

**"THE WINNING STREAK!" THE GREATEST BOXING YARN EVER WRITTEN!
IN THIS ISSUE!**

The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

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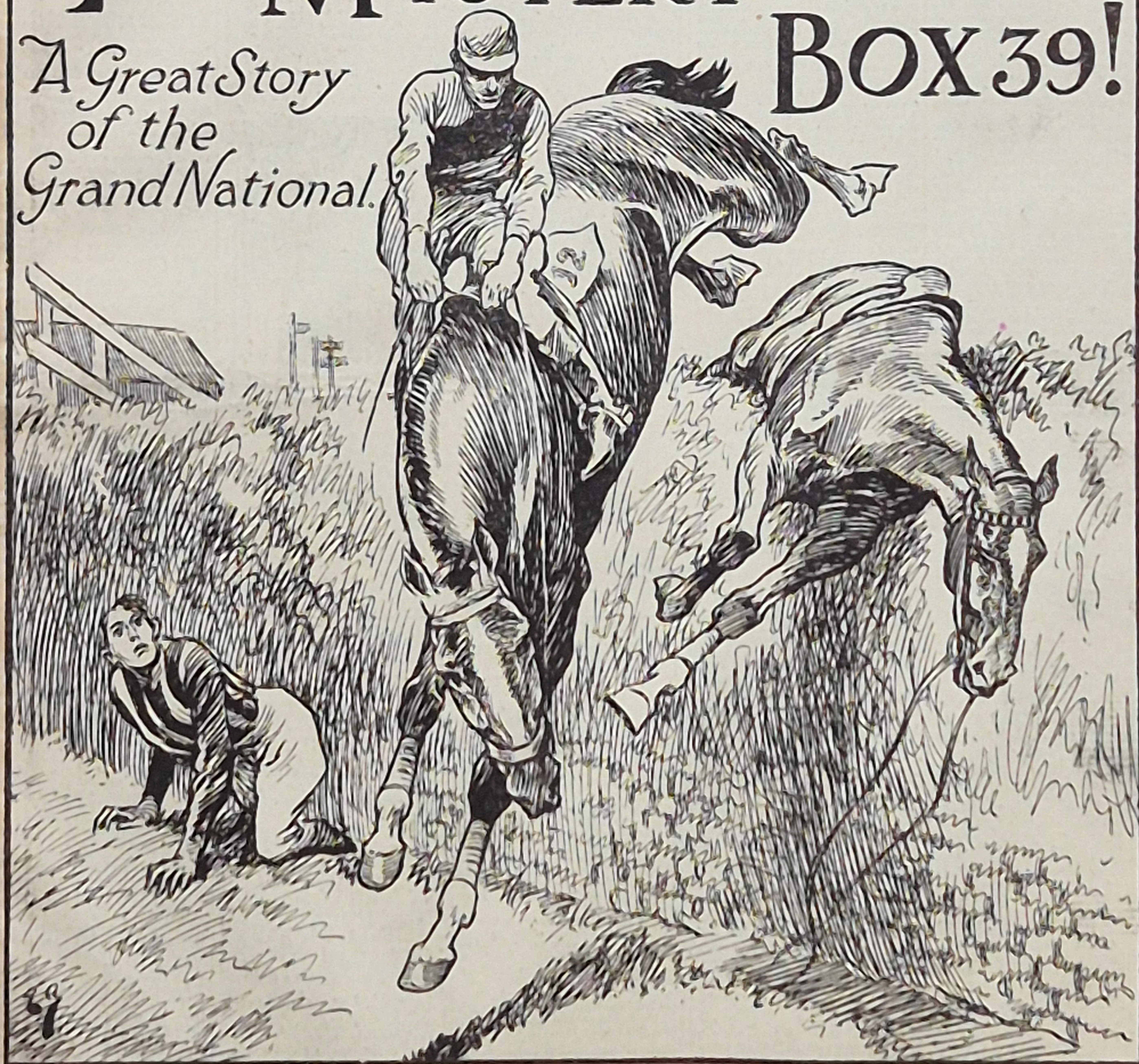
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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending March 20th, 1924.]

The MYSTERY of BOX 39!

*A Great Story
of the
Grand National.*



A DESPERATE LEAP—Pilot, the Favourite, clears Horse and Fence!

(A thrilling incident from the great racing story in this issue.)

ANOTHER STIRRING ADVENTURE OF THE REBELS OF ROOKWOOD!

The Fight With The Fifth!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

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

Another attempt is made to dislodge the rebels from their stronghold on the island in the river—this time by the Fifth Form at Rookwood!



The 1st Chapter.

A Chance for the Fifth.

"This," said Hansom of the Fifth, "is where we come in!"

Edward Hansom, captain of the Fifth Form at Rookwood, had been thinking.

There were half a dozen Fifth Form fellows in Hansom's study, discussing the topic which was now the chief topic at Rookwood School—the rebellion of the Classical Fourth.

That rebellion was a serious matter; from the point of view of the Head, it was extremely, inexpressibly serious. But all Rookwood did not see eye to eye with the Head. Most of the fellows, seniors as well as juniors, chuckled over Jimmy Silver & Co.'s revolt, and their retreat from Rookwood to the island in the river.

So there was more laughter than seriousness in Hansom's study as the Fifth Form fellows discussed the matter. But while his comrades were laughing and talking, Edward Hansom was thinking, with a corrugated brow. All of a sudden he shot his remark at the company; this unexpected remark being, apparently, the outcome of his deep and unusual cogitations.

"Eh?" said Talboys.

"What?" asked Brown major.

"This is where we come in!" repeated Hansom firmly.

"Where, what, how, and why?" inquired Lumsden of the Fifth.

"Shut up a minute, and listen to me," said Hansom. "This is our chance, and it's where we come out strong."

"Didn't you say it was where we come in?" asked Lumsden.

"Yes."

"Now you say it's where we come out strong."

"Yes."

"Do we come in and come out, too?"

Some of the Fifth Form fellows laughed. But Hansom did not laugh; he gave the humorist a severe stare.

"Don't be a funny ass, Lumsden," he said sternly. "This is a serious matter."

"My mistake!" yawned Lumsden. "I hadn't noticed it, myself. But if you say it is, old bean, all right."

"What's it got to do with us, anyhow, Hansom?" asked Talboys. "We've got nothing to do with the Fourth—scrubby little sweeps!"

"We're going to have something to do with them, though," said Hansom. "I've thought it out. As the matter stands, the Classical Fourth have got their ears up because the Head sacked their Form master, Dicky Dalton. To be quite candid, the Head was a bit of an ass. Dalton was a good man, and the Head oughtn't to have pushed him out."

"Hear, hear!"

"But that's neither here nor there," said Hansom. "Fourth Form kids are only fags, and must do as they're told."

"Hear, hear!" repeated the Fifth Form fellows, more emphatically. There wasn't a fellow in the Rookwood Fifth, who did not believe in fags being kept in their place.

"This sort of thing is bad for a school," said Hansom sagely. "Why, we shall have the Third Form gottin'

their ears up next. And the Second! No tellin' where the thing might end. It's got to be stopped."

"That's the Head's bizney, isn't it, not ours?" said Lumsden.

"Yes; but the Head's failed to score," said Hansom. "He sent the Sixth Form prefects to round them up. What happened to the prefects—Bulkeley, and Neville, and that lot?"

There was a chortle in the study.

"They were licked!"

"Licked to the wide!"

"They looked a sorry crowd when they came tricklin' in afterwards," grinned Talboys.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, it was natural, in a way, for the Head to put his money on the Sixth," resumed Hansom. "Somebody—some ass—has said that the Sixth Form is the giddy Palladium of the public school—"

"What rot!"

"Bosh!"

"My own opinion," went on Hansom, "is that if there's any giddy Palladium knockin' around at Rookwood, it's the Fifth Form, not the Sixth."

"Right as rain!"

There was unanimous agreement in the study. Hansom was voicing the conviction of the whole Fifth Form, Classical and Modern.

"The Sixth are all very well," said Hansom tolerantly. "Bulkeley's a good captain, and a good man at games. I don't deny it! But I think every fellow here will agree that the Sixth think a lot too much of themselves—"

Every fellow there did!

"Too much swank!" said Hansom.

"Much too much!" agreed Lumsden.

"They think they're the salt of the earth. They're not."

"Certainly not!"

"Only the other day," said Hansom.

"Jobson of the Fifth was told to bend over by a Sixth Form prefect."

"Rotten!"

"Of course, Jobson is a bit of a corker, and he was whopped for dodgin' games practice, and serve him right! But when it comes to a Sixth Form ass tellin' a Fifth-Former to bend over, it looks to me as if things are gettin' pretty near the limit," said Hansom, with a serious shake of the head.

"Jolly well think so," said Talboys.

"And after all, what good were the Sixth when the Head set on the prefects to round up those cheeky fags? Did they score? They didn't! They were clean bowled by young Silver and his gang of ragamuffins. The Head saw they were no good, and since then—"

"Since then he's used no other," said Lumsden.

"Since then, those cheeky fags have been sticking on the island in the river, and they say they're sticking it till Mr. Dalton comes back as Fourth Form master. Of course, the Head can't give in to them. But this sort of thing can't go on. Bad for the school. Bad all round. We shall have the governors on the scene. The whole neighbourhood is talkin' about it already. Kids go up from Coombe and Latcham to stare at those fags on the island; it's gettin' to be a regular show. Now, the Sixth have failed!

That's admitted. So, as I said, this is where we come in."

"But—"

"The Sixth having failed, the Fifth take it up," explained Hansom. "Of course, we can handle a gang of fags easily enough."

"Of course."

"It will be no end of a score over the Sixth, if we succeed where they failed—"

"Oh, good!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The prefects will have to—to—"

"Hide their diminished heads," suggested Lumsden.



IN THE HANDS OF THE REBELS! While Hansom struggled frantically in an endeavour to extricate himself from the barbed wire, Raby squeezed an orange down his neck, and Tubby Muffin plastered his head with handfuls of mud.

"That's it—hide their giddy diminished nappers," said Hansom. "It will mean a little less of their swank in the future. We can point out to the prefects that we had to do their job for them."

"Bravo!"

"And it will impress the fags. A lot of the fags don't treat the Fifth with proper respect; don't seem to understand that we're a senior Form at all. What with cheeky fags on one side, and swanking Sixth-Formers on the other, we have to keep busy to keep our end up. Well, this is a chance for us. I'm going to the Head to offer him the services of the Fifth."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Jolly good wheeze!" exclaimed Brown major heartily. "We can go up the river on a half-holiday, and mop up those fags, as easy as falling off a form."

Hansom smiled the smile of superior wisdom.

"Not on a half-holiday," he said. "We've got uses for all the holidays we get. Quid pro quo, you know! If the Head wants our services, he lets us out classes for the job."

"Bravo!"

"You've got a head on you, Hansom, old man," said Brown major admiringly. "I'd rather scrap with the fags up the river than grind classics with old Greely, any day."

"What-ho!"

Hansom jumped up.

"Strike the iron while it's hot," he said. "You come with me, Talboys, and you, Lumsden! We'll see the Head and take the job on and make a success of it, before the Sixth get goin' again."

"Hear, hear!"

And the three Fifth-Formers quitted the study to interview Dr. Chisholm, and the other fellows dispersed, to spread the news in the Fifth of Edward Hansom's great wheeze—which was to bag no end of kudos for the Rookwood Fifth, to make the Sixth Form prefects hide their diminished heads, and to put a sharp and sudden end to the rebellion of the juniors—perhaps!

The 2nd Chapter. In Camp.

Jimmy Silver, captain of the Fourth, stood on the bank of the little island in the river, and looked along the flowing stream, glimmering and shimmering in the spring sunshine. Raby and Newcome, sitting on a stump, were playing chess with a pocket set of chessmen. Arthur Edward Lovell was looking over the game, and helping both players with advice, alternately—advice which was received without gratitude, and even with contumely. Mornington, leaning against a tree, was reading the latest copy of the "Coombe Times," with an interest that was rather remarkable, for the local paper was not, as a rule, an enthralling publication. Tubby Muffin was busy at the campfire, which blazed and smoked in front of the old Army hut in the centre of the island—Tubby being

Silver over the paper. "The Head doesn't seem to be gettin' busy yet, Jimmy."

"It's bound to come, though," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm looking for a shindy every day."

Arthur Edward Lovell looked round from the chess—much to the relief of the players.

"We can hold our own," he said. "We beat off the prefects, and we got the better of those fellows Carker set on us. We've laid in lots of grub, and we can hold out. The Head's bound to realise that in the long run."

"The Head's sacked Mr. Carker," remarked Putty of the Fourth. "I heard it from Wegg of the Third. He was waxy at Carker getting a gang of barges to go for us. We should have been knocked right out if Mr. Dalton hadn't come along and chipped in."

"Good old Dicky!" said Lovell.

"I was thinkin' of that," said Valentine Mornington. "Carker was a brute, but he knew what was what. If the Head's waitin' for us to give in he will be disappointed. We sha'n't be left alone much longer, and we've had a narrow escape once. That's why this giddy advertisement in the local paper is interestin'."

"How's that?" asked Jimmy.

"Army surplus stores," said Mornington. "Any amount of barbed wire goin' cheap."

"Barbed wire?" repeated Lovell.

"Just that!"

"What the thump do we want with barbed wire?" asked Lovell, whose powerful intellect never did work very quickly.

"Just what the boys at the front wanted with it in the Wartime," answered Mornington. "To keep the enemy off."

"Oh, my hat!"

"If we'd had it when those bargee johnnies came up from Latcham they'd never have got at us," said Mornington. "Next time, we're goin' to be ready for the enemy, and next time can't be very far off. The Head simply can't afford to let this sort of thing go on. He must beat us or give in."

"That's so," said Jimmy.

"Well, whether he'll give in or not, I don't know, but he's not goin' to beat us."

"No fear!"

"But it's no good sayin' that we could handle a couple of dozen men if he tried Carker's game on us, because we couldn't," said Morny.

"But with barbed wire round the camp, I fancy we could hold off half Hampshire, what?"

"Jolly good idea," said Putty.

Lovell granted. Arthur Edward Lovell was a good fellow, but he had a way of regarding any other fellow's ideas as superfluous.

"Don't see that we need it," said Lovell. "If anybody comes barging on this island we'll jolly well chuck him into the river, see?"

"I see," assented Mornington affably. "I can see you chucking a six-foot bargee into the river—I don't think."

"Look here, Morny—"

"Two or three fellows had better come with me to carry the stuff," said Mornington. "We can get the boat down to Latcham—that's the quickest way."

"You'll have to pass the school," said Lovell. "They might jolly well catch you."

"We'll chance that."

Jimmy Silver nodded assent. Fortune had favoured the Rookwood rebels so far; but Jimmy, like a good general, was always on the alert for the turn of the tide. The rebels had a strong position on the island in the river, but there was no doubt that an overwhelming force could be brought against them if the Head once made up his mind to that extreme step. Angry as he had been with Mr. Carker for his drastic methods, it was quite possible that, in the long run, the Head might come to realise that very drastic measures were the only useful ones.

A barbed wire defence round the rebel camp would, so to speak, put "paid" to any attempt to rush the island.

Mornington called to Erroll, and with his chum's aid, ran the boat down into the water. Conroy joined them in the boat. Jimmy Silver's place was on the island, though as a matter of fact he would have enjoyed the pull on the river down to Latcham and back.

Financial resources had been pooled among the rebels in the present crisis, and so far there was cash in hand. Jimmy Silver counted out the necessary sum to Morny, and the boat pulled away down the river.

(Continued overleaf.)

Be sure you read "Back to Rookwood!" next Monday's great story of the Fourth Form Rebels!

The Fight With The Fifth!



(Continued from previous page.)

his alarm, almost swallowed his cigarette, and choked and coughed. "Groogh! Gug-gug! Oh!"

"Hullo, Silver!" said Cyril Peele with an impudent grin. "Come to take a hand in the game?"

"Just that," said Jimmy.

"Sit down, old bean," said Lattrey. Jimmy Silver did not sit down. He stooped and gathered up the cards.

Peele gave him a fierce look, but did not venture to interfere. Jimmy slipped the cards into his pocket.

"They're going into the fire!" he said. "Will you fellows oblige me by handing over your smokes?"

"Look here!" shouted Peele. "Will you?" asked Jimmy politely.

"No, I won't, for one! Oh! Ow! Let go, you cad!" howled Peele.

Jimmy grasped the blackguard of the Fourth by the collar. There was a bang as Cyril Peele's head smote a tree-trunk.

"Yow-ow! Leggo!" yelled Peele, struggling wildly.

"Say when!" said Jimmy cheerily. "Yooooop!"

"Are you handing over the smokes?"

"Yow-ow! Yes!" gasped Peele. "Thanks!"

Jimmy Silver made quite an extensive collection of cigarettes from the trio.

"Now get back to the camp!" he said.

"Look here—"

"I don't want to kick you," said Jimmy pleasantly. "But if you don't go—"

Peele & Co. went, with Jimmy Silver walking behind. They arrived at the camp with dark and furious faces. Jimmy Silver tossed the cards and the cigarettes into the fire.

"Tubby!" he said, "these three fellows are in want of a job. Got anything they can do—in the way of washing up or peeling potatoes, or anything of that kind?"

Tubby Muffin chuckled. "Lots!" he answered.

"Set them to work, then! Keep them at it till I tell you to let them off. You three fellows are now under Muffin's orders till further notice," said Jimmy. "Make yourselves useful!"

"You cheeky rotter!" gasped Peele. "Get on with those spuds, Peele!" said Tubby Muffin.

"Sha'n't!" howled Peele.

"Oswald, you've got a stump there," said the captain of the Fourth. "Bring it here, and keep these scullions up to the mark."

"Any old thing!" grinned Oswald. "Every time they slack lay into them."

"Leave it to me," said Oswald. Peele & Co. breathed hard and deep. They looked at Jimmy Silver, and they looked at the stump in Dick Oswald's hand.

Then they set to work under Tubby Muffin's directions, and were soon busy in peeling potatoes, scrubbing tin dishes, stacking firewood, and other useful forms of labour. Which undoubtedly was much better for them than smoking cigarettes and playing nap, though, to judge by their looks, they did not seem to realise it.

The 3rd Chapter. A Hot Chase.

"Hansom!"

"Hullo, Bulkeley!" said Hansom of the Fifth with studied carelessness.

Bulkeley of the Sixth was looking serious, perhaps a trifle annoyed. Hansom, on the other hand, smiled cheerily.

"A message from the Head," said Bulkeley curtly.

"Yes. I was expectin' somethin' of the sort," said Hansom.

"It seems that you Fifth Form chaps are taking a hand against the fags on the island," said the captain of Rookwood.

"Well, we thought we'd better," drawled Hansom. "You see, the Head seems to be in a bit of a scrape, and the Sixth Form don't seem able to help him much. We've talked it over, and agreed that it's up to the Fifth."

"That's how it is, Bulkeley," smiled Talboys.

"So I mentioned to the Head yesterday that we'd round up the fags, if he cared to give the word," said Hansom. "He told me he would think it over."

"And you think you will handle the fags better than the Sixth Form prefects?" asked Bulkeley.

"I fancy so."

"Just a few!" said Lumsden.

"Well, you're welcome to try," said Bulkeley with a shrug of the shoulders. "I daresay you'll be sorry later on that you butted in. But that isn't my affair. The Head says he has spoken to Mr. Greely, and you are to see him about it."

"Right-ho!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth walked away frowning. It was true that the Sixth Form prefects had failed completely to deal with the rebels. But Bulkeley would willingly have tried again at

a word from the Head. Apparently the Head did not care to ask him, or perhaps he was annoyed at the failure of the prefects. Anyway, it seemed that Dr. Chisholm had decided to accept the services of the Fifth Form volunteers, and he had asked Bulkeley to tell Hansom so. So Bulkeley frowned as he walked away, but the Fifth-Formers were grinning. They liked old Bulkeley, as everyone did, but it was a great score for the Fifth to go "one better" than the Sixth.

"Go and see old Greely, Ted," said Talboys. "We're lucky if we get off this afternoon—there's maths."

And Edward Hansom went to speak to his Form master. Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth, did not seem pleased.

"The Head has asked me to excuse certain members of my class this afternoon, Hansom," he said. "It appears that you are going to fetch back the rebellious juniors from the island?"

"That's it, sir," said Hansom. "Of course, we're very pleased to oblige the Head in any way."

"Oh, yes, of course!" said Mr. Greely. "I should really have supposed, however, that a half-holiday would have been a more suitable time to select."

Hansom did not reply to that. He did not agree with Mr. Greely at all. On a half-holiday he might have had difficulty in raising an adequate force to deal with the rebels. But during classes, it was certain that most of the Fifth would volunteer. A few "swots" might prefer the Form-room, with classics and maths, but it was quite certain that the great majority of the Form would prefer a rag up the river.

However, the Head seems to have decided," said Mr. Greely. "I am directed to give exerts to any members of the Fifth Form whom you select to accompany you, Hansom."

"Very good, sir!"

"The remainder will come into class as usual," said Mr. Greely; and he dismissed Hansom with a wave of his podgy hand.

Hansom was not long in spreading the glad tidings. The Fifth received the news with enthusiasm. That afternoon they were to have Latin prose with Mr. Greely, and mathematics with Mr. Manders in a senior set. Needless to say, Mr. Greely's class and Mr. Manders' set were likely to be extremely depleted.

Indeed, when Mr. Greely rolled, portly and majestic, into the Fifth Form room to take his class, he was astonished to find only one fellow there.

"Jobson!" rapped out Mr. Greely. Jobson of the Fifth blinked at him.

"Where are the others, Jobson?"

"Gone out of gates, sir," said Jobson.

Mr. Greely breathed hard.

"All of them?"

"I think so, sir."

"Do you mean to say, Jobson, that you are the only Fifth Form boy in class this afternoon?"

"It seems so, sir. I'm ready to begin, sir."

Mr. Greely snorted. Jobson of the Fifth might be dutifully ready to begin, but Mr. Greely certainly wasn't ready to begin with a class of one.

"I shall dismiss the—the class," said Mr. Greely, and he rolled out of the Form-room again, leaving Tobias Jobson to his own devices.

Evidently Hansom had found no difficulty in collecting recruits. The Fifth had joined up as one man.

While Mr. Greely fumed, and wondered what Rookwood was coming to, Hansom & Co. walked down to the river. The weather was fine and sunny, and the river, glistening in the spring sunshine, looked tempting, much more tempting than the Fifth Form room. Quite a happy crowd of seniors walked down to the boat-house with Hansom.

"We're in luck, and no mistake," grinned Talboys. "Look here, I don't see that there's any hurry, Hansom, old man. If we march those young sweeps back in an hour, we shall be expected to turn up in the Form-room afterwards. That's not good enough."

Edward Hansom nodded.

"I've thought of that," he said. "We'll get the boats out, and pull up the river as far as Fishers' Rest, and have tea there, and mop up the fags on the way home."

"Good egg!"

"That's top-hole!" assented Lumsden. "If we do the Head's jolly old bizney for him, he can't grouse at our having a whole afternoon for the job."

"Grouse or not, that's the programme," said Hansom. "I don't want any Greely or any Manders on a gorgeous afternoon like this."

"Hear, hear!"

"I don't suppose it will take ten minutes to mop up those cheeky kids, and bundle them into the boats," said Hansom. "We'll make them row us back from the island when we've licked them and brought them to their senses, just to show them who is who, and what is what!"

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll time it to get back when classes are over, especially as we want the Sixth to see us march the fags in," added Hansom.

And the Fifth-Formers chuckled.

There were twenty fellows with Hansom, of the Classical and Modern Fifties. And certainly Hansom's confidence in victory seemed well founded. Once at close quarters there seemed no doubt that the big Fifth-

(Continued on the next page.)

Our Football Corner

The Semi-Final.

This week-end the last hurdle on the way to Wembley will be tackled by the four clubs which have been fortunate enough, or good enough, to force their way through to the Semi-Final. It is a striking commentary on the change which takes place from year to year to note that not one of the four teams which reached the Semi-Final last season has performed the feat again this time round. Indeed, not one of the four even got over the second hurdle, and Sheffield United, beaten by Bolton Wanderers in the Semi-Final last season, went out at the first round in this 1924 competition. Derby County and West Ham were, of course, the other two clubs which fought their way to the Semi-Final stage a year ago.

Two Amazing Semi-Finals.

Both last season's Semi-Finals were remarkable in their way. At Stamford Bridge, where West Ham and Derby County played, the London side put up a game which set the whole football world talking. It was one of the most wonderful performances, coupled with the most dazzling football, I have ever seen at anything like such a late stage of the competition. The Hammers played absolutely clockwork football, as if there was not even a salmon-tin at stake, much less the right to appear in the

Final for the most treasured bauble of the football "fans." And they ran the fast, clever Derby County team almost off their legs in putting up a score of five goals to two against.

A Wembley Rehearsal.

The other Semi-Final, played at Old Trafford, was also marked by amazing scenes, but in this match the football was not so good, and it was the



H. JOHNSON.
(Queen's Park Rangers.)

crowd which provided the real interest. The onlookers overflowed right on to the touchlines all round the field, and at times it did not seem likely that the game could be played to a finish. Indeed, the scenes at this Semi-Final would have been historic if they had not so quickly been followed by much more amazing scenes at Wembley, when all our pre-conceived notions of record invasions of a playing-pitch vanished into thin air.

Last season's Cup Final was really responsible for a new word being added to our language, for ever since, when we have thought of possible tragedies connected with big crowds, we have said it was another "Wembley."

A Great Day.

Dick Richards was one of the men who played a valiant part in West Ham's Semi-Final victory last season, but during the present campaign he has not been able to command his place in the East London eleven at all regularly. That there are people who still think highly of the former Wolverhampton Wanderer, however, is shown by the fact that, although he was not in the West Ham first team at the time, he was chosen by the Welsh selection committee to play for Wales against Scotland, and as partner to Vizard he helped his native country to achieve a notable victory. Richards has appeared in previous International matches, and indeed the proudest day of his life was connected with one of these games, for in 1920 he scored the goal by which Wales beat England in the International match at Highbury.

What is the matter with London?

A popular cry during the greater part of the present season has run on

these lines: "What is the matter with London football?" It is certainly true that the clubs of the metropolis have not cut a very wonderful figure, but some of the excuses



R. RICHARDS. (West Ham.)

which have been put forward for this state of things strike me as being merely humorous. Anyway, it has not been for lack of trying that the London managers have failed to get together teams which would be successful. Big money has been paid for star players, though it may be added that some of the stars have not shone as brightly as they were expected to do.

Among the newcomers to London in the second half of the season was Henry Johnson, an inside-left who joined Queen's Park Rangers from Southampton. When he was picked up at Darlaston in 1920 Johnson had gained local fame as a goal-scorer, and

he was quickly given a chance to show what he could do in the Saints first eleven. He is a stockily built, energetic forward who has plenty of time to develop into a great player, for he is even now only twenty-four years of age.

New Rule Wanted.

I wonder if this season's Cup ties will be responsible for a new rule being introduced to the game? Many people think there is need for revision in a certain direction. You will remember that in the Second Round of the Cup Derby County and Newcastle met. In the first match between the two clubs one of the Newcastle full-backs fisted out a shot which had beaten the goalkeeper and was just sailing under the bar. Of course, the referee awarded a penalty, but Derby failed to take advantage of the spot kick, and that game was drawn. Thus did the "guilty" escape punishment, and Newcastle eventually won through. Personally, I think the referee ought to be allowed to use his discretion on points like these. If he is absolutely convinced that a goal would have been scored had it not been for an offence against the rules by a member of the defending side, then he ought to be able to award a goal. During the next few weeks I shall not be surprised if a real effort is made to have the rules amended to this effect.

"Goalie"

(There will be another splendid footer article next week.)

"True to his Word!" is the magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School appearing in the "Magnet" Library. Out to-day!

Formers would knock the juniors right and left. Ten minutes seemed to them quite as much time as they could possibly need to bring Jimmy Silver & Co. to heel.

A boat was run out over the raft, and plumped into the water. Hansom jumped into it, and as he fended off from the raft, he caught sight of a skiff pulling up the river from the direction of Coombe and Latcham. In the skiff were Mornington and Erroll rowing, and Conroy of the Fourth steering. And there were a number of large packages in the bottom of the skiff which Hansom noticed without paying them much attention.

"Hallo! There's the fags' boat!" exclaimed Hansom. "We'll bag that lot to begin with."

"Lucky chance!" said Talboys.

"Chuck in those oars—quick!"

Hansom's boat was a four-oar. Hansom and Talboys, Lumsden and Brown major, sat to the oars, and Lister of the Modern Fifth took the lines. The boat shot out into the river, and the rest of the Fifth crowded the raft, looking on with grinning faces to watch the capture of the rebels' boat.

The three juniors had already seen their danger, and they were pulling hard now, and were already abreast of the school raft.

"Those cheeky bounders are going to bother us," said Conroy. "Put it on, you fellows! Bless if I know what the Fifth want to chip in for, but they're going to."

Morny and Erroll pulled hard, and the light skiff fairly flew over the shining water. Hansom waved a hand to them.

"Stop, there!"

"Go and eat coke!" shouted back Mornington.

"Stop. I tell you!" roared Hansom.

"Why aren't you kids in class?" asked Mornington. "Does your master know you are playin' truant, you naughty boys?"

Hansom did not answer that. He choked with wrath and tugged at his oar. The Fifth Form boat glided behind the skiff, and with four hefty fellows pulling, it gained.

"We'll have them in a few minutes, you chaps," said Lister. "We're gaining hand-over-hand."

"Good!" gasped Hansom.

Mornington and Erroll rowed hard, and harder. The island was not a great distance away. Conroy, as he sat steering, could see its tree-tops over the winding banks against the blue sky. But the Fifth-Formers were gaining steadily.

Morny set his teeth.

Arthur Edward Lovell had warned him that he might be caught passing the school; but Morny had expected all Rookwood to be at classes at that hour. He knew nothing of Hansom & Co.'s campaign. He was very anxious that Arthur Edward's prediction should not be realised.

Beside the packages of barbed wire in the bottom of the skiff were several bags of provisions. Morny & Co. had done some shopping at Latcham. Mornington drew in his oars and fumbled in one of the bags.

"Keep it up, Erroll!" he muttered.

Erroll did not answer, but he pulled his hardest. Mornington drew half a dozen oranges from the bag.

Whiz!

Morny was a good marksman. The orange whizzed through the air with unerring aim.

It crashed fairly in Lister's eye in the boat behind. The Fifth-Former gave a startled yell and sprawled backwards. He let go one line, but dragged heavily on the other as he sprawled.

The boat swerved round.

"Ooohoo!" spluttered Lister.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Hansom. "Mind what you're doing, you Modern ass! Do you want us into the bank?"

Lister didn't want it, but the Fifth Form boat went into the bank all the same. It crashed in the rushes.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

The oranges flew from Morny's hand and crashed into the Fifth Form boat. Hansom caught one with his ear, and Talboys another with his nose. Brown major captured one with his chin. There were roars of wrath from the Fifth Form crew.

Mornington grasped his oars again, and bent to them. The junior boat shot away up the stream like an arrow.

Hansom & Co. floundered in their boat in great wrath and wild recrimination.

"You dummy, Lister!"

"I was hit in the eye!" yelled Lister. "How could I help it? Look at my eye!"

"Blow your eye!" howled Hansom. "Look at my nose!" gasped Talboys.

"Blow your nose!"

"Oh, cheese it, and let's get after them!" exclaimed Brown major.

"You clumsy ass!"

"You burbling chump!"

"Look here—"

"Get the boat off and shut up!" roared Hansom. He shoved off with an oar, and the Fifth-Formers took up the chase again.

But the juniors had too good a start now. Right up to the island the pursuers followed them, pulling hard. But Morny & Co. were still two lengths ahead when they reached safety. There was a shout from the island, and Jimmy Silver & Co. came swarming down on the beach. Morny & Co. sprang ashore, and from the swarm of juniors a shower of clods and roots volleyed upon the Fifth Form boat.

Hansom & Co. backed off hastily. "Come on!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

But Hansom & Co. did not come on. They were not in sufficient force to deal with the rebels. They turned and pulled back to the school raft, breathless and wrathful, followed by yells of derision from the rebels on the island.

"Hallo! Where are they?" asked Myers of the Fifth, as Hansom & Co. landed on the raft. The Fifth

wire was a stroke of genius, Morny. I only hope we shall have time to get it fixed before they get at us."

"Let's get going with it, then!"

No time was lost by the rebels. Arthur Edward Lovell might opine, if he liked, that the Fourth could beat an equal number of the Fifth in hand-to-hand combat; but nobody was likely to share Lovell's opinion. The one thing needful was to keep the overpowering enemy from getting to close quarters, as everybody but Arthur Edward realised quite clearly. Morny's idea of bagging the barbed wire from the merchant of surplus Army stores at Latcham was really a brain-wave. And evidently it had come in the nick of time.

Under Jimmy Silver's direction the juniors worked hard. There were coils and coils of wire, plenty for the defence of the island, if only it could be got into position in time. The juniors uncoiled it, and ran it among trees and thickets and roots round the island, line above line. But while they were still busy, and the task was nowhere near half-done, there was a shout of warning from Oswald.

"Here they come!"

Three boats were pulling up the river towards the island, crowded with Fifth Form fellows. Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"Too soon for us," he remarked.

It was hard work, and not pleasant work, and there were some sore hands and scratched arms and torn clothes among the juniors when it was finished at last. But that was all in the day's work, and they took it as cheerfully as possible.

Round the little isle, at a short distance from the water's edge, the wire ran, curling through thickets and round trees and stumps and low-hanging boughs. Line above line, with many a knot and tangle, it ran, and not a single place was left for an opening. Within the barbed wire was the camp, with the old Army hut in the centre, and the skiff drawn up out of danger. And when the "job" was finished, and the tired juniors knocked off to rest, Jimmy Silver considered that the rebels' stronghold was fairly impregnable.

"If the Fifth really are after us, I fancy Hansom will be sorry that he lost time when he butts his head against that," grinned Mornington. "I hope they're on the war-path! While we're up against the Head, we may as well give the Fifth a fall."

"Just as well," said Jimmy Silver. "Keep a good watch, you fellows. It may be Hansom's dodge to take us suddenly from the upper end."

"They won't get through the wire," said Morny confidently.

"Not likely!"

"There's somebody on the tow-

had "rounded up" the rebels, and were at that moment engaged in shepherding them back to the school. It was surely an easy task for a score of hefty Fifth-Formers, and the Head had no doubt that they had done it.

"Very good!" said the Head aloud, and the March wind brought the muttered words across the water to the ears of the rebels. "Very good indeed! This is very satisfactory!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Lovell.

There was a chuckle among the rebel juniors. Higgs of the Fourth rose silently on a tree-stump, with a clod in his hand. Higgs was a fellow with no respect for his elders and betters, and he could not resist the temptation of catching the Head's topper with a missile. Fortunately, Jimmy Silver sighted him in time.

"Higgs, you dummy—"

Jimmy grabbed at Higgs' leg. There was a roar as Higgs came to the ground with a crash.

"Whooooop!"

Higgs hit the ground hard. His roar of anguish rang over the island and the river.

The Head was seen to give quite a jump. He realised now that the island was not so deserted as it looked.

"Bless my soul!" The Head raised his voice and called: "Boys! Are you still there?"

"Yes, sir!" called back Lovell.

"Still alive and kicking, sir!" called out Putty of the Fourth. "How do you do, sir? Nice afternoon for a walk up the river."

"Upon my word!"

"Like to come over to tea, sir?" called out Mornington. "We'll stand you tea with pleasure; truce for the afternoon, sir, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Chisholm did not reply. There was no trace of a smile on his face now. He cast a thunderous look up and down the river, apparently in search of the Fifth-Formers. At the same moment Conroy called from the upper end of the island: "Here come the Fifth!"

The 5th Chapter.

Not So Easy!

"Top-hole afternoon!" said Talboys.

"Rippin'!" agreed Lumsden.

Hansom of the Fifth smiled genially. In the tea-gardens of the Fishers' Rest, the Fifth-Formers had quite enjoyed an open-air spread after the pull up the river.

On all hands it was agreed that Edward Hansom deserved well of his Form.

There were two half-holidays a week at Rookwood; but an extra one was more than welcome. And it was one of those mild and pleasant days in early spring when a fellow thoroughly enjoyed himself up the river. The Fifth-Formers of Rookwood felt that they had had a good time, and they owed it to their Form captain. Hansom's idea of helping the Head out of his scrape was regarded almost as a stroke of genius. True, the Fifth had not yet rounded up the rebels. But they had enjoyed an afternoon on the river and a spread in the tea-gardens, and that, after all, was the chief thing. Hansom looked at his watch.

"Time we were movin'," he remarked.

And the Fifth, in great good-humour, went back to their boats. They pulled lazily down the current towards the island.

"Hallo! There's the Head on the bank!" ejaculated Talboys suddenly. "Phew!"

Dr. Chisholm stood like a stern statue on the towpath, his eyes fixed on the three boats as they glided up. He raised his hand commandingly, and the Fifth-Formers swerved in to the bank.

"Hansom!" rapped out the Head.

"Hom! Yes, sir!"

"I gave you leave from school this afternoon, in order that you might bring those rebellious juniors back to Rookwood!"

"Hom! Yes, sir! Exactly!" stammered Hansom.

"You have not done so, Hansom." "We—we—hom!—we thought we—we—better think it out a bit, sir—strategy, and—and all that, sir!" stammered Hansom, hoping that the Head would not guess that the Fifth-Formers had been up the river for tea. "We—we've laid all our plans now, sir."

"Indeed!" said the Head, very dryly.

"Oh, yes, sir! We—we've got it all cut and dried," said Hansom. "In

(Continued on page 624.)



DEAD ON THE MARK! Whiz! Valentine Mornington hurled the orange with unerring aim, and it crashed fairly in Lister's eye as he sat in the boat behind. The Fifth-Former gave a startled yell, sprawled backwards, and let go one line, but dragged heavily on the other, causing the boat to swerve round.

Form crowd had expected Hansom to return with a captured boat and three prisoners. But he hadn't.

"They got away," said Hansom.

"You let them get away?" asked Myers.

Hansom gave him a glare, and did not deign to reply.

"Get out the other boats!" he snapped. "We're going up the river. Get out the boats, and don't jaw!"

Hansom of the Fifth did not seem to be in a good temper.

The 4th Chapter.

The Head Looks In.

Jimmy Silver watched Hansom's boat out of sight, and whistled. The rebels of Rookwood landed Morny's cargo, and pulled the skiff ashore.

"So the Fifth are taking a hand in this game, are they?" said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully.

"Looks like it," said Valentine Mornington. "The raft was swarming with them when we came by, and Hansom came after us. Looks as if the Head has put the Fifth after us, as the jolly old prefects weren't any good."

"Let 'em all come!" said Lovell. "We're ready for them!"

"I hope so," said Mornington dryly. "They're nearly as many as us—quite as many as us if we leave out the slackers and funks. Once they get on the island, I fancy we're booked. Of course, Lovell may be able to lick Fifth-Formers; but as a rule the Fourth are not quite up to the weight of the Fifth."

"Oh, don't give us any sars!" said Lovell. "We'll jolly well make 'em sorry they came!"

"Nuff said!" interposed Jimmy Silver. "Your idea of the barbed

"Still, this will stop a rush, anyhow, and that's something."

The juniors watched the boats coming up. They were ready for the fray; though the result of that fray was exceedingly doubtful, with the Fifth in such strong force. To their surprise the boats pulled into the channel past the island.

"They're not coming here!" ejaculated Morny blankly. "What the dickens are they doin' out of class, then? Hansom was after us—"

"Anyhow, they're going on," said Jimmy Silver, in great relief.

Some of the Fifth stared towards the island and laughed. Hansom stared and frowned. But the three boats pulled on, and disappeared up-river between the winding banks. Hansom & Co. were heading for the inn a couple of miles farther up; keeping to the programme of mopping up the juniors on their way back, after a happy outing.

Had Edward Hansom known what was going on on the island, probably he would have changed his plans, and lost no time. But he did not know, and the rebels of Rookwood were left undisturbed.

"I believe they're after us, all the same," said Mornington, with conviction. "We want to keep an eye open, and get on with the giddy wire entanglement as fast as we jolly well can."

"Don't lose a second, you fellows," said Jimmy Silver.

And the Rookwood rebels made the best use of that unexpected respite. It was a case of all hands on deck, as Jimmy expressed it. Even Tubby Muffin was made to help, and Peele and Gower and one or two other slackers were routed out and turned to.

The Fight With The Fifth!



(Continued from page 621.)

ten minutes from now, sir, we shall have those cheeky fags marching back to the school, sir! Rely upon us!"

"I don't think!" murmured Jimmy Silver, and there was a chuckle from the Classical Fourth, behind the barbed wire. They heard every word that Edward Hansom uttered; and there was no doubt now of the intentions of the Fifth. There was great doubt, however, whether the Fifth would be able to carry out those intentions.

Dr. Chisholm gave the captain of the Fifth a rather grim look.

"Very good, Hansom," he said curtly. "You appear to have wasted time; but we will speak of that later. Kindly lose no more time."

"Oh, yes, sir—I mean, no, sir!" stuttered Hansom. "Pull for the island, you fellows!"

And the three boats turned from the river-bank.

"The old boy's in a wax!" whispered Talboys.

"A rare wax," said Hansom, below his breath. "But it will be all right when we bring the Fourth to book. He won't rag us after we've done that."

"Couldn't very well," agreed Talboys.

"Dash it all, he ought to be grateful!" grumbled Lumsden. "We're doin' his dashed bizney for him! Just like the Head!"

"It will be all serene," said Hansom confidently. "It won't take us ten minutes to make those fags howl for mercy! Get on with it!"

Three boats bumped into the rushes on the island. The Fifth Form of Rookwood swarmed ashore, rather surprised that their landing was not disputed. So far as Hansom could see, the rebels' only chance was to rush them before they got fairly ashore; not that it was much of a chance, at that.

But the landing took place undisputed. The boats were moored, and the Fifth gathered in a body to advance. From the bank the Head watched them, standing like a grim old statue. He was not pleased with his Fifth Form; he was aware, now, that Hansom & Co. had annexed an

"Hullo, Hansom!" It was the voice of Arthur Edward Lovell. "Get off our island, you cheeky Fifth Form cad!"

Hansom smiled grimly. "We're getting off pretty soon, and you're getting off with us, my pippin!" he said. "Come on, you chaps!"

And Hansom led a rush into the thickets.

The next minute Edward Hansom was lying on his back, yelling. He had rushed into something he had not seen, and did not yet know clearly what it was. But it had hurt him.

"Come on!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "Give them socks!" roared Lovell. There was a yell from Talboys.

"I—I say—there's a wire here!"

"There's a wire here!" yelled Lumsden, demonstrating the fact by catching his foot, and going with a crash to the ground. "Oh, my hat! Oh, my Aunt Belinda! Ow!"

"Why, what—what—" stuttered Hansom.

"Aren't you Fifth chaps coming on?" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hansom scrambled up and came on. He came on to the tangled skein of barbed wire in the thicket, and yelled and stopped. Over the wire defences a cricket-stump lashed out, and Hansom caught it with his head. He gave a bellow and jumped back. Another stump lunged out at Talboys, and caught him on his waistcoat. He grabbed at the holder of the stump,

and caught a handful of wire, and raved.

"Quite a surprise for the jolly old Fifth!" chuckled Valentine Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They—they—they've got the place wired!" stuttered Edward Hansom, utterly taken aback. "Oh, my thumping Uncle Theophilus! They—they—they've got barbed wire from somewhere, and—and—and— Oh dear!"

"Aren't you coming on, Hansom?" yelled Lovell.

Hansom gritted his teeth.

"Back up, you fellows!" he shouted. "We've got to get them; we've got to do it! Back up!"

And the Fifth backed up manfully. They spread among the thickets of the island, groping among tangled wires, hunting for a way through. But there was no way through. Tangled wire—unpleasant to touch—barred them at every point.

Hansom, almost desperate, came on fiercely, and fairly hung on the barbed wire, caught and unable to extricate himself. He hung there, squirming and wriggling and struggling frantically, while Putty of the Fourth tapped him with a cricket-stump, and Raby squeezed an orange down his neck, and Tubby Muffin plastered his head with handfuls of mud.

Loud and wild yells and howls reached the ears of Dr. Chisholm as he stood on the river-bank, watching

and waiting. The thickets on the island hid what was passing from his view; but his sense of hearing told him that the Fifth were not having matters all their own way—very far from that!

And meanwhile on the island one by one, or two by two, the hapless Fifth drifted back to their boats, torn and untidy, dishevelled and breathless, and wishing from the bottom of their hearts that Hansom had never thought of tackling the Classical Fourth.

"Come on!" Hansom was yelling.

"Come off, you mean!" howled Lumsden. "You silly ass, what did you bring us here for, playing the goat? I'm going!"

"Same here!" gasped Talboys.

"No business of ours, anyhow," spluttered Brown major. "If the Head wants those young cads, let the Head fetch 'em, and be blown to him! I'm off!"

"Come here!" yelled Hansom.

"Rats!"

"Come and help a fellow. I—I can't get away!" shrieked Hansom, in desperation.

And then his followers understood that he was not urging them on to battle, but demanding help to join in the retreat. Even Hansom had had enough.

His comrades extricated him—getting a good many lunges from the Fourth-Formers in doing so—and Hansom retreated with them to the waterside. Loud yells of victory sounded from the Fourth.

"Come on, you funks!" bawled Lovell.

"They're running for it!" yelled Raby. "Good old Fifth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A dejected and dispirited crowd of seniors swarmed into the boats. They did not heed the yells and cat-calls from the rebel camp. They only wanted to get away. Three boats pulled off from the island, and Dr. Chisholm watched them with an angry, steely eye. He raised a beckoning hand.

"Hansom!"

"Yes, sir?" groaned Hansom.

"You have failed?"

"You—you see, sir, they—they—we—they—" babbled Hansom.

"Return to Rookwood at once. I desire to hear no explanations. It is my opinion that, in making me the offer of service you did, Hansom, you were simply thinking of obtaining leave from classes, and—"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all, sir! I—I—we—we—"

"That will do! I regard you as having abused my confidence. Every Fifth Form boy here will take five hundred lines. Not a word! Return to the school."

Dr. Chisholm turned his back on the hapless Fifth and stalked away, wrathful and majestic. And the miserable Fifth rowed home to Rookwood in the lowest possible spirits.

THE END.

("Back to Rookwood!" is the great story of the Fourth Form Rebels appearing in next Monday's Boys' Friend. Don't miss it!")

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No boy could wish for a better headmaster than Mr. Roger Blunt, who now holds the reins at St. Katie's School. Formerly master of the Transitus Form, Jolly Roger, as Mr. Blunt is affectionately called by everyone in the school, took over the position at the head of St. Katie's when Mr. Bird left the establishment at the end of the summer term last year. And, although as yet his reign as headmaster of the school can only be termed as in its infancy, Mr. Blunt up till now has proved that he is the right man in the right place.

A firm believer in discipline of the cast-iron variety, Jolly Roger is, nevertheless, a thoroughly decent

sort, and is consequently highly respected by almost every boy under him. Besides which, he is a very fine athlete, and perhaps that has a great deal to do with his popularity at St. Katie's, where, of course, they are sport-mad.

Comparatively young as headmasters go, Jolly Roger, who is even now only about thirty-two years of age, is married to Margery Frayne's sister, Nancy, and, of course, as everyone knows, Jolly Roger's sister-in-law is a great friend of Dickie Dexter & Co. of the Transitus Form at Katie's. In fact, Dickie Dexter, along with Jimmy Curtis, played a very big part indeed in the big event in Jolly Roger's life. But how Dexter and Curtis butted into the quiet wedding of their master and gave him a warm reception is, of course, past history now.

That Mr. Blunt has a great regard for St. Katie's and his boys is no secret, and, although he is never in love with the task of punishing

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