It's agreed that if one goes, we all go."

"That's rot!" said Bulkeley sharply.

"We don't think so."

"Well, come on!" said Bulkeley sharply, and he led Jimmy Silver on to the Head's study. He tapped at the door of that august apartment and opened it.

"Silver, sir!" he said.

"You may enter, Silver!" came Dr. Chisholm's deep voice.

Jimmy Silver entered, and Bulkeley drew the door shut and walked away, with a deeply troubled brow. Bulkeley of the Sixth, like a good many others at Rookwood, felt that the Head was acting in an extremely high-handed manner, which was not for the good of the school. But the Head was the Head, and his word was law at Rookwood, and George Bulkeley did not see what was to be done.

Jimmy Silver's heart beat a little faster as he stood in the Head's study, under the stern eyes of the headmaster. But he was still quiet and self-possessed.

Mr. Carker, the new master of the Fourth, was also in the study. His face was pale, and his hair was still sticky with tar from his late handling by the rebels. He gave Jimmy Silver a venomous look. Jimmy did not heed him; he looked at the Head.

Dr. Chisholm's face was hard and stern. Whether the Head had any regrets for his harsh treatment of Mr. Richard Dalton nobody knew but himself. But assuredly there was no doubt that he intended to crush the rebellion in the Fourth, which had followed the dismissal of the popular Form master.

"Silver"—his deep voice was like the roll of distant thunder—"I have already told you that you are expelled from this school."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

"You have ventured to lay hands upon your Form master—Mr. Carker—even to the extent of entrapping him in a box-room and coating him with tar and feathers!"

"Yes, sir."

"Every other participant in that outrage, Silver, will be flogged after prayers to-morrow morning! Of you, as the ringleader, I shall make an example. You leave Rookwood in the morning!"

Jimmy did not reply to that.

"For to-night," continued the Head, "you will be confined to the punishment-room. I regard your influence over your Form-fellows as dangerous, and you will not be allowed to hold any further communication with them before you leave."

"Indeed, sir!"

"I have already written to your father, informing him of the circumstances. He will expect you at home to-morrow."

No reply.

"That is all, Silver," said Dr. Chisholm. "I may add, however, that I should be glad to hear you express some regret to Mr. Carker for your rebellious and disrespectful treatment of him."

Jimmy smiled faintly.

"But I don't regret it, sir!" he answered.

"What!"

"Mr. Carker is a bully and a brute, sir!"

Mr. Carker made a movement. The Head's brow darkened.

(Continued overleaf.)

Simply top-hole—"Holding the Fort!" next Monday's great story of the Rookwood Rebels. Tell ALL your pals not to miss it!

The Retreat From Rookwood!



(Continued from previous page.)

The Fourth marched on. Mr. Carker was hustled aside and left leaning in a breathless state against the wall. Then Moray & Co. went victoriously upon their way.

The punishment-room at Rookwood—a room little used—was in a rather remote part of the old building, away from the Form-rooms and the studies. It was approached by a little staircase from one of the passages on the second floor. The Classical juniors arrived in a mob at that staircase. And then there was a sudden halt as Bulkeley's voice was heard.

"Stop, there!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth was standing on the stairs. Behind him appeared Neville, Lonsdale, Jones major, and several more of the Sixth. It dawned upon the juniors that a guard was being kept over the punishment-room.

"Get out of it, Bulkeley!" shouted Mornington.

Bulkeley raised his hand.

"The Head thought there might be some rot of this kind," he said.

BOYS' FRIEND FAVOURITES!



JIMMY SILVER OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

With very few exceptions, the Fourth-Formers back their leader, up right nobly, and this is proved beyond all doubt by the way in which they are sticking to Jimmy through thick and thin in the present trouble in the Form.

Since his appointment to the captaincy of the Fourth and Lower School, Jimmy Silver has done much towards bringing Rookwood well to the fore in all the various sporting events. Jimmy's present football and cricket teams are excellent, and they have proved worthy opponents for such well-known schools as Greyfriars and St. Jim's, who have earned for themselves great names in sport. Jimmy himself is great at both football and cricket. In fact, he is the best all-rounder in the Rookwood Lower School, for he excels as a boxer, and at running and swimming he has few equals.

Like most healthy youngsters, Jimmy, whose age is fifteen years and four months, is high-spirited. He dearly loves a "rag," and, of course, with two different Houses at Rookwood, he has every opportunity to indulge in this harmless fun. In the course of the friendly rivalry between Classicals and Moderns, Uncle James has found in Tommy Dodd, leader of

"He has asked me to see that nobody goes near the punishment-room to speak to Silver. We're here to do it. See?"

"Yah!"

"Go and eat cake!"

"I warn you to go back quietly to your studies," said Bulkeley. "It's time for prep, too."

"Blow prep!"

"We're comin' up!" roared Mornington.

"Keep back, I tell you!"

Morny turned to his followers.

"Come on!" he shouted. And then he rushed recklessly up the narrow stairs, with the mob of juniors at his heels. For the first time the rebels of Rookwood were in open conflict with the Sixth Form prefects, the representatives of authority in the school.

"Shove the young asses down!" said Bulkeley to his companions.

He grasped Morny as the latter came within reach. Morny struggled desperately.

"Back up!" he panted.

"Go for them!" roared Lovell.

The juniors came on gallantly. But there were six hefty seniors blocking the narrow staircase, and

they had all the advantage on their side.

In the punishment-room above Jimmy Silver could hear the din of the struggle and the excited yells of the combatants. But a locked door kept him from joining in the fray.

The struggle was sharp, but it was short. One by one the juniors were shoved and hurled down the staircase. As fast as they rushed up they were flung back by the prefects.

The rush stopped at last, and the juniors, crowded at the foot of the stairs, hurled yells and catcalls at the enemy above. But they realised that rushing tactics were no good.

"Now clear off, you young duffers!" gasped Bulkeley. "Clear off at once, and I won't report this to the Head."

"Report and be blown!" shouted Lovell.

"Are you going?" snapped the captain of Rookwood.

"No, we're not!"

"Come on, you fellows!" said the Rookwood captain. And the prefects, with their official ashplants in their hands, came in a body down the stairs.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

The ashplants whacked on all sides, and there were wild yells from the rebels. They backed away down the passage, and the prefects followed them up, still whacking.

"Nothin' doin', you chaps," said Mornington. "We may as well cut."

And the rebels cut, scattering in

the Fourth Form passage, the Head would have realised that the matter was far from closed.

The 4th Chapter. A Loyal Oath!

Jimmy Silver sat on the edge of the little iron bed in the punishment-room and yawned. At half-past nine, bed-time for the juniors, a prefect had stepped into the room and extinguished the gas. Jimmy Silver had turned in obediently; but as soon as the prefect was gone he had turned out again and dressed himself. He had no intention of sleeping that night in the punishment-room.

Under sentence of expulsion from the school, locked in a room far from his comrades, Jimmy Silver was still confident. He knew that he could rely upon his chums; the attempt to rescue him was proof of that, if he needed proof. Even without aid from outside, Jimmy had little doubt of being able to get out of his present quarters, and he was sure that aid would come.

As he sat on the edge of the bed he heard a muttering of voices on the landing, and recognised Bulkeley's voice, and then Neville's. He did not catch all the words, but he knew that the seniors were agreeing that it was unnecessary to watch the punishment-room any longer. Indeed, they could scarcely have been expected to keep it up through the night.

"The fags are all asleep by this

the Modern House, a very tough handful. But Jimmy and Tommy Dodd, although deadly rivals when it is a case of "House first," are always to be found shoulder to shoulder when it is up to them both to uphold the glorious traditions of the school. It is then that they are the staunchest of pals.

As in sports, so in class-work does Jimmy prove that he is a very bright youngster, and he is easily counted amongst the six best in the Fourth. And Jimmy loves Rookwood and his life there. That much he showed only recently. It was on the occasion of his long holiday with his chums in Canada. Although liking the life as lived by the cowpunchers of his cousin's ranch in Alberta, Uncle James after a while began to turn his thoughts to the old school and the fellows he had left behind. He almost yearned to be in the Form-room again, at lessons, and, although when the time came to wend his way back to England he was sorry to be leaving the boundless prairie, he was quite excited at the thought of being within the precincts of Rookwood once more.

At present the affairs at Rookwood are serious. Expelled by the Head of the school for being the ringleader of the Fourth Form rebels, Jimmy Silver has refused to take his departure. This may appear to be an act of defiance on the part of Uncle James, but he it said that he is quite justified in his stand. He and the Fourth are on strike until Mr. Dalton, their wrongfully-dismissed Form master, is reinstated at Rookwood. Jimmy stands for justice always, and on that point alone he is to be highly commended.

(There will be another Boys' Friend favourite next week!)

time," Jimmy heard Lonsdale remark, "and I'm fed-up with this."

"It's all right," said Bulkeley. "I'll give them a look in at the dormitory. Anyhow, if a silly fag sneaked up here and whispered through the keyhole, I can't see that it would hurt."

"Let's clear," mumbled Jones major.

And Jimmy heard footsteps receding.

Ten o'clock had rumbled out from the clock-tower of Rookwood. Jimmy did not think of sleep.

He waited for some sign from his friends; he was sure that it would come.

As it happened, he had not long to wait. It was not yet half-past ten when there was a faint tap at the door, and a whisper:

"Jimmy!"

It was Lovell's voice. Jimmy Silver jumped up, and crossed hurriedly to the door, and whispered back through the keyhole:

"Hallo, Lovell!"

"Oh! You're not asleep?"

"No fear!" chuckled Jimmy.

"There's nobody watching now," Lovell went on, "I've sneaked up

from the dorm to see. We're going to have you out, Jimmy. We tried this afternoon—"

"I heard you, old chap."

"They were too hefty for us," said Lovell. "We couldn't get up the stairs against them. But it's all clear now. I'll go back and call the fellows, and bring something to bust in this lock, Jimmy. We'll have you out jolly soon."

"Hold on!" breathed Jimmy.

"What—"

"Better manage it quietly, old man," said Jimmy through the keyhole. "If there's a shindy, the masters will come up, and the prefects, and there will be trouble."

"I don't care!" growled Lovell.

"But we want to get through this time, old chap. A shindy outside won't do me any good."

"Oh, we'd lick the lot!" said Lovell confidently.

Jimmy Silver smiled in the darkness. Arthur Edward Lovell's confidence was evidently undiminished by defeat.

"But it would spoil the whole game, Lovell, if there was a row," said Jimmy. "There's a lot to do after I get out, you know. Look here, the window of this room is over the window of the top box-room."

"Yes?"

"If I let down a string, you can tie a rope on it, and I can pull it up, and come down to the box-room window."

"My hat! It's sixty feet from the ground, Jimmy."

"That's all right."

"In the dark, too!"

"That's all right. That's the wheeze," said Jimmy Silver. "I'll wait for you to jerk the string, as a signal, and then I'll pull it up. Catch on?"

"Right-ho! But—"

There was a creak and a footstep, and a light flashed on Lovell as he bent outside the punishment-room door. Mr. Carker's harsh voice broke on the ears of the juniors.

"You young rascal!"

"Oh, my hat! Carker!" exclaimed Lovell, springing up.

"What are you doing here? How dare you leave your dormitory?" exclaimed Mr. Carker angrily. "You were speaking through the keyhole to Silver, Lovell. Don't attempt to deny it!"

Lovell gave an angry snort.

"I'm not going to deny it," he answered.

"Come with me. I shall take you to the Head!"

Mr. Carker's hand dropped on Lovell's shoulder. For a moment Arthur Edward was tempted to kick the master's shins and resist; but he thought better of it. His comrades were far away in the dormitory and alone, Lovell had no chance in the hands of the Fourth Form tyrant.

"Good-night, Jimmy!" he called out.

"Good-night, old chap!"

"Silence! Come!" snapped Mr. Carker.

Arthur Edward Lovell was led away. Mr. Carker led him direct to the headmaster's study. Dr. Chisholm blinked in surprise at the junior, who was clad in pyjamas and trousers and felt slippers.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"What does this mean, Mr. Carker?"

"I considered it judicious, sir, to keep an eye on the punishment-room," said Mr. Carker. "I found this boy speaking to Silver through the keyhole."

Dr. Chisholm knitted his brows. His hand strayed to his cane, and Lovell breathed hard. He felt that he was "for it," and he knew by experience how the Head could lay it on when he liked. But Dr. Chisholm did not pick up the cane. His glance, as it rested on Lovell, was not unkindly.

"You left your dormitory to speak to Silver?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Lovell quietly.

"I have no doubt that you are concerned about a boy who has been your friend, and who is to leave the school in the morning," said the Head. "Silver is separated from the rest of the school for good reasons, Lovell. You are very well aware that you should not have acted as you have done. But I can make allowance. I shall excuse you."

"Oh, sir!" ejaculated Lovell, quite taken aback.

Mr. Carker set his lips hard. He by no means shared the merciful view of the Head. But it was not for him to speak.

"I shall excuse you, Lovell. But do not leave your dormitory again to-night, or I shall be compelled to punish you severely," said Dr.

Chisholm. "Mr. Carker, please see Lovell safely back to the Fourth Form dormitory."

Mr. Carker opened his lips and closed them again. In silence he obeyed the Head's injunction.

Lovell followed him back to the dormitory. Mr. Carker opened the door of that apartment, and turned on the light. He gave a bitter glance up and down the long room. All the Classical Fourth were awake. Then his hard eyes fixed on Lovell.

"Go to bed, Lovell!"

"Yes, sir!" murmured Lovell.

He turned in. Mr. Carker looked up and down the room again, with a black brow, and turned out the light and retired.

As soon as he was gone there was a buzz of voices in the dormitory.

"What's up, Lovell?"

"Licked?"

Arthur Edward Lovell explained.

"The Head really isn't a bad old sort," he concluded. "I thought I was for it, and no mistake! You should have seen Carker's face when the Head let me off." Lovell chuckled. "The Head's a good sort in his way; but he's not going to bunk Jimmy Silver, all the same."

"No jolly fear!" said Mornington.

"But how are we going to get at Jimmy, with the Carker-bird on the watch?" asked Rawson.

"That's all right. I fixed that up with Jimmy before Carker happened along," chuckled Lovell. "It's right as rain!"

A quarter of an hour later Lovell opened the dormitory door softly, and looked out and listened. All was dark and silent outside. Even the Sixth were in bed by this time; and, though lights still burned in masters' Common-room and some of the masters' studies, there was no gleam of light above the dormitory staircase.

Lovell trotted softly out to the box-room. He reached it in a few minutes; and then, for a little while, he was busy plaiting box-ropes into a thick rope that would have stood the weight of half a dozen juniors. Then he opened the windows, and groped outside in the dim moonlight, and caught a string that hung and floated from the window of the punishment-room above. A few moments more and he had tied on the rope and given the signal to Jimmy Silver.

The 5th Chapter.

Mr. Carker Asks For It!

Jimmy Silver had waited long and patiently. He had made a string by tying together strips from the sheets of his bed, and that string dangled from the window of the punishment-room. It was a small window, but large enough for a junior to pass through, though certainly no one had ever dreamed that a junior would think of passing through it, as it opened on a sheer drop of at least sixty feet. At the open window Jimmy Silver waited patiently. He knew that sooner or later Lovell would carry out his instructions, and it was only a question of time.

There came a jerk at the string at last. It was the signal, and Jimmy drew it in. Below, dimly in the moonlight, he could see Lovell's head projecting from the box-room window.

The plaited rope came within his reach, and he drew it in. There was an ample length of it, Lovell had not done his work by halves. Jimmy drew the end across to the bed, and made it fast there.

Then he returned to the window.

With a cool and steady head, and taking care not to look downwards, Jimmy climbed out on the sill.

He grasped the rope, tested it carefully, and then trusted his weight to it.

Below, at the box-room window, Lovell looked upward, watching him breathlessly. Hand - below - hand, Jimmy Silver came down, slowly and steadily.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Lovell, as Jimmy reached the level of the box-room at last.

He grasped his chum, and drew him in. Jimmy Silver slid in over the sill, and stood in the box-room, breathing hard and deep.

"All serene, old chap?" asked Lovell anxiously.

"Right as rain!"

"Good! The fellows are waiting for us in the dorm."

"Come on!" said Jimmy.

In the darkness the two juniors crept silently along dark passages, and reached the dormitory of the

Classical Fourth. As Lovell opened the door, there was a footstep on the stairs.

"Quick!" he breathed. "It's Carker again, I fancy! He's doing the night-watchman stunt to-night."

The two juniors entered the dormitory, and closed the door softly. Two or three whispering voices were heard.

"That you, Lovell?"

"Jimmy—"

"Shush!" breathed Lovell.

"Carker's coming up!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Cut into bed, Lovell!" said Jimmy hurriedly.

"But you—"

"That's all right."

Arthur Edward Lovell bolted into bed as a hand was heard on the door. He had barely drawn the blankets over him when the door opened and the light was switched on.

Mr. Carker stood in the doorway, staring grimly into the dormitory. Evidently the new master of the Fourth was suspicious. His eyes sought Lovell's bed at once. But Lovell was there, and the Form master looked up and down the room, watchfully and suspiciously. Two or three snores were heard—in Tubby Muffin's case quite genuine. But in some of the beds the juniors sat up and blinked at Mr. Carker in the sudden light.

Jimmy Silver was not to be seen. He had drawn close to the wall, and the door, in opening, had hidden him from sight.

Behind the door Jimmy Silver stood silent, scarcely breathing, while the Form master looked about him suspiciously. That Mr. Carker suspected some nocturnal attempt to rescue Jimmy was certain; but equally certainly he did not suspect that Jimmy was in the dormitory at that moment, within three feet of him.

"Do you want anythin', sir?" asked Mornington politely, as he met the master's suspicious glance.

Mr. Carker knitted his brows.

"I heard a sound as I came here," he said. "Someone opened or closed the door. Who has been out of the room?"

There was no reply from the Classical Fourth. If Mr. Carker wanted to know that he had to find it out.

Jimmy made no sound. He hoped that Mr. Carker would be satisfied and would go. But Mr. Carker was not easily satisfied. He came over towards Arthur Edward Lovell's bed.

"Have you been out of the dormitory, Lovell?"

No answer.

"Do you hear me, Lovell?"

"I hear you, sir," said Arthur Edward.

"Then answer me—truthfully! Something has been going on here," said Mr. Carker savagely. "I believe there is some scheme for getting Silver out of the punishment-room. Answer me at once!"

"I've nothing to say, sir," said Lovell.

Mr. Carker had a cane under his arm. He let it slide down into his hand, and took a businesslike grip on it.

"Get out of bed, Lovell!"

"What for?" grunted Lovell.

"I am going to cane you."

Lovell set his teeth.

"You're not!" he answered.

Swish! The cane came down across Arthur Edward Lovell, and he gave a gasp and a jump. The bedclothes fell back, revealing the fact that Lovell was fully dressed.

Mr. Carker's eyes glittered at him.

"I thought so," he said. "You are dressed. You have been out of the dormitory again, Lovell! The Head excused you last time. This time I shall not take you to him, but shall deal with you myself. Stand up and hold out your hand!"

Lovell jumped out of bed, but on the opposite side from Mr. Carker. Mornington and Rawson, Conroy and Putty Grace turned out at the same moment with grim looks. Oswald and Raby and Newcome followed their example at once.

Trouble was imminent.

Click! The dormitory door closed suddenly, and the key was turned in the lock. Mr. Carker swung round towards it in amazement, and his eyes almost started from his head at the sight of Jimmy Silver standing by the closed door.

"Silver!" he stuttered.

"Little me, sir!" said Jimmy coolly.

"Collar him, you fellows, and keep him quiet!"

And Jimmy Silver led the rush.

The 6th Chapter. The Plan of Campaign.

Mr. Carker lashed out with his cane as the Classical juniors rushed on him. There was a yelp from Raby and a gasp from Putty of the Fourth. But the next moment Mr. Carker went staggering across Lovell's bed, with half a dozen pairs of hands grasping him.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Collar the cad!" grinned Mornington.

"Sit on his head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

From the other side of the bed



THE ESCAPE! Hand below hand, Jimmy Silver came down the rope, slowly and steadily. He was making his escape from the punishment-room to the box-room below, where Lovell waited, anxiously watching his chum's perilous descent.

Lovell threw his arm round Mr. Carker's neck and dragged him down as he strove to rise.

"Got him!" chuckled Lovell.

Newcome tore the cane from Mr. Carker's hand. Conroy and Raby grasped his wrists.

Mr. Carker struggled savagely. But as he realised that he could not release himself, he opened his mouth to yell for help. Jimmy Silver was ready for him. As Mr. Carker's mouth opened, a cake of soap was jammed into it, and driven home hard.

"Gggrrrrrrrr!"

Mr. Carker spluttered and gurgled, but he did not yell. It was not possible for him to yell now.

He gurgled and gasped.

"Sorry, old bean!" said Jimmy Silver politely. "You would butt in, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Keep him tight, you fellows, and mind that he doesn't kick up a row," said Jimmy Silver. "We don't want the Head and the prefects up here."

"We've got him!" chuckled Lovell.

Mr. Carker struggled desperately. Morny picked up the cane from the floor and flourished it.

"Keep quiet, Carker!" he rapped out.

The enraged master still struggled. The cane came down with a lash across his whirling legs. There was a gasp of spluttering anguish from Mr. Carker.

"Takin' it quietly now?" asked

The juniors watched those proceedings in amazement. Mr. Carker was still more astonished. Possibly he feared a repetition of his previous experience of tar and feathers, for his look was very apprehensive. But having secured him, Jimmy Silver took no further heed of the new master of the Fourth.

He crossed to the electric light switch and turned it off. The dormitory was plunged into darkness.

"What's that for?" demanded Lovell.

"The light might be seen from the windows," said Jimmy. "We've got some candles here."

"What does it matter, anyhow?" demanded Arthur Edward. "There'll be a row over this, and we're up against the beaks. May as well come now as any other time."

"Jimmy's leader," said Mornington.

Lovell grunted. Four or five candle-ends were lighted, shedding a dim and glimmering light through the long, lofty room.

All the Classical Fourth were wide awake now and all out of bed, with the exception of Tubby Muffin. Tubby was sitting up and blinking at the scene. Peele and his friends were looking very uneasy. They did not like the new Form master any more than the other fellows did, but they were far from keen on entering upon a campaign against the Head. But the great majority of the Form were heart and soul with Jimmy Silver, and prepared to follow his lead whithersoever he should lead them.

All eyes were fixed on Jimmy. Mr. Carker, bound and helpless, wriggled unregarded on Lovell's bed.

"Well, what's the game?" asked Mornington. "Give it a name, Jimmy."

"Is it going to be a barring-out?" asked Lovell.

There was a murmur of applause.

"Good egg!"

"That's the game, Jimmy!"

"Lend me your ears, gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said the captain of the Fourth. "It's agreed that the whole Form are up against the beaks till Dicky Dalton comes back."

"Hear, hear!"

"It's agreed that if any fellow is bunked the whole Form stands by him and doesn't let him go."

"What-ho!"

"It's war now," went on Jimmy Silver. "I'm booked to go to-morrow morning, and some of you fellows will follow if you don't give in."

"We're not giving in!" growled Lovell.

"Then it's a fight to a finish," said Jimmy Silver. "And now it's come to that, a barring-out is the only way."

"Bravo!"

"If the whole school were in it that would be the simple way," went on Jimmy Silver, "but it's only the Classical Fourth. Even the Modern Fourth are not in this with us. We're only a handful, and we shall have all the Sixth against us—perhaps the Fifth, too, and a barring-out inside the school isn't practical politics. The fact is that we're on strike till Mr. Dalton comes back, and we can't go on strike inside Rookwood."

"But what—" ejaculated Lovell.

"Then where—" said Mornington.

Jimmy held up his hand.

"My idea is for the whole Classical Fourth to retreat from the school," he said quietly. "To-morrow morning the Head will find Carker here, but he won't find us."

"Great pip!"

"Phew!"

There was a murmur of amazement among the juniors. Jimmy Silver's plan almost took their breath away.

"But—but where are we going?" exclaimed Lovell. "We could bar them out from the dormitory—"

"We should be starved out in a day," said Jimmy.

"Ye-es, but—"

"What about barricading the Fourth Form passage?" asked Raby.

"The same thing applies, old chap. We should have to have time to get ready and lay in grub and all that, and there's no time. The other side are too strong for us at close quarters, and we can't bar them out and then surrender as soon as we get hungry."

There was a chuckle among the juniors.

"We're getting out of Rookwood," went on Jimmy. "The Head has sacked me. I'm to go to-morrow. Well, I'm going to-night, and all the

(Continued on page 576.)



up and winning easy!" said Maddock hopefully. "Stick to it, Barry, my lad! You're doing fine!"

When the gong sounded for the sixth round, Barry O'Rooney's left eye looked considerably damaged. The stoker's nose had also received rough treatment, and there were scarlet patches on his ribs and chest. He was fresher than O'Rooney, and urged on by shouts of "Finish it, Slarky!" he rushed in fiercely, so fiercely that he broke down O'Rooney's guard. The Irishman reeled and failed to recover. A smashing blow on the ribs and a quick, clean drive at the chin, put him down.

As he lay there on his back the bluejackets nearly split the roof of the tent with their cheers, while the yachtsmen remained dumb and silent.

"Four-five-six!" counted the man with the watch, while the alert stoker crouched ready to pounce.

Then came the sound of the gong, and Barry O'Rooney crawled to his feet and gave his jarred head a shake.

"Stick it, Barry!" shouted the yachtsmen, hoping against hope. "You're not whacked yet! Go in and win!"

It was a weary-looking Barry O'Rooney, and though he kept his feet, the seventh round was the stoker's all the way. It seemed certain that the next round would end it, but the plucky Irishman, always on the defensive, fought his way through doggedly and staggered to his corner, winning plaudits from both sides.

"He might make a draw of it yet," said Maddock. "It looks black, souse me, but he might, Tom. He's piled up heaps of points."

"If he had twelve hours' sleep he might go another four rounds," said Prout dimly. "But not without. But, by honey, he's a good 'un, Ben, and I don't grudge him his tenner now. The boy's playing for the knock-out, and I don't want to see old Barry get that. So I think I'll go out and take a stroll round."

Later on, Mr. Thomas Prout regretted that he had not remained. Stoker Slark rose full of fight and bore down on Barry O'Rooney, driving the yachtsman to the ropes. Barry clinched, and they had worked back almost into the centre of the ring before they were separated. And then something must have happened to the stoker; that does happen to men in a gruelling contest when they are not thoroughly trained and wound up. He came again with a rush and then stopped dizzily and lowered his hands. Barry

(Continued from
previous page.)

O'Rooney had not much left in him, but he was an old ringsman, and while a younger man might have thought it was a feint or a trick, O'Rooney saw his chance and took it, for in another second the stoker might have recovered.

It was not a very stinging blow to the chin, but it was the best the weary yachtsman could do, and it was quite enough. The stoker's head went back with a jerk, and sagging at the knees, he rocked forward slowly and fell face downwards. Then, with a spasmodic heave of his body, he twisted over and lay still, while O'Rooney, bending over him, rocked groggily on his legs.

There was a breathless silence, except for the clear, unruffled voice that counted out the fatal seconds.

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine—Out!"

And then pandemonium and caps in the air, yells and whistles and handclaps and stamping.

Barry helped his opponent to his feet, and then sat down himself with a flop, almost as beaten as his opponent. It had been a good, clean fight if not a great one. When their gloves had been removed, the boxers shook hands.

"The cup will be presented to the winner after supper," cried the lieutenant. "In ten minutes exactly the motor-coaches will return to Port-hampton."

Ching Lung could not get away at once. He had Mr. Joseph Sharkham to deal with, and Joe was a better man of business than he had ever been a boxer.

"You've done it on me lovely," said Joe to the prince. "You've done it on me lovely, so where do I come in? I've booked O'Rooney for a fortnight at a good screw, and now you've gone and burst him! How about my show, and him the star turn and shining light, so to speak? Why, he won't be fit to spar with a wax-doll not for the next ten days! And I'd fixed up that fight with Tinker Soggs, him as gave my last man the k.o., and cost me a fiver! That's for Sat'day, at treble prices, and every ticket sold! Why, they'll be so savage, they'll tear the tent down and tar and feather me!"

"I wish you'd thought of all that before you'd let me hire the tent and taken my money, Sharkham," said Ching Lung.

"I'd never have touched your money if I knewed it was going to be such a slogging match," growled the showman. "O'Rooney is bursted and I'm in the cart, and it ain't fair to the public! I shall 'ave to cash up them Sat'day tickets or they'll lynch me. I'm in about ten carts, five wugonettes, and a charabanc—that's me!"

The prince found it a much more expensive matter to pay out Mr. Sharkham than to keep Gan Waga in

oysters, though that was expensive enough.

He paid up good-temperedly, however, and late that night Barry O'Rooney sat in the booby-hutch in an easy-chair, with a cushion at his back. He was sore but not sad, and not at all beautiful to look at, and it hurt him to smile. But to Prout, Maddock, and Joe, for the first time in his life, Barry O'Rooney seemed quite handsome as the silver cup filled with champagne went round and they toasted him.

"And now, by honey, Barry," said Prout gently, "you've come home, so where's that fiver to show us. If you can't show it we go to the prince and draw our winnings!"

It was at that moment that Hal Honour, the engineer, walked in. Without looking at Prout & Co., he held out a crisp piece of paper to Barry O'Rooney.

"I saw the fight—my treat—take this. You've earned it!" he said in his gruff, blunt way. "Night!"

The next second he was gone.

The faces of Prout & Co. were a picture. Just at the moment of their triumph it was snatched from them.

"Bejabbers, ut's a gint he is!" said Barry, with a huge chuckle of delight. "O've earned ut! You heard him say so, you muzzle-headed freaks! Ut's a tenner, too, so I reckon you ought to pay double, as O've earned double!"

"Done, by honey!" gasped Prout.

Barry winked solemnly at the note.

"O'd like to frame ye, me son, but Oi think you'll be better suit!" he said. "Who says another bottle at the fizz?"

That was the only consolation Prout & Co. received—but none would say that Barry hadn't deserved to win.

THE END.

(For next Monday: "The Zoo Ship!" by Sidney Drew—another fine story featuring Prince Ching Lung, Gan Waga & Co. Be sure you read it! Order your BOYS' FRIEND in advance and avoid disappointment!)

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Look Out For It!

THE RETREAT FROM ROOKWOOD!

(Continued from page 567.)

Classical Fourth are coming with me."

"Phew!"

"But where?" persisted Lovell. "This isn't the time of year for camping out in the jolly old fields, you know."

"No fear!" said Tubby Muffin.

"I've thought all that out," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I thought out the plans while I was waiting in the punishment-room. We're going to bar out the Head, not in Rookwood, but on the island in the river."

"The—the island?"

"That's it! It will mean roughing it, of course. But I suppose we're all ready to rough it sooner than give in?"

"Yes, rather!"

"There's the old hut on the island—the old Army hut, you know—that will be our headquarters. We can get in a supply of grub before anybody can get at us there. We can take our camping stuff along with us. That won't take long to pack. To-morrow morning there won't be any Classical Fourth Form at Rookwood."

"Poor old Rookwood!" murmured Pully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but—" stuttered Lovell.

"The Head will be bound to come to terms in the long run," said Jimmy Silver. "Before the barring-out has gone on a week it will be the talk of the county. The school governors will hear of it. There'll be no end of a shindy! All we've got to do is to hold out till the enemy come to terms."

"Bravo!"

Mr. Carker heard, though he could not speak. His eyes grew wide with amazement.

"I—I say," stammered Tubby Muffin. "I—I think I'll stay here, Jimmy. It's co-co-cold on the island, you know."

"I'm jolly well not goin'!" exclaimed Peele hotly. "We shall all get the sack!"

"Awful rot!" said Gower.

Jimmy Silver glanced round quietly.

"The whole Form are standing in," he said. "We're bound to stand together. Two or three or half a dozen could be expelled, but they can't sack a whole Form. We must stand together, Peele."

"There's another point," drawled Mornington. "Any fellow who stays behind will have the pleasure of seeing Carker every day. Carker will take it out of the fellows he can get at, I fancy. You'd really be better off on the island, Peele, with the rest."

Cyril Peele seemed to realise the force of that remark, for he said no more.

"And we're goin' to-night, Jimmy!" asked Mornington, his eyes gleaming with the anticipation of excitement.

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver, "and we're losing no time. Carker can tell the Head all about it in the morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Lovell.

There was a footstep outside. It was followed by the turning of the handle of the door. The juniors suddenly silent, scarcely breathed.

There was a sharp rap at the door.

"What's going on here? The door's locked! Open this door at once!"

It was the voice of Bulkeley of the Sixth.

"That settles it," murmured Peele.

"Dowled out, by gad!"

"Shut up, Peele!"

Bulkeley knocked again.

"Open this door! Is Mr. Carker here? Let me in at once, you young sweeps, or I shall call the Head!"

"We'll let you in, Bulkeley!" called back Mornington, after a whispered word from Jimmy Silver.

"Buck up, then!"

Jimmy Silver gave hurried instructions in whispers. It was a critical moment, for had the alarm been given then the planned retreat from Rookwood certainly could never have been carried out. But Jimmy Silver was equal to the emergency.

The candles were blown out, and seven or eight sturdy juniors gathered by the door. Then the key was turned back and the door opened.

Bulkeley of the Sixth blinked in the dark.

"What—" he began.

He made a step into the room, groping for the electric light switch. At the same moment Jimmy Silver & Co. fastened upon him.

Bump!

Almost before he knew what was happening, the captain of Rookwood was on the floor, helpless in the hands of his assailants. Jimmy Silver jammed a sponge into his mouth, and Bulkeley gasped and spluttered. He struggled savagely, but he struggled in vain. A cord was knotted round his arms, a strap buckled round his legs. Utterly helpless, the captain of Rookwood was lifted, carried to a bed and laid thereon.

Jimmy Silver bent over him.

"It's all right, Bulkeley! Keep smiling!"

"Mmmmmmm!" came faintly from Bulkeley.

"And now get a move on," said Jimmy Silver.

And the Classical Fourth, in deep but subdued excitement, promptly got a move on. The remainder of the night was a busy time for the rebels of Rookwood.

Dr. Chisholm, in the comfortable belief that trouble in the Fourth was now at an end, slept the sleep of the just. He little dreamed that the morning was to bring him the astounding news of the retreat from Rookwood.

THE END.

(Look out for "Holding the Fort"—next Monday's stirring story of the Fourth Form Rebels. Don't miss it!)

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