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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending March 15th, 1924.

Holding the Fort!

By Owen Conquest.



The Island Battle—The Clash Between the Fourth Form Rebels and the Rookwood Prefects!

(A stirring incident from the great story of the chums of Rookwood School in this issue!)

ANOTHER STIRRING STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD REBELS!

Holding the Fort!

By Owen Conquest.



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

The Fourth Form rebels take up their headquarters on the island in the river, and from that impregnable position are able to defy the authority of Dr. Chisholm!

The 1st Chapter.
The Head is Wrath!

Clang! Clang! The rising-bell rang out over Rookwood School in the spring morning.

In the various dormitories in the School House there were sounds of movement and activity. From one dormitory after another, Rookwood fellows came down, crowding the staircases and the passages. But, strange to relate, from the dormitory of the Classical Fourth Form not a single fellow emerged.

As a rule, Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Classical Fourth were among the first down, after the rising-bell had ceased to clang. On the present occasion Jimmy Silver & Co. were conspicuous by their absence.

No one, certainly, expected to see Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth, in the passages or the quad. For Jimmy Silver was supposed to be shut up in the punishment-room, under sentence of expulsion from the school, by order of the Head! Jimmy's disappearance from the throng of Rookwooders that morning therefore would have excited no remark. But his chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, were not to be seen—neither were Mornington and Erroll, Townsend and Topham, Putty of the Fourth and Tubby Mussin—in fact, not one fellow belonging to the Classical Fourth.

Shell fellows and fags of the Third and Second remarked on the peculiar circumstance, and wondered what it meant. If the Classical Fourth had overslept themselves, it was odd that their new Form master, Mr. Carker, had not roused them out. But Mr. Carker himself, as it happened, was not to be seen, either. Bulkeley of the Sixth, as head prefect, might have been expected to take some note of the matter in Mr. Carker's absence. But Bulkeley of the Sixth did not appear to be on the scene—indeed, in the Sixth Form passage a group of seniors were debating that subject and wondering what had become of George Bulkeley.

Matters certainly were not in their usual state in Rookwood that morning. The old school was not proceeding on the usual calm tenor of its way.

"There's somethin' up!" Smythe of the Shell remarked slyly; and Smythe's friends agreed that it was so.

"There's the Head!" whispered Mansum of the Fifth. "My hat! He looks in a royal wax!"

All eyes were turned on Dr. Chisholm, as he came rustling along the lower Hall. His face was set and his eyes glinted. He was quite calm—the Head was always perfectly calm—but the Rookwood fellows knew the signs. When that glint shone in the eyes of the Head of Rookwood it boded trouble for somebody.

"Neville!" Neville of the Sixth hurried up.

"Neville's for it!" whispered Smythe to his friends. "A prefect of the Sixth, too! Jolly glad it isn't little me!"

Nobody envied Neville, as that

youth answered the call of the headmaster. Neville himself looked, and felt, uneasy. There was wrath to fall upon somebody—some person or persons unknown—and Neville devoutly hoped that it was not to fall upon his own devoted head.

"Neville, I have visited the punishment-room to speak to the junior who is under sentence of expulsion from the school. I did not find him there. Silver is gone!"

"Indeed, sir!" gasped Neville.

"The door was locked as usual," said the Head in a deep voice. "The boy appears to have left the punishment-room by a rope from the window. This cannot have been done without assistance—somebody was acting in collusion with Silver."

"Oh, sir!" said Neville.

"Is anything known of this, Neville?"

"I don't know anything, sir."

"Then it is your duty, Neville, to know something of it, as a prefect of the Sixth Form!" said the Head grimly.

And he rustled on, leaving the hapless Neville with a crimson face, the cynosure of all eyes.

Dr. Chisholm rustled on to Mr. Carker's study—once the study of Mr. Dalton, the former master of the Fourth. He tapped sharply at the door and opened it. The room was empty.

"Pish!" said the Head.

He turned back into the corridor.

"Smythe!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Smythe of the Shell.

"Have you seen Mr. Carker this morning?"

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Bless my soul! He is down, I suppose?"

"I haven't seen him, sir!"

"Go up to his room at once, Smythe, and tell him that Dr. Chisholm is waiting in his study to speak to him."

"Certainly, sir!"

Smythe of the Shell fairly flew up the staircase. In less than a minute he was thumping at Mr. Carker's bedroom door.

There was no answer from within. Smythe of the Shell turned the handle and opened the door.

"Mr. Carker!" he called breathlessly.

No reply.

Adolphus Smythe ventured into the room. The blinds were drawn; it was dusky in the room. But it was light enough for Smythe of the Shell to see that the room was vacant, and that the bed had not been slept in.

Smythe blinked helplessly at the bed. It was evidently impossible to deliver the Head's message.

"My only aunt!" murmured Smythe.

He descended the stairs again, and approached Mr. Carker's study in a very gingerly manner. The headmaster was not a pleasant person to face in present circumstances. Smythe was almost trembling as he looked into Mr. Carker's study and caught the Head's steely eye.

"Well?"

"Mr. Carker isn't there, sir!" stammered Smythe.

"It—it looks like it, sir."

Dr. Chisholm left the study, his majestic brow growing blacker and blacker. He glanced over the buzzing crowd of Rookwood fellows, and the buzz ceased as if by magic.

"Does any boy present know where Silver of the Fourth Form is to be found?"

There was no answer. Nobody had any information to give, and all tried to avoid catching the Head's keen, inquiring eye. That keen eye noted that no members of the Classical Fourth were to be seen.

"Neville, are not the Fourth down yet?"

"I haven't seen them, sir. I think not."

"This is very extraordinary! Go to the Fourth Form dormitory, Neville, and if Silver is there, bring him to my study."

And Dr. Chisholm swept away, little dreaming of the amazing news that the prefect was to bring him from the Fourth Form dormitory.

The 2nd Chapter. The Rebels in Camp.

"Jimmy!"

"Hallo, Tubby!"

"What about brekken?" asked Tubby Mussin anxiously.

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

It was past the usual breakfast-hour; but Jimmy Silver was not thinking chiefly about brekken. There were plenty of other matters to occupy the mind of the leader of the Rookwood rebels.

The Fourth Form of Rookwood—at least, the Classical portion of that Form—were in revolt against the Head. And under Jimmy Silver's cool and skilful leadership the revolt had been, so far, carried out successfully.

In the dark hours of the night the retreat from Rookwood had been



LOVELL IS ANNOYED! "Do you think I don't know how to light a camp-fire?" demanded Lovell hotly. "I don't think, I know!" answered Putty Grace cheerily. Then he fled, for Lovell, thoroughly exasperated, snatched up a billet of wood and made a rush at him.

stairs himself. There was a buzzing crowd in the passages now. All the fellows realised that there was something very unusual on the tapis. Every eye was fixed on the Head when he came down the staircase with a brow like thunder.

"Where is Bulkeley?" called out the Head.

"We—wo don't know, sir," stammered Neville.

"What?"

"He's not in his room, sir, and we haven't seen him."

"What does this mean, Neville?"

"I—I don't know, sir!"

Dr. Chisholm, more thunderous than ever, swept away to the Sixth Form passage. Bulkeley's door was open; Lonsdale and Smith major were discussing matters in the doorway. They made room at once for the Head to enter. Dr. Chisholm glanced at the bed in the alcove; it had not been occupied the previous night, that was clear at a glance.

"Do you know where Bulkeley is, Lonsdale?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"He cannot have been absent from Rookwood last night."

island in the river, and the skiff drawn up on the shore. And then Jimmy Silver & Co. mapped out the camp.

The island was small, wooded in places. In the summer-time it was a favourite spot for picnics, and the Rookwooders knew every inch of it. In the middle of it, among the trees, stood an old Army hut, long deserted and falling into disrepair. It had been used for some purpose in the war-time, and never used since. Now the rebels of Rookwood were making it their headquarters.

Camping materials had been brought along in great quantities; ground-sheets and rugs and blankets were ample. There were spirit-stoves and an oil-stove, and pots and kettles. The equipment of the Rookwood Boy Scouts had come in very useful. It was cold weather for camping, but the old hut gave accommodation for sleeping quarters, and the rebels were prepared to rough it.

As the spring sun rose on the glimmering river, Arthur Edward Lovell started a camp-fire. At all events, he started starting a camp-fire. There was plenty of wood on the island, but it was decidedly damp, and Arthur Edward Lovell found his task a difficult one. But he stuck to it manfully.

Mornington and Raby had been despatched in the skiff down the river to Coombe. The rebels had pooled their financial resources, and Morn was supplied with cash for shopping in the village. Extensive shopping was to be done, as soon as the village shops opened, and the skiff was to return laden with provisions and other supplies. Jimmy Silver cast several anxious glances down the shining stream, hoping to see the messengers returning. The supplies were very much needed, if the rebels were to stand a siege on the island in the river. And assuredly they did not expect to be left there to camp in peace.

"Jimmy, old man," persisted Tubby Mussin, "they'll be going into class at Rookwood now."

"Let 'em!" grunted Jimmy. "It's jolly late for brekken," said Tubby. "Of course, I'm backing you up like anything, Jimmy. Rely on me! But I told you to be jolly careful about the grub, didn't I?"

"Dry up, Tubby!"

"That's all very well!" exclaimed Reginald Mussin warmly. "But you remember I told you to be careful about the grub. I suppose a fellow can't miss his brekken, can he?"

"Well, he might," said Jimmy.

"Miss his brekken!" ejaculated Tubby Mussin, quite aghast at the bare possibility.

"Yes, and his dinner, too."

"His—his—his dinner, too!" said Tubby faintly.

"And his tea," said Jimmy Silver.

"His tut-tut-tea!"

"And his supper," pursued Jimmy Silver ruthlessly.

"His supper! Oh, Jimmy!"

"And his brekken next morning!" went on the captain of the Fourth.

Tubby Mussin stood rooted to the ground. These dreadful possibilities dumbfounded him. Jimmy Silver pointed down the river in the direction of the distant village.

"There's no brekken till the boat comes back, fathead," he said. "So you'd better hope that Morn will manage it all right."

"But, I say, the Head may get on to it. The boat may be stopped!" gasped Tubby.

"Possibly," assented Jimmy.

"What are we going to do, then?"

"We're going to do without, in that case, old fat top!"

"Without grub!" yelled Tubby.

"Just that."

"Oh dear!"

Jimmy Silver turned from the bank and walked towards the hut, in front of which Arthur Edward Lovell was labouring with the obstinate camp-fire. Lovell's face was red and smoky, and he seemed to be in an exasperated frame of mind. Lovell had taken charge of the camp-fire, on the ground that he could do it best; but he was not making much of a success of it so far.

"Getting it going, old man?" said Jimmy cheerily.

A thick column of smoke was rising from a stack of damp wood; but there seemed no sign of a blaze.

Lovell looked up, and rubbed his eyes, which were red and watering from an overdose of smoke.

"It's getting on," he said. "Can't do everything at once. Rome wasn't built in a day."

"Is that camp-fire going to take as long as the building of Rome?" inquired Putty of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You silly, cheeky ass!" roared Lovell. "Do you think I don't know how to light a camp-fire?"
"I don't think—I know!" answered Putty cheerily. "I know you've jolly well nearly smoked us off the island. Are you going to try to boil the kettle with smoke?"

There was a chuckle from a crowd of juniors round the hut. Arthur Edward Lovell did not answer Putty's question in words. After an hour's desperate struggle with damp wood, Lovell's patience was wearing a little thin.

He picked up a billet of wood and made a rush at Putty. That humorous youth promptly fled.

"Come back, you cheeky ass!" roared Lovell.

"Easy does it, old man!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "Shall I give you a hand with the fire?" Lovell glared at him.

"Do you think I need any help? If I did, do you think you've got sense enough to be of any use?"

Evidently Arthur Edward's temper was suffering!

"Well, we want a fire, don't we?" said Newcome. "It's a bit parky here, you know!"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Look here, Lovell—"

"Cheese it! How's a fellow to light a fire with a lot of silly asses standing round grinning and cackling?" demanded Lovell hotly. "Where's the paraffin? I suppose somebody had sense enough to bring along that can of paraffin!"

"You hadn't!" remarked Oswald.

"Shut up, Oswald!"

"Here's the paraffin, old man!" said Jimmy Silver. "Go easy with it! We want it for the oil-stove, you know!"

"Yes, I know," said Lovell. "I know without your telling me! Teach your grandmother!"

"Lovell, old chap—"

"For goodness' sake get out of the way, and let a fellow get this dashed fire going!"

Lovell swamped paraffin on the smoking wood. A thick, black column of smoke rose and soared over the trees on the island. It might have been a signal to half the county of Hampshire.

The juniors crowded back from it. Lovell fumbled in his pocket for matches. He had already used several boxes of matches; but, fortunately, there were plenty more.

"Look out!" yelled Jimmy. "Keep clear, Lovell, if you're going—"

"Oh, let a fellow alone!"

"But—"

"Rate!"

Lovell struck a match and threw it upon the pile. There was a roar of blazing flame, and Lovell leaped back, gasping and spluttering. Flames soared and roared, and Lovell yelled and clawed at his scorched face.

"Ow—ow! Yow! Wow! Ow!"

"The silly ass!" gasped Erroll.

"Lovell—"

"Ow—ow! Wow!"

Jimmy Silver rushed to him, quite alarmed. Fortunately, Lovell had escaped with singed hair and eyebrows.

"It's all right!" he gasped. "Ow! Oh dear! It's all right! Bit scorched—"

"You might have blinded yourself, you howling idiot!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Rot! Where's the paraffin can?"

"Let it alone!"

"Look here, Jimmy Silver—"

Jimmy jerked away the can. Lovell's performances with a dangerous inflammable fluid were a little too exciting, in Jimmy Silver's opinion.

"You ass, I've got to feed it now it's going!" roared Lovell. "Perhaps I'd better put on some methylated spirit, though!"

"Sit on him, somebody!" shouted Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's the methylated?" shouted Lovell.

"If you touch the methylated, Lovell, we'll tie you to a tree!" said Rawson. "You're too jolly dangerous!"

"You silly ass—"

There was a shout from Putty of the Fourth beyond the trees.

"Look out! The giddy enemy!"

And as the alarm rang over the island, even Lovell forgot the obstinate camp-fire, and there was a rush to see the enemy.

The 3rd Chapter.

A Surprise for the Head.

"Mr. Carker, what—what—"

Dr. Chisholm fairly blinked at the new master of the Rookwood Fourth.

Mr. Carker came into his study,

untidy, dishevelled, pale—in a state that no Rookwood master had ever been seen in before. And the Head, who was an extremely punctilious old gentleman, stared at him with amazement and strong disapproval.

"Mr. Carker, what—what does this mean?"

The Form master sank into a chair.

"I have just been released!" he gasped.

"Released!"

"I have spent the night, sir, tied up!"

"Tied up!" said the Head blankly.

"In the Fourth Form dormitory."

"What!"

"I—I was seized!" gasped Mr. Carker.

"I found that Silver had left the punishment-room and was in the dormitory. They set on me—"

"Bless my soul!"

"They seized me and tied me to a bed!" gasped Mr. Carker. "Bulkeley, who came up to the dormitory, was served in the same manner!"

The Head gasped.

"We have only just been released. Novillo came up, and the Fourth Form are gone!"

"Gone!" stuttered the Head.

"Gone!" said Mr. Carker.

"What, in the name of all that is

believed suppressed, had spread—far and wide.

"Mr. Carker," gasped the Head at last, "do you seriously tell me that the Classical Fourth Form are no longer in the school?"

"Not a single one, sir!"

"It is incredible," said Dr. Chisholm. "Such disobedience—such unparalleled audacity—"

"Bless my soul! I must deal with this matter at once. They must return without delay! You do not appear, Mr. Carker, to possess the necessary authority over your Form. Fortunately, my authority is not likely to be questioned. I shall order these young rascals to return to the school immediately. You are sure that they have gone to the island?"

"That was their plan, at least, sir!"

"We shall see—we shall see!"

Dr. Chisholm hurried out of the study. He had not breakfasted yet, but he was not thinking of that. He found the whole school in a buzz.

The revolt of the Fourth was known on all sides now—the School House was buzzing with it. Over in Mr. Manders' house, the Modern fellows were discussing it breathlessly.

Excitement reigned in Rookwood School from end to end.

"Neville!" Dr. Chisholm called to the prefect in the corridor. "I am

of excitement it seemed probable that neither masters nor boys would give the usual attention to lessons. But discipline had to be maintained; and, above all, the example of insubordination had to be prevented from spreading.

Sixth and Fifth, Shell and Third and Second, went into the Form-rooms as usual; in the lab on the Modern side, Mr. Manders went on the even tenor of his way. And then Dr. Chisholm walked out of the gates of Rookwood, reddening under the curious glance of old Mack, the porter.

By the tow-path along the river, the Head of Rookwood walked up to the island. Over the trees on the isle a thick column of smoke was rising.

Evidently the rebels were there. It was too early in the year, and too early in the day for that matter, for a picnic party. Incredible as it seemed to the headmaster, the rebels of Rookwood were camped on the island—in open rebellion.

Dr. Chisholm stopped on the tow-path, opposite the island, and looked across. There he was spoilt by Putty of the Fourth, who gave the alarm; and a minute later, the shore of the island was crowded by the Fourth-Formers.

Across the intervening channel of the river the Head and the rebel Form looked at one another. Jimmy

will row across at once. I shall wait here, and see you all back to the school—with the exception of Silver. Lose no time."

"Dear old man!" murmured Lovell. "He really thinks that we're going to do it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head waited.

It seemed so impossible to him that his personal authority could be disregarded; that undoubtedly he expected his order to be obeyed on the spot. He waited.

But he waited in vain.

The 4th Chapter.

Rank Rebellion.

"Hallo, there's Mornay!" From the direction of Coombe a boat appeared on the shining river, with Valentine Mornington and Raby of the Fourth pulling at the oars. The boat was fairly stacked with packages and parcels. Mornay had done his shopping, and apparently had done it on a huge scale. Tubby Muffin rubbed his fat hands.

"Come on, Mornay!" he shouted. "Buck up, Raby!"

Dr. Chisholm glanced at the boat as it approached the island. The stack of packages puzzled him for a moment; but in another moment he understood. The rebels were preparing to stand a siege on the island; it was serious business with them!

The Head raised his hand towards the boat.

"Mornington!" he called out. Mornay glanced round as he pulled.

"Hallo, that's the jolly old Head!" he remarked. His voice carried to where the Head stood, and Dr. Chisholm reddened.

"Mornington! Bring that boat here."

"Edge a bit closer, Raby." murmured Mornington. "Not near enough for the old sport to jump, though! I don't want to have to biff him with a boathook!"

Raby chuckled. The boat edged in between the island and the river-bank, keeping a safe distance, however, though really it was not probable that so dignified a personage as the headmaster of Rookwood would take a flying leap into it.

"Anythin' we can do for you, sir?" asked Mornington politely.

"Bring that boat ashore!"

"Afraid that can't be done, sir! Anythin' else?"

"Obey me at once, Mornington!"

"If you haven't had brekker, sir, we can stand you some. We've got a lot of stuff here," said Mornay cheerily.

"Three kinds of jam—"

"Boy!"

"Lots of marmalade, and whole stacks of butter—"

"Mornington!"

"Bread galore and sardines and ham and cold beef—apples and oranges and nuts, sir; but we have no bananas."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the island.

"Yes, we have no bananas!" went on Mornington. "Anythin' else we can do for you, sir?"

Dr. Chisholm appeared on the point of suffocating.

"Mornington! Raby!" he gasped.

"I command you—"

"Has Mr. Dalton come back to Rookwood, sir?"

"Mr. Dalton! Certainly not!" thundered the Head.

"Then I'm afraid we can't do business, sir!" said Mornington affably.

"Pull for the jolly old island, Raby!"

The boat bumped on the island. A dozen fellows dragged it up the shore. Mornay and Raby jumped out. Dr. Chisholm stared across the intervening strip of water, like an old gentleman who could not believe the evidence of his eyes.

"Boys!" he stuttered at last. "If you do not immediately return to Rookwood, force will be used!"

"Carry on, sir!" answered Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it possible, Mornington, that you venture to disregard the authority of your headmaster?"

"Barely possible, sir! Just a few!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you will be expelled as well as Silver, Mornington!"

"Thank you, sir! You're very kind!"

"Anything for little me?" yelled Lovell.

"You are expelled, Lovell!" thundered the Head.

"Me, too, sir!" howled Putty of the Fourth. "Make a clean sweep of it, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head stuttered. He realised

(Continued overleaf.)



DEALING WITH THE PREFECT! In the grasp of the Juniors Smith major was carried bodily to the water's edge. "Chuck him in!" roared Lovell.

"Ow!" gasped the hapless Sixth Form prefect. "Oh, my hat! I—I say—yarrrooop!" Splash! With a wild yell Smith hurtled into the river and for a moment disappeared from sight.

absurd, do you mean?" thundered the Head. "How can the Fourth Form be gone? You do not mean that they have left Rookwood?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Impossible!"

The whole of the Classical Fourth, sir! They went during the night—leaving me tied up in the dormitory!" gasped Mr. Carker. "I heard them making their plans, without being able to interfere. Their intention is to camp out on the island in the river—"

"The—the island in the river!" repeated the Head dazedly.

Holding the Fort!

By Owen Conquest



(Continued from previous page.)

"At once!" said Jimmy Silver. "I don't see that!" exclaimed Higgs. "Now we're in for it, let's make it last."

"Fathead!" "By gad, you know, it's quite fun, you know," remarked Townsend. "Like some picnickin' we did in the jolly old Alps once, eh, Toppy?"

"Only it's rough on a fellow's clothes, Toppy," said Topham.

"Never mind, we're not givin' in, clobber or no clobber," said Townsend heroically.

"Never mind the clobber, so long

that he was cutting a somewhat undignified figure in this party with rebellious Lower boys. And it was borne in upon his mind that obedience was at an end.

He stood for some moments staring at the juniors on the island, and then found his voice again.

"Force will be used!" he gasped. "Unless you are all back at Rookwood within an hour, force will be used."

And with that the Head turned and strode away along the towpath. Jimmy Silver caught at the wrist of Higgs, who had picked up a turf to hurl.

"Stop that!" snapped Jimmy. "Look here, I can bag his hat!"

"Chuck it, you ruffian!" Higgs glared at the captain of the Fourth.

"Ain't this a rebellion?" he roared.

"Yes, you ass, but there's such a thing as respect, all the same. Put that turf down."

"Sha'n't!" howled Higgs.

Bump! Alfred Higgs sat down violently in damp grass, and the turf squashed on his head. Jimmy Silver left him roaring as he walked back to the camp-fire with the rest. By the time Higgs scrambled up the Head fortunately was out of range.

Tubby Muffin was already busy on the supplies in the boat. He had sliced a loaf, and a packet of butter, and opened a tin of salmon, and was going strong. He grinned at Jimmy Silver cheerily.

"This isn't half bad, Jimmy," he said. "Quite as good as brekker in school, in fact! I'm backing you up, Jimmy."

"So long as the grub's good, eh?" growled Lovell.

"Of course," said Tubby innocently.

"Why haven't you fellows lighted a camp-fire?" asked Raby. "It's jolly parky here."

"Lovell's been at it for hours."

"Only an hour!" snapped Lovell. "And I'd have got it going long ago but for a pack of dashed asses butting in. Where's the methylated?"

"Where you won't find it, my son," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "We don't want a prairie fire or a burnt offering of half the Fourth. Leave the fire to me."

"If you think you can light a camp-fire better than I can, Jimmy Silver—" hooted Lovell.

"Bow-wow!"

Apparently Jimmy had some skill that was wanting in Arthur Edward, for in a few minutes he had the fire going. A kettle was swung over it from an overhanging branch of a tree, and the fire was soon glowing red under the kettle, which began to sing—a cheery sound. Among the shopping sorted out from the boat were a number of tin crocks—jugs and cups; not quite so nice as the school crockery-ware, but likely to last longer in camp life. There was an enormous coffee-pot, and a teapot and tea and coffee galore. Quite a cheery crowd gathered round the camp-fire, now burning with a ruddy glow, for breakfast. All the Rookwood rebels were hungry, and more than ready for the feast "al fresco." Even Townsend and Topham ceased to think of their clothes in thinking of brekker.

"Prime!" said Putty of the Fourth. "I say, this beats lessons in the Fourth Form room, you fellows."

"What ho! Pass the ham."

"Even lessons with Dicky Dalton!" said Raby. "My hat! I wonder what Dicky Dalton would say to this!"

"Well, we shouldn't be here if Dicky had stayed at Rookwood," remarked Mornington, "and I suppose we shall chuck it if the Head fetches Dicky back."

After breakfast there was washing.

up, a ceremony that most of the fellows seemed inclined to pass over. But Jimmy Silver had established discipline in the camp, everything was to proceed in an orderly manner. After the work of the camp was done, studious fellows like Rawson and Erroll turned to the school books they had brought with them. More of the juniors, however, turned to several "Holiday Annuals" which Lovell had brought along with him. Others roamed about the island, and Gower and Peele looked in the trees for birds' nests—fortunately without finding any. Jimmy Silver watched for the approach of an enemy; he had no expectation whatever of the day passing without some move being made by the Head.

Jimmy had shown great generalship in selecting the island as the rebels' stronghold. It was a strong position, and there were plenty of defenders. But it was quite certain that the Head would lose no time in rounding up the rebel Form; the struggle could not be long deferred. Jimmy Silver was confident in the result, and his loyal followers shared his confidence. Indeed, most of them were anxious for the trouble to begin.

On the shining surface of the river a boat appeared in sight in the direction of the school.

Jimmy Silver watched it keenly. Four oars were pulling, and he soon

stout hearts to back up Jimmy Silver, and the absence of a few slackers did not matter.

Jimmy Silver raised his hand as the prefects' boat ranged up to the island.

"Halt!" he called out. Bulkeley gave him a look, but did not speak. The boat glided on.

"Stop!" roared Lovell. "You can't land here, Bulkeley!" called out Jimmy Silver. "I warn you to keep clear!"

"Head's orders to take you all back to the school!" rapped out Bulkeley. "Rats!" roared Lovell.

"Excepting you, Silver. You're to be taken to the railway-station, and I'm to take you!" said Bulkeley.

"Not this morning!" said Jimmy.

"Sorry if you get hurt, Bulkeley, but we mean business, and we shall resist!"

"We shall see!" grunted the captain of Rockwood.

The boat shot on to the island. A whizzing volley of turfs and fragments of wood greeted it, and there were loud and wrathful exclamations among the Sixth-Formers.

But they did not pause. The boat crashed on the bank, and Bulkeley sprang ashore, leading the attack.

Probably the Rookwood prefects did not suppose that a mob of juniors would venture seriously to resist so strong a body of seniors. They had

island and the river. Sticks and cricket-stumps crashed against canes and on shoulders and arms and heads. The Rookwood prefects discovered that they were far from having matters all their own way.

"Smash the cheeky young cads!" yelled Carthew, the bully of the Sixth. "Oh! Ow! Yooooh!"

Carthew went staggering back under a charge, and crashed into the water. A moment later Knowles followed him in again, spluttering. The other six struggled hand-to-hand with the juniors. Each of them was equal to at least two of the Fourth—but each of them had three or four to deal with; and the prefects' ash-plant had lost its terrors now. The fight waxed fast and furious.

Knowles and Carthew clambered out of the water into the boat. But at the same time Rawson gave it a shove and sent it rocketing out into the river. Two of the enemy were out of the fight for a time. And Bulkeley & Co., fighting hard on shore, found that they were overmatched by the numbers of the rebels.

Bulkeley was down again, with two juniors sitting on him; Neville went splashing headlong into the water; Jones major and Lonsdale were dragged down by numberless hands, and Smith and Scott had to back away into the trees to escape being driven into the river by lunging stumps and cudgels.

They backed off, panting for breath, glad to get out of the melee for a few minutes.

"Licked!" shouted Lovell, dabbing a crimson-streaming nose with his handkerchief.

"Hurrah!" "Here comes Knowles again! Look out!"

Knowles and Carthew brought the boat to the shore again. But a volley of missiles crashed on them, and they yelled and backed the boat away. The fire was too hot for them.

"They're running!" yelled Oswald. "Down with the Sixth!"

"Give them some more!" howled Lovell, in wild excitement, burling his stick after Knowles in the boat.

"Yarooooh!"

"You young villains!" panted Bulkeley. "Lemme gerrup! I—I—I'll smash the lot of you! I—I—I'll—"

"Chuck him out!" shouted Lovell. "I—I—Oh, my bat!" gasped Bulkeley.

"Sorry, old man!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Outside, Bulkeley!"

Half a dozen pairs of hands dragged the struggling captain of Rookwood to the water's edge. In spite of his fierce resistance, he was hurled headlong into the river.

Splash!

"That's much for Bulkeley!" chuckled Putty of the Fourth. "Now send the others after him!"

Whiz, whiz, whiz! All kinds of missiles flew at the boat, and Knowles and Carthew backed off further. Bulkeley came to the surface, swimming. As he did so, Lonsdale of the Sixth splashed headlong into the water.

Jones major and Neville were struggling wildly and breathlessly in the grasp of a horde of juniors. Still struggling, they were hustled down to the water's edge and pitched in. They came up, and made for the boat, swimming; they seemed to have had enough of the island.

"There's two more somewhere!" panted Lovell. "Where's Smith major—and Scott? Collar the cads!"

Bulkeley made an attempt to get ashore. As he came breathlessly scrambling out of the water, Putty of the Fourth charged him with a long branch. It caught Bulkeley under the chin, and sent him sprawling backwards. There was a terrific splash as he went into the water again. Neville, half in the boat, grabbed at him and dragged him up. In a dazed state Bulkeley sprawled into the boat.

Only Smith major and Scott of the Sixth were left on the island now, and they were fleeing as a mob of juniors came whooping in pursuit of them. Jimmy Silver & Co. still guarded the landing-place; but a dozen excited juniors chased the two hapless prefects. Tubby Muffin now emerging from his hiding-place to take a hand, and Peele and Gower making themselves quite prominent. Scott stumbled over a root and fell, and in a moment more was in the hands of the rebels. He was dragged back to the water and pitched in, and Bulkeley and Neville heaved him into

Loud hoots and yells rang over the

(Continued on page 592.)

BOYS' FRIEND FAVOURITES!

JIMMY CURTIS OF ST. KATIE'S SCHOOL.



It is at sports that Jimmy Curtis, who shares Study No. 7 in the Transitus at St. Katie's with Dickie Dexter and the Beck brothers, shines most of all. In fact, he can well be termed as the greatest all-rounder in his Form.

At sixteen years and four months this well-built youngster, who hails from the great Commonwealth of Australia, is an exceptionally fine footballer; so good, in fact, is he in the inside-left position that Smith, the captain of St. Katie's, has thought fit to recognise his talent by awarding him the school's colours. Naturally this great honour and the fact that he now holds a regular place in the school's first eleven has bucked up the

Australian junior no end. But by no means can it be said that Jimmy has got swelled head over the business. He is a cool, level-headed fellow, and although it is almost the first time in St. Katie's history that a boy from the Transitus has been given a place in the school's premier football eleven, Jimmy has taken the honour bestowed on him as though it were an every-day happening for a junior to be given his colours for Soccer.

Besides his claims to being the best footballer in the Transitus Form, Jimmy, who, incidentally, is his Form's football captain, and also skipper of Mr. Warman's House eleven, is easily placed among the six best at boxing, while at cricket there is no one at all in the Trans to touch him with the bat and ball when he is at the top of his form.

A loyal pal, Jimmy Curtis has a keen sense of humour, and is therefore ever ready to enter into any japes or escapades which his study-mates, Linky and Washy Beck and Dickie Dexter, might get up to

recognised the oarsmen as Rookwood prefects—Bulkeley and Neville, Smith major and Lonsdale. Four other fellows were in the boat—Jones major, Carthew, and Scott of the Classical Sixth, and Knowles of the Modern Sixth.

"Line up, you fellows!" called out Jimmy Silver.

There was a shout from the rebels.

"The prefects!"

"Let 'em all come!" chuckled Lovell.

"I—I say, Jimmy—" stammered Tubby Muffin. "I—I say—" At the sight of eight hefty Sixth Form prefects, Reginald Muffin felt his enthusiasm for the rebellion oozing out at his fat finger-tips.

"Shut up, Muffin!"

"Come on, you Sixth Form bounders!" roared Lovell. "If you want a jolly good whooping, come on!"

Without answering, the Rookwood prefects came on, and the boat shot up to the island.

The 5th Chapter.

The Fight on the Island.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stood ready on the island shore. All of them were armed for the fray, some with cricket-stumps, some with sticks cut from the thickets, or various other weapons. They looked a determined band, as they stood waiting for the enemy. Tubby Muffin had vanished from sight, and Peele and Gower were not to be seen; but there were plenty of

strict orders from the Head to shepherd the Classical Fourth back to Rookwood, and they did not anticipate any great difficulty in carrying out the orders. But a surprise was awaiting them.

Jimmy Silver, Lovell and Raby, Newcome and Mornington, rushed on Bulkeley as he landed.

"Stand back!" shouted Bulkeley.

"Down with the Sixth!" roared Lovell.

"Give 'em socks!"

"Hurrrah!"

Bulkeley lashed out right and left with his ash-plant. There were yells from the juniors. But Jimmy Silver dodged under the lashing canes and threw his arms round the Sixth-Formers, and Morny hooked his leg at the same time. Bulkeley of the Sixth went down with a heavy crash.

Knowles and Lonsdale were ashore the next second. But they went staggering under a rush of the juniors, and Knowles splashed backwards into shallow water. Lonsdale, with half a dozen juniors clinging to him like cats, collapsed in the rushes, roaring.

"Go it!" yelled Lovell.

The other seniors were scrambling out of the boat. Knowles emerged, dripping and furious, from mud and water. Each of the prefects had his cane, and laid about him vigorously; it was no time to consider where the blows fell. It dawned upon them that the matter was serious, and that they were booked for a struggle.

Loud hoots and yells rang over the

(Continued on page 592.)

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In Your Editor's Den



Your editor is always pleased to hear from his readers upon any subject. Address your letters to: Editor, "Boys' Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

"THE CRUISE OF THE COFFIN-MORANT!"

Is it enough, given all the facts of the case, to make a bare announcement of a certain extra-special treat in store for next week? I am just wondering. Anyway, next Monday there is a tremendous event. It is the return of Maurice Everard. His new serial bears the above title, and it is a record-maker! Could there be better news? That is the question, as Hamlet used to say in his fed-up moments. But in this instance there is only one answer. We are jolly glad to see this "star" author back. He gives us such topping romances by land and sea. He can depict the mysterious forests through which the pioneers have to hack their way foot by foot. He has the key to the wilds and the back of beyond. Tell your chums about the new yarn. Maurice Everard, as a describer of things seen is nullus secundus, so welcome him!

MORE SIGNIFICANT NEWS!

Pass this fresh item of intelligence on to your pals, too, if you don't mind, namely, that David Goodwin will soon be in the front line again with a grand serial of adventure. "Topsail Tony" went like wildfire. I dare venture to say that David Goodwin's new story will go one better. Look out for further announcements about it.

"MONEY TO BURN!"

For next week the Boys' FRIEND has a sure thing in another first-line tale of good old Gan Waga, the portly Eskimo with the large-sized appetite, and the lordly Excellency, Prince Ching Lung from the Flowery Land. Anything Sidney Drew turns out is of real value. There is sparkle in it, ditto humanity, likewise tons of sympathy. By the way, one hears no end about character in handwriting. Was it ever your luck to come across a page of Sidney Drew's wonderful manuscript? This author writes the smallest "fist" you could possibly imagine. It is as neat as the copper-plate of some old monk in the year dot, to whom time was a bagatelle. If handwriting tells anything, it speaks in Sidney Drew's case of close, deep thinking, and a springy sort of genius, allied to an infinite aptitude for taking pains.

"FACING THE MUSIC!"

What is going to happen at Rookwood? Things are all at sixes and sevens, and even eights, and there is no sign of peace. Can you marvel at it? There is bound to be trouble when an unintelligent outsider, dressed in a little brief authority, upsets all the traditions of the school. Mr. Owen Conquest shows plainly enough the possible mischief when a pitchforked piffler straddles a seat for which his abilities do not fit him. Anyhow, Rookwood juniors are up and doing, and next week's contribution to the history of a pretty intolerable state of affairs, is the most dramatic yet. That is so for several reasons, one being the totally unexpected appearance of good old "Dicky" Dalton, who turns up in welcome fashion. But the time is not yet! Mr. Carker has not budged from his position, and the fight goes on hammer and tongs between capricious interference and honest rebellion against injustice.

"THE RECKONING!"

Next Monday's tale of St. Katie's is right up to form, and presents a mighty ingenious situation.

THE GLORY HOLE GANG!

I have just received a piteous appeal from Swanson. "Please we want Skeleton back, and the Glory Hole Gang," says the writer. Requests of this nature always get my most earnest consideration.

"THE WINNING STREAK!"

Walter Edwards set himself a difficult task when he tackled the virile theme of his present serial. But a little detail like that is not the thing to cause "W. E." to hesitate. He put his hand to the plough—and trust him for a win! Walter Edwards has boxing interests at heart. He wants to see the Noble Art restored to its old pitch of excellence this side of the "Big Drink," otherwise the Atlantic, and, what's more, he puts things convincingly.

THOSE EXTRA TURNS!"

You will be as pleased as Punch with "Goalie" next week; also with the

(Continued in next ed.)

HOLDING THE FORT!

(Continued from page 580.)

the boat. In that boat there were now seven of the prefects, drenched, muddy, breathless, looking—and feeling—beaten to the wide. On the island, Smith major was still dodging and running, with a mob at his heels.

The hapless Smith was run down at last. In the grasp of six or seven fellows, he was carried bodily to the water's edge.

"Chuck him in!" roared Lovell.

"Ow!" gasped Smith major. "Oh, my hat! I—I say—Yarooooop!"

Splash!

"That's the last!" shouted Arthur Edward Lovell. "I say, Bulkeley, are you coming back to have some more?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh-gorooggh—hooch!" spluttered Smith as he came to the surface. "Ow! Ow! Gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smith major swam desperately for the boat, with cloths splashing in the water round him. Bulkeley grasped him by the collar and dragged him in.

"Get going!" he muttered to his comrades.

(Continued from previous ed.)

article from Mr. Percy Longhurst. With regard to our Health and Sport expert, I am prepared to say, without fear of contradiction, as the tub-thumper puts it in his merry way, that no man living could take more trouble over his work of giving counsel on training, etc., than Mr. Longhurst. He works like a slave at the business. Not a point escapes his notice. He views things from the position of the fellow who asks for advice, and he brings to the treatment of each individual case all his splendid store of knowledge about physique and keeping as fit as a fiddle.

GOOD NEWS FROM ERIN.

From the Emerald Isle comes a topping letter about the stories in the old "Green 'Un." By the way the writer asks me to define the meaning of the term, Pick-me-up. He asks whether it is a word. Well, in a sense it is, a sort of Gladstone bag word. I shall recommend my correspondent to his own bracing letter for the meaning. It was a genuine pick-me-up. He says Wheway has gone one better with his Sporting Independents, and that "Topsail Tony" is splendid. There is also a first-class tribute for Dickie Dexter & Co. Then he asks when the Duke is coming back? Personally, I thought the Duke deserved a rest after a bout of hard work, but nous verrons, as they say in France. I shall ask Mr. Walter Edwards about this point.

Your Editor.

"Are we leaving those cheeky young cads there, Bulkeley?" gasped Lonsdale. "Head's orders—"

"What can we do?" growled Bulkeley.

"Nothing, I suppose."

"Ow! Ow!" groaned Knowles. "I've got a bump as big as an egg on my head! Ow! Ow! Look at my nose! Ow!"

"Look at my eye!" groaned Jones major.

"Oh, dear! Ow!"

"We'd better get back and report to the Head!" growled Bulkeley.

"Get going!"

The boat glided away down the sunny river. Loud yells of triumph and unusual catcalls followed it from the triumphant rebels on the island. Clods dropped into the water, splashing behind it.

"Won't you come back and have some more, you Sixth Form duffers?" yelled Lovell.

"Yah!"

"What price the Sixth now?" chuckled Mornington.

"Twopence—and dear at that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With crimson cheeks, the defeated prefects pulled away down the river. They had come, like Caesar, to see and conquer. Like Caesar, they had come and seen, but certainly they had not conquered. They were defeated, they were tired, they were damaged, they were muddy and wet, and they were glad to get clear of the rebels.

"Our win!" chuckled Mornington as the boat disappeared along the winding river. "The Head will have to try something better than that. The jolly old Sixth is on the down grade."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And on the island the Rookwood rebels rejoiced in their victory, while the hapless prefects pulled dismally home.

Dr. Chisholm looked from his study window. Classes were over,

and the quadrangle swarmed with Rookwood fellows, all of them discussing the rebellion of the Fourth and the expedition of the Sixth Form prefects.

The Head was looking for the return of the prefects, with the rebels in their care. His birch lay on his study table ready for use, and the Head intended that birch to have some very considerable exercise.

There was a shout in the quad.

"Here they come!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, what a crew!" gasped Han-

son of the Fifth.

The Head stared. He could scarcely believe his eyes as he saw eight dreary, dismal, draggled seniors marching wearily across the quad to the School House.

Loud laughter greeted them on all sides from the Rookwood crowd. It was only too clear that the Sixth Form prefects had not gone forth to victory. Dr. Chisholm leaned from his window.

"Bulkeley, what does this mean? Where are the boys?"

"On the island, sir."

"You—you—you have failed to—

"We couldn't help it, sir! We—

"Bless my soul!"

Bulkeley & Co. tramped into the house. Dr. Chisholm stepped back from his study window, his face extraordinary in expression. And in the crowded quadrangle for quite a long time there were loud sounds of merriment.

THE END.

(Another stunning story of the Rookwood rebels—"Facing the Music!"—appearing in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND. Don't miss it whatever you do! And don't forget to tell ALL your non-reader pals about these fine yarns of the chums of Rookwood School!)

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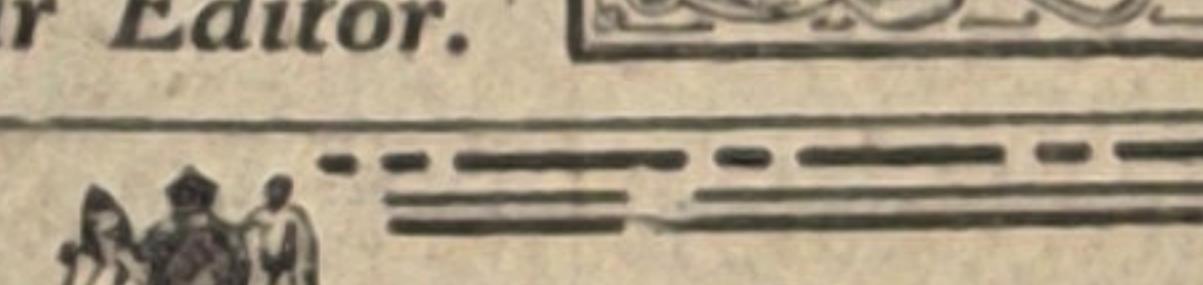
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