

"CYMREX" LEVER WATCHES AND MATCH FOOTBALLS OFFERED TO READERS. See Page 547 inside!

The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

EVERY MONDAY. SIXTEEN BIG PAGES!

No. 1,290. Vol. XXVI.—New Series.]

THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD! [Week Ending February 27th, 1926.]

A TERROR FOR HIS SIZE!

by Edgar Sayers

The 1st Chapter.
Turned Down!

"YOU want a trial with the Vale, do you?" And Manager Shard's fat cheeks quivered as he laughed sneeringly. "What d' you think we are—a school team, or somethin'?" He planted his heavy hands on his hips, and his jaw stuck out as he stared down at the lean, wiry boy on the threshold of the "officials' entrance to the Barr Vale ground.

"Lemme tell you that football's a man's game!" the club's new manager went on, his thick lips curved in a contemptuous sneer. "Why, you ain't as big as six-penn'orth o' coppers! Hop it—quick!"

Mick Little certainly wasn't very big. But he was tough and sinewy, and the ruddy glow of real health showed on the rugged features beneath the peak of his cap. His light grey eyes glinted at the manager's tone, but he was anxious for a trial and he swallowed his anger. In any case, it had been the club secretary whom he wanted to see, and it was just a stroke of bad luck that he should have bumped into the manager as he pushed open the door.

"But won't you give me a chance, Mr. Shard? I've played for Barr Amateurs, and I can—"

"Go on, clear off!" Shard cut in. "I'm busy! I haven't got any time to waste on you! Make yourself scarce afore I—"

"I don't want to waste your time!" Mick cut in. "I didn't come to see you, anyway. It was the secretary that I—"

"Oh, it was, was it!" And the bullying manager stuck his red face forward. "The secretary—eh? You think he rules the roost here, do you? Lemme tell you that I'm boss of this outfit! It's me who says who'll play an' who won't play! What's more, I don't want any cheek from a kid like you! Hop it!"

He stretched out a hand like a ham, and it clumped across Mick's ear with a force that half staggered him. His fingers clenched on the bag he was carrying until the knuckles showed white, his free fist half-raised. Then Mick checked himself in time.

"But, Mr. Shard, surely you'll give me a chance to show what I can do! I know there's a trial game on this morning, and you want a right-winger badly! I've got—"

"No!" bawled Shard. "Stone me! Ain't I speakin' plain enough? No! Now clear off, will you? You'll be tellin' me how to run a team next! Get out of it, and don't let me see—"

"I've scored seventeen goals already for the Amateurs!" Mick cut in eagerly. "I know I can—"

He broke off abruptly. Manager Shard had a very short temper and it got the better of him. His fist swung again for Mick's head, and the youngster ducked just in time, slipping out of the way as the man dived at him.

Manager Shard missed him by a couple of feet, and his swinging hand crashed against the woodwork of the open door. With a roar of pain he swung round and jumped at Mick again, both big fists swinging now, his little black eyes gleaming angrily.

Bunched knuckles plugged to the side of Mick's head before the lad could jump back. A moment later he was penned between the open door and an angle of the wall, his head singing from the blow.

For a second or so the manager's big fists slugged home on his sinewy form, then Mick's jaw squared suddenly. He could see that there was no chance of getting a trial now—but he'd got an opportunity of avenging the insults that the man had offered him. He dropped the bag containing his football kit, and a moment later he was tearing into Shard like a young tiger.

One fist rocked home to the podgy chin and another caught the man above the watch-chain in a drive that was harder than any Manager Shard had ever experienced. His rush was stopped; then Mick's head went down, and he drove at the man with both hands.

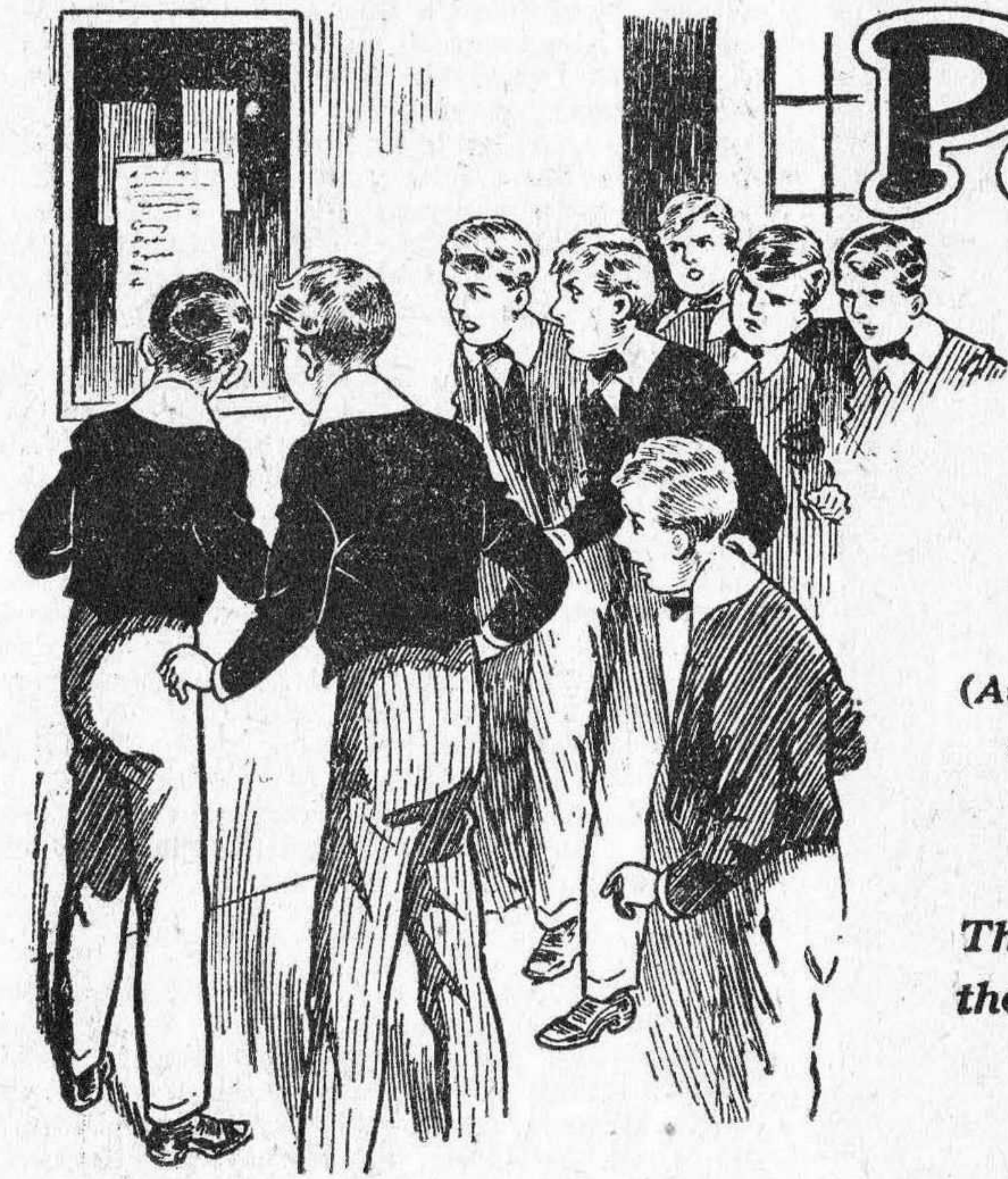
He plastered Shard's red features with snapping punches that stung like mule-kicks; Mick's knuckly

(Continued overleaf.)



THE TERROR SCORES! "Goal—1—1!" yelled the lads on the roof of the colliery shed. "Good old Micky la-ad! Goal—!" There was a terrific crash that sounded through the uproar as the roof collapsed under the strain of the strenuous applause of Mick's pals.

**TROUBLE IN THE FOURTH AT ROOKWOOD! YOU'LL ENJOY
THIS STIRRING STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO.!**



Parted Pals!

By
OWEN CONQUEST.

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

**There is a rush to put up for
the captaincy of the Fourth
Form at Rookwood!**

The 1st Chapter.

Bend Over.

LOVELL!" Arthur Edward Lovell grunted. It was Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, who called to him from the doorway of his study. And it was Lovell's duty as a junior to hurry up immediately at the call of so great a man as the head prefect and captain of the school. Instead of which Lovell of the Fourth grunted.

He was not in a good temper. To be more precise, he was in a very bad one.

When Lovell was in a good temper, he was not the most reasonable of mortals; when he was in a bad temper he was distinctly unreasonable. Many offences, or fancied offences, had roused Lovell's ire, and he was feeling "ratty" towards the whole universe—including, of course, Bulkeley of the Sixth.

So he grunted instead of answering, and did not walk up to the Rookwood captain's door as he should have done.

"Lovell!" called out Bulkeley again, raising his voice a little.

So far from taking due heed of the fact that Lovell was in a temper and annoyed with the universe generally, Bulkeley only supposed that he did not hear. Irritable temper on the part of a junior was not a circumstance, indeed, of which the captain of the school was likely to take note.

"Lovell! Do you hear?"

Lovell looked round crossly.

"What is it now?" he asked, with the accent on the "now."

Bulkeley of the Sixth fixed his eyes on him. He noticed now that Lovell was "ratty," but he still failed to attach any importance to the circumstance.

"Don't be cheeky, kid," he said quietly.

Grunt!

"Go and find Jimmy Silver, and tell him to come to my study," said the prefect.

Grunt!

"Cut off!" said Bulkeley, his tone growing sharper. He was a good-tempered fellow, and the most popular prefect at Rookwood; but there was a limit to his patience with a sulky junior.

"I can't!" said Lovell.

"What?"

"I don't speak to Silver now," grunted Lovell.

"You don't speak to Silver of the Fourth?" repeated Bulkeley.

"No."

"And why not?"

"We bar each other," said Lovell sulkily. Bulkeley eyed him.

So far, Bulkeley of the Sixth was unaware of the rift in the lute that had occurred in the end study in the Classical Fourth. It was deeply discussed in the Fourth Form, discussed there with breathless interest. It was talked of in the Third and the Shell. In the Sixth Form it had not been heard of, and would not have excited any interest had it been heard of. Rags and rows in junior studies would scarcely have ruffled the stately calm of the great men of the Sixth.

"Oh, so you kids have been rowing, have you?" said Bulkeley, with a smile.

Grunt from Lovell.

In the end study in the Fourth the part-

ing of the ways had come, on Lovell's side with lofty dignity and disdain. He did not like to hear this grave state of affairs described as "kid's rowing."

Yet that was what it was in the eyes of the Sixth-Former—merely that and nothing more.

"I thought that you four young rascals were inseparable," went on Bulkeley good-naturedly. "So you bar Silver, do you?"

"Yes, I do, and Raby and Newcome as well!" muttered Lovell.

"Better make it up again," said Bulkeley. "Still, that's your own affair, not mine. Now take my message to Silver."

"I can't."

"Step into my study, Lovell!" said the captain of Rookwood quietly.

He stepped back into his room and picked up his official ashplant from the table.

Lovell hesitated.

He was in a bad temper, and in a mood for a quarrel with anybody, friend or foe, and he was not a prudent fellow. But even Lovell realised that he could not directly disobey the head prefect of Rookwood.

With a frowning brow he entered Bulkeley's study.

His eyes glinted at the sight of the ashplant in the prefect's hand. Bulkeley fixed his eyes on him grimly.

"Bend over that chair!" he said.

Lovell gritted his teeth.

"I gave you a message," said Bulkeley. "You tell me you can't take it, because you bar young Silver. I'm going to try to convince you that you can take it, see?"

He pointed to the chair with his cane.

"Bend over!"

Arthur Edward Lovell breathed hard and deep. He had asked for it, there was no doubt about that, and now he was going to get what he had asked for. The captain of Rookwood was a good-natured and tolerant fellow; but he was not to be trifled with.

With set teeth Lovell bent over the chair. There was no help for it.

The cane swished!

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

Lovell did not make a sound as he endured the "six." His face grew more and more savage and sullen, that was all.

"Can you take the message now?" asked Bulkeley.

No answer.

"I'm sorry to see you playing the goat like this, Lovell," said the Rookwood captain. "My advice to you is not to be a sulky young duffer. Now, cut off and tell Silver I want him. Clear!"

Lovell cleared.

He tramped out of Bulkeley's study with a set, savage face, and went towards the stairs.

But he did not ascend the staircase to the Fourth Form passage. He knew that Jimmy Silver was in the end study; but he did not intend to go there. Having barred his former chum and resolved never to speak to him again, Arthur Edward Lovell did not intend to break his resolution even at the command of the captain of the school.

Heedless of consequences—which were likely to be serious enough—Lovell tramped past the stairs and went out into the quadrangle.

The 2nd Chapter.

Jimmy Silver's Resignation!

"NOTHING doing!" said Jimmy Silver. "But you're an ass!" urged Raby.

"I've had that, old man."

"You're a thumping duffer, Jimmy," said Newcome.

"I've had that, too!" said Jimmy Silver, with a faint smile.

Jimmy had rather a tired look, while his comrades were looking quite exasperated. The poet has told us that when sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions. And certainly trouble seemed to be piling up now on the once happy and united end study.

"It's fatheaded," said Raby hotly. "Just because that ass Lovell chose to make a fool of himself you want to resign the junior captaincy."

"I've resigned it," said Jimmy.

"All the fellows are willing for you to wash that out," said Newcome.

"But I'm not willing."

"Then you jolly well ought to be. It's letting this study down."

"Oh, rot, old chap!"

"What sort of a skipper are we going to get in your place?"

"A better one, I hope."

"Some Shell duffer, perhaps. Smythe of the Shell is already talking of putting up for it."

Jimmy smiled.

"Let him! I don't think the fellows will be asses enough to elect Smythe. But if they want him, let them have him."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Let it drop," urged Jimmy Silver. "It's nothing to do with Lovell's nonsense, really. I let the team down in the House match, and it was up to me to resign. I've done it, and there's an end."

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"He, he, he!" came an unmusical cackinnation from the doorway. Tubby Muffin of the Fourth blinked into the study, with a fat grin.

"Roll away, bother you!" snapped Raby.

Newcome reached for a missile. The end study was in no humour for Tubby and his cackinnations.

"I say! Lovell's asking for it!" chuckled Tubby. "Don't you buzz that cushion at me, Newcome! I say! Lovell's got old Bulkeley's rag out now!"

"Blow Lovell!" growled Raby.

"We're fed-up with Lovell in this study!" snapped Newcome. "Go and tell somebody else!"

Jimmy Silver looked up anxiously. Lovell had tried the patience of his old friends too far, but Jimmy still felt some concern for the headstrong fellow who had been his chum.

"What's happened, Tubby?" he asked.

Tubby grinned.

"I was in the Sixth Form passage," he said. "Bulkeley told Lovell to come to you with a message that you were wanted, and Lovell wouldn't! He said that he barred the study! He, he, he!"

"Cheeky ass!" growled Raby.

"Bulkeley gave him six!" chuckled Tubby.

"Serve him jolly well right!"

"Then he told him to take the message!" grinned the fat Classical. "Lovell was looking like a demon in a panto when he came out of Bulkeley's study! He, he, he!"

"He's asking for trouble all over Rookwood!" grunted Raby. "If he asks for any more here, he will get it!"

"Keep smiling!" said Jimmy. "Be as civil as you can when he comes. We don't want any more rowing."

"He, he, he! He isn't coming!" chortled Tubby Muffin. "He's had six, but he wants some more! He went slouching out into the quad! He don't mean to bring you Bulkeley's message at all! I say, Jimmy, he will get it awful hot from old Bulkeley! He, he, he!"

Jimmy Silver rose from his chair.

"You heard Bulkeley say I was wanted in his study?" he asked.

"Yes. And Lovell said—"

"Never mind what Lovell said. I'll go and see what Bulkeley wants, you chaps," said Jimmy. "No need for him to know that Lovell didn't bring the message. Lovell's got trouble enough without a row with a prefect of the Sixth."

"Oh, isn't that just like you?" exclaimed Raby, in exasperation. "Lovell's fairly driven you into resigning the captaincy, and now you want to save him from being licked for his dashed cheek!"

"Just like Jimmy!" agreed Newcome. "I always told you you had a soft streak in you, Jimmy!"

"No need to tell me again, then!"

answered Jimmy, with a smile; and he left the end study.

But he was not smiling as he went down the staircase. He could guess what Bulkeley of the Sixth wanted to see him for, and he did not look forward with pleasure to this interview with the head of the games. But it was like Jimmy, with a good many worries of his own on his youthful shoulders, to think of his estranged chum, and he hurried to Bulkeley's study as fast as he could.

The captain of Rookwood gave him a kind nod as he appeared in the doorway.

"Come in, Silver. So you got my message, after all?" said Bulkeley, smiling.

"You wanted to see me, Bulkeley?" asked Jimmy, without directly replying to the question.

"Yes. What's this about your resigning the junior captaincy?"

"I've resigned, that's all, Bulkeley," said the captain of the Fourth uncomfortably.

"I know that. But why? Nobody wanted you to resign."

"No. But—"

"Well, why did you do it?"

"I let the team down in the House match," said Jimmy, colouring. "Lovell wasn't fit to play, but I put him in, all the same. As it turned out, it lost us the game."

Bulkeley frowned.

"That's not like you, Silver. I should have thought you had a little more sense than that."

"Well, I hadn't," murmured Jimmy.

"I suppose you really mean that Lovell talked you over and persuaded you to try him, and you acted against your own judgment?"

"Well, you see—"

"It was silly enough," said Bulkeley.

"The fact that Lovell was your friend ought not to have influenced you at all, of course."

"I know. That's why I've resigned," said Jimmy. "I played him, hoping for the best, but I really knew all the time that he ought not to have been in the team. It was my fault, and although the fellows haven't said much about it, they all think I played the goat—and so I did. They can find a captain who hasn't a soft streak in him."

Bulkeley looked very thoughtful.

"Well, if that's how the matter stands, there's nothing for me to do but to order a new junior election," he said. "I'm sorry. I think you are the best man for the job. I'm surprised at you making such a mistake, and perhaps you're right to resign. You don't seem to be a very good

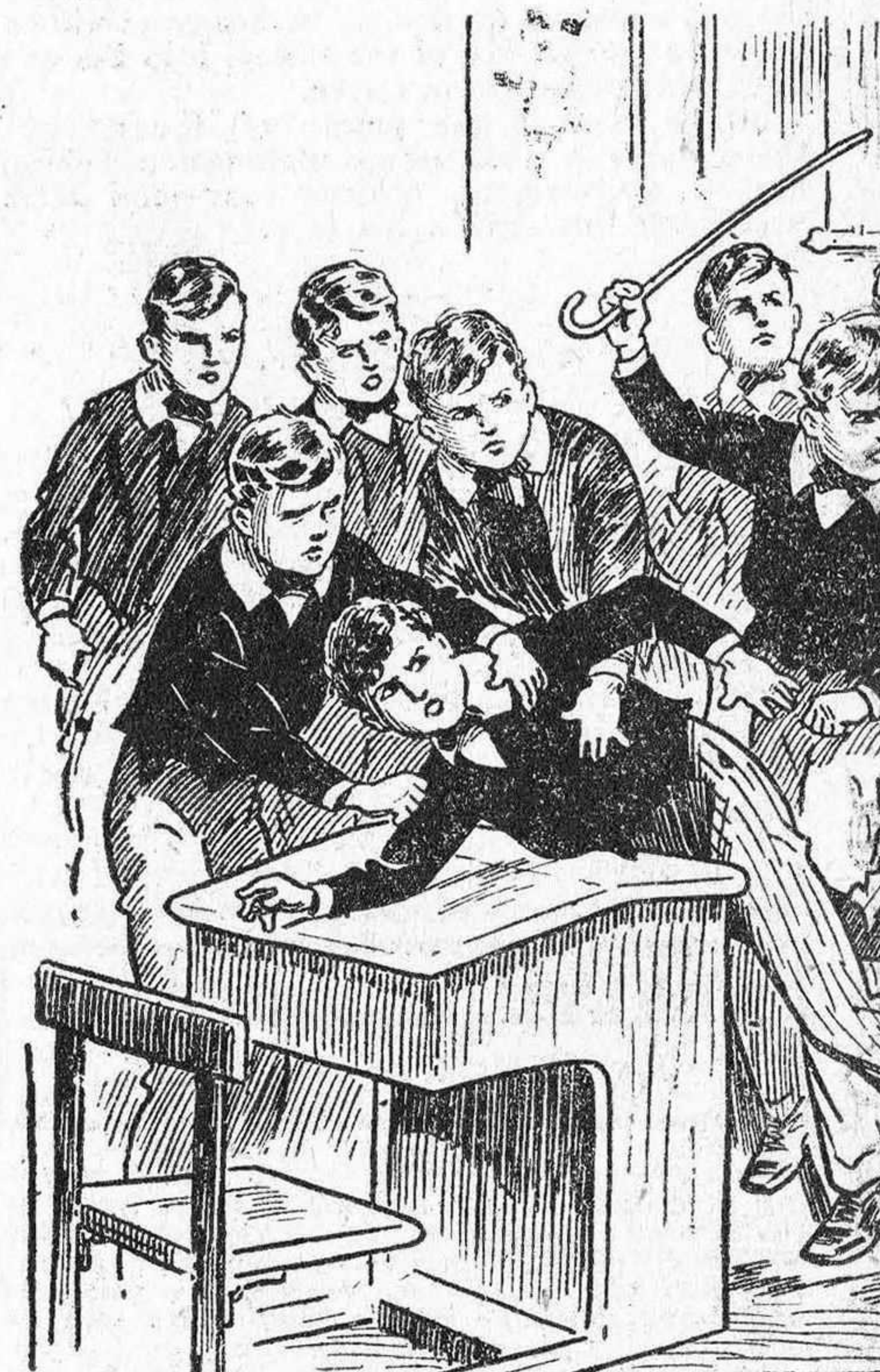
terms with Lovell now, after making a fool of yourself on his account, though."

"No," said Jimmy.

"Well, I'll fix the election for Saturday," said the captain of Rookwood. "I'll put a notice on the board to that effect. Are you standing for re-election?"

"No."

"Well, Conroy or Dodd or Erroll would make a good junior skipper. You must be a young ass to play the fool as you tell me you've done. I thought better of you than that. You can cut."



ENTER MR. DALTON! "Yarooooooop!" voice in the doorway Dalton, the master of the Fourth, walked in

You'll enjoy "Out of the Running!" next Monday's exciting story of the fight for the captaincy of the Fourth Form at Rookwood!

Jimmy Silver left the study, feeling extremely uncomfortable. As he went down the corridor Mornington of the Fourth joined him.

"Seen Bulkeley?" asked Morny.

Jimmy nodded.

"About your resignation?"

"Yes."

"Did he order you to withdraw it?"

"No. He seems to think I've done right in resigning."

"Oh! I rather thought he would tell you to call it off!" said Mornington. "So there's going to be a new election?"

"Yes—on Saturday."

"You're standin'?"

"No."

"If the fellows re-elected you it would be a sort of vote of confidence, and you could carry on all right," said Mornington.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Well, if you're out of it, you won't object to my puttin' up for the job—what?" asked Morny, with a laugh.

"You!" said Jimmy, with a start.

"Why not?"

"Oh, no reason why not, I suppose," said Jimmy. "You've as much right to stand as anybody else."

"Only you don't think I'm the man for the job?" asked Mornington rather sarcastically.

"Well, no. I'd like to see Conroy or Erroll get in—or Tommy Dodd, if he wasn't a Modern."

"Thanks! I'm goin' in for it, all the same! Can't count on your vote—what?"

"Fraid not."

"I'll try to worry along without it, old bean!" And Valentine Mornington walked away whistling.

Jimmy Silver returned to the end study with a rather worried frown on his brow. Morny was a good footballer, and had many of the qualities needed in a junior captain of Rookwood, but he lacked a good many more qualities that were needed. He was not a fellow whom Jimmy would willingly have seen take the place, though he rather liked Morny personally. But the matter was out of his hands now.

Jimmy stopped at Study No. 3 in the Fourth Form passage and looked in. Conroy of the Fourth was there.

"Election on Saturday," said Jimmy. "Conroy, old man, I think you ought to put up. I know Erroll won't, as he's Morny's pal, and Morny is standing. You're the next best man."

Conroy grinned.

"Only the next best?" he asked. "Right—"

"Fathead!" said Raby.

"Ass!" said Newcome.

"You see—" began Jimmy.

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"But I say—"

"Frabjous ass!"

"Chump!"

Jimmy gave it up.

The 3rd Chapter.
Too Funny!

"THIS," said Tommy Dodd, "is where we come in."

And Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, his loyal chums, answered in unison: "It is—it are!"

The three Tommies of the Modern Fourth looked very merry and bright.

As members of the Rookwood Junior Football Club, they rather regretted the loss of Jimmy Silver; but as Modern fellows, members of Manders' House, they rejoiced.

It was a fixed belief on the Classical side that the junior captain was bound to be a Classical man. For one thing, the Head's House was the more numerous House, and it was the older House—and, of course, it was cock House, in the estimation of every inhabitant. As its voting power was so much greater than that of Manders' House, it needed only to exert itself to carry any school election. Classical fellows looked on the captaincy, senior or junior, as belonging to them of right.

Not so the Moderns.

Tommy Dodd & Co. had an equally fixed belief that things would never go really well till a Modern man became captain; and Tommy Dodd was prepared to take on the job at a moment's notice.

Now was his chance at last.

There was to be a new election, and there were two Classical candidates up. That meant a split in the vote on the Classical side, and it was possible, at last, for the less numerous House to carry the election. House loyalty was very strong at Rookwood; it was not likely that any Modern fellow would vote for either Mornington or Conroy against a man of his own House. It was not likely that any Classical would vote for Tommy Dodd; but if the Classics split their votes about evenly between their two candidates, a solid Modern vote would outweigh both parties—and that, as Tommy Dodd remarked, was where he came in.

"Jimmy Silver was rather an ass to resign," remarked Tommy Cook. "Between ourselves, he was a jolly good captain."

"Best man on the Classical side," agreed Dodd. "But I think we can go one better on this side."

"Hear, hear!"

"The only thing is to settle on the man and vote solid for him," said Doyle. "Morny and Conroy will wash each other out."

"That's it."

"Morny's rather popular on the other side," remarked Cook. "Conroy's the man I should vote for, though, if I were a Classical. Morny's a bit showy and uncertain. If they divide the vote equally, we're all right."

"And the sooner we put up a man the better," said Tommy Doyle. "Any ideas on that subject so far, Dobby?"

Tommy Dodd gave his chum a rather fixed look.

If there was a Modern candidate at all, it was a foregone conclusion that that candidate would be Tommy Dodd, already junior captain of his House. Doyle seemed to be overlooking that obvious fact.

"I don't think we need discuss that," said Dodd dryly. "There's only one man can stand on this side, and that's a member of this study."

"Agreed!"

"Glad you can see it," said Tommy Dodd. "Dear man, I was thinking the same thing," said Tommy Doyle blandly. "Certainly, a member of this study. Chap must be a good footballer—"

"Of course."

"Good all-round sportsman, in fact—"

"Quite so."

"Popular, and good-tempered, and suited to the job in every way," went on Doyle. "Naturally."

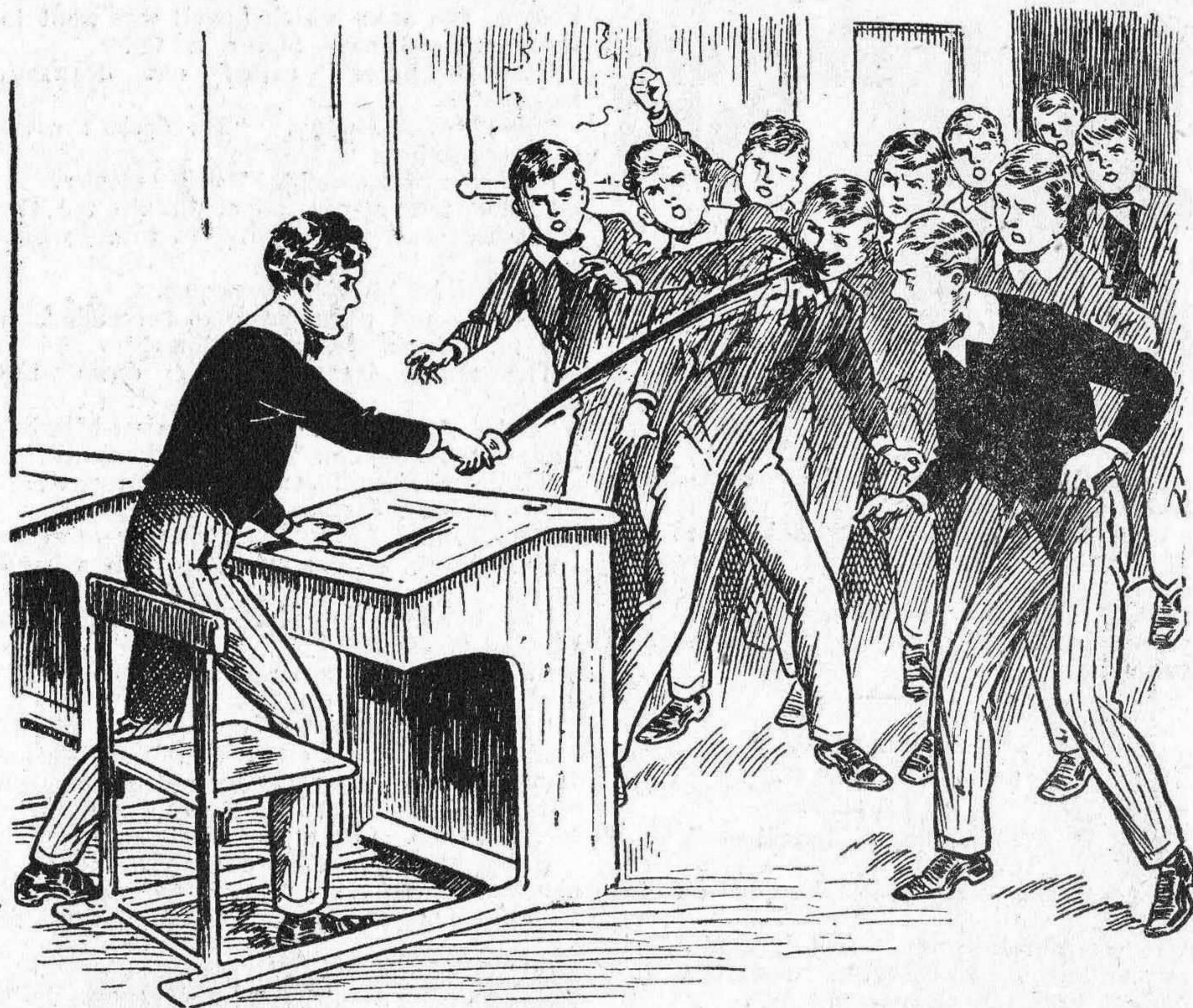
"Good! I don't mind standing."

"What?"

"You fellows back me up, and I'll pull it off!" said Doyle heartily, apparently oblivious of the extraordinary expression that was coming over Tommy Dodd's face. "We'll get a Modern skipper at last if we all stand together and you fellows back me up all along the line."

"You!" stammered Tommy Dodd.

"You!" ejaculated Cook.



LOVELL IS WANTED! Lovell jumped up and grasped his inkpot. "Keep off, or—" But the excited juniors closed in on him, in a mob. The inkpot swung in the air, and there was a howl of rage as its contents were distributed liberally over the raggars. "Ow! Ooooooh!" spluttered Higgs, who unfortunately had his mouth open at the time. The taste of the ink was not agreeable.

Doyle looked surprised.

"Didn't you mean me?" he demanded.

"No!" roared Tommy Dodd. "I didn't."

"Look here, if you mean Cook—"

"I don't mean Cook!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd heatedly.

"Is it yourself you mean, then?"

"Yes, you silly ass, it is!"

"Well, of course, you've as much right to put up as any other fellow," said Doyle thoughtfully. "I'd take it more kindly if you backed me up, as a pal should. But go in for it, old chap, and let the best man win."

Tommy Dodd breathed hard.

He had been congratulating himself on the split in the Classical vote, which gave the Moderns a chance of getting their man in by voting solid. Apparently, however, the Modern vote was not going to be so solid as he had taken for granted.

"Now look here, Doyle," said Tommy Dodd. "We've all got to stand together to bring this off."

"Just what I think," said Doyle, with a nod. "You back me up—"

"You've got to back me up!"

"How can I, when I'm standing for election?" remonstrated Doyle. "One candidate can't vote for another, can he?"

"You're not standing!" roared Tommy Dodd, greatly incensed.

"My dear man—"

"Now look here—" began Cook.

"You see, I'm standing," said Doyle cheerily. "You see—"

"No, you're not—you're sitting!" said Tommy Dodd wrathfully, as he collared his comrade and sat him down on the study carpet with a bump.

"Whoop!" roared Doyle.

"Collar him, Cookey! We've got to make him understand sense before we get any further with this!" said Tommy Dodd. "The Modern vote isn't going to be split like the Classical, or we're nowhere. Bump him!"

"What-ho!" grinned Cook.

"Here, I say—" yelled Doyle, as he was collared by his chums and lifted from the floor.

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

Bump!

"Oh, my hat!"

Bump!

"Yoooooorryggghh!"

"Now are you standing?" grinned Cook.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Are you standing?" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Ow! I say—ow—"

"Oh, give him another!"

Bump!

Tommy Doyle roared and struggled frantically. He wrenched himself loose from the grasp of his chums and bolted round the study table.

"You silly owls!" he roared. "Keep off!"

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

"Keep off!" yelled Doyle, dodging

frantically round the table. "I tell you—"

Crash!

The grasp of his comrades closed on him again, and Tommy Doyle went to the floor dragging Dodd and Cook with him. The three juniors rolled over in a terrific struggle.

Towle, of the Modern Fourth, looked in at the door.

"What the thump—" he exclaimed.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"Bump him!"

"Serag him!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Towle, in astonishment.

Ragging was quite rare in Tommy Dodd's study. Generally the three Moderns pulled together wonderfully well, but for once there was evidently a very serious rift in the lute.

Doyle tore himself loose again and jumped up. Dodd and Cook scrambled to their feet.

"Collar him!" shouted Tommy Dodd breathlessly. "Stop him, Towle! Lend a hand ragging him!"

"But what—"

"The silly ass thinks he is going to stand for election on Saturday, and we're trying to show him that he isn't!"

"Oh, I see!"

"Keep off!" yelled Doyle, seizing the poker from the fender and brandishing it as three juniors closed in on him. "I tell you—"

"Collar him!"

"You silly owls!" yelled Doyle. "I was only pulling your silly legs! I'm not going to stand, you thumping chumps!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Only a joke, you silly cuckoos!" gasped the hapless Doyle. "Can't a fellow pull your legs without being snatched bald-headed, you blinking duffers? Ow!"

Tommy Dodd broke into a chuckle.

"Well, you shouldn't be funny on a serious subject!" he said. "Still, if it was only a joke, we take back that bumping—don't we, Cookey?"

"We do—we does!" grinned Cook. "You can consider yourself unbumped, Doyle, if that's any good to you!"

"Better give him another for being such a silly ass!" suggested Towle. "Of all the silly chumps— Oh, ow! Keep that poker away, you born idiot! Keep him off, you fellows!"

Towle retreated to the door under the lunges of the poker.

"Keep him off!" he howled.

Tommy Dodd shook his head.

"Mustn't call this study names," he said. "Give him another jab, Doyle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Towle fled.

"Now, let's talk it over!" said Tommy Dodd amicably. "If you've done making your little jokes, Doyle—"

"You silly ass!" gasped Doyle. "I've a jolly good mind to stand after all."

"What!" roared Cook and Dodd together.

(Continued overleaf.)



Whack! "What is all this disturbance?" asked a quiet boy. "Oh, my hat!" "Cave!" "It's Dicky!" Richard entered the Form-room with a frowning brow.

ho! If you really mean to resign, I'll try my hand at the job."

"That's settled," said Jimmy Silver. "I'll back you up, and I think my friends will do the same. You'll stand, then?"

"You bet!"

"Good!"

Jimmy went to the end study. Raby and Newcome eyed him rather morosely as he came in.

"It's all settled," said Jimmy cheerily. "Election on Saturday, and Conroy's our candidate."



(Continued from
previous page.)

"Only a jolly good mind," said Doyle hastily. "Chuck it!"

And the three Tommies held a council of war on the subject of the coming election, punctuated by gasps from Tommy Doyle, who did not venture upon any more frivolous jests on such a serious subject.

The 4th Chapter. Lovell Asks For It.

"THAT ass, Lovell—"
"That chump, Lovell—"
"Cheek!"

There was only one opinion on the subject.

It was cheek—pure, unadulterated cheek, as Valentine Mornington described it—dashed neck, as Conroy put it.

"That cheeky ass!" said Putty of the Fourth indignantly. "Why, it was through him that Jimmy resigned! And now—"

"Now he's got the cheek to put up!" ejaculated Oswald.

"Tubby Muffin will be putting up next!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cheek!"

"The silly ass!"

Quite a crowd of Classical fellows had gathered before the notice-board. There was a paper in Bulkeley's handwriting on the board announcing the date and hour of the junior election, with the names of the candidates.

The names of Mornington and Conroy were there; and no one was surprised to see Tommy Dodd's name. All, in fact, had expected the Moderns to "butt in," as it was considered on the Classical side. Neither was there surprise at the name of Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell. It was just like Smythe of the Shell to step in. But there was general surprise at the name of A. E. Lovell.

Lovell was putting up as a candidate.

Every Classical junior knew that Lovell had fairly worried and badgered Jimmy Silver into playing him in the late House match, against Jimmy's own better judgment. Jimmy had felt that it was up to him to resign when the match was thereby thrown away.

And Lovell, the cause of all the trouble, with his headstrong and unreasonable temper, apparently considered that he was a suitable person to fill the late captain's shoes.

"It's too thick!" exclaimed Rawson. "It's sheer cheek! How many votes does he think he will get?"

"None—unless he votes for himself!" said Jones minor.

"Not a man will put a paw up for him!" exclaimed Putty of the Fourth. "I'd rather vote for Smythe myself."

"Same here!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Four Classical candidates, and only one Modern," said Mornington, with a whistle. "That looks like a walkover for Dodd. The Moderns will muster strong."

"It's rot!" said Oswald.

"Perhaps you'd better stand out, Morny, old man," said Conroy.

Morny chuckled.

"I was goin' to suggest the same thing to you," he answered.

"That's rot, of course."

"Not such rot as your suggestion, old bean."

"The vote will be split into little bits," said Putty. "All this means that the Modern will get in. Who wants a Modern skipper?"

"Nobody."

"We'll jolly well talk to Lovell, anyhow. He's got to withdraw!" exclaimed Rawson. "It's too thick. After all the harm he's done, he's making it easier for a Modern to get in."

"We'll jolly well stop him!" said Mornington. "We'll jolly well rag him till he takes his name off."

"Hear, hear!"

An excited crowd of juniors proceeded to look for Arthur Edward Lovell. They repaired first to the end study in the

Fourth, the room which Lovell was wont to share with Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Lovell here?" called out Rawson, looking in.

"No!" said Jimmy. "He doesn't come to this study now."

"What's the trouble?" asked Raby.

"He's putting up as candidate for the captaincy, and we're going to talk to him about it."

"Lovell is?" yelled Newcome.

"He is—and we're going to persuade him not to. Come on, you fellows!"

The crowd tramped away down the passage.

"Let's go with them!" exclaimed Raby, jumping up. "This is the giddy limit!"

"Hold on!" said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"Look here, Jimmy—"

"Hold on, I tell you. If there's going to be a ragging, we don't want to take a hand in it."

"Isn't he asking for a ragging?" demanded Newcome.

"Isn't he begging and praying for it?" exclaimed Raby excitedly.

"Well, he will get it without our help!" said Jimmy, with a sigh. "He's asking for trouble on all sides; and he will get enough without us chipping in. He was our pal, if he isn't now. Chuck it, old chaps!"

Raby and Newcome grunted, but they chuckled it. Lovell's latest step had caused as much exasperation in his old study as in

any other study in the Classical Fourth. But Jimmy was anxious that the breach, already too wide, should not be made wider.

The Classical crowd proceeded to look for Lovell.

He was found at last in the Form-room, where he had taken his books for prep.

Lovell was seated at his desk, in solitary sulky state, when the juniors looked in, and he gave them rather a sour look.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Rawson.

"Lovell, you ass—"

"Lovell, you cheeky cad—"

"Hallo! Looking for me?" asked Lovell coolly. "Here I am—not specially pleased to see you."

"Your name's up as a candidate for the election!" exclaimed Oswald.

"That's right," said Lovell, with a nod.

"It isn't right—it's jolly wrong! You've got to take it off."

"Rats!"

"Look here, Lovell—" exclaimed Mornington.

Lovell curled his lip.

"Have you fellows come along to offer me your support in the election on Saturday?" he asked.

"What? No jolly fear!"

"We're all down on you!" roared Higgs.

"In that case, you can clear off, and let me get on with my prep," said Lovell coolly.

"You've got to withdraw your name. How many fellows in the Fourth will vote for you, do you think?"

"Every one that's got any sense," said Lovell. "That doesn't apply to you fellows, of course."

"Why, you cheeky fathead—"

"Collar him!"

"Look here, Lovell," said Rawson, "the Classical vote is badly split already. There are two candidates from the Fourth, and a Shell duffer has butted in. You're one too many."

"Rats!"

"But for your fatheadedness, Jimmy Silver never would have resigned. You've got to keep out of the election."

"Go and eat coke."

"Oh, rag him!" exclaimed Higgs impatiently. "He never will listen to reason, we all know that. Bang his head on the desk."

"Hear, hear!"

Lovell jumped up and grasped his ink-pot.

"Keep off, or—"

But the excited juniors closed in on him, in a mob. The inkpot swung in the air, and there was a howl of rage as its contents were distributed liberally over the raggers.

"Ow! Ooooh!" spluttered Higgs, who unfortunately had his mouth open at the time. The taste of the ink was not agreeable.

"Collar the cad!"

"Rag him!"

Arthur Edward Lovell had many faults and weaknesses; but want of pluck certainly was not one of them. He stood up

to his assailants manfully and hit out right and left.

Two or three of the juniors went rolling over under his hefty drives. Then Lovell was collared and dragged down among the desks.

He still struggled fiercely, and half a dozen fellows had plenty to do to hold him.

"Bang his napper!" howled Jones minor, clapping his nose, which streamed red from a hefty blow from Lovell's knuckles.

"Go it!"

"Give him jip!"

Lovell, still resisting desperately, was dragged to his desk, and Mornington grasped the back of his collar.

"Now, you cheeky ass," exclaimed Morny,

"are you going to tell Bulkeley to take your name off?"

"No!" roared Lovell.

Bang!

Lovell's head smote the desk, with a hefty smite. There was a fiendish yell from Arthur Edward.

"Now, will you have another?" demanded Mornington. "Mind, we're goin' to keep this up as long as you do. Will you chuck it?"

"No!" bawled Lovell furiously.

Bang!

"Yaroooh!"

"Here's Dalton's cane," yelled Jones minor. "Hold him over the desk while I give him six."

"Good egg!"

"You rotters!" yelled Lovell.

"Bend him over!"

"Go it, Jonesy!"

Lovell, still desperately resisting, was sprawled over the desk. Jones minor brandished the Form-master's cane, and brought it down with a terrific whack. The yell that came from Arthur Edward Lovell could have been heard all over Rookwood.

"Yarooooooop!"

Whack!

"What is all this disturbance?" asked a quiet voice in the doorway.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Cave!"

"It's Dicky!"

Richard Dalton, the master of the Fourth, walked into the Form-room with a frowning brow. Lovell was instantly released, and he staggered to a form and sat down, gasping for breath.

Mr. Dalton eyed the raggers sternly.

"What does this mean?" he demanded.

"Hem!"

"Um!"

"It is what you call a ragging, I suppose," said Mr. Dalton quietly. "I demand to know the reason of it."

"Lovell's puttin' up on the captain's election, sir," said Mornington, at last. "We're tryin' to persuade him not to."

Mr. Dalton knitted his brows.

"Lovell has as much right as anyone else to do so," he said. "Every boy present will take five hundred lines."

"Oh!"

"Let there be no more of this, or the punishment will be much more severe!" said the Form-master. "Leave this room at once."

With glum faces, the raggers marched out of the Form-room. Mr. Dalton had come down heavy; as indeed he was bound to do, in the circumstances. The juniors did not blame him; but their feelings towards Arthur Edward Lovell were quite humish. Five hundred lines was a heavy inpot; it was likely to use up a good many leisure hours.

"Never mind," muttered Mornington, "we'll handle him in the dorm to-night, Dicky or no Dicky."

But that view found no support in the Classical Fourth. Nobody wanted trouble with Mr. Dalton; and when the Fourth Form went to bed that night Arthur Edward Lovell was allowed to turn in in peace. But it was safe to say that if there was one fellow at Rookwood who was thoroughly and absolutely unpopular in his Form, the name of that fellow was Arthur Edward Lovell.

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of those fellows as a matter of course, outweighing as usual the Modern vote.

The matter had turned out quite differently.

It was not merely a case of "another Richmond in the field"—there were, so to speak, a crowd of Richmonds in the field.

Conroy or Erroll was the best man, and Conroy was standing, with all the support of the end study. Erroll declined to entertain the idea, as he was Mornington's best chum, and had no desire or intention to oppose Morny. It was Morny who was superfluous. Then there was Smythe of the Shell—a Classical man, but no good at all. Futile as he was, he was sure to capture some Shell votes, as he belonged to the Shell, and many of the Shell did not like a captain chosen from a lower Form. And then there was Lovell, whose candidature had quite exasperated the Classical Fourth. But Lovell had his followers—fellows like Peele and Gower and Lattrey, who were so much "up against" Jimmy Silver that they would have voted for a Prussian Hun to irritate the end study. All the rank outsiders in the Form, indeed, rallied round Lovell, simply to make themselves obnoxious, as it were—possibly not wholly to Lovell's satisfaction. He could not have been very pleased with such supporters as Peele & Co. But there it was—he had a party, though a small one, and it drew away votes that were needed to beat the Modern man.

Tommy Dodd was a good man, as Jimmy Silver freely admitted; but Jimmy was a Classical, and shared to the full the feelings of his House. On the Classical side it was generally held that Rookwood would go to the dogs, or farther, if a Modern man got in as captain. Jimmy did not think it would be quite so bad as that; but he was keenly desirous of seeing a man of his own House win the captaincy.

And that consummation, which was so devoutly to be wished, was really impossible with four Classical candidates splitting the House vote. The Moderns had only to stand together to make it a walk-over for the Modern man.

Hence the worried look on Jimmy Silver's youthful brow that morning. It was borne in upon his mind that he had not, perhaps, acted with the usual wisdom of Uncle James of Rookwood in resigning the captaincy, and stating that he would not stand for re-election. But he had done so, and said so; and he felt that he could not blow hot and cold with a breath—he could not spin round like a weathercock at a change of wind. What he had done he had done, and what he had said he had said. And that was that, so to speak.

In morning break Conroy came up to Jimmy in the quad.

"We look like losing on Saturday!" said the Australian junior. "If you think best, old man, I'll stand down and vote for Morny."

"That's jolly decent of you, old chap," said Jimmy, "but I don't think it best. Stick to it."

"I'm afraid that means Dodd getting in, then."

"We don't want a Modern," admitted Jimmy Silver ruefully. "But facts are facts. Dodd is a better man for the job than Morny, though it goes against the grain to say so."

"Well, if you think so—"

"I do."

"That settles it as far as I'm concerned," said the Cornstalk; and he nodded to Jimmy and strolled away.

Jimmy proceeded to look for Valentine Mornington, hoping to find the dandy of the Fourth in the same reasonable and accommodating mood. The hope was faint; he knew Morny's obstinate and arrogant nature too well. But he could only do his best.

Mornington grinned as Jimmy came up. His look showed that he knew what was coming.

"Cut it out!" he said, without waiting for Uncle James to begin.

"I'm going to ask you to stand down, Morny, and let a Classical man pull off the election," said Jimmy.

"I guessed that! Better ask Conroy."

"Conroy's offered."

"Oh gad! Is this his self-denial week?" yawned Mornington. "I suppose you jumped at the offer?"

"No; I told him to stick it out, and he's going to. I want you to stand down, Morny, like a loyal Classical to let your House win."

Valentine Mornington laughed.

"Because Conroy's the better man of the two, in your opinion?"

"Naturally," said Jimmy.

"Well, you've got a nice polite way of puttin' things," said Mornington, laughing.

"I suppose your worst enemy wouldn't call you a flatterer, old bean. I'm not standin' down, thanks. I'm really conceited enough to think that I'm as good a man for the job as Conroy."

"That's rot," said Jimmy. "You know you aren't."

"Put it down to swank, then," said Mornington carelessly. "Anyhow, I'm standin'. If you don't want a Modern man to beat us, better nail down Conroy to his offer, before he changes his mind."

Jimmy shook his head.

"You won't? That means that you'd rather see a Modern man in the captaincy than little me?"

"Well, yes, if it's Dodd. Dodd's a good man."

"Thanks!" said Mornington ironically. "That's what your House loyalty comes to, is it? Well, I'm not standin' down, and you can go an' eat coke, Jimmy Silver."

And the dandy of the Fourth turned his back on Jimmy and walked away. Jimmy Silver was feeling more worried than ever when the bell called the juniors in to third lesson.

After third lesson Lovell left the Form-room with Peele and Gower, fellows with whom he seemed now to be becoming quite friendly. Jimmy, after a moment's hesitation, hurried after him. He was estranged now from his old chum; but that did not count in a matter affecting the House.

"Hold on a minute, Lovell," he said.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave him a fixed stare.

"I think I told you I didn't care to speak to you, Jimmy Silver," he answered.

"It's about the election," said Uncle James patiently.

"Oh! You've decided to back me up?" asked Lovell sarcastically, and Peele and Gower grinned.

Jimmy compressed his lips a little.

"You know you don't stand any chance of getting in, Lovell! You're only weakening the House vote, and giving the Moderns a chance. We used to be friends, old chap, and I know you're a decent fellow. You don't want to see your House beaten."

"Let the House back me up, then," said Lovell sourly. "You can talk to Morny and Conroy, not to me."

"Cheek, I call it," said Cyril Peele.

Jimmy did not heed the black sheep of the Fourth.

"Look here, Lovell, old man—"

"That's enough! Leave me alone."

Lovell walked away with that, Peele and Gower following him with grinning faces. Jimmy Silver drew a deep, deep breath. The temptation was strong upon him to stride after Lovell and seize him by the collar. Fortunately, he resisted that temptation. Certainly it would never have had the effect of bringing Arthur Edward Lovell to a state of sweet reasonableness—rather the reverse.

In class that afternoon Jimmy Silver was undoubtedly thinking more about the coming election than about the valuable instruction he was receiving from Mr. Dalton.

Morny gave him a mocking look every now and then, and Lovell a dark glance; but Jimmy did not heed them. He was turning over pros and cons in his mind, counting votes and chances—much to the detriment of a Latin prose paper to which he was supposed to be giving his whole and devoted attention.

It was certain that Morny would carry a good many of the Classical Fourth with him; but Conroy was well supported, the influence of the end study being strong. If the Shell supported Conroy, or most of them, the end study's candidate would be strong enough to beat the Modern vote, in spite of Morny's crowd and Lovell's handful. A Classical victory depended, therefore, on the Shell, and most of that Form were fairly certain to back up Smythe of the Shell—unless he could be persuaded to withdraw. So it came to that—all depended on Adolphus Smythe seeing reason.

And Jimmy Silver decided to try his eloquence upon the elegant Adolphus.

After classes, Jimmy proceeded to Smythe's study in the Shell passage. Adolphus and his friends, Tracy and Howard, were at tea there when Jimmy tapped at the door. They had, in fact, just finished tea and were lighting cigarettes—it being Adolphus' nutty custom to do so. There was, in consequence, a sound of alarm in Smythe's study as Jimmy tapped, and when he opened the door three startled juniors looked at him with their right hands held under the table.

"Oh! Only Silver!" said Smythe in great relief. Apparently the "Giddy Goats" of Rookwood had feared that the tap might be the tap of a Sixth-Form prefect.

Three cigarettes came into view again, and the three young rascals puffed out

smoke, with grinning faces. They knew Jimmy Silver's views on the subject of smoking in the studies.

"Have a fag, old bean?" yawned Adolphus.

"Thanks, no," said Jimmy as politely as he could.

"Oh, be a man, you know!" said Howard. Jimmy did not heed that injunction. He had no desire to be a "man" on the lines of the weedy, pasty-faced nuts of the Shell.

"I've dropped in to speak about Saturday's election, Smythe," he said.

Adolphus winked at his chums.

"Now, that's jolly decent of you, Silver!" he said in quite a hearty way. "You can see that the junior captain ought to be a Shell fellow, as I've always said."

"I don't mean—"

"A Shell man had it before you came to Rookwood, you know," remarked Tracy. "You can't say that things have gone better since."

"Well, I fancy most of the fellows think they have," said Jimmy mildly.

"That's rot, of course!"

"Utter rot!" said Smythe. "Look at the House match the other day—chucked away. I quite approve of your resignin', Silver—most sensible thing you ever did in your life. When a fellow's not equal to a job, let him chuck it—what?"

"Well, I did resign," said Jimmy. "Glad you're pleased. Now it seems that there are four Classical candidates, and that means a win for the Modern man. You don't want that, Smythe?"

"Not the least little bit in the world. But I hope the fellows will back up a Shell man. You go and tell the other fags that they ought to rally round me."

"That's it!" grinned Howard.

"Look here, Smythe—you don't stand a dog's chance of getting in!" exclaimed Jimmy, losing patience a little. "The Fourth are solid against you—"

"Cheeky fags!" said Smythe.

"And a good many of the Shell will back up Conroy. All the footballers will," said Jimmy. "You're only mucking up the election for your House."

"I don't see it."

"Well, think it over," urged Jimmy Silver. "I've worked it out that if you stand down Conroy will get in, beating

both Morny and the Moderns. You want to see a Classical man win."

"Shut the door after you."

"What?"

"Shut the door when you go. You're goin', I suppose?" yawned Adolphus, with his most insolent grin.

"The fact is, we don't encourage fags in this study—especially cheeky ones," remarked Tracy. "Cut!"

Jimmy Silver breathed hard and deep. His patience had been sorely tried, and he had failed all along the line. The eloquence of Uncle James of Rookwood had been tried on all the superfluous candidates in turn, and each in turn had declined to listen to the voice of the charmer. Uncle James was a patient fellow, but patience had its limits. Smythe & Co., with their impudent grinning, were too much for him.

"Shut the door, as I've told you," yawned Smythe. "Don't come here again, by the way. I bar inky fags!"

"You silly ass!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Get out—before you're chucked out!" exclaimed Adolphus, starting to his feet.

"Oh! Oh gad! My hat! Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Jimmy Silver's grasp was on Smythe's elegant collar. His other hand grasped the collar of the grinning Tracy, who ceased to grin all of a sudden.

Crack!

Two fiendish howls were blended into one as Smythe's head came against Tracy's and established contact.

"Yooooop!"

Crash! Smythe and Tracy were strewn on the carpet. Howard made a jump to their aid just in time to meet Jimmy Silver's left, which caught him on the chin and strewed him across Tracy and Adolphus.

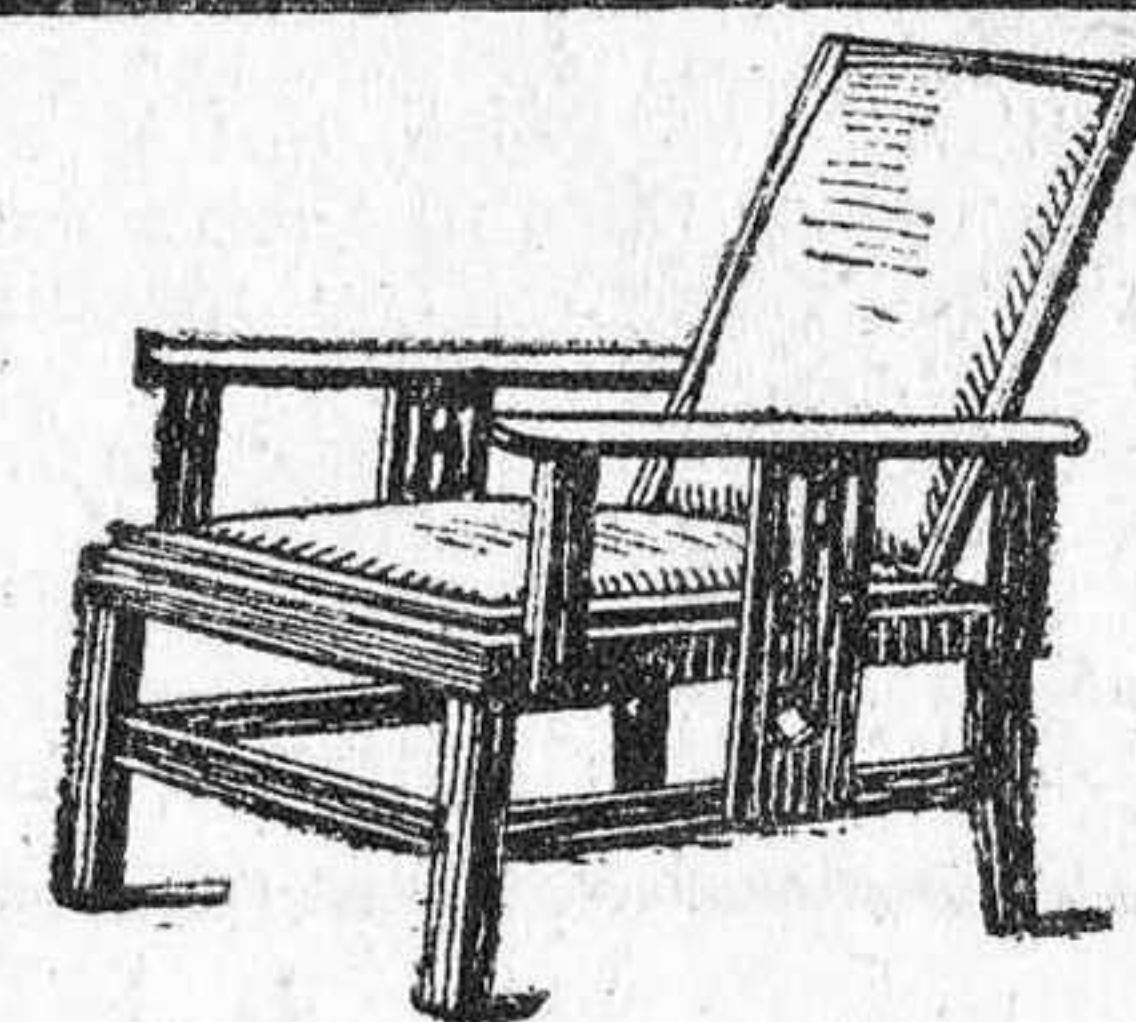
"That's that, anyhow!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

And he walked out of the study, having failed once more, but somewhat solaced by the wild howls that followed him from Adolphus & Co.

THE END.

(Who will be captain of the Fourth Form at Rookwood? Don't miss "Out of the Running!" next Monday's lively story of Jimmy Silver & Co. Make sure of your copy of the Boys' FRIEND by ordering it from your newsagent to-day!)

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