

Another Great New Story of Frank Polruan & Co. In Next Week's Issue.

The BOYS' FRIEND

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR!

No. 1,082. Vol. XXII. New Series.]

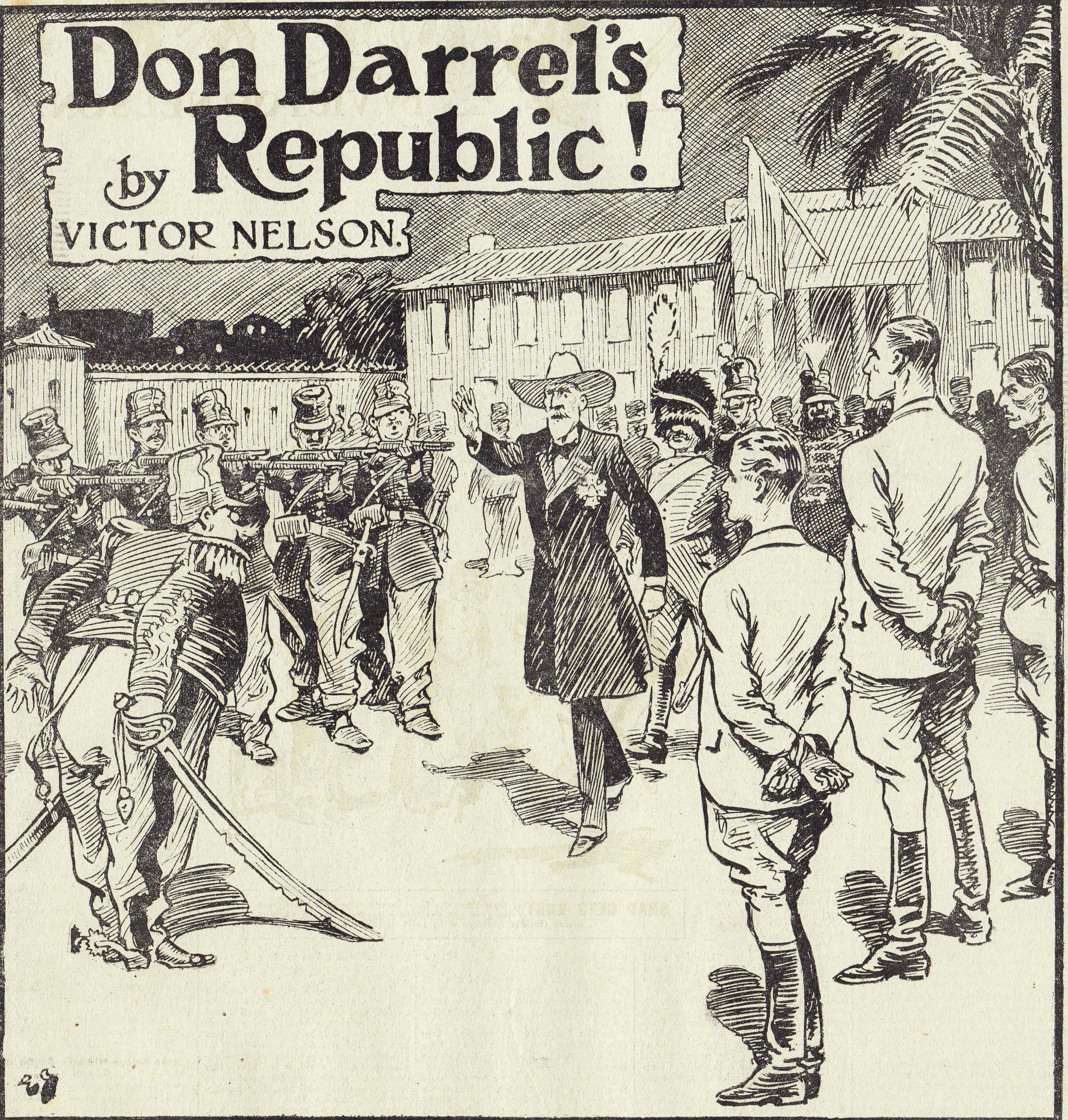
THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending March 4th, 1922.

Don Darrel's Republic!

by

VICTOR NELSON.



AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR!

Just as Captain Hoz was about to give the order to the firing squad to carry out their terrible duty, the command to "Stop!" rang out and the President of Santa Rio came forward!

A SPLENDID COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY BY OWEN CONQUEST!



Backing Up Dicky Dalton!

The 1st Chapter.

Hands Off!

Jimmy Silver smiled. Lovell and Raby and Newcome smiled also.

The Fistical Four of the Rookwood Fourth seemed to be in a merry mood that snowy March morning.

It was Mr. Manders who caused them to smile.

Mr. Manders was crossing over towards the School House. There was a black frown upon his brow. It grew blacker as he sighted the cheery chums of the Classical Fourth. And Jimmy Silver & Co. smiled!

Mr. Manders came on, still frowning blackly. The Fistical Four were still smiling as he came by—there was no law against smiling.

But their smiles had a very irritating effect upon Roger Manders.

He passed quite close to the Co., and as he passed, Lovell's smile grew broader and more irritating; and Mr. Manders, suddenly reaching out, gave Arthur Edward a resounding box on the ear!

Smack! It rang like a pistol-shot; and it was followed by a terrific yell from Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Yaroooh!" "Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy jumped back as Mr. Manders turned on him, evidently with a box on the ear ready for the captain of the Fourth.

"Hands off!" exclaimed Jimmy. "You impertinent young rascal!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Lovell, rubbing his ear. "Oh erikiey!"

Mr. Manders strode on towards the School House steps, apparently somewhat soled.

Lovell blinked after him in breathless wrath.

"The—the cheeky cad!" stuttered Lovell. "Banging me on the napper! Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Words failed Arthur Edward Lovell. Besides, it was a time for action, not for words.

He stooped and gathered up handfuls of snow. His ear was burning, and his eyes blazed.

With great rapidity Lovell kneaded a snowball. Really it was fortunate that there had been a fall of snow in that part of Sussex the night before. Lovell rose again with a big snowball in his hand.

"Go it!" gasped Raby. Whiz!

Mr. Manders, certainly not dreaming of vengeance from the junior he had cuffed, was mounting the steps of the School House, when Lovell let fly. Biff!

The snowball landed fairly and squarely on the back of Mr. Manders' neck!

"Goal!" ejaculated Newcome. Mr. Manders gave a sudden yelp, and pitched forward. He landed on his hands and knees on the steps.

There was a yell of laughter from a dozen Classical fellows in the quadrangle.

"Well hit, Lovell! Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Manders spun round, and sat on the steps, blinking. His hat had fallen off, and his scanty locks streamed in the wind.

"Give him another!" yelled Raby. Lovell was already grabbing up snow for another missile.

Mr. Manders jumped up. His face was furious as he rushed towards the chums of the Classical Fourth.

"Give him beans!" shouted Jimmy Silver, as the Modern master came rushing on.

Whiz, whiz, whiz, whiz! The four juniors all piled in together. A volley of snowballs met Mr. Manders as he came on, smashing and crashing all over him.

Whiz, whiz! Smash! Crash!

Mr. Manders staggered back and glared at the Classical juniors, but he was not thinking any longer of attack. He turned and ran for the School House.

"Follow on!" shouted Mornington. "Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors, yelling with laughter, closed up behind the Modern master as he ran, keeping up a hot fire. Snowballs crashed all over Mr. Manders' back as he dodged up the steps, and fled into the School House.

Jimmy Silver chuckled. "The dear man has left his hat behind him. Pass it this way, Raby."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Raby "passed" Mr. Manders' hat, and Jimmy Silver passed it on to Lovell, who passed in turn. In a few minutes nearly all the Classical Fourth were playing football with Mr. Manders' hat, and in a few more minutes what remained of the hat was certainly not suitable to adorn the head of a master at Rookwood!

The 2nd Chapter.

Mr. Manders Puts His Foot Down!

Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, looked up as his study door was flung violently open, and a hatless snowy gentleman stamped in.

It was close on time for morning classes, and Mr. Dalton was preparing for the Form-room. His handsome face set a little grimly as the Modern master stamped in.

"Mr. Dalton—" Roger Manders gasped for breath. "You—you see—"

"I saw what occurred, from my window. Mr. Manders," said the young Form-master quietly.

"You saw me attacked, assailed, assaulted!" spluttered Mr. Manders.

"I saw you strike a boy of my Form, quite unprovoked," said Mr. Dalton. "What followed was certainly your own fault. You have no right whatever to lay hands on a Classical junior, and certainly not in such a way."

Mr. Manders gasped. "I might have expected you to uphold those young ruffians in their lawless conduct!" he spluttered.

"I shall not allow the boys of my Form to be interfered with," said Mr. Dalton.

Mr. Manders stared at him across the table. There was bitter dislike in his look, almost amounting to hatred.

With an effort the Modern master calmed himself a little.

"I came over to speak to you, Mr. Dalton, before classes begin," he said. "I have something to say that you must hear."

Mr. Dalton glanced at the clock. "Pray lose no time then," he said. "Will you be seated?"

Mr. Manders did not heed that invitation. He remained standing, glaring at the young man across the table.

"The Head left me in control of Rookwood," he said. "Not being satisfied with you, Mr. Dalton, I dismissed you. You have returned to Rookwood without my consent, and re-taken charge of the Fourth Form against my desire. You have no right in the school at all."

"That is for Dr. Chisholm to settle when he returns, sir."

"Nothing of the sort. I am determined not to allow it."

Mr. Dalton shrugged his shoulders. "During your absence the Fourth Form broke into open rebellion," continued Mr. Manders. "I need not inquire who inspired it. It was a cunning move on your part, Mr. Dalton, to necessitate your return."

"That is untrue, sir, and you know it!" said the young master hotly. "I knew nothing of the proceedings until I received a message from the whole staff here, requesting me to return and do what I could to put a stop to the state of affairs. I felt it my duty to accede. Since my return, there has been perfect order—"

"Of which this outrage, of a few minutes ago, is a sample!" sneered Mr. Manders.

"You provoked it, sir."

"I will not bandy words with you, Richard Dalton. I am here to tell you that, having thought the matter out, I have decided that I will not allow you to retain the position you

have usurped. I have determined to place a prefect—a Modern prefect—in charge of the Fourth Form for the present."

"The Fourth Form is in my charge, sir."

"I repeat that I shall not allow that to continue."

Mr. Dalton glanced at the clock again.

"I am afraid I can give you no further time, sir," he remarked politely. "I am due in the Form-room in a few minutes."

"I forbid you to enter the Form-room."

"Nonsense!" Mr. Manders breathed hard.

"If you persist in this—this ruffianly and lawless course, you will take the consequences," he said. "I repeat that I shall send Knowles of the Sixth to the Form-room to take charge of the Fourth!"

"And I repeat, nonsense!" said Mr. Dalton coolly.

Mr. Manders clenched his hands. For a moment he looked as if he would whip round the table, and lay hands upon the cool, good-looking young man who faced him calmly and contemptuously.

But he restrained himself. The long, lean gentleman was head and shoulders taller than the Form-master, but he was only too well aware that he would have crumpled up helplessly in Richard Dalton's athletic grip.

"We shall see!" he stuttered. "We—we shall see!"

And Mr. Manders flung out of the study. Richard Dalton shrugged his broad shoulders again, and made his way to the Fourth Form room. The young man's position at Rookwood was difficult enough; but he had quite made up his mind to tolerate no more interference from Roger Manders.

Jimmy Silver & Co., having finished playing football with Mr. Manders' hat, were coming into the School House for classes, when the Modern master strode out.

The whole crew of Classical juniors grinned and chortled as Mr. Manders passed them.

But Mr. Manders did not venture upon the boxing of ears. He had had enough of that! He strode out scowling, leaving the Classical juniors still chortling merrily.

"The dear old bird seems to have learned his lesson!" remarked Jimmy Silver, laughing.

And the Classics went on cheerily to the Form-room, quite satisfied with their victory over the former tyrant of Rookwood.

Mr. Richard Dalton's handsome face was unusually grave when his pupils saw him in the Form-room. Lessons began quietly, the Classical Fourth being on their very best behaviour. It was Jimmy Silver's idea to prove by exemplary conduct that the late barring-out had been caused only by Mr. Manders and his tyranny, and that the Fourth Form knew how to behave themselves with a master who had a right sense of duty.

And Uncle James of Rookwood had his way, and the Fourth Form, lately in rebellion, were now as good as gold, and made Mr. Dalton's duties very easy. For some days peace, perfect peace, had reigned in the Fourth, and the juniors had supposed that that beatific state of affairs would last until the Head's return, which could not be long delayed. But they were to learn that Mr. Manders was not disposed to take his defeat "lying down." Lessons were quite lost on that obstinate gentleman.

First lesson was interrupted by the Form-room door opening without a knock. Cecil Knowles of the Modern Sixth stepped in.

Mr. Dalton glanced at him.

"What do you want, Knowles?" he asked.

Knowles' reply made the Fourth-Formers jump.

"I've come to take charge of the Fourth Form, Mr. Dalton, by Mr. Manders' orders!"

The 3rd Chapter.

Nice for Knowles!

Jimmy Silver exchanged a quick glance with his chums.

Lovell snorted.

"Manders is going it again," he

murmured in Jimmy's ear. "We're not standing it—what!"

"No fear!"

"Let's chuck the modern cad out."

"Hold on! Leave him to Dicky."

All eyes in the Classical Fourth were fixed on the Modern prefect and the Form-master. Mr. Dalton's face had set hard. There was an insolent smile on Knowles' face. No love was lost between the Sixth Form bully and the young Form-master.

Knowles walked coolly across to the master's desk. The Fourth Form waited breathlessly. Sharp and clear came Mr. Dalton's voice.

"Knowles, kindly leave the Form-room!"

"Sorry, sir," said Knowles coolly. "Can't be done! I'm in charge here now!"

Knowles' look showed how much he enjoyed this opportunity of being insolent to the master of the Fourth.

Mr. Dalton did not deign to argue. He pointed to the door.

Knowles did not heed.

"If you'll be kind enough to step outside, Mr. Dalton, I can get going," he remarked casually. "I cannot allow you to remain here during lessons, of course."

"You cannot allow!" ejaculated Mr. Dalton.

"Not at all. Please leave at once!" said Knowles.

Arthur Edward Lovell half-rose. Jimmy Silver jerked him back into his seat again.

"Leave it to Dicky, you ass!" he whispered.

"We ought to back Dicky up!" murmured Lovell.

"Fathead! He will cut up rusty if we chip in," said Jimmy in an undertone. "Leave him alone!"

As a matter of fact, Mr. Dalton was not in need of support from his Form even if he had desired it, which most certainly he did not. He was quite able to deal with the situation.

He strode across towards Knowles, with a gleam in his eyes.

"I shall not argue the matter with you, Knowles," he said crisply. "Mr. Manders' authority is not recognised in this room. You will leave at once!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind," said Knowles. "In fact, I insist upon your leaving at once, Mr. Dalton!"

"If you do not retire from this room, Knowles, I shall have no alternative but to remove you by force!" said Mr. Dalton quietly.

"Go it, Dicky!" yelled Lovell, quite irrepresible now.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Dalton swung round towards the class.

"Lovell," he rapped out, "how dare you! Take two hundred lines!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Arthur Edward. This was rather a surprising reward for his enthusiastic support.

"If you speak again I shall cane you!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Lovell. He did not speak again.

Mr. Dalton turned to Knowles once more. The Modern prefect had seated himself at the master's high desk, and showed no sign of vacating the chair.

"You heard what I said to you, Knowles?"

"Oh, yes," answered the Sixth-Former carelessly.

"Retire at once!"

"Nothing of the kind!"

"Then I shall remove you!"

Mr. Dalton strode directly at the prefect. Knowles' greenish eyes glittered at him like a cat's. A powerful grasp on his shoulder jerked him from the desk, and he came spinning across the floor.

"Let go!" roared Knowles. "I shall hit out, I tell you! I have Mr. Manders' authority to—"

"Never mind Mr. Manders now. Will you leave the Form-room?"

"No, I won't!" yelled Knowles.

Without wasting more time in words, Mr. Dalton gasped the prefect with both hands and swept him towards the door. Knowles of the Sixth was a big fellow, and rather athletic, but he seemed like an infant in Richard Dalton's hands. He was swept along helplessly, his boots scraping on the floor. With a savage snarl Knowles struck at the Form-master, and the juniors fairly gasped as they saw his clenched fist land on Mr. Dalton's cheek, leaving a red mark there.

Mr. Dalton did not heed the blow. He swept Knowles right on to the door, threw it open with his left hand, his right gripping the prefect's collar. Then, with a swing of his strong arm, he sent the Modern prefect whirling into the corridor.

The door closed on Knowles.

Mr. Dalton came back towards his class. Save for the red glow in his cheek, he showed no sign of the struggle. He was not even breathing more quickly than usual. He had

taken up his book to resume, when the door was hurled open and Knowles came rushing breathlessly in.

"Look here—" yelled Knowles.

He had no time to finish. Mr. Dalton turned on him like lightning, and grasped him. This time Knowles was swept right off the floor and carried bodily out of the Form-room, with his arms and legs wildly thrashing the air. Mr. Dalton carried him down the corridor and across the hall and out into the quadrangle. There he sat Knowles down on the School House steps.

The prefect sat breathless, gasping, and blinking at him.

"I have done with you, Knowles," said Mr. Dalton quietly. "If you return to the Form-room again, I shall cane you!"

"C-c-cane me!" gasped Knowles.

"Yes. Take warning!"

Mr. Dalton went in again. Knowles staggered to his feet. He was aching from the powerful grip that had been placed on him. He made a step into the School House, and paused. Dicky Dalton was a man of his word, and the prospect of being thrashed before a grinning class of juniors did not appeal to Knowles. It was, he sagely decided, not good enough. And he turned back and tramped away to Mr. Manders' house to report progress.

Lessons finished in the Fourth Form room that morning without further interruption from the enemy.

The 4th Chapter.

Up to Uncle James!

"The Head's coming back!" Tubby Muffin made that announcement after dinner. Jimmy Silver & Co. were interested at once, which was not often the case when Reginald Muffin imparted information.

"When?" asked Jimmy.

"This afternoon."

"And how do you know?" demanded Newcome.

"Had it from Leggett of the Modern Fourth," said Tubby.

"Leggett heard Manders speaking to Knowles about it. The Head's telephoned to Manders that he's coming this afternoon. Trouble for somebody when he comes!" added Tubby. "I saw Manders. He's looking no end backed. He expects the Head to back him up against Mr. Dalton, of course. I say, do you think Dalton will get the boot?"

"Rats!" growled Lovell. "Go and eat coke, fatty!"

"Well, he's rather a beast," said Tubby. "Not such a beast as Manders, but rather a beast. He gave me lines this morning, after the way I've backed him up, you know. So he did you, Lovell!"

"Why shouldn't he, if he chooses?" said Arthur Edward Lovell, rather unexpectedly.

"Well, he's a beast—"

"Ass!"

Lovell sat Tubby Muffin down in the snow and walked away with his chums. The news that the Head was returning that afternoon was important, from the point of view of the Fistical Four. How the dispute between Mr. Manders and Mr. Dalton would be regarded by the Head they did not know, and they were concerned for Dicky.

"The Head's a terrific stickler for discipline," Jimmy Silver remarked thoughtfully. "After all, he left Manders in control. He may be down on Dicky. Manders will make it look as bad as he can. Still, I think the rest of the masters will speak up for Dicky. Manders has worried them no end while the Head's been away. And there would still be a barring-out going on if Dicky hadn't chipped in. Dash it all, I hope Dicky will come through all right."

"Let's tell him," suggested Raby. "Manders won't mention it; you may be sure. Dicky ought to be put on his guard."

"Good!" assented Jimmy.

Mr. Dalton was standing on the School House steps, in conversation with Bulkeley of the Sixth. The Fistical Four approached him, and Mr. Dalton gave them a kind smile.

"We've just heard that Dr. Chisholm is coming back this afternoon, sir!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Dalton.

He glanced past the juniors at a lean figure that was coming across the quadrangle. Jimmy Silver & Co. stepped back as Mr. Manders came up. They wondered whether Mr. Manders was coming himself with the information of the Head's return. But it was soon clear that that was not the Modern master's object.

"A word with you, Mr. Dalton!" he said, with a bitter look at the young Form-master. "This morning you turned out of the Fourth

Form room the prefect I sent to take charge of the Fourth."

"Quite so!" assented Mr. Dalton. "It is my intention, sir, to take charge of the Fourth myself personally, this afternoon," said Mr. Manders.

Mr. Dalton did not speak. "You are an intruder here, sir," continued Mr. Manders, raising his voice. "I shall tolerate your intrusion no longer. I shall assume control in the Fourth Form room, and if you have the audacity, sir, to interfere, I shall be compelled to eject you."

There was a buzz from a score of fellows who overheard that threat. Mr. Dalton's look did not change. "Well, sir, what is your answer?" snapped Mr. Manders.

"I shall allow no interference in my Form-room, Mr. Manders," said the young man. "I advise you not to enter it."

"I shall certainly enter it." "You will be removed, sir."

Mr. Manders' eyes glittered. "Very well!" he said. "Very well, indeed, Mr. Dalton. I assure you that I shall enter; and if you adopt any of your ruffianly tactics towards me, sir, I shall know how to deal with you. That is all, sir! I advise you, for your own good, to quit Rookwood at once."

"I shall do nothing of the kind." Mr. Manders sniffed and whisked away. There was satisfaction in his thin, bitter face now. Mr. Dalton went quietly into the School House, and Bulkeley strolled away looking puzzled and troubled. Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged worried glances. They had taken Dicky under their wing, as it were, and they were greatly concerned for him.

"The awful rotter!" breathed Lovell, alluding to Roger Manders. "Don't you see his game? He's going to land Dicky fair and square. He wants a row to be going on when the Head comes back! He would like nothing better than the Head seeing Dicky chucking him out of the Form-room. That would settle Dicky's account here."

Jimmy Silver nodded gloomily. Now that he knew that the Head was due to return that afternoon, he could read quite easily Mr. Manders' cunning scheme.

Whatever accounts the Head might receive of the rights and the wrongs of the disputes during his absence, it was quite certain that a scene of violence between two masters would rouse his deepest anger and condemnation. If he came on the scene when Mr. Manders was being forcibly ejected from the Fourth Form room—

He had left Mr. Manders in charge! His first impression would be the worst possible, for Mr. Dalton. The Head was a stickler for discipline—perhaps too severely so. Such a scene, whatever explanations came afterwards, was pretty certain to have only one result—the dismissal of Richard Dalton from his post at Rookwood School.

On the other hand, Mr. Dalton could scarcely recede from the position he had taken up, and allow Roger Manders to order him out of his own Form-room. It looked as if the young Form-master was caught in a cleft stick, as it were, by his cunning enemy.

"It's rotten!" said Raby. "Manders knows the Head's time, of course, and he will time it for the row to be taking place just when Dr. Chisholm arrives."

"Sure to!" said Newcome. "He will wait and watch for him," said Jimmy Silver. "Just when the Head's at the gates, Manders will come butting into our Form-room. And Dicky will either have to chuck him out or eat dirt—and he won't do that!"

"No fear!" Jimmy knitted his brows. "It's up to us!" he said at last. "What can we do?" asked Lovell glumly. "Dicky won't let us handle the old bird."

"Not in the Form-room!" said Jimmy Silver. "But Manders isn't going to carry out this scheme."

"Dicky can't stop him!" "We can, somehow."

"How?" demanded three voices in unison. "I've got to think that out!" said Jimmy Silver. "It's half an hour to lessons yet. Your Uncle James is going to have a big think."

Jimmy Silver had a "big think" on the spot, and it did not take him long. Dicky was not going to be caught in Mr. Manders' trap—Jimmy was determined upon that. It only remained to decide what was to be done, and Jimmy felt himself equal to the occasion.

"Well?" said Lovell at last, with a grin, "got it, Uncle James?" Jimmy nodded. "Got it!" he answered. "Expound!" grinned Raby. "It's a bit risky." "Cut that out!" said Lovell. "What's the programme? We're game!"

Jimmy Silver proceeded to explain. His chums listened to him with deep attention, and they stared! But there was a general nodding of heads among the Co. when Jimmy had finished.

"We're game!" said Arthur Edward Lovell again. "Get on with it!" said Raby. And the Fistical Four "got on with it"—whatever "it" was.

The 5th Chapter. All Serene!

Mr. Manders smiled. He was seated in his study, warming his toes at the fire; and he seemed to be in a mood of unusual satisfaction.

He was anticipating triumph. The Head was to arrive at half-past two, and the Head was always a punctual gentleman; he could be depended on to the minute. And at half-past two Roger Manders was

"What—what does this mean?" stuttered Mr. Manders.

One of the party turned the key in the lock. Then, without a word, the whole party rushed at Mr. Manders.

Before the Modern master quite knew what was happening, seven pairs of reckless hands were grasping him. He came down on his hearthrug with a bump.

One wild howl escaped Mr. Manders, but only one. The next moment a bath sponge was crammed into his mouth.

A heavy knee was planted on his chest, pinning him down. A couple of his assailants stood on his wriggling legs. His arms were held, and one active fellow proceeded to wind a cord around his head and neck, to keep the sponge in its place between his lean jaws.

"Gerroooooooogh!" That sound came faintly from Mr. Manders: it was all that he could utter. The sponge crammed in his mouth choked speech.

Quietly, methodically, his assailants proceeded to tie up Mr. Manders. They jerked him into his armchair, and tied his arms to the chair arms, and his legs to the chair legs.

Not a word was uttered during that peculiar process. Evidently the masked party—with

Outside the study door seven juniors whipped off Guy Fawkes masks and slipped them into their pockets. The faces of the Fistical Four, and of the three Tommies of the Modern Fourth, were disclosed. They were grinning.

"Worked like a charm!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

"Right as rain!" whispered Tommy Dodd. "But let's hook it! Better not be seen hanging round here."

"You bet!"

The seven juniors melted away. When the bell rang for afternoon classes at Rookwood, Jimmy Silver & Co. came cheerily into the Form-room. Mr. Dalton was already there, with a very grave face.

The young man understood, quite as clearly as Jimmy Silver & Co., what Mr. Manders' intentions were. He could not help feeling that that day was probably his last at Rookwood. Howsoever his case might be represented to the Head, it was certain that Dr. Chisholm could and would never forgive such a scene as Mr. Manders had planned to meet his eyes. But the young man was cool and calm, and quite determined to deal efficaciously with Roger Manders if that gentleman "buted" in.

Lessons began in the Form-room in an atmosphere of suppressed ex-

Silver exchanged a cheery smile with his six confederates.

Dr. Chisholm was met at the door by Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth. He went into his own house. Jimmy stole a look at Mr. Dalton's face, and he could read the involuntary relief there. The blow had not fallen. Mr. Manders had failed inexplicably to play his last card—a certain trump! It was inexplicable to Mr. Dalton, but it was a great relief.

It was close on time for the Form to be dismissed when a tap came at the door, and Mr. Greely entered. He gave the Fourth Form master a smile and a nod.

"Will you step into the Head's study, Mr. Dalton," he said. "I have—ah!—explained at some length to Dr. Chisholm the—unusual occurrences that have taken place here during his absence—ahem! He desires to hear your personal explanation."

"Mr. Manders—"

The Fifth Form master smiled. "Mr. Manders has not chosen to put in an appearance yet," he said. "Possibly he feels that his case is a very bad one. You may depend upon the support of the whole staff, my dear fellow. But go and see the Head now; he desires to speak to you at once."

Mr. Greely was not blind to the advantage of saying the first word.

The amazing and inexplicable inactivity of Mr. Manders was making things easy for the master of the Fourth.

"Thank you very much!" said Mr. Dalton.

He dismissed his Form, and went at once to the Head's study. Jimmy Silver & Co. came out, smiling, into the quadrangle.

"Looks like a win for little us!" Jimmy Silver remarked serenely. "Dicky gets in the first version—what! And there wasn't any scene to meet the Head when he hopped in—what! I wonder what old Dicky would do if he hadn't kind uncles in the Fourth to look after him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. would have given a good deal to hear the conversation that went on in the Head's study. That was not possible, and they could only hope for the best. Certainly, the stern old gentleman heard, first, the explanation of Mr. Dalton, and the united testimony of the staff, while Mr. Manders said no word! When Bulkeley of the Sixth came out, and crossed over to Mr. Manders' House, the Classical chums could guess his mission—he was going to call Mr. Manders to see the Head. Bulkeley came back a few minutes later looking perplexed. He had to report to the Head that Mr. Manders' door was locked, and that he could get no answer.

There was a surprise for Rookwood a little later. The Head crossed over in person, with a frowning face, to see Mr. Manders in his own house.

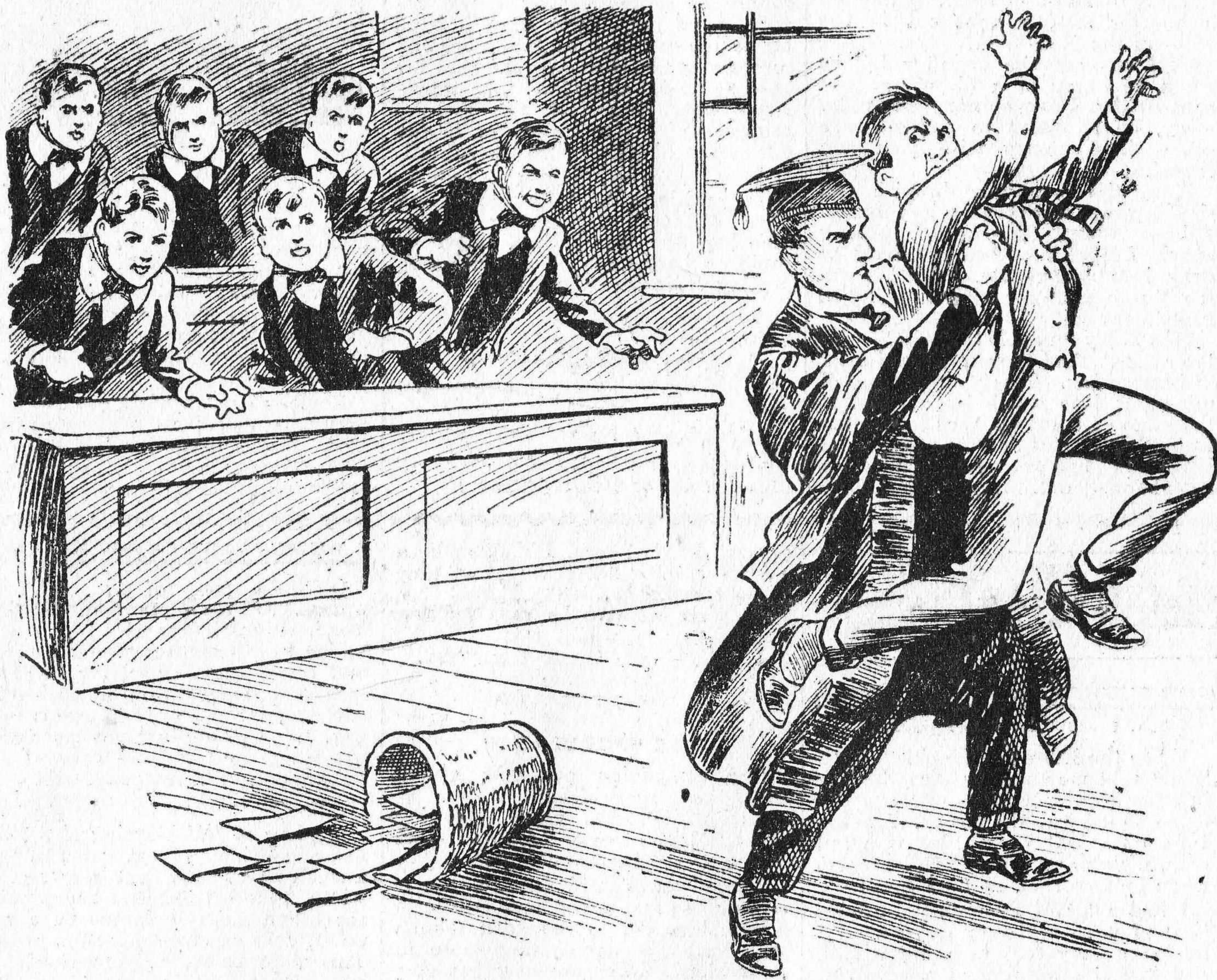
Jimmy Silver & Co. were very careful to keep off the scene, but a crowd of Modern fellows watched the Head tapping impatiently at Mr. Manders' study door, his annoyance changing to alarm at last. The door was forced finally, and Mr. Manders burst upon the Head in all his glory.

Dr. Chisholm had been surprised by Mr. Manders' failure to put in an appearance. He was still more surprised when he beheld the Modern master tied in his chair, wriggling, with a bath sponge in his lean jaws, and a ticket pinned on his gown, which announced, "ENOUGH MANDERS!" With a grim face the Head watched him released by Knowles of the Sixth; with a grimmer face he listened to Mr. Manders' spluttering account of an outrageous case of assault and battery. That evening the prefects were seeking up and down Rookwood for seven juniors who had Guy Fawkes' masks in their possession—and Jimmy Silver & Co. were feeling very pleased that they had made a bonfire of seven Guy Fawkes' masks in the wood-shed before classes!

Exactly what the Head thought of the conflicting accounts he received of the happenings during his absence Jimmy Silver & Co. never knew. But they knew that Mr. Manders—probably on a hint from on high, as it were—took a holiday of several weeks, after the Head's return, and with that the affair dropped. So Uncle James of Rookwood and his chums had reason to be satisfied with their success in backing up Dicky Dalton!

THE END.

"Cuffy's Practical Joke" is the title of a screamingly funny Rookwood School story appearing next Monday. Order your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND well in advance!



FORCIBLY EJECTED! Mr. Dalton picked the prefect up bodily and carried him yelling and kicking to the Form-room door, amidst the cheers of the Classical juniors!

going to take charge in the Fourth Form room. He knew that Mr. Dalton, whatever the consequences, would not "climb down" and submit. The interfering Modern master would be ejected. That, probably, would not be a pleasant process for him. But the Head would witness it, and that was more than a compensation for the discomfort of the process. Mr. Dalton would be asking for the "boot"—and he would get the boot on the spot. Mr. Manders had not the slightest doubt about that. So he smiled with satisfaction as he warmed his toes at the study fire.

He glanced round as his door opened without a knock. Then he started to his feet with an exclamation of angry surprise. Seven fellows entered his study in a crowd. Who the fellows were Mr. Manders could not see, for every one of them had a Guy Fawkes mask fastened over his face. Their aspect was peculiar and startling.

an eye to the future—did not want to give Mr. Manders a chance of recognising their voices. The Modern master was soon secured, and he sat quite helpless, glaring at the seven with burning eyes.

A faint mumble came from him, and one of the party gave further attention to the gag, and the mumble died away.

Then a card was pinned on his breast. It bore the simple inscription, in large block letters:

ENOUGH MANDERS!

Quietly the seven juniors quitted the study. The key was whipped into the outside of the lock. Mr. Manders heard it turned and withdrawn.

He sat silent, wriggling, with feelings that could not have been expressed in words.

No one was likely to come into the study. No one would be able to enter even if he came. Mr. Manders was booked.

ENOUGH MANDERS!

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