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INSIDE I)



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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending January 22nd, 1921.

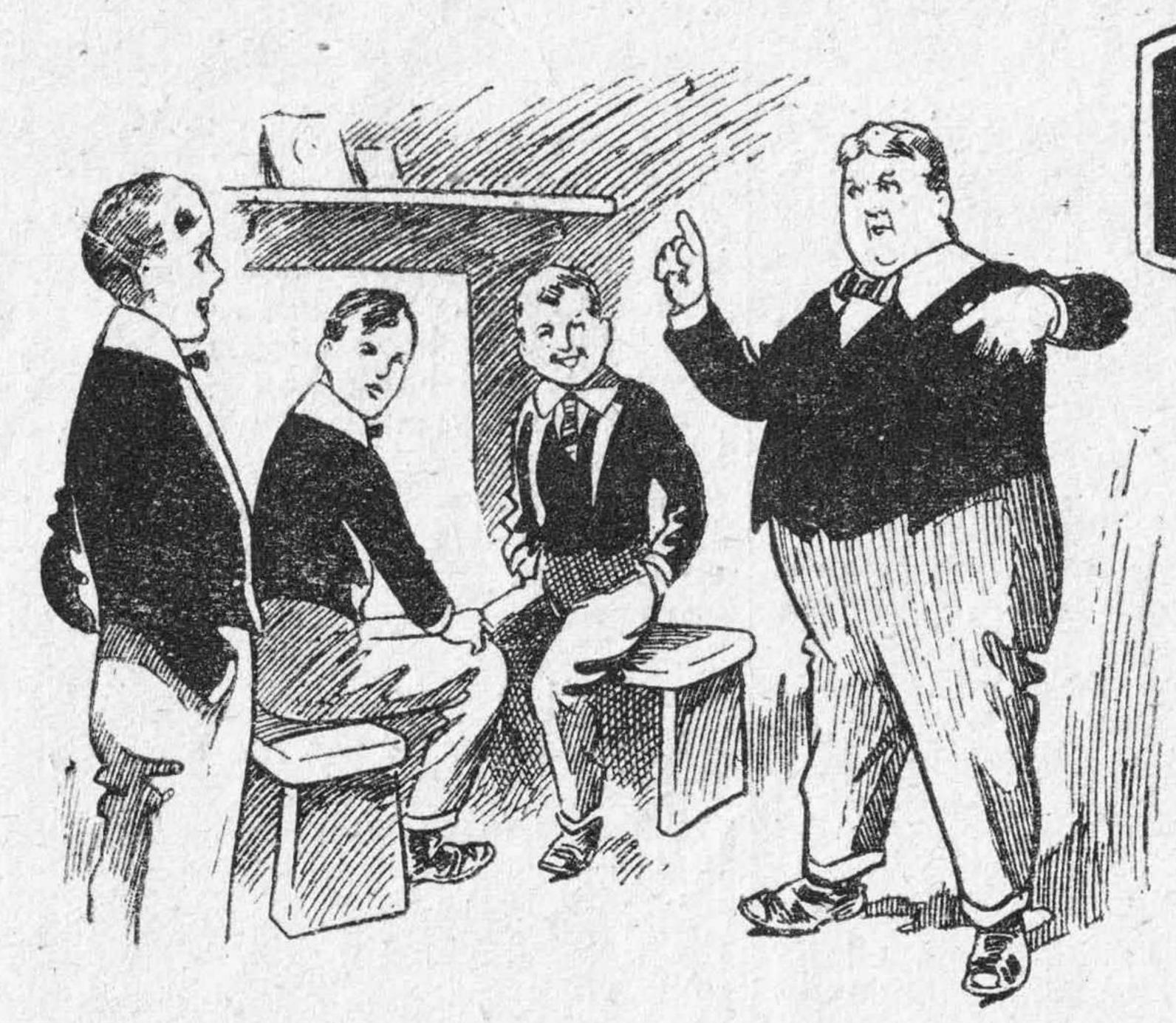
The Wrecked Playing Field-Read "THE MINERS' ELEVEN" In This Issue!



BY AN UNKNOWN HAND!

The members of the Miners' Eleven stood aghast. What had once been their playing-field was now more like a section of a battlefield after a bombardment. "Bulford is at the bottom of this!" was the thought that instantly flashed through Jack Vernon's brain. (A thrilling incident in our grand footer yarn which starts on page 26.)

A Splendid Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co.



More Adventures of the Rookwood Secret Society.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Carthew is Missing!

"Anybody seen Carthew?" Jimmy Silver, of the Classical Fourth, asked that question as he came into the School House at Rookwood to breakfast. He smiled as he asked it, and his chums, Lovell and Rahy and Newcome, smiled too.

"Nobody's seen him yet, I think," remarked Putty of the Fourth. can't have come down."

"He'll miss his brekker at this rate!" grinned Lovell.

And the chums of Rookwood chuckled softly as they joined the crowd going into the dining-room.

As a rule, Jimmy Silver & Co. weren't interested in the movements of Carthew of the Sixth. The less they saw of Mark Carthew the better they liked it.

But they were interested on this special morning, and so were some more of the juniors.

Carthew's name cropped up a good many times in whispers among the Classical Fourth juniors; and, what was more surprising, Tommy Dodd & Co. were interested in the same question over on the Modern side.

Carthew, the most unpopular prefeet at Rookwood, seemed to occupy | there. a great many thoughts in the Lower

School. Jimmy Silver glanced round as he dropped into his seat at the Fourth-Form table. His glance rested on the

table where the great men of the Sixth sat in state. Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, was at the head of the Sixth-Form

table, and one place there was empty. Carthew was not turning up to break-

Jimmy saw the Rookwood captain lean over and speak to Neville and Jones major, and guessed that he was inquiring after Carthew. Neville and Jones major of the Sixth shook their heads. They didn't know where Carthew was, and probably weren't interested.

Mr. Bootles, at the head of the Fouth-Form table, could not help noticing some unusual animation among his pupils.

Often they glanced at the door, often at the Sixth; and there were many whispers, and a good many smiles.

"You will-ah!-kindly keep a little more quiet-what, what?" said Mr. Bootles, gently reproving.

The juniors ceased to whisper. Some of the Classical Fourth seemed perplexed; not all the Form were in the secret, whatever it was.

Those who were in the secret were keeping it very dark. When Tubby I Mussin whispered a query to Jimmy Silver, desiring to know what was "on," Jimmy developed deafness. When Tubby repeated his query to Arthur Edward Lovell, that youth gruffly told him to go and eat coke. Tubby Muffin snorted, and devoted himself to bacon and eggs. Evidently there was no enlightenment for Tubby

Muffin. Breakfast finished without Carthew arriving, and his absence was by that time generally observed. It was quite unusual. So important a person as a prefect of the Sixth Form could | call themselves the Rookwood Secret stay out from a meal if he liked; he was not so amenable to regulations as a junior. But it was certainly very

unusual. the Sixth-Form passage, to give that handled me in the quad, I sup-Carthew a look-in. Carthew hadn't pose, and some more. I'm going to been seen that morning at all, so it | the Head about this. They came in | boys did not look upon the matter could not, be supposed that he had and collared me-" remain in bed so very late was stretch- | naturally.

ing even the privileges of a Sixth-Form prefect.

Bulkeley tapped at Carthew's door

and opened it. "Carthew!" he called into the study. "Aren't you up yet Don't you know the time?"

Bulkeley gave a jump. The Sixth Form at Rookwood did | shoulders. not occupy a domitory like the smaller fry. The Sixth-Form studies were bed-rooms at night. Carthew's | George Bulkeley in that style. It bed was in an alcove, nicely curtained off. Bulkeley's glance had gone to wards the bed alcove as he looked in

and spoke; but Carthew was not he was not what bullies so often arethere. When he saw where Carthew actually was, Bulkeley had reason to been quite an easy victim of the

The bully of Rookwood was seated in his armchair.

Blankets were stacked round him, apparently to keep him from catching cold, for he was in his pyjamas, here and there a pink stripe of pyjama was revealed among the blankets. And his face was striped with paint.

That he was tied to the chair was evident at a glance.

Why he didn't call out to be released was also clear. There was a gag stuffed in his mouth, and tied

Only his eyes were active. They glittered at Bulkeley, and spoke volumes, though silently. Those glittering eyes told of the rage that was burning in the Rookwood bully's breast, and which had been burning there for quite a long time. For many a long hour the Rookwood bully had had to consume his own smoke, as it were.

"Great Scott!" stuttered Bulkeley. He blinked at his fellow-prefect.

Carthew jerked himself in his chair, and his eyes were eloquent. Bulkeley understood what he wanted, and hurried towards him.

He pulled away the blankets, took out a penknife, and out the prefect loose, and removed the gag from his

"What on earth does this mean, Carthew?" he exclaimed.

"Grooooogh!" That was Carthew's first remark. His mouth was a little numb.

"Who has done this?" "Gr-r-r-rh!"

"You must have had a bad time," said Bulkeley sympathetically. "Gug-gug-groogh!"

Carthew staggered out of the chair. Bulkeley stood watching him, overcome with astonishment, unable to make head or tail, so far, of the strange affair.

For a prefect to be tied up in his study in this fashion was an unprecedented happening at Rookwood School. Bulkeley simply couldn't "get on" to it for the moment. He was dumfounded.

"Those young fiends!" gasped Carthew at last.

"Who-what---" "They came into my room last night-" spluttered Carthew.

"Who did?" "They did-!"

"Who are 'they'?" "How should I know?" hissed Carthew. "Those young villains who

Society!" "Oh!" ejaculated Bulkeley.

"Some of the juniors-I don't know which. They had their faces hidden. After breakfast Bulkeley started for | Half a dozen of them. The same lot

gone out and forgotten brekker. Ap- | "Why did you let them?" asked parently, he had not risen yet; and to | the captain of Rookwood, rather | joke.

Carthew gave an enraged howl. "How could I help it-six or seven of them-"

"You could have shouted out, I suppose?"

"They were going to pinch my nose with pincers if I called out-" Bulkeley gave a slight shrug of the

All the juniors of Rookwood together could not have dealt with was pretty certain that they would never have thought of trying it. But then Bulkeley was not a bully, and a funk. Carthew had apparently Rookwood Secret Society.

"I'll make them pay for it!" muttered Carthew. "I'm going to the Head about it! You can laugh, if you like---"

"I'm not laughing," said Bulkeley

"I'm going to Dr. Chisholm! We'll see whether a prefect is to be handled in this way!" Carthew strode to-

wards the door. "Are you going to the Head in your pyjamas?" asked Bulkeley. "Hadn't you better get your clobber on first?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes!"

Carthew turned back and grabbed his clothes.

Bulkeley left the study.

His face was very grave, though there was a glimmer in his eyes of something like amusement. George Bulkeley had a lurking suspicion that Carthew deserved whatever he received at the hands of the mysterious Rookwood Secret Society; but he felt that this kind of thing would never do. It was likely to undermine the Lower School's respect for the Sixth Form-a very important matter, at least, to the Carthew had probably brought it on himself; but it wouldn't do, Bulkeley felt. And all the rest of the Sixth agreed with him on that point when they heard the startling news.

The 2nd Chapter. Carthew Mends His Ways!

The Rookwood Secret Society was an astounding happening; it quite upset the calm and serene current of affairs at the old school. The Head did not quite know how to grapple with it.

Punishment without proof was not feasible; and it was as likely as not to land upon the wrong parties, and actually encourage the wrongdoers to pursue their lawless course.

A rigid personal questioning of every boy in the school might have brought the truth to light, but it was more likely to turn the delinquents into liars. A boy could not be expected to incriminate himself of his own accord. Such a questioning would have been taking an unfair advantage of a boy's sense of honour, and was only too likely to make him set his sense of honour aside for the occasion.

The Head realised that, and he did not think of applying that method. But something had to be done!

There was much gravity among the masters of Rookwood that day. They looked upon the affair of the R.S.S. very seriously indeed.

That was another instance of the undoubted fact that boys and masters seldom saw eye to eye.

For it was quite certain that the seriously at all.

They looked upon it as a huge There was hardly a fag in the

Lower School who had not felt Mark Carthew's heavy hand at one time or another, and who did not rejoice that the bully of the Sixth had been properly punished.

Price

The Rookwood Secret Society doubtless had few members; but fellows who were not members certainly wished more power to its | elbow.

Who the members were was a deep mystery.

They themselves knew, of course, but nobody else knew. If anybody had a suspicion, he kept it to him-

Carthew was in a very uneasy mood that day.

His uncomfortable hours in the armchair had enraged him to boiling point, and on his release he felt an instant need of vengeance-vengeance hot and strong and undiluted. But there was no vengeance to be had. He was inclined to suspect Jimmy Silver on general grounds, but even on that point he was doubtful.

And although he was at daggers drawn with the end study, he was also bitterly unpopular with the rest of the Lower School. There were more than a hundred fellows for him to choose from to find his unknown assailants.

He was uneasy now-very!

The Head was investigating, but nothing had come of it. The actual state of affairs was, that the Rookwood Secret Society had punished the bully of the Sixth, and had escaped unknown and scot-free.

Mark Carthew thought a great deal about that.

That day it was noticeable that Carthew did not cuff a single junior, and did not bawl "Fag!" down the corridor. He fagged for himself at tea-time.

Apparently, the bully's behaviour

was on the mend. Jimmy Silver & Co. passed him, going down to footer practice after lessons, Jimmy with a football under his arm. Carthew glanced at them, but did not even scowl. It was just the occasion when Carthew would have called on Jimmy to fag, in his old style. Now he turned away

without a word. The Fistical Four smiled as they

walked on. "Carthew's biting on to it," Lovell remarked, in a low voice. "Bullying doesn't seem so much to his taste to-day."

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"He's thinking of next time," he remarked. "There won't be a next time if Carthew behaves himself. | it for himself. He's learning."

"Isn't the R.S.S. the stunt of the term?" demanded Putty Grace. "It is-it are!" assented Jimmy. "You do have good ideas sometimes, Putty. But, for goodness' sake, hide

your light under a bushel this time; don't go out for glory!"

"No jolly fear!" grinned Putty. "I say, if Carthew's cured, we'll begin next on Knowles and Frampton and Catesby of the Modern side. Tommy Dodd & Co. are quite keen. Shush! Here's Tubby!"

talking football as Tubby Muffin rolled into hearing.

The 3rd Chapter. Tubby's Chance!

"That's telling!"

That remark was made by Reginald Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, in the junior Common-room that evening.

Muffin made that remark in a very mysterious manner, with a very knowing wink.

"That's telling!" he repeated. "I may know something about the R.S.S., and I may not." "With the odds on the 'not,"

suggested Mornington. "That's all you know, Morny! Perhaps I was the chap who tied Carthew up last night. Perhaps I wasn't."

"No perhaps about it," grunted Conroy. "Don't give us that stuff, Tubby. We can't swallow it, you know."

Tubby sniffed.

A good many very curious glances were turned upon the fat Classical. He was the cynosure of all eyes, in fact, when Jimmy Silver & Co. sauntered into the Common-room after prep

"Heard the latest, Jimmy?" called out Dick Oswald. "What's that?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"Tubby Muffin owns up that he's the Rookwood Secret Society!" "My only hat!" ejaculated Jimmy

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell.

"Tell us another, old Raby.

"How do you know I'm not, then?" demanded Reginald Muffin

warmly. "Oh! Ahem! Of-of course-",

Lovell stammered. As a matter of fact, the Fistical Four had good reasons for not explaining in public how they knew that Muffin wasn't a member of the R.S.S. Any display of accurate knowledge on the subject was as good as a confession that they were members themselves.

"You don't know anything about it," said Tubby Muffin, with a superior smile. "I'm not admitting anything, of course. I'm not going to say anything. I'm keeping it all very dark. But fellows who can put two and two together can figure it out for themselves. That's all."

And Tubby looked very loftly. "Well, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver, and he smiled as he strolled on.

Tubby Muffin was evidently out for

The mysterious membership of the Rookwood Secret Society was the one topic at present. There was endless speculation and curiosity on the subject. Fellows wanted to know, and asked one another if they knew, or guessed, or suspected.

The mystery was so deep and impenetrable that Muffin felt it was quite safe to make a claim.

The genuine members of the R.S.S. couldn't dispute that claim without betraying themselves; so Tubby thought it was all serene. He had only to claim the glory, and it was his. Tubby loved the limelight, and very little limelight ever came his way. He was not going to lose this

Reginald Muffin had long laboured under the delusion that he was really a very distinguished fellow; only that other fellows couldn't, or wouldn't, recognise his distinction. He was no good at games, and little good at lessons. He could beat the other fellows hands down when it came to eating, or sleeping, or prevaricating; but these distinctions won him no admiration, quite the contrary. But here was a chance too good to be

The unknown "Grand Master" of the R.S.S. was a delinquent in the eyes of the school authorities; but he was a hero to the Lower School—a very admirable hero of the first water. For excellent reasons, no one laid claim to the distinction. So Tubby Muffin cheerily rolled in and bagged

With mysterious nods and winks and hints, Tubby conveyed that he knew what he knew, and that he could tell a thing or two if he chose, and so forth; and he had at least the satisfaction of rendering himself the object of great curiosity.

"What do you think of that, Jimmy?" asked Valentine Mornington, joining the Fistical Four at a little distance from the group of juniors surrounding Tubby Musin. "Nothing!" answered Jimmy.

"You don't believe Mushin is And the chums of the Fourth were | Grand Master of the Rockwood Secret Society?"

Jimmy smiled. "He says he is," he replied. "You agree?" "How should I know, old top?"

Mornington deflected one eye a "I rather thought the end study

asked Jimmy blandly.

would know somethin' about the facts," he remarked. "My dear chap, you shouldn't

think," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Stick to your neckties, and don't

Mornington laughed, and walked away. Tubby Muffin was getting quite a crowd round him in the Common-room now. The limelight he loved was falling to his share, and he enjoyed it-so much that he wanted more. Nods and winks and hints were giving place to open statements now. Tubby was yearning to be looked upon by his Form-fellows as a bold bad blade—a daring, reckless sort of chap-exactly the reverse to what he really was, as a matter of

"I don't mind telling you fellows." Twenty-five juniors at least were the recipients of Tubby's cheery confidences, fellows of the Fourth and Shell and Third. "Keep it dark, of course. I'm taking you into my confidence. I know I can trust you. Awful row if it got out, of coursenot that I should care. I'm not

"Suppose Bootles got on to it, you bold, bad, bloated buccaneer?" asked

Putty of the Fourth. "I shouldn't care! If I have any cheek from Bootles. I'll serve him as "Good old Tubby!" chuckled I served Carthew!" said Tubby.

"Phew!"

"Or the Head, if it comes to that," pursued Tubby, quite intoxicated by this time with his own reckless audacity. "Any rot from the Head, and we'll give him a lesson. You mark my words!"

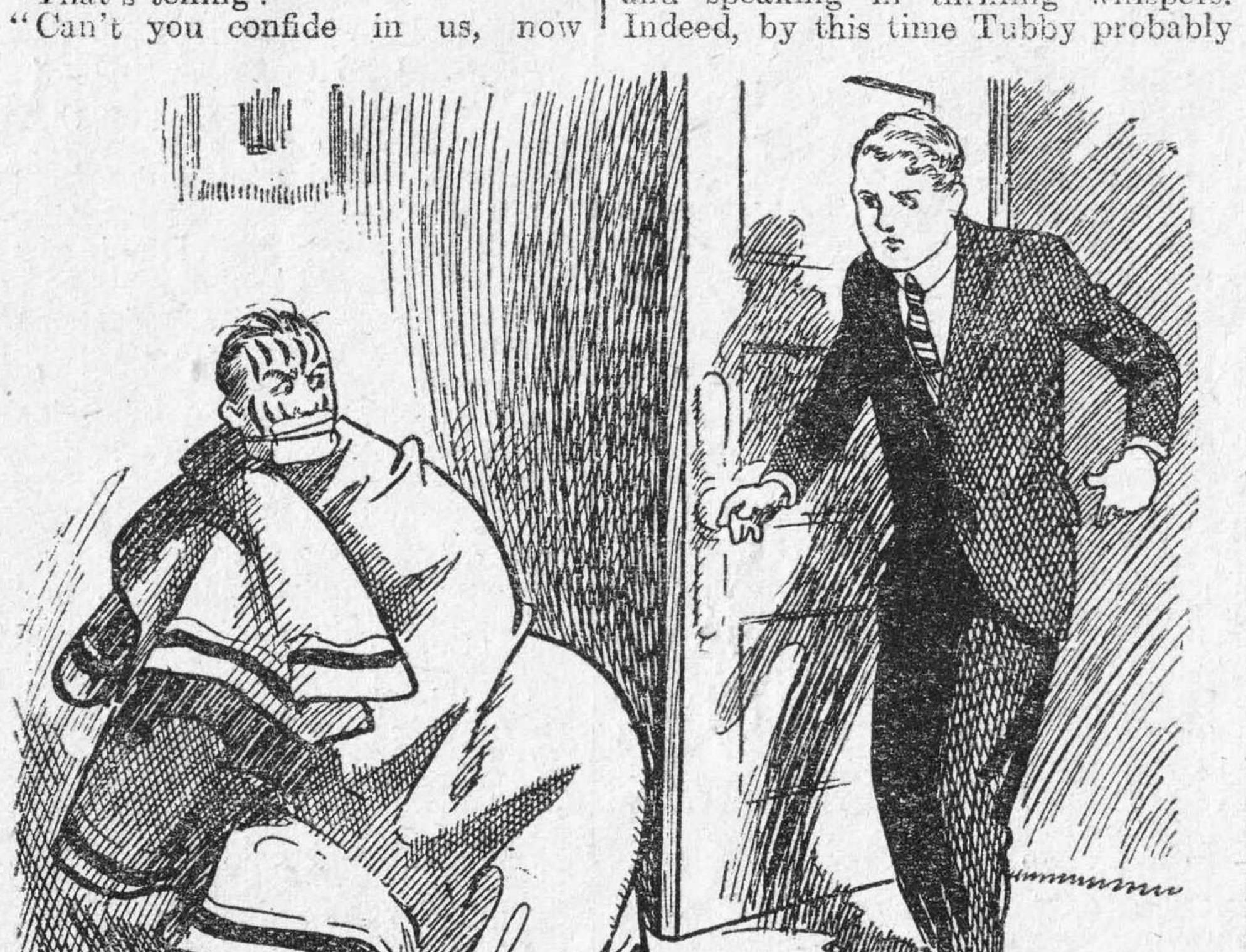
"The Head would mark your paws, if he heard that!" said Peele. "What other fellows are in it, as

well as you, Tubby?" Putty Grace inquired, with great interest. "That's telling!"

hardly fail to hear of it sooner or later. But Reginald Muffin wasn't thinking about that aspect of the case at all. He was thinking only of the "kudos" he had suddenly acquired, and he was enjoying it to the full.

Published Every Monday

It made him feel like a mixture of the dashing hero and the deep, dark villain on the "screen" at the picture palace. He had fallen into the habit of shaking his head ominously, casting sudden glances over his shoulder, and speaking in thrilling whispers.



THE WORK OF THE SECRET SOCIETY! Carthew was tied in a chair, with blankets stacked round him, and his face painted with hideous stripes. Bulkeley was astounded! Such an outrage had no precedent in the annals of Rookwood School!

you're being so jolly confidential, old | half-believed that he was telling the bean?" urged Putty.

Muffin shook his head. "You see, our secret society has awfully strict rules, like freemasons and things," he explained. "Like freemasons and nihilists and bol-

sheviks, and so on. It's death to let out any of its secrets."

"It's wha-a-at?" "Death!" said Tubby solemnly. "The traitor who reveals the deadly secret is slain by an unknown hand!" "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

Tubby blinked at them. His statement was founded upon a vague recollection of something he had seen on the "pictures" at Rookham Cinema, and he had expected the juniors to be awed, impressed, and thrilled. But they weren't. They

only howled with merriment. "You can cackle!" said Tubby wrathfully. "Wait till the R.S.S. starts on you, that's all! You'll be sorry then. You can't cheek the Grand Master of the Rockwood Secret Society, I can tell you! I may

order my myrmidons---" "Your what?" shrieked Putty. "My myrmidons," said Tubby Muffin firmly. "I may order my Form fags discussing Tubby's claim, myrmidons to seize you in your beds at the dead of night, and-and-"

"And strew the hungry churchyard with our bones?" asked Putty.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tubby curled his lip.

"Don't you be funny about such an awful thing as the Rookwood Secret Society," he said. "It's a thing to shudder at, I can tell you. I could make your flesh creep by telling you some things I know. I won't. But I could. But take care, all of you! A mysterious eye is upon you!"

And with that fearful warning Tubby Muffin walked off, with his fat little nose high in the air.

The 4th Chapter. Wuffin in All His Glory!

"Who'd have thought it?" Two or three score of fellows were making that remark on the following

The mystery which had seemed so dreadfully deep has been revealed at last. The Grand Master of the R.S.S. was known, and it was Reginald Muffin of the Classical Fourth.

Everybody knew it. Tubby had told it-in confidence, of course—to nearly everybody who would listen to him.

There was no doubt that Muffin had the limelight now.

His brain was a good deal too obtuse for him to realise what a very perilous distinction he had annexed. The Head and all the masters and prefects were particularly anxious to lay hands upon the chief of the mysterious R.S.S. And with all the Lower School discussing Tubby's claim to that distinction, they could | young Muffin being in the Rookwood | a dead man!"

truth, having a fertile imagination which might have made the fortune of a journalist.

Certainly, nobody else claimed the distinction; Tubby was left to enjoy it all by himself. It was probable that the enjoyment would come to an end when the Head heard of it.

"Who'd have thought it?" the Rookwood fellows said to one another. "If it's true, fancy the ass giving himself away!" "The Head will flog him," said

Oswald.

"Carthew will skin him," remarked Peele. "He'll be sacked, very likely."

"All the prefects will jump on

"And all the masters." "But is it true?"

"Well, he says so. He ought to

It was about midday that day that Mark Carthew heard of it. It was really surprising that he had not heard earlier, considering how the matter was talked of far and wide. Carthew heard a group of Third and his eyes glittered as he heard. He went away at once to Bulkeley with the news. He found the captain of Rookwood in the prefects'room, with Neville and Lonsdale of the Sixth, and he imparted the rather startling intelligence at once.

Bulkeley smiled. "What rot!" he said. "Whoever the fellow was, it certainly wasn't that fat little duffer Muffin!"

"He seems to have owned up to it—in fact, he's been bragging of it, from what I hear," snapped Car-

"But is it likely, on the face of

Carthew set his lips.

"There were at least half a dozen of them," he said. "More of them were in it, I believe. Mustin may be a member. I shouldn't wonder if half the Fourth are really in the Classical had taken leave of his

do?" asked Bulkeley. "If you think language. it was really Muffin—" Lonsdale

the matter," scowled Carthew. "I suppose that one prefect is entitled to support from the others? I don't care to go to the Head, in case it turns out to be a mare's-nest. The Head isn't any too sweet-tempered about the affair."

"Pretty certain to be a mare's nest. I think," said Bulkeley. He looked out of the open window, and signed | to a junior in the quad. "Here, Grace!"

Putty of the Fourth came up to

"Have you heard anything of word to my myrmidons, and you are

Secret Society, or whatever it is the young asses call themselves?"
"Ahem!"

"You're his study-mate, I think," said Bulkeley.

"Yes." "Well, you'd know. Do you think

"I think it's very unlikely, Bulkeley," answered Putty. "I-I don't think Tubby has nerve enough to do such-such dreadful things."

Carthew gave a scowl. "They all stand by one another, of course," he snapped. "Send for the young rascal here, Bulkeley." "Ob, all right! Tell Muffin to

come here at once, Grace!" "Yes, Bulkeley."

Putty of the Fourth cut off. He found Reginald Muffin under the beeches in the quadrangle, holding forth to an interested, if somewhat incredulous, group of juniors. Tubby was expatiating upon the terrible and deadly laws of the mystic society of his own account.

"You're wanted, Tubby!" said podgy shoulder. "Bulkeley-in the prefects'-room."

"Bulkeley can go and eat coke!" answered Muffin independently. "A fellow with such power as I have isn't going to be ordered about by a prefect. I've only got to say the word, and Bulkeley would mysteriously vanish, never to look upon the light of day again-"

"Wake up, old bean!" said Putty. "You're not at the pictures now. Cut along to Bulkeley before I kick

"If you kick me, Putty Grace, I shall say to my mysterious followers--- Yarooooooh!" Tubby Muffin broke off with a howl as Putty's boot gently smote upon his podgy person. "Ow! Yow! You! beast! I'm just going, ain't I?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" And Tubby Muffin went.

A crowd of fellows followed him. It was easy to guess what Bulkeley wanted the fat Classical for, and the juniors were intensely keen to know how Tubby would face the ordeal. Some of them followed Tubby down the passage to the prefects'-room; others gathered under the open window. And they were all ears.

"Here he is!" said Bulkeley, as ! the fat junior rolled in. "Now, Muffin, I hear that you know something about that foolery called the Rookwood Secret Society."

Tubby's heart sank for a moment. But he braced himself for the shock. He was encouraged by the

Before that audience Tubby wasn't | really, you know. Oh dear!" going to climb down from his pedestal-not if he knew it! Besides, it was common talk among the juniors that Carthew had been frightened by the dealings of the R.S.S. with him, and Tubby's obtuse brain saw no reason why the other prefects shouldn't be frightened, too. So, instead of shrinking back, or dodging away-which was his first instinct-Tubby Muffin drew himself up to his full height-not very extensive-and fixed a defiant eye on the captain of Rookwood.

"Ask me not!" he said.

Bulkeley jumped. "Wha-a-at?"

"Ask me not!" repeated Tubby dramatically. "Have you gone potty?" roared

Bulkeley. Tubby curled his lip.

There was an irrepressible giggle outside from the crowded doorway. Tubby was evidently taking his role seriously, and his language appeared to have been borrowed from a play. "Ask me not!" he said, for a third time. "Enough!"

The 5th Chapter. Tubby Muffin Wakes Up!

Bulkeley blinked at Tubby Muffin. His first thought was that the fat senses; that seemed the only way of "Well, what do you want us to accounting for his remarkable

Lonsdale chuckled, and Carthew "It's for the prefects to investigate | scowled. Tubby Muffin folded his arms and stared defiantly at Bulkelev. "If you're not potty--" began Bulkeley at last.

"Bah!" "What?". "Bah!"

"What does this mean, Muffin?" "I refuse to answer!" said Muffin calmly. "Ask me not! The deadly

secret cannot be revealed!"

"Then you know something---" "Ha, ha! I do! But beware! The arm of the secret society is the window.

long, and it strikes in secret!" said butted into a crowd of chuc "Yes, Bulkeley."

Tubby Muffin impressively. "A juniors in the passage.

'A-a-a dead man!" repeated Bulkeley dazedly.

"Yes, rather-I mean, 'tis so!" I wield-"

Muffin," said Bulkeley, with an air borrowed plumes. But apparently of reflection. "I think you've been he had not given up hope yet-not to the pictures, and it's got into your | quite. In the quadrangle he sursilly head! Now, I want a plain | prised Jimmy Silver & Co. by bestowanswer! Do you know anything ing upon them a fat wink. about the affair in Carthew's study "I pulled his leg a treat, didn't I?" the other night, and did you have a he asked. hand in it?"

"Bah!" "Will you answer me?"

"Never!"

"Hand me that ash-plant, will you, Lonsdale?" "Certainly!"

Tubby Muffin backed a step. "Beware!" he exclaimed. "One touch, and the secret society is on your track! You will perish--Yow-ow-woop!"

Apparently the secret society had which he was the chief-according to no terrors for Bulkeley of the Sixth. He grasped Mussin by the collar, and there was a loud whack as the Teddy Grace, tapping him on a ash-plant came into contact with a very podgy person.

"Yaroooh!" roared Tubby Muffin. "Leave off! Ow!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-wooooop!" The whacks were not very hard, but they were quite hard enough for | too!" said Mornington. "Give him Reginald Muffin. They brought him back out of dreamland, as it were- | tell the truth!" back to common earth again. He "Hear, hear!" realised that he wasn't the mysterious chief of a mysterious society, with unlimited power in his hands, but Tubby Muffin. "I'll make an exwas just Tubby Muffin of the Fourth | ample of you. I'll set the secret -being whacked!

"I-I-I say! Stoppit!" he howled. "C-c-can't you take a j-j-joke, Bulkeley? Ow, ow, ow!" "Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from

the doorway. "Clear off, you young sweeps!"

exclaimed Bulkeley. "Now, Muffin, do---'' "Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Do you want any more licking?" "Yow-ow! No! Ow!" "Then tell me the truth, you young | would lead to the same results. ass! What do you know about the

affair in Carthew's study?" "Oh dear!"

Bulkeley. "Were you there?"

"N-n-no!"

"Did you have a hand in it?" "N-n-no!"

had!" growled Carthew savagely. murmur of voices and the shuffling | ing the fellows' legs, you know!" | any "forrader." And provisionally, of feet, which told him that he had I groaned Tubby Muffin dismally. "I- as it were, Carthew gave up bullying.

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tubby Muffin rolled away dismally said Muffin. "Beware! The power | into the quadrangle with the laughing juniors. His brief glory had de-"I don't think you're potty, parted. He had been stripped of his

"Eh? Whose leg?" demanded

Jimmy Silver. "Bulkeley's."

"Bulkeley's!" exclaimed Oswald. Tubby winked again, though rather

"Yes. I-I'll bet he doesn't believe now that I'm the chief of the Rookwood Secret Society," he said. "I've got to keep it dark, you know, so I-I-I---"

"Are you keeping that up, then?" roared Putty.

"Certainly! It's the fact, you know---"

"The fact! Oh, my hat! You awful, lying, fat bounder!" "Beware!" said Tubby Muffin.

"A word to my myrmidons, you know, and--- Leggo!" "We've had enough of your myrmidons, and of your thundering lies,

the frog's-march, and teach him to

"Collar him!"

"Here, I say, leggo!" howled society on your track. I'll tell my myrmidons. I'll-- Yah-yoooooop!"

"Help!"

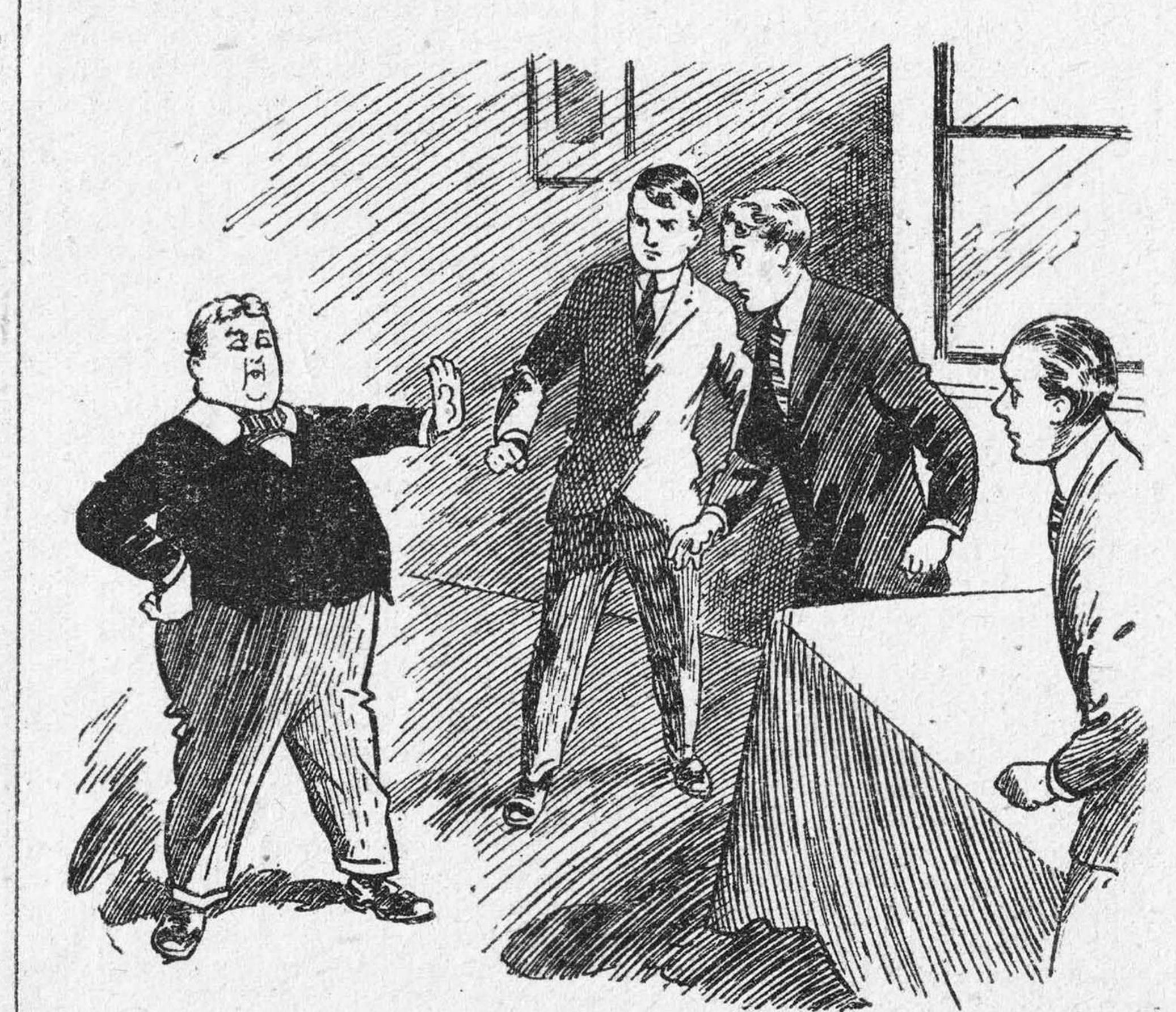
But there was no help for Reginald Muifin. He was frog's-marched under the beeches, and finally bumped down on the hard, unsympathetic ground.

There the chuckling juniors left him to consider himself, with the warning that any more "whoppers"

Tubby Muffin limped away in dismal spirits. His borrowed plumage was gone for good. The limelight "Out with it, sharp!" exclaimed had passed from him. The Fourth Form heard nothing more of Tubby's "N-n-nothing!" stammered Muffin. | terrible powers, or of his mysterious myrmidons.

The real identity of the Rookwood "You've been saying that you! Secret Society remained undiscovered. Carthew thought on the subject till "Oh dear! I-I-I was only pull- his head ached, but without getting

a large audience near at hand. I don't know anything about it, Meanwhile, he took counsel with his friends Knowles & Co. of the Bulkeley laughed, and Carthew | Modern side, and the real members of



TUBBY MUFFIN DEFIANT! Tubby drew himself up to his full height. "Ask me not!" he replied. "Wha-at? Have you gone potty?" reared Bulkeley. "Ask me not!" repeated Tubby dramatically.

at being deprived of a victim. Fourth and Jimmy Silver & Co.

As Bulkeley tossed the ashplant Whether they were to eventually aside, Carthew caught it up.

Whack, whack! Carthew laid it on harder than Bulkeley had done, and Tubby Muthin fled for the door yelling. He

Putty of the Fourth.

gritted his teeth. Even Carthew had I the R.S.S. realised that they had to to believe Tubby Muffin's disclaimer. | walk warily, and they walked warily It was only too clear that the fat accordingly. The campaign was not youth had been "talking out of his over yet; but so far, at least, the hat." But Carthew was not pleased | honours were with Putty of the

be successful in their project time alone could show!

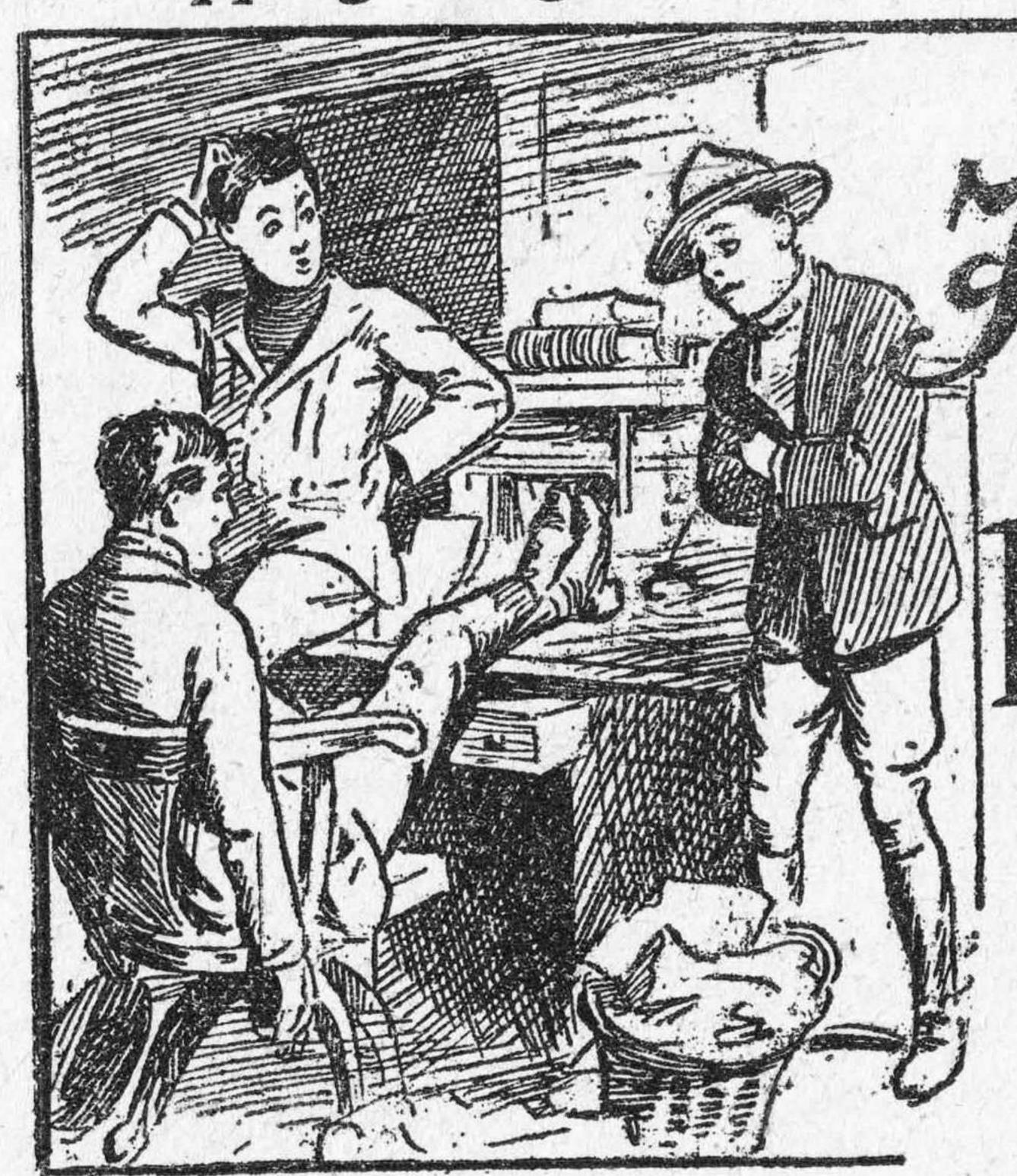
THE END.

("The Death of the R.S.S." is a butted into a crowd of chuckling fine, long, complete yarn of the chums of Rookwood School in next "Hail, mighty chief!" chortled Monday's Boys' Friend. Make a point of reading it!)

A Topping Long Complete Yarn of Frank Richards & Co.!

Published

Every Monday



UROPRISIORS!

A Tale of the Chums of the Backwoods School.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter. Business First!

"Letter for you. Franky!" "Oh, good!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

Frank had just come down to breakfast at the Lawless Ranch. His face brightened as Bob Lawless tossed a letter to him across the table.

Letters for Frank, at the ranch, were few and far between. Except-England, and his father in India, he | the "Thompson Press." had no regular correspondents, Mr. Penrose, editor, printer, and of his birth.

afraid," said Bob, as he tossed the satisfy all his creditors. There was a Thompson."

Frank Richards' face fell.

"Oh. from Thompson," he said. "What the thump does anybody in Thompson want to write for? I don't know the fist." he added, glancing at the envelope.

"Not from Mr. Penrose," said

"No; it's not his hand-besides, he's gone from Thompson for good," said Frank. "He hasn't been heard of for a couple of weeks now, and it's pretty clear he's not coming back. taken by a new man."

"The 'Thompson Press' didn't ! come out last week," remarked Bob. I "We shall miss our local paper, if it's | a great dea! of pleasure in turning out gone for good. But read your letter."

Frank Richards opened the envelope rather curiously. Now that Mr. Penrose, the editor and publisher of the "Thompson Press" was gone, he could not guess from whom the him of his early career as an author, labour was dear in the Thompson letter might have come. Anybody in | was the typewriter which had been | Valley. Sometimes it had been swept | to him might have been expected to | battered old machine, which Frank ride over to the ranch to say it.

He unfolded the letter, and found that it was typed, with a businesslike looking engraved heading:

THE "THOMPSON PRESS."

"Dear Richards,-Kindly call here at 11 o'clock to-morrow morning, the 12th.

"Yours truly, "A. B. CARTER."

Frank Richards read that succinct communication, and tossed it across for Bob Lawless to read. Then he sat down to his breakfast.

Bob Lawless whistled.

"To-morrow, the 12th-that's today," he remarked, "and at eleven | ing that over in his mind-and still | young man with a clean-shaven face, a in the morning-you're in school at eleven o'clock. Frank."

Frank Richards smiled.

"A. B. Carter, whoever he is, apparently doesn't know I go to school." he remarked. "He will

"You can't go at eleven, unless you ask Miss Meadows to let you off lessons at Cedar Creek."

"Which I'm not going to do," answered Frank. "I don't know who the thump A. B. Carter may be, but he doesn't seem to have much sense. He should have given me time for a reply."

Bob looked thoughtful.

"It's some new man who's taken town when he absquatulated, and his that was certain. He was a schoolboy answered Frank, more and more But Mr. A. B. Carter was efficiency held up his hand to stop props were sold at the sheriff's sale. first, and an author afterwards. Surprised. He did not see what his incarnate. In a brisk and snappy way flow of ready invention. props were sold at the sheriff's sale. I first, and an author afterwards.

This chap Carter must have taken on | "Miss Meadows might let you off," the business."

"Looks like it," said Frank. "Better be civil to him," said Bob.

"He may want you to go on with the weekly story that you used to do for Penrose. It would be a pity for that to stop."

Frank Richards nodded.

As a matter of fact, Frank was very far from pleased at the sudden and ing for his sister, at school in disastrous demise of the local paper,

though occasionally a letter came publisher, had departed with great from some old school-chum in the suddenness, to elude the troubles Old Country. They were very wel- | brought upon him by his peculiar come when they came. Frank | methods of conducting his business. | Richards was happy enough in his It transpired that he owed money up home in the Canadian West, but he | and down Thompson-which did not | Meadows for leave, and she's sure to | had by no means forgotten the land surprise anybody who knew Mr Pen- say 'Yes.' Go!" rose. The sale of the few effects he "Not from your people, I'm had left behind did not, probably, "The postmark's | hand-press-much the worse for wear

-a typewriter, still more seedy from age and careless use—a small stock of know what A. B. Carter has to say." paper, and a large accumulation, in the shanty office, of odds-and-ends, Press cuttings, cobwebs, and dust.

Mr. Penrose had been too strongly addicted to the cup that inebriates as well as cheers; he had been, also, what Bob Lawless called a jay, and what Frank Richards was compelled to call rather a rogue. But Frank missed him and his paper.

It was true that Mr. Penrose had not paid promptly for Frank's contri-I've heard that his office has been butions to the paper; that sometimes he had not paid at all. He owed Frank thirty dollars when he left. But the schoolboy author had found his weekly story, and he was sorry that the series had come to an end. Like Othello, he found his occupation

> All that remained to him, to remind had mended and tended till it was in keep the machine, in lieu of the dollars Mr. Penrose owed him for literary work; but he had returned it to the office, to be sold along with the rest of Mr. Penrose's effects at the overjoyed one morning to find it on the table in his room-his property turning it over, when the letter arrived from A. B. Carter.

while he was eating his breakfast.

than willing to carry on with his His penetrating eye seemed to series of school-stories, which had pierce Frank Richards. been eagerly read by all the youth of the Thompson Valley. His contribut politely. tions had saved the paper from extinction once, by attracting a new | class of readers, which had doubled the circulation. He had been the was so very brisk that he did not give stood now. entire "staff" of the "Press." And now it seemed to him probable that the new proprietor had decided to carry on the only attractive feature of the paper; hence the request, or, on Penrose's office and paper," he rather, command, for an interview. said. "I know the office is taken- | But Frank Richards could not go to Penrose left no end of debts in the the office at eleven in the morning.

Bob Lawless remarked, as they mounted their horses to ride to school.

Frank shook his head.

"I can't ask her-besides, it's not necessary. I'll trot over after morning lessons. That will do. It will l have to, anyhow!"

And they rode off to school.

Carter. "Better go," was Beauclerc's opinion. "Miss Meadows will let you | dollars, it's no surprise that Penrose

"But-" said Frank.

"My dear chap, business first," said Beauclerc. "You don't often ask Miss

"I guess it's two to one against you, Frank!" said Bob, with a laugh. "You've got to go!"

"Well, I'll go," said Frank. "After all, I'm rather curious to

And as soon as the chums arrived at Cedar Creek School, Frank Richards sought the Canadian schoolmistress to prefer his request for leave that morning.

The 2nd Chapter. A Very Efficient Young Man!

"Come in!" It was a sharp, businesslike voice that bade Frank Richards enter. He came in.

There had been some changes in Mr. Penrose's shanty office since Frank's last visit there.

Mr. Penrose had been accustomed to write, set up, and print his paper in one room, where he also took some of his meals, and occasionally had a "shake down" in a camp-bed. Sometimes that room had been swept out by a Chinaman, but not often, for Thompson who had anything to say lent him by Mr. Penrose—a rather out by Mr. Penrose, but very seldom, indeed. Cobwebs had adorned every corner, dust had accumulated. excellent working order. Frank i faced type had littered the plank would really have been entitled to floor, which in several places had needed repair.

Now all was changed.

A "lumber" addition to the shanty | "Thompson Press" office. had been run up, apparently as a printing department, for the ancient sheriff's sale. But Mr. Lawless had | hand-press was no longer visible. The kindly attended the sale and pur- type-cases also had disappeared from chased it, and Frank Richards was sight. The floor was swept, and covered with lino from Gunten's store. Cobwebs and dust had disnow. Bob Lawless, who took an appeared, and there was a smell of affectionate interest in his cousin's new paint. The old rickety bench literary career, urged him to go had been replaced by a desk, and at ahead, and try the Canadian maga. the desk was a revolving chair, and lagain, and the brisk young man zines-and Frank Richards was turn- in the revolving chair sat a stout keen eye, and a brisk manner. There was a stove near the desk, at which Frank thought that letter over the stout, brisk young man was toasting his toes. The revolving-chair If A. B. Carter was carrying on the | squeaked and revolved as the young | "Thompson Press," Frank was more | man whirled round to face his caller.

"Mr. Carter?" asked Frank

"Correct!"

"You asked me to call--"

"Quite so!" The brisk young man Frank Richards time to finish. "How old are you!"

"Old?" repeated Frank, surprised

by the question. "Yep! Old?"

"Fifteen." "Strong?"

"Fairly strong, I

tributing to the "Thompson Press." It did not require a very exceptional muscular development to handle a typewriter.

"Willing?"

"Willing?" snapped the brisk young man.

"I-I suppose so."

"No good supposing," said Mr. A. B. Carter tersely. "Are you willing or not?"

"Yes!" gasped Frank.
"Handy?"

"H-h-h-handy?"

"Yep; handy! Yes or no?" "I don't quite see--"

"No need to see! I'm asking questions and you're answering them. Are you handy or are you not handy?"

"Oh, yes!" "You should have said so at first. You've wasted time. I suppose you know time is of value?"

"Certainly!"

"In this office you will find it so. You will find efficiency in this office!" said Mr. A. B. Carter. "Efficiency, that's the word! If you're not going to be efficient there's the door! Got

" But-" "You're strong, willing, and handy. How much money do you want?"

"Money!" "My hat! I-I mean, Mr. Penrose used to give me ten dollars-"

"Cut it out!" Vere Beauclere met them, as usual, "Well, he did," said Frank, staring on the trail through the timber. He at the efficient young man, and wonwas shown the letter from A. B. | dering whether he was quite right in his head.

"I guess if Penrose gave you ten slipped up in his business. I shall give you three dollars."

"But-"

"Take it or leave it!"

"I-I haven't thought about it." stammered Frank. "I-I think---' "Think about it while I'm talking. This is a business office. No time to chinwag. Eight in the morning-"

"What?" "Till six in the evening--"

"Messages after that if required." "But--"

"Can you handle a hand-press?"

"Set type?"

"I've helped Mr. Penrose set type." "Good! I may raise you to four dollars if you're useful. You're engaged!"

"Engaged!" repeated Frank. "Yep. Don't stare! Got any character?"

"Character?"

"Recommendation from previous employer?"

"Great Scott, no!"

"If you worked for Penrose I'll take that as sufficient. I guess I'll give you a trial, anyhow. Now, begin right here! Take a broom and sweep out the printing works!"

"The-the printing works?" "Yep; the shanty adjoining." "But--"

"I haven't engaged you to talk." The chair revolved again, and the young man toasted his toes at the stove, with his back to Frank Richards, who stood and stared at him helplessly. whether it was possible that an escaped lunatio had landed in the

"Look here!" he began. "Look here, Mr. Carter-"

"Cut it out!"

"But I want to say--" "Say nothing!"-

"That you can go and eat coke!" roared Frank wrathfully. "Goodmorning, you silly ass!"

He turned, and strode to the door. Then the revolving-chair revolved looked at him.

"Stop!" he rapped out. Frank Richards paused. " Well?"

"You don't want the job?" snapped

the brisk young man. "Job? What job?" howled Frank. "I didn't come here for a job, did

"What the thump did you come for, then? Haven't you come in Store, advertising for an office-boy?" demanded Mr. Carter.

Frank Richards jumped. He under-

"You-you--" he stuttered. "You ass! I'm Frank Richards!" "Oh Jerusalem!"

Mr. A. B. Carter realised his mistake now. But for his extreme efficiency he would not have made the mistake. He had only needed to give believe," Frank time to put in a few words.

physical strength had to do with con- he would jerk on from one mistake to

another. "I guess I took you for the new office-boy I'm asking for," he said,

after a pause. "If you'd allowed me to speak---"

"So you're Frank Richards?"

"You've come in answer to my

"Yes I received it this morning, and got leave from school." "School!" ejaculated A. B. Carter.

"Yes. I go to Cedar Creek." "Holy smoke! Did Penrose let a schoolboy write for his paper? No wonder it went up the flume!"

"It doubled the circulation!" said Frank warmly. "Mr. Penrose told me that himself!"

"How many was it sellin'-two and a half?" asked Mr. Carter derisively. "I found your address among Penrose's rubbish here, and I reckoned I might want you. I didn't guess you were a school kid!"

"Well, now you know!" said Frank gruffly. "Good-morning!"

"Stop!" rapped out A. B. Carter. "Sit down!"

He pointed to a chair with a fountain-pen. Frank Richards hesitated a moment; he was anything but favourably impressed by Mr. Carter. But he sat down.

The 3rd Chapter. Nothing Doing!

A. B. Carter stared meditatively at Frank Richards. He was surprised, and he was not pleased, by the extreme youth of his caller. Probably, if he had known that Frank Richards was a schoolboy at Cedar Creek, he would not have asked for the interview. But he was in rather a difficulty. He was a very brisk young man, with ideas; he was going to make the "Thompson Press" boom; it was to rise like a phænix from its ashes, and become the most influential paper between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific-all by the force of Mr. Carter's genius and efficiency.

But he wanted some assistance; and he doubted whether there was much literary ability to be rounded up in

the Thompson Valley. Imported contributions from New Westminster or Vancouver would have come too expensive, and so would imported contributors. He had to use the material that was to hand-if he

In his efficient way he gave the matter three seconds' reflection, and decided to turn Frank Richards inside out, as he would have expressed it, to see whether there was anything in him. It never occurred to him that there was more in Frank Richards than in A. B. Carter multiplied by

any imaginable numeral. Frank waited, not in too serene a temper. But he was willing to come

to terms if possible; so he waited. "This gets my goat!" said Mr. Carter at last. "Can't understand why Penrose put a school kid on his

paper! "He knew what his

wanted." suggested Frank. "Cut it out! I've looked at your stuff in the back numbers. It's not badly written--"

"Thanks!"

Frank wondered "But I'm changing the policy of the paper," said Mr. Carter, with an important air. He might have been sitting at the editorial desk of the "Times" by his manner. "A complete change of policy."

"Oh!" "This school stuff--" Mr. Carter smiled derisively. "I'm chalking that

"Oh!" "Sure! Now, what can you do?" "I've written school stories, because know all about that, and can do it," explained Frank. "I can't write

novels-yet, at any rate." "I'll give you a trial on a feuille-

"A which?" "A serial. Something gaudy-

something that will make the reader buy the next number. Go home now and turn out the first instalment, and bring it to me this evening—say, five thousand words." "My only hat!"

answer to my notice up in Gunten's "Put some punch in it! I'll give you an idea for the yarn," said Mr. Carter. "It's got to bite, you understand! Man with two wives--"

> "What?" "Poisons one of them with fly.

"Shuts the other up in a hollow

"Great-Scott!"

"And then elopes--" Frank Richards rose to his feet, and held up his hand to stop Mr. Carter's



Published

Every Wonday

Frank Richards interviews the new proprietor of the "Thompson Press."

"That will do!" he said. "I can't, write rot like that!"

author cheerfully. "Besides, it's Richards, that I've told you a lot of wrong to write such stuff, decent times you can't write." people don't do such things! If you | "I remember," said Frank, laughwant sensational and unclean rubbish, | ing. you can get some boozy bounder from "Now I can," resumed Chunky. Chunky warmly.
the Red Dog saloon to scribble it for "I'm not bragging about it, you "Ha, ha, ha!"

on his brow. But as he came out into | typer to turn out the stuff--" the trail his brow cleared, and he "No other qualification necessary?" burst into a laugh. asked Beauclerc.

had met of the modern efficient young man, and he did not think much of

He had very strong doubts whether that bright young man would make a success of reviving the defunct local paper. Mr. Penrose, with all his weaknesses, had given his limited public what they wanted-which is really the beginning, middle, and end of an editor's business.

Mr. Carter evidently intended to give them what he thought they wanted, or what he thought they ought to want-quite a different thing. Guided only by the light of his own genius, it was quite probable that the brisk young man would take the

wrong turning. The schoolboy author-all schoolboy now, and no author--arrived at Cedar Creek as the fellows were coming out of school, and his chums joined him at once, eager to know the result of the interview.

"It's a wash-out!" explained Frank. "The fellow's a born idiot, and doesn't know it!" And he gave a description of the

editorial interview. "Too bad!" said Bob Lawless.

"Then you're not scribbling any "Not at present," said Frank, with

a rather wry smile. "I'm certainly not going to try writing the muck he I wants; I should be ashamed to see it in print! I'll give the typer a restor, rather, I'll lend it to Chunky. Why shouldn't Chunky have a chance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I'll try again when A. B. Carter clears out," added Frank. "He won't last long, I think; he's too jolly efficient! When he's gone, perhaps some chap with more sense will come along."

Chunky Todgers came up with a reproachful look as Frank waved his hand to him.

"Hallo, Chunky!"

"I've been wanting to see you," said Chunky. "I want your typewriter." "Eh?"

Chunky Todgers, blinking at him. will come in useful. I want it."

"My hat!" said Frank. "There's a new man in Penrose's office," continued Chunky. "Mannamed Carter, a fat johnny, awfully businesslike. I called to see him yesterday, and took him a lot of my manuscripts."

"Poor chap!" said Bob. "You might have gone a bit easier with a pilgrim and a stranger, Chunky."

Chunky Todgers sniffed. "He looked at my stuff," he went

"Did he have a fit?"

"No, you ass, he didn't!" howled Chunky. "He said that only typewritten stuff could be considered. Awfully businesslike. That's how they are in the big newspaper offices, you know, East. So I want Frank's typer."

"But I want it!" said Frank mildly. "It's no use to you. Carter won't look at your stuff!" said Chunky confidently. "You see, Penrose was a boozy old galoot, and didn't know how to go in when it rained. He hadn't the sense of a blind burrostuff, you know." for even that!" assented Frank.

"Oh, was it?" ejaculated Frank. Chunky nodded.

"Rot!" ejaculated Mr. Carter | "Yes, that's it. You see, you can't "Yes, silly rot!" said the young write. I'm sure you must remember,

you! Good-morning!" | know. Writing is a gift, and I Frank Richards walked out of the happen to have the gift. Penrose office with that, heedless of further | couldn't see it. He was a real jay, | remarks from Mr. Carter. | you know! No sense at all. Now he's Frank mounted his horse, and rode | gone, and there's a new editor, now's | away down Main Street, with a frown | my chance. See? I only want a | sha'n't take him any more stuff!"

Mr. Carter was the first specimen he "I've got all the other qualifica- The 4th Chapter. tions," explained Chunky. "Literary ability, a graphic style, wonderful descriptive powers, and all that. All I want now is Frank's typer. Of course, I'm going to pay for it. How much will you take for it, Frank?"

only with a sniff.

Chunky Todgers seemed to be walk- | sheer ability and efficiency. Some- | on a bargain. It's rather a joke to ing on air, when Frank Richards & thing seemed to have gone wrong, Co. saw him at Cedar Creek.

form and high feather. Asked how the circulation had gone down inhis literary work was progressing, he stead of up; all the younger generareplied that it was top-notch, and I tion in the valley lost their interest fairly rolling off the typer in sur- in the paper when the school story was going to dazzle A. B. Carter with | "feuilleton," which dealt thrillingly | it in his office.

Lucifer, Son of the Morning, had Penrose had rubbed along somehow | "Hundred and ninety!" he rapped fallen from his high estate. He on a small circulation, and Mr. out. looked quite gloomy when the chums | Carter found himself rubbing along | found him in the playground that on a still smaller one. He discovered "Two hundred dollars I am offered

"All O.K.?" asked Bob Lawless.

"How's that?"

"I've brought your pesky typer | "In one lot, gentlemen," said | Gunten.

Whereat Frank Richards smiled, but forebore comment. .

silly galoot Carter with confempt.

A Very Unexpected Bargain!

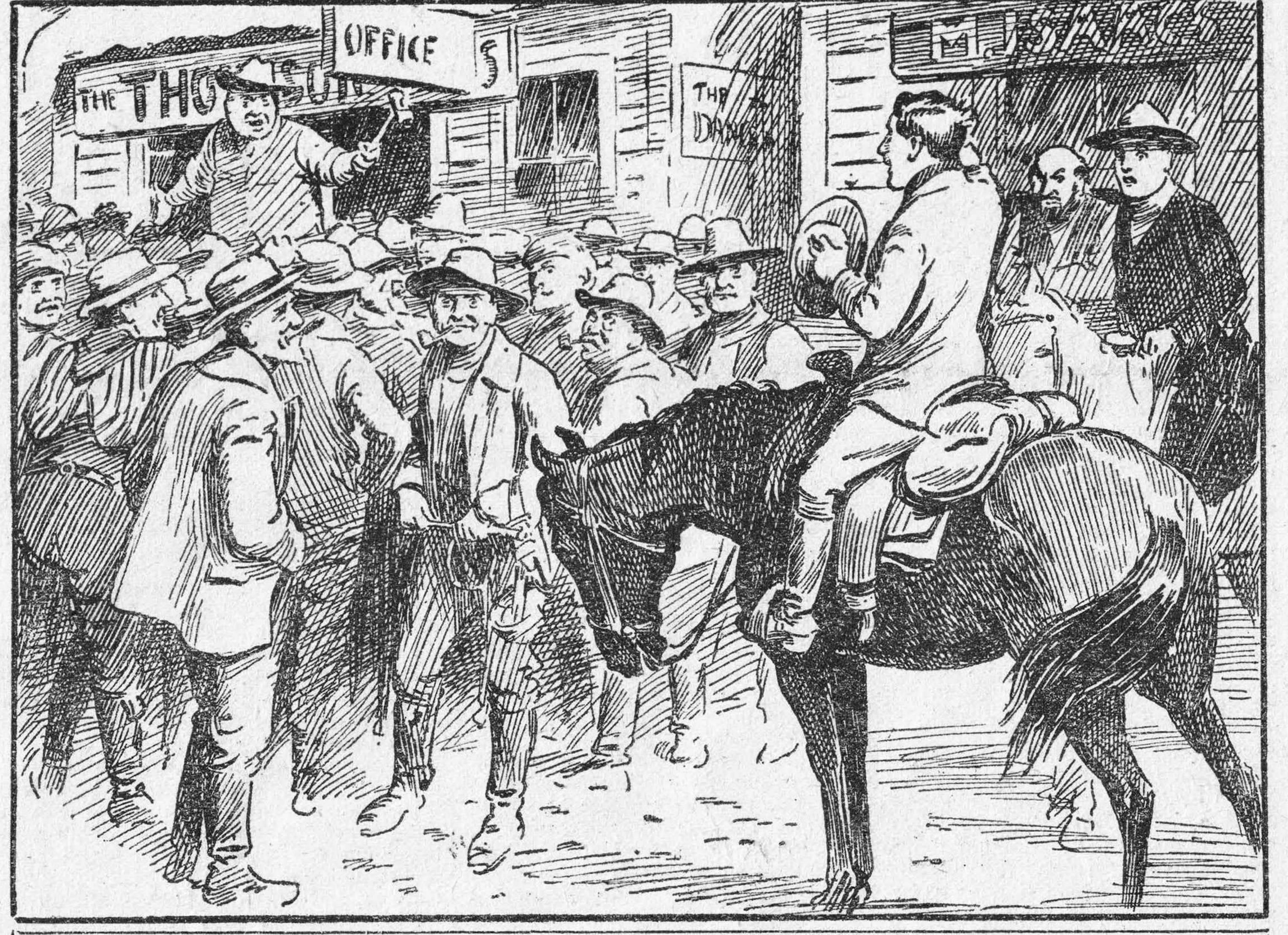
"Hallo! What's on?" It was a Saturday, a few weeks | "Gentlemen! Gentlemen! This later, and Frank Richards & Co. were riding into Thompson to visit | "Two dollars!" called out Buster "But if you want to buy one you Gunten's Store. On their way they Bill.

Evidently Chunky was in great too much efficiency. At all events, with murder, forgery, and divorce, Mr. Isaacs' black eyes glittered But on Monday, Chunky, like had failed to fill the gap. Mr. over his prominent nose. "That fellow Carter's a fraud!" he But the brisk young man had been said. "He looks business-like enough. | far too efficient to look before he | property worth--" the office wall, and hence Mr. Dry Billy. "Say's my stuff is no good!" said | Gompers Gunten, fat and florid, | "Ha, ha, ha!" grinning crowd.

here, Richards; you can take it home | Mr. Gunten. "Going-going! A | "Then I guess it isn't worth a with you!" said Chunky Todgers very valuable lot; the only local cent." dispiritedly. "I'm going to treat that newspaper nearer than Kamloops! "Going-going! I am offered two First-rate printing press, stock of hundred dollars-" Mr. Gunten paper, type-case, new roll-top desk | glanced towards Mr. Isaacs. "Did and revolving chair, office standing | you say two fifty, Mr. Isaacs?" in its own ground, new shanty-I "No. I did not!" answered Mr. mean, printing-works! What offers, I Isaacs sourly.

"Ten cents!" came from Dry Billy Bowers, and there was a loud | sunburnt face. chortle after this humorous effort.

splendid property---'



COING, GOING, CONE! "Here you are, Bob Lawless!" shouted wir. Gunten. "The incompanies of two hundred dollars!" "Great "Here you are, Bob Lawless!" shouted Wir. Gunten. "The 'Thompson Jerusalem !" gasped Bob. His little joke in running Mr. Isaacs up in the bidding had come home

my literary work." ... "Something's on!" remarked men," said Mr. Gunten. "The

"Oh, my only hat! Am I to do "Yep! You won't have to wait

long. Carter will simply jump at my | claimed Bob.

candid!"

know! "Ha, ha! Well, I'll lend you the

typer, Chunky!" "Good man!" said Chunky. "I'm sorry for you, Richards-real sorry; but I always told you you couldn't write, didn't I? You couldn't expect anybody but old Penrose to print your stuff! Too weak, you know-too rotten, if you don't mind my being

"Not at all," said Frank. "Mere trash, then, since you ask my opinion!" said the candid Chunky. "Not at all like I should write!"

"That's true, I hope," said Frank. 'I'll ride home with you to-night, and carry off the typer," said Chunky. "I'll begin at once: and I've precious little doubt that Carter

will jump at my stuff!" That's how he came to take your | "I believe he's almost idiot enough

"It's no use to you now," said can order one to be sent from Kam- | had to pass the office of the loops," said Frank. "Thompson Press," and they drew "Now old Penrose has vamoosed | "Nunno! You see, they wouldn't | in their horses as they saw a crowd | you're left, ain't you? But the typer | wait for the money until I'm paid for | gathered before the building.

Beauclerc. "That's Old Man Gunten on the tub."

"By gum! An auction!" ex-

The chums of Cedar Creek halted. Richards. "If it goes for a hundred "How do you know?" The fat and oily Mr. Gunten, of dollars, it's cheap enough, you "Oh, he's the real goods, you Gunten's Store, was mounted on a fellows. But I suppose nobody in cask outside the newspaper office, Thompson wants to try his hand at with a hammer in his hand, evidently I acting as auctioneer. Most of the Thompson citizens who had gathered I Mr. Isaacs, leaning from his office round were grinning. On the wall | of the office, by the door, was pasted. a large notice, announcing that the office, its contents, the paper, and the "goodwill" were for sale that Saturday morning, in one "lot."

"Carter hasn't had a very long run," said Bob Lawless, laughing. "He hasn't stuck it out so long as Penrose did."

Evidently, Mr. Carter's career as editor in the Thompson Valley had come to a termination. Mr. A. B. Carter could be seen at the office window, but he did not look so spruce and self-satisfied as on the occasion of Frank's interview with him. This morning his sharp if you don't look out!" countenance had a gloomy cast. Mr I Bob Lawless grinned.

"Ha, ha. ha!"

"Three dollars!" "And ten cents!"

"Have your little joke, gentlereserve price, I don't mind telling you, is one hundred dollars. Now, then, what offers?"

"My hat!" murmured Frank running a newspaper."

"Hundred and five!" came from window a few doors up the street.

"Hundred and five I am offered!" said Mr. Gunten. "What improvement on a hundred and five dollars, gentlemen, for this splendid property?"

"Hundred and six!" called out Bob Lawless.

nodded. "Hundred and six dollars I am offered-"

"And ten!" came from Mr. Isaacs. "Hundred and twenty!" chirruped

"Bob, you ass!" murmured Frank. "You'll get it knocked down to you

To which Chunky Todgers replied | Carter had bought up the defunct | "All serene," he answered. "You "Press" for a mere song, intending | know old Isaacs; he will never let During the next two or three days | to work it up into a big thing by | himself be beaten. He's grim death

run him up.27 somehow. Perhaps there had been | "And fifty!" called out Mr. Isaacs, with a peculiar glance at Bob

> Lawless. "Hundred and sixty!" hooted

"Go it, young Lawless!" roared prising quantities. On Saturday he | no longer appeared, and an exciting | Buster Bill. "Don't let the sheeny beat you!"

"Two hundred!" chuckled Bob. -rather too late-that there wasn't for this handsome property!" said really room for extensive newspaper | Mr. Gunten cheerily. "Now, gents, Chunky shook a disconsolate head. | expansion in the Thompson Valley. | don't be backward in coming forward. Two hundred dollars for a

but he's as big a jay as Penrose was." | leaped. Hence the sale notice on | "Two hundred cents!" interjected

hammer in hand, addressing the "Worth a thousand, if it's worth a Continental red cent!" said Mr.

gentlemen-what offers?" Bob Lawless was grinning cheerily, but the grin suddenly faded off his

> Mr. Gunten's eye was on him. "Two hundred dollars! Any advance on two hundred dollars? Going-going-gone! Young Lawless, you are the owner of this handsome property at the ridiculous price of two hundred dollars."

"Great Jerusalem!" gasped Bob Lawless.

He blinked at Mr. Gunten. That gentleman stepped down from the cask, after a rap of his hammer, his business evidently done for the

Bob sat his horse as if frozen to the

Not the remotest idea had entered his mind of becoming the purchaser of the "Thompson Press" and its printing outfit; he had been running up the bidding by way of a joke on Mr. Isaacs, who was reputed to be very close with his money. The biter had been bit, with a vengeance.

The crowd was already dispersing, the auction being over. Mr. Gunten beckoned to the hapless purchaser. "Kindly step inside, Bob Lawless,

and finish the transaction, will you? Spot cash."

"But-but I--" Bob Lawless had, in the wide world, about thirty dollars to call his own. His face was the picture of dismay.

Frank pressed his arm.

"Don't worry, Bob---" "But-but I can't! Oh Jerusalem crickets!" gasped Bob.

"We can stand it between us. I've got some tin in the bank, you know." "But-but you can't! You-you

"Can't be helped now," said Frank. "You've bought the dashed thing, you ass! It's got to be paid for. Mr. Gunten, we're going along to the bank. Back in ten minutes." "Don't be longer," said Mr.

Gunten. "But-but, Frank, old chap," gasped Bob, "you can't waste your money-your savings--'

"I dare say we can sell the blessed thing again for something," said Frank, as cheerfully as he could. "Anyhow, the bargain's made, and it's got to be paid for. Come on!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Bob. His little joke on Mr. Isaacs had come home to roost in the most unpleasant

But there was no help for it now. Frank Richards drew the required sum from the Thompson Bank, and the chums returned to the "Press" office. There the money was paid over, and the "splendid property" assigned to three partners-Frank Richards, Vere Beauclere, and Bob Lawless. Mr. A. B. Carter gladly pocketed the two hundred dollars, and shook the dust of the Thompson Valley from his feet, doubtless seeking some wider sphere where there would be more room for his genius and efficiency. Mr. Gunten, having pocketed his fee, rolled back to his Mr. Gunten glanced at him and store quite satisfied.

And the chums of Cedar Creeknewspaper proprietors now-sat in the deserted office, and stared at one another!

THE END.

("The Schoolboy Editor" is a fine, long, complete tute of Frank Richards & Co. You must read it in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND.)