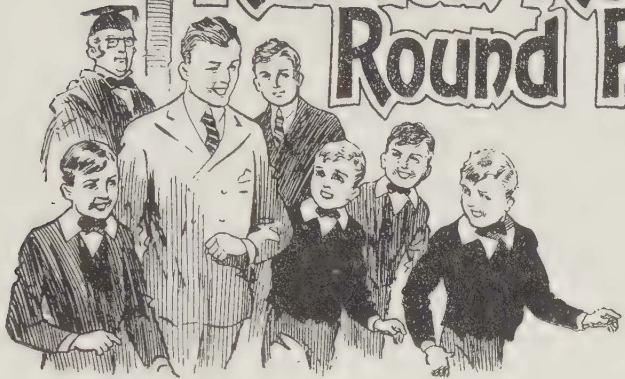


Random Ramblings Round Rookwood!



By
OWEN CONQUEST
*Who chronicles the cheery
adventures of
Jimmy Silver & Co.*

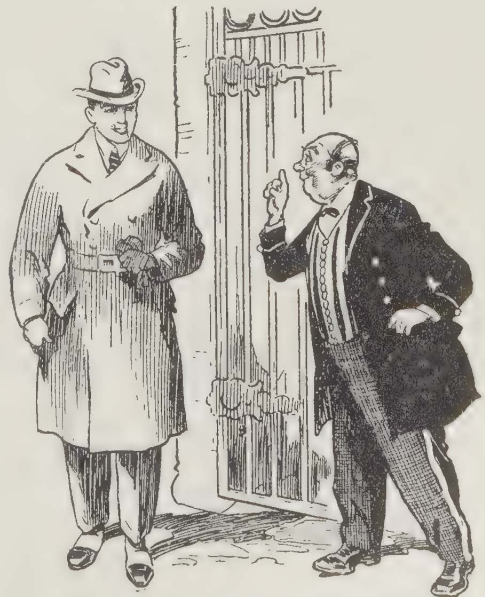
I AM in the habit of visiting Rookwood School pretty regularly. You see, in my rôle of chronicler of all that goes on at Rookwood, I have to keep constantly in touch with the old place, and glean all the latest news from Jimmy Silver & Co.

These visits of mine are very informal affairs. I am not ushered into the school quadrangle with a flourish of trumpets, and elaborate ceremonial; nor should I care to be. I have the headmaster's permission to "drop in" whenever I wish—a privilege which I much appreciate.

I expect the readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL would give a good deal to be able to accompany me on my ramblings round Rookwood. Well, they can join me now, if they wish, and I will proceed to show them round. Come along, you fellows, and let us explore this very famous and historic school, in the heart of Hampshire.

We are greeted at the gate by sour-faced old Mack, the school porter—or, as he would prefer to be called, the Keeper of the Keys. Mack's position is one of great responsibility; and he would talk to you for hours—if you were to let him—about the numerous occasions on which he has saved the school from being burgled, or burnt to the ground, or invaded by undesirable characters.

Mack's wrinkled old face lights up when he espies us; and his "Pleased to see yer, Mr. Conquest, sir!" lacks nothing of heartiness and sincerity. Mack was inclined to be frigid and aloof, at first; but numerous "tips," slipped into his horny palm from



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time to time, have gradually thawed his heart.

He permits us to pass in; and we troop into the spacious, sunny quadrangle, bordered with beeches, and paved with ancient flagstones. Over these same flagstones the kindly monks of old often used to pass in a priestly procession. But times have changed; and the old quad now re-echoes the sound of happy schoolboy laughter.

Jimmy Silver & Co., the heroes of the Classical Fourth, leave their game of football and hurry forward to greet us. Instantly we find ourselves surrounded. "Welcome to Rookwood!" is writ large on every smiling face; and we are piloted into the building, and round a maze of corridors, with Jimmy Silver & Co. chatting away as fast as their tongues will let them.

"I say, Mr. Conquest! You'll stop and have tea with us?"

"And your friends, too?"

"Don't refuse! We're in funds, and the end study is a land flowing with milk and honey!"

Refusal, of course, is out of the question; for we are hustled willy-nilly into the end study in the Fourth Form passage. Extra chairs and cushions and crockery are commandeered from other studies; the fire is stirred into a blaze; and we are made cosy and comfortable. Our hosts then proceed to wait upon us hand and foot; and there is a constant procession to and from the tuckshop, where Sergeant Kettle is fairly rushed off his feet.

When tea is well under way, the fat face of Tubby Muffin—Rookwood's champion feeder—appears in the doorway. There is a chorus of "Buzz off, Tubby!" and "Run

away and pick flowers!" So pathetic is the expression on the fat fellow's face that we plead for him to be allowed to remain. So Tubby Muffin trots gleefully in; and with your own eyes you see what an amazing appetite he has, and that his gastronomic feats, as described in the Rookwood stories, are in no way exaggerated.

A study feed at Rookwood is one of the



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joys of life. We feel that we are among old friends, and Jimmy Silver & Co. cannot do enough for us. We chat about every subject under the sun—"of ships and shoes and sealing-wax, of cabbages and kings." But, of course, the chief topics are the latest footer matches, and fights, and japes, and so forth, which have taken place at Rookwood. All these are stored in my memory-tank, for use when writing future stories.

After tea will come the sight-seeing; and in the course of our progress we shall meet with many people, both high and humble.

You will like the Head, Dr. Chisholm—



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a genial, kindly man, beaming benignly upon us through his spectacles. Yet you will not fail to observe that he can be capable of sternness and severity on occasion ; and you will come to the conclusion that he is the ideal Head.

You will like, too, Mr. " Dicky " Dalton, the master of the Classical Fourth. A very youthful master, this—a man of character and energy and charm, having " a way with him " which instantly commands liking and

respect. You will not like Mr. Horace Manders, of the Modern Side. His handshake will be of the flabby kind ; his smile will be wintry. He will be polite ; but you will see that his politeness is merely a mask to cloak a naturally sour and vindictive nature. But we soon escape from Mr. Manders, and find ourselves chatting with big, honest Bulkeley, the school skipper, and with Lawrence Neville, his stalwart and manly chum.

Before we leave, we shall be besieged by eager fags with their autograph-books ; and we shall be pressed to partake of a " send-off snack " at the school tuck-shop. And when, all too soon, the time of departure comes, we shall be escorted down to the gates by Jimmy Silver and his satellites, who will wish us good-speed, and urge us to come again as soon as ever we can.

And so—adieu to Rookwood !

THE END



A carriage-load of Rookwood celebrities. Tubby Muffin, of course, is in charge of the tuck hamper, with Jimmy Silver & Co., on his left, to see fair play. Mornington is trifling with a bottle of " pop." Putty Grace indulges in a little footer practice, whilst Clarence Cuffy on the right " swots " remorselessly.

Tubby In Nine Typical Attitudes!

