

*Sumner*  
X Yuletide Greetings to All X

# The POPULAR

Week Ending December 22nd, 1928.  
New Series, No. 517.

2d  
EVERY  
TUESDAY.

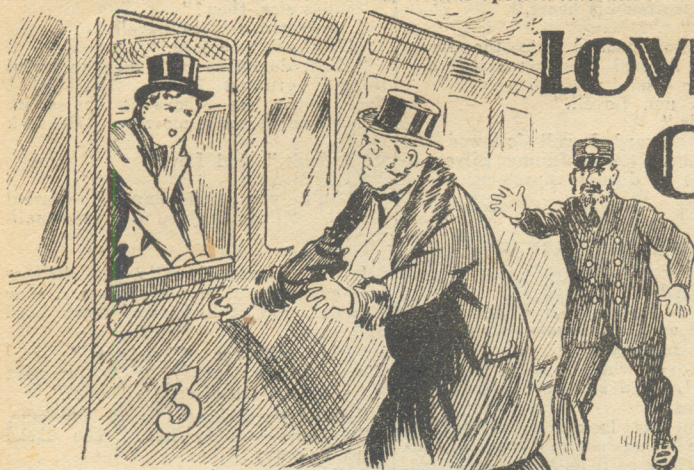


"HOLD ON, SIR! HELP IS COMING!"  
*Lovell Saves the life of his Headmaster  
Special School Tale inside!*



## NO HOLIDAY FOR LOVELL ?

He snowballed his headmaster, and as a result was ordered to stay at the school during the Christmas vacation. But Lovell did not intend to have his Christmas spoiled like this!



# LOVELL'S CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE!

A ROUSING LONG COMPLETE  
STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO.  
OF ROOKWOOD.

By  
**OWEN CONQUEST.**

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

WHIZ!

Crash!

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was a good shot—the most unerring shot Lovell

of the Fourth had ever made with a snowball. So, naturally, he was elated with his success.

It was a shot taken under difficulties, for the winter dusk was deep on the old quadrangle of Rookwood School; and the ancient stone arch that led into Little Quad was wrapped in gloom. It was rather by hearing than by sight that Arthur Edward had been guided.

He had been waiting several minutes, with a well-kneaded snowball in hand, for Carthew of the Sixth. He had spotted Carthew leaving the library door in Little Quad. The bully of the Sixth had to come through the arch into Big Quad to return to the House. So Arthur Edward Lovell had waited there in ambush.

It was the last day before breaking-up at Rookwood School; and during the term Carthew's sins had been manifold and not sufficiently punished—in the opinion of the Fourth Form, at least.

Hence Lovell's ambush by the old arch and the well-delivered snowball which was a farewell offering, so to speak, from Carthew's old enemies of the Fourth.

Lovell had waited patiently till footsteps came through the arch from Little Quad, and a dim shadow loomed in the gloom.

Then the snowball flew.

It crashed and smashed on startled features; and there was a gasping exclamation, and the sound of a heavy bump. The recipient of the snowball had sat down suddenly.

Lovell's loud laugh rang through the December mists.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A dim figure sat spluttering and gasping under the stone arch.

Lovell turned to scud away.

His shot had been eminently successful; but it was no use waiting till Carthew of the Sixth got to close quarters.

The result of that would have been painful for the unerring snowballer.

So Arthur Edward Lovell stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

He vanished across the dusky, misty quad, while the breathless gasping and spluttering and gurgling continued under the arch.

He dropped into a walk as he neared the House, however, and strolled in at the big doorway with quite a casual air.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome were chatting by the big log fire in the hall. They were discussing the Christmas holidays, which the Fistical Four were to spend together at Jimmy's home.

Lovell joined them, grinning.

"Where have you been all this time?" inquired Jimmy Silver. "And what's the little joke, anyhow?"

Lovell chuckled.

"I got Carthew of the Sixth with a snowball——"

"My hat!"

"Caught him under the arch!" chuckled Lovell. "He never saw me, and he won't know who landed him. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

"Don't give it away, of course!" grinned Lovell. "But watch his face when he comes in. I fancy he will be looking cross."

"There he is!" whispered Raby.

"Oh!"

Arthur Edward Lovell spun round—to look at Carthew of the Sixth who had just come in from the quadrangle. Carthew came across to the fire, and the juniors fell back to give him room—as in duty bound when a prefect wanted the fire.

Lovell stared at Carthew with a fixed, blank stare, as if he had seen Carthew's ghost instead of Carthew himself.

For the prefect was not looking "cross"—he was not looking excited in any way, and there were no traces of a snowball about him. He warmed his hands at the fire, and took no notice of the juniors beyond a passing scowl.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome exchanged glances. It was clear to them that Carthew of the Sixth had not bagged that unerring snowball under the arch. Had he bagged it he would have come into the House breathing fire and slaughter, in infuriated

quest of the snowballer. And certainly he would have shown traces of the snowball about him. And there were none.

"My hat!" ejaculated Lovell. He doubted the evidence of his eyes.

The Co. grinned.

They wondered who it was that Lovell had bagged with his snowball. Obviously he had bagged the wrong man—which was just like Lovell.

Somebody had collected Lovell's snowball on his startled face. But that somebody was not Carthew of the Sixth.

"I—I say, Carthew——" gasped Lovell.

The prefect glanced at him.

"Did you come through the arch from Little Quad a few minutes ago?"

"No."

"I—I thought I saw you at the library."

"I came round by the clock tower," said Carthew, with a stare. "I had to speak to the sergeant there. Why?"

"Oh!" stammered Lovell.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome chuckled. Carthew had not walked into Lovell's ambush at all; but somebody else had. They wondered who the somebody else was, and so did Lovell.

Then, all of a sudden, they knew.

A figure entered at the door, with snow clinging to his clothes, almost smothered with snow, and gasping. The face was crimson, the eyes gleamed with wrath. And Arthur Edward Lovell, with a fearful realisation of the facts dawning upon him, murmured, in a horrified murmur:

"The Head!"

### THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Just Like Lovell!

"THE Head!"

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

Lovell stood rooted to the floor. But quite a crowd of other fellows surged towards the Head.

Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, came hurrying towards him, with concern in his face. Mr. Chisholm was almost tottering.

"An accident, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

The Head spluttered.

"No, sir. An assault!" he gasped.

"Wha-a-at?"

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"I have been attacked in the dark—attacked with a snowball!" stuttered the Head. "Someone—some insolent person—some rascal—some ruffian—hurled a snowball at me."

"Is it possible?"  
"It smashed in my face!" gurgled the Head, amid a horrified silence. "It knocked me over! I was actually knocked over, Mr. Dalton—knocked off my feet—by a snowball!"

"Good gracious!"  
"The culprit must be found at once, sir," said Mr. Dalton. "Shall I request the prefects to make instant inquiry?"

"Pray do, Mr. Dalton, and let the—the young ruffian—the—the rascal—be sent to my study at once! His punishment shall be—oh dear!—exemplary! Lose not a moment!"

Carthew gave Jimmy Silver & Co. a malicious grin and stepped forward. Arthur Edward Lovell stood motionless, paralysed. He had wondered who had bagged the snowball. The discovery that it was the Head simply stunned him.

"Dr. Chisholm, I think Lovell may be able to tell you something about this," said Carthew.

"What? What?"  
"Oh dear!" groaned Lovell.  
"Stand forward, Lovell," said Mr. Dalton. "Do you know anything of this matter?"

Lovell dragged himself forward.  
He was "for it" now, that was clear. He had given himself away to Carthew, and Carthew had promptly given him away to the Head. Certainly it was the prefect's duty to report him; but in Carthew's case it was a very enjoyable duty.

"I—I never meant—" stammered Lovell.

His voice died away under the glare of his indignant headmaster.

"You threw that snowball, Lovell?"

"Yes, sir. I—"

"Enough! Come to my study in half an hour!"

"I—I—" stammered Lovell.  
"Silence!"

The Head swept on. Arthur Edward Lovell rejoined the group by the fire. He was quite pale.

"Well, you've done it now, old chap!" remarked Tubby Muffin, perhaps by way of comfort.

"You awful ass!" said Mornington.

"What the merry dickens did you snowball the Head for?"

"I—I meant it for Carthew!" groaned Lovell.

"Great gad! You duffer!"

"A floggin' or the sack!" remarked Peele of the Fourth.

"Which do you think it will be, Jimmy Silver?"

Jimmy did not answer that question. He drew Lovell away from the buzzing crowd, and the Fistical Four went up to the end study in the Fourth. It was past tea-time; but the chums of the Fourth had no appetite for tea now—especially Lovell.

Arthur Edward threw himself into the armchair and blinked dismally at his comrades.

"I've done it!" he gasped.

"You have!" agreed Newcome.

"How—how was I to know that the Head would be butting about when I was waiting for Carthew?"

Lovell's chums did not reply. It was useless to point out to Arthur Edward that he had been a reckless ass.

"Might look over it, Christmas being THE POPULAR.—No. 517.

so near," said Lovell hopefully. "Peace and good will, you know, and—and so on—might soften his heart."

"Hem!"  
Mr. Dalton looked into the study while the Fistical Four were still discussing the dismal possibilities.

"Follow me, Lovell."

"Yes, sir."  
Arthur Edward Lovell followed his Form master. And Jimmy Silver & Co. waited in dismal apprehension for his return.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Awful!

"WELL?"  
Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome shot that monosyllable at Arthur Edward Lovell when he came back.

Arthur Edward had been absent only ten minutes.

That did not look like a flogging. And as Lovell was not rubbing his hands it did not look as if he had been caned. But he was looking overwhelmed with dismay.

He almost limped into the study.

"Well?" rapped Jimmy Silver.

"Oh dear!"

"Flogged?" asked Raby.

"Ow! No!"

"Licked?" demanded Newcome.

"No. Oh dear!"

Lovell crumpled up into the armchair.

He blinked at his companions dismally in the depths of woe.

"Not sacked?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"No."

"Then what is it?" exclaimed Jimmy impatiently.

"If you're not sacked, or flogged, or even caned, what's the row?"

Lovell's answer was a deep groan.

"Jawed?" asked Raby.

"Oh, yes! That's nothing! I can stand jaw!"

"What else, then?"

A deep groan from Lovell.

"Detained," he said.

"Well, detention isn't such an awful thing!" grunted Raby.

"Besides, I don't quite see where it comes in. There's no classes to-morrow. We break up."

"I don't," said Lovell.

"Eh?"

"Can't you understand?" howled Lovell.

"I'm detained over the holidays!"

"What!"

Lovell groaned dismally. The chopper had come down on the hapless Arthur Edward, and it had come down hard and heavy.

"Detained for Christmas!" said Jimmy Silver blankly.

"Oh, my hat! Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Awful hard cheese!" said Newcome.

"But—but— My hat! The Head must be waxy!"

"Waxy isn't the word!" mumbled Lovell miserably.

"He was raging, almost tearing his hair! He was going to expel me at first, thinking I had snowballed him on purpose! and when I got out that it was meant for Carthew, he asked me how dared I confess that I had planned to snowball a Sixth Form prefect. Unreasonable, you know! And he seemed to feel that it didn't make much difference whom I had intended it for, as he had got the snowball. That seemed to stick in his mind somehow."

"Well, it would, I suppose," said Jimmy.

"Must have given him rather a jolt!" remarked Raby thoughtfully.

"But it's too thick!" said Newcome warmly.

"You can't detain a fellow over the Christmas holidays, you know. It's not done."

"The Head seems to think he can," moaned Lovell.

"I—I told him I was going home with Jimmy for the vac, and—and my friends would be disappointed, and—and he said he hoped that would be a warning to me. I told him my people expected to see me at home, and he said he would write to my father and explain that I merited expulsion, but that, being Christmas-time, he was taking as merciful a view of the matter as he could. Mr. Dalton tried to put in a word for me—"

"Good old Dicky!"

"And he cut him very short," said Lovell.

"Hard as tintacks, you know. I—I say, I'm booked to hang on here over Christmas! Awful, ain't it?"

And Lovell gave another deep groan.

It was not a happy evening in the end study.

Lovell turned out of bed dismally the following morning—the day that was to have been his last at Rookwood; but which was now only the first day of his doleful detention.

His comrades shared his dismal mood.

It was "rotten"—absolutely rotten—to clear off from the school and leave old Lovell behind.

Jimmy Silver & Co. made their preparations for departure with long and serious faces. But for the awful outcome of the affair, they could have kicked Lovell for getting himself into such a scrape. But the unhappy Lovell did not need any more punishment than he had received.





Break-up was a dismal function to him.

Bright and cheery faces surrounded him; there was an incessant buzz of merry voices; every fellow at Rookwood was anticipating the Christmas holidays and the jollity thereof—excepting Lovell.

Lovell was looking glumly forward to lonely days after the fellows were gone—meals with the house-dame, solitary nights in the deserted dormitory; “mooching” about the silent quadrangle, silence and solitude broken only by a chat with the sergeant or the porter or the bootboy. It was an unnerving prospect, and Arthur Edward Lovell rebelled against it.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome shook hands commiseratingly with their chum when the time for departure came.

“Well, good-bye, old chap. No good saying a Merry Christmas!” said Jimmy Silver glumly.

“Good-bye, old fellow! Keep your pecker up!”

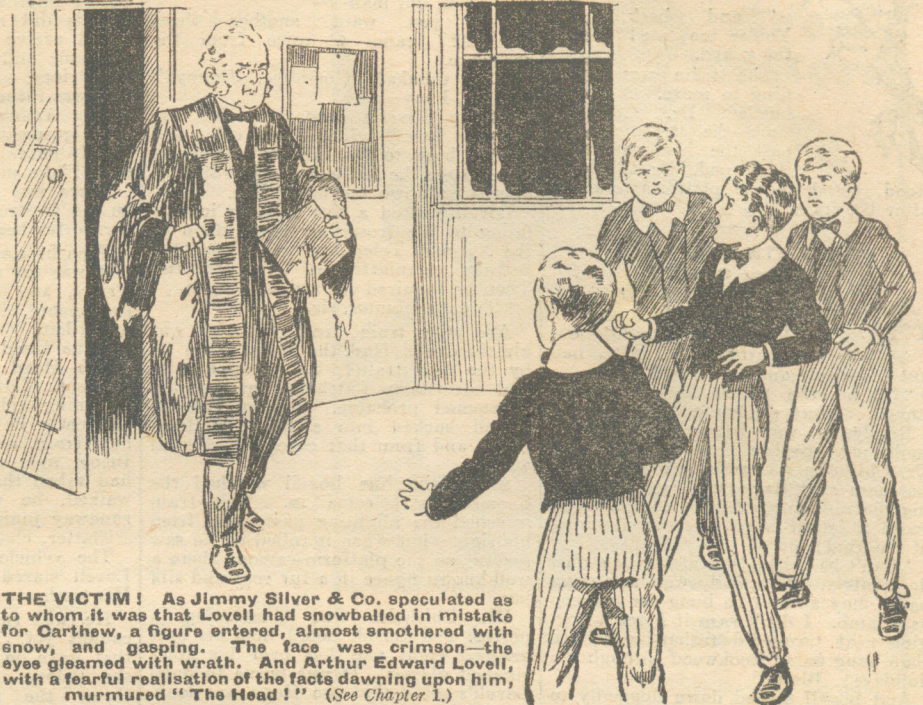
“Make the best of it, old man! Good-bye!”

The brake rolled away, crowded with fellows. Another and another brake followed.

Arthur Edward Lovell stood on the House steps and watched them go, with a clouded face and a heavy heart.

“My hat!” said Lovell, staring gloomily from the window of the end study into a gloomy quadrangle. “My only hat! Is it really only three days since the fellows went, or three thousand years? Oh dear!”

In a bright, frosty morning, Lovell put on coat and hat and walked down to the gates. It was nine o'clock, and he would not be missed till he was due to dinner with the house-dame. Plenty of time to get clear, and the Head,



**THE VICTIM!** As Jimmy Silver & Co. speculated as to whom it was that Lovell had snowballed in mistake for Carthew, a figure entered, almost smothered with snow, and gasping. The face was crimson—the eyes gleamed with wrath. And Arthur Edward Lovell, with a fearful realisation of the facts dawning upon him, murmured “The Head!” (See Chapter 1.)

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.**

**Altogether Too Thick!**

“Oh dear!” Thus Arthur Edward Lovell. Two days had passed.

Lovell of the Fourth had never, even in his most dismal dreams, dreamed that two days could possibly be so long.

The first day he wandered about the quad with his hands in his pockets; had a talk with the sergeant, and another with old Mack, and another with Tupper, and another with the house-dame.

He found that he had no interests in common with these persons, but he had to talk to somebody.

At the end of the second day Lovell was well-nigh desperate.

On the third morning he had a letter from his father referring to the communication Mr. Lovell had received from the Head. Mr. Lovell recommended him to be patient, and to make up his mind to be less thoughtless and reckless the next term.

It was good advice, but good advice was not precisely what Arthur Edward wanted or felt that he needed. What he wanted was a jolly Christmas holiday, and he felt more and more that that was what he was going to have, Head or no Head.

That day Mrs. Chisholm asked him to tea, kindly enough. Lovell was glad to tea with the Head's wife—it was a break in the monotony. But it was not wildly exhilarating.

Even little Molly Chisholm, the Head's daughter, was away on a Christmas holiday. Lovell had Rookwood practically to himself.

Evidently it was not to be stood. One word summed up the resolution to which Arthur Edward Lovell came at last—bolt!

He resolved upon bolting. To escape from the school was easy enough; he was allowed to take walks out of gates. But if he did not return from one of those walks the Head would know at once what he had done.

What would happen then? Surely the Head would not take the trouble to follow and recapture him? Surely he would leave the delinquent's punishment till the next term?

Lovell felt that he could stand any amount of punishment next term if he could only get away from Rookwood now.

Even if it came to expulsion he felt that he would rather risk even that extreme than “mooch” about Rookwood day after day while Christmas came and went. The fact was it was more than a fellow could stand—more than flesh and blood could be expected to bear. The Head, enjoying a well-earned rest after the labours of the term, simply could not understand what the detention meant to a junior of the Fourth Form.

“I'm jolly well going!” Lovell said to himself at last.

He made his preparations cautiously. He did not intend to take even a bag with him. Jimmy Silver would lend him all he needed when he got to the Priory.

A few essential things he crammed into the pockets of his overcoat. There was to be nothing to excite old Mack's suspicions when he walked out of gates—he knew that Mack had a rather surly and suspicious eye on him.

when he found that he was gone, could do as he jolly well liked! To such a pitch of desperation had Arthur Edward Lovell come.

He walked down to Coombe, rejoicing in his freedom. The clear, frosty air was intensely invigorating, the knowledge that he was free added to its effect. Lovell was whistling cheerily when he walked into the village and headed for the railway station.

He took his ticket and strolled on the platform. There was ten minutes to wait for the train. He was in good time, he had taken care of that.

The train came in—the local for Latcham. Lovell strolled along the carriages in a reckless mood of cheerfulness. He opened a carriage door and stepped in. The carriage was empty. He slammed the door shut after him and took a corner seat.

A gentleman in a fur-lined coat and a silk hat came hurriedly on the platform and crossed towards the train, which was about to start. He grasped the handle of the door of Lovell's carriage to open it.

Then he stopped, staring in at the window.

“Lovell!”  
“Oh dear! The—the Head!”  
“Lovell! What—what—?”  
“Stand back there!” shouted the guard.

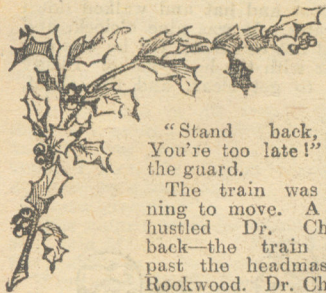
“Lovell, how dare you—how dare you—”

The Head wrenched at the handle of the door.

Lovell, in sheer desperation, hardly knowing what he was doing, held the handle on the inside. The Head could not turn it.

“Lovell!” he gasped.





stood rooted to the platform, staring after the train.

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

#### A Stern Chase!

**A**RTHUR EDWARD LOVELL fairly groaned.

The local glided rapidly out of the station; the Head had lost his train—and lost Lovell!

"Of all the rotten luck!" gasped Lovell. "Just sickening!"

Really, it was hard luck! Lovell could not possibly have foreseen that Dr. Chisholm was making a journey to Latcham that day—that he was catching the nine-thirty from Coombe. How could a fellow have foreseen anything of the kind?

"Can't be helped!" said Lovell at last desperately. "I'm jolly well not going back—may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. I don't care if I get a flogging next term—I'd rather be sacked than hang on at Rookwood through the holidays! Blow!"

And Lovell settled down doggedly to the journey.

The train ran into Latcham Junction. Lovell alighted and inquired for his train to Hadley Priors, in Wiltshire, which was the station for Jimmy's home. He found that he had three changes to make on the journey and twenty minutes to wait. But the trains from Coombe to Latcham were only half-hourly, so he was safe from the Head.

With twenty minutes on his hands, Lovell walked into Latcham post office and asked for a trunk call. He felt that it would be as well to apprise Jimmy Silver that he was coming.

He had to wait some time; but he was through at last. The deep voice of Mr. Silver answered him on the phone.

"Lovell speaking, sir! How do you do, sir? Can I speak to Jimmy?"

"Certainly, my boy! I was very sorry to hear that you had been detained for Christmas," said Mr. Silver. "I will call Jimmy at once."

"Hallo, old scout!" came Jimmy Silver's voice a few moments later.

"Hallo, Jimmy!"

"Speaking from Rookwood on the Head's phone?" chuckled Jimmy.

"No—Latcham. I've bolted."

"Phew!"

"I'm coming on, Jimmy—I shall be with you soon after lunch."

"Lovell, old man, think a bit! I know it's rotten, but do get back to the school before the Head misses you!"

"He's missed me already—spotted me in the train."

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy, in dismay.

"In for a penny, in for a pound," said Lovell recklessly. "I'm jolly well coming—if you want me!"

"Of course. But—"

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"Some time this afternoon, then—early as I can make it. We'll have a jolly Christmas after all, old chap!" said Lovell cheerily.

"But the Head—"

"The Head can go and eat coke!"

"Lovell, old man—"

"Do you want another three minutes?" came a voice from the exchange.

"No, thanks! Good-bye, Jimmy!"

"But, I say—"

Jimmy Silver's dismayed voice was cut off. Lovell left the post office and walked back to the railway station—in time to see the tail-end of his train disappearing down the misty line.

Lovell wasted a few minutes in confiding to the frosty air his opinion of the National Telephone Service and the railway organisation of Great Britain. Then he inquired for the next train.

"Twenty minutes, sir."

And the train from Coombe was almost due! Had the Head come on by the next train? As he apparently had business in Latcham that morning it seemed probable. Arthur Edward Lovell backed into a chilly waiting-room, and from that cover he watched warily.

Across the line Lovell watched the Coombe local come in. The train screened the alighting passengers from his sight; but when it rolled on he saw several on the platform—among them a well-known figure in a fur coat and silk hat.

Dr. Chisholm was questioning a porter, and Lovell noted that his eyes glanced right and left over his gold-rimmed glasses. It was borne in upon Lovell's mind that the Head was looking for him.

Finally Dr. Chisholm crossed the line by the bridge, Lovell keeping well in cover in the waiting-room. He saw the Head enter into talk with another porter, and then disappear towards the station master's office. There was no longer any doubt that he was inquiring for the escaped junior.

Lovell set his teeth.

Head or no Head, he was going, let the consequences be what they might. He lay low in the waiting-room, longing to see his train come in.

It came puffing in at last, and stopped. Lovell made a dive across the platform, and bolted head-first into the nearest carriage.

Two or three passengers stared at him. Lovell did not heed them. He watched anxiously from the window.

Would the train never start?

A stately figure came along the platform, eyeing each carriage window with scrutinising eyes. The whistle rang out; the train moved.

Lovell grinned. He could not help it, as he caught the Head's eyes as his carriage glided past the stately gentleman.

The Head frowned portentously and made a gesture; then he vanished behind, and the train was steaming out into the open country.

"Oh, good egg!" gasped Lovell, to the further astonishment of his fellow-passengers.

It was a narrow escape, but it was an escape. Lovell rejoiced as the train rolled on with him through a frosty landscape.

He had to change at Rookham and wait ten minutes there. Then the express bore him away at a welcome speed.

Mile after mile glided under the thundering wheels.

Another change and he was in a slow local train for Hadley Priors. Brightly and cheerily he stepped out at the village station. He glanced round the village street, hoping to see something of Jimmy Silver & Co., perhaps of Cousin Phyllis. But he realised that his friends did not know what train he would arrive by. There was no sign of them; and Lovell started to walk to the Priory.

It was rather a long walk on a snowy road. Arthur Edward Lovell stepped out vigorously.

"My hat! This is better than Rookwood!" he murmured.

There was a clatter of horses' hoofs on the frosty road behind him. Lovell turned his head carelessly.

Then he stood transfixed.

It was the station hack from Hadley Priors, and in it sat a stern-visaged gentleman with frowning brows under a silk hat.

"The Head!"

The Head saw Lovell at the same moment. Lovell stared blankly at the oncoming vehicle. It was the Head. Evidently he had followed on by the next train, and had arrived at Hadley Priors soon after Lovell. And as he had taken the hack, while Lovell had walked, he was now overtaking the runaway junior on the road.

Clatter, clatter!

The vehicle came rapidly on, while Lovell stared in dismay at the Head. His teeth came together hard.

He was run down but he was not caught yet. He was close by a gate that gave on the extensive grounds of the Priory. He whirled round and threw the gate open and dashed through.

"Lovell!" The Head's voice boomed behind him like the rumble of distant thunder. "Stop!"

Lovell did not stop.

He glanced back. The hack had halted at the gate, the Head had alighted. He was following Lovell across the field.

"Lovell!"

Arthur Edward Lovell scudded on.

### THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

#### For Life or Death.

**L**OVELL!

The Head's voice boomed in deep wrath.

Ahead of Lovell lay the stream that intersected the grounds of the Priory—far beyond, the old building itself. The stream was frozen over, but as Lovell came up to it he saw a board sticking out of the ice, with the warning word, "DANGER!"

Lovell halted and glanced back savagely. Dr. Chisholm was following him at a rapid walk; he was too dignified to run, but his pace was decidedly good for a gentleman of his years.

His face was crimson with exertion and anger.

Lovell set his teeth.

His Christmas holiday at the Priory was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream. Certainly Mr. Silver could not allow him to remain there when his headmaster demanded him in person. It was useless to go on to Mr. Silver's house. But he was desperately determined not to be taken back to Rookwood for Christmas.

As he stood hesitating on the verge of the thin ice Dr. Chisholm drew nearer and nearer.





Lovell, with a set face, stepped out on the ice. To turn along the stream was to be cut off and captured, and he was in a mood to prefer any risk to that.

With his heart in his mouth, Lovell trod warily across and in spite of a warning creak or two the ice held.

He was thankful when he stepped off the frozen sheet to the safety of the opposite bank.

There he turned with a grin. Dr. Chisholm had stopped at the stream.

"Lovell, come back at once!"

But Lovell had not risked so much to surrender now. He stared at the Head, turned again, and walked on.

"Lovell, you unruly, disobedient boy!"

Lovell hurried on.

It did not even cross his mind that the Head would attempt to cross the frozen stream in face of the warning notice-board. The ice that had barely borne the weight of the junior was more than likely to collapse under the weight of the Head. Fifty yards from the stream he glanced back, and then he stood stock still in utter dismay, as he saw Dr. Chisholm already in the centre of the stream.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lovell.

The Head had stopped. He had essayed to cross the ice as Lovell had done, and he had reached the middle. There he halted, with long cracks in the frozen surface running in all directions.

His face had become suddenly white.

Possibly, in his haste and anger, he had not observed the notice-board; at least, he had not heeded it. But now he understood that the word danger was no idle warning.

"Go back!" yelled Lovell involuntarily. "Go back, sir! It's not safe! Go back—go back!"

Crack!

Even as he spoke the ice gave under Dr. Chisholm's weight, and there was a loud cracking and rending, a plunge, and a splash.

In an instant the headmaster of Rookwood disappeared from Lovell's horrified eyes.

Where he had stood there loomed a black gap amid broken edges of ice, with dark waters welling and lapping.

"Oh, good heavens!" panted Lovell, his face white as death.

He raced back madly towards the stream.

He could have sobbed with relief as Dr. Chisholm's head came up, and his face, ghastly white now, glimmered in the winter sunshine.

The Head grasped at the ice to save himself, and held on with fingers blue and numbed with cold. Lovell came racing madly down to the stream, and he did not pause at the bank. His only thought now was to hurry to the help of the man whose life had been endangered by his recklessness.

"Hold on, sir!" almost shrieked Lovell.

The junior was on the ice again, treading towards the gap. Dr. Chisholm's eyes were fixed on him, but there was no anger in his look now. Deep water was under him, the ice was crumbling in his frozen fingers, and in the shadow of death there was no place for anger.

"Hold on, sir!"

The Head's lips moved, but he did not speak—he could not. Lovell crept to the verge of the gap, the ice creaking under him. There was a sudden crack and a plunge, and Lovell was in the water.

The Head's frozen fingers released their hold. But Lovell's grasp was on the collar of the fur coat, his other arm was thrown over the surface of the ice.

"I've got you, sir!" he mumbled.

The bitter cold of the water penetrated to the very marrow. The Head was helpless now—a burden on the schoolboy. But Lovell held to him with a tenacious grip, and held on to the ice. And as he held he shouted wildly:

"Help! Help!"

The ice cracked and broke, and Lovell grasped again and held on. He could not get out of the gap, burdened by the Head, and the old gentleman was helpless to save himself.

"Lovell!" It was a faint whisper from Dr. Chisholm.

"You cannot save me. Save yourself!"

"Help! Help!"

Lovell's voice was growing fainter.

Then, like music to his ears, came a yell in Jimmy Silver's voice.

"We're coming! Hold on!"

#### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

##### Unexpected!

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL was very nearly unconscious when he was drawn from the stream and hurried away to the house. Raby and Newcome took an arm each of their chum and rushed him away at top speed. The Head was quite unconscious now, and he was carried to the house, insensible to his surroundings.

(Continued on page 28.)

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# LOVELL'S CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE!

(Continued from page 7.)

"Jimmy, old man"—Arthur Edward Lovell, under a pile of blankets, with hot-water bottles at his feet, blinked from the bed as Jimmy Silver came into his room—"is he—is he all right?"

"I hope so—I think so," said Jimmy. "The doctor's come already. He's with him now."

"Oh, Jimmy, old man, I've played the goat!" groaned Lovell.

"You have," said Jimmy.

"I—I did my best for him; but—"

"We'll hear soon how he is," said Jimmy.

It was an anxious time for Lovell as he waited. Arthur Edward himself was little the worse for his ducking. In a couple of hours he came down, dressed, looking only a little pale. But the ducking in the frozen stream was a more serious matter for an elderly gentleman, and Lovell's heart was heavy.

Mr. Silver brought reassuring news at last. The Head was to keep his room the rest of that day; but he was ex-

pected to come down in the morning and take the train back to Rookwood.

"With me under his wing!" murmured Lovell. "Well, it serves me jolly well right. I jolly well deserve it, and more!"

The following morning Lovell breakfasted rather dismally with his comrades and Cousin Phyllis. The Head was breakfasting in his room, and when the morning meal was over Lovell was to see him. But there was no more rebellion in Lovell's breast. He was ready to go meekly with the Head, only glad that the matter had ended no worse.

"Here's the Head!" murmured Jimmy.

Lovell gulped, and went out into the hall, where the Head stood, dressed for his journey. Mr. Silver's car waited at the door to take him to the station.

"I'm ready, sir," said Lovell meekly. "I—I'm sorry, sir! I know I've played the goat, sir, and—I'm ready to go back and—and be flogged, sir!"

Dr. Chisholm looked at him fixedly.

"You have done very wrong, Lovell!" he said, in his deep voice.

"I—I know, sir."

"Your unruly conduct endangered my life!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Lovell.

"But," continued the Head, "I cannot overlook the fact that when I was in peril—in fearful peril—you risked your life to help me, and if you disobeyed my commands to remain at Rookwood, you also disobeyed my command to leave me to my fate and save yourself. I cannot forget this. Lovell, I trust you will reflect upon your errors and resolve to amend them. In view of your courage and devotion, I freely forgive you and rescind the detention to which you were sentenced. You will spend your Christmas holidays your own way, and my dear boy, I shall be glad to see you at Rookwood next term."

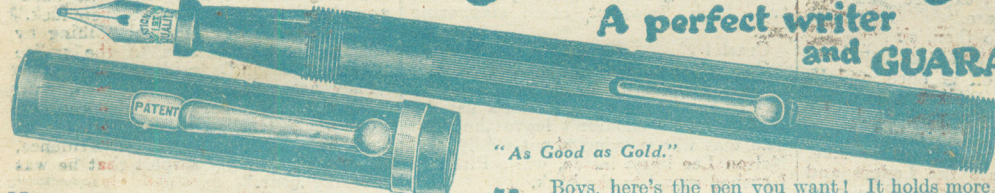
And before the dumbfounded Lovell could recover from his astonishment, the Head had shaken him by the hand and was gone.

It was a merry Christmas, after all, for the Fistical Four, and they enjoyed it to the full. Which was an unexpected, but very happy, outcome of Lovell's Christmas Adventure.

THE END.

(You'll find plenty of thrills in 'The Peril of the Haunted Tower!'—next week's topping long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood.)

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