

NEW SERIES of AFRICAN ADVENTURE YARNS **START TO-DAY!**

The POPULAR

EVERY
TUESDAY.

2^d

Week Ending
October 19th, 1929.
New Series.
No. 560.



"The JOURNEY of DEATH!"
One of the Full-of-Thrills tales in this issue

YOU'LL ALL ENJOY THIS ROUSING TALE OF THE HEROES OF ROOKWOOD!

TOO TRICKY BY HALF!

OWEN CONQUEST

In which Clarence Cuffy, the hopeles duffer of Rookwood, falls a victim to the schemings of Leggett, the rascal of the Fourth!



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Sympathetic!

"MY dear Albert—"
Albert Leggett scowled. Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Classical Fourth grinned. Rookwood fellows often grinned when Clarence Cuffy of the Modern Fourth had anything to say.

Not that Cuffy was a humorous fellow. Far from that. He was exceedingly serious, not to say awfully solemn. He had never been known to make a joke; he had never been known to see one when made. It was doubtful, indeed, whether a jest could have penetrated Cuffy's head without a surgical operation. Nevertheless, Cuffy had his humorous side. He was in, fact, a joke in himself.

Merely looking at Cuffy, with his thoughtful, serious face, strangely reminiscent of an owl's, was enough to make any Rookwood fellow smile. Listening to him was enough to make any fellow chuckle. Clarence Cuffy had his own manners and customs, which he had brought to Rookwood with him and never changed. They were not like unto the manners and customs of the average Rookwood fellow, but Cuffy was satisfied with them—more than satisfied. In his own quiet, serious way Cuffy had a good opinion of himself, and he would have been glad to see the rest of the Fourth come up to his own high and serious standard.

He was a good-hearted fellow, kind to a fault. Nobody could really help liking Cuffy. He was always obliging. He would sit at an invalid's bedside and give him the wrong medicine; he would mend a puncture for anybody, to the utter destruction of the tyre; he would walk a mile to the post office with a letter for any fellow who was willing to have his letter lost in transit. And he was sympathetic. He was sympathising with Leggett now in morning quarter, and he addressed him as "Albert," which was one of Cuffy's ways.

Jimmy Silver & Co., strolling under the Rookwood beeches, stopped to look on. They could always waste a few minutes listening to Cuffy. At his worst he was a mild entertainment; at his best he was a shriek.

Leggett had been licked in the Form-room that morning, and he was feeling very uncomfortable. Mr. Dalton had been quite cross with Leggett, and the Modern junior had had to "bend over" and take six. So now he was wriggling with discomfort as he walked, feeling savage and resentful towards the whole universe, and not in the least in a mood

to receive with gratitude Cuffy's kind sympathy.

But it was one of Cuffy's gifts never to see anything that was perfectly obvious, so Leggett's scowl did not warn him. He ran on brightly:

"My dear Albert, I am so very, very sorry that you were caned! I fear that you must have found the infliction somewhat painful, my dear Albert. I have been through a similar experience, and I found it exceedingly disconcerting."

"You silly owl!" said Leggett ungratefully.

Cuffy raised his eyebrows in mild surprise.

"My dear Albert—"

"Shut it!" said Leggett rudely.

"I am offering you my very, very sincere sympathy—"

"Keep it!" snorted Leggett.

"I have no desire to press upon you a sympathy, however sincere, which you do not welcome, my dear Albert," said Cuffy mildly. "But I feel bound to express the wish that the chastisement you received from Mr. Dalton this morning will eventuate for your ultimate benefit."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver & Co.

Clarence Cuffy glanced round at the four Classics.

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome seemed immensely entertained. Cuffy did not know why.

"My dear James, I should be very, very sorry to— Oh dear! Pray keep off, Leggett!" gasped Cuffy, backing against the big trunk of the beech.

But Leggett did not keep off.

He was feeling just then that he wanted to punch somebody hard, and Cuffy, in his obliging way, had come along and asked for it. Leggett drew back his right and drove it straight at Cuffy's nose. He drove it with all the vigour of his arm.

At the same instant Cuffy jerked his head aside, more by instinct than intention.

Crash!

Cuffy's head was no longer in the way, and Leggett's driving fist struck something harder—the trunk of a beech.

"Ow!" roared Leggett.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fistic Four.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" shrieked Leggett, clapping his right hand with his left in anguish. "Ow! I believe I've busted my knuckles! Ow-wow! Ow, woooo!"

"Oh, my goodness!" gasped Clarence Cuffy. "I am very, very sorry, Albert. I—"

"Yarooooh!"

"Let this be a warning to you, my dear Albert, not to lose your temper and resort to unthinking violence—"

"Gr-r-r-r!"

Leggett sucked his barked knuckles frantically. Had his terrific drive landed on Cuffy's features, undoubtedly those features would have been damaged. As it was, Leggett's fist was damaged—the knuckles were raw, the wrist and arm jarred and numbed by the shock. Leggett almost danced with pain.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Jimmy Silver & Co.

"My dear James, it is somewhat unfeeling to laugh when dear Albert is suffering from a very, very painful concussion—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wait a minute," gasped Leggett. "Just wait a minute! I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! I'll spificate you! I'll—"

Jimmy Silver took Cuffy by the arm and led him away, chuckling.

"Better come for a little walk with us till third lesson, old bean," he said. "Leggett isn't safe!"

"Upon the whole, my dear James, I think your observation is well-founded, said Cuffy. "Leggett is not a deserving object of sympathy, I am very, very sorry to say. I shall keep at a distance from Leggett."

"That's sense," chuckled Arthur Edward Lovell. "You're not such a fool as you look, Cuffy."

"It is very kind of you to say so, my dear Arthur; and only my very strict regard for the truth prevents me saying the same of you, I assure you."

"What?" ejaculated Lovell.

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

"You silly chump—"

"My dear Arthur—"

"Come and help us punt a ball about till the bell goes, Cuffy," said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"Certainly, my dear James; but would you not prefer to sit on one of these benches, and play a quiet game of noughts and crosses?" asked Cuffy gently. "It is somewhat less boisterous than football, and of much deeper interest as a game."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Cuffy, old man, I'm not good at noughts and crosses—bad, in fact."

"Everything can be learned with patience, my dear James. Personally," said Cuffy modestly, "I am rather an expert at the game; I play it a great deal in the holidays with my Aunt Georgina. I shall be very, very pleased to instruct you in the intricacies of the game—my dear James—my dear fellows—where are you going?"

The dear fellows did not stop to say—they went. Clarence Cuffy was an entertainment in his way; but it was possible to have too much of a good thing. The good thing was left under the beeches, to play noughts and crosses solo till third lesson, with a happy and contented smile on his kind face.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Unlucky for Cuffy!

"WHERE'S my crackers?"

"Eh?"

"Crackers!" said Lovell, with an accusing look at his comrades.

Classes were over for the day at Rookwood, and Arthur Edward Lovell had gone up to the end study of the Fourth. He had come down again with a frowning brow.

Evidently Lovell was annoyed. "Crackers!" he repeated. "Crackers and squibs! Some silly ass has shifted the box! Now, which silly ass was it?" "Fathhead!" was the answer of Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome, and they answered in unison.

Lovell's frown deepened. Arthur Edward Lovell was a thoughtful fellow in some ways, and for the great occasion of the approaching Fifth of November he had taken time by the forelock, as it were. Being in funds, he had made quite an extensive purchase of crackers, squibs, and Roman candles, and other fearsome things, with which the anniversary of Mr. Fawkes' little plot was to be duly celebrated when the date came round. Which was really very thoughtful of Lovell; for riches take unto themselves wings, and fly away—especially in the hands of the Lower boys at school.

It was quite probable that Lovell's funds might have evaporated before the Fifth of November, leaving him in a firework-less state on the bonfire day. While the fireworks, already purchased and stacked in a box in the study, couldn't evaporate.

But if they had not evaporated, it seemed that they were gone. Hence Lovell's wrathful questions and accusing looks.

"It's a queer thing," said Lovell, "that a fellow can't lay a thing down in the study without some silly ass shifting it. My account books are always being shifted. I left my football boots in the bookcase only yesterday, and some chump shifted them into the corner behind the desk, and I had to hunt for them. Now some frabjous footling ass has shifted the firework box. Where is it?"

"Not knowing, can't say," said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

Arthur Edward Lovell seemed on the

verge of an explosion, as if he were a firework himself.

"Mean to say that you haven't shifted that box, any of you?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" said Jimmy Silver meekly.

"Then who has?"

"Ask me another!" yawned the captain of the Fourth.

"Somebody has!" roared Lovell.

"Then I'll tell you what," said Jimmy Silver, as if struck by a sudden, bright idea. "Look for that somebody, and find him, and roar at him instead of at us! See?"

And the Co. walked away smiling; leaving Arthur Edward Lovell in a sulphurous state.

"I—I'll jolly well find the rotter, and scrag him!" gasped Arthur Edward. "Bagging my fireworks! I'll give him fireworks!"

And Arthur Edward proceeded to inquire after the missing box. It was a matter requiring care, for the juniors were not allowed to keep combustibles in the studies. On Bonfire Day rules were relaxed, but on other days nobody was supposed to have such things in his room. There was danger of fire, a danger which Lovell, in his own lofty way, loftily disregarded. In such matters he knew better than the Head. He had no doubt on that point. Still, it was impossible for a Fourth Form fellow to tell the Head so, and so Lovell's loss had to be kept away from the knowledge of masters and prefects.

Fortunately, information was soon obtained. Tubby Muffin was loafing on the stairs, and Lovell bore down on him. Tubby had eyes for everything that did not concern him, and it was quite possible that he had had an eye on the end study since classes, as he had no business there.

"Seen anybody rooting about my study, Tubby?" asked Lovell.

Reginald Muffin nodded.

"I saw Cuffy—"

"Cuffy! That Modern idiot?"

"Yes. He wasn't ragging," said Tubby Muffin. "Cuffy never rags. He carried away an old cardboard box. I thought you must have sent him for it."

"An old cardboard box!" gasped Lovell. "Was it about a foot square, and tied with string?"

"That's it!"

"My hat! That born idiot Cuffy taking to study-raiding!" ejaculated Lovell. "I'll give him raiding my study!"

Lovell scudded out of the House.

It was surprising, in fact astonishing, to learn that the mild and amiable Clarence Cuffy had raided his box of fireworks. But there it was. Muffin had seen the raider with his own eyes. The cardboard box that Cuffy had carried out of the end study was undoubtedly the cardboard box containing the fireworks.

Lovell cut across the quadrangle to Mr. Manders' House, breathing wrath.

He was going to recapture his fireworks, and he was going to punch Cuffy. He was going to punch him hard. He would give him a lesson to stick to noughts and crosses, and leave study-raiding severely alone.

Lovell rushed into Mr. Manders' House. Being a Classical fellow, and warfare being fairly perpetual at Rookwood between Classicals and Moderns, it would have been wiser of Lovell to stroll in quietly and sedately. But he was too excited and angry to be cautious.

And so it was that Mr. Manders, stepping out of his study, almost walked into the Classical junior as he came in

in a great hurry. And Lovell's excited face showed that he was there on no peaceful mission. Mr. Roger Manders raised a commanding hand.

"Lovell!"

Arthur Edward reluctantly halted. He despised all Moderns, and especially Modern masters. Mr. Manders taught chemistry, and wore elastic-sided boots, and was therefore an object of scorn to Classical men. Nevertheless, he was a master, and a Housemaster, and, especially in his own House, he was not to be disregarded. So Arthur Edward Lovell halted rebelliously.

"Why are you in this House, Lovell?" asked the Modern master suspiciously.

"I—I've come to speak to a fellow," stammered Lovell. "I—I want to see one of the Fourth, sir."

"Another of the rags, as I believe you call them, which cause continual disturbance at Rookwood," said Mr. Manders acidly. "Which boy do you wish to see, Lovell?"

"Cuffy, sir," said Lovell savagely.

"Indeed! For what reason?"

"He—he—he's got a box of mine, sir."

"Do you mean that you have lent Cuffy a box?" asked Mr. Manders.

"N-n-no, sir!"

"You cannot mean that Cuffy has purloined a box belonging to you, Lovell? If so, you may inform me of the particulars of the theft."

"No!" gasped Lovell.

It was just like Mr. Manders to put it like this. He really was a very unpleasant gentleman.

"Then what do you mean, Lovell?" asked Roger Manders, in his most magisterial way.

"I—I mean it was a lark, sir—a study raid—only a jape—no harm done," stammered the unfortunate Lovell. "I—I just want to ask Cuffy for the box, sir."

"If Cuffy has taken a box from your study, I fail to see how it can possibly be regarded as a joke," said Mr. Manders. "At all events, I quite fail to see any humour in it. But if Cuffy has your box, Lovell, certainly it shall be returned to you. Describe the box."

Lovell began to regret his hasty invasion of Mr. Manders' House. But he regretted too late, as he often did.

"Oh, just a cardboard box, sir, about a foot square, tied up with string," he stammered.

"What did it contain?"

"H'm!"

"Kindly acquaint me with the contents of the box which, you allege, a boy belonging to this House has taken from your study in the School House, Lovell," said Mr. Manders sternly. "Was it some article of value?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"Some eatables, I suppose—some of the indigestible pastries upon which, I believe, Classical boys are allowed to gorge in their studies?" said the Modern master in disgust.

"No, sir, it wasn't tuck."

"Then what was it?" snapped Roger Manders.

"Hem!"

"If you cannot acquaint me with the contents of the box, Lovell, I decline to believe that Cuffy has taken any box belonging to you," said Mr. Manders. "It is clear to me that you have come here to pick a quarrel with a Modern boy, for no reason whatever save your natural quarrelsome disposition."

"Oh, my hat!"
 "I shall take you to your Form master, Lovell."
 "I—I—I don't mind telling you, sir," gasped Lovell desperately. "It—it was fireworks, sir, that I'd got ready for the Fifth."

Mr. Manders frowned.
 As he was a Modern master, and had nothing to do with the Classical side, Lovell hoped that the existence of fireworks in a Classical study would not worry him. But he had overlooked Mr. Manders' well-known gift for interfering in matters that did not concern him.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Manders. "You have been keeping fireworks in your study against all the rules of the school, Lovell!"

"It isn't long to the Fifth, sir, and—and—"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Cuffy Means Well!

"MY dear James—"
 "My dear ass!" answered Jimmy Silver cordially.

Clarence Cuffy, with a grave and serious expression on his face, came up to the three juniors in the quad. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome resisted the impulse to walk quickly in another direction.

Really, they felt that they had had enough Cuffy for one day. But they were good-natured fellows, and they held on.

"I observe that Lovell is not with you, my dear James," pursued Cuffy, blinking at the captain of the Fourth.

"He's looking for a giddy box he's lost," answered Jimmy. "Why not run along and help him, Cuffy?"

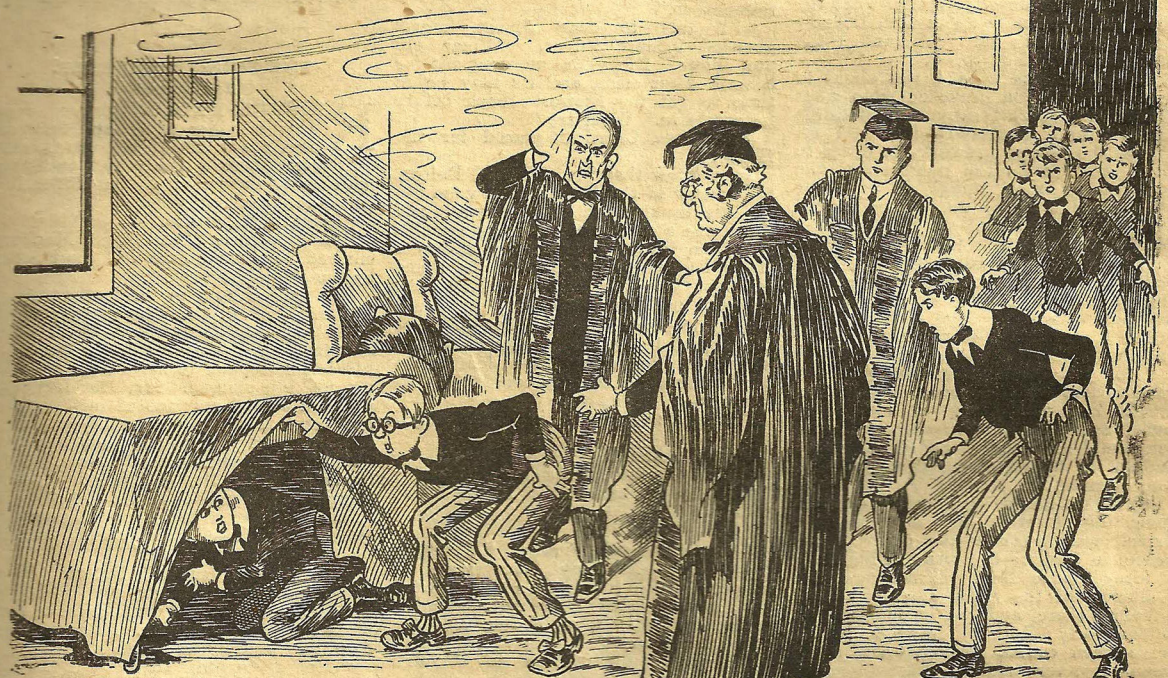
"Good egg!" said Raby heartily.
 "Do!" urged Newcome.

"Precisely, my dear friends."
 "My only hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver in amazement. "Here's Cuffy taking to playing japes in his old age. Great pip! But you musn't jape Classical studies, Cuffy. You really musn't, you know. Keep it for the Modern side!"

"But, my dear James—"
 "We always bump silly asses who jape in our study," explained Raby. "We give them whole beans."

"My dear George—"
 "Collar him!" said Newcome. "I hardly like the idea of bumping a white rabbit, but we can't let Moderns rag in Classical studies. It's a matter of prestige."

"My dear Arthur—"
 "Sorry!" said Jimmy Silver kindly.



THE DISCOVERY! "Where did you leave the box of fireworks, Cuffy?" asked Mr. Dalton gently. "I do not see it in the study."
 "I left it under the table, sir." "See if it is still there." There was a cover on Mr. Dalton's table, which descended half-way to the floor. Clarence Cuffy raised the edge of the cover and peered under the table. He started back with a howl of surprise. "My goodness! What are you doing there, my dear Albert?" (See Chapter 5.)

"Scandalous!" exclaimed Mr. Manders. "You will be punished for this, Lovell—punished severely!"

Arthur Edward Lovell's eyes gleamed. He was more than fed-up with Roger Manders by this time.

"I shan't be punished in this House, sir!" he exclaimed.

"What—what?"

"You can't cane Classical, sir," said Lovell.

Mr. Manders smiled grimly.

"I shall deal with Cuffy myself, Lovell, as he belongs to my House. As you so clearly state, you are a Classical boy, and to be dealt with elsewhere. I shall take you to your Form master and explain to Mr. Dalton. Come!"

Lovell backed away.

"I—I—"

"Come!" said Mr. Manders, in a grinding voice, and he dropped a heavy hand on Lovell's shoulder and led him out of the House and across the quad to the Classical side.

Clarence Cuffy was so excessively obliging a youth, so thoughtful for others and so forgetful of himself, that the three Classical expected to see him send off towards the House at once to lend his assistance to Arthur Edward.

But Cuffy did not. He shook his head very seriously.

"In the circumstances, my dear James, I do not desire to approach within closer proximity of Lovell," he said. "I should greatly prefer to give you a message for him, James."

"A message! What on earth about?"

"Possibly he may have already missed his box of fireworks—"

"My hat! That's the box he's looking for!" Jimmy Silver stared at Cuffy. "You don't know anything about it, I suppose, Cuffy?"

"I am very, very well acquainted with the matter, my dear James. You see, I removed the box from your study."

"You did!" yelled the three.

"I'm not displeased to see you waking up, Cuffy, and developing some of the attributes of a human being. In fact, I am very, very pleased."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Raby and Newcome, quite tickled by that playful imitation of Cuffy's solemn style.

"But," continued Jimmy Silver, "it's a well-established law, like unto the laws of the Medes and giddy Persians, that any merchant who rags in our study gets it in the neck. Sorry and all that, but for the sake of our prestige we've got to bump you."

"My dear James—"

"Bag him!"

"Yarrah! I assure you— Oh dear! Oh, my goodness!" yelled Cuffy, as he was up-ended in the grasp of the Classical trio.

Bump!

It was not a hefty, only a playful bump. But it was enough for Clarence Cuffy, who was of the weedy variety physically. The game of noughts and

crosses, though so very, very much preferable to football, had not developed Cuffy's muscles to any great extent. He sat on the ground and gasped and blinked at the three in a dizzy state.

"Oh dear! Oh, my goodness!" he gasped. "My dear James—my dear George—my dear Arthur—ow! I do assure you in the most serious manner that I was not what you term japing in your study. I have always sedulously avoided joining in anything of the nature of a practical joke. I assure you, my dear friends, that I removed the—ow!—box of fireworks with the very, very best intentions. Ow!"

Jimmy Silver chuckled and picked Cuffy up by the collar and set him on unsteady feet.

"If you weren't japing we've wasted that bump," he said. "You can consider that you never had it."

"Ow! Ow! My dear James—" gasped Cuffy.

"But if you weren't japing, what the thump did you mess about with Lovell's box of fireworks for?" demanded the captain of the Fourth.

"Ow! That is what I was about to explain when you broke out into what I can only characterise as indefensible hooliganism!" stuttered Cuffy. "I removed the box of fireworks in order to save Lovell from the punishment due for keeping such things in a junior study. I felt it my duty to do Lovell this act of kindness. Ow! But as I considered it possible that Lovell might be annoyed, I was going to ask you to tell him, instead of personally acquainting him with this act of—ow!—kindness."

The Classical trio stared at the gasping Cuffy.

"Do you mean that some giddy master had heard about Lovell's fireworks, and was going to root them out?" asked Raby in wonder. "If so, you could have tipped Lovell the wink, instead of taking them away yourself, you born ass!"

"You do not as yet wholly comprehend the situation, my dear George. Lovell was breaking the rules of the school in keeping fireworks in his study before Bonfire Day. I learned that Bulkeley of the Sixth suspected their presence there, and had he found them, undoubtedly Arthur Edward would have been caned. That would have been very, very sad."

"Sad enough for Lovell," agreed Jimmy. "But why couldn't you tell Lovell about it, fathead?"

"My dear James, I could not wholly reconcile it to my conscience to be a party, however innocent, to a serious infraction of the rules of the school," explained Cuffy. "Lovell would merely have placed the fireworks in a safer spot. In an entirely unjustifiable spirit of self-sufficiency he would have persisted in his infraction of the rules of the school. For that reason I conveyed the box of fireworks to Mr. Dalton's study."

"What!" roared the Classicals. Cuffy blinked at them.

"I considered that the most judicious thing to do in the circumstances," he said. "The fireworks, of course, will be confiscated. I hope and trust that that will impress upon dear Arthur Edward the necessity of obeying the rules of the school. Do you not think it probable, my dear James?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped dear James.

"Somebody's put the silly owl up to this," said Raby. "How did a Modern ass know anything about a box in a Classical study? Who told you, Cuffy?"

"Dear Albert."

THE POPULAR.—No. 560.

"Fathead! Do you mean that cad Leggett? He's the kind of spying cad who would know what there was in a fellow's study," sniffed Raby.

"My dear George, pray do not speak so very, very slightly of dear Albert. This morning he acted very thoughtlessly and ill-temperedly, I admit. But since then he has shown a kind and forgiving spirit that has delighted me. Dear Albert told me that the fireworks were in Lovell's study, and that Bulkeley knew, and suggested that a really kind-hearted fellow would remove them in time. Was not that very, very kind of Leggett?"

"You cross ass!" said Jimmy Silver. "You—you—you pink-eyed white rabbit! Lovell shelled out a quid for those fireworks! They'll be confiscated now!"

"Without doubt, my dear James. But do you not think that that will be a valuable lesson to Lovell? Albert thought so."

"I'll talk to dear Albert later," growled Jimmy Silver. "Come on, you chaps! Dicky Dalton went out for a walk after class, and we may be in time to get the fireworks back before he comes in. We'll try."

The three Classicals raced for the House.

They knew that Mr. Richard Dalton, the master of the Fourth, had gone out for his usual walk after classes, and there was a chance of annexing Lovell's box from his study before he returned. If he had already returned the game was up; but they hoped for the best, and did not lose a second.

They ran breathlessly into the House and headed for Mr. Dalton's study. Valentine Mornington was loafing in the passage, and Jimmy caught him by the arm.

"Has Dicky come in?" he asked quickly.

Morny nodded.

"Yes; he passed me a minute ago."

"Oh, rotten luck! Did he go to his study?"

"I think so."

"Come on," said Jimmy. "There's a chance yet—he may have gone to Masters' Room! If he's there, we'll ask him something about deponent verbs; if he isn't, we'll bag Lovell's box. Come on!"

The three hurried on to Richard Dalton's study.

Just as they reached it the door opened. Richard Dalton himself glanced into the passage.

"Ah, Silver!" he said. "Have you a box of matches, my boy?"

"Oh—ah—what! Matches?" There was no doubt that Richard Dalton had gone to his study!

"Yes," said Mr. Dalton, with a smile. "My fire is laid, but I find there are no matches in the study, and I have none about me. Perhaps you will fetch me a box, Silver."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" gasped Jimmy.

He cut off, and returned in a minute or two with a box of matches.

"Thank you!" said Mr. Dalton; and he went back into his study and closed the door.

The fire was ready laid in his grate, and Mr. Dalton was accustomed to putting a match to it himself when he came in from his walk after classes.

In the passage the three Classicals looked at one another.

"Nothing doing!" remarked Newcome, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Only to kick Cuffy and thrash that cad Leggett," said Raby.

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"It's rotten," he said; "but we've done our best. Better find that ass

Lovell and tell him where his giddy fireworks are, anyhow."

"My hat! Here he comes, with Manders."

"Oh dear! More trouble!" sighed Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Roger Manders, with a grim and frowning brow, came along the corridor, with a heavy hand on the shoulder of Arthur Edward Lovell. Arthur Edward was looking sulky and rebellious.

Mr. Manders glanced at Jimmy & Co. with a frown, and then tapped at Mr. Dalton's door. Lovell, with a grimace at his chums, went with him. Evidently Arthur Edward was being taken to his Form master for punishment for some offence; he had not been long in gathering up trouble after parting with his comrades.

"What on earth's up?" said Jimmy. "Goodness knows! Let's wait for him."

And the Classical three waited.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Explosive!

RICHARD DALTON glanced over his shoulder as a tap came at his study door. He was kneeling before the fire, applying matches to the paper stuffed under the wood and coal.

"Come in!" he said.

The door opened, and Roger Manders entered, leading in Lovell of the Fourth by the shoulder.

Mr. Dalton rose to his feet.

The paper in the grate had caught now, and was flickering. Mr. Dalton laid the box of matches on the mantelpiece and stepped to his table. He was not looking pleased. Mr. Manders' expression hinted only too plainly that he had come to lay a complaint—and Mr. Manders was a gentleman much given to laying complaints. Always, or nearly always, Mr. Manders had some complaint to make of the conduct of Classical fellows, and Classical masters generally suffered from a tired feeling on the subject.

Still it was Richard Dalton's duty to hear the complaint and to adjudicate, and he stood at his writing-table and looked across it at Mr. Manders and Lovell as politely as he could.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Roger Manders acidly. "Mr. Dalton, I have to bring to your notice—"

"I trust that Lovell—"

"Lovell has been insolent to me, sir," said Mr. Manders. "That, perhaps, may not seem very serious to you, Mr. Dalton."

"Really, Mr. Manders—"

"I will not dwell upon it, sir—I will not dwell upon it!" interrupted the Modern master. "I am well aware that on the Classical side in this school views differ from those held on the Modern side. Lovell's impudence, I have no doubt, is in keeping with the traditions of his House."

"Mr. Manders!"

"But there is another matter, sir, which I must report to you, which I think that you will regard as serious!" snapped Roger Manders. "Lovell burst into my House, sir, a few minutes ago, in search of a Modern boy, whom he accuses of taking a box from his study. So far as Cuffy of the Modern Fourth is concerned, I shall deal with the matter. But reluctantly, sir, very reluctantly, Lovell confessed to keeping a box of fireworks in his study, against all the rules of the school, sir. This utterly reckless boy totally disregards the danger of setting Rookwood on fire, and recklessly disregards the strict in-

junctions of Dr. Chisholm! That matter sir, I felt bound to bring to your notice, as Lovell's Form master, sir."

And having thus delivered himself, at twice the necessary length, Mr. Manders took up a commanding position on the hearthrug, leaving Lovell to face his Form master across the writing-table.

Mr. Dalton frowned.

"Lovell! You had a box of fireworks in your study?"

"Yes, sir," said Lovell.

"You are well aware of the strict rule against keeping fireworks in the studies before the Fifth of November?"

"I—I forgot, sir," stammered Lovell.

"Sniff! from Mr. Manders.

"It is a serious matter, Lovell! A fire was caused in a study at one time from the explosion of some fireworks which had been carelessly left near a fire. Since then the rule on the subject has been very strict. It was quite right and proper of Mr. Manders to report this to me. I am obliged to you, Mr. Manders," added Richard Dalton, with an effort.

"Not at all, sir—not at all!" said Mr. Manders, with a slight inflection of sarcasm.

"As for you, Lovell—"

Mr. Dalton was interrupted.

It was an amazing interruption.

Bang!

"What—" stuttered Lovell.

Bang, bang bang! Fizz! Squishsh! Bang, bang, BANG!

"Whooop!" yelled Mr. Manders.

It was a sudden, terrific, deafening, volcanic explosion in the fire-grate!

Wood and coal were hurled in all directions!

Bang, bang, bang!

That sudden, terrific explosion just behind him made Roger Manders leap fairly into the air.

Bang, BANG! Squizzzz!

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Manders. "Fire, fire! Help! Whoop! Bless my soul! Help! What—what— Oh!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Fireworks!" stuttered Lovell. "Fireworks—in the fire! That villain Cuffy, has— Oh, my only summer hat!"

Mr. Dalton stood transfixed. But for Mr. Manders' visit, probably he would have been seated in the armchair before the fire, changing his boots for his slippers, and in that case he would have got the full benefit of the sudden eruption.

As it was, it was Mr. Manders who got the full benefit of it.

He leaped away from the fender, pursued by whizzing fragments of coal and wood, whizzing rockets and Roman candles and fizzing squibs. To the astounded and scared Modern master it seemed as if a bomb had exploded just behind him. Wild thoughts of Bolshevik outrages buzzed in his dizzy brain as he jumped.

Bang, bang, bang!

Fireworks flew on all sides. A "jumping" cracker—one of those fearsome contrivances that exploded half a dozen times in succession—seemed to haunt Mr. Manders as he jumped and leaped and dodged. It banged under his coat-tails; it banged again between his feet as he came down after his first jump; it banged behind him as he fled; it banged after him; it jumped and banged again in front of him. It seemed endowed with almost a human ingenuity. Mr. Manders stumbled over a chair in his wild dodging and fell to the floor, fairly on the repeating cracker. It gave a final bang as he landed on it.

BANG!

Mr. Manders jumped up as suddenly as if the floor had become red-hot.

"Oh! Ah! Ow! Help! Fire—fire! Help!" shrieked Mr. Manders frantically.

"Upon my word!" gasped Richard Dalton.

Lovell stared dazedly at the smoking, fizzing fire-grate. He knew where his fireworks had gone now. Evidently Cuffy had not taken them over to Manders' House, as he had supposed at first. They were here—here, in Mr. Dalton's study, going strong!

The door opened and Jimmy Silver's alarmed face looked in, with other alarmed faces looking over his shoulders.

"What is it, sir? What—what—" stuttered Jimmy.

"A diabolical outrage!" gasped Mr. Manders. "Upon my word! I am burnt—I am scorched—I am injured! Mr. Dalton, I—I—"

Words failed Roger Manders.

The study reeked with smoke and the smell of gunpowder.

With a last fizz the last squib went off, and there was silence after the terrific uproar. Outside, in the passage, a startled mob of Rookwood fellows stared into Mr. Dalton's study. Then there was a buzz of "the Head!" and the crowd in the passage parted to give room to the majestic figure of Dr. Chisholm, the headmaster of Rookwood.

— — —

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Awful for Albert!

DR. CHISHOLM swept into the study. He swept in lofty and majestic. But the next moment, as the atmosphere of the study struck him, he coughed and sniffed. This detracted a little from his majesty, but added to his anger.

"What is all this?" he exclaimed. "What does this mean—in your study, Mr. Dalton? I have been startled, astounded, by an explosion, a series of deafening detonations!"

"It is an outrage, sir!" almost shrieked Mr. Manders. "I have been subjected to an outrage—a diabolical outrage!"

"What has happened?" thundered the Head.

"Explosives, sir, were stacked in Mr. Dalton's fire, and I—as I was standing before the fire, sir—was blown up—blown up, sir!" stuttered the Modern master. "Mr. Dalton can doubtless explain, sir—Mr. Dalton may be able to explain—"

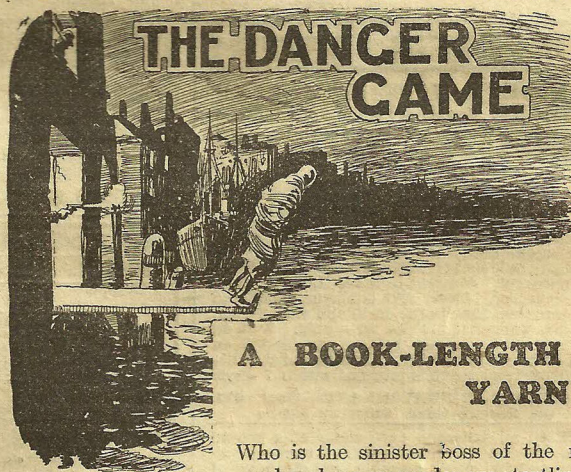
"Tush!" exclaimed the Head. "Mr. Manders, calm yourself! Mr. Dalton, kindly tell me at once what has occurred."

"Mr. Manders came here with Lovell, of my Form, sir, to report him for keeping fireworks in his study. We were interrupted by that sudden explosion. Some person had stacked fireworks among the coal in my grate. Quite ignorant of this, I applied a match to the fire when I came in, as is my habit. It was, of course, by the sheerest accident that Mr. Manders was standing before the fire when the explosion took place."

"Undoubtedly," said the Head. "But this—this wicked and dangerous trick—this must be severely inquired into. Lovell, it appears, had fireworks in his possession. Did you place fireworks in Mr. Dalton's grate, Lovell?"

"No, sir!" gasped Lovell. "Where are your fireworks now, at this moment?"

"I—I don't know, sir!" "You do not know!" thundered the Head. "I think we may very safely



Thrills in London's Under-world.

A BOOK-LENGTH YARN FOR 4d.

Who is the sinister boss of the mysterious gang of crooks whose escapades are startling London? That's what Peter Bray means to find out—and he's the chap to do it. In the pink of condition, with steel-wire nerves, he carries in each fist a punch that makes a mule-kick seem like a caress! There are thrills and excitement galore when Peter gets loose amongst the crooks! Read this great yarn to-day!

You will also enjoy these other volumes just published in this library. Ask your newsagent to show them to you.

- No. 209—WHAT PRICE JIMMY?
- No. 211—FANG, THE WOLF DOG.
- No. 212—KINGS OF THE AMAZON.

Ask for No. 210 of the

BOYS' FRIEND Library 4d.

conclude that they were your fireworks, then, that exploded in this study, Lovell."

"I—I think it's very likely, sir; but—but—"

"Then it was you—"

"No, sir!" panted Lovell, in dire apprehension. "Not at all, sir! Mr. Manders will bear me out, sir, that I went over to his House, looking for a fellow who had taken the fireworks from my study."

"If you kept fireworks in your study, Lovell, you will be caned. If you played this dastardly and dangerous trick, you will be given a public flogging."

"I—I didn't, sir!"

"Give me the name of the boy who has taken the fireworks from your study immediately."

"I—I—," stammered Lovell.

"It was Cuffy, of my House, sir," said Mr. Manders. "That was Lovell's statement."

"Cuffy!" repeated the Head. "I have noticed the boy Cuffy, and certainly I should never have suspected that— Send for Cuffy at once, and I will question him. This matter must be probed to the very root."

The Duffer of Rookwood came in brightly enough. Being the only fellow at Rookwood who was blessed with an absolutely clear conscience on all possible subjects, Cuffy had no fear of standing in the presence of his headmaster.

"Cuffy!" said the Head, fixing his eyes on Clarence's mild face. "You removed a box of fireworks from Lovell's study?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you do with them?"

"I brought them here, sir."

"Here!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "To this study?"

"Yes, sir," said Cuffy brightly.

"Upon my word!"

"Did you place the fireworks in Mr. Dalton's grate, Cuffy?"

Clarence Cuffy jumped.

"Oh, my goodness! No, sir! I should consider such an action, sir, as extremely disrespectful to Mr. Dalton. I should regard it as taking a very, very great liberty, sir."

"Then why did you bring the fireworks here?"

"I considered it my duty to do so, sir, as Lovell was keeping them in his study against the rules, sir. My intention was to do Lovell a service, sir, and I hoped and trusted that it would be a lesson to him to act in a more thoughtful and law-abiding manner on future occasions, sir. Leggett was also of the same opinion, and, though I seldom agree with Leggett's views, I certainly consider that on the present occasion dear Albert advised me with unusual perspicacity and propriety of feeling, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"Is it possible that Leggett played this wretched trick, after inducing that foolish boy to bring the fireworks to this room?" said Mr. Dalton.

"Oh, my goodness!" gasped Cuffy, quite overcome by the bare idea of such duplicity on the part of dear Albert.

"Where did you leave the box of fireworks, Cuffy?" asked Mr. Dalton gently. "I do not see it in the study."

"I left it under the table, sir."

"See if it is still there."

There was a cover on Mr. Dalton's table which descended half-way to the floor. Clarence Cuffy raised the edge of the cover, and peered under the table.

He started back with a howl of surprise.

"Oh, my goodness! What are you doing there, my dear Albert?"

"What?" thundered the Head.

Dr. Chisholm stepped to the table and jerked aside the cover.

"Emerge!" he thundered.

Leggett of the Fourth emerged. His face was white with terror. All eyes were fixed on him. Only too plainly, Leggett, having stacked the fireworks in the grate, had been surprised in the study by Mr. Dalton's sudden return from his walk, and had desperately dodged under the table to escape discovery. He had been there all the time, listening and quaking with fear, and now—

He cringed with terror before the Head. If his presence there, and his hiding, had not been proof enough, there were smears of coal on his fingers, plain for all eyes to see. For a terrible moment there was silence.

"I think we need look no further for the culprit!" said the Head, in a deep voice. "Leggett, follow me to my study!"

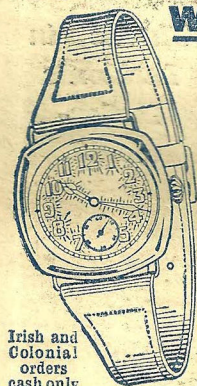
And Albert Leggett, quaking, followed the Head.

The episode, to the Head, seemed an exceedingly serious one, and he impressed his view upon Albert Leggett, with the assistance of the birch. But most of Rookwood saw a comic side to the affair, and there were roars of laughter over it in the Classical Fourth studies. Even Arthur Edward Lovell hardly regretted the loss of his fireworks, the way the affair had turned out. When Leggett came away from the Head's study, he was wriggling and writhing; and for a long, long time he writhed and wriggled, and groaned and gasped.

Albert Leggett, not for the first time, had been "too tricky by half."

THE END.

(Look out for another topping long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next week's issue, entitled: "THE KINDNESS OF CLARENCE CUFFY!")



WONDERFUL OFFER!

HIGH GRADE LUMINOUS WRIST WATCH

YOURS for 6^d

Complete with stout, solid leather sewn-on strap, as illustrated. High-grade and perfectly-finished movement. Jewelled balance. Dead accurate timekeeper. Clear, bold luminous hands and figures (see time in the dark) and seconds dial. Fully warranted. Price 20/- only. Sent on receipt of 6d. deposit, balance payable 1/6 on receipt and 1/- weekly. Cash refunded if dissatisfied and watch is returned within 7 days.

Irish and Colonial orders cash only

SIMPSONS (BRIGHTON) LTD., Dept. 471, 94, Queen's Road, Brighton, Sussex.

BLUSHING.—FREE to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment, and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to—**Mr. A. TEMPLEN (Specialist), Palace House, 128, Shaftesbury Avenue (2nd Floor), London, W.1. (Established over 20 years.)**

OUTFIT & "BOY KING" PKT. FREE !!
Album, 25 Bohemian pocket case, etc. 2d. post for approvals.
LISBURN & TOWNSEND (U.S.), LIVERPOOL.

£2,000 worth Cheap Photo Material and Films. Samples Catalogue Free. 12 by 10 Enlargement, any photo, 8d.—**HACKETT'S, JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.**

FILMS from 5/6 1,000 ft. 100-ft. Sample 9d., post 3d.—Lists free.—**NAVYLO, 46, Reginald Road, Forest Gate, London.**

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—**FRANK E. ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.**

BE TALLER! Increased my own height to 6ft. 3 1/2 ins. STAMP brings FREE DETAILS.—**ROSS, Height Specialist, Scarborough.**

THE "SPITFIRE"



shoots peas and rubber tipped arrows. A flash with every shot! Long range. Absolutely safe. With peas, arrow, and target, 1/6. (Post 3d.) Colonial postage 9d. extra.

"Remanco" Automatic Pea Pistol 2/- } Post free.
"Wild West" " " " 1/- }

NORWOODS (Dept. U.4), 16, Cullum Street, London, E.C.3-

GROSE'S 8, New Bridge Street. LUDGATE CIRCUS London, E.C.4.

BILLIARDS AT HOME 1/3 per week.

SIZE	DEPOSIT	4 monthly payments	CASH
3 ft. 2 in. x 1 ft. 8 in.	8/-	8/-	18/-
3 ft. 9 in. x 2 ft. 3 in.	10/-	6/6	28/-
4 ft. 4 in. x 2 ft. 3 in.	14/-	7/6	32/-
4 ft. 9 in. x 2 ft. 6 in.	20/-	10/-	42/-
5 ft. 4 in. x 2 ft. 10 in.	24/-	12/-	52/-

Complete with 2 Cues, 3 Ompo. Balls, Marking Board, Spirit Level, Rules and Chalk. **COMPLETE LIST FREE.**

300 STAMPS FOR 6d. (Broad 1/-) including Airport, Barbados, Old India, Nigeria, New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—**W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYE, Stourbridge.**

FREE PASSAGES TO ONTARIO, CANADA, for approved boy farm learners, age 15 to 18. Apply:—**ONTARIO GOVERNMENT, 163, STRAND, LONDON.**

HAVE YOU A RED NOSE ?

Send a stamp to pay postage, and you will learn how to rid yourself of such a terrible affliction free of charge. Enclose stamp. Address in confidence: **T. J. TEMPLEN, Specialist, "Palace House," 128, Shaftesbury Avenue, LONDON, W.1. (Est. over 20 years.)**

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, **UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon St, London, E.C.4.**