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The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

EVERY MONDAY.

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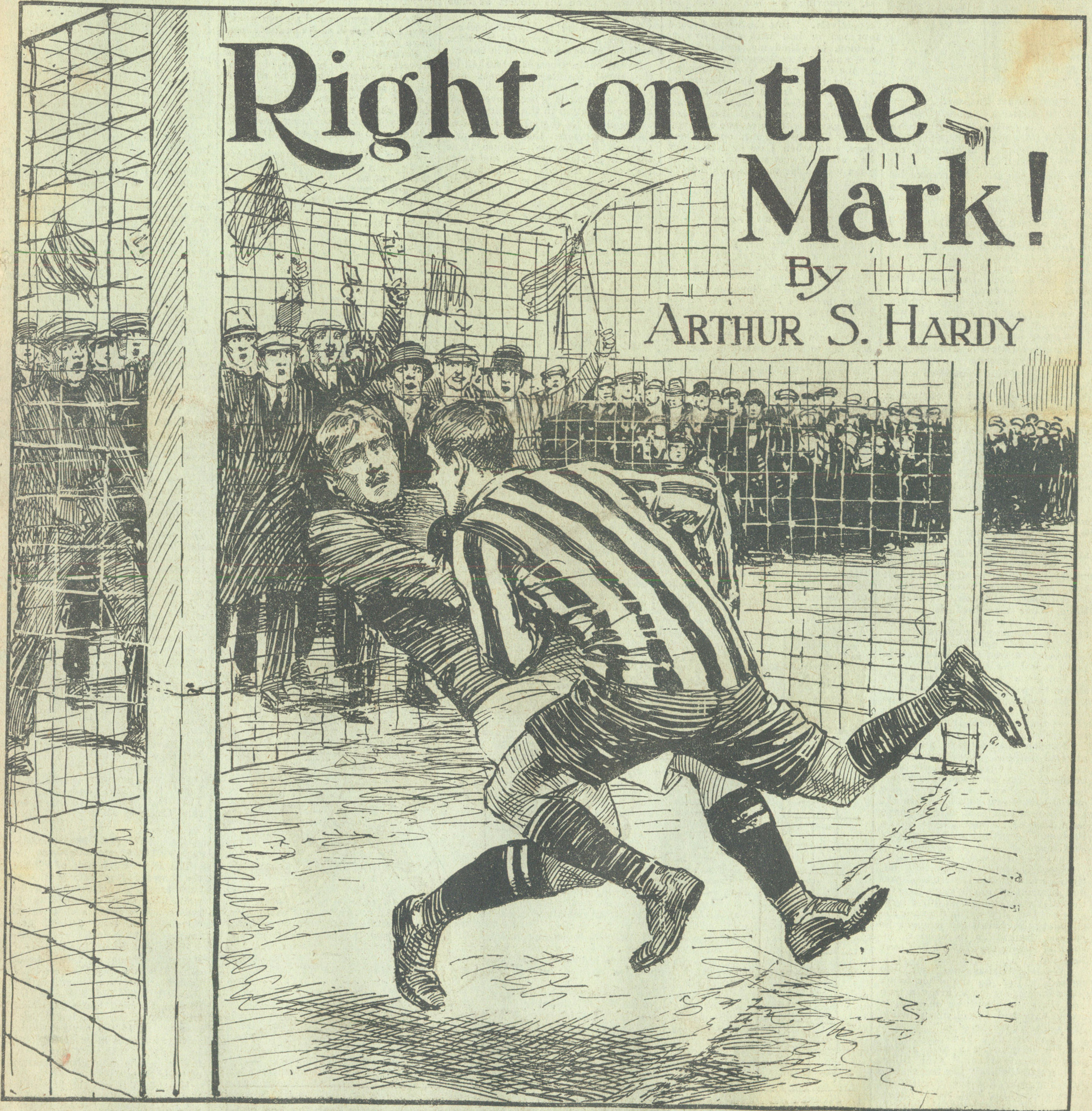
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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending October 17th, 1925.]

Right on the Mark!

By
ARTHUR S. HARDY



"Well played, Jim!" The Rovers' Centre-Forward Charges Goalkeeper and Ball into the Net!

(An exciting incident from Arthur S. Hardy's great new football story in this issue.)

TUBBY MUFFIN PLAYS A PROMINENT PART IN THIS RIPPING STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!

Rough Justice!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

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

Cyril Peele is forced to realise that the way of the transgressor is hard!



The 1st Chapter. Nothing Doing!

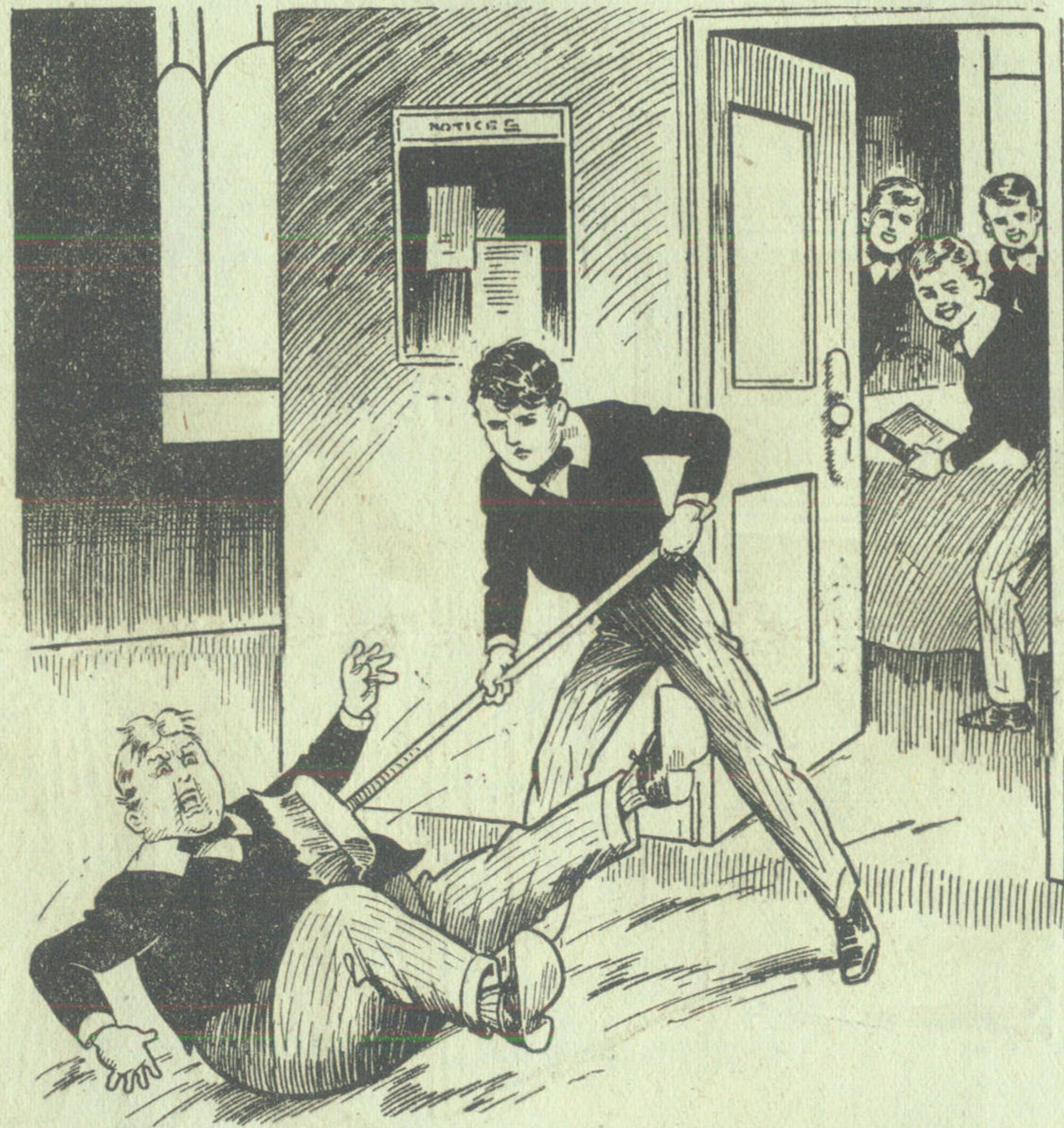
"Jimmy, old fellow!"
 "Snort!"
 It was not like Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Rookwood Fourth, to snort when a fellow addressed him as Jimmy, old fellow.
 But Jimmy Silver, for once, was really cross.
 Generally, he was able to live up to his favourite maxim, and "keep smiling."
 But he was not smiling now.
 Neither were his comrades, Lovell and Raby and Newcome. Frowns were the order of the day in the end study in the Rookwood Fourth.
 The Fistical Four were very busy.
 The study looked a good deal as if an air raid or an earthquake had happened there. Jimmy Silver & Co. were putting it to rights.
 Tubby Muffin, looking in at the doorway, grinned. Jimmy Silver & Co. felt like anything but grinning; but Reginald Muffin seemed to find something entertaining in the aspect of the end study. It was not his study!
 Red and dusty, the four juniors laboured, putting things in their places, trying to evolve order out of chaos. They were in no mood for visitors—especially for Tubby Muffin.
 Hence the impatient snort with which Jimmy Silver responded to the fat Classical's affectionate address.
 "I say, Jimmy—"
 "Hook it, Muffin!" growled Lovell.
 "But, I say—"
 "Oh, get out!" said Raby crossly. "We've got to get this room in order before prep."
 "Have you come to lend a hand, Muffin?" asked Newcome sarcastically.
 "Eh? No!"
 "Then travel!"
 "And sharp!" snapped Lovell.
 Reginald Muffin did not travel. He stood in the doorway, and watched the Fistical Four at work.
 That the end study had been ragged by some unknown ragger was well known to all the Classical Fourth. It had been ragged just before a "Head's inspection"; and the Head, finding it in such a state, had caned all four owners of the study. The Head had not known that a ragging had taken place; and—in the unfortunate, hasty way Dr. Chisholm sometimes had—he had not stopped to inquire.
 So it was no wonder that the Fistical Four were not in a sunny temper. They yearned for vengeance on the unknown study ragger; but they did not know who he was. They suspected Cyril Peele, of the Classical Fourth, for various reasons; but there was no proof.
 Arthur Edward Lovell certainly did not consider it essential to wait for proof; he was for reprisals first and inquiry afterwards. But the Co., exasperated as they were, gently but firmly restrained Arthur Edward on that point.
 "You fellows seem busy!" remarked Tubby Muffin. "But I suppose you can spare a few minutes, Jimmy?"
 "No!" snapped Jimmy Silver.
 "Don't be ratty, old man! I didn't rag your study, you know!" remon-

strated Tubby. "I want you to do something for me, Jimmy! It won't take you a few minutes."
 "Oh, bother!" said Jimmy impatiently.
 He paused in the task of scraping gum out of the armchair. Uncle James, of Rookwood, always was a good-natured fellow; and even when he was cross, his good nature did not quite desert him.
 "Well, what is it?" he asked.
 "Look here, never mind, Muffin!" hooted Arthur Edward Lovell. "Get on with it, Jimmy. It's jolly near prep; and look at the place."
 "It won't take a minute," urged Reginald Muffin.
 "Oh, buck up, and give it a name!" said Jimmy Silver.
 "Peele, you know—"
 "Bother Peele!"
 "I want you to go to his study and—"
 "What on earth for?" snapped Jimmy.
 "And get him out of the room for a few minutes—"
 "Eh?"
 "Is it a jape?" asked Lovell, a little more amicably. Any kind of a jape on the suspected ragger was welcome to Lovell just then.
 "Well, yes. That's it! Will you do it, Jimmy? It won't take you a minute! Just tell him the Head wants him—"
 "The Head doesn't want him."
 "Well, tell him Mr. Dalton wants him."
 "He doesn't!"
 "Well, tell him anything!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin impatiently. "Tell him his uncle's telephoned, and he's to go and take the call. Tell him anything to get him out of his study for five minutes!"
 Jimmy Silver smiled faintly.
 Reginald Muffin had not been brought up at the feet of the late lamented George Washington, who—according to his own statement, at least—could not tell a lie.
 Reginald Muffin could—and did! And Reginald never quite saw the objections of other fellows to following his example. Jimmy Silver did not attempt to explain. Muffin and truth were such strangers that it was hopeless to think of making them better acquainted.
 Jimmy resumed scraping gum from the armchair.
 "Well, ain't you going, Jimmy?" asked Muffin.
 "I'm not going to tell Peele lies, fathead! That sort of thing is in his line—not in mine!"
 "But what's the jape?" asked Lovell. "Peele's a cad, and it looks as if he ragged this study. I can get him out of his study all right. I'll go in and take him by the ears. But what's on?"
 Tubby Muffin grinned.
 "Thanks, old man! Get him out of his room before Gower and Lattrey come in. I just want to nip into the study; and, look here, I'll whack out the cake with you chaps."
 "The what?"
 "Cake!"
 "Cake!" repeated Lovell.
 "Yes. Peele's had a whacking cake from home, you know," said Tubby Muffin eagerly. "No end of a lark to bag it—what? I know he's got it in the study cupboard, and in a few minutes—"

"You—you fat rascal!" hooted Lovell. "You said it was a jape! Do you want us to help you pinch a cake from a fellow's study?"
 "Yes, exactly. You see—"
 Reginald Muffin broke off suddenly, as Lovell grabbed up a broom which had been borrowed from below stairs for tidying the study.
 "I—I say, Lovell, what—what are

a watchful and wistful eye on that door.
 In that study was Cyril Peele; and so long as Peele was there Reginald Muffin's designs on Peele's cake were impossible of execution. Muffin had seen that cake unpacked—a large, rich, fruity cake, with marzipan on top, a cake that made Muffin's mouth water merely to look at it. It was a cake for a fellow to dream about—at least, a fellow like Reginald Muffin.
 It was useless to think of joining Peele & Co. when they dealt with that cake. The study was not a hospitable one, Tubby Muffin was not popular there, either. If Tubby had presented himself for a share in the cake with his most ingratiating smile, Tubby would have received the order of the boot, short and sharp. He was only too well aware of it—only too well aware that there was but one way of obtaining a "whack" in Peele's enormous cake—by raiding it. Tubby had no scruples about raiding another fellow's cake; he had very few scruples of any kind. All he wanted was a chance at the cake; he was not bothering about his conscience. Tubby, of course, had a conscience, and he never did anything of which his conscience did not approve. But his conscience was a remarkably accommodating one.

passage; Lattrey and Gower might come up the staircase at any moment. It was quite probable that the raided cake might be stopped in transit. There was no time like the present; and the cake was tempting. Reginald Muffin hacked off a huge chunk and started.
 He started on the cake standing at the cupboard. If the enemy caught him as he carried off his plunder and recaptured it, at least they would not be able to recapture the portion that Reginald Muffin had devoured. That was absolutely certain. And Reginald Muffin's podgy jaws worked with amazing speed.
 It was a large cake, but Tubby Muffin travelled into it with such speed that half of it was soon missing. He was still going strong when he heard Peele's voice outside the study.
 "Hallo! You chaps back?"
 Evidently Peele was greeting Lattrey and Gower, who had been over in Manders' House, on the Modern side of Rookwood.
 Tubby Muffin's fat hand, with a chunk of cake in it, was arrested on its way to his capacious mouth.
 He shivered. Even the fruity cake lost its attraction for the moment.
 Peele & Co. were coming in! If they found him there, with half the cake already gone—
 There was no escape for Muffin. The enemy were at the door. Any second the door might open, and then—
 That cake doubtless was worth a kicking. Still, Reginald Muffin did not want a kicking.
 Almost without stopping to think, Muffin plunged into the lower half of the study cupboard, under the wide shelf on which the cake lay.
 He plunged in among foils and boots and boxes and other odds and ends, and drew the cupboard door nearly shut after him.
 He was only just in time.
 The study door opened, and Cyril Peele came in, with Lattrey and Cuthbert Gower following him.
 Reginald Muffin crouched in terrified silence, breathing hard, and trying not to breathe at all.
 He heard the study door slam and shut; and then there was a sound of laughter. Peele & Co. seemed to be entertained by some merry jest.
 Muffin peered out through the crack in the cupboard door.
 Undoubtedly the three black sheep of the Fourth were in a hilarious mood. They chuckled and chortled loud and long. Muffin wondered what the joke was. Peele & Co. knew nothing, so far, about the raid on the cake; and when they knew they were certainly not likely to look upon that as a jest.
 "They're at it now!" Peele said. "Mopping up their study! I've just looked in. Lovell shied a broom at me."
 "They don't know—" began Lattrey.
 "Of course they don't! I fancy they suspect." Peele shrugged his shoulders. "They can suspect as much as they like."
 "But you haven't heard the cream of the joke," said Gower. "It's really too good to be true!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lattrey.
 "They went over to Manders' House and had a fearful row with Tommy Dodd & Co.," chortled Gower. "We've just had it all from Towle, of the Modern Fourth."
 Peele gurgled.
 "I left Tommy Dodd's chemistry manual in their study when I ragged it," he said. "I thought they'd find it and jump to the conclusion that it was a Modern raid. And they did!"
 "They did! Ha, ha, ha!"
 "They've been over the way!" gasped Lattrey. "They fairly wrecked Tommy Dodd's study without stopping to ask questions."
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 The three young rascals roared with laughter.
 "Oh, my hat!" said Peele. "This is one on the end study, and no mistake. It was sheer luck, you know. I heard the Head tell Mr. Dalton that there was to be an inspection this afternoon—one of the giddy surprise visits, with a prefect keeping guard on the passage, so that



MUFFIN HAS TO GO! The bristly head of the broom caught Reginald Muffin on his well-filled waistcoat, and hurled him through the study doorway. Bump! "Oh! I—I say—yaroooooop!" yelled Tubby Muffin as Lovell followed him out of the study, broom in hand, and fairly swept him away down the passage.

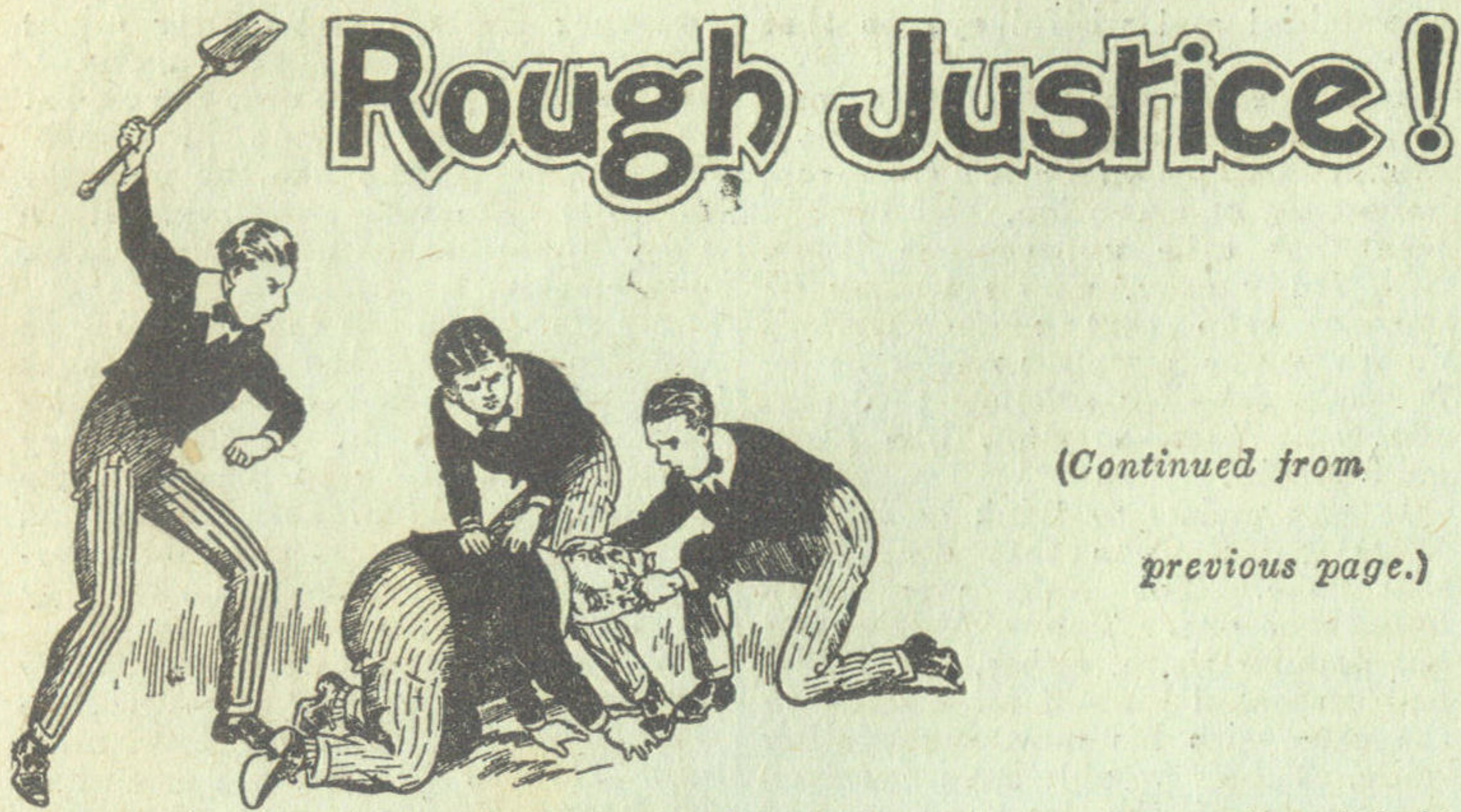
you going to do with that broom?" he ejaculated apprehensively.
 There were grounds for Muffin's apprehension. Lovell did not explain what he was going to do with the broom. He did it! He charged at Reginald Muffin with the broom, like a knight of old with a trusty lance. The bristly head of the broom caught Reginald Muffin on his well-filled waistcoat, and hurled him through the study doorway as if a cannon-ball had smitten him.
 Bump!
 "Oh!" roared Muffin.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I—I say— Yaroooooop!" yelled Tubby Muffin, as Lovell followed him out of the study, broom in hand, and fairly swept him away down the passage.
 Reginald Muffin rolled over and picked himself up and fled frantically, helped on his way by a final lunge from the broom. He vanished at record speed along the Classical Fourth passage.
 Lovell tramped back into the end study, feeling a little better. Reginald Muffin was feeling decidedly worse.

All of a sudden the door of the first study opened, and Cyril Peele came out.
 Really, it was tremendous luck. Peele, without even a glance at the fat junior, walked up the passage to the end study.
 His own room was left empty.
 Lattrey and Gower, his study-mates, had not yet come in. Perhaps Peele was tired of waiting for them and thought he would find a little entertainment looking in at the wrecked study at the other end of the passage. Anyhow, he was gone, and the coast was clear. Reginald Muffin, who had hung about the study door like a plump Peri at the gate of Paradise, darted in before Peele was half-way along the passage. Fortunately, Peele did not turn his head.
 Muffin closed the study door softly, and then scudded across to the cupboard.
 He jerked open the cupboard door, and his eyes bulged with delight as he gazed at the cake. There it was, still in the cardboard box in which it had arrived, with shiny paper wrapped over it. There it was, a gorgeous cake, as much as even Reginald Muffin could have disposed of at one sitting.
 "Oh, good!" breathed Muffin.
 He grabbed up the cake. His idea was to bolt with it, to carry it off to some secluded corner where he could devour his prey at his leisure, so to speak. But Peele was in the

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The 2nd Chapter. Tubby Muffin Makes Discoveries.

Simply great—"A Burning Question!"—next Monday's lively story of the chums of Rookwood School. Be sure you read it, boys!



Rough Justice!

(Continued from
previous page.)

naughty boys couldn't get ready for it. While those footling asses were at footer I got their study ready for the Head to inspect—

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"The jolly old scout never asked a question—he never does, you know! Just gave them six each for having their study in such a state."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"And then they find Tommy Dodd's chemistry book, and never dreamt that it had been left there for them to find—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"It's really too good to be true!" gasped Peele. "Uncle James fell right into the trap! Ha, ha, ha!"
"They're not very bright in the end study after all!" chuckled Gower.

"Not up to the weight of this study, at any rate!" said Lattrey. "They wrecked Tommy Dodd's study, and were simply mobbed by the Moderns when they'd done it!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy they rather suspect me now!" grinned Peele. "Lovell looked like it when he shied the broom at me! But they can't prove anything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Cyril Peele wiped his eyes. This was, in his view, the jape of the term; it had worked like magic. All along the line, the Fistical Four had been baffled and beaten; and Cyril Peele had paid off a long list of ancient grudges at one fell swoop.

Generally, the end study was more than able to hold its own. But this time it had been beaten to the wide, there was no doubt about that. And Peele & Co. rejoiced accordingly.

"Well, what about prep?" said Gower at last.

In the study cupboard, Tubby Muffin heard that remark with dismay.

He was getting cramped.
He had hoped that the three juniors might leave the study again. But clearly they had come to stay.

Still chuckling over their successful enterprise, Peele & Co. sorted out their books for prep.

Muffin was a prisoner!
He was a prisoner, with discovery certain now. For after prep, it was pretty certain Peele & Co. would get out the cake for supper; and then—

Reginald Muffin suppressed a groan.

He was cramped in the narrow confines of the cupboard; he was getting pins-and-needles in his fat limbs. He knew that he could never last out till prep was over.

But as he crouched there, palpitating with apprehension, his fat brain was working.

It dawned upon him that what he had heard had placed Peele & Co. under his fat thumb.

Jimmy Silver suspected Peele; but there was no evidence! Reginald Muffin was in a position to supply the evidence! He was in a position to make terms with Peele & Co.!

The three juniors had sat down to their work. Peele smoked a cigarette over his prep—one of his little ways. There was silence in the study.

It was suddenly broken.
Crash!

Reginald Muffin, a prey to pins-and-needles, had been unable to keep still any longer.

He moved suddenly, involuntarily, and a couple of wooden foils and a pair of football boots were displaced as he moved.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Peele.

He jumped up from the table, and stepped across to the cupboard.

"Can't be a dog there!" said Gower.

Peele opened the cupboard door. The first thing that caught his eyes

was the cake—unwrapped and half-gone. Peele gave a yell of wrath.

"Somebody's been raiding this cake!"

He sighted Muffin in the lower half of the cupboard the next moment. And then Reginald Muffin, with a savage grip on his collar, came sprawling out into the room, yelling.

The 3rd Chapter. Under Tubby's Thumb!

"Whoop!"
Tubby Muffin roared.
Peele and Lattrey and Gower gathered round him with furious



TUBBY AND THE CAKE! Peele opened the cupboard door. The first thing that caught his eyes was the cake—unwrapped, and half-gone. Peele gave a yell of wrath. "Somebody's been raiding this cake!" The next moment he sighted Muffin in the lower half of the cupboard.

looks. Muffin sprawled on the carpet and roared. He was not hurt yet; but he had a well-grounded apprehension that he was going to be hurt. He roared in anticipation, as it were.

"You fat rotter!" howled Peele.

"You've been bagging my cake!"

"I—I haven't!" gasped Muffin.

"It's half-gone!"

"I—I mean—" Tubby Muffin spluttered. "I—I mean, I—I—"

"My hat! I'll jolly well lam you for this!" said Peele. "Give me the shovel, Gower, and roll him over on the carpet."

"I—I didn't!" roared Muffin. "I never knew you had a cake! I never came in here for any cake! I haven't touched it! Besides, I haven't taken much—only a bite or two! And I'll pay for it! Look here—Yaroooh—"

Lattrey and Gower rolled the fat Classical face down on the carpet. Peele flourished the shovel.

Whack, whack!

The fall of the shovel fairly rang on Muffin's tight trousers.

The yells of Reginald Muffin rang far and wide.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Whoop! Yaroooh! Help! Rescue!" roared Muffin. "Oh, crumbs! Oh, dear! Stoppit! I'll tell Jimmy Silver! Yoop!"

"Tell him as soon as you like!" hissed Peele. "Tell him you bagged my cake, and tell him I skinned you for it! You've only had a taste so

far! I'm going to give you six dozen!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And then I'll give him a few!" said Gower.

"Same here!" said Lattrey. "Go it, Peele!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Peele went it, with great vim. Muffin roared and wriggled and yelled. There was no doubt that the fat Classical had asked for a licking, and that he deserved it; but really Peele was going too far. A Head's licking was a joke to what Reginald Muffin was getting now.

"Stoppit!" shrieked Muffin desperately. "I'll tell Jimmy Silver that you ragged his study! Oh! Ow! Oooooh!"

"Wha-a-at?"

The shovel was descending again, and Peele arrested it in mid-career. Muffin's words had made him jump.

In his excitement, it had not occurred to him that Muffin, hidden in the cupboard, must have heard all that had been said in the study.

It occurred to him now. He lowered the fire-shovel.

"My hat!" murmured Gower. "That fat villain heard—"

"Phew!" Lattrey whistled softly. "I jolly well heard everything you said!" howled Tubby Muffin. "I'm going to Jimmy Silver to tell him who ragged his study! I'm going to Lovell to tell him! You just wait till Lovell knows!"

Cyril Peele dropped the shovel

"I had nothing to do with it," said Gower hastily. "Peele told me what he had done, that's all."

"And I!" said Lattrey uneasily. "Peele told me afterwards—you know you did, Peele!"

Cyril Peele gave his study-mates a bitter look. The three black sheep were friends, but their friendship was not of a very reliable kind. Lattrey and Gower had been immensely entertained by Peele's knavish trickery, but they had no intention whatever of sharing the consequences with him when the reckoning came after the feast. Peele had done it on his own, and he could take the consequences on his own. Lattrey and Gower were in a hurry to dissociate themselves from the affair, even before Muffin had reported his discovery in the end study.

"Better make that fat fool hold his tongue, Peele!" said Gower.

"After all, it was rather thick, getting those fellows a Head's licking. It was over the limit; I thought so when you told me."

"You didn't say so!" sneered Peele.

"Well, I thought so," snapped Gower. "It's not a lark getting chaps into a row with the Head! It's a mean trick, if you ask me."

"Muffin won't talk about this," said Lattrey.

"Won't I?" hooted Muffin. "I've been whacked with a shovel! Won't I talk about it? I'm going straight

solace was the disappointed look on the faces of Lattrey and Gower. His study-mates had intended to help Peele dispose of that cake.

Muffin grinned.

He rolled to the study cupboard, and calmly packed up the remains of the cake in the cardboard box. Peele watched him with glinting eyes.

"You're saying nothin', of course," he said, as Tubby Muffin walked to the door, with the cake under his arm.

"I'll do what I can for you, Peele," said Muffin coolly. "I'll think it over."

"That's not good enough," said Peele savagely.

"It will have to be, old pippin! Keep off—I can hear Lovell in the passage!" grinned Muffin.

Peele clenched his hands in helpless rage. Arthur Edward Lovell's voice could be heard outside. The door of the study opened, and Lovell looked in—Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome behind him. The Fistical Four had finished putting their study to rights at last, and they looked tired and cross.

"Well, what do you fellows want?" snarled Peele.

"Just a word with you, you cad!" said Lovell. "I believe it was you ragged our study to get us a Head's licking. I'd jolly well wade in and smash you, only—"

"Only you won't, fathead," interposed Jimmy Silver. "It's all right Peele. We are going to find out who ragged our study, and if it was you, you can get ready for the time of your life. But we're going to make sure first."

"What's the good?" snorted Lovell. "I'm jolly sure it was Peele."

"You were sure it was Tommy Dodd, ass, and then you were sure that it was Smythe of the Shell, fathead. Chuck it," said Raby.

"Get out of my study!" said Peele.

Tubby Muffin grinned at Peele. He rolled out into the passage with the cake under his arm. The Fistical Four looked at him. They could see that it was a cake in the cardboard box, and they remembered Tubby's request for assistance in raiding a cake from Peele's study. It was simply extraordinary to see him walking it off under Cyril Peele's very eyes, and Peele raising no objection.

"What have you got there, Tubby?" asked Newcome. "Is that the cake?"

"Oh! No! It—it's Peele's wireless—he lent it to me," stammered Muffin.

"You fat ass! It's a cake."

"I—I mean, Peele's lent me this cake—"

"Lent you a cake!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"I mean, he's given it to me. I suppose Peele can give me a cake if he likes!" said Tubby. And he rolled away to his study to escape further questioning.

"Well, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver in astonishment.

Slam!

The door of Peele's study closed. Peele of the Fourth returned to his prep in a very unenviable frame of mind. He had played his knavish trick on the end study, and he had been successful all along the line, but—there was a but! The way of the transgressor is hard; and this was not the first time that Peele's transgressions had found him out. He was under Muffin's fat thumb now, till the affair blew over at least, and that was an extremely uncomfortable situation. And he had no sympathy from his comrades.

"You'll have to keep that fat fool quiet somehow, Peele!" said Cuthbert Gower uneasily. "If those cads found out, they'd think nothing of wrecking this study in return—and it's our study as well as yours."

"Just what I was thinking," said Lattrey. "It was a good jest in its way, but too thick, much too thick! We don't want those brutes ragging in this study, Peele. You'll have to keep Muffin quiet."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snarled Peele.

"Well, look here—"

"Just look here—"

"Shut it!" howled Peele angrily.

Prep that evening in Peele's study went on in a rather thundery atmosphere.

The 4th Chapter. Shell Out.

Reginald Muffin smiled cheerily. He nodded to Peele of the Fourth as he smiled.

It was the following day, after

classes, and Peele had passed that day in considerable uneasiness.

The bribe of the cake had kept Muffin quiet; so far not a word had been said of the discovery he had made. Jimmy Silver & Co., as Peele knew, were making inquiries up and down the Form, hoping to learn who was the ragger of the end study. But naturally, they did not suppose that Muffin knew anything about it, and the fat Classical had not told them. But Peele was only too well acquainted with Muffin's tattling tongue, and he had felt extremely uneasy all day.

Now, as Muffin met him on the path under the old Rookwood beeches, and smiled and nodded, Peele forced himself to grin in response. He would much rather have taken Tubby by his fat neck, and knocked his head against a beech. But that, obviously, was out of the question, Tubby was not to be treated in that disrespectful manner now. Peele's trickery had had made it necessary for him to keep on good terms with Muffin, so he grinned in a rather ghastly fashion, and nodded, and would have passed on his way. But a fat paw on his arm detained him.

"Not in a hurry, old fellow?" said Muffin.

"Yes!" muttered Peele.

"Going to the tuckshop?"

"No."

"Well, I am," said Muffin. "Trot along with me, old chap! I'd really like your company."

Peele drew a deep breath, but he controlled his feelings, and dropped into step at Muffin's side. If the fat junior thought that he was going to chum with him, on the strength of the secret he was keeping, he was making a mistake, Peele told himself furiously. But he did not venture to tell Muffin so.

"The fact is, there's something I wanted to speak to you about, old scout," said Tubby affably.

"Well," muttered Peele.

"I think I've mentioned my uncle to you—Captain Muffin. I had a vac with him on his yacht, and he gave me my splendid gold watch," said Tubby. "He often sends me remittances. I was expecting to get one from him this week—ten shillings, you know."

"Were you?" breathed Peele.

"Yes. But something very awkward has happened," said Tubby with great solemnity. "It seems that my uncle has gone on a cruise in his yacht with a party of aristocratic friends. Somehow or other he forgot to post the letter to me."

Peele did not answer.

"Now, he may be away quite a long time," went on Muffin. "He may even be away over Christmas, cruising in the Mediterranean, you know. Looks to me as if I sha'n't get that remittance, what?"

No reply.

"So I was thinking," said Muffin cheerily, "that perhaps you'd like to lend me the ten bob, Peele, and I'd settle with you when I get the remittance from Captain Muffin. See?"

"Can't be done."

"I'd really like you to oblige me, Peele," said Tubby Muffin calmly.

"Of course, I could ask Jimmy Silver or Lovell. I'm sure they'd lend me the money like a shot. I happen to want it specially this afternoon, as I'm really stony, and there's nothing in the study for tea. I'm sure Lovell would lend it to me."

"Better ask him, then."

"Oh, of course, if you like! The difficulty is, that I don't feel I'm treating my friends in the end study very well," explained Muffin.

"They're trying to find out who ragged their study, and I'm not telling them, and in these circumstances it seems rather thick to borrow from them, doesn't it? If I asked them for a loan I should feel bound to tell them what I know, and save them from a lot of trouble."

Peele gritted his teeth.

"I stood you that cake to hold your tongue," he said furiously. "I'm not standing you ten bob as well."

Tubby looked pained.

"That's a brutal, sordid way of putting it," he said. "Just like you, too, Peele. You're a sordid chap. Most of the fellows say you're a rank outsider, and I must say I agree with them. If I oblige you by keeping a secret for you, I hope I'm not the kind of chap to try to make anything out of it."

"What?"

"You judge others by yourself, that's what it is," said Muffin scornfully. "You're always on the make, and you think other fellows are on the make. I'm above it, I hope."

"Well, you'll make nothing out of me, anyhow," said Peele savagely. "I'm fed-up with you. Go and eat coke!"

Tubby waved a fat hand at him. "That's enough!" he said. "You needn't say any more, Peele. If you offer to lend me the ten shillings now I shall refuse it. I can borrow it of Lovell easily enough. I'm sure he'll be glad to oblige me."

Muffin rolled on, leaving Peele standing still, biting his thin lip. After a moment Peele hurried on after the fat Classical.

"Look here, Muffin!" he panted.

"You needn't speak to me, Peele. You've insulted me!" said Tubby loftily. "You've made out that I'm on the make, asking you for money to keep your sneaking secret. That's enough! I'd rather you kept your distance!"

"Are you going to tell Jimmy Silver about what you heard in my study?" hissed Peele.

"If Jimmy treats me as a pal, I'm bound to treat him as a pal in return," explained Muffin. "I don't expect you to understand that, Peele. You're such a rank outsider. I've got a sense of honour."

"I'll lend you ten bob, if you like!" breathed Peele.

"You needn't!" said Tubby. "I can get a loan, if I want it, in the end study."

Peele groped in his pocket.

"Here you are!" he muttered.

But Reginald Muffin did not stretch out his fat hand for the ten-shilling note, though his eyes glistened at the sight of it. Reginald's

Reginald Muffin rolled on to the tuckshop with Peele's ten-shilling note in his possession. Tea in Tubby's study that day was unusually ample.

Cyril Peele walked under the trees, biting his lips, kicking the fallen leaves savagely. Gower and Lattrey came on him, and grinned at the expression on his face.

"What's the jolly old trouble?" asked Gower. "Been backin' losers again?"

"That fat scoundrel Muffin's just got ten bob out of me!" hissed Peele.

"Phew!"

"The awful rotter!"

"If he tries to keep this up—"

said Peele. He kicked again at the fallen leaves, probably wishing that they were Reginald Muffin. Really, it was a dismaying prospect that opened out before the cad of the Fourth.

The 5th Chapter. Rough Justice!

"Nothing doing!" said Jimmy Silver.

"That's all very well!" grunted Lovell. "But I'm not standing it, for one. Let's rag Peele, and chance it."

"Fathead!" said Lovell's three chums together.

Another day had passed, and on Saturday afternoon Jimmy Silver &

the study-ragger, but Arthur Edward Lovell seemed as keen as ever. According to Lovell, the end study could not, and should not, let the matter pass. Somehow or other, they were going to discover the "hidden hand," and inflict summary justice. The Co. were willing, if not specially keen, but they did not see how the discovery was to be made.

"We ragged the Modern cads on suspicion," said Raby, "then you wanted us to rag Smythe of the Shell on suspicion, Lovell. Now you want to lynch Peele. Peele's rather a cad, and just the fellow who'd play such a dirty trick, but we're not going to jump on any fellow without any proof."

"Hear, hear!" said Jimmy Silver. There was a fat chuckle close at hand, and the Fistical Four glanced round as Reginald Muffin came rolling along from the stairs. Lovell gave him a glare.

"Well, what's the joke, Muffin?" he snapped.

Tubby grinned a fat grin.

"Nothing, old man. Are you still looking for the chap who ragged your study, days ago? He, he, he!"

"Perhaps you know who it was?" growled Lovell. "Perhaps it was you, what?"

Tubby jumped back.

"Oh, no! Not at all! I wouldn't, you know! I don't know anything about it! Don't you run away with the idea that I'm keeping anything

never good, had been inexpressibly bad, owing to the peculiar position in which he found himself. If he could not venture to tell Reginald Muffin what he thought of him, he was under no such restraint with regard to his study-mates, and his language in the study was "frequent and painful and free."

He was so angry, so ill-tempered, so bitter and savage generally, that his chums had fallen into the way of avoiding him as much as they could. Peele's temper was, in fact, approaching boiling-point, and a less obtuse fellow than Reginald Muffin might have observed the danger-signals, as Cyril Peele's eyes glittered at him. But Reginald Muffin was thinking of tea, not of Peele's temper. Besides, he did not realise that a nice, friendly, fascinating fellow like himself could have such an exasperating effect on another fellow.

He nodded and grinned cheerily to Peele. His glance went to the study table, which was bare.

"All alone, old fellow?" he said brightly.

Peele grunted. Merely being addressed as "old fellow" by Muffin had an intensely enraging effect on him. And he knew what was coming.

"What about tea, dear boy?" asked Muffin.

"I'm teeing in Hall!" growled Peele.

"Better tea in the study," said Muffin. "Why not, when you had a remittance to-day?"

"So you found that out, did you?" snarled Peele.

"I happened to notice you opening the letter, old chap. Like me to do some shopping for you?"

"No!"

"The sergeant's got some ripping cakes, and a fresh lot of tarts to-day," remarked Muffin. "Of course, don't fancy that I'm butting in here to tea, Peele. If you'd rather—really rather—that I went, just say the word!"

"Clear, then!"

"Oh, very well!" said Muffin cheerily. "I'll tea with Jimmy Silver. He's just outside in the passage now. I dare say I can tell him some interesting things over tea."

Peele set his teeth hard. His eyes fairly blazed at Muffin. He was not only fed-up with Muffin and his exactions, but he was in almost a homicidal frame of mind. Anything that he had to fear from the end study was not so bad as this persecution by the greedy, remorseless Muffin. It was one of Tubby's little failings that he never knew when to stop.

Apparently the fat Classical had worked it out, to his own fat satisfaction, that he was going to "pal" with Peele for the rest of the term, on the strength of what he knew.

"Palling" with Peele sounded better, to Tubby's fat conscience, than "sponging" on Peele, but evidently it came to the same thing.

Possibly, if Peele had kept cool, he would have submitted once more. But he was not cool now; he was boiling with rage.

"Have it your own way, old chap," said Reginald Muffin. "Mind, I'm prepared to be friendly. You're rather a cad and an outsider, Peele; but I don't mind taking you up. If you ask me to tea, I'll stay. I shall expect something pretty decent. Now—"

Tubby Muffin broke off suddenly as Peele leaped to his feet.

"I—I say—"

Peele grabbed up a cushion. Even the fatuous Tubby could see the danger-signals now, and he made a jump forward.

Crash!

The cushion caught him as he jumped, and Reginald Muffin sprawled headlong on the carpet, with a roar that rang as far as the end study in the Classical Fourth passage, "Oh! Ow! Whoop!"

Biff, biff, biff!

The cushion, in Peele's hefty hand, rose and fell, with amazing speed and terrific force.

Whack after whack descended on the struggling, breathless Tubby, as he squirmed and wriggled and yelled.

Peele was warming to his work now.

After what he had endured at Muffin's hands, there was a great solace in thrashing Muffin, and Peele enjoyed it to the full. Muffin wriggled and squirmed in vain, he could not escape the terrific swipes of the cushion. Peele seemed to be under the impression that he was beating a carpet.

Wild howls and roars rang from the study. The four juniors in the window-seat across the passage grinned.

(Continued on page 256.)



"UNCLE JAMES" INTERVENES! "Take that, you fat rotter, and that—and that—and that!" gasped Peele. "Ow! Wow! Rescue! Help!" roared Tubby Muffin. Jimmy Silver ran into the study, and caught Peele's descending arm. He jerked away the cushion. "Enough's as good as a feast!" he remarked cheerily. "Chuck it, Peele!"

dignity had to be considered in the matter. Reginald's fat conscience would never have allowed him to screw money out of Cyril Peele for keeping his secret. The matter was not going to be on that footing at all. It was going to be on a much superior footing to that—on a footing that would satisfy Reginald's conscience.

"That's all very well, Peele," he said. "If you want to be friendly, I don't want to be standoffish. But if you lend me that ten-bob note, it's got to be understood that you lend it to me as a friend, without any of your caddish insinuations."

"Do you want it or not?" hissed Peele.

"That depends," answered Muffin calmly. "I'll take it as a loan from a friend, to be returned when I receive the remittance I'm expecting from Captain Muffin. Is that how you mean it?"

Peele breathed hard and deep. Really, it was hard to have to part with his ten-shilling note, and butter up the unspeakable Muffin at the same time.

But there seemed to be no help for it. He was under Muffin's fat thumb at present.

"Yes!" he gasped.

"You want me to accept that loan as a pal?" demanded Reginald Muffin categorically.

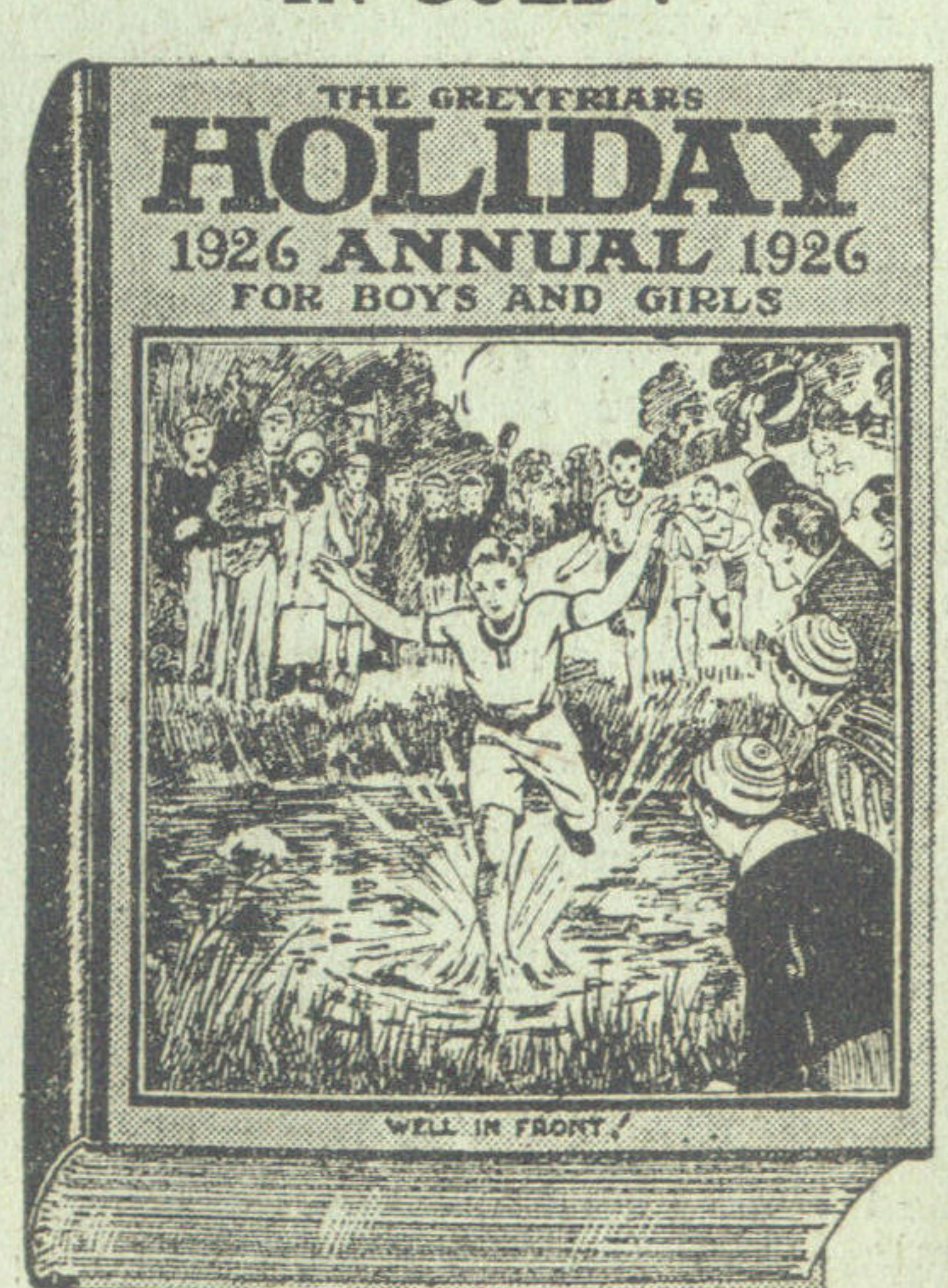
"Yes!" articulated Peele.

Tubby smiled again.

"Well, if you put it like that, old fellow, I don't know that I'll refuse," he said. "All serene, old chap! In fact, thanks!"

Co. sat in the window-seat in the Classical Fourth passage, after footer practice. Jimmy and Raby and Newcome, as a matter of fact, were not so keen now on the subject of

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dark. Nothing of the sort, you know."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" grunted Lovell crossly.

Tubby grinned again.

"I'm going to eat something better than that," he chuckled. "I'm going to tea with Peele. Fat of the land, my boy! He, he, he!"

And Reginald Muffin rolled to the door of the first study in the Classical Fourth with a cheery grin on his fat face, evidently in a state of great anticipation.

Jimmy Silver glanced after him curiously.

"Jolly odd Peele standing Muffin study spreads," he remarked. "I remember he gave him a cake the other day. I never knew that Peele was a giddy philanthropist."

"Oh, blow Muffin and bless Peele!" growled Lovell. "The question is, who ragged our study? We got a Head's licking. We were mobbed in Manders' House. Somebody's got to squirm for it. If we let the rotter off, it lets down our study."

And Lovell pursued that topic, and worried it, as it were, like a dog, while his chums listened as patiently as they could. It was true that they desired to take reprisals on the unknown study-ragger; but it was not to be denied that they were getting a trifle fed-up with the subject.

Meanwhile, Reginald Muffin threw open the door of Peele's study and walked in. Peele of the Fourth was there alone. It was tea-time, but Gower and Lattrey were "teeing" in Hall. Of late, Peele's temper,

Rough Justice!



(Continued from page 249.)

"That doesn't sound like a tea-party!" murmured Newcome. "Tubby doesn't seem so welcome in Peele's study as he supposed."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Yaroo! Help! Rescue! Whoop! Yah! Oh, oh! Ow!" came in frantic yells from Peele's study. Jimmy Silver rose to his feet. "Mustn't slaughter him," he said. "We'd better look in."

The Fistical Four crossed the passage to Peele's door, and looked in. Cyril Peele was too busy even to heed them. With a crimson face and blazing eyes he whacked and whacked with the cushion, while the hapless Tubby yelled and squirmed and dodged in vain.

"Take that, you fat rotter, and that—and that—and that!" gasped Peele!

"Ow! Wow! Rescue! Help!" Jimmy Silver ran into the study and caught Peele's descending arm. He jerked away the cushion.

"Enough's as good as a feast!" he remarked cheerily. "Chuck it, Peele!"

Tubby sat up dizzily. "Ow, ow! Keep him off! Wow! Help! He's pitching into me because I know about him ragging your study! Ow, ow!"

"What's that?" roared Lovell. "It was Peele!" roared the infuriated Tubby. "Peele all the time! I heard him say so! That's why—"

"Oh, that's why he gave you a cake!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, comprehending all of a sudden.

Peele made a quick movement to the door. But the doorway was promptly blocked by Arthur Edward Lovell's stalwart form.

"No, you don't!" said Lovell grimly.

Jimmy Silver grasped Reginald Muffin by the collar, and jerked him to his feet. Muffin staggered breathlessly against the table.

"Now, out with it!" said the captain of the Fourth curtly.

Tubby Muffin babbled breathlessly, Peele listening with a savage, sullen scowl. It was all up now with the study-ragger; but the Fistical Four were not in a hurry. They extracted the whole story from the breathless Muffin.

"Well, you fat rotter!" said Jimmy Silver at last. "You knew it all along and you kept it dark, and it's pretty plain that you've been sponging on Peele on the strength of it. You ought to be scragged."

"Kick him out!" said Raby. "I—I say, I wasn't going to keep it dark. I was just going to tell you chaps!" gasped Muffin. "You see—Leggo! Oh, my hat! Whoop!"

Reginald Muffin flew through the doorway.

Then the Fistical Four devoted their attention to Cyril Peele and his study.

The door was closed, and then the ragging began. Reprisals were the order of the day, and the reprisals were thorough.

The ragging of the end study had been severe. But it was a mere jest to what happened in Peele's study.

The cad of the Fourth watched the juniors at work without venturing to lift a hand. His brow grew blacker and blacker as he watched.

A quarter of an hour made an immense difference to the study. Nobody would have recognised it as the same room after that lapse of time.

Even Arthur Edward Lovell was satisfied as he glanced round.

"I think that will do!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"You rotters!" breathed Peele.

"I'm going to the Head about this!"

"Do!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

"The Head will hear the whole story. And if you think he will be pleased to hear that he licked us because you'd ragged our study all ready for his giddy inspection, you can go ahead. Please yourself, old pippin."

Peele gritted his teeth. His threat was an empty one. He knew that he dared not let the Head know that he, the majestic headmaster of Rookwood, had had his leg pulled, and had, in fact, been made use of to wreak Peele's old grudges against the end study.

Having finished with the study, the Fistical Four began on Peele. Then there was a struggle, but Peele's struggles did not avail him much. In ten minutes he lay gasping on the carpet, in a sea of ink and gum and ashes and jam and marmalade, probably repenting by that time that he had ever started in business as a reckless ragger. It was evidently a game that two sides could play at, and the originator of the game was getting the worst of it.

Justice having been done, Jimmy Silver & Co. walked out. A few minutes later Gower and Latrey arrived, and they fairly jumped at the sight of their wrecked study.

"What!" gasped Gower.

"How—" stuttered Latrey.

Peele groaned. "They've found out— Ow! Ooooh! Oooogh! Grooogh! Oh, dear! Wow! I've been through it! Ow! Here, you keep off, you rotters— Ow, ow, ow!"

But Peele's study-mates did not keep off. This disastrous ending to Peele's career as a study-ragger enraged them too much. They fairly hurled themselves on Cyril Peele, and smote him right and left, and did not cease till he fled, yelling, from the study.

It was likely to be a long time before Peele of the Fourth ragged a Rookwood study again. He had found the way of the transgressor too hard!

THE END.

(Lively times at Rookwood! Be sure you read "A Burning Question!"—next Monday's top-notch story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the famous Fistical Four. You'll enjoy it no end, chums! Order your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND in advance and thus make certain of securing it!)

IN DESPERATE HANDS!

(Continued from previous page.)

Dick looked at him steadily. "Three minutes!" Dick could hear the Spanish watch ticking in the silence.

"One minute!" Slowly Dan Deadeye lifted his revolver.

"Hold up your hands!" Dick slowly lifted his bound hands. "Spread your fingers, and I'll shoot 'em off one by one!"

Dick's fingers quivered as the gun was lifted. Then a sudden yell went up. Something whizzed and hissed over his head like a flying serpent, and Dan Deadeye went down with an arrow quivering in his shoulder.

And from the darkness came such a yell as the boys had never heard in their lives before. It was the war-whoop of the Redskins on the war-path.

It sounded as if six hundred Indians were attacking the fortress of whisky.

The Mexicans and dagoes turned pale as three went down under the arrows that whistled over the whisky-cases. They fired a few shots. Then a huge shape, armed with a club and wearing a torn Eton suit and a battered top-hat, seemed to fall upon them from the skies. Cecil, maddened by the whoopings of his Redskin friends, was amongst them, slugging them right and left.

Binge, yelling like a madman, armed with his shot-gun, came near peppering Skeleton as he dusted a Mexican's leather trousers with a charge of number six.

The bootleggers rushed back as a sound of engines was heard in the narrow creek close by the whisky fort. Then came the welcome sound of Mr. Pugsley's voice.

"Ere, what's all this? Stoush that dago, Bill! Sock 'im one!"

The enemy were jumping for the launch now, thinking that it was one of their high-power run-runners, and there was Mr. Pugsley ready to receive them, backed by a bunch of the heavy-weight bruisers of the Bombay Castle.

In a few seconds the cabin of the launch was full of badly damaged dagoes, and Mr. Pugsley stepped ashore just in time to prevent Chief Sitting Bull from taking his first scalp.

"Ere, stop that, young Sitting Bull!" he exclaimed. "And who is this party with the arrow through his shoulder? Dan Deadeye?"

Mr. Pugsley neatly cut off the head of the arrow and withdrew the shaft from the groaning ruffian.

Then he looked round at the pile of cases.

"We'd better send all the lifeboats in for this stuff," said he. "It's no good wasting it, and if we don't take it somebody else will. How did I find yer? Well, didn't I see that light signalling. And I knew pretty well where you'd drifted. Now, I'll just tie up this chap's shoulder and make 'im comfortable, as you might say. What! All a mistake? I should think it was, Dan Deadeye! It's always a mistake to monkey with the Glory Hole Gang, more especially when they've shipped a crew of Redskins. And I should say that you'll cop it when we hand you over to Uncle Sam!"

THE END.

(Our special treat for next week—"The Man in the Red Mask!" An amazing mystery story featuring the Hon. John Scarlett, the millionaire detective, and his boy assistant, Jimmy West. Be sure you read this stunner, boys! Order your copy of the old "Green 'Un" to-day and avoid disappointment!)

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.



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"THE MAN IN THE RED MASK!"

Francis Warwick's great yarn for next week is an amazing mystery, from whichever point you view it. It takes you for a deep plunge into the whirling waters of plot and clever conspiracy. Who is the Man in the Red Mask? What precisely lies behind the crimson masquerade? Those are the questions which will be asked. Mr. Warwick is a consummately skilful spinner of yarns, and this new one takes the biscuit for smart work in the detective line and sheer baffling mystification. In the grim old bygone, when enemies were wont to lurk at every street corner, masks were practically universal. Odd, but true, that the little "loup de velours," no matter the colour, is an effective disguise. As to the wearer of the Red Mask, that is a burning question, but on Monday next we have another query of the same kind. This is "A Burning Question," a truly brisk and lively yarn of Rookwood and Jimmy Silver & Co. taking the stage.

CLARENCE CUFFY.

This gentle worthy of the mild as milk manners plays a conspicuous part in Owen Conquest's next. Clarence was not born to greatness, at least, there is no reliable information to that effect. But in some subtle and curious manner Master Cuffy has achieved fame. He has done this mainly by not doing things. He has suffered. I cannot go into Clarence's sufferings, for it is too long a story. Perhaps Mr. Conquest will tackle the matter one of these days. When he plays footer Clarence is met with the embarrassing get-off-the-earth look, and yet there are plenty of people who really like Cuffy. He is admired as a merchant of soft answers, though Clarence never managed to turn wrath aside. See his interesting "doings" next week. Then, as to other features, there are two splendid instalments of our serials, "Skeleton's Treasure!" and "The City of Ghosts!" are going great guns. Sidney Drew's company of characters, including the cheery fellow from Wales, are up to their necks in adventure.

"PLAY THE GAME, REF!"

Arthur S. Hardy is on top again with a grand football story, with Jim Gryce of the Rovers in the thick of the fight. Next Monday, too, we have "Goalie's" Football News with a batch of forecasts, and, as we have reason to know, this watcher of the winter game possesses a flair which is almost uncanny. Don't forget that the "Holiday Annual" is fast selling out. The 1926 volume is the prize book of the season. You will be glad to hear that the ss. Bombay Castle will steam in the week after next, and that there are more striking features on the way. En passant it can be noted that Nos. 13 and 14 of the "Schoolboys' Own Library" are right up to scratch.

SYMPATHY WANTED!

I don't think it! "Rex" writes to me from Northampton to say that his holiday was squeezed into the autumn. The reason for this week off in the back end lies in the fact that he got his job in June, and, of course, all the other fellows came first. But I think my chum has little room for a grouse. The country in the "fall" is topping. Very often we get a cheery little summer working things all on its own right in the middle of the autumn, with a riot of colours in the woods, and with rare chances in the mushroom and blackberry line. "Rex" is taking his holiday at a farm. It will be a jolly change from the boot factory, and he ought to have a nailing good time.

STICKING IT OUT!

Here is a stickler from Stourport. "J.B." is in sore trouble. I am breaking no confidence as regards his manly letter, and only refer to the matter as the main issue is of decided general interest. We have all heard of the member of a family who just lounges through life, letting other people earn the bread and cheese. That is the worry of my correspondent. His elder brother is a lazy dolt, not entirely a bad egg, but a fatheaded dreamer who loafers round. He comes into meals, but that is about all he does do. He does not mind being shabby. The fellow has hazy ideas of becoming great some day. That "some day" never comes. What will turn up safe as houses is a bad awakening when the old home gets broken up, and the shirker is left right on the charity of his hard-working relations.

FROM EDINBURGH, TOO!

An interesting suggestion comes from Edinburgh. The correspondent says if Mr. Owen Conquest would weigh in with a history of Rookwood, the BOYS' FRIEND would be even finer than it is. This is our good old friend "if" taking the field again with a vengeance. "If" seems to be the real "bossy" word of the English language. But I am jotting down the Rookwood notion for future consideration and discussion with Mr. Owen Conquest when I catch him in a favourable mood.

BOTHERED BY SHORTHAND.

It is one thing to write shorthand, and another to read it. A puzzled pal in Liverpool says that he cannot memorise all the outlines. Sometimes if he leaves his shorthand notes to cool off he has forgotten the whole range of his notes. That experience is common enough to all beginners. My chum must fight to get his shorthand neat, and stick like glue to the rules of the business. For the rest, practice is important, so important that it overshadows everything. I have had to write shorthand all day, and ought to know.

Your Editor.

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