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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending January 16th, 1926.]

H.R.H., INSIDE-RIGHT!

by Sydney Horler



The 1st Chapter.

The Prowler!

"WHAT are you doing here?" Harry Grey, lunging forward, caught the skulker by the shoulder. He did not like the look of the fellow. What was he doing trespassing in the school grounds?

"What's up, Harry?" demanded Tim Swainson, coming up at that moment.

"I found this fellow skulking about, looking up at the dorm windows. Here"—turning to the trespasser—"you haven't answered me yet. What was your idea in coming in here? Didn't you know that these grounds were private property?"

The man snivelled.

"It's a 'ard world, gov'nor!" he whined. "I only crept in 'ere out of the rain. I 'aven't had bite or sup all this lifelong day, and nowhere to put my 'ead, either. Don't be too 'ard on a poor feller wot's willin' to do work, but can't find anythin'."

Harry instantly put his hand into his pocket. There were a good many wrong 'uns about, no doubt, but whenever he could he always gave, on the off chance of that case being a deserving one. He now pulled out half-a-crown.

"Here's enough to get you a bed to-night and something to eat," he said, proffering the coin; "but you must clear out of these grounds or you'll get into trouble. This is St. Colston's School, and these grounds are private property."

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the tramp to the stalwart schoolboy.

And with that he shuffled away down the drive.

"Do you think we'd better see him off the premises, Harry?" inquired Tim.

"In spite of his thanks, I think it would be better," replied his pal.

Following closely on the heels of the intruder, they had the satisfaction of watching the man lurch through the heavy iron gates at the end of the winding carriage-drive. Then they turned.

"Rather rummy that, coming on top of your chat with old Beazer, don't you think?" commented Swainson, as they strolled schoolwards.

Harry Grey laughed.

"You're stretching things, old son," he answered. "What possible connection can there be between what old Beazer told me and that dirty-looking tramp?"

Tim's eyes shone behind his spectacles. Tim was by way of fancying himself a bit of an amateur detective, and there was a thrill in his voice as he said:

"Well, didn't old Beazer"—it was in this disrespectful way that the two pals referred to the Head of St. Colston's—"say to-night that there was some mystery about your birth, but that he was not in possession of sufficient information to be able to throw much light on the subject? Tell me again, old man, exactly what he did say," continued Tim, his eyes bright with insatiable curiosity.

It wasn't Harry Grey's nature to be effusive with information about himself, but Tim was a pal of tried and trusted standing.

"Well, he had me in, looked at me queerly—you know how he can look at a fellow!—and then sort of mellowed. Became quite matey, in fact. First of all, he wanted to know all I could remember about myself when I was a tiny chee-ild—which wasn't much, let me tell you—and then startled your humble by saying: 'Soon I may have remarkable, even astonishing news to give you, Grey! What it is I am not in the position to state clearly at the moment, but apparently there is some mystery about your birth, and before long, as I have already said, I may be able to give you feally astonishing news. In the meantime, I think it would be wise if you regarded what I have told you as being strictly personal and confidential!'"

Swainson gasped when his pal had come to an end.

"I shouldn't be surprised if you aren't worth pots and pots of cash!" he said. "And I'll tell you what—that chap you ordered out of the grounds just now has got hold of the yarn, and he's been sent to spy out the land. Suppose you were attacked in the night

THE DIRECTOR'S THREAT!

"Mr. Referee, if you don't send that man off, I shall remove my team from the field!" cried the enraged director.

(Continued overleaf.)

BACK AT ROOKWOOD AGAIN, CYRIL PEELE LOSES NO TIME IN STIRRING UP STRIFE IN THE FOURTH FORM!



Too Clever By Half!

By
Owen Conquest

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

**Peele's rascally scheme is
nipped in the bud by the
Fistical Four!**

The 1st Chapter.

Called to Order.

CHUCK it, Peele!"
Half a dozen Rookwood fellows spoke at once.

The carriage was crowded.

It was the opening day of the new term at Rookwood School, and Latcham Junction swarmed with Rookwooders, gathered there from all quarters of the kingdom.

The local train from Latcham to Coombe did not accommodate half the fellows who wanted seats in it. The second train was to start ten minutes later. But nobody wanted to wait for the second train. So every carriage in the local was full—in fact, overfull. Some fellows sat on seats, some sat on other fellows' knees, and some were standing.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, had tumbled into a carriage, and Mornington and Erroll followed them in, then Peele and Gower. Then came Tubby Muffin and Jones minor and Oswald; and after that fresh arrivals had to scamper along the train—there was no room for more. Arthur Edward Lovell jammed the door shut and held the handle and grinned cheerily at excited faces that glared in at the window.

With eleven fellows crammed somehow into the carriage, there was little room to move, and not too much breathing-space. The local inspector certainly would not have considered that that carriage had a sufficient number of cubic feet for so many inhabitants.

And then Cyril Peele felt it incumbent on him to light a cigarette.

In the holidays, Peele of the Fourth was accustomed to letting himself go, in a manner that was not quite practicable at Rookwood under the eyes of masters and prefects. During the Christmas vacation Peele had consumed innumerable cigarettes. That gentle relaxation had to be given up, or at least indulged with great secrecy, once he was back at Rookwood. So the black sheep of the Fourth was allowing himself a last smoke in the train.

There was at once a chorus of indignant protest from the other fellows.

In his study at Rookwood, with the door locked, or behind the woodshed Peele could smoke like a furnace if he liked, so far as the rest of the Classical Fourth were concerned. But it was a different matter in a closely crowded railway carriage. Cyril Peele's doggishness was quite out of place there, as it caused general discomfort.

"Chuck it, Peele!"

"Stop that, you ass!"

Peele shrugged his shoulders, and blew out a cloud of smoke. Tubby Muffin, who was standing in front of him, caught it. There was a sudden explosion of coughing and snorting from Reginald Muffin.

"Grooogh! Hooch! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Chuck it, Peele!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Rats!" retorted Peele independently. "We're not at Rookwood yet. Time enough to toe the line and be good little boys when we get there. Mind your own bizney, Silver."

"You smoky rotter!" boomed Arthur Edward Lovell. "Do you think you're

going to turn this carriage into a giddy tap-room? Chuck that out of the window at once."

"Grooogh-hooch!" spluttered Tubby.

"Look here, Peele—"

"Don't play the giddy ox."

"It's too thick!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern Fourth stopped at the carriage door and looked in at the open window.

"Room in here—"

"No room for Moderns!" grinned Lovell, grasping the door-handle again. "Try next door."

Tommy Dodd sniffed.

"Come on, chaps," he said. "We don't want to travel with a mob of smoky Classicals. Mind a prefect doesn't catch you fellows."

The Moderns sniffed and walked down the train.

Arthur Edward Lovell glared.

Only Peele was smoking; but Tommy Dodd had classed them all together as smoky Classicals. It was intensely irritating to Lovell. He fixed a wrathful glare on Peele across the carriage.

"Look here, Peele, you dingy sweep—" he roared.

"Oh, can it?" said Peele airily. "I'll stand you a smoke, if you want one. I've got plenty."

"Why, you—you—you—" spluttered Lovell.

Another arrival stopped at the carriage door and looked in.

"Any room— Why, what—"

"Dicky!" ejaculated Raby.

It was Mr. Richard Dalton, the master of the Fourth, affectionately called Dicky by the dutiful members of his Form.

Mr. Dalton glanced quite pleasantly into the carriage; but the pleasant look vanished from his face instantly as his eyes fixed on Cyril Peele with the cigarette in his mouth.

Peele had no time to remove it.

There it was—smoking, sending up little curls of blue smoke, in the full view of his Form master.

"Peele!" thundered Mr. Dalton.

"Oh!" gasped Peele.

"Take that cigarette from your mouth at once."

Peele obeyed.

"Throw it from the carriage."

The half-smoked cigarette descended on the line.

"How dare you, Peele?"

"I—I—"

Really, Cyril Peele did not know what to say. He had dared, because he had not known that he would be seen—he had not expected a Form master of Rookwood to glance into the carriage; indeed, he had not known that Richard Dalton was returning to the school by that train at all. He had felt quite safe from observation, crammed in a crowded carriage full of junior fellows.

"You young rascal! How dare you? Smoking!"

"I—I—" Peele gasped. "I—I—we're not at Rookwood yet, sir."

"What!"

"I smoke in the hols, sir."

"That is a matter for your parents to deal with, Peele; but I am quite assured that you indulge in such a foolish vice without their knowledge," said Mr. Dalton sternly. "Do you venture to tell me that your father has given you permission to smoke, at your age?"

Peele was silent.

The other juniors were silent, too. Generally, there was sympathy for any fellow "caught out" by a master. But nobody had much sympathy to waste on Peele.

"You are beginning the new term very badly, Peele!" said Mr. Dalton sternly.

"We're not at Rookwood yet, sir," said Peele sullenly.

"What difference does that make, boy?"

"Well, I think it does, sir," said Peele. "Rookwood rules don't begin till we get to Rookwood, I suppose."

Mr. Dalton knitted his brows.

"I suppose that is intended for impertinence, Peele. I shall not bandy words with you. Step out of this carriage."

"But, sir—"

"You are not to be trusted to travel, Peele, without disgracing your school and bringing the name of Rookwood into contempt!" said Mr. Dalton severely. "I shall take you with me, under my observation. Step from the carriage at once."

Peele reluctantly rose to his feet.

"We can make room for you in this carriage, sir," said Jimmy Silver diffidently. "We shouldn't mind standing."

"Pleased, sir!" said Newcome.

"Honoured, sir!" said Valentine Mornington.

Mr. Dalton smiled.

"Thank you, but the carriage is too crowded already," he said. "I shall take the second train. Come with me, Peele."

The black sheep of the Fourth descended unwillingly to the platform. He did not want to take the second train and he did not want to travel in the company of Richard Dalton, under the Form master's vigilant eye. But there was no help for it.

"Stand back, there!"

Slam, slam, slam!

"We're off!" said Lovell.

The train started.

Jimmy Silver & Co. went buzzing cheerily down the line to Coombe. A crowd of Rookwooders were left on the platform at the Junction, and Arthur Edward Lovell, glancing back from the window, grinned as he saw Peele standing by the side of the Form master, scowling. Once more Cyril Peele was finding that the way of the transgressor was hard.

The 2nd Chapter.

Mr. Dalton Has His Doubts.

MR. DALTON! How do you do, sir?"

"Mr. Greely!"

The portly master of the Fifth rolled through the crowd on the platform like a stately galleon amid cockleshells, and greeted the Fourth Form master in his portly, ponderous way.

Mr. Dalton shook hands with him.

The Fifth Form master stopped, evidently for conversation. Possibly Richard Dalton could have dispensed with the portly, ponderous conversation of Horace Greely; but courtesy to an elder gentleman came first.

"We meet once more," said Mr. Greely. "Once more unto the breach—what, what, as Shakespeare expresses it. What? And where have you been, Mr. Dalton?" Mr. Greely did not pause for a reply—he seldom did. "I have returned invigorated from the Swiss mountains. Mr. Dalton, like a giant refreshed with wine—what, what?"

Mr. Dalton glanced down at the scowling junior.

"Peele, go into the waiting-room and stay there till I come for you."

"Yes, sir!" grunted Peele.

He was annoyed at being shut up in the waiting-room; but he was glad, at least, to get away from the two masters. He did not enjoy portly and ponderous talk from Mr. Greely.

Leaving Mr. Greely to talk of winter sports in the Alps and the shameless over-charging at Swiss hotels, in a deep and booming voice that was heard by half the people in the railway station, Cyril Peele loafed into the waiting-room.

The platform and the buffet at Latcham were swarming; but the dingy, stuffy waiting-room was quite deserted.

Peele had it all to himself.

He threw himself on a seat and drove his hands deep into his pockets and scowled.

He had ten minutes at least to wait there—probably more, as the trains were generally late. His pal Gower had gone on in the first train, and there was nobody for him to speak to. He sat and scowled at the crowds of faces passing and re-passing.

Peele was in a savage mood.

His smoking in the railway carriage had been more bravado than anything else, to show off to the Rookwooders what a doggish fellow he was, and to give the impression

that he had been having a deuce of a time in the holidays. It was very unpleasant and humiliating to be called to order in the presence of the other fellows, and it was still more unpleasant to anticipate what was to happen when he reached Rookwood. In all probability he would begin the term with a caning from his Form master. Peele had never liked Richard Dalton, and now he felt that he disliked him intensely. He had more cigarettes in his pocket, and was tempted to smoke one in the waiting-room; but he did not venture to yield to that temptation.

In sheer irritable boredom, he picked up the Latcham paper, which some earlier traveller had left lying on the seat, and glanced down its columns.

He grunted discontentedly as he looked at it.

The "Latcham Times" was not an entertaining sheet.

Half of it was advertisements, and the other half, consisting chiefly of local news items, was still heavier reading.

Of the two, Peele preferred the advertisements.

A considerable portion of the front page was occupied by the interesting announcement that a gentleman of the name of Spindles was prepared to advance any sum in cash, from £50 to £5,000, on note-of-hand alone.

This generous gentleman, according to his own statements, made no inquiries whatever, and the matter was conducted with the strictest secrecy.

If Mr. Spindles was to be trusted, you had simply to walk into his office at Latcham, state how much money you required, and walk away with it. An easier method of tiding over financial difficulties could not have been imagined—if Mr. Spindles was to be trusted.

Probably he was not to be trusted.

Peele grinned sourly as he read it.

In point of fact, Peele had come back from the holidays in a hard-up state, and he would have been very glad indeed to avail himself of Mr. Spindles' generous offer, had there been anything in it! Nothing would have delighted Peele more than to walk into Mr. Spindles' office at Latcham and borrow any sum from £50 to £5,000, without inquiries and without security. Peele had more knowledge of the world than most Rookwood juniors—more than was good for a fellow of his age, in fact; but even without that he would have guessed that this generous offer was made merely in order to enable the astute Mr. Spindles to get into touch with "mugs."

But Peele found the advertisement amusing. There was a tincture of roguery in the black sheep of the Fourth, and he had a touch of fellow-feeling for Mr. Spindles in his desire to live without work at the expense of "mugs."

"Peele!"

It was Mr. Dalton's voice in the doorway of the waiting-room.

Peele started and looked up.

"Yes, sir!"



RUCTIONS IN THE END STUDY! "You dance 'Look out!' yelled Mornington. But it was too hefty a fellow as Lovell standing on it. It needed lurching, and Lovell fell to the study floor with a—
Lovell sat on the

"What are you reading?" Mr. Dalton frowned. "I should scarcely have supposed, Peele, that there was any interest for a Rookwood boy in a moneylender's advertisement."

Peele set his teeth. The brute had the eyes of a hawk, he said to himself. What did it matter to him, anyhow, what Peele was reading?

Mr. Dalton seemed to think that it mattered. His eyes were fixed very intently on Peele, and his brow was dark and thoughtful. His glance was very searching.

"Peele," he said very quietly, "last term at Rookwood you were in trouble more than once."

"That's over, sir," said Peele uneasily. "I—I hope to do better this term, sir."

"Your smoking in the railway carriage does not promise much in the way of amendment, Peele. What you do in the holidays is a matter for your parents; but I am afraid, Peele, that in the vacation you have somewhat forgotten what is expected of a Rookwood boy."

Peele was savagely silent. He wondered whether the beast was going to call him over the coals for what he had done in the vac. As if he could know, though perhaps he could guess!

"Are you in debt, Peele?"

Peele jumped.

"In—in debt, sir?"

"Yes. Answer my question."

"No, sir!" gasped Peele. "I—I owe Gower a pound, and—Lattrey ten bob, sir—that's nothing."

"And that is all?"

"Yes, sir!" breathed Peele. Surely the brute could have no suspicion of a certain debt that Peele had left over from last term—a little sporting affair with Mr. Hook at the Bird-in-Hand! But, really, there was no telling what Mr. Dalton might know or suspect. He was as keen as a razor. Peele felt an inward sinking.

"Very good, Peele," said Mr. Dalton. "It is unwise to get into even small debts among your schoolfellows; but such trifling matters are not for my cognizance. Anything more serious—"

"Oh, no, sir! Nothing."

"I am glad to hear it! Bear in mind, Peele, that any Rookwood boy discovered to have any relations with a moneylender would be expelled from the school by Dr. Chisholm."

Peele stared at him and almost laughed.

So that was Dicky Dalton's idea—through seeing him reading the moneylender's advertisement and remembering certain little episodes of the previous term!

As if Peele would be ass enough to under-stand the fly that walked into the spider's parlour! He might be dingy and disreputable enough; but ass enough—never.

"I was just looking at the paper, sir!" he said quite lightly. "I wasn't thinking of borrowing any money from anybody, sir."

"Very good, Peele. I felt bound to give you a warning, as your past conduct has forced me to feel serious doubts about you."

said the master of the Fourth. "Now come with me."

Peele threw down the paper and followed the Form master from the waiting-room.

He had to get into the same carriage in the second train with Richard Dalton, where he had the happiness—or otherwise—of finding himself also in the company of Mr. Greely. There were also Knowles and Bulkeley of the Sixth in the carriage; no other junior besides Peele.

The black sheep of the Fourth sat with a sullen face through a dreary journey.

The two seniors joined sometimes in the conversation of the masters; they were prefects, great men of the Sixth. The junior, of course, had to sit silent.

Peele sat bored and sulky. He was angry and annoyed, and he had a sense of grievance, too! Just because he had been idly scanning the advertisements in the "Latham Times," Mr. Dalton had supposed that he might be thinking of applying to a moneylender for help in liquidating some imaginary debt. Peele did not reflect that his own past record had given his Form master ample reason to be thus doubtful of him, and that the warning Mr. Dalton had uttered had been kindly meant. Listening to the ponderous periods of Mr. Greely, Peele was bored and weary, and he found some malicious satisfaction in nursing his resentment against his Form master. A fellow might be sacked for going to a moneylender—likely enough, and serve him right, too, for being such an ass! Peele was never likely to play the goat to that extent, even if Joey Hook worried him for that old debt. Peele, though for different reasons, was no more likely to call on Mr. Spindles than was Richard Dalton himself. Richard Dalton, indeed, was the more likely of the two, Peele told himself sourly, as nearly everybody at Rookwood knew that he had relations to support on his salary. And from that reflection Cyril Peele's sharp, malicious mind worked on, and his eyes glinted curiously as they were turned on the master of the Fourth. An idea was working in Peele's active brain.

"Coombe!"

The carriage emptied.

Gower and Lattrey of the Classical Fourth were on the platform waiting for Peele. They signed to him as he stepped out of the carriage after the masters and prefects.

"Can I go with my friends, sir?" asked Peele meekly. The three young rascals had planned a little "run" before turning up at Rookwood.

"You will remain with me till we reach the school, Peele!" answered Mr. Dalton.

"But, sir—"

"That is enough, Peele."

And Peele set his teeth and was silent.

The 3rd Chapter. Just Like Lovell!

"HERE we are, here we are, here we are again!" sang Arthur Edward Lovell cheerfully, if not specially musically.

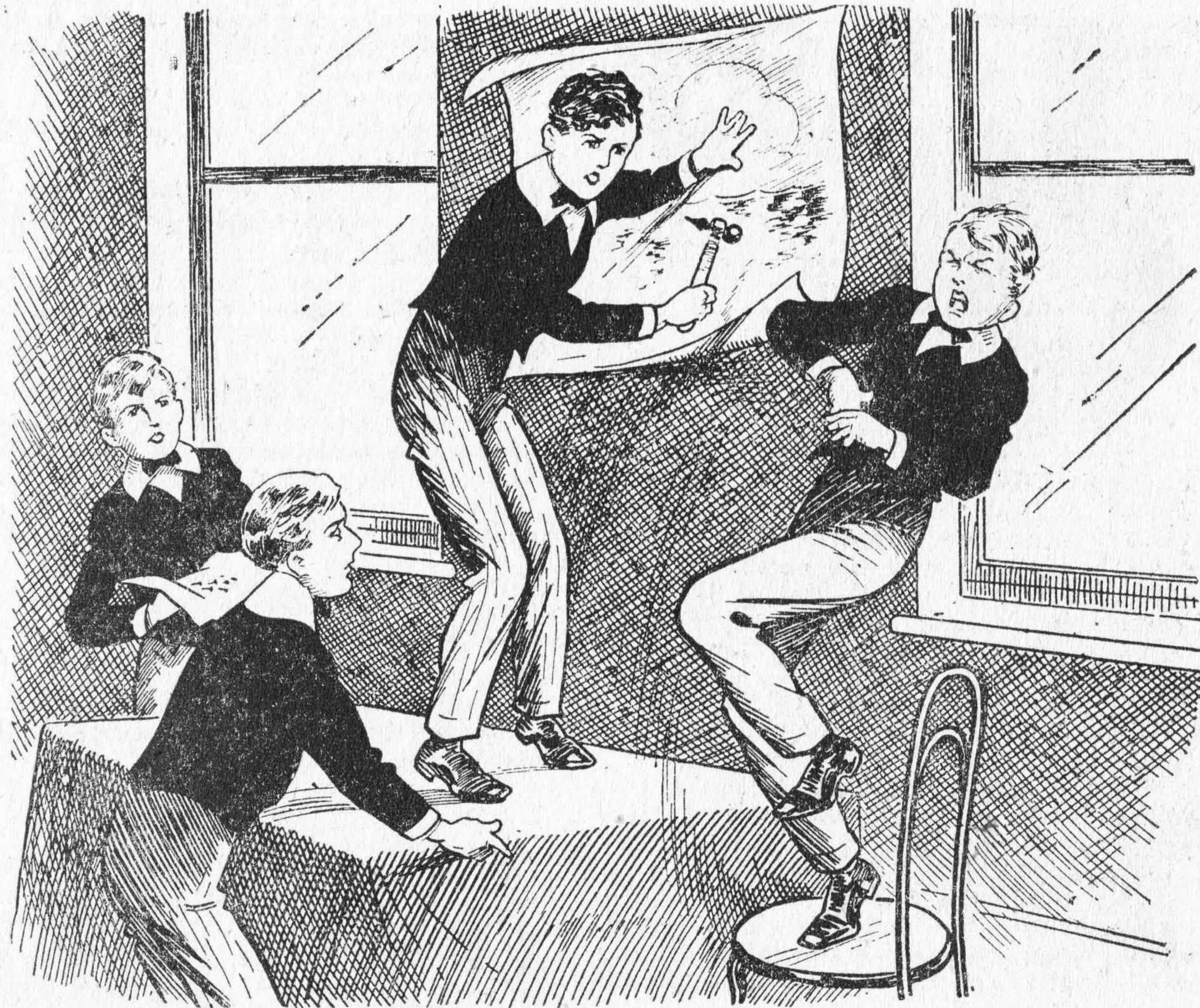
The Fistical Four were in the end study. The first rush was over; medical certificates had been handed in, night bags unpacked, names called over by the Head, notices on the board scanned and commented upon and criticised. Now the chums of the Classical Fourth had taken possession of their old study.

Downstairs fellows were still crowding in Hall, talking and greeting old acquaintances, scanning new boys—disparagingly, of course—telling one another about the "hols" in an incessant buzz of voices. Other fellows were taking possession of their studies, or roaming the old passages—or even larking on the big staircase—first night of the term being a time of unusual liberty and license. Jimmy Silver & Co. had taken possession of the end study, and were glad to find themselves in their old quarters again. Arthur Edward Lovell had brought back a picture for the decoration of the study—rolled up under his coat, and he was anxious to get it stuck up for the general beautification of the room. Lovell had borrowed a hammer and tacks—that being the method by which pictures were hung as a rule in junior studies.

Jimmy Silver started a fire; it was cold, and a fire was home-like. Raby unpacked a parcel brought in from the tuckshop. Newcome filled the study kettle at the tap in the passage, and sorted out the teapot. The Fistical Four were all very busy and very cheerful. Lovell was busiest and cheerfulest of all. He unrolled his picture on the study table, and called on his comrades for admiration.

"Topping, isn't it?" he inquired.

His comrades agreed that it was topping. There was plenty of colour in that picture, at least, and the fact that it had been given



CARELESS OF LOVELL! "Hold that corner with one hand, and the other corner with the other, old man," said Lovell. "I'm putting a tack in this corner first—" "Yaroooh!" roared Newcome. Lovell had missed the tack, but his blow with the hammer was not altogether wasted; it had caught Newcome's finger!

away as an advertisement of Somebody's Wonderful Biscuits did not detract from its merits. Lovell had cut off the allusion to biscuits from the bottom of the picture, leaving the work of art on its own.

"It will brighten the study!" said Lovell.

"It will!" agreed Jimmy Silver, gazing at an ultramarine sea and a crimson sunset in the work of art. "It would brighten the Black Hole of Calcutta, old chap. We'll stick it up after supper."

"We'll stick it up now," said Lovell.

"Between the windows—what?"

"Go it!"

"I shall want the table to stand on."

"I was just going to lay the table for supper, old bean," said Raby. "We've asked Morny and Erroll and Putty of the Fourth."

"That's all right; I sha'n't be long!"

Arthur Edward Lovell dragged the study table between the two windows, and mounted upon it. The end study was fortunate in possessing two windows; most of the rooms in the passage had only one. Lovell spread out the big oleograph on the wall, and cocked his head on one side to look at it.

"All right, what?" he asked.

"Topping! Get on with it," said Raby.

"No good hurrying over a thing like this, Raby," said Lovell. "We want it to look nice. Is that straight?"

"Straight as a string," said Newcome.

"Hand me the hammer, Jimmy."

"Here you are."

"Stand by to hold the tacks, will you?"

"Oh, yes!"

"You might hold the table, Raby. It wriggles."

"Oh dear! All right!"

"Get on a chair, will you, Newcome, and put a hand to this picture while I tack it."

"Oh, um! Yes."

That was Arthur Edward Lovell all over, so to speak. He was going to hang the picture; but every fellow in the study had to stand around and follow his directions while he did it.

"Hold that corner with one hand, and the other corner with the other, old man," said Lovell. "I'm putting a tack in this corner first—"

"Yaroooh!" roared Newcome.

Lovell had missed the tack, but his blow with the hammer was not altogether wasted; it had caught Newcome's finger.

Newcome jumped down from the chair and sucked his finger frantically. Lovell stared down at him.

"Did the hammer touch your finger, Newcome?"

"Ow! Wow! Wow! Goooooooooogh! Oooooop!"

Newcome's reply was a little incoherent, but it seemed to imply an affirmative.

"Clumsy!" said Lovell.

"What?"

"You hold the picture while I tack it, Jimmy."

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"Not little me! I might be clumsy, too."

"Fathead! You hold it, Raby."

"Old bean, I want all my fingers for use," explained Raby.

"You silly ass! Have I got to hang this picture without any help from you slackers?" exclaimed Lovell indignantly. "I like that!"

"Ow, ow! Wow!" mumbled Newcome, still sucking his finger. "Oh, you ass! Oh, you chump! Ow!"

Lovell grunted, and proceeded to tack up the picture unaided. Plaster flew from the wall in showers. Lovell had a heavy hand with a hammer, and the tacks did not seem to hold, somehow. He was going strong, when Mornington and Erroll and Putty of the Fourth arrived for supper.

"Hallo! Breakin' up the happy home?" inquired Mornington cheerfully.

Lovell looked round with a face crimson from exertion.

"I'm hanging a picture," he said.

"Where's the picture?"

"Here it is, ass! Haven't you any eyes?"

Morny stared at the gorgeous oleograph.

"Oh, gad! Is that a picture?"

"Yes," roared Lovell, "it is!"

"My mistake, old bean!" said Morny cordially. "Naturally I didn't know till you told me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell breathed deep.

"If you fellows are going to stand round cackling like a lot of silly greese, instead of helping a fellow hang a picture, I don't see much use in a chap trying to make the study look nice," he said. "But it's always the same—one fellow does all the work, and the others just slack about. Keep hold of the table, Raby, you ass—it's rocking. Hand me those tacks, Jimmy."

The picture, having been rolled up a long time, persisted in trying to roll itself up again. This made Arthur Edward's task more difficult, and seemed to have an irritating effect on him. A rather vicious smite with the hammer, which caught his own thumb, added to his annoyance.

"Oh!" gasped Lovell, and he let both picture and hammer drop all of a sudden as he jammed his damaged thumb into his mouth.

The picture skidded over Jimmy Silver's head; the hammer dropped on George Raby's toe.

There was a fiendish yell in the end study.

"Yooooooooop!"

Raby let go the table he was holding and danced on one leg, clasping the other foot with both hands.

"Oh! Ow! Wow! Ow!"

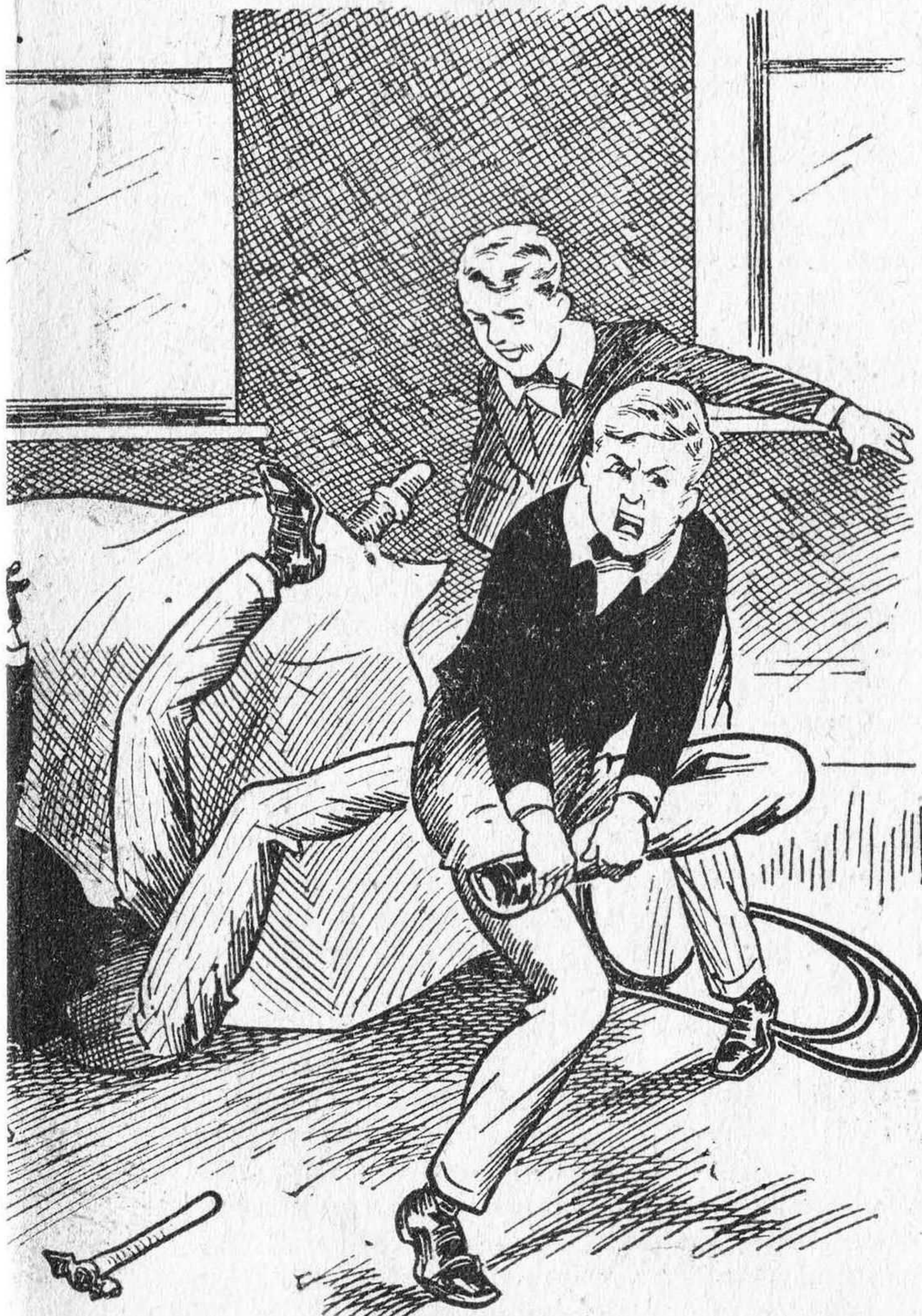
"Oh, my thumb!" ejaculated Lovell. "I've hit my thumb! All the fault of you cackling asses putting a fellow off his stroke. Oh, my hat!"

"Look out!" yelled Mornington.

But it was too late.

The study table was a little uncertain with so hefty a fellow as Arthur Edward Lovell standing on it. It needed holding—and now it was not held. It rocked and lurched, and Lovell slipped—and the law

(Continued overleaf.)



"Oop!" Raby let go the table he was holding, and d on one leg, clasping the other foot with both hands. The study table was a little uncertain, with so holding—and now it was not held. It rocked and lurched, and Lovell slipped—and the law floor and roared.

"Peele Pays the Price!" is next Monday's delightful long story of the chums of Rookwood School. Be sure you read it, boys!

The 5th Chapter. Painful for Peele!

CYRIL PEELE wore a satisfied look as he lounged in the armchair in his study with a cigarette in his mouth. In the seclusion of his study he could venture upon a cigarette. Mr. Dalton was not likely to visit the Fourth Form quarters a second time. Peele's study-mates, Lattrey and Gower, were also smoking cigarettes—a fag before turning in, as Gower expressed it in what he fondly fancied was a man-of-the-world manner. It was getting near time for dormitory now.

In all the studies of the Classical Fourth there had been talk on the subject of Mr. Spindles' advertisement—dropped, or supposed to be dropped, by Richard Dalton. Few, if any, of the Classical fellows guessed, as Erroll had done, that Peele had played a cunning trick in the matter, and the general feeling in the Classical Fourth was sympathy and concern for the popular young master, whom they supposed to be down on his luck. Gunner of the Fourth declared that it was rotten for Dicky to begin a new term with a trouble like this on his shoulders, and the other fellows agreed. Tubby Muffin speculated excitedly as to what the Head would say, and do, if he knew! It would be the order of the boot for Dicky, if he was going to moneylenders—most of the juniors thought that probable. Nobody wanted to lose the popular master of the Fourth; but Tubby Muffin pointed out that there would be a consolation. If Dalton went suddenly, probably there would be some interval before a new master was appointed, and that interval might mean quite a slack time for the Fourth. It might even mean no "construe" for a week, perhaps, which, from Tubby's point of view, was a state that was happy and glorious.

Fellows who liked Mr. Dalton—and nearly all the Fourth liked and admired him—observed that the least said the soonest mended, that Dicky wouldn't like this talked about, and that it had better not be talked about. Peele had grinned cheerily as he heard such remarks. He knew that by the morrow the incident would be a general topic, in other Forms as well as the Fourth, and that Mr. Dalton's name would be bandied up and down Rookwood in connection with that of Mr. Spindles, the usurer.

Peele was feeling quite satisfied. His view was that Mr. Dalton was going to be sorry for worrying him in the train that day, and for caning him on his arrival at Rookwood.

"Dalton will be the talk of the school tomorrow!" Gower observed, with a grin. "What on earth put the stunt into your head, Peele?"

Peele smiled sourly. "Dalton himself did," he answered. "Shut me up in the waitin'-room at Latcham, and when I was lookin' over a rotten newspaper to kill time, he found me—I was readin' Spindles' advert—and gave me a solemn warnin' what a Rookwood fellow had to expect who dealt with moneylenders. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. He gave me a warnin' to be good, and now I'm givin' him one."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "But that's only the beginnin'," said Peele, with a gleam in his eyes. "I'm goin' to give this a day or two to sink in, and then Spindles is goin' to call here to see Dalton."

Lattrey and Gower stared. "Why the thump should he?" asked Gower. "Dalton won't ask him to call—he's probably never heard of him."

"Somebody will ask him to call, on the telephone, giving Dalton's name," said Peele coolly.

"Oh, my hat!" "All Rookwood will see him call; he's pretty well known by sight; a fat old bounder," said Peele. "It will be rather a surprise for Dicky Dalton when Spindles butts in and asks for him—"

"Phew!" "He can explain it to Spindles how he likes, and he can tell all Rookwood afterwards that it was a jape. I fancy lots of the fellows won't believe him, and I'm fairly certain the Head won't!" said Peele. "The Head's rather a grim old bird. I don't envy Dalton when he's called up before Dr. Chisholm to explain why a moneylender called on him."

"You wouldn't dare!" gasped Gower. Peele shrugged his shoulders. "I say, it's awfully thick!" muttered Lattrey. "Why, if the Head's ratty, it might cost Dalton his job here." "All the better." "That's all very well; but he's not a bad sort," said Gower. "We might jolly well get a worse man in his place. You'd better think again, Peele."

"I've got it all cut and dried," said Peele coolly. "Dicky Dalton has a down on me, and I'd like to see him pushed out, and a new man put in his place. If it comes to that I shall be jolly glad."

"It's too thick!" said Gower uneasily. "Jolly risky, too. Using a man's name on the phone—"

"Who's to know?" yawned Peele. "You'll come a mucker, old man, if you play tricks of that sort. Better let it drop."

"Rats!" "Look here, Peele—" "Oh, cheese it!" said Peele. "I can take care of myself, I fancy."

"I jolly well wouldn't risk it." "I'm not askin' you to!" yawned Peele.

There was a thump at the door, and it flew open. Arthur Edward Lovell looked in and sniffed!

"Smoky rotters!" he ejaculated. "So kind of you to give us your opinion!" said Peele urbanely.

"Dorm!" growled Lovell. "I looked in to tell you."

"Thanks, old bean." Lovell, with another sniff, tramped away. Peele & Co. followed him, and joined the rest of the Classical Fourth on their way to the dormitory. Mr. Dalton was shepherding his Form to the dormitory, and many of the juniors were looking at him very curiously.

It could not be said that Richard Dalton looked like a man who had deep and serious financial troubles upon his shoulders. He

"Indeed!" said Mr. Dalton. "What is it? Of what consequence is it, Silver?"

"Would you mind looking at it, sir?" Mr. Dalton took the newspaper cutting. His brow darkened.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed. "A moneylender's advertisement—cut from some paper. You did quite right, Silver, in bringing this matter to my notice; it was your duty as head boy of the Form. Is it possible that any boy in the Fourth Form of Rookwood has any personal interest in such a thing as this?"

His eyes turned for a moment on Peele. He had not forgotten the little incident in the waiting-room at Latcham Junction.

Peele felt a deep tremor. He had not dreamed for a moment that the newspaper cutting would be handed to Mr. Dalton. Neither would it have been had not his trickery been suspected in the end study. And Peele was quite unaware even now that his trickery was suspected.

The juniors exchanged curious glances. Mr. Dalton, instead of displaying startled consciousness and confusion as might have been expected, was only perturbed and angry, and his manner and his words left no doubt as to what he was thinking—that the moneylender's advertisement had been dropped in the Fourth Form passage by some member of the Classical Fourth.

"It was picked up outside our doorway, sir," said Jimmy. "It—it was where you fell down, sir, and it was picked up a minute after you were gone."

"What do you mean, Silver?"



THE FOURTH-FORMERS MEAN BUSINESS! "We're going to give Peele a jolly good ragging for slandering our Dicky!" said Lovell. "We are!" said Jimmy Silver. "Turn out, Peele!" "Hear, hear!" "I—I say," stammered Peele. "I—I never. I—I did not—" "Can it," said Jimmy Silver. "Have him out!" Bump! Cyril Peele landed on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes.

was kind and genial as usual, and seemed in his usual good temper and good spirits. Gunner remarked to Dickinson minor that he was keeping a stiff upper-lip. The Classical Fourth crowded in, under the eye of their Form master.

"Now, then, Jimmy!" murmured Lovell. Jimmy Silver groped in his pocket for the newspaper cutting.

Jimmy had given the matter a good deal of thought during the latter part of the evening, and he was convinced now that Erroll's suggestion was well-founded, that the whole thing was one of Peele's tricks. And the best way to knock the whole affair on the head, Jimmy considered, was to "have it out" in the presence of all the Classical Fourth. There had already been any amount of excited discussion of the matter, and there was certain to be much more on the morrow, if the thing was not squashed at once. It certainly did not occur to Richard Dalton that he had been taken under the kind protection of the end study; but that was how the matter stood. He was, in fact, the unconscious object of the protective kindness of Uncle James of Rookwood.

"Mr. Dalton—sir!" said Jimmy, in a clear voice that drew glances from all parts of the dormitory upon him.

The Fourth Form master glanced at him. "Yes, Silver?"

"This paper, sir, was picked up in the Fourth Form passage this evening, outside our study."

"When it was picked up, sir, some fellows thought it belonged to you—"

"What?" "You see, sir, it looked as if you had dropped it in falling down—"

"My Coldest Night" By Capt. E. R. G. R. EVANS C.B., D.S.O., R.N.

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PICTORIAL MAGAZINE 2d On Sale Tuesday, Jan. 12th. Make sure of a copy!

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton, in great wrath. "Is it possible, Silver, that you venture to say to me, your Form master, that you supposed that I had a moneylender's advertisement, cut out of a newspaper, in my possession? Are you out of your senses, or is this impertinence?"

"Nunno, sir!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "I—I—" For the moment Uncle James of Rookwood doubted whether he had acted with his usual sagacity in taking Dicky Dalton under his kind protection.

"Explain what you mean, Silver!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton sternly.

"I—I—I mean, sir—" stuttered Jimmy. "I—I mean, some of the fellows fancied that, sir, and—and I thought—I thought the best thing to do, sir, was to hand you the paper before all the Form, sir, to knock the thing on the head at once."

Mr. Dalton stared at him. But his brow cleared. Richard Dalton was quick on the uptake, and he understood how the matter lay.

"Oh, that alters the case, Silver!" he said. "I think I understand. It is difficult for me to believe that any boy in my Form could be so stupid as to suppose that this newspaper cutting belonged to me."

"Oh!" "Hem!"

"Certainly it did not belong to me," said Mr. Dalton. "But I require to know to whom it did belong. I must know the name of the boy in whose possession it was. Some boy in the Fourth Form has kept this advertisement, and he must have a reason for doing so. The matter will have to be inquired into very strictly."

"Phew!" murmured Lovell. Cyril Peele quaked.

Mr. Dalton's eyes fixed on him.

"Peele, I found you reading this very advertisement in the waiting-room at Latcham to-day. Does this cutting belong to you?"

"No, sir!" gasped Peele. "Very well, Peele, for the present I accept your denial, but the matter will be inquired into further," said Mr. Dalton. "You may now go to bed."

The Classical Fourth turned in, and Mr. Dalton put out the lights and left the dormitory.

As soon as his footsteps had died away down the corridor Arthur Edward Lovell sat up in bed.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Arthur Edward oracularly. "You see how the matter stands. Dicky never had that paper before, as we jolly well knew in our study. Peele planted it where he picked it up. Peele would get a Head's flogging if we gave him away."

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Mornington.

"We're not going to do that, but we're going to give him a jolly good ragging for slandering our Dicky!" said Lovell.

"We are!" said Jimmy Silver. "Turn out, Peele!"

"Hear, hear!" "I—I say!" stammered Peele. "I—I never—I—I did not—"

"Can it!" said Jimmy Silver. "Have him out!"

Bump! Cyril Peele landed on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes. Oswald lighted a candle to illuminate the proceedings. Most of the Classical Fourth turned out. Lattrey and Gower sat up in bed and grinned. They had had an idea that Peele had been a little too clever, and now it seemed that they had been right.

The next five minutes were exciting ones to the black sheep of the Fourth. Every second was crammed with incident.

Long before those five minutes had elapsed Cyril Peele repented him deeply and sincerely. But five minutes would not have satisfied the incensed juniors, but the uproar in the dormitory brought Bulkeley of the Sixth on the scene, with an ash-plant in his hand, and Bulkeley, without wasting any of his valuable time in asking questions, distributed impartial whacks to all the juniors who were out of bed, and the ragers bolted back to bed like rabbits to their burrows.

"Any more of this, and you'll hear from me!" said Bulkeley, as he left the dormitory.

But there was no more. Cyril Peele had had enough. He felt as if he had had a little too much. Long after the rest of the Classical Fourth were fast asleep the black sheep of the Form was still grunting and groaning, and wishing from the bottom of his heart that he had not been quite so clever.

THE END.

(Another Rookwood winner! "Peele Pays the Price!" next Monday's stunning long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. Don't miss it, chums. Order your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND in advance and thus make certain of securing it!)

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