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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending July 26th, 1924.]



**CUFFY'S ACCIDENTAL FALL SAVES AN OLD GENTLEMAN FROM VIOLENCE!**

(A startling incident from "A Hero by Accident!" inside.)

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**A HERO BY ACCIDENT!**

An amusing long story of the boys of Rookwood School, by **OWEN CONQUEST.**

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A grand new story of Prince Ching Lung and Gan Waga & Co., by **SIDNEY DREW.**

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(A thrilling incident from "The Guardians of the Gold!" in this issue.)

A SCREAMINGLY FUNNY STORY OF THE BOYS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



# A Hero By Accident!

By Owen Conquest.

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

Quite unintentionally Clarence Cuffy renders an old gentleman a very great service!

## The 1st Chapter.

### Cuffy's Way!

"My dear James—"  
"Hook it!" said Jimmy Silver briefly.

"But, my dear James—" said Clarence Cuffy, in tones of pained surprise.

"Busy!" explained Jimmy. "But—" "Cut!"

"I trust, my dear James, that you are not too busy to observe the rules of politeness that are really obligatory upon all really nice boys."

Jimmy Silver grinned; he could not help it. It was difficult to listen to any of Clarence Cuffy's remarks at any time without grinning.

Cuffy was a serious fellow—very serious. But the effect he generally had on other Rookwood fellows was the reverse of serious.

It was a half-holiday at Rookwood; but Jimmy Silver, instead of enjoying the fine summer's afternoon out of doors, was sitting at his desk in the Fourth Form room.

He had a detention task before him which Mr. Dalton had calculated would keep him nicely occupied for an hour.

It was not often that Jimmy was detained by his Form master on a half-holiday. But such things will happen at times.

Jimmy had punched Cyril Peele's nose. His fixed belief was that the more Peele's nose was punched the better it was for Peele. Peele was a fellow who simply asked to have his nose punched. Jimmy had punched it, not wisely, but too well. Hence his present detention.

It was warm that afternoon, and the Form-room was stuffy. And it was very solitary.

Jimmy Silver would have been glad of any company—even Cuffy's. Only he had to get his task done. Conversation interrupted Latin translation.

So Jimmy pointed to the door with his pen.

He had three pages of translation to do, and of the three, he had completed two. He was at work on the third. He was in hopes of getting finished and going down to Coombe time to meet his chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, there.

But Clarence Cuffy was not to be denied. His serious, amiable face loomed benignly at the captain of the Fourth as he stood before Jimmy's desk.

"Hook it, old man!" said Jimmy. "I've really got to get through. The sooner I'm done the sooner I shall be finished—see?"

"Certainly, my dear James. I should be very glad to assist you, but being on the Modern side, I do not take Latin, so probably my assistance would not be useful to you."

"Probably not. Good-bye!"

"But dear Thomas—"

"Blow dear Thomas! Did Tommy Dodd send you here?" asked Jimmy.

"He suggested that I should come in and cheer you up with a little bright and interesting conversation, my dear James!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Dear Thomas was just going out for a walk with Cook and Doyle," went on Cuffy. "I joined them, intending to take a walk with them this pleasant afternoon. Then dear Thomas told me that you were detained, and made the suggestion I have already mentioned. Do you not think, my dear James, that it was very, very kind and thoughtful of Thomas?"

Jimmy Silver looked at Cuffy quite curiously.

He quite understood that Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern Fourth, going off on some excursion for the afternoon, did not want to be bothered with the duffer of Rookwood.

He understood, too, that Tommy Dodd, being a relative of Cuffy's, and his guide, philosopher, and friend at Rookwood, had not cared to tell Cuffy so.

Cuffy was a good fellow, and good actions came easily to him. As he often remarked, his good father and his kind aunt had always impressed upon him to be kind and considerate to others; and Cuffy did his simple best to live up to their instructions.

So he had jumped at Tommy Dodd's suggestion, and here he was, prepared to cheer up Jimmy Silver in his detention—what time Tommy Dodd & Co. rambled forth untroubled by Cuffy.

Undoubtedly Cuffy was an innocent and unsuspecting youth. He never dreamed that Tommy Dodd had landed him on Jimmy Silver in order to escape his uplifting company and his serious and solemn conversation.

Tommy Dodd was a dutiful fellow, and he stood Cuffy manfully, as a rule. But he could not stand him always.

Cuffy was good—very, very good. But other attractive qualities he rather lacked. And sometimes his friends, like the fallen prince of darkness in Milton, though in a different sense, "felt how awful goodness is."

Clarence Cuffy seated himself on Jimmy's desk, regarding the Classical junior with an amiable smile.

There was generally warfare between Classical and Modern juniors at Rookwood. But that made no difference to the good Cuffy. He was prepared to bore Classics as well as Moderns.

"Will you be very long now, James?" he asked.

"Not if you clear and leave me to get finished!"

"My dear James—"

"Shut up, old chap, anyhow."

"Do you find, my dear James, that my conversation has a deterrent effect upon your labours?"

"Oh, my hat! Yes, just a few!"

"Then I will preserve silence, my dear James, which the proverb justly remarks is golden."

"Do!" granted Jimmy.

He jabbed his pen into the inkpot in his desk, and restarted his task after the interval, so to speak. The pen scratched faintly.

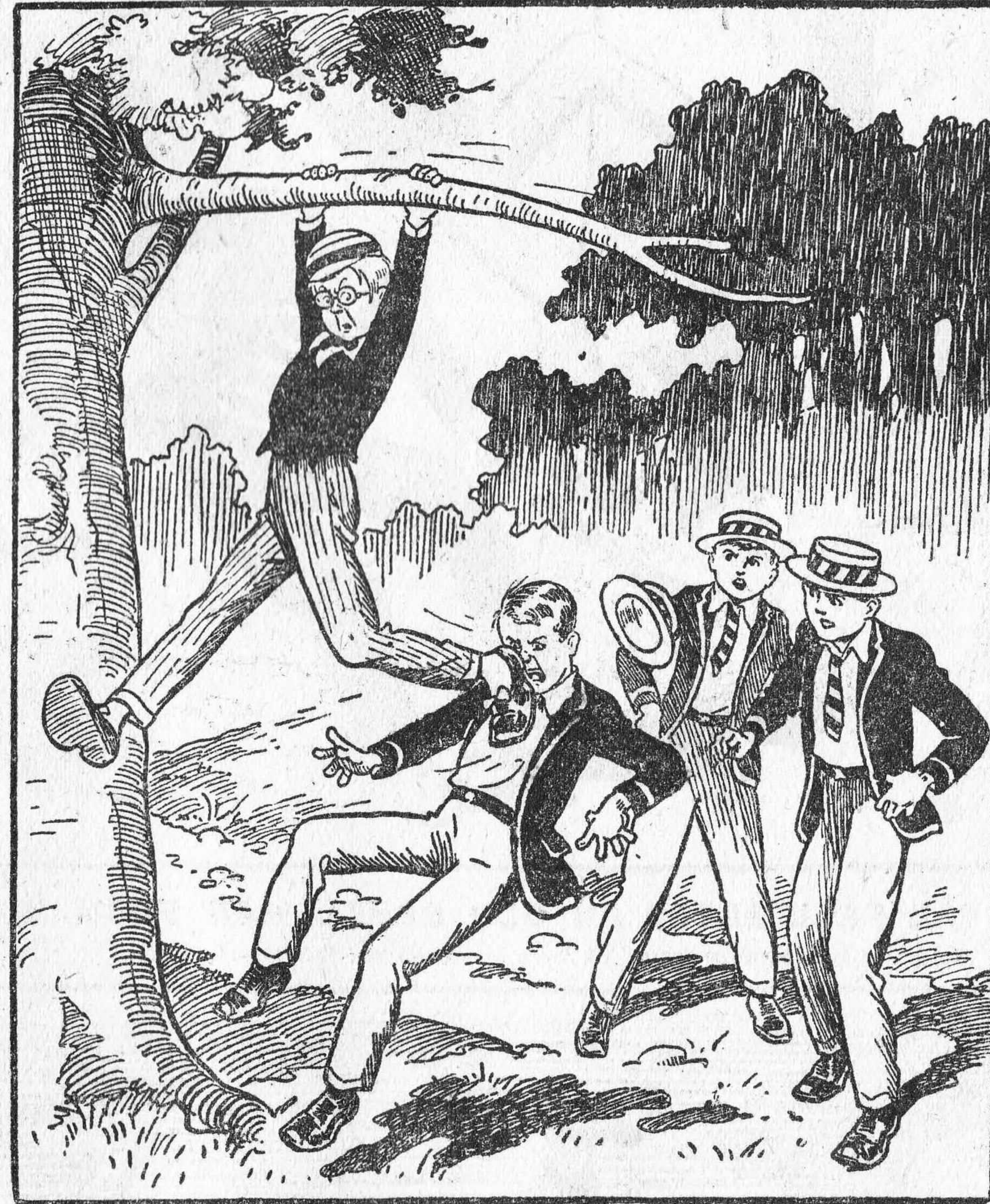
"Oh dear, the ink's out, of course!" growled Jimmy irritably. "It never rains but it pours."

Cuffy brightened up at once.

"Perhaps I can assist you, my dear

James. If there is a further supply of that necessary fluid to be procured—"

"Cut it short, for goodness' sake!" said Jimmy Silver. "There's a big bottle of ink in the corner cupboard."



## CUFFY AND THE BAGSHOT "BOUNDERS"!

Cuffy clung to the branch of the tree, and struggled to release his legs from Pankley's grasp. One of his feet jerked free, and the next moment the heel of his boot was planted on Pankley's nose. "Oh!" roared Pankley. "Ow! Wow! Whoooooop!" The Bagshot fellow let go Cuffy's other foot and staggered back, groaning.

You can dish it out if you like. But don't jaw, old man!"

Cuffy slid off the desk, and trotted away to the Form-room cupboard. He brought out the big bottle of ink.

Jimmy was deep in Latin again.

Cuffy uncorked the bottle.

"Shall I replenish the inkwell, James?"

"Oh! Eh? What? Yes! Shut up!"

"Certainly, my dear James!"

Cuffy started to fill the inkwell. It was an unfortunate circumstance that, though Cuffy's intentions were invariably good, his performances seldom or never equalled his intentions. That was a misfortune that had always pursued Clarence Cuffy.

It pursued him on the present occasion, and indeed overtook him.

His intention was to fill the inkwell in order to be of assistance to dear James. His performance was quite different. Perhaps he jerked the bottle a little too hastily. Perhaps his eye deceived him. Perhaps he was simply clumsy. Whatever the reason, the result was disastrous. A stream of ink shot from the bottle—not into the inkwell. It shot across the desk—across the two finished

pages of Jimmy Silver's task—across the unfinished third page—and over Jimmy Silver's waistcoat and knees.

There was a roar from Jimmy Silver that might have been heard on the other side of Big Quad.

"Oh, my goodness!" exclaimed Cuffy, in dismay.

He was so dismayed that he stood agape with the ink still streaming from the big bottle.

It flooded the desk, it flooded Jimmy Silver's books and papers, it splattered over Cuffy's own trousers.

"You silly ass!"

"Oh! I—I— Oh dear! I—"

Jimmy Silver leaped to his feet.

He dodged round the desk at Cuffy, with wild and whirling wrath in his crimson face.

Perhaps it was ungrateful. Cuffy's intentions were kind and benevolent. But it was, perhaps, not unnatural that Jimmy should be thinking at that moment more of his performances than of his intentions.

He grasped Cuffy by the back of the neck.

"Yaroooh! My dear James—

Ow! Ooooooh!" spluttered Cuffy, as his bewildered face was mopped down on the desk into the streaming ink.

"There—" gasped Jimmy.

"Mmmmmmmmm!"

"You born idiot—"

"Ooooooh!"

"Now cut!"

"Groogh! My dear James—"

He retired; and Jimmy Silver was left to his detention task, uncheered by the company and conversation of the duffer of Rookwood.

## The 2nd Chapter.

### Treed!

"Oh, my goodness!"  
Cuffy of the Modern Fourth seemed really to be in the wars that afternoon.

Having failed in his benevolent intentions towards Jimmy Silver, Cuffy had started out from the school to look for Tommy Dodd. Cuffy had his own peculiar manners and customs, which were not the manners and customs of any other Rookwood fellow; Clarence was, in fact, in a class by himself. But he was a gregarious youth. He delighted in bestowing his conversation on other fellows—who never shared the delight.

So he looked for Tommy Dodd, not doubting for a moment that dear Thomas would be very, very glad to see him.

He had a vague idea that the three Tommies of the Modern Fourth had gone down to Coombe. So Cuffy started towards the village, taking the footpath through Coombe Woods as a short cut. Then his unmerited misfortunes recommenced.

Three fellows in Bagshot caps appeared on the footpath, coming towards him.

Pankley, Putter, and Price, of Bagshot School, were deep in talk as they came along, and did not observe Cuffy. But Cuffy observed them while they were still at a distance.

He halted in dismay.

Only too well did Cuffy know that if he encountered the heroes of Bagshot on that solitary path in the heart of the wood, he was booked for a ragging. Rookwooders and Bagshot fellows generally ragged when they met—and Cuffy was fair game for Pankley & Co. Certainly, they would not have hurt him. But undoubtedly they would have considered themselves entitled to derive a little entertainment from him. Cuffy remembered with dismay an occasion when they had fallen upon him and coloured his face with crayons, and paraded him in that startling state along the High Street of Coombe, much to the astonishment of the natives.

Cuffy was by no means a funk, but he was not a fighting-man. And the heaviest fighting-man in the Lower School at Rookwood could not have handled the three Bagshot fellows. So Cuffy's first thought was to avoid the encounter.

He decided upon retreat into the woods, leaving the footpath to the Bagshot trio.

He started at a run.

Being Cuffy, he was bound to catch his foot in a trailing root at the second or third step, and to come down with a loud bump.

"Oh!" howled Cuffy as he landed.

"Hallo! Rookwood cad!" exclaimed Pankley, glancing along the path. "Bag him!"

The three came on at a run, grinning. Pankley & Co. were playful youths, always ready for a rag.

Cuffy scrambled up.

It was no use to run now—he was seen. He stared at the Bagshot trio, and—his placid mind working with unaccustomed swiftness, as the peril came nearer—he made a jump for the nearest tree and clambered up.

Up went Cuffy, but he was not a good climber. There were few things that Cuffy did well with his hands or his feet—or, indeed, with any part of him.

He had grasped a branch that stretched over the footpath, to pull himself higher, but his feet were well within reach as the three juniors arrived under the tree.

Pankley promptly grasped his ankles.

"Got him!"

"Ow!"

"Come down!" grinned Pankley.

Cuffy clung to the branch. He blinked down round his shoulder at the grinning Pankley.

"My dear fellow—ow! I cannot descend while you maintain that hold upon my extremities," he gasped. "If I release my grasp upon this branch—ow!—I shall indubitably fall head first, my dear fellow, and the result will be a concussion with the earth that may have a serious effect upon my cranium."

"Hear him!" ejaculated Price.

"Has that chap swallowed a dictionary?" inquired Putter.

"That's all right, Cuffy," said Pankley. "There's nothing in your head to be damaged."

"My dear fellow—Ow!"  
"Come down!"  
"Oh, my goodness!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Cuffy clung to the branch and struggled to release his legs. One of his feet jerked free, and the next moment the heel of his boot was planted on Pankley's nose.

It was quite unintentional on Cuffy's part. Not for worlds would he have kicked Pankley's nose. He would have regarded such an action as very, very unkind.

Nevertheless, it was upon Pankley's nose that his swinging boot landed, with a crash that made Pankley yell like a Red Indian on the warpath.

Pankley let go of Cuffy's other foot and staggered back, clasping both hands to his injured nose. Between his fingers oozed a stream of crimson.

Cuffy was right up in the tree the next moment. He sat on the branch and blinked down at the three Bagshot fellows.

"Oh!" roared Pankley. "Ow! Wow! Whooooooop!"

"Have I hurt you?" gasped Cuffy. "Whooooooooooop!"

"My dear fellow, I regret very much—very, very much—"

Pankley glared up at Cuffy. "Come down and be slaughtered!" he roared.

Cuffy was undoubtedly a duffer. But he was not quite duffer enough to obey that command.

"I am very, very sorry to have to refuse to accede to your request, Pankley," he said gently. "But in the circumstances I deem it more judicious to remain where I am."

Undoubtedly it was more judicious of Cuffy to remain where he was. Cecil Pankley was foaming with wrath.

His nose streamed crimson. He dabbed at it with his handkerchief and glared up at Cuffy like a Hun.

"Will you come down?" he bawled. "The answer, my dear fellow, is in the negative," said Cuffy, blinking down at him.

"Then I'll jolly well fetch you down!"

"Oh, let him alone, old chap!" said Price. "Let's get on."

"I'm going to smash him!" roared Pankley.

"Then buck up!"

Pankley grasped the gnarled trunk of the tree to climb. He wanted vengeance for his damaged nose, and he wanted it badly.

Clarence Cuffy eyed him with alarm.

He was not a bright youth, but he was bright enough to realise that it would be very bad for him to let Cecil Pankley get within hitting distance.

"Pray go back, my dear Pankley," he said mildly.

"Just wait a minute!" gasped Pankley.

"I urge you, my dear fellow—"

Pankley came on. Cuffy, with a sigh, made up his mind that there was nothing for it but hostility.

Hanging on to the bough with his hands, he trampled on Pankley's head with both feet.

"Yaroooooh!"

Pankley lost his hold on the trunk and went rolling back into the grass. He sat up there, looking quite dazed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Putter and Price.

"Ow! What are you cackling at, you silly owls?" gasped Pankley.

"Ow! My napper! Cuffy, I'll—I'll pulverise you! I'll spifficate you! I—I—I'll make shavings of you! Ow!"

"Did I not urge you to retire, my dear Pankley?" said Cuffy. "Very, very much against my will, I shall be compelled to kick you again if you attempt to ascend this tree!"

Pankley picked himself up, rubbing his head. Putter and Price were grinning, but Pankley did not feel inclined to grin.

For some minutes Pankley stared up at Clarence Cuffy. He was not disposed to climb the tree again—he did not want another kick and another fall. He shook his fist at Cuffy.

"Will you come down, you Rookwood rotter?" he demanded.

"Certainly not, my dear fellow."

"Then I'll jolly well wait for you!"

"Look here, we're not hanging about here all the afternoon, Pankley!" exclaimed Price warmly.

"Dry up, you ass!"

Pankley made a sign to his comrades, unseen by Cuffy. They grinned and nodded.

"Stay there as long as you like, Cuffy," said Pankley. "When you come down look out for squalls! We'll take a rest in the thicket, you chaps."

The three Bagshot juniors plunged

through the thicket and disappeared from Cuffy's gaze.

In the cover of the trees and thickets they trod softly away unseen by Cuffy. That hapless youth, under the impression that the trio were resting close at hand waiting for him to come down, remained in the tree.

Half an hour later Pankley & Co. were sauntering in at the gates of Bagshot School, grinning and wondering how long Clarence Cuffy would remain "treed" in Coombe Wood.

### The 3rd Chapter. Robbery Under Arms!

Mr. Henry Hooker, generally known in his own select circle as 'Arry 'Ooker, threw himself into the grass at the foot of an ancient tree and leaned his tired head against the gnarled trunk. His worldly possessions, wrapped in a ragged spotted handkerchief, were laid in the grass beside him, and across the knees of his shabby trousers he dropped a knobby stick.

Henry Hooker was out of work. He had been out of work for over forty years. He never looked for work, because a man who looked for work was always in some danger of finding it. Casual-wards in every county knew Henry Hooker; prison

In that lonely spot Mr. Hooker was about the last person in the wide world whom Cuffy would have desired to meet. Cuffy was not a rich fellow, but he had a watch and chain and a few shillings in his pockets. One look at Mr. Hooker's harsh, savage face was enough to show that had Cuffy dropped within his reach there would have been a redistribution of wealth on the spot, perhaps accompanied by a clump from the knobby stick.

This was worse than Pankley & Co. Very sagely, Cuffy sat tight in the foliage, scarcely breathing, only anxious for the tramp to go.

But the tramp showed no sign of going.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Hooker had settled down in that secluded spot to rest till dark. He was fatigued, with the fatigue of a man who had not worked for forty years. And he had nothing to do till dark—his designs on the chickens at Coombe Farm could not be carried out in the daylight.

Half an hour passed very comfortably to Mr. Hooker and very slowly indeed to Clarence Cuffy.

Then there was a footstep on the path.

Both Cuffy and the tramp started and looked. Cuffy hoped that it

who stood blocking the narrow footpath, cudgel in hand. The old gentleman was a few paces away. Cuffy realised, with horror, that he was looking on at a robbery—which was evidently going to be a robbery with violence, for the old gentleman was bent on resistance.

Cuffy trembled with excitement and terror mingled.

He knew that he ought to chip in. He felt that Jimmy Silver or Arthur Edward Lovell, or dear Thomas, would have jumped down to help the old gentleman, without a second thought. But poor Cuffy also knew that he was useless in a fight—and the tramp was big, and burly, and savage, and armed with a cudgel. One blow was enough to knock out the old gentleman—another to knock out Cuffy.

"Oh, my goodness!" breathed Cuffy, in horror.

Mr. Hooker raised the stick again. "Nuff said!" he growled. "And it over, old 'un, or I'll brain you!"

"Scoundrel!"

The tramp made a threatening step forward. The old gentleman, apparently on the principle that attack was the best method of defence, rushed at him and smote with the umbrella.

Henry Hooker yelled as he received the blow across his brutal face. With

"Oh, my goodness!" stuttered Cuffy.

The tramp did not move. It dawned upon Cuffy that the man was stunned. Cuffy was not a heavy-weight; but he had come down on Mr. Hooker's head like a thunderbolt. The tramp's head had crashed on the ground as he went down, under Cuffy, and the concussion had been terrific. Mr. Hooker was quite insensible, and likely to remain so for a long time.

Cuffy realised that the danger was over.

The old gentleman took his arm, and helped him to his feet. Cuffy stood unsteadily, blinking at him.

"My dear lad! Are you hurt?" exclaimed the old gentleman anxiously.

"Ow! Nunno! I—I think not!" gasped Cuffy. "I—I think I have a bruise or two! Ow!"

"That wretch could not have known you were in the tree," said the old gentleman. "I had no suspicion of it. You acted with wonderful presence of mind, my dear boy."

"D-d-d-did I?" gasped Cuffy.

"Wonderful! By jumping down on the man's head, you did the only thing possible in the circumstances—it showed amazing presence of mind, and wonderful courage," exclaimed the old gentleman admiringly.

"You might have been severely hurt—you might even have broken a limb. You might not have succeeded in putting the man out of action as you did—and in that case he would certainly have injured you terribly."

Cuffy shuddered.

The old gentleman turned from him, and picked up the tramp's cudgel. Then he looked at the man closely.

"He is quite stunned," he said. "His head seems to have struck the ground with great force. Possibly he will have concussion of the brain."

"Oh dear!"

"He does not deserve any sympathy, my dear boy. I must take measures at once to have him taken in charge by the police, before he can recover and escape. Will you remain and watch him while I go to the village for the police?"

"Oh, yes!" gasped Cuffy. He glanced uneasily at the tramp. Even in a state of unconsciousness, he did not like Mr. Hooker's looks. "I—I say, I've got to get back to Rookwood, though."

"You belong to Rookwood School?"

"Ow! Yes! I'm in the Fourth," gasped Cuffy. "I—I—"

"You are keeping up the grand old traditions of your school, my boy, by this display of courage and of wonderful presence of mind in the hour of danger. Take this stick, and keep watch on the man till I return with a constable. If he should show signs of recovering, do not hesitate to strike him on the head."

"Oh, yes! All right!"

The old gentleman pushed the cudgel into Cuffy's hand, and hurried away along the footpath, the way he had come.

Cuffy blinked after him, and then blinked at the tramp.

In a few moments the old gentleman was out of sight, hurrying back to Coombe to fetch the village policeman.

"Oh, my goodness!" murmured Cuffy.

He eyed Mr. Hooker doubtfully, with increasing dismay. It was all very well to watch the man while he was insensible. Cuffy was equal to that. But suppose he came to his senses?

Cuffy could not see himself stunning the man with the cudgel if he opened his eyes—though that was certainly the only way to save himself from a savage attack. Indeed, he was quite sure that if the tramp moved so much as an eyelash, he would take to his heels the same instant.

Cuffy waited and watched, in a state of great trepidation.

His trepidation grew with every passing moment. He desired to do as the old gentleman asked him. But his desire to get away from the neighbourhood of Mr. Hooker was stronger.

He hesitated long. What would the old gentleman think of him, if he deserted his post? After all, perhaps the tramp would not recover. But the village policeman could not possibly arrive for another half-hour at least—and in that time—

There was a movement from the insensible man stretched in the grass. Mr. Hooker shivered and moaned faintly.

"Oh, my goodness!" Cuffy shivered, too. His eyes were fixed on the tramp.

(Continued overleaf.)



**NOT A HERO!** No sooner did the tramp show signs of regaining consciousness than Clarence Cuffy, who had been left to guard the ruffian, bolted along the footpath, running for his life like a startled hare!

officials by the score had an acquaintance with him. No farmer's chickens were safe when Mr. Hooker was in the offing. Even a cottager's washing hanging on the line was not secure from Mr. Hooker's attentions. He subsisted precariously as a snatcher-up of unconsidered trifles. Sometimes, in favourable circumstances, on a lonely footpath or in a dark lane, Mr. Hooker developed from a sneak-thief into a footpad. Sometimes, as was natural in a gentleman who followed such a precarious career, Mr. Hooker was down on his luck. This was the case with Mr. Hooker now. Still thirsty, he had been kicked out of the Bird-in-Hand, at Coombe. In a state of stony impetuosity, Mr. Hooker tramped into the wood, to rest and sleep in the shade of the trees, revolving in his mind certain schemes connected with the chicken-coops at Coombe Farm, to be carried out after sunset.

Mr. Hooker never thought of looking up into the thick branches of the tree under which he laid down to rest. Had he done so he might have seen a startled face peering down at him from the foliage.

Clarence Cuffy very nearly ejaculated "My goodness!" But, fortunately, he restrained that ejaculation.

For a whole hour Cuffy remained treed, under the mistaken impression that Pankley & Co. were waiting and watching for him in the thickets.

It was dawning upon Cuffy at long last that he was not watched—that the Bagshot Bounders were gone. He was considering whether it was advisable to descend from his perch and proceed to look for dear Thomas, when Henry Hooker arrived.

With great prudence, Cuffy decided to remain where he was.

might be dear Thomas and his friends, or Lovell & Co. returning to Rookwood. But it was not.

A little old gentleman came along the path.

He was a well-dressed gentleman. The sunlight, filtering through the branches, gleamed on his silk hat and his gold tie-pin and the gold rims of his spectacles.

Mr. Hooker sat up and took notice. His evil eyes gleamed and his horny hand closed on his cudgel.

He had been down on his luck for days. Farmers and farmers' dogs had treated him cruelly. And here, on a lonely footpath, was a prosperous old gentleman, fairly walking into his hands. Cudgel in hand, Mr. Hooker jumped to his feet and jumped out into the middle of the footpath. The old gentleman came to a sudden, startled halt.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "And it over!" said Mr. Hooker. "What? What?"

"And it over—your watch and your blooming pin and what you've got in your pockets—and sharp!" said Henry Hooker, flourishing the cudgel. "I don't want to 'ave to 'urt you."

"You scoundrel!"

The old gentleman started back, his eyes gleaming behind his spectacles. Evidently he was a plucky old gentleman. He grasped his umbrella as a weapon of defence.

"You 'ear me, old 'un—"

"Stand back, you rascal! I will have you locked up for this!" exclaimed the old gentleman indignantly. "Stand back!"

From the big branch overhead Clarence Cuffy stared down with horrified eyes.

He was just over the burly tramp,

a savage exclamation he aimed a blow with his cudgel at the old gentleman's head.

At the same moment Clarence Cuffy, quite losing his presence of mind in his horror and dismay, lost also his hold on the branch, and came hurtling down.

Crash!

There was a howl from Clarence Cuffy as he struck—not the earth, but the head of the tramp standing under the trees. There was a muffled gasp from Mr. Hooker as he collapsed under Cuffy.

### The 4th Chapter. Unheroic!

Clarence Cuffy rolled dizzily in the grass.

He yelled as he rolled.

He was almost out of his wits with panic, expecting every instant to feel the cudgel of the tramp crashing on him.

"Bless my soul! What! What!" It was the old gentleman's voice. "Upon my word! What! What!"

"Oh, my goodness!" Cuffy sat up dazedly.

The whole wood was whirling round his dazed eyes. But he became conscious that the old gentleman was bending over him, and that the tramp lay extended in the grass, motionless. Why the man was lying there, with his cudgel still in his hand, without movement, was a baffling mystery to Cuffy. But there he was.

"My dear boy! My brave lad! How can I thank you?"

"Eh?"

"You have saved me from robbery—perhaps saved my life! Brave boy! How can I reward you?"



# A Hero By Accident!

By Owen Conquest.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Glory for Rookwood," grinned Mornington. "A Rookwood chap is wanted—badly wanted."

"Not by the police?" grinned Lovell.

"Ha, ha! No. By a giddy old baronet, now laid up on his jolly old beam-ends from shock to the system. Ever heard of Sir Theophilus Pratt?"

"Never," said Jimmy Silver. "I should remember a name like that, I think. You don't hear it every day."

"Well, that's the Johnny. A Rookwood chap did him no end of a good turn yesterday, in Coombe Wood, and he wants to find the chap," said Mornington. "There's a notice up in Hall, in the Head's fist. Wasn't you, Jimmy?"

"No," said Jimmy. "I was detained yesterday afternoon, and I had to stay in till about six owing to that ass Cuffy mopping ink over my papers. I say, let's go and see this

"Sir Theophilus Pratt is an old gentleman who has taken Coombe Lodge," answered Bulkeley. "He was attacked in the wood yesterday afternoon by a hefty tramp. A Rookwood chap helped him through."

"Good old Rookwood!" said Jimmy Silver. "Who was it, Bulkeley?" Bulkeley pointed to the notice.

"That's not known yet. The kid mentioned to Sir Theophilus that he belonged to the Fourth Form at Rookwood, and that's all the old gent knows. He left the kid to look after the tramp, who was stunned—it seems that the Rookwood kid stunned him somehow—but when he came back with a bobby, the tramp and the kid were both gone. The tramp's not been arrested, after all—he got clear. But it seems that Sir Theophilus would have been badly damaged if the kid hadn't butted in and helped him, so he wants to know who it was."

"Can't he come here and pick him out?" asked Lovell.

"He's laid up—excitement and shock, and the exertion of running for the bobby in a hot sun," explained Bulkeley. "He's had to take to his bed at Coombe Lodge. But I suppose the kid will come forward when he sees this notice up."

"Luck for somebody," said Peele of the Fourth. "If the old codger's got Coombe Lodge he will be rich. It may mean a fiver or a new bike for the lucky man."

"Your paw!" snapped Bulkeley, letting his ashplant slip from under his arm into his hand.

Whack!

"Oh!" roared Tubby Muffin.

Bulkeley walked away, leaving Reginald Muffin rubbing his fat hand and the rest of the juniors roaring with laughter.

Jimmy Silver & Co. strolled away. They were rather interested in the Rookwood hero, as yet unknown; but certainly they were not inclined to credit Tubby Muffin's rather hurried claim to the distinction.

"I wonder who it was, though," said Lovell. "Might have been one of us—only it wasn't! Of course, it was a Classical chap. A Modern cad wouldn't have been able to do it."

"Of course," assented Newcome.

"Queer that we never heard of it before, though," said Lovell. "The fellow might have told somebody about it. We ought to have heard it along the studies last evening."

"But we didn't," remarked Jimmy Silver. "That looks as if it wasn't a Classical chap."

"Oh, rot! Besides, Tommy Dodd doesn't know who it was, so it wasn't talked of on the Modern side, either," said Lovell. "What the thump was the fellow keeping it dark for, I wonder?"

"Modesty, perhaps," said Jimmy with a smile. "He didn't feel disposed to talk about his heroic stunts."

"Bosh!"

"Anyhow, he will come forward

the chap shouldn't own up and take the credit, so far as I can see."

"Perhaps it wasn't a Rookwood chap, after all?" suggested Raby. "The old gent may have been mistaken, especially as he doesn't seem to have asked the kid his name."

"Possibly. Anyhow, nobody's put in a claim so far."

Jimmy Silver sat down to tea in the end study with his chums. Over tea they discussed the strange affair, which was being discussed, by this time, in nearly every study at Rookwood. Why the fellow had not come forward, to take the glory that was his due, was a mystery, if the gallant rescuer had really been a Rookwood fellow at all. And it was difficult to suppose that the old baronet had been mistaken on that point, especially as he had specified that the fellow was a member of the Fourth Form.

But strange as it was—puzzling as it was—nobody came forward to own up, and when Rookwood School turned in that night the unknown rescuer was still unknown.

## The 6th Chapter. Mysterious!

Clarence Cuffy was worried. It was but seldom that Cuffy was worried. Generally his harmless career slid on its placid way untroubled and calm. Even when his affectionate relation, Tommy Dodd, kicked him for his own good, Cuffy returned to placidity as soon as the ache had departed.

But now Cuffy was worried—mistakenly worried. The Head's notice was the cause of it all.

Cuffy had helped the old gentleman in the wood. He had helped him, as he knew only too well, inadvertently, by falling off the branch on the tramp's head. So far from having played the hero, he had fled incontinently at the first sign of returning consciousness on Mr. Hooker's part.

The old baronet's mistake had been a natural one. But Cuffy, of course, knew that it was a mistake. And Cuffy would never have dreamed of claiming credit, or anything else, that was not justly his.

Certainly he would have liked to shine as a hero in the eyes of all Rookwood. But he would have repudiated with scorn the bare idea of shining on false pretences.

He had not jumped heroically to the rescue as Sir Theophilus supposed. He had fallen from the branch in a panic.

Cuffy felt greatly distressed. He hadn't a very keen sense of the ridiculous. But even Cuffy realised that if he came forward and explained the facts there would be one howl of laughter from one end of Rookwood to the other.

Cuffy did not like the idea. He could not come forward as a hero, and he objected strongly to coming forward as an object of ridicule.

The only alternative was silence. Undoubtedly it was a case where, whether speech was silver or not, silence was golden.

So Cuffy said no word—not even to his relative Tommy Dodd. But he felt quite worried as he listened to the comments of the Rookwood fellows, and their unending surmises as to the identity of the unknown hero.

The unknown hero was known to Cuffy, only Cuffy unfortunately knew also that he wasn't a hero.

On Friday the secret was still a secret. Cuffy hoped that the matter would die away of its own accord. But there was not the slightest possibility of that.

Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, had paid a visit to Coombe Lodge, where the old baronet was laid up. It leaked out, after his return, that the grateful old gentleman's design was to present a magnificent gold watch, with a suitable inscription, to the Rookwooder who had saved him from the tramp.

After that there was no possibility whatever of the excitement dying away.

The fellow had to be found, his unaccountable modesty had to be overcome. He had to stand forward in Big Hall for a little speech to be made, followed by a presentation and loud cheers.

But who was it?

As soon as he had heard of the gold watch Reginald Muffin decided that he was the man, having by that time forgotten the effect of Bulkeley's ashplant. But Tubby's claim only met with laughter in the Fourth Form, Classical and Modern.

(Continued on page 64.)

## BOYS' FRIEND FAVOURITES!

### CLARENCE CUFFY OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.



Without doubt Clarence Cuffy of the Modern Fourth Form at Rookwood stands out head and shoulders above any other fellow in the school. And the chief reason for this can be attributed to the fact that Clarence is "soft," emphatically so.

The Duffer of Rookwood, as Cuffy is called by all his schoolfellows, is fifteen years and five months of age, and he "digs" in Study No. 1 in

Mr. Manders' House. Gentle in ways, meek and mild in the extreme, it is only natural that Cuffy should be a victim to a great deal of ragging and leg-pulling, which harmless fun is so much enjoyed by the light-hearted boys at the school. Still, no one can take a mean advantage of Cuffy's weaknesses, for he is ably championed by Tommy Dodd, the leader of the Modern Fourth, who is a distant relation of Clarence's.

Although a hopeless duffer at most things, Clarence Cuffy is very learned; he is, in fact, one of the most brilliant scholars in his Form. And on account of the big words that he has the knack of rolling out when he is holding a conversation, fellows have jokingly referred to him as a walking dictionary.

To think of Cuffy as a great sportsman would be absurd. As a matter of fact, he doesn't know the difference between a goal scored at football and a boundary scored at cricket. Still, Cuffy has been seen on Little Side this

season in flannels. It was on the occasion of his father's visit to the school, when Mr. Cuffy very much wanted to see his son playing cricket. Cuffy turned out for the Modern Fourth against the Classicals, and, amazing though it may seem, he was instrumental in winning the game for his House. He had, up to a point, made a hopeless duffer of himself, but then had come a catch when the Classical last wicket pair seemed certain of pulling the game out of the fire, and by a fluke Cuffy held on to the ball! But that game Tommy Dodd decided should be the last in which Cuffy honoured the Modern side with his presence. As the leader of the Modern Fourth knows well enough, flukes such as the winning catch Cuffy made do not often happen, and besides, Tommy Dodd, is firmly convinced that his relative could not even be included among the fifth-raters at cricket in the school.

Another weakness of Cuffy's is that he suffers from nerves. Indeed, it can almost be said of him that he is afraid of his own shadow. However, in spite of the many deficiencies in his character, Cuffy is a boy whose ideals are of the highest, and that is certainly something very much to his credit.

(J. R. Smith, the captain of St. Katie's School, is the BOYS' FRIEND Favourite for next Monday. Look out for it!)

## The 5th Chapter. Wanted, the Hero!

"Was it you, Jimmy?" Reginald Muffin of the Classical Fourth asked that question.

It was the following day, and the Fistical Four, with their bats under their arms, were going down to cricket practice, when the fat Classical stopped them with his question.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared inquiringly at Muffin.

"Was what me, fathead?" asked Jimmy. "Is anything up?"

"Anything up?" Tubby Muffin grinned. "Haven't you seen the notice on the board—in the Head's fist?"

"Oh, my hat! Bounds drawn in?" asked Raby.

"Nothing about bounds. It's about Sir Theophilus Pratt."

"Sir Which What?" exclaimed Newcome.

"Sir Theophilus Pratt," said Tubby Muffin. "I thought perhaps it was you, Jimmy."

"You thought perhaps I was Sir Theophilus Pratt?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, wondering whether Tubby was wandering in his mind.

"No, you ass! I thought perhaps it was you who rescued him."

"Who the thump is he, and what does he matter, anyhow?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell.

"You see—" began Tubby Muffin. He was interrupted by Valentine Mornington of the Fourth, who came up with Erroll.

"One of you fellows?" asked Morny.

"Who—which—what—how?" demanded Jimmy Silver, quite perplexed. "Has something happened?"

notice, you chaps—it sounds interesting."

The chums of the Fourth turned back to the House; and they found a good many juniors gathered before the official notice-board. There was a new paper on the board, in the well-known handwriting of Dr. Chisholm, and it was the centre of attraction now. Generally, notices in the headmaster's "fist" did not thrill the juniors very much. But this was a very unusual paper. It ran:

"The Fourth Form boy who so gallantly rendered assistance to Sir Theophilus Pratt on Wednesday afternoon in Coombe Wood is requested to make himself known at once."

"H. CHISHOLM,  
Headmaster."

"A Fourth Form chap, you know," said Flynn of the Classical Fourth. "I wonder what he did."

"Goodness knows!" said Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth. "It says 'gallant assistance,' so I suppose it was something plucky. That means that it must have been a Modern chap."

"What utter rot!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "It must have been a Classical, that stands to reason."

"You silly Classical ass—"

"You burbling Modern duffer—"

"But what the thump happened?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "I say, Bulkeley, do you know anything about this?"

Bulkeley of the Sixth had stopped to look at the paper. He nodded and smiled, and the juniors surrounded him eagerly.

"Who's the Pratt-bird?" asked Raby.



# A Hero By Accident!

By Owen Conquest.

"Truth!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yes, and Dicky Dalton knows you're straight, so he will take your word all right. I'd rather have you chaps for witnesses than anybody else," said Tubby. "Well, then, I bag the gold watch, and sell it, and whack it out with you chaps. What do you think of that? Nothing wrong in that, I hope."

The Fistical Four gazed at Tubby Muffin.

Apparently the obtuseness of the fat Tubby was of such an unexampled depth and solidity that he really did not see anything wrong in his amazing scheme.

Jimmy Silver & Co. felt it their bounden duty to open his eyes, and strive at least to make him realise that wrong was wrong.

They rose to their feet and collared Tubby Muffin. They swept him off his feet, and bumped him on the study carpet. The roar of Tubby Muffin rang as far as the staircase.

"Whoop!"

"Give him another."

Bump!

"Yaroooh! Ow! Help!" yelled Muffin.

"Now, you fat villain!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-woop!"

Valentine Mornington looked into the end study.

"What a thumpin' row! You fellows killin' a pig in here?" he asked.

"No; only bumping one on the carpet," answered Jimmy Silver, laughing. "Tubby's just asked us to be witnesses to what he didn't do in the wood on Wednesday—"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mornington. "Tubby, you fat duffer, you'd better cut that out—the real man's going to be found."

"How's that?" asked Raby.

"Head's goin' to question the Fourth—all the Form to roll up into the Form-room at six," answered Mornington. "Just had it from Dicky Dalton."

"Oh! Now we sha'n't be long," said Lovell.

There was much keenness among the Fourth-Formers when they gathered in their Form-room at six o'clock. Every member of the Fourth Form was there, Classical and Modern. Mr. Dalton called the roll of the Form, and every fellow answered to his name. Clarence Cuffy blushed self-consciously as he answered; but nobody noticed Cuffy. Nobody ever was likely to notice Cuffy—and certainly not likely to associate him with the idea of heroic stunts.

The Head entered the Form-room.

Dr. Chisholm looked a little severe. He was puzzled, and not pleased, by the failure of his notice to elicit the identity of the wanted hero. Now he was going to put the Form through it personally.

"Are all the boys present, Mr. Dalton?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Very good." The Head eyed the breathless Fourth Form. "My boys! One member of this Form appears to have done a very brave and generous thing on Wednesday afternoon. Apparently some sense of modesty and diffidence, carried to excess, keeps him from coming forward. This, however, cannot be allowed. I command the boy to step forward in my presence."

No answer.

Nobody stepped forward.

Clarence Cuffy gasped. There were fellows in the Form—one or two—who, in Cuffy's place, would have stepped out, and taken the glory that was not their due.

Not Cuffy. If he had stepped forward he would have had to tell the facts as they had happened, and disclaim all merit.

That he couldn't do. His ears burned at the thought. Indeed, he rather wondered that his blushing dismay did not betray him to the eyes of his Form-fellows. But nobody was noticing Cuffy.

There was a long silence.

Dr. Chisholm frowned.

"I repeat," he said, raising his voice slightly. "I repeat, that the

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boy who so bravely and devotedly helped Sir Theophilus Pratt on Wednesday afternoon is commanded to stand forward and reveal himself."

Tubby Muffin for a moment stirred. But he caught Jimmy Silver's warning eye and quailed.

The Head waited.

Like Brutus, he paused for a reply. Again like Brutus, he paused in vain. There was no reply.

The Head was perplexed and annoyed. Mr. Dalton was obviously astonished. The Fourth-Formers were simply mystified.

A long, long pause, and then the Head made a rather angry gesture of dismissal and swept from the Form-room.

The Fourth Form poured out a minute or two later, in a buzz of excited discussion.

The unknown hero was still unknown; even the Head's command had not drawn him forth from his shell of diffident retirement. And it seemed likely to be a nine days' wonder at Rookwood.

THE END.

(You'll enjoy "Cuffy Chips In!" Next Monday's amusing story of the chums of Rookwood School. Don't miss it! Order your BOYS' FRIEND in advance and avoid disappointment!)

# In Your Editor's Den



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers upon any subject. Address your letters to: Editor, "Boys' Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

## AN AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER.

Next week's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND is the Special Number for the August Bank Holiday. It will be packed with the finest holiday reading, the brightest and best yarns, all right up to the standard of the old "Green 'Un."

## THAT FIRST MONDAY!

There was no brighter notion ever hit on than to turn the first cheery old Monday in August into a holiday. It comes right in the midst of the summer. You can generally depend on it that the weather won't let you down. A really jolly time is what I wish all my chums, but mind you slip the bumper number of the BOYS' FRIEND into your pocket when you start off in the morning. You will find Rookwood just the thing, and Linky Beck will strike you as even more invigorating than usual, while the Duke turns up in slimmest guise.

## "CUFFY CHIPS IN!"

By Owen Conquest.

Honour where honour is due. "Palman qui meruit ferat," as the great and only Cuffy would put it. You know Cuffy's way. He stews in words, and when there is a long, long procession of adjectives which can be dragged in by the ears to put a little gentle emphasis on what he wants to say, Cuffy trots them all out. But when Cuffy dropped on to a good thing in the person of a benevolent old gentleman who was in peril, the learned Rookwooder little imagined events would shape as they did. Next week's yarn shows what a tense struggle took place in the conscientious soul of the cultured Cuffy. It is not Cuffy alone who chips in, but Leggett as well. Leggett will not permit a poor lonely reward to be left out in the cold minus an owner. Very nice and thoughtful of Leggett! For the surprising upshot see our next great number.

## "THE PHANTOM FORTUNE!"

By Victor Nelson.

Glorious Goodwood is dealt with next Monday by Victor Nelson in a rousing Don Darrel and Holdfast story. In this yarn we get the true Nelson touch, and it is quite O.K. there should be a Victor in it. People have talked and written no end about the wonders of Goodwood, the wonderful country, and all that sort

of thing, but I am prepared to wager nothing better has ever been set down of the tip-top Sussex meeting than you will find in next Monday's brilliant tale. It is a nailer. The mystery is as thrilling as anybody could wish, and as you read you will almost feel you are down south on the Downs amidst the crowd of pleasure-seekers. I should like to say more about this Goodwood Cup yarn, but space forbids.

## "LINKY 'COMES BACK'!"

By Michael Poole.

A capital story about St. Katie's, this! Lincoln Beck, "Jolly Roger," and the usual select crowd will be found taking part. There is plenty of plot, and heaps of humour, so don't miss a treat. For wit and sparkle Michael Poole is simply inimitable. He dropped in to see me the other day and told me a sad story about a man who fell downstairs—at least, I thought it was going to be a sad affair altogether, but it was really the prime joke of the year. It is a great gift to see the funny side of things. When you can do that all the dilemmas of life, such as washing-day, cold mornings, disappointments, and the rest fade away. But, of course, even to a merry jester like Michael Poole, the world is not all laughter, with the band playing soft music "off." There is just that pleasant magic something in this author's work which gets one thinking of even more important and mighty encouraging things. And that's where genius comes in, without troubling to knock or ring.

## "ONE CLUE 'GAYMER'!"

By Walter Edwards.

Already I have had the honour of mentioning the Duke, see above, but there will be no possible harm in touching on his popular personality a second time. That is, I hope not. You can't have too much of a good thing, as the man said when he saw the sea for the first time. The Duke may not be good, but, like a hundred per cent investment, he is full of interest. There is a great triumph in the new tale of the crook's misdeeds.

## "THE PRIDE OF THE COUNTY!"

Another grand instalment coming! Jim Lyle has his successes, and deserves them, but Arthur S. Hardy makes the biggest innings.

Your Editor.

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