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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

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Winning Through!

by WALTER EDWARDS



TROUBLE ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD — WHOLESALE ARRESTS AT THE CHELSEA VILLA v. MERTON MATCH!
(A thrilling incident from the long, complete story of Rollo Dayton and the Duke, included in this number.)

The Downfall of Dandy Jim! Jimmy Silver & Co. Score Again!

Rookwooders To The Rescue!



Another Thrilling Story of the Chums of Rookwood.

BY OWEN CONQUEST

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

The 1st Chapter.

A Meeting in the End Study!

"Buzz off!" Arthur Edward Lovell gave that terse command emphatically as Tubby Muffin put a fat face into the doorway of the end study.

But Tubby did not retreat. It was tea-time, and there was a gathering in Jimmy Silver's study, in the Fourth Form passage at Rookwood.

Jimmy was there, with Raby, Lovell, and Newcome, his study-mates, and Conroy, Pons, and Van Ryn of the Fourth had dropped in, and Erroll and Oswald had followed. And Tubby Muffin, who had the nose of a bloodhound for a study spread, promptly followed on.

But there was a lion in the path, in the shape of Arthur Edward Lovell.

Lovell was apparently acting as door-keeper. He passed the juniors in, one by one, till Reginald Muffin arrived, and then he extended a sturdy arm across the doorway, and commanded Muffin to "buzz."

Rawson and Putty of the Fourth came along the passage, and Lovell admitted them to the study. Tubby Muffin, seeking to dodge in after Rawson, was caught by the collar.

"Leggo!" roared Tubby.

"Outside!" "Look here, I'm coming to the feed!" howled Tubby indignantly. "I say, Jimmy, you're not leaving out an old pal, are you?"

Jimmy Silver looked round.

"Fathead! It's not a feed."

"Eh? What are all the fellows turning up for, if it's not a spread?" demanded Tubby suspiciously.

"It's a meeting."

"Well, I'll come to the meeting," said Muffin. "Leggo, Lovell! I don't want to punch an old pal, but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "Punch away, fatty!"

"I wouldn't—not when I'm coming to your spread," said Tubby Muffin. "Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"We're all here now," said Jimmy Silver. "Shut the door, Lovell!"

"I say, Jimmy—"

"Oh, buzz off, Muffin!" said the captain of the Fourth impatiently. "It's not a spread, and there's nothing to eat."

Lovell jerked the fat Classical into the passage by his collar, and sat him down there with a bump. Then the door of the end study was slammed.

Tubby Muffin sat and gaped for a minute or two. Then he scrambled to his feet, and approached the study door cautiously. Tubby was by no means convinced that it wasn't a feed, and he meant to know. If it was a study spread, Tubby was going to be present somehow, he was determined on that.

Jimmy Silver's voice was audible in the study, as Tubby bent cautiously over the keyhole.

"I dare say you fellows are a bit surprised at being called in—"

"Yes, if it isn't a feed!" said Oswald, with a laugh.

"It isn't; it's something a good bit more important and serious."

Jimmy Silver's tone was very grave. Tubby Muffin sniffed, but he did not leave the keyhole. It wasn't a spread, but Tubby's curiosity was excited, and he wanted to know all about it. The fellows in the study, evidently, had forgotten the existence of the Peeping Tom of Rookwood.

The meeting in the end study regarded Jimmy Silver with curious glances. What the captain of the Fourth was driving at was a mystery to them so far.

"Well, what's the game, anyhow?" asked Conroy.

"It's about Wilmot."

"A meeting in the study about the school football coach!" said Oswald, in astonishment.

"That's it."

"You see, we've made a tremendous discovery!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, and two unsuspected fat ears outside the study door pricked up in happy anticipation.

"You fellows remember," said Jimmy quietly, "that our football coach, Mr. Wilmot, was arrested in mistake for a man wanted by the police—a man just like him to look at, named Stacey—Dandy Jim, as he was called."

"That's not likely to happen again," said Conroy. "Mr. Wilmot proved that he wasn't the man, and they let him go."

"Then he came back to Rookwood," said Jimmy. "Have you fellows noticed any difference in him since he came back?"

"Yes," said Conroy, at once. "He doesn't seem anything like the good footballer he was before. I've heard Bulkeley of the Sixth mention that, too."

"Nor so good-tempered," remarked Oswald. "But he's easier-going in some ways—he lets off the slackers, a thing he never used to do."

"He had a queer way of forgetting fellows' names," said Erroll. "It was odd he should have forgotten so much while he was away only a few days. But what are you getting at, Jimmy?"

"This," said Jimmy Silver. "He is not the same man."

"What?"

"My hat!"

"Draw it mild, old top!"

"I've proved it," said Jimmy quietly.

"Putting a lot of things together, I came to suspect it—and then I put him to the test. I asked him about things that happened—and didn't happen—while Mr. Wilmot was here, and he gave himself completely away. He's not Mr. Wilmot. Now, there's only one man who resembles Mr. Wilmot so closely as to be taken for him. And that one is Dandy Jim, the cracksman. And my belief is that Mr. Wilmot was somehow got at as he was coming back to Rookwood, and put away somewhere, and this rascal took his place, and his clothes, and had the nerve to come here as Wilmot."

The Rookwood juniors stared blankly at Jimmy Silver.

They had not known what to expect when they were called to the meeting in

the end study, but most decidedly they had not expected this.

"Great Scott!" said Rawson at last.

"But—"

"The other day," continued Jimmy, "we were caught in a thunderstorm, and took cover in a shed next to an old cottage on the heath. There, through a crack in the wall, we saw Dandy Jim. Another man was with him who called him by name. Now, if the real Mr. Wilmot has been made a prisoner and put away somewhere secretly, that's the place—it's a lonely cottage, in the middle of the heath—and this man must have had a reason for going to such a place. My belief is that he goes there to make sure that his prisoner is safe; also, perhaps, to see his confederate about their schemes. We're going to look into it."

"My hat!"

"I'm quite certain of what I say," continued Jimmy; "but, naturally, we want actual proof before we can speak out. We're going to find the proof at the cottage on the heath. But we're dealing with pretty desperate characters, and we'd like you fellows to back us up—if you feel inclined. That's how it stands."

Lovell rose to his feet, and made a quick step to the door. In his breathless excitement Tubby Muffin had knocked on the door-handle and rattled it. Lovell threw the door open, and there was a startled yelp as the fat junior almost tumbled into the study.

"Ow! I—I wasn't listening—"

Yarooooooh!

Tubby Muffin did not stay to explain further—he fled, and Arthur Edward Lovell, in great wrath, dribbled him down

the passage as far as the stairs. Tubby went down the stairs at a wonderful speed, and Lovell snorted, and tramped back to the end study—where the council of war was resumed unheard by Reginald Muffin of the Classical Fourth.

The 2nd Chapter. The Shadow of Fear!

Crash!

"Whooooo!" roared Tubby Muffin. It was a terrific collision.

Tubby, under the impression that Arthur Edward Lovell was still raging on his track, close at his flying heels, went down the staircase almost as if he were going down a toboggan.

Naturally, he had no time to look where he was going.

A sturdy, good-looking young man was crossing the lower landing; and Tubby Muffin crashed into him like a battering-ram.

Tubby reeled from the shock, and sat down with a breathless bump.

The young man he had butted into fared worse. He staggered across the landing, brought up against the wall, and slid down at the foot of it, fairly hurled off his feet by the impact of Tubby's heavy weight.

Tubby blinked at him dizzily.

"Oh dear! Groogh! It's Mr. Wilmot! Oh crumbs! Ow! 'Twasn't my fault, Mr. Wilmot! Grooogh!"

The footballer sat up, a loud and savage exclamation leaving his lips. Even in his breathless, dazed state, Tubby was startled to hear him. Eric Wilmot, the football coach of Rookwood, was a fellow respected by all the school, liked by almost all Rookwood. That he was capable of uttering the savage words that were now streaming from his lips, no one at Rookwood had imagined for a moment; certainly, if the Head had heard him, he would not have remained five minutes longer within the walls of the old school.

He staggered up, his face black with rage. The collision and the fall had hurt him, and roused all his savage temper. Tubby blinked almost in terror at the enraged face—remembering what he had overheard at the door of the end study. And into Tubby's fat brain sank the knowledge that Jimmy Silver had stated the facts—that this was not the man Rookwood School had known as Eric Wilmot, but the cracksman who resembled him so closely. Jimmy Silver was right.

The man made a spring towards the gasping Tubby, grasped him by the collar, and dragged him to his feet.

"You clumsy young hound!" he hissed. "Yaroooh! Leggo! Help! Murder! Thieves!" howled Tubby Muffin. "I—I say, I'll call the police! I'll hand you over! Leggo!"

"What?"

The rage in the man's face died away suddenly; it became fixed, startled, fearful. His eyes glittered at the fat Classical. For one terrible moment it came into Dandy Jim's mind that his secret was known.

"I—I— Leggo! I couldn't help it!

Accident!" gasped Tubby. "That beast Lovell was after me!"

"You said—" hissed the footballer.

"I—I didn't say anything! I—I never heard Jimmy Silver tell the fellows anything about you!" gasped Tubby Muffin, in mortal terror as the grasp of his collar tightened.

"What did he say?"

"Nothing! I wasn't listening. I—I believe you are Mr. Wilmot. I'm sure it's all right!"

A terrible look came over the face of Eric Wilmot's double. But he calmed himself and released Tubby Muffin's collar. Dozens of ears were within range of Tubby's yelling, and it was no place to deal with him as Dandy Jim would have liked to deal with the fat Classical junior.

"All right, my boy," said Dandy Jim, choking back his fury and speaking calmly, and with a smiling face. "You rather hurt me, you know, bumping me over like that."

"Sorry!" gasped Tubby. "That beast Lovell—"

"Why was Lovell after you?" asked Dandy Jim smoothly.

"He thought I—I was listening, you know. I wasn't, of course. I never heard a word."

"They were talking about me, what?"

"Yes, Jimmy thinks—I mean, no—you see, I never heard a word," said Tubby Muffin. "Don't you think I believe anything of the kind. Just as if a cracksman could come here pretending to be our football coach."

Dandy Jim's face was pale.

"I was just going to my room to tea," he said. "Come and share a cake and a cup of tea with me, Master Muffin."

For the first time on record, Tubby Muffin failed to be attracted by a free feed. He was quite convinced now that the man before him was the cracksman, Dandy Jim, and his only anxiety was to get safely out of his reach.

"Thanks! I—I'm going to tea with Mr. Dalton," he stammered.

"Mr. Dalton is out of doors."

"I—I mean the—the Head—"

stuttered Tubby.

"Come, my boy," said the young man, smoothly and smilingly, and he made a movement towards Reginald Muffin.

Muffin gave a yelp of terror and fled. He went down the lower staircase like a deer.

What the football coach might think of his terrified flight, Tubby did not know or care. He only knew that he wanted to get safe away.

Dandy Jim did not follow him.

He wanted very much to "pump" Tubby Muffin and learn what the fat Classical knew or suspected. But evidently that was out of the question now; he did not wish to draw a crowd. He cast a black look after Tubby, and strode away to his own room.

He locked the door of the room, and went out on the little iron balcony by the French window. There he stood in deep, grim thought. He was thinking—and he was watching. Unlikely as it seemed to the cunning plotter, Tubby's gasping words seemed to imply that Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth Form, suspected the true identity of the man who was known at Rookwood as Eric Wilmot. It was unlikely—impossible—yet—Dandy Jim was assured that he had covered up his tracks thoroughly, and yet—What did the fat fool's babble mean?

If Jimmy Silver, by some unheard-of chance, knew or suspected the truth, what would he do? Had he, on the day of the visit to the lonely cottage on the moor, seen or heard something of which Dandy Jim knew nothing? In that case, what would he do? Go to the Head—with so strange a story? Go to the police? Or go to the lonely cottage to make a cautious investigation before committing himself to a startling accusation?

The last was the most probable.

Dandy Jim knew that Jimmy Silver & Co. were now in the house. If Jimmy went out—

He gave a sudden start, and caught his breath.

In the quadrangle below he caught sight of a number of juniors crossing towards the gates. Jimmy Silver was there, and with him were a crowd of fellows—Lovell, Raby, Newcome, Oswald, Conroy, and two or three others. Dandy Jim noted that the schoolboys were all carrying sticks under their arms—a rather unusual equipment for a half-holiday walk.

From the little balcony he saw the crowd of juniors turn out at the school gates and disappear.

He drew a deep, hissing breath. They were gone—whither? Something like despair mingled with black rage in the rascally impostor's heart. If the truth was known—

A minute later Dandy Jim was hurrying down to the gates.

The 3rd Chapter.

Rookwooders to the Rescue!

"Here's luck!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. As the crowd of Fourth-Formers started for Coombe, there was a whir and a hooting on the road, and they looked round to see a lumbering motor-bus coming on behind. It was the bus that plied twice a day between Woodend and Coombe.

"That's a lift for us!" said Jimmy.

"Good!"

Jimmy Silver held up his hand, and the bus slowed down. The Fourth-Formers clambered on the big vehicle, and it rolled on towards the village.

It was disappearing in the distance when the man who called himself Eric Wilmot came out at the gates.

Dandy Jim gritted his teeth.

The road was clear, and he could guess that the juniors had gone on the motor-omnibus. He had intended to keep them in sight, and learn whether their destination was the lonely cottage on the

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moor. He was left hopelessly behind now.

The juniors, unaware of what the impostor had learned from Tubby Muffin, did not even guess that the suspected man was following them. They gave him hardly a thought, as the motor-bus rolled on to Coombe.

At the village they descended, having saved a mile of the long walk to the cottage on the heath.

From Coombe the party struck across the heath at once. It was a cold, clear afternoon, and all the party were ready for a tramp on the open heath. But most of them were very doubtful as to what they would discover at the end of their long walk.

Jimmy Silver was quite certain in his own mind; but even Jimmy had taken his time to think over the strange affair, and wanted to get hold of definite proof before making his suspicions known outside the circle of his own chums. Lovell and Raby and Newcome agreed with their study-leader; but they had lingering doubts. The other fellows had still stronger doubts, but they were prepared to back up Jimmy Silver and put the matter to the test.

It was a long tramp across the heath, but the Rookwooders came in sight of the lonely cottage at last.

A thin column of smoke was rising from the chimney showing that the hovel was inhabited. The front door was open, and a man was bending beside a bicycle outside the door, apparently engaged upon repairing a puncture.

He stood up as he caught sight of the juniors, and stared towards them with a dark and lowering face.

"Is that the Johnny you fellows saw there before?" asked Conroy.

"That's the man!" said Jimmy.

"Dandy Jim called him Lurcher."

"Ye gods, what a name!" grinned the Australian junior.

"He looks a pretty tough customer," remarked Oswald. "I say, Jimmy, we're not going to rush the man's house, I suppose, and search it for a giddy prisoner? What about the law?"

"We ought to have dropped in at the police-station and borrowed a search-warrant," murmured Putty Grace.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're going to be guided by circumstances," said Jimmy. "But, anyhow, we're going to know the facts. If Mr. Wilmot is a prisoner in that den—"

"If!" murmured Putty.

"We're going to have him out, and that will be proof enough against that rotter who's using his name at Rookwood. If he's there, he's in the upper room—there's only two," said Jimmy. "Come on!"

The juniors approached the cottage. The man Lurcher scowled at them as they came up. Whether he was acting the part of a gaoler in the lonely cottage or not, evidently he did not desire visitors.

Putty Grace greeted the scowling man with a cheery smile and a nod.

"Is this the place for refreshments?" he asked.

"No, it ain't!"

"This isn't where they do the shilling teas for cyclists?" asked Putty pleasantly.

"No!" growled the man.

"Then what's your figure for a tea all round for this little party?" asked Putty.

"This here ain't tea-rooms!" growled Lurcher. "You get on your way. You can't come in here!"

"Don't you want our company?" asked Putty, with a pained look.

"No, I blooming well don't!"

"Never mind; we've only called to see your lodger," said Jimmy Silver.

The man started violently, and his eyes glittered as they turned on the captain of the Fourth.

"Whatcher mean?" he snarled. "There ain't any lodger 'ere!"

"The chap in your upstairs room, I mean," said Jimmy.

"There ain't nobody there."

Jimmy glanced up at the little window of the upper room. It was tightly closed and thickly curtained. Lurcher was watching him with savage suspicion.

"Well, what are we going to do, Jimmy?" asked Lovell.

"We're going to watch the place, while one of us goes to Coombe for a policeman," said Jimmy Silver. "We've got to take care that Mr. Wilmot isn't removed before the police arrive."

There was a gasping exclamation from Lurcher. Jimmy's words took him utterly by surprise—as they were intended to do. The ruffian made a spring towards Jimmy, and grasped him by the shoulder, his savage, bead-eyes peering into the schoolboy's face.

"You young hound!" he panted. "So you was spying—"

"Let go my shoulder, Mr. Lurcher," said Jimmy calmly, though his heart was beating fast. "Your game's up here, my man. Dandy Jim—"

"What do you now about Dandy Jim?" panted Lurcher.

"Lots!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "You see, I happen to know that he is going to be arrested at Rookwood to-day—"

"At—at Rookwood!"

"Where he is passing himself off as Mr. Wilmot," smiled Jimmy.

Lurcher almost staggered.

The Rookwooders were watching him with breathless keenness. Jimmy Silver was bluffing; and if his suspicions had been ill-founded, it was rather difficult to imagine what the man's answer would have been. But it was clear enough that Jimmy's suspicions were well-founded—that the ruffian was startled and terrified at what he knew.

The man's glance passed the group of juniors and swept the open heath, searchingly. They knew what he was looking for; they could see the terror of the police in his face.

He moved closer to the bicycle, and grasped it. His glance swept round the heath again, and then fixed savagely on the juniors.

"Keep off that bike!" said Lovell.

"You're not getting away, my man. You're wanted for kidnapping Mr. Wilmot."

"Collar him!" shouted Conroy.

That was enough for Lurcher. He made a sudden rush with the bicycle, and drove it through the crowd of Rookwooders, hurling them right and left. The next moment he had his leg over the saddle and was riding away before he was fairly seated. The bicycle bumped and jolted over the rough track on the heath at a great rate.

The juniors stared after him blankly. That sudden and complete proof that Jimmy Silver was on the right track took his comrades by surprise.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"I fancy that settles it," he said.

"That rotter knows that it's all known, and he's only thinking of saving his own skin."

"My hat!" gasped Lovell. "I—I say, we ought to collar him!"

"No proof yet," said Putty. "But as he's bolted, we can take the liberty of looking into his cottage."

"Yes, rather."

Without a single glance back, Lurcher was pedalling away across the heath as if for his life. Obviously he was not giving a thought to the prisoner in the cottage or to his belongings there, he was only thinking of saving himself from the law. But the business of the Rookwooders was not with Lurcher. They crowded into the cottage; every one in the party convinced now that Jimmy Silver had hit upon the truth, and that Eric Wilmot, the football coach of Rookwood, was a prisoner in the hovel on the heath.

The 4th Chapter. The Rescue!

"Mr. Wilmot!" Arthur Edward Lovell had a powerful voice, and it fairly thundered in the little

help and rescue had come, it seemed like a dream to the cracksmen's victim.

"I'll soon have you loose, sir!" breathed Jimmy.

He cut the cords, and drew away the gagging cloth. The white, numbed lips of the prisoner moved, but only a faint inarticulate sound came forth. The hapless footballer could not speak.

Quickly Jimmy sawed through the cords that secured him. The rascals had run no risks with their prisoner; escape had been impossible, and they had taken measures to prevent him from giving the alarm to any chance visitor to the lonely cottage. Evidently they had cared little or nothing how much he had suffered in their hands. The once sturdy footballer was the ghost of his former self.

He could not speak, but there were tears rolling down his ghastly cheeks, as Jimmy freed him.

"Poor old chap!" breathed Lovell.

"It's Wilmot! And that scoundrel at Rookwood—"

"He's going to pay for this!" said Jimmy Silver, between his teeth.

"Yes, rather! Let's get Mr. Wilmot downstairs."

"Lend a hand here, you chaps!" called out Jimmy Silver.

Three or four of the juniors ascended into the garret. The young man was raised among them, and they helped him to the trap. With some difficulty, and the assistance of the rest of the party from below, he was got down the ladder.

He was placed in the most comfortable chair that could be found, and the juniors gathered round him. It was clear that the exhausted man was in no state to leave the cottage then.

"We shall have to get a lift, somehow," said Jimmy Silver. "He couldn't possibly walk the distance to Rookwood—if he can walk at all, poor chap! One of you fellows cut off to Coombe, and bring the trap from the Red Lion here!"

the fire was lighted in the rusty old grate, and a rusty kettle was soon boiling. A hot cup of tea was placed to Eric Wilmot's lips, and he smiled faintly and sipped it. It revived him, too, and when he had finished the tea he was able to speak.

"Silver and you others, you've saved me!" His voice was faint and choked. "Heaven bless you! I had given up hope! I knew that villain was at Rookwood in my name—"

He broke off.

"It was all Jimmy's doing, sir," said Raby. "He spotted that awful rotter, and found out that it wasn't you!"

"Heaven bless you, Silver!"

"Thank goodness you're found!" said the captain of the Fourth. "And that villain will be collared as soon as we get back to the school!"

Eric Wilmot's eyes gleamed.

"My cousin—James Stacey—" he muttered.

"He is your cousin!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Yes."

"I—I thought he must be a relation, from the likeness."

"He is my cousin—and for that reason I have spared him more than once!" muttered Wilmot. "But after this let him get what he deserves! My cousin—it will all come out when he stands his trial—he will not spare me the shame of having it known."

"No fault of yours, sir!" said Conroy.

"Rookwood won't think any the less of you for it, Mr. Wilmot!"

"Not a bit!" said Jimmy Silver. "And the safest place for that villain is Dartmoor."

Wilmot nodded.

"And you've been a prisoner here, all the time he's been at Rookwood in your name!" said Raby. "You've had a hard time, sir!"

"I think I should have died if it had lasted much longer!" muttered Wilmot.

stick crashed on the rascal's arm. The revolver went to the ground.

"Collar the rotter!"

A moment more, and the cracksmen was in the grasp of six or seven pairs of hands, struggling desperately.

The odds were too great for him, and he had no chance, but he put up a fearful struggle. For long minutes he fought, and tore, and struck, and struggled; but the Rookwooders never let go, and at last the cracksmen came to the ground, with the juniors swarming over him. Even then he did not yield till he was utterly exhausted, and lay helpless and panting under his assailants.

Conroy planted a heavy knee on his chest.

"Get a rope!" he said breathlessly.

Putty of the Fourth dashed into the cottage, while the other fellows kept the cracksmen secure in their grasp. He came out with the cords which, an hour before, had held Eric Wilmot a helpless prisoner in the garret. With great care Putty proceeded to bind the wrists and ankles of the scowling, panting rascal.

Then the juniors released him.

Dandy Jim, the cracksmen, lay helpless on the ground, unable to stir hand or foot.

Only his furious eyes glittered at the juniors, with volumes of hate and rage in them. But his savage looks had no effect on the cheery heroes of Rookwood. "Looks like a win for us—what!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

And in great spirits, in spite of some hard knocks they had received in the conflict, the Rookwood crowd returned into the cottage, to keep Eric Wilmot company until Lovell arrived with the trap.

Arthur Edward Lovell jumped from the trap at the door of the cottage on the heath, half an hour later. The driver from the Red Lion stared at the bound man lying before the doorway. He stared still more when the Rookwooders crowded out of the cottage, helping Eric Wilmot in their midst. Lovell fairly chirruped with satisfaction at the sight of the bound cracksmen.

"So that beauty came along here!" he exclaimed. "Lucky you fellows managed to bag him."

Arthur Edward seemed a little surprised that his comrades had been so successful in his absence. However, there was no doubt about their success. There was Dandy Jim, tied hand and foot.

"We've got him!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "We'll drive back through Coombe, and drop him at the police-station. It will give Mr. Boggs the surprise of his life."

"What-ho!"

Eric Wilmot was helped into a comfortable seat in the trap, and then the prisoner was hauled into the bottom of the vehicle. Jimmy Silver and Lovell stepped in after them; the rest of the party had to walk. The driver started the horse, and the trap jolted away by the rough track over the heath, the Rookwood crowd trotting along with it.

Coombe was reached, and they halted outside the residence of Mr. Boggs, which was attached to the little police-station of the village. Mr. Boggs was called out, and he blinked at the bound man blankly. His first impression was that this was a Rookwood "rag," but when the facts sank at last into P.-c. Boggs' stolid brain, he grinned with satisfaction. Mr. Boggs had never taken in charge before any criminal more desperate than a village urchin for robbing an orchard. Dandy Jim was his first cracksmen! And the bare idea of bagging a well-known criminal who was sought in vain by the London police made Mr. Boggs swell with importance, to such an extent that he really seemed in danger of bursting his well-filled tunic.

Mr. Boggs took charge of Dandy Jim, sorting out a rusty old pair of handcuffs to fasten on him. As he was lifted from the trap the rascal turned his eyes upon the cousin he had wronged and injured. Perhaps, even at that moment, he still hoped that Wilmot might relent towards him. The young footballer avoided his glance. Not that he could have helped the rascal if he had taken pity on him—Jimmy Silver & Co. would have seen to that.

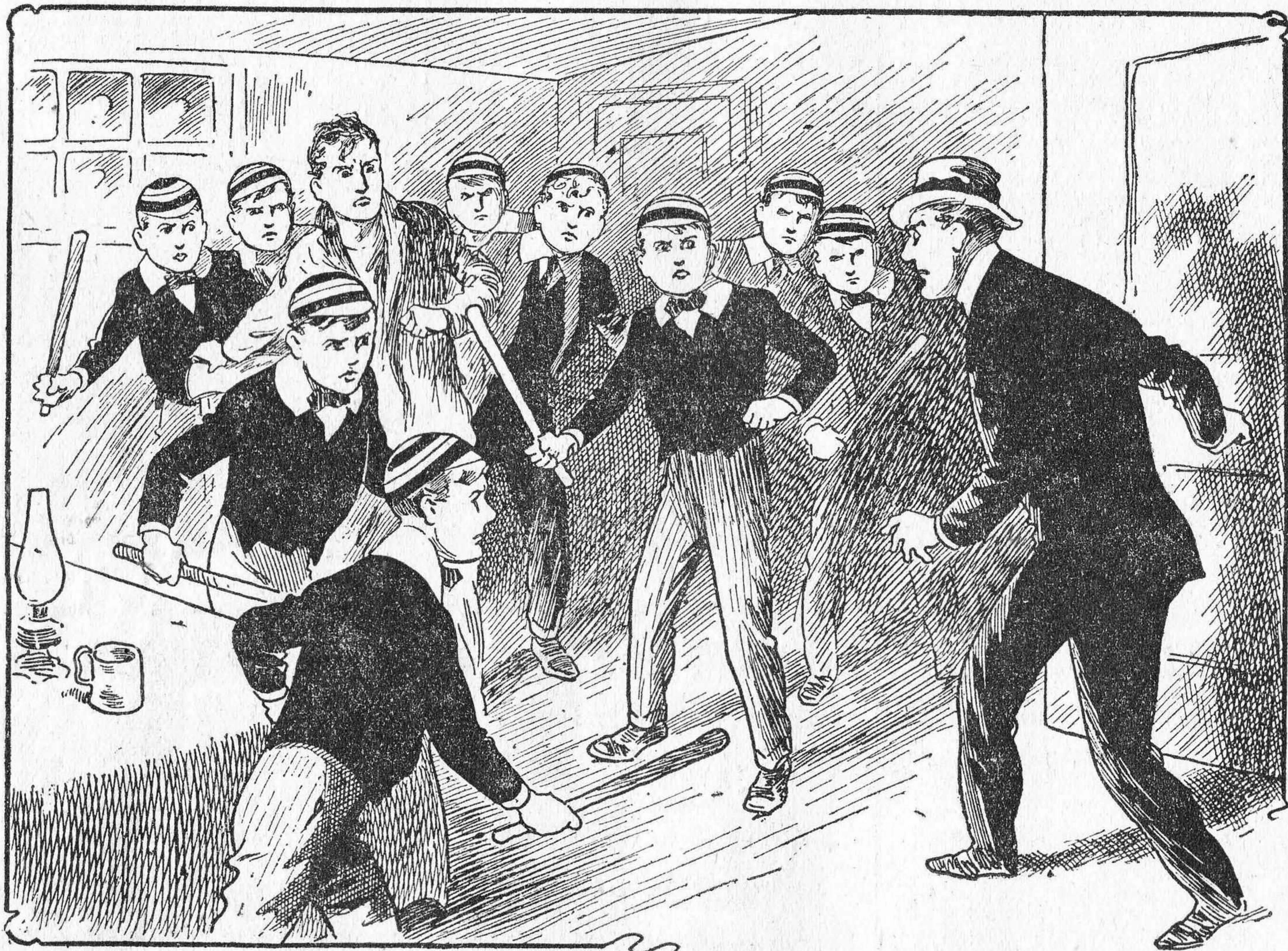
Leaving Dandy Jim in the careful hands of Mr. Boggs, Jimmy Silver & Co. drove on to Rookwood School. Their arrival at the gates of Rookwood caused a sensation. Two or three of the party had cut on to the school during the delay in the village, and spread the news. Rookwood School was buzzing with it when they arrived.

A cheering crowd greeted Eric Wilmot as he was helped from the trap. He went into the house leaning on the shoulder of Bulkeley of the Sixth, and Dr. Chisholm met him at the door with an amazed face, but a welcoming handshake. The footballer's homecoming, after his terrible experience, was a regular triumph.

Afterwards there was a great celebration in the end study. Eric Wilmot was in the sanatorium, under the doctor's care; and Inspector Troope, of Scotland Yard, apprised by telephone of what had happened, was hurrying down to Coombe to take possession of the wanted man. Dandy Jim went to what he had earned, and the cousin he had wronged was troubled by him no more. But no one at Rookwood was wasting a thought on the wretched cracksmen. The end study were enjoying their triumph, and celebrating their success—and great was the celebration thereof!

THE END.

(You must certainly read "Jimmy Silver's Protégé!" next Monday's thrilling story of the chums of Rookwood School. Ask your newsagent to save a copy of the Greatly Enlarged Boys' FRIEND for you!)



FACE TO FACE! There was a sound at the door, and the juniors and the football coach looked up to see the figure of the cracksmen. "Dandy Jim!" gasped Eric Wilmot, starting from his chair. And his eyes blazed with an angry light!

cottage as he shouted the name of the young footballer.

"Are you there?" roared Lovell.

"Hark!"

There was no answer; but from above came a heavy dragging sound. It was the sound of someone moving with difficulty, someone who had heard, but could not speak.

The upper room was approached by a heavy wooden ladder in the corner of the cottage. Above was a trapdoor, bolted underneath. Jimmy Silver mounted the ladder while Lovell was shouting, and shot back the bolt.

He threw up the trap and passed into the attic above.

It was a small room, dark and dirty and cobwebby, dimly lighted by a glimmer from the little window. Its only furniture was a bed of rugs on the floor and two or three boxes.

On the bed lay a man, whose ankles and wrists were shackled with knotted cords, allowing him small liberty of movement. Over his mouth a cloth was tied securely.

The face, as Jimmy Silver saw it in the dimness, was ghastly white, the eyes hollow and feverish.

"Mr. Wilmot!"

Ghastly as the prisoner's face looked, Jimmy Silver recognised it. It was the once healthy and handsome face of Eric Wilmot, the double of Dandy Jim.

"Is he there?" shouted Lovell from below.

"He's here!"

"Hurrah!"

Lovell came clambering up the ladder.

Jimmy hurried across the dim attic to the bound man on the rugs. He opened his penknife, to cut the cords that secured the gag.

The hollow eyes of the prisoner were fixed upon him with a painful intensity. The hopeless despair of the prisoner could be read in the haggard face. Now that

"I'll go!" said Lovell.

"Buck up, old chap! Put it on, and take a rest in the trap coming back," said Jimmy.

Arthur Edward Lovell started, and disappeared across the heath as if he were on the cinder-path.

Several times the white-faced man in the chair tried to speak, but still no words would come. Putty Grace hunted through the cupboards, and found tea;

"I think you have saved my life!" Jimmy Silver gave a start as there was a sound from without.

"That can't be Lovell already—"

"Look out—"

There was a hurrying footstep, a sound of panting breath, and a man stood in the open doorway. Wilmot started from the chair, his eyes blazing.

"Dandy Jim!"

The 5th Chapter. Landed at Last.

Dandy Jim stared at the scene in the hut.

He had come there with fear in his heart—fear and disquietude. But he had not expected this. The cottage was swarming with Rookwooders, and Eric Wilmot, his prisoner, was free in their midst. The rascal, taken utterly aback, stood staring into the cottage with flaming eyes.

There was a yell from Conroy.

"Collar the villain!"

"Rush him!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

Wilmot made a step forward, but sank back on the chair from sheer weakness. But the juniors rushed in a crowd at the ruffian.

Half a dozen sticks had almost reached him, when Dandy Jim sprang back from the doorway, panting. Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed after him fiercely. The cracksmen's hand was in his pocket; it came out with a weapon glittering in it.

"Stand back!" he panted hoarsely.

"Stand back, or—"

Crash!

Conroy, the Cornstalk, hurled his stick over the heads of the other fellows. It crashed in the face of Dandy Jim, sending him spinning backwards.

"Down him!"

As the ruffian staggered, and almost fell, Jimmy Silver reached him, and his

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