

GRAND NEW SERIES OF HOLIDAY STORIES OF THE
CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL SEE INSIDE!

The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

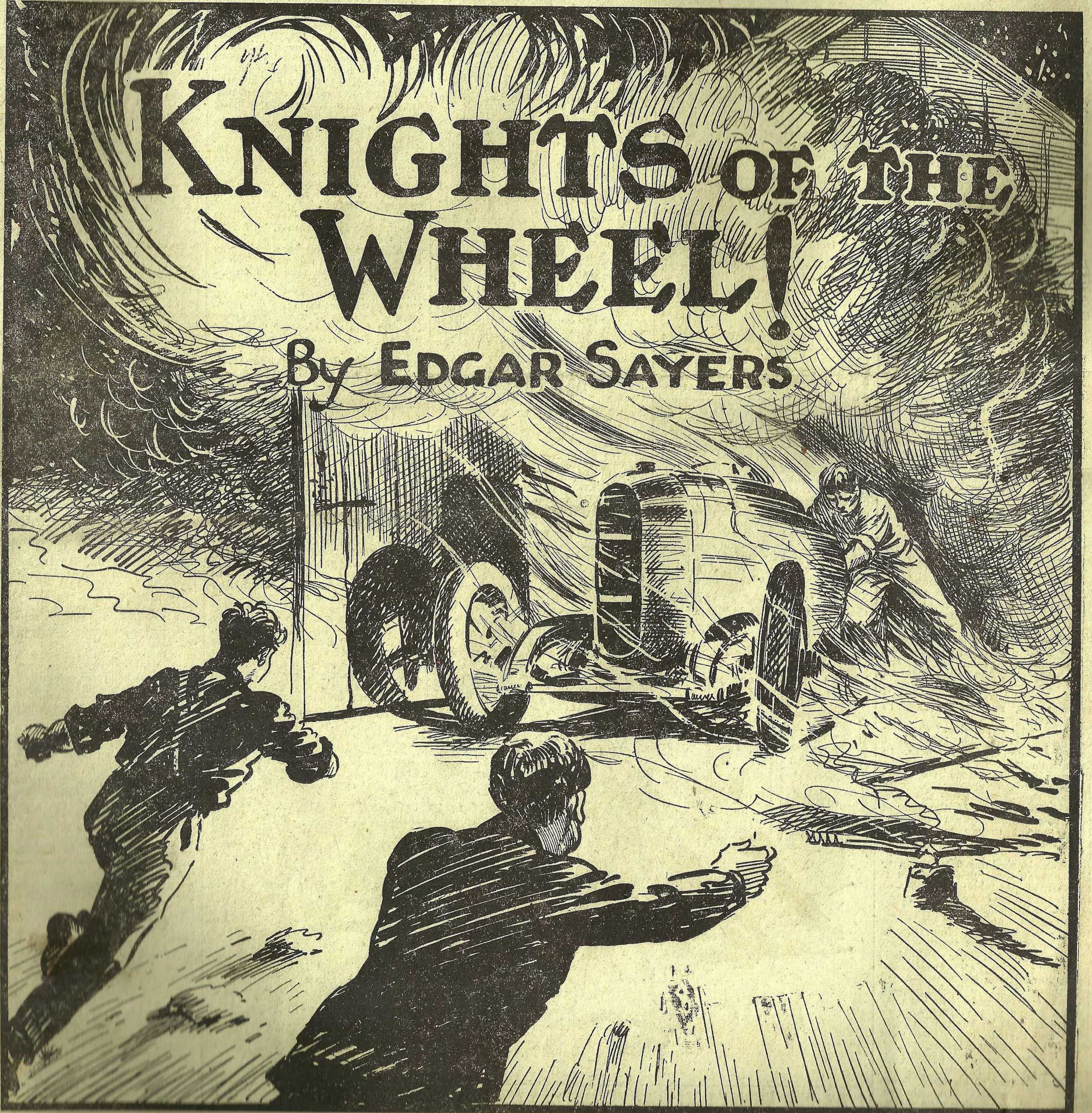
EVERY MONDAY.

SIXTEEN BIG PAGES!

No. 1,259. Vol. XXVI.—New Series.]

THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending July 25th, 1925.]



BART'S PLUCKY DASH INTO THE BLAZING BARN TO SAVE THE WILSON RACERS!

(A thrilling incident from our hair-raising motor-racing story in this issue.)

THE FIRST OF A GREAT NEW SERIES OF HOLIDAY STORIES OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



Tubby Muffin's Invitation!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

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

It is left to Lovell to make arrangements for the holidays!

The 1st Chapter.

Lovell Loses His Temper!

"Yachtin'!"
"Yaas, yachtin'!" said Smythe of the Shell.
Arthur Edward Lovell of the Fourth grunted.
Smythe was swanking, as usual.
Rookwood School was about to break up for the summer holidays, and most of the Rookwooders were discussing the "hols." Classes, and even exams, were quite unimportant matters in comparison. At least, that was the view taken by the Lower School, though the Head and his staff doubtless took quite a different view.

On this especial sunny morning, in "quarter," Smythe and Howard and Tracy of the Shell sauntered under the old Rookwood beeches, discussing the all-important subject. And as they came on Lovell of the Fourth, sitting on a bench there, the nuts of the Shell paused and stood in a nutty group to let Arthur Edward have the benefit of their discussion.

Lovell was thinking of the coming vacation.

Generally Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth spent their holidays together. This time they had arranged to go home with Lovell.

Lovell had asked Jimmy and Raby and Newcome, nothing doubting.

Quite a pleasant holiday could be spent at his father's home in Somersetshire, and Lovell's chums had cheerily agreed to come.

Arthur Edward had arranged that little matter in the middle of the term. It had not occurred to him to mention it in his letters home till quite late before breaking-up.

His people were hospitable—his friends were always sure of a welcome there. And Lovell had spent his last Christmas holiday with Jimmy Silver, and the Easter holidays had been "whacked out" between Raby and Newcome. So it was Lovell's turn. Nothing doubting, Arthur Edward had fixed it up with his chums.

Hence the thoughtful frown on Lovell's brow as he sat under the shady old beeches with a letter in his hand.

The letter was from his pater.

It mentioned that Lovell's parents would be spending most of the summer with a relation in Scotland, and that the house would be shut up during their absence.

Lovell was feeling worried and rather sore.

Obviously, with his people away and the house shut up in charge of a caretaker, he couldn't take a Rookwood party home.

His young brother, Teddy, was arranged for. He was going home with Algy Silver of the Third. Arthur Edward wasn't arranged for.

He had arranged for himself, and his arrangements had fallen to the ground.

He felt that it was a bit thoughtless of his people to clear off in this way for the summer without mentioning the fact to him earlier. It did not occur to him that it was rather thoughtless of him to make arrangements without mentioning them to his people.

Certainly it was open to him to go up to Scotland with his parents. But he could not take three Rookwood fellows there with him. The Scottish relation was hospitable, but there was a limit.

His father suggested that he should take his choice of going up to Scotland, of going to his uncle at

Harrogate, or of going home with one of his Rookwood friends.

The suggestion was of no use to Lovell.

It was his turn to entertain the Co. He had made his arrangements to that end. His comrades were counting on him, and Lovell felt that he could not let them down.

How could he say to fellows at the last minute almost, "You can't come home with me, after all; I'll come home with you!" Fellows had to let their people know—though it had not occurred to Lovell to let his people know.

It was an awkward situation.

It was rotten, in fact, and Lovell felt quite rotten about it. In that mood, there was something very irritating in Adolphus Smythe's swank.

Though Smythe had tons of money, and wealthy friends and relations, he was no gentleman—in Lovell's opinion, at least; but there was no doubt about the wealth.

Adolphus Smythe could have afforded to take his pals on a trip to Switzerland, or Norway, if he had liked.

Lovell couldn't.

In fact, Arthur Edward, if he was to take his friends with him, had no alternative to home, and home was barred. He thought of his Harrogate uncle, and smiled grimly at the mental picture of that old gentleman's expression if his Rookwood nephew should turn up with three Rookwood fellows along with him. He thought of his aunt at Sandgate, and his other aunt in Bayswater. But he could not plant his school friends on his aunts—and they wouldn't enjoy it if he did. He could have gone with Tom Merry, of St. Jim's, who had asked him and taken an army with him, only, in the belief that he was going home, he had to decline the invitation, and he could not very well rake it up again. So Lovell was feeling moody and irritable and worried, shrinking from telling his friends the disagreeable news, and yet realising dimly that the sooner they were told the better.

In this unhappy frame of mind he had the pleasure of listening to Adolphus Smythe & Co. swanking about the "hols."

"Yachtin'!" said Smythe. "Nothin' like it, you fellows! I want you fellows to come, and you'll enjoy it no end."

"Sounds jolly!" said Howard.

"Top-hole!" agreed Tracy.

"Your father's yacht?" asked Howard.

"Well, no. But the pater's arranged it all for me," said Smythe airily. "I'm goin', and takin' my friends, and we shall meet some other fellows on board. You see, the yacht's specially engaged for a pleasure cruise."

"I say, that sounds all right," said Howard. "Your pater must have had to shell out pretty handsomely."

Smythe nodded.

"Oh, the pater's rollin' in it, you know," he said. "I've only got to ask for what I want."

"Lucky bargee!" said Tracy.

"Yaas, I suppose I'm rather lucky," said Smythe, with one eye on the moody face of Arthur Edward Lovell, sitting grimly on the bench under the beech. "I'm lookin' forward to it. We're goin' to have a glorious time these hols. A rippin' yacht, and a cruise round the coast, landin' wherever we like and livin'

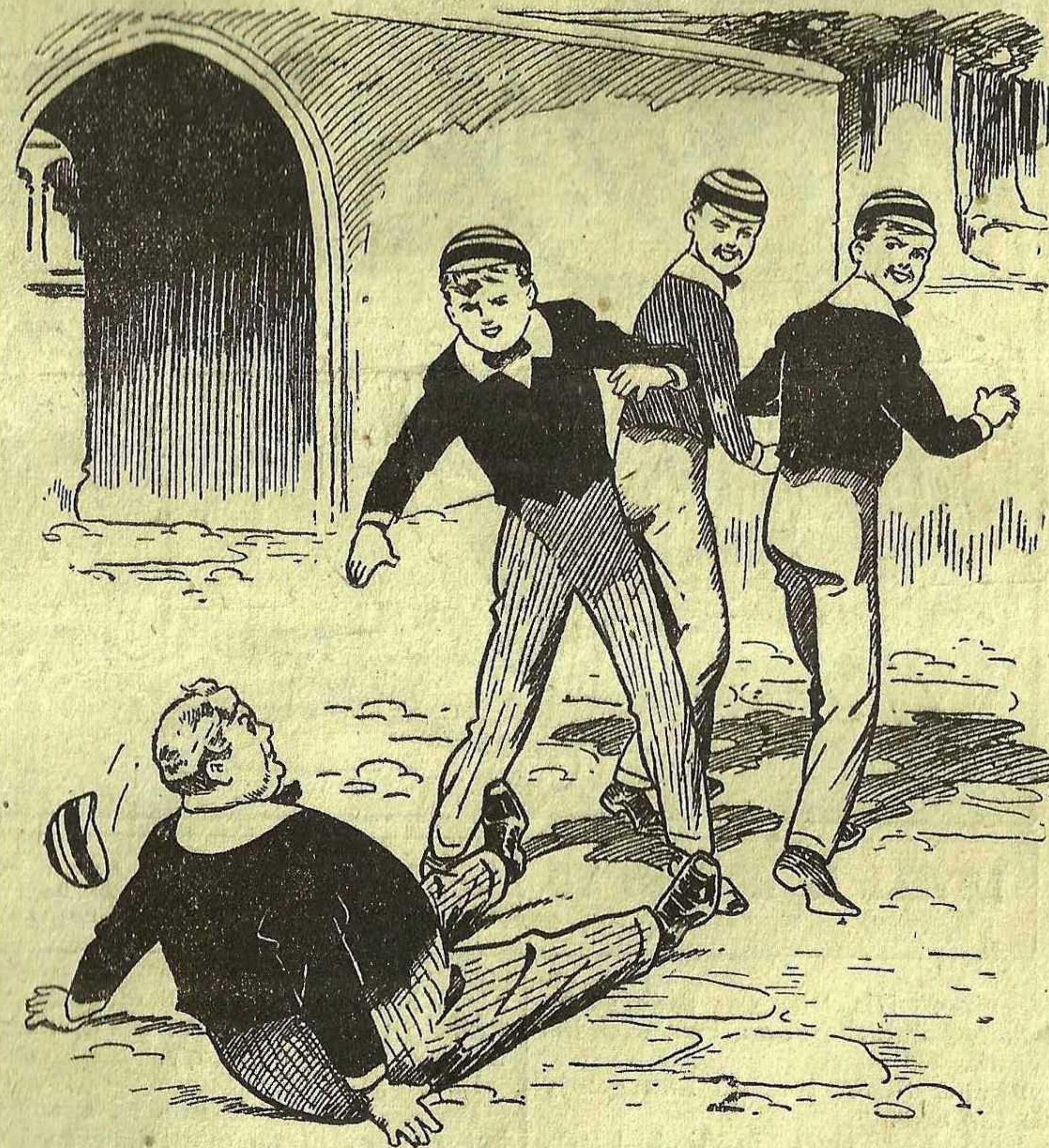
on the fat of the land. I'm jolly keen to get away from Rookwood, I can tell you. Some chaps don't seem very bucked at breakin' up, I notice. Must be horrid to have rotten hols in prospect, and nowhere to go."

"Oh, rotten!" grinned Tracy, greatly entertained by the flush that spread over Lovell's face.

"Some fellows look awfully glum about it, you know," said Smythe, still with one eye on Lovell.

"They do!" agreed Tracy.

"Hallo, Lovell! Didn't see you there, old bean!" said Smythe,



BUMP! "You keep on telling whoppers, and fatheaded ones at that," said Jimmy Silver impatiently. "We don't want Smythe's swank second-hand from you, Tubby. Sit down and take a rest!" "Yaroooh!" roared Tubby Muffin, as the captain of the Fourth gently, but firmly, sat him down in the quad.

looking at Arthur Edward with both eyes now. "Feelin' bucked, what, at breakin' up? Where are you goin' for the hols?"

Lovell glared at him.

He was on the worst of terms with Smythe & Co. of the Shell, and he was not in a mood for any banter from Adolphus.

"You did see me!" he growled. "For goodness' sake, Smythe, go and swank somewhere else. A fellow gets fed-up!"

"They have nice manners in the Fourth, haven't they?" smiled Smythe. "What's the trouble, Lovell? Somebody let you down over the hols?"

Arthur Edward Lovell rose to his feet.

Really, Adolphus Smythe's swank was irritating, but it was not enough to put a fellow out of temper. But Lovell was out of temper already, and Smythe's remarks only put the lid on. Instead of walking disdainfully away, as would have been wise, Arthur Edward Lovell reached out and thumped the top of Smythe's straw hat, squashing it on his head.

Smythe gave a yell.

"Ow! You dashed ruffian!"

He clutched at his hat and extracted his head from it.

"Collar that cad, you fellows!" he shouted. "Bump him!"

And Howard and Tracy, mindful of the fact that they were invited to join Adolphus on his expensive yachting cruise, backed him up at once.

The three Shell fellows rushed at Lovell.

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

And the next moment Arthur Edward Lovell was too busy to think about his disappointment over the holidays. He was struggling desperately in the grasp of Smythe & Co., and in spite of his desperate struggles he was whirled over in the grip of the three.

Bump!
And there was an infuriated roar from Lovell as he smote the hard, unsympathetic earth near the beeches.

The 2nd Chapter.

Cross!

"Where's Lovell?"

"Blessed if I know!" yawned Raby.

"Gone off somewhere on his own," said Newcome carelessly.

"Yes, but where?" said Jimmy Silver.

"What the thump does it matter?" asked Raby. "We shall see him again in class—if you want to see him."

Jimmy Silver smiled faintly.

Raby and Newcome had a rather fed-up expression—not a new expression, really, on the faces of Arthur Edward Lovell's chums.

Lovell sometimes tried the patience

"Lovell?" he repeated. "Yes, I think I saw him going over by the beeches a little while ago. Never mind Lovell now: I want to speak to you, Jimmy. About the vacation—"

"My dear old barrel, the want is all on your side," said Jimmy Silver politely. "Come on, you chaps."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin. "Look here, Jimmy, are you fixed up for the vac?"

"Yes."

"I want you to come with me for the 'hols.'"

"With you?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver in astonishment.

It was quite unlike Reginald Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, to be extending invitations in this way. Generally, when the date of breaking-up drew nigh, Reginald Muffin got busy in seeking some well-off fellow, to whom to attach himself for the vacation. Jimmy Silver would not have been surprised by the offer of Tubby's fascinating society for the vac. But he was very much surprised at being asked to bestow his upon Muffin.

Tubby nodded and smirked. "Yes; I'm making up a party," he said.

"Gammon!" said Raby, with more directness than politeness.

"Bunkum!" said Newcome.

"Honest Injun!" said Tubby, still grinning, and not at all perturbed by these plain expressions of opinion. Plain English was used in the Rookwood Fourth—sometimes very plain indeed. "I want all you fellows to come. I suppose you've been on the sea before?"

"The sea?"

"Yes; are you anything like sailors?" asked Tubby. "You see, it's a yachting party."

"Great Scott!"

Jimmy Silver quite forgot his desire to seek Lovell and ascertain what it was that had disturbed that youth's equanimity, in his surprise.

"Whose yacht?" he demanded.

"My uncle's."

"Has it been built yet, or are they building it specially for the vac?" asked Raby humorously.

"Look here, Raby—"

"You look here, you fat, swanking boulder!" exclaimed Newcome. "If you tell us your uncle keeps a fried fish shop we'll believe you. Don't tell us he keeps a yacht."

"He does!" roared Muffin.

"Rats!"

"My uncle, Captain Muffin—"

"Captain of a coal barge?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"No!" yelled Tubby Muffin indignantly. "Captain of the yacht Silver Cloud—his own yacht."

"Pile it on!" said Raby sarcastically. "You're asking us to join a yachting party on the Silver Cloud yacht, commanded by Captain Muffin, and—"

"That's it!"

"And that means that you want to borrow half-a-crown, doesn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, it doesn't," howled Tubby. "It's honest Injun! Straight as a string! My uncle has given me permission to ask a Rookwood party."

"Oh, cheese it, old man," said Jimmy Silver good-humouredly. "I suppose you've heard that ass, Smythe, of the Shell, swanking about a yachting cruise he's going in for this vac, and that's put the wheeze into your silly head. It's a size too large for you, Muffin. Chuck it!"

"But I tell you—"

"Chuck it!"

"Do you mean you won't come, when I'm specially asking you for a ripping yachting cruise this vac?" demanded Tubby Muffin indignantly.

"Bow-wow!"

"I keep on telling you—"

"You keep on telling whoppers—and fatheaded ones, at that," said Jimmy Silver impatiently. "We don't want Smythe's swank second-hand from you, Tubby. Sit down and take a rest."

"Yaroooh!" roared Tubby Muffin, as the captain of the Fourth gently but firmly, sat him down in the quad.

Jimmy Silver & Co. walked on towards the beeches, leaving Reginald Muffin in a gasping state. Muffin scrambled up, crimson with wrath and indignation.

"Yah!" he roared. "I won't take you now. Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Classical Fourth chuckled as they walked on. An invitation to a yachting cruise from Tubby Muffin—the impecunious Tubby, the fellow who had borrowed more half-crowns than all the rest of the Fourth put together—was rather too rich. The Co. had not the

(Continued overleaf.)

There's a scream in every line of "Paying Guests!" next Monday's great holiday story of the chums of Rookwood School. Be sure you read it!



Tubby Muffin's Invitation!

(Continued from previous page.)

seemed rather "thick" even for Arthur Edward.

"My dear man!" said Jimmy. "Mean to say that you squashed Smythe's hat because he was swanking about the hols?"

"Yes, I jolly well did!" snapped Lovell.

"Then you're a silly ass!"

"Look here, Jimmy Silver—"

"And you jolly well deserved to be bumped!" exclaimed Newcome.

"What the thump does Smythe's swank matter to you?"

"Look here, Newcome—"

"Hallo! There's the bell!" exclaimed Raby. "Come on! Dicky Dalton don't like us to be late for class."

And the Fistical Four started for the House for third lesson. The bell rang at a fortunate moment, as a matter of fact, for high words were imminent. Undoubtedly Arthur Edward Lovell was very cross that

He was worried.

He had to tell his chums that the holiday at his home in Somersetshire was off, and he had not told them; instead of doing so, he had been cross and sulky, owing to his worried state of mind—which, of course, made it more difficult than ever for him to tell them.

It weighed on Lovell's mind, and at such a time construing Virgil seemed to him, not only a bother and a bore—which was usual—but an irritating waste of time. His private opinion of Æneas was that Æneas was a long-winded merchant, and it beat him how Dido could have listened to his long stories. Lovell considered that she must have been pulling Æneas' leg. With the hols in his mind, Lovell couldn't put his mind into the Æneid; he had only one mind, and it was fully occupied.

Hence his remarkable translation of "conticuere omnes"—not a bad translation for the Fourth Form passage, but decidedly out of place in the Form-room.

Most of the Classical Fourth grinned; even Reginald Muffin grinned. Even Muffin would not have rendered "conticuere omnes" as "Everybody shut up"—not in Mr. Dalton's presence, at least.

"What do you mean, Lovell?"

"Everybody shut up, and gave Æneas his head while he went on jawing."

There was a gasp from the Fourth. There were many and varied ways of rendering:

"Conticuere omnes, intenticue ora tenebant; inde toro pater Æneas sic orsus ab alto."

Nobody in the Fourth, probably, would have rendered it exactly like anybody else. And nobody would have rendered it like Lovell, unless he had been hunting for trouble.

"Oh gad!" murmured Mornington.

"Lovell's askin' for it."

"And he'll get it!" murmured Oswald.

There was no doubt about that.

"Lovell!" thundered Mr. Dalton.

"Isn't that all right, sir?"

"Stand out before the class."

Lovell tramped out sulkily.

Whack!

Mr. Dalton replaced his cane on his desk.

"Lovell, you will stay in the Form-room this afternoon, and write out the first hundred lines of the second book, with a translation," said Mr. Dalton.

Snort from Lovell.

He sat down again with a sulky

Smythe's hat was evidently in peril again. Jimmy Silver caught his chum's arm, and the Shell fellows passed in safety.

"Let go my arm!" snapped Lovell, jerking it away.

"Lovell, old man, what's the matter?" asked Jimmy mildly. "What's happened to put your back up?"

"Nothing, ass! My back's not up."

"Is this what you call good temper, then?" inquired Newcome.

Lovell glared at him.

"If you don't like my temper, Arthur Newcome, I'm not asking you to put up with it. The quad's big enough for both of us."

"Well, I don't like your temper," said Newcome tartly, "and I'll give you a wide berth till you feel better."

And Newcome walked away in another direction, and George Raby went with him. Jimmy Silver lingered with Lovell. He was puzzled and a little troubled over his chum. Lovell's temper was hasty and uncertain at the best of times; but Jimmy realised that there must be something unusual the matter now. It was not like Lovell, hasty as he was, to cut up rusty about nothing at all.

Lovell's brow was dark and sullen. The incident in the Form-room had given him a feeling of being persecuted at a time when he had worry enough, anyhow, without his Form master piling in. And it was no light matter to grind out Virgil on a sunny afternoon, and lose his last game at cricket at Rookwood. Certainly, it was not Jimmy Silver's fault; but from Lovell's looks anybody might have supposed that his patient chum was to blame.

Jimmy did not speak as they strolled across the quad; he felt that silence was more tactful, in Lovell's queer frame of mind. He was all the more anxious that there should not be trouble in the Co., as the three were going home with Lovell for the holidays, and trouble in the happy family at such a juncture would have been decidedly awkward. It did not occur to him, naturally, that it was this very matter that was the cause of Lovell's irritation. But silence, though tactful, did not serve. Really, it was a case of the wolf and the lamb over again.

"Well?" snapped Lovell, as Jimmy did not speak.

"Well?" murmured Jimmy.

"I've a jolly good mind not to turn up for detention this afternoon."

"Better, old chap."

"It's a dirty trick detaining a chap for the last half-holiday."

"Old man, you asked for it."

"Rot!"

"Hem!"

"If you can't talk anything but silly rot, Jimmy Silver, the sooner you ring off the better!"

Jimmy looked at him. There was a limit to the patience of even Uncle James of Rookwood.

"Right-ho!" he said. "Walk it off, old man."

"Walk what off?" snapped Lovell.

"Your beastly bad temper, old chap," said Jimmy; and he strolled away under the beeches, to speak to Mornington, before Lovell could reply.

"You're a cheeky ass, Jimmy Silver!" bawled Lovell, addressing Jimmy's back at a distance of ten yards or so.

Jimmy turned a deaf ear to that remark.

Arthur Edward Lovell drove his hands deep into his pockets, and tramped away by himself, in a savage humour. It was fortunate that he did not happen on the nuts of the Shell again before dinner. Had he done so, Smythe's hat, and probably Smythe himself, would have been reduced to a state of wreckage.

The 4th Chapter.

Any Port in a Storm!

Jimmy Silver & Co. were playing cricket that afternoon. Lovell should have been with his chums; but he had to cut the last game of cricket now, and repair to the Form-room. His "jolly good mind" to cut detention had come to nothing. Really, detention couldn't be cut, without results that were too painful to contemplate. While the other fellows were on the cricket-ground or the river, Arthur Edward Lovell sat at his desk in the deserted Form-room and opened the classic pages of P. Vergilius Maro. Could he only have had the gloves on with that classic gentleman, Lovell felt that he could have spent quite a happy afternoon in the Form-room. As matters stood, he was booked for a dismal time, and he grunted and almost groaned over the long-winded narrative to which the Carthaginian



LOVELL IS ROUSED TO ANGER! Arthur Edward Lovell reached out and thumped the top of Smythe's straw hat, squashing it on his head. Smythe gave a yell. "Ow! You dashed ruffian!"

morning. His face was dark as he tramped into the Form-room with his chums.

Jimmy Silver touched him gently on the arm.

"No bad news in that letter, Lovell?"

"What letter?" growled Lovell.

"I thought you had a letter from home—"

"Well, I had."

"Nobody ill, I hope?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"I thought you seemed a bit put out!" said Jimmy.

"What rot!"

"Hem!"

Jimmy Silver went to his place without further remark. Evidently Arthur Edward Lovell was not in a mood for cheery conversation.

The 3rd Chapter. Asking For It!

"Everybody shut up—"

"What?"

"I mean they all cheesed it—"

"Lovell!"

Arthur Edward Lovell stopped. Mr. Richard Dalton's tone was sharp and his look was ominous.

All the Classical Fourth stared at Lovell.

Many a weird construe had been heard in that Form-room, especially from Tubby, whose renderings sometimes made his Form master, like Quintilian, stare and gasp.

But Lovell was beating Tubby Muffin at his own game, so to speak, in handling the Æneid this morning. Really it was not Lovell's fault.

asked Mr. Dalton in the quiet tone which was a warning to the Fourth to mind their p's and q's.

Lovell grunted.

He liked Dicky Dalton as a rule, but he was in no mood now to be bothered even by Dicky. It was ill luck that Lovell had been called upon to begin.

"Did you prepare this lesson, Lovell?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is that what you consider a good construe?"

"Quite, sir."

"I differ, Lovell! I trust that it is not your intention to be impertinent," said Mr. Dalton quietly.

Mr. Dalton was not so cheerily good-humoured as usual that morning. At the end of the term it was usual for Form masters to be in a rather "fed-up" state—indeed, the more elderly members of the staff were generally in a state of frayed nerves by that time. Even the young and athletic Richard Dalton had a tired feeling, and his patience had worn a little thin.

So had Lovell's.

"Isn't that what the stuff means, sir?" grunted Lovell.

"The what?"

"Stuff!" said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver gave his chum a rather anxious look; Raby murmured a word of warning. That only had the effect on Arthur Edward Lovell of making him more obstinate.

Mr. Dalton was silent, perhaps too astonished to speak. So Lovell went on with his construe.

brow, and Peele was called on to take up the tale where Lovell had left it off. Cyril Peele was very careful indeed to hand out a good construe. Mr. Dalton was not in a mood to be trifled with.

After the lesson the Classical Fourth came out, many of them grinning. Lovell's construe had provided an entertaining interlude—entertaining for the Classical Fourth, though rather painful for Lovell himself.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome joined Lovell, as usual, as they went out into the quad.

They sympathised with their chum; but, really, they could not help thinking that he had asked for it. Still, it was rather hard to be detained for the last half-holiday in the term.

"Hard cheese, old fellow!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Lovell grunted angrily.

"That silly ass Dalton—"

"Well, you couldn't expect him to stand it, old chap," said Raby.

"Dicky Dalton isn't the man to be ragged in class, you know."

"Blow Dicky Dalton!"

"Hem!"

"I'm fed-up with him!" growled Lovell.

Smythe & Co. came sauntering by, and Adolphus Smythe was talking. In fact, it was seldom that Adolphus Smythe was not talking. His topic, of course, was the "hols."

"She's lyin' at Southampton now," Smythe was saying, evidently alluding to the yacht on which his vacation was to be spent. "We get the train to Southampton—"

Lovell made a movement.

dame had listened so patiently in ancient time.

Fellows under detention were not supposed to be spoken to by other fellows. It was strictly against the rules for any Rookwooder to drop into a Form-room where a fellow was detained with a task. But supposition was not always the same as reality; and, in point of fact, it was not uncommon for a detained junior to receive visitors, who would chat with him, with one eye on the passage. Lovell especially would have been glad of a visitor or two that afternoon, not only for the sake of company, but for the sake of help with his translation. And he felt very sore because his comrades did not drop in; though he was quite well aware that they were playing cricket, and also that his recent manners and behaviour were scarcely calculated to encourage them to call.

He grunted and groused over Virgil and groaned over the translation, drearily looking out words in the "dic." It was blazing sunshine outside, and he could hear the echo of cheery voices through the open windows. Every passing minute made him feel sorer and sorer. It was bad for a summer exam; but summer exams were necessary evils—at least, they were taken as matters of course, whether necessary or not. But being detained to grind over Virgil was unnecessary and iniquitous; though Lovell, in a more reasonable mood, would have admitted that his Form master could hardly have dealt with him more leniently.

There was a footstep in the passage at last, and it stopped at the Form-room door. Only a moment before Lovell had been longing for a visitor, now he turned a frowning face towards the door. If the Co. had dropped in at last, they were not likely to find Lovell's temper improved by detention.

But it was not a member of the Co. It was Tubby Muffin's fat face that looked in.

Lovell gave a grunt. Tubby was of no use as an aid to translation, and he was not much in the way of company at the best of times. Still, Arthur Edward was not displeased to see him. After an hour in the Form-room by himself he was beginning to feel like Robinson Crusoe on his island, and anything in the nature of a man Friday was welcome.

Reginald Muffin gave him a cheery nod and a fat grin.

"Getting on with it?" he asked.

Grunt!

"Can I help you, old chap?"

"Fathead!"

"Well, I'm rather a dab at Latin, as you know," said Tubby.

Lovell grinned in spite of himself. Encouraged by the grin, Reginald Muffin rolled into the dusky Form-room and sat on a desk by Lovell.

"Anyhow, let's have a chat," he said. "It's pretty rotten to be shut up here, isn't it, Lovell?"

"Beastly!" growled Lovell.

"You've been looking a bit down all day, old chap."

"Have I?" snarled Lovell.

He had been feeling "down," and he realised that probably he had been looking the same. But he did not like to hear it mentioned. No Rookwooder liked to feel that he seemed an object for sympathy.

"Yes," said Tubby cheerily. "Not looking forward to the 'hols,' what?"

"Eh?"

"Nothing doing for the vac, I suppose?" said Tubby sympathetically.

Lovell looked at him. Tubby was the most fatuous as well as the fattest fellow in the Classical Fourth. It was rather startling for Tubby to hit the right nail on the head in this way. Fat and fatuous as he was, he had gone right to the root of the trouble, as it were, as if by magic.

"You silly owl!" said Lovell at last. He disdained to prevaricate, but certainly nothing would have induced him to admit that he was "hung up" for the "hols." No fellow at Rookwood would have admitted that.

"Well, that's what I thought," said Muffin brightly, quite unconscious of the fact that he was in dire danger of being up-ended off the desk. "That's really why I came in to speak to you, old fellow. You see, I want you to come with me for the 'hols.'"

"My hat!"

"I mean it, old chap. Do come!"

Lovell simply stared.

"I don't mean home," added Tubby hastily. "I'm not taking friends home this vac. I'm going on a yachting cruise."

"Like Smythe—what?" said Lovell, with a laugh.

Tubby sniffed.

"Something better than that," he said. "I've heard that Smythe is going yachting, but I dare say it's mostly swank."

"And yours isn't?" asked Lovell sarcastically.

"No, not at all. Captain Muffin, my—"

"Captain which?"

"Muffin—my uncle, you know. He's taking me for a cruise in his yacht, the Silver Cloud, and I can take as many fellows as I like. In fact, my uncle is keen for a Rookwood party to go."

"Go it!" said Lovell, still sarcastic.

"You're a funny beggar, Tubby—ever so much funnier than Virgil! Keep it up!"

"Look here, Lovell, if you don't believe me—"

"Believe you! My hat!"

"But I mean it!" persisted Tubby.

"I've asked you to come, Lovell. We shall go straight to the Silver Cloud when the school breaks up. Dash it all, I suppose you don't think I'm pulling your leg?"

"No, I don't; but I think you're trying to, you fat idiot!" said Lovell.

"Chuck it, Tubby! Smythe's swank is all very well for Smythe. He's got money. But it doesn't suit you."

"If you don't care to accept my invitation, Lovell," said Tubby, with a great deal of dignity, "you might at least say so civilly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell, thinking it over, looked at the fat Classical rather more amicably. Really, it was a case of any port in a storm, and if Tubby really was offering a port, so to speak, he was entitled to civility at least.

"Look here, Muffin, old man!" said Lovell, after a long pause. "If this is anything but bunkum, say so. If you're trying to pull my leg with silly swank—"

"My dear chap, I want you to come," said Tubby, in earnest protest. "My uncle wants me to bring a Rookwood party. He'd be pleased if I fairly swarmed the Silver Cloud with Rookwood fellows."

"Must be a jolly hospitable old bean, at any rate," said Lovell.

"Oh, he's one of the best!" said Tubby. "He's told me in a letter that he'll be glad to see my friends for the vac."

"Got the letter about you?"

grinned Lovell.

"Yes."

"Wha-a-a-t!"

"Here it is," said Tubby.

To Lovell's amazement, the fat Classical sorted out a crumpled letter from his pocket, and tossed it on the desk. Lovell looked at it and read it with wide-open eyes.

"Hotel Royal, Southampton."

"Dear Reginald—Certainly I should be very pleased if you brought a party from your school, as you

Instead of the invitation being empty swank, with some lame excuse to be proffered at the last moment for letting him down, Tubby Muffin really was asking him on a yachting cruise in a real yacht, of which his uncle was owner and commander. Really, he owed Tubby an apology.

"Like the idea, old chap?" asked Tubby, beaming.

"My dear fellow, if you really mean it, I'll be glad to come and bring my friends," said Lovell. "You're a good chap, Muffin, and I own up that I haven't been as decent to you as you deserve."

"That's all right, old fellow," said Tubby genially.

"Your uncle seems to be a jolly old sport," said Lovell. "I wish I had an uncle or two like him."

"Oh, he's first rate!" said Tubby.

"You see, he's fond of young society, and all that. I'm glad you're coming."

Lovell glanced at the letter again.

"According to this, you could take half the Form if you liked," he remarked.

"So I could if I liked," said Tubby. "The more the merrier, you know. There will be some other guests on the yacht, of course—plenty of good company, and all that. Shall I tell my uncle that you're coming, and bringing Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome? You think they'll come with you?"

"Oh, yes," said Lovell. "You see, they were coming home with me,

punishment just before break-up. But Lovell's face was not sulky now, and Mr. Dalton's countenance cleared as he glanced at the papers. The lines were quite well-written, and the translation was quite good—for Lovell. Apparently something had occurred to work a change in Arthur Edward during his detention. Mr. Dalton smiled.

"Very good, Lovell! Very good indeed!" he said. "I am glad that you have done so well, and sorry that I was compelled to detain you this afternoon."

"Thank you, sir!" said Lovell. "I—I'd like to say I'm sorry for—cheeking you in the Form-room this morning, sir! I was a bit upset about something, or I wouldn't have done it, sir!"

"Very good Lovell! I shall forget the incident!" said Mr. Dalton, with a kind smile.

Lovell walked cheerily out of the study. It was tea-time, and the junior cricketers had come in. In a sunny humour Lovell went up to the Classical Fourth passage and strolled along to the end study. He expected to find his chums there, at tea, and he was going to tell them the good news. In the passage he came on Tubby Muffin, and gave that fat youth a friendly slap on the shoulder and a cheery word in passing.

Tubby had come in remarkably useful for once; he had been the right man in the right place. Lovell was feeling quite cordial towards him; in fact, chummy. He felt that he had never done Muffin justice.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were in the end study, getting tea ready. Whether Lovell would come in to tea or not they did not know. When he was in one of his "tantrums" Lovell was not to be counted upon. If they waited tea for him he might not come in at all. If they didn't wait, and he came, he would doubtless feel that they had slighted him. As they were hungry after cricket they started tea, and soon after they had started Lovell's step was heard.

Arthur Edward came briskly into the end study with a cheery expression on his face. He seemed surprised to see three faces looking rather grave. He stared at the three, as if wondering what was the matter with them. That was one of Arthur Edward's ways. As soon as he recovered from a bout of bad temper he took it for granted that everything would go on the same as usual, and did not allow for the fact that other tempers might not cool at precisely the same rate as his own.

"Hallo! Anything up?" he inquired.

"Nothing," said Jimmy Silver.

"Nothing at all," said Raby sarcastically. "If you've done ragging, of course, we've done too. When father says turn, we all turn."

"Does it please your Majesty to be in a good temper again?" asked Newcome, also sarcastic.

Lovell frowned.

"That's a pretty sort of a way to greet a fellow who's been detained all the afternoon doing rotten Latin," he said.

"Your detention seems to have done you good, anyhow," remarked Newcome. "Dickie Dalton had better give you a little more of it."

"Order!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Tea's ready, Lovell. Shove another egg on for Lovell, Raby! Shove the kettle on, Newcome! Did you get on all right with Mr. Dalton, Lovell?"

"Oh, yes—better than I seem to get on in my own study," said Lovell sardonically. "I think you fellows might be civil at tea-time, after ragging a fellow all day."

"Oh, my hat!"

Lovell plumped down in a chair. He was frowning, but his good-humour soon reasserted itself. A prospect of a yachting cruise in the vacation was enough to make any fellow good-humoured, and Lovell was feeling too merry and bright to think of keeping up offences.

"I want to speak to you chaps about the hols," he said as he cracked his egg. "I've made a bit of a change in the programme."

"Oh!" said Jimmy. "Go ahead!"

"Anything up at home?" asked Newcome, comprehending at last.

Lovell did not reply.

"What would you fellows think of a yachting cruise for August?" he asked.

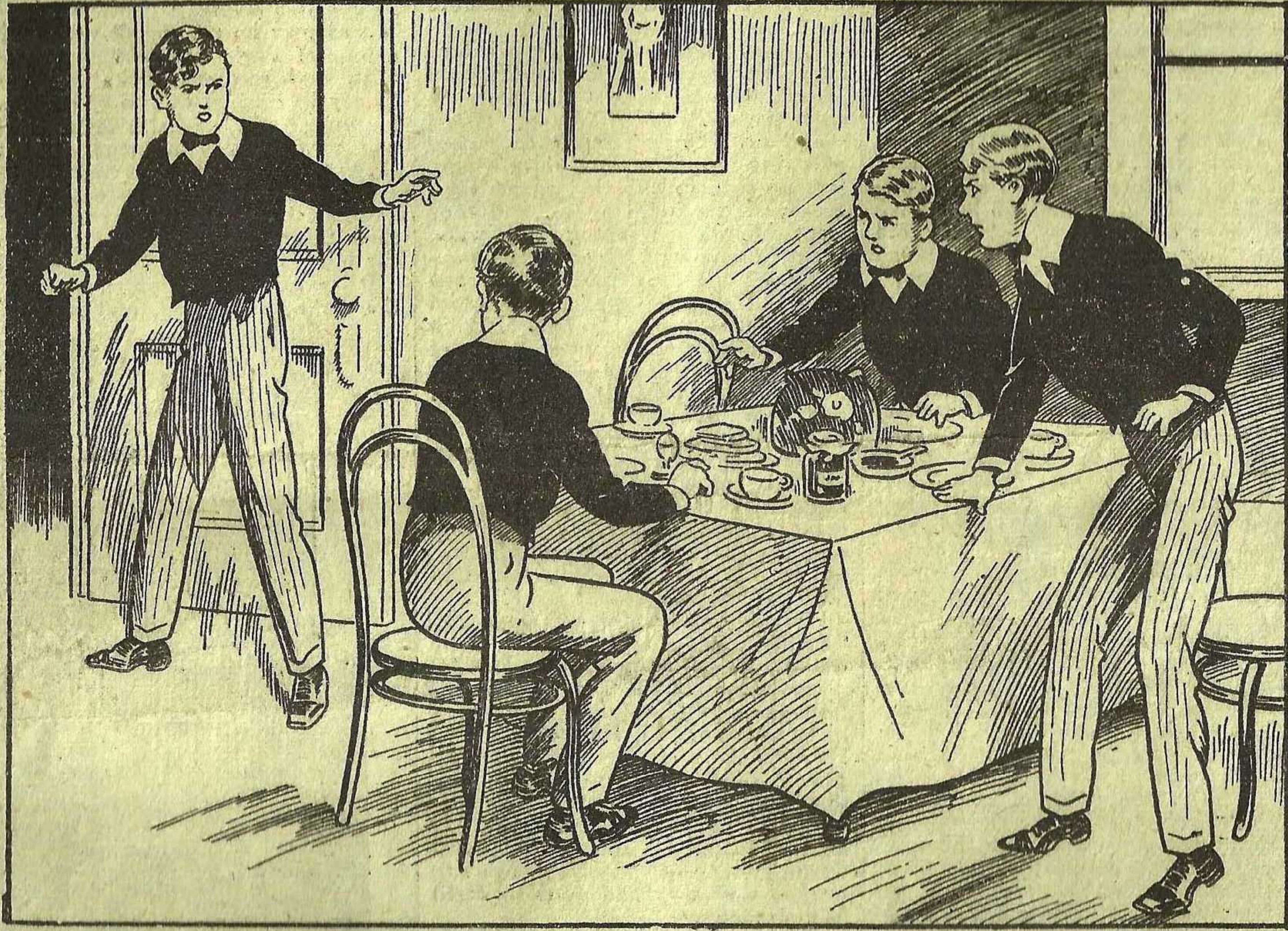
"Top-hole!" said Jimmy.

"My hat! Is yachting catching, like measles?" exclaimed Newcome.

"First there was Smythe of the Shell, then that ass Muffin, and now you—"

"I don't see that Muffin is such an ass," said Lovell rather gruffly. "He seems to me a very decent chap."

(Continued on page 64.)



LOVELL MEANS BUSINESS! "I've accepted Tubby Muffin's invitation," said Lovell. "Oh, you fellows come or not. Are you coming?" snapped Jimmy Silver. "I'm going with him, whether you can go and eat cake!" Lovell strode to the door. "Oh, don't be an ass, old chap. It's all gas." "Then you did not 'look there.'" He strode out of the end study and closed the door after him with a bang.

"You can bring your friends if you like," said Tubby. "In fact, I've already asked Jimmy Silver. Bring the lot!"

Lovell ceased to chuckle. If this invitation from Tubby had been anything but "gas"—an echo of the swank of Adolphus Smythe, as it were—it would have come in extremely useful. Instead of telling his friends that he couldn't take them home as arranged, Lovell could have explained how much more ripping it would be to cruise round in a yacht instead of going down to Somerset. It would have been a very happy alternative if he could have taken his friends on a yachting cruise for August.

From that reflection came another. Suppose, after all, there was something in it?

Tubby was a fat "tick," not the fellow Lovell would have chosen for a comrade on a holiday, by any means. Still, a fellow who could offer a yachting cruise was a fellow to be considered. Tubby had once planted himself on the Fistical Four for a caravanning tour, and if he wanted to play up, in his turn, it was only fair to let him.

After all, ass as he was, gaseous as he was, Tubby could scarcely be ass enough to ask fellows to a yacht that didn't exist. Tubby himself was generally hard up, but he might have well-off relations.

suggest. You will, of course, explain to them the nature of the cruise, and give them all particulars. Let me know how many are coming, so that I can make the necessary arrangements on the Silver Cloud.

"Your affectionate uncle,
"MONTAGUE MUFFIN."

Arthur Edward Lovell read that letter and re-read it, and read it again. Without being unduly suspicious, Lovell had at first a slight misgiving that Tubby might have manufactured that letter himself, in order to give colour to his "swank" in the style of Adolphus Smythe. But at the second glance Lovell knew that the letter must be genuine. It was written in a man's hand on the hotel letter-paper, and it was absurd to suppose that Tubby could have produced that handwriting, or have obtained possession of notepaper from an hotel so far off as Southampton.

"My only hat!" said Lovell.

The thing was genuine, and Lovell had a natural revulsion of feeling.

ANSWERS
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anyway—and they'll come on the yacht instead. That's settled."

"Good!" said Muffin.

He rolled off the desk.

Arthur Edward Lovell's face was much brighter when Tubby had rolled out of the Form-room. He piled into Virgil almost as if he liked it. His trouble was over. The hols were a settled thing now. He would not have to let down his chums over the vacation. And, though no doubt the chums of the Fourth would have enjoyed a holiday in Somersetshire, it was certain that a yachting cruise would be ever so much more enjoyable. Lovell was going to give them a good time—a better time than they had anticipated. And it was all through Tubby Muffin—the impetuous Tubby, whom he had always treated with a good-natured tolerance and a good deal of contempt! Arthur Edward's feelings towards Tubby Muffin, just now, were very kind indeed.

**The 5th Chapter.
Nothing Doing!**

Richard Dalton frowned a little as Lovell came into his study with a sheaf of impot paper in his hand. He was prepared for badly written lines and a still worse translation, and more impertinence from the sulky junior, and he disliked very much the idea of inflicting further

TUBBY MUFFIN'S INVITATION!

(Continued from page 55.)

"Eh?"
"What?"
"Which?"
"For goodness' sake, let Muffin alone!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell irritably. "I know he's a bit of a fat boulder, and he borrows half-crowns and never remembers to hand them back! I know all that! But he's got his good points, all the same, and he's a friend of mine."

"Well, he's not a friend of ours, and I'll take the liberty of speaking of him as I've always done!" said Newcome tartly. "And as you did until this very minute, too!"

Jimmy Silver regarded Lovell in surprise. This sudden championship of Tubby Muffin was really astonishing, wilful fellow as Lovell was. Lovell was always very positive in his opinions, and when fellows did not agree with him he put it down to stupidity or obstinacy, or a mixture of the two. But if fellows did agree with him, and he changed his opinion, then it was another case of stupidity or obstinacy if they did not change also. But, really, it was asking a great deal of his friends to require them to change their long-fixed opinion of Reginald Muffin. They regarded that fat youth with a good-natured contempt and derision, and they still so regarded him in spite of the change on the part of Arthur Edward.

"The fact is—" said Lovell, and he paused.

"Oh, all right," said Jimmy Silver resignedly. "Muffin's a friend of yours, is he? Only yesterday you kicked him out of the study for pilfering our cake. To-day he's your pal. Well, I can stand Muffin—at a distance. But he's not a pal of mine, and never will be. When he leaves off cadging half-crowns and burgling study cupboards and gassing about his uncle's yacht I will think about it."

"Not till then!" agreed Raby.

Lovell breathed hard. "Then you don't feel disposed to put up with Muffin's company for the vacation?" he asked.

"Oh, my hat! Have you asked him?" exclaimed Jimmy in amazement. "If you have, I suppose we can be civil to him in your father's house. He's a fat tick, but there's not much harm in him. We can stand Muffin."

"Of course we can!" grunted Raby. "Why the thump couldn't you say at once that you'd asked him home, Lovell? You've a right to ask any fellow you like, I suppose."

Lovell shifted uncomfortably. "I haven't asked him; he's asked me."

"Wha-a-at?"
"I wish you fellows would take it decently!" exclaimed Lovell. "Muffin's asked me for the vac, and asked me to bring my friends. I've promised for you, as you were coming with me, anyhow."

There was a deep silence in the end study. Jimmy Silver & Co. were too amazed to speak.

"Well?" snapped Lovell. "Haven't you anything to say?"

"Blessed if I know what to say!" answered Jimmy Silver. "Muffin gasses about his place—he's an echo of Smythe and Howard of the Shell in that line. But you know as well as I do that there's nothing in it. I wouldn't say so to poor old Tubby, as he likes to swank, but we know very well that he can't ask a party home for the hols. I can fancy his father's face if he walked four Rookwood fellows into their semi-detached villa at Peckham."

"I don't mean that he's asked us home," said Lovell sharply. "I don't know anything about his home, and don't want to. He's asked us for a yachting cruise on his uncle's yacht, the Silver Cloud."

"What!" roared three voices.

"Well, is there anything to yell about in that?" demanded Lovell. "Muffin's uncle owns a yacht, and he's willing to take a party of school-boys on a cruise in August. He's written to Muffin to say so, and Muffin has asked us first. Jolly decent of him, I think. We haven't treated him so jolly well that we've got much claim on him, so far as that goes."

Raby gasped. "You mean to say you swallow that silly piffle of Muffin's about his uncle's yacht?" he shouted.

"It isn't piffle!"

"It jolly well is piffle, and you know it, or ought to know it," said Raby angrily. "You'd have laughed at it yourself if you hadn't got this bee in your bonnet. I remember you cackling last break-up, when Muffin asked us if we'd like to have Easter at Muffin Manor. I remember you asking him whether it was a semi-detached manor."

Lovell coloured.

"Look here, old man!" said Jimmy Silver seriously. "Let's know what this means. That ass Smythe has been swanking about yachting cruises, and Muffin's heard him and followed on as usual. If Muffin's uncle is a captain, he's captain of a

coal barge or a Thames steamer. If you choose to think for a minute, you know it. It's not against Muffin that his people are poor, but they're not people who can afford to keep yachts and take parties on cruises—that runs to more money than the Muffins can chuck away."

"Rot!" said Lovell. "I suppose you'll be repeating Peele's yarn next, that Muffin's fees here are always in arrears."

"Peele was a cad to nose it out; but I've no doubt it's true," answered Jimmy. "Most people are short of money since the War; and the Muffins are not well-off people."

"Well, I believe him, and I've accepted his invitation for the yachting cruise, for myself, and you fellows as well."

Raby shrugged his shoulders. "Let's ask you one question, Lovell," he said quietly. "Has anything happened to prevent you from carrying out the arrangement we made to come home with you?"

Lovell crimsoned. "My people are going up to Scotland for the summer," he said. "I—I was going to tell you —"

"You old duffer," said Jimmy Silver, "so that's what's been bothering you; as if it matters. I'll send a wire to my father, and we'll go down to Wiltshire instead. What does it matter where we go, so long as we all go together?"

"Of course," said Raby. "That's all right."

"Right as rain!" said Newcome.

Arthur Edward Lovell rose to his feet, his tea unfinished. His face was burning. Only too obviously his chums supposed that he had accepted Tubby's egregious invitation in order to avoid owning up that he couldn't take them anywhere for the vac. It did not occur to Lovell that possibly that consideration had weighed with him, in giving faith to Tubby. He stared at the three across the tea-table.

"I've accepted Tubby Muffin's invitation—"

"Oh, rot!"
"I'm going with him, whether you fellows come or not. Are you coming?"

"Oh, don't be an ass, old chap! It's all gas."

"Then you can go and eat coke!"

Lovell strode to the door.

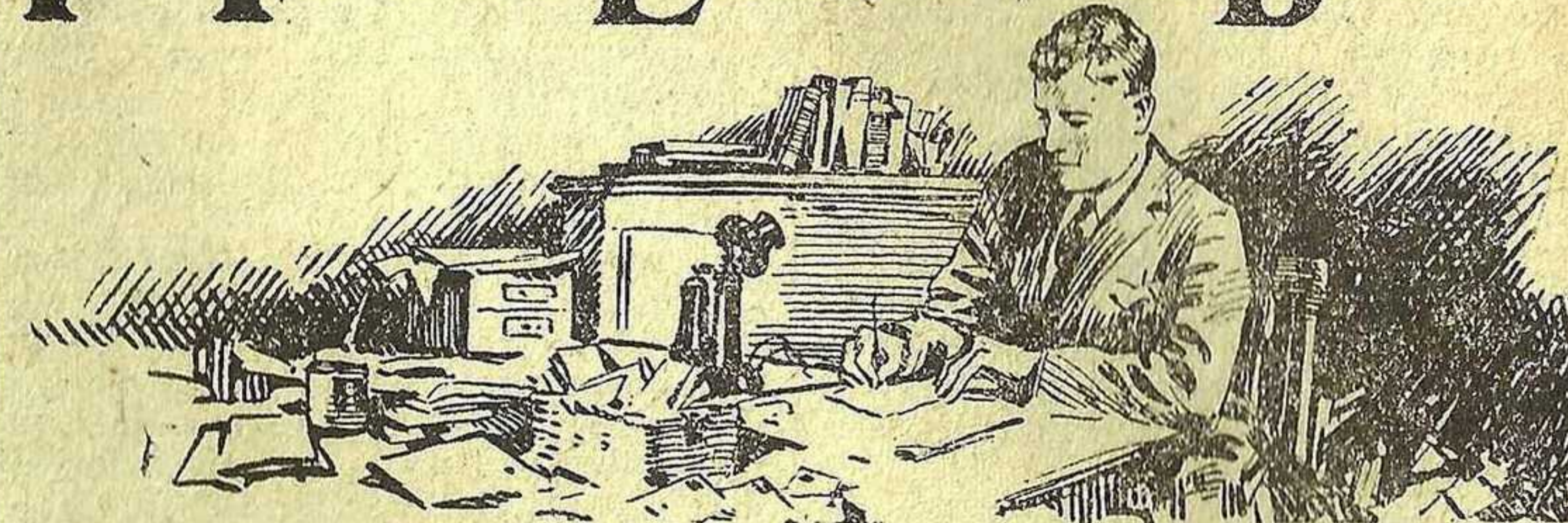
"Look here, Lovell—"

But Arthur Edward Lovell did not "look there." He strode out of the end study and closed the door after him with a bang that rang from one end of the Fourth-Form passage to the other.

THE END.

(It's a scream—"Paying Guests!" Next Monday's magnificent long holiday story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School. Don't miss it on any account! Order your copy of the 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.

HURRAH FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Once again the summer holidays are here, and, as you will see when you read "Tubby Muffin's Invitation!" this week's great Rookwood story, Jimmy Silver & Co. are about to depart from the old school on vacation. This magnificent tale is the first of a grand new series of holiday stories which Mr. Owen Conquest is specially writing, at my request, for the Boys' Friend. There is hardly any need for me to inform you that you will enjoy every story in this series, for you all know what ripping yarns Mr. Owen Conquest gives you. What I will say, however, is that all your pals would also enjoy the stirring adventures of the chums of Rookwood School, so just put them wise to these splendid tales.

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME.

As can be expected, there are many breathless situations in the long instalments of "Knights of the Wheel!" and "The Three Gold Feathers!" for Monday next. In addition to these two great new serials, the coming issue of your favourite paper will contain "Paying Guests!" a screamingly funny story of the chums of Rookwood School on holiday, "In Hot Water!" another lively adventure of the boys of the school-ship Bombay Castle in Japan, and "Foul Play!" a stunning cricket story featuring that popular boy cricketer, Jim Gryce. You will also find in the old "Green Un" for next week a further interesting cricket article by "Mid-Off," and, of course, the result of "A.B.C.'s" Competition No. 3. Look out for this, boys, for you may be among the prize winners.

A HUNTING HE WOULD GO!

A very unusual request reaches me from a would-be huntsman! How is the writer to get a situation in a hunt? Of course, there are not many openings in this line. I should recommend him to study the advertisements in a paper like "The Field," offering jobs as whippers-in, first and second huntsmen, and so forth. I take it that this correspondent knows something of horses, grooming, etc., and that he is fond of them, otherwise his search for work will be fruitless.

GARDENING AS A HOBBY.

It is a very excellent hobby, too, and, moreover, one which will lead to serious work in the open market if a fellow who takes to it finds that his real calling lies in horticulture. "Jim," of Chorley, sends me a long and particularly interesting letter on this subject, and he expresses his surprise that more fellows do not take up gardening. Jim has turned his mother's back yard into a delightful flower garden, with no more expense than the cost of a few packets of flower seeds. He is absolutely right in what he says, but, naturally it means work. If you drop into any flower show you will see at once that the charming bits of garden which have been made owe their success to ingenuity far more than to outlay in hard cash.

STITCH WHEN RUNNING.

I am passing on the complaint about this trouble which reaches me from an Irish reader, to Mr. Percy Longhurst, our Health and Training Expert. Mr. Longhurst will go into the matter thoroughly. That trouble is due, of course, in the main to wrong diet. Heavy and indigestible foods are usually the cause of stitch. Attention to rules of health, and some good training will cause the evil to vanish.

HE CAN'T SPELL.

There is no magic which will make a fellow a good speller if it is not his nature to. "Perplexed," of Hartlepool, tells me his job in an insurance office is in jeopardy because he gets the words wrong. All I can tell him is this—he must read and memorise the words about which there are any doubts, for instance those engaging little "double" words which double cross one. He should get hold of a book on the language, and devote ten minutes to the theory of derivations. All classical scholars are not good spellers, but they might be, for they know how a word comes into our language, and why. They understand its parentage. But classics are often rotten spellers. My insurance chum must focus his mind on the business, and just force himself into familiarity with words. It is the only way. He must cheer up, burn a little midnight oil, and have faith. He can remember, too, that, as indicated, the learned, highbrow lot often make blunders in this way.

KEEP YOUR HAIR ON!

C. M., of Liverpool, is much bothered because his hair is coming off in great patches. This is a sign of weak health. He ought to get overhauled by a doctor to see what exactly is wrong. An excellent recipe for strengthening the hair is the following lotion: Two ounces of eau-de-Cologne, one ounce of tincture of cantharides, half a drachm of oil of rosemary. Any chemist and druggist will make up this prescription, and my Liverpool chum will find the blend efficacious.

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY.

And now, in passing, I want to draw your attention once again to Nos. 7 and 8 of this grand school-story library. These books can be obtained at all newsagents, price 4d. each. In No. 7 is a topping, long story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars School, and in No. 8 is an exciting long tale of Tom Merry & Co., the world-famous chums of St. Jim's School. Secure your copies at once, chums. Otherwise you may be too late!

Your Editor.

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