

OUR GREATEST "Topsail Tony!" by David Goodwin, Inside!
STORY—

The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

EVERY MONDAY.

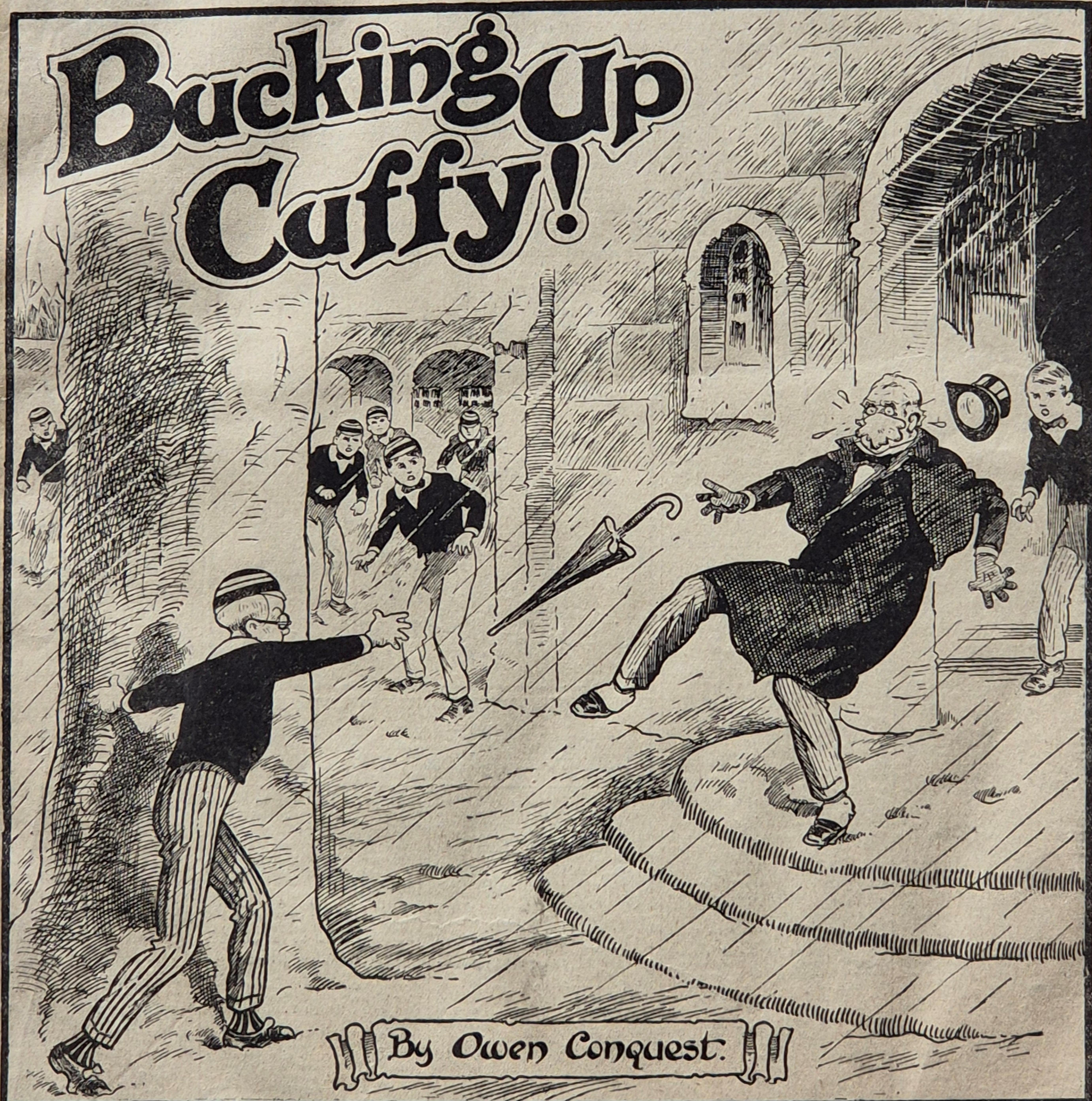
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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending February 2nd, 1924.

Bucking Up Cuffy!



By Owen Conquest.

Cuffy snowballs the first person to emerge from the School House—the Head!

(An amazing incident from the great story of Rookwood School in this issue.)

ANOTHER RIPPING TALE OF THE FAMOUS CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



Bucking Up Cuffy!

By
Owen Conquest:

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

Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth at Rookwood discovers that after all it is impossible to buck up Clarence Cuffy!

The 1st Chapter.

Cuffy Requires Bucking.

"You ass!"

"Thomas!"

"You duffer!"

"My dear Thomas!"

"You—you mooncalf!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd in tones of deep exasperation.

Clarence Cuffy of the Modern Fourth at Rookwood gazed at Tommy Dodd more in sorrow than in anger. Tommy Dodd stared at Clarence Cuffy more in anger than in sorrow.

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle looked on grinning. Dodd of the Fourth had been talking steadily for ten minutes, and he was still eloquent.

The three Tommies were sitting in judgment on Clarence Cuffy. On the study table lay a cricket-stump—upon which Cuffy's glance, every now and then, lingered uneasily. Cuffy was apprehensive of that cricket-stump. He had a suspicion that he would shortly feel the weight of it, applied to his person, and he did not like the idea at all. He was sorry to have displeased his dear relative Thomas. But he realised that he would be sorrier still when the cricket-stump was introduced into the discussion.

It was just then that Jimmy Silver of the Classical Fourth arrived in Tommy Dodd's study. He had come over about football matters; and he arrived to find Clarence Cuffy on the carpet, and the three Tommies holding a sort of court martial over him.

"Hallo! Trouble in the happy family?" asked Jimmy Silver, as he put a smiling face in at the doorway. "Buzz off, you Classical boulder," answered Tommy Dodd. "We're busy just now."

"What about the match this afternoon?"

Tommy Dodd jerked his thumb towards the study window. Past that window snowflakes were steadily falling. Rookwood, from end to end, was white with snow.

"Football's off, aye," said Tommy Dodd. "I suppose we can't play in a foot of snow."

"Not quite," assented Jimmy Silver. "But I thought I'd mention it. You might have sent over a message."

"Well, I thought some Classical ass would be coming over to ask," said Tommy Dodd politely. "I was right, you see."

Jimmy Silver shook snow from his coat, and crossed over to the study fire to warm his hands. The three Tommies eyed him for a moment, and then turned their attention to Clarence Cuffy again. That hapless youth was standing first on one leg, and then on the other, and obviously longing to escape from the study.

Clarence Cuffy was quite celebrated at Rookwood—as a duffer. There were, of course, other duffers at Rookwood. Gunner of the Classical Fourth was an obstreperous duffer. Tibby Mussin was a satious duffer. Flynn was an excitable duffer. But Clarence Cuffy was the duffer unequalled—the duffer who was certain to "dull" under any conceivable circumstance. And as he was a distant relative of Tommy Dodd's, and as Tommy had been requested by his people to keep a friendly and fatherly eye on Clarence, and steer him through the shoals and rocks of school life, Tommy felt it considerably.

Tommy had kept an eye on Clarence. More than once he had licked him for his own good. Often and often he had kicked him, but he had never been able to kick any "horse-sense" into Clarence.

In the frequent alarms and excursions between the Modern and Classical juniors at Rookwood Cuffy was a source of weakness to Tommy Dodd & Co. He was a slave in their armour. It was easy for anybody to pull his leg. He believed anything that was told him, with a simple and touching faith. He was meek and mild and inoffensive, though on occasions he had shown great audacity—on the principal, apparently, of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread. And Tommy Dodd was fed-up.

"You crass, burbling, frabjous jabberwock!" said Tommy Dodd, growing more and more eloquent. "What sort of a frabjous dummy do you call yourself, anyhow?" "My dear Thomas—" said Cuffy feebly.

"If you call me dear Thomas again, I'll punch you!" roared Tommy Dodd ferociously.

"My dear—honest—"

"Can't you try to talk like a human being?" roared Tommy. "Can't you say Tommy, fathead?"

"Tommy fathead!" said Clarence Cuffy, anxious to oblige.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cook and Doyle, and Jimmy Silver contributed a chuckle. Tommy Dodd stared at Cuffy in wrath.

"Tommy fathead!" repeated Clarence, still anxious to please. "My dear friend, I was reluctant to hurt your feelings by stating with such brutal frankness that I regarded you as a fathead."

"Whoo-pat?"

"But since you desire me to do so, Thomas, I will certainly meet your wishes," said Clarence. "Undoubtedly I have long considered you a fathead."

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Tommy Dodd. "You born idiot, are you trying to be funny?"

"Certainly not, Thomas. I am stating the facts as you requested. Have you changed your mind?" asked Cuffy anxiously. "Would you prefer me to conceal my opinion of your mental state?"

Tommy Dodd seemed to find some difficulty in breathing.

"What are you dummies cackling about?" he demanded, turning suddenly on his study-mates. "Nothing to chortle at, that I can see. For goodness' sake stop that row. As for you, you Classical chump—"

Tommy turned a baleful eye on Jimmy Silver.

"All serene, old scout," said Jimmy Silver laughing. "What's old Cuffy done this time?"

"What hasn't he done?" snorted Tommy Dodd. "He goes around looking for chances to let down the Modern side. He's a bigger fool than any you've got in the Classical Fourth—and that's saying a lot. One of your rotters, Peelo, caught him in the eye with a snowball, right in the doorway of our house. And what do you think this frabjous dummy did?"

"Give it up!" said Jimmy.

"He told Peelo he was a bad boy," roared Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Jimmy. Clarence Cuffy looked surprised and pained.

"But Peelo was a bad boy, Thomas," he remonstrated.

hapless Cuffy. He was swung across the study table, face down. Tommy Dodd picked up the cricket-stump. Cuffy's apprehensions, on the score of that stump, were about to be realised.

Whack!

"Ow!" gasped Cuffy.

Whack!

"Whoop!"

"Now," said Tommy Dodd, "I'm going to give you a chance, Cuffy. You're a born idiot, and a howling duffer, and a mock-and-mild chump, and a burbling idiot, and a lot of things like that. It's no good trying to make you understand sense. But you—"

Whack!

"Yaroooooh!"

"But you can understand that," said Tommy Dodd. "Can you?"

"My dear Thomas—"

Whack!

"Can you understand that?" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Ow! Yes—oh, yes! Ow!"

"Good! Now you're to get across the quad when you leave here, and you're to make up a big snowball—big and hard—and you're to bung it right in the eye of the first chap who comes out of the School House—see?"

"Oh dear! But why, my dear Thomas, should I make an unprovoked assault upon some person who has never given me offence—Yaroooooh!"

Whack!

"Never mind about all that," said Tommy Dodd. "You're to do it! If you don't, I shall give you two dozen like that!"

Whack!

"Whoooop!"

"And then some more like that!"

Whack!

"Oh dear! Owl! Yaroooooh!"

"Got it at last!" asked Tommy

"Now cut!"

And Clarence Cuffy "cut."

Having sent Cuffy like a lamb to the slaughter, so to speak, Tommy Dodd recovered his good humour.

"No footer this afternoon," he remarked. "Like to hang on and try some of our baked chestnuts, you Classical ass?"

"Certainly, you modern duffer!" answered Jimmy Silver.

And Jimmy Silver sat on the table, and helped the Modern chums to dispose of baked chestnuts amicably—what time Clarence Cuffy sallied forth from Mr. Manders' house to distinguish himself as a warrior, as commanded by his guide, philosopher, and friend.

The 2nd Chapter.

Cross!

Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, glanced from a window in the School House, and grunted—if a headmaster and a Doctor of Divinity could be supposed to grunt. At all events, he uttered a sound that was suspiciously like a grunt as he surveyed the weather.

It was still snowing.

Roofs and walls and trees were clad in white. The quadrangle was a sheet of white, thick and soft, the gleaming surface only broken by footprints on the paths. In the distance, among the old beeches, a number of fellows were snowballing. Since the breaking of a window on a recent occasion, snowballing near the houses had been forbidden. Some of the Rookwooders seemed to be enjoying the snow, but Dr. Chisholm had reached an age when a heavy snowfall no longer gave him any cause for satisfaction. He did not like it at all; and he was a somewhat testy gentleman, liable to be sharp in temper when things happened that he did not like.

And he had to go out.

He thought of ordering his car, but he did not like the idea of grinding and skidding through thick snow. He thought of telephoning to the vicarage, but he was the soul of punctuality and order, and putting off an appointment was against all his principles. So, after surveying the weather, and uttering that sound which was so suspiciously like a grunt, Dr. Chisholm made up his mind to start.

"Look out!"

"Cave!"

It was a yell in the corridor as the Head was spotted. There was a scamper of escaping juniors.

Dr. Chisholm frowned.

Leapfrog in the corridor was one of the many youthful relaxations that were against the rules.

"Lovell!" thundered the Head.

"Oh!"

"Come here!"

Arthur Edward Lovell of the Classical Fourth reluctantly came there! His comrades, Raby and Newcome, had fortunately dodged round corners, and Mornington and Rawson and Flynn had escaped up the staircase. Lovell was caught.

The Head fixed a stern eye upon him.

"What were you doing, Lovell?"

"D—doing, sir?" stammered Lovell.

"Yes. Answer me!"

"N—nothing, sir!"

"Were you playing leapfrog in the corridors?" thundered the Head.

Lovell quaked.

"Ye—es, sir!"

"You will take two hundred lines of Virgil."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"I shall speak to your Form master!"

The Head waved a majestic hand, and Arthur Edward Lovell bolted. Dr. Chisholm continued his progress, and dropped in at Mr. Dalton's study on his way. The master of the Fourth rose respectfully to his feet as the august presence dawned upon him.

"Mr. Dalton! I have given Lovell of your Form two hundred lines of Virgil for playing leapfrog in the corridors!" said Dr. Chisholm.

"Very well sir!" said Mr. Dalton.

"You will see that this imposition is duly handed in!"

"Oh, quite so!"

"I do not approve of this—this horsplay—I may say hooliganism—in the House, Mr. Dalton!"

The Head would not have said "hooliganism" if it had not been snowing. There was no logical connection, certainly, between a snowfall and leapfrog in the corridors. But in his present humour the Head was regardless of logic. He was annoyed, and when the Head of Rookwood was annoyed, he had, like other great men in authority, a way of passing the annoyance on.



MR. MANDERS IS ANNOYED! "I fear, sir," said the innocent Cuffy, "that I acted after inadequate reflection, in neglecting to follow the advice often impressed upon me by my dear grandfather, to think twice, if not thrice, before acting once. Nevertheless—Whoop!" Smack! Thoroughly exasperated, Mr. Manders did not stop to pick up his cane. He hurled himself at Clarence Cuffy and smote him on the cheek hard!

Manders has forbidden us to hurl snowballs anywhere near the house. In the circumstances, Thomas, I felt that I could not do less than tell Peelo plainly that I considered him a bad boy."

The juniors in Tommy Dodd's study gazed at Cuffy as he thus unburdened his soul. They found it difficult to believe that Clarence Cuffy really was a human being at all. He seemed far too good to be true.

"That's Cuffy!" groaned Tommy Dodd. "I've jawed him, and kicked him, and licked him, but he goes on doing it."

"If you consider, my dear Thomas, that my condemnation of Peelo's conduct was excessive, I am prepared to apologise to him for having called him a bad boy," said Cuffy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you born duffer!" said Tommy Dodd. "It's no good talking to you. I'm going to give you the cricket-stump!"

"My dear Thomas—"

"Put him across the table."

"Oh dear!"

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle rose to their feet, and seized the

Do your pals a good turn by introducing them to the BOYS' FRIEND. They're bound to like our great stories!

"Certainly not, sir!" assented Mr. Dalton.

"The members of your Form, Mr. Dalton, seem to be the greatest offenders in these matters!"

Mr. Dalton smiled slightly.

"My Form is a junior Form, sir. The Fifth and Sixth would not be likely to offend in such a way."

Dr. Chisholm frowned. He did not like what the juniors would have called "back-chat," though the Head would certainly not have called it back-chat. Such an expression could never have passed his majestic lips.

"Really, Mr. Dalton—" He paused. "Even a junior Form may be induced to maintain some semblance of order, I imagine. A headmaster does not expect to be called upon to keep Fourth Form boys from turning the school corridors into a bear-garden. Such a duty falls, I suppose, within the province of a Form master."

"Quite so, sir," assented Mr. Dalton, with a faint pink in his cheeks.

He respected the Head highly, and he was a patient young gentleman, but he was quite aware that the Head was "rugging" him, because the weather was unpleasant. That was one of the Head's little ways that the staff at Rookwood had to get accustomed to.

"You will bear this in mind, Mr. Dalton?"

"Certainly, sir."

The Head paused. It was still snowing; but, really, there was no more that he could say to Mr. Dalton.

"Very good," he said at last, and stalked majestically from the Fourth Form master's study.

Mr. Dalton breathed a little more freely when he was gone. He respected the Head. He had a well-paid and agreeable post at Rookwood; he liked the boys, and they liked him; but sometimes he found circumstances a little trying. Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth, had stated in masters' Common-room that the Head would have tried the patience of Job; and Mr. Mooney of the Shell contemplated resigning regularly every term, though he never did so. Mr. Richard Dalton—affectionately called "Dicky" in his Form—never slanged the Head in masters' Common-room, and never thought of resigning his post, but sometimes he wore a worried look.

Dr. Chisholm, having reduced the Fourth Form master to a very serious frame of mind, sallied forth, like Alexander, in search of fresh worlds to conquer.

His luck was in, for on his way to the big door he encountered Smythe of the Shell. Adolphus Smythe had one ambition in life. He did not seek to shine in class. He did not yearn to distinguish himself in games. He aspired to be the best-dressed fellow at Rookwood. In that ambition, Adolphus was fairly successful. The crease in his expensive trousers was unequalled; his neckties were tied as only Adolphus could tie them, and his waistcoats were many and various. On the present occasion Adolphus was sporting a waistcoat that rivalled Joseph's celebrated coat in its variegated hues. Of course, it was quite against the rules, which laid it down that Rookwood fellows should be dressed in dark and inconspicuous tints. But the Head had seen Smythe of the Shell dozens of times in waistcoats that rivalled the glory of a tropical sunset, and had said no word. But now it was snowing, and the Head had to go out, and that made a difference. A beckoning hand arrested Smythe.

"Smythe!"

"Yaa, sir," said Adolphus, coming to a halt.

"What is that?"

"What is what, sir?" asked Adolphus, bewildered.

"That—that thing you are wearing!"

The accusing finger of the Head pointed to Smythe's beautiful waistcoat.

"Oh!" gasped Adolphus. "That—that—that's my waistcoat, sir."

"How dare you assume such a—a garment?"

"Eh?"

"Do you consider it right and fitting, Smythe, for a Rookwood boy to dress like a—a bookmaker?"

"Oh gad!" gasped Smythe.

"Take it off, and convey it to the housekeeper, and request her to keep it till the end of the term, Smythe."

"Oh, sir!"

"And take two hundred lines."

"Oh!"

"Go!"

Adolphus Smythe went, in deep dismay.

Dr. Chisholm continued his

progress to the door, feeling better. He paused in the doorway, and glanced out. He paused in the porch, and glanced again. But it was still snowing, and there was no other victim in sight. With a frowning brow, Dr. Chisholm descended the steps of the School House.

Whiz!

Crash!

"Oh!"

A huge, hard snowball smashed on the majestic nose of the Head of Rookwood, and he staggered under the shock, and sat down on the steps.

And Clarence Cuffy fled wildly through falling snowflakes, greatly excited with his success, and feeling greatly pleased that he had succeeded so well in carrying out the instructions of his guide, philosopher, and friend, Tommy Dodd.

The 3rd Chapter.

Awful!

"Oh!"

Dr. Chisholm sat and spluttered.

"Oh! Oh dear! Oh!" It was greatly to the doctor's credit that he said only "Oh dear!" Many old gentlemen, in similar circumstances, would have said something much more expressive.

"Oh! Ah! Oh dear! Upon my word! Groooogh!"

The doctor sat in snow on the step, with snow smothering his august face and trickling over his chin. He was more astounded than hurt. Indeed, for some moments he did not realise what had happened. That anyone would or could hurl a snowball at him was too amazing to be believed, till conviction forced itself upon his mind. He had been snowballed—he, the Head of Rookwood School, had been fairly bowled over by a well-aimed snowball—he, Dr. Chisholm, was actually sitting on a snowy, slippery step, where he had been landed by the shock. It was incredible but true!

The doctor staggered up, and his foot slipping in the snow, sat down again. A junior came scudding through the snowflakes and jumped to his rescue. It was Arthur Edward Lovell. He gripped the doctor's arm and helped him to his feet. Dr. Chisholm stood unsteadily.

He glared at Lovell.

"It was you—"

"Wha-a-at?" stammered Lovell.

"You hurled that snowball?"

"Oh! No, no! Certainly not!" gasped Lovell. "I—I saw you fall, sir, and ran up to help you."

Dr. Chisholm breathed hard.

"We shall see!" he gasped.

Tubby Muslin ran officiously out of the house, and picked up the doctor's hat and restored it to him. Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth, came hurriedly out, and offered the doctor his arm. Plump and portly Mr. Greely was quite concerned. He had heard the Head's wild spluttering, and looked out of his study window, and had rushed immediately to the rescue.

"Pray take my arm, sir!" he exclaimed. "Lean on me, Dr. Chisholm! Your foot slipped, I suppose, sir?"

Dr. Chisholm leaned on his arm.

"My foot did not slip!" he snapped.

"But—but you fell, sir."

"I was struck down!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Struck down by a missile, sir!" snorted the Head. "A snowball was hurled at me by some boy in the quadrangle, and I was struck down!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Greely, quite aghast.

He helped the Head up the steps, and in the hall Dr. Chisholm rubbed his face with his handkerchief. His face was quite white with concentrated anger.

A number of fellows gathered round, and several masters arrived on the spot. The news of this unprecedented happening was spreading through Rookwood like wildfire. Fellows looked at one another in consternation; even Patty of the Fourth did not, for the moment, see anything humorous in the occurrence. For it was the "sack" for somebody: that much was certain.

"An accident, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton, hurrying up, as the doctor wiped the snow from his face.

"No, sir!" said the Head. "An assault!"

"Is it possible?"

"Some boy hurled a snowball at me—"

"Upon my word!"

"You saw the culprit, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Mooney of the Shell.

"I did not observe him," said the Head. "I think he was in hiding behind the tree at a short distance from the door."

"But—but surely it was an accident, sir!" said Mr. Dalton anxiously. "No boy in his senses could deliberately snowball you, Dr. Chisholm. The snowball must have been aimed at someone else. It must have struck you by accident!"

The Head's eyes gleamed at Mr. Dalton.

Crash!

"I repeat that it was no accident, Mr. Dalton! The missile was deliberately aimed at me, and struck me full in the face. The boy must have been in hiding behind the tree, or I should have seen him, and I did not see him. I shall, of course, expel the young ruffian from the school."

"Of course, sir!" said Mr. Greely.

"If I might make a suggestion, sir, I should suggest administering a severe flogging before sending him forth in disgrace from Rookwood."

Dr. Chisholm glanced almost graciously at Mr. Greely.

"Quite so!" he said.

"But if the boy was not seen—" said Mr. Dalton.

"He must be discovered, and at once," said the Head. "Lovell!"

Arthur Edward Lovell came unwillingly forward. He was looking rather scared. Certainly he had not hurled the snowball, but he felt like Daniel going into the lions' den as he came forward to face the steely eyes of his headmaster.

"Lovell! You were close at hand!"

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By
Owen Conquest

(Continued from previous page.)

Arthur Edward was brought to the Form master's study. He exchanged a glum look with Jimmy as he came in.

"Lovell, you saw the attack on the Head. Was it Silver who threw the snowball at Dr. Chisholm?"

"Jimmy?" said Lovell in astonishment. "Oh, no, sir! Certainly not! It wasn't a Classical chap at all."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

He looked relieved, and so did Bulkeley of the Sixth. Neither of them wanted an expulsion on the Classical side.

"You are sure it was a Modern boy, Lovell?"

Lovell wriggled uncomfortably.

"Well, sir, his cap—"

"Quite so. As you did not see his face I cannot ask you to name him," said Mr. Dalton, much to Lovell's relief, and confirming that junior's opinion that Dicky Dalton was a brick. "You may go now. I must see Mr. Manders about this."

The two juniors left the study, and Mr. Dalton donned hat and coat to visit Mr. Manders' house. In the corridor, Jimmy Silver and Arthur Edward Lovell looked at one another.

"You saw the born idiot do it?" breathed Jimmy.

Lovell nodded.

"That fathead—that chump—that dummy—"

"Well, I didn't see his face," said Lovell. "But, of course, I knew who it was. Nobody else at Rookwood has such big ears and such spindle shanks."

"That crass idiot, Cuffy—"

"Of course. He must be mad," said Lovell. "Perhaps he wants to be sent home. He just laid in wait for the Head and let him have it slap bang on the bok!" I spotted him, and thought he was in ambush for a Classical chap. Never dreamed he was waiting for the Head. When he let the Head have it, you could have knocked me down with a coke hammer!"

"He wasn't waiting for the Head!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "Just waiting for anyone to come out, that was all. Any old thing would have done! It happened to be the Head. What on earth will Dodd do?"

"Dodd?" repeated Lovell.

Jimmy Silver explained how Tommy Dodd had laid his stern commands upon the meek and mild Cuffy, backed up by the cricket-stump. Lovell stared at him blankly, and then burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha!"

Mr. Dalton, passing on his way to the door, gave the juniors a stern glance. It was not a time for laughter, in Mr. Dalton's opinion. But Arthur Edward simply couldn't help it. He became quite crimson with efforts to suppress his merriment till Mr. Dalton was gone, and then he burst out again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And when the circumstances were related in the Fourth Form passage that passage rang with hilarity from end to end. It was a serious matter—an awfully serious matter—but the juniors fairly howled over Cuffy's latest.

The 5th Chapter.

A Surprise for Mr. Manders.

Clarence Cuffy came rather breathlessly into Tommy Dodd's study on the Modern side. The three Tommies had finished the baked chestnuts, and were discussing what was to be done with the half-holiday, not knowing as yet what an exciting half-holiday it was going to be. They turned grinning glances on Cuffy as he came in.

"Done it?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"Yes, my dear Thomas."

"Oh, good!" said Tommy heartily.

"You're improving, Cuffy."

"I am very glad to hear you say

Clarence stopped to take breath at the foot of the staircase near the door of Mr. Manders' study. Mr. Manders' door was partly open, and his sharp, acid voice could be heard, a little louder than usual.

"Nonsense!"

"My dear sir—" This was Mr. Dalton's quiet voice.

"I repeat—nonsense!" said the Modern master angrily. "I refuse to believe for one moment that a boy belonging to my House was guilty of such outrageous conduct."

"Lovell states—"

"I care nothing for what Lovell states. Lovell is a Classical boy in your Form, Mr. Dalton. I regard it as unmanly of him to accuse another boy!"

"Lovell has accused no one, sir!" said Mr. Dalton sharply. "He saw the occurrence, but has named no one. He simply states that he knew the boy to be a Modern, as he was wearing a Modern cap."

Mr. Manders sniffed angrily.

"Stuff and nonsense! Possibly a Classical boy may have put on a Modern cap, in order to bring discredit upon my house. I admit the possibility."

"I think it is my turn to say 'Nonsense!' now, sir," said Mr. Dalton.

"You may say what you like! I decline to admit for one moment that any boy in my house would be guilty of an assault upon the headmaster. Such an action, sir, is much more in accordance with Classical ways. No doubt you will find the boy in your own Form and in your own House—probably Silver or Mornington."

"If you decline to make an

his evidence is beyond question. Cuffy, who was it?"

"Me, sir!"

"Eh?"

"I mean, it was I, sir!" amended Cuffy. "In the haste of the moment, sir, I inadvertently spoke ungrammatically!"

"Whooat!"

Mr. Manders stared at Cuffy. He really looked as if he could have bitten Clarence at that moment. Mr. Dalton tried hard not to smile, and he avoided catching Mr. Manders' eye.

"I am sorry, sir," pursued the innocent Cuffy. "It appears that I have unintentionally committed a serious infraction of the rules. I fear that I acted after inadequate reflection in neglecting to follow the advice, often impressed upon me by my dear grandfather, to think twice, if not thrice, before acting once. Nevertheless—Whoop!"

Snack!

Mr. Manders did not stop to pick up his cane. He hurled himself at Clarence Cuffy and smote.

"I—I—I had better take Cuffy to the Head!" gasped Mr. Dalton.

He caught the hapless youth by the shoulder, and whisked him out of the study, rescuing him from the exasperated Mr. Manders. From the window above, the three Tommies saw Clarence marched away through the snowflakes, with Mr. Dalton's hand on his shoulder.

Tommy Dodd groaned deeply.

"It's up to me!" he mumbled.

"Sure, and it is!" assented Tommy Doyle.

"Put some exercise-books in your

"A fatheaded bandersnatch, I mean, sir! That is, I—I mean—it—it was all my fault, sir!"

"What! Were you a party to this outrage?" thundered the Head.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped the unhappy Tommy, with a jump. "I—I never dreamt that Cuffy would be such an idiot—such a born jackass, sir!"

"My dear Thomas," said Cuffy reproachfully, "is it not somewhat unfeeling, indeed, reprehensible, to apply such epithets to me, when I only carried out your instructions with rigid exactitude?"

"Dodd's instructions!" exclaimed the Head. "Bless my soul! This boy Cuffy is in your Form, Mr. Dalton! He is, I think, simple."

"Very simple, sir," said Mr. Dalton.

"If it should prove that he has only been the cat's paw of a more designing boy—" The Head fixed a terrifying look on Tommy Dodd.

"Dodd! You instructed Cuffy—"

"Yes, sir; no, sir—that is—" stammered Tommy.

"Explain yourself at once."

It was not easy for Tommy Dodd to explain, with the Head's steely eyes penetrating him almost like a pair of gimlets. But in fragments, gasping and incoherent, he got the story out.

Dr. Chisholm listened in blank astonishment. Mr. Dalton smiled, but checked the smile at once.

"Cuffy is certainly very simple, sir," ventured Mr. Dalton. "He appears to have misunderstood Dodd in an absurd manner—"

"Of course, I never meant him to miss a snowball at a master, especially the Head!" said Tommy Dodd, with almost tearful earnestness. "When he told me what he'd done, sir, I jolly well punched him—"

"My dear Thomas—"

"Silence, Cuffy!" exclaimed the Head. "Do you consider it possible, Mr. Dalton, that this boy Cuffy is so great a fool as would appear from this?"

Mr. Dalton coughed.

"Certainly he is not very bright, sir," he answered. "I have no doubt that the matter is as Dodd states."

"I shall not flog you, Cuffy, and you will not be sent away from Rookwood."

"Thank you, sir!" said Cuffy meekly.

"I will leave Cuffy to you, Mr. Dalton. No doubt you will cane him severely."

"Certainly!"

"As for you, Dodd, I accept your explanation, and I am glad to learn that the outrageous assault committed upon me was not intentional. You are not wholly responsible for Cuffy's crass folly, but you are very considerably to blame. I shall flog you!"

The Head picked up his birch again.

"Take him up, sergeant!"

Jimmy Silver & Co., and most of the Lower School of Rookwood, agreed that Tommy Dodd had played up like a little man. They sympathised with him deeply when he crawled away from the Head's study. Tommy Dodd spent most of the half-holiday groaning in his study. It was not till supper that he began to look like his old cheery self; and Cook and Doyle were able to tempt him out of his melancholy with some specially good things they had brought in from the tuckshop. While the three Tommies were at supper, Clarence Cuffy looked in.

"My dear Thomas—"

Tommy Dodd reached for a cushion.

"Your advice this afternoon, Thomas, turned out somewhat unfortunately," said Cuffy. "Nevertheless, although you have considerably shaken my faith in your judgment, I am prepared to listen to any further counsel you wish to give me. If there is anything more I can do, I—"

Crash!

The cushion whizzed, and Clarence Cuffy flew backwards through the doorway. There was a crash as he landed in the passage.

Tommy Dodd kicked the study door shut.

Clarence did not come back. He was a mild and forgiving youth; but the limit was reached. He resolved never, never to ask any more advice from dear Thomas. And dear Thomas was still more firmly resolved never, never to give him any. He was done with bucking up Cuffy.

THE END.

(You will enjoy "Mr. Dalton's Dilemma"—next Monday's grand story featuring Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School. Don't miss it!)

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investigation in this House, Mr. Manders, I—"

"I most assuredly decline!"

"Very well; I must acquaint the Head with your decision, and leave the matter in his hands."

"Oh dear!" mumbled Cuffy.

"You will do as you think best, Mr. Dalton," said the Modern master angrily. "I am convinced that the delinquent was no Modern boy. Boys in this House, Mr. Dalton, do not hurl snowballs at their headmaster. On the Classical side matters are, I believe, different."

"It is useless to bandy words, Mr. Manders, I think—"

"Nonsense!"

Tap!

Clarence Cuffy looked into the study.

"Pray excuse my interrupting you, sir," he said mildly, "But I think I ought to tell you—"

"You know something of this occurrence, Cuffy?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Can you name the culprit?" demanded Mr. Manders.

"Yes, sir!"

"Were you a witness to what happened?"

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Manders shot a triumphant glare at Mr. Dalton. He had not the slightest doubt that Cuffy was going to name a Classical. Certainly it was unlikely that a Modern would give away a Modern fellow; and that Cuffy himself was the culprit, naturally, never crossed Mr. Manders' mind.

"Very good!" said Mr. Manders. "I presume, Mr. Dalton, that the word of Cuffy is of equal value with the word of Lovell, a Classical boy?"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Dalton.

"Of more value, in my opinion!" said Mr. Manders. "I regard Lovell's statement as utterly unfounded—as, in fact, a base insinuation. I rely completely upon Cuffy's word, and I will maintain before the Head that

bags, old man!" said Tommy Cook sympathetically.

And having taken that harmless and necessary precaution, Tommy Dodd sprinted across to the School House.

The 6th Chapter.

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