



A False Alarm!

An Amusing Story of
ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

Featuring

TUBBY MUFFIN

The Famous Fat Boy of the Fourth

By TEDDY GRACE

"TELEGRAM for Master Muffin!"

The uniformed boy who pushed his red bicycle into the Rookwood quadrangle made quite a sensation.

Telegrams for "Master Muffin" were like figs in the average fig-pudding—few and far between. Sometimes Tubby went right through a term without getting a telegram. Not being a person of importance—except in his own estimation—he very seldom received a wire. Few of Tubby's relatives ever squandered a shilling over him, in this way. But a telegram had come now, and Tubby Muffin clutched eagerly at the buff-coloured envelope. His schoolfellows looked on eagerly while he opened it.

"Good news, Tubby?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"I expect so."

But the expectations of Reginald Muffin

were not realised. He drew out the flimsy sheet, and glanced at the written message, and instantly his face changed colour. He gave a deep, dismal groan, and very nearly collapsed on the flagstones.

Instantly Jimmy Silver and Co. were full of concern.

"Is it bad news, Tubby?"

"Anybody ill?"

"Brace up, old fellow!"

Tubby groaned again—a deep, sepulchral groan.

"Oh, dear! This is too awful for words! Talk about a giddy bombshell! He—he's coming! This afternoon, too!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver in surprise. "Who's coming this afternoon?"

"The Holy Terror!"

"And who might that happen to be?" asked Lovell.

"My Uncle Roger."

"Well, you ought to be jolly bucked to receive a visit from your uncle," said Newcome. "Uncles don't drop in every day. Wish one of mine would roll up, with a cheery smile and a fat remittance."

"You—you don't understand," faltered Tubby. "This particular uncle is a fair tartar! He's a retired colonel, and he goes purple in the face on the slightest provocation. He called some time ago, you remember, and he gave me an awful lamming with his walking-stick, just because he got a rotten report about me from my form-master. I'm afraid history will repeat itself this afternoon. Oh, dear, confound Uncle Roger and all his works!"

The telegraph-boy waited until this outburst was over. Then he asked if there was any reply.

"No," grunted Tubby.

He tipped the lad the princely sum of one penny, and dismissed him.

Then Tubby glanced once again at the fateful telegram.

"Muffin, Rookwood, Coombe, Hants.—Calling on you this afternoon about three.—UNCLE."

Of course, Tubby had more uncles than one. But he had no doubt that the particular uncle who had sent this message was his Uncle Roger, since the rest of his avuncular relatives hardly ever came to Rookwood. Besides, the telegram had been despatched at Winchester, and that was where Uncle Roger lived.

Tubby crumpled up the telegram, and hurried the little ball of paper to the winds. Then, without another word to Jimmy Silver and Co. he rolled moodily away.

"I must try and dodge this somehow!" he groaned. "I simply can't face the Holy Terror. He's bound to ask Dalton how I've been shaping in class, and Dalton will shake his head in that grave way of his, and say, 'Your nephew, sir, is the worst slacker in my form!' Then Uncle Roger will see red, and chase me round the corridors and pitch into me with his walking-stick."

Tubby shuddered at the prospect. By hook

or by crook, he told himself, he must dodge the coming ordeal.

The obvious thing to do was to go out of gates, and stay out all the afternoon. This, however, Tubby was unable to do, for he had been gated for a week by the Head, for raiding the school pantry at dead of night. If he attempted to leave the school precincts, he would probably be seen and stopped by a prefect.

Presently an inspiration came to Tubby.

Why not go to the matron, and represent that he was unwell? He would then spend the afternoon in the sick bay, and give instructions that no one was to be admitted on any pretext. He would, if necessary, feign desperate illness, and the matron would keep all visitors at bay.

"Conspiracies no sooner should be formed than executed," said Shakespeare; and Tubby Muffin acted on this advice. He rolled away to the sanatorium, and knocked at the door of the matron's room. During the brief interval of waiting, Tubby assumed a look of appalling anguish. The door opened, and the kindly old matron appeared. She gazed at the plump junior, first with concern, and then with suspicion.

"Good gracious, whatever are you pulling such faces for, Master Muffin?"

"Ow, I—I'm awfully ill, ma'am!" groaned Tubby.

"Come, come! What is the matter with you?"

"I've got shooting, stabbing pains in my chest—"

"Indigestion," said the matron tersely, "I will give you a couple of tablets."

"It's not indigestion!" Tubby almost shrieked. "It's ten thousand times worse than that! The pain's going right down my legs. You can't get indigestion in your legs!"

The matron looked very sharply at Tubby. Then she darted into her room, and returned with a thermometer. This she promptly inserted between Tubby's lips.

If Tubby could have done anything to make his temperature rise to a hundred and four, or thereabouts, he would not have hesitated. But, alas, the matron's eye was

upon him, and there was no chance of playing tricks with the thermometer.

Presently the matron removed the instrument and shook it and examined it.

"Why, your temperature is perfectly normal!" she said. "There cannot be anything the matter with you. If you experience any discomfort, then it must be due to over-feeding. I have in my surgery a special pill—"

"Groo! I don't need a pill, ma'am. What I want is an afternoon in the sick bay, until the delirium passes off."

"But you are not delirious, you utterly stupid boy!"

"I shall be in a minute," said Tubby hopefully. "I've got pneumatic fever—"

"What?"

"Or else it's fatty regeneration of the heart—I'm not sure which. I wish you'd show me a little sympathy, ma'am, instead of glaring at me like that!"

But the matron, kindly soul though she was, had no sympathy to waste on malingerers. She promptly sent Tubby Muffin about his business, and the fat junior realised, as he went mournfully down the stairs, that his little ruse had been an utter failure.

Was there no way of dodging the impending

interview with Uncle Roger? Yes. Another scheme leapt into Tubby's mind—quite a simple scheme, so simple that he could have kicked himself for not having thought of it before.

Ha would hide in the coal-cellar! And he would lie concealed in those dim regions until Uncle Roger, despairing of finding him,

took his departure.

Tubby waited until nearly three o'clock—at which hour the martinet was due to arrive—and then he made his way by stealth to the coal-cellar.

No prying eyes saw Tubby Muffin descend the stone steps which led to that gloomy dungeon.

It was not a pleasant hiding-place, but it was a very effective one. It was extremely unlikely that Uncle Roger, when making search for his plump

nephew, would think of exploring the coal-cellar.

Having entered the cellar, Tubby shut the door after him, and sat down.

His surroundings were very dark and depressing. He shuddered to think he might have to spend some hours in this place. It made him realise what a prison cell must have been like in the days of old



"Good gracious, whatever are you pulling such faces for, Master Muffin?" exclaimed the Matron. "Ow! I—I'm awfully ill, ma'am!" groaned Tubby



"Has—has my uncle gone?" asked Tubby feebly.
"You frabjous duffer!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "We've hunted high and low for you. It wasn't your Uncle Roger who came!" "Wha-at!" gasped Tubby.

The time passed with terrible slowness. Tubby had a luminous wristlet-watch, and he glanced at it every now and then, only to find that the minute-hand seemed to be standing still.

"This is too awful for words!" he groaned. "It's almost as big an ordeal as meeting Uncle Roger! But I must stick it out, somehow!"

The atmosphere was suffocating, like that of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Tubby felt like a deep-sea diver who longed to come up for air.

Slowly, ever so slowly, the afternoon dragged out its weary length. And then voices sounded in Tubby Muffin's ears—the familiar voices of Jimmy Silver and Co.

"He can't be in the coal-cellar, surely?" Lovell was saying.

"Well, it's about the only place we haven't explored," replied Jimmy Silver. "Let's investigate."

Tubby could hear a clatter of feet on the stone steps without.

"I—I say, you fellows——" he called feebly.

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Newcome. "He's here!"

The door opened, and Jimmy Silver flashed an electric torch into the dark recess.

Tubby Muffin scrambled to his feet in alarm. "My uncle!" he muttered. "Has—has he gone?"

"Yes, you frabjous duffer!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "We've hunted high and low for you. We've turned the whole school upside-down! It wasn't your Uncle Roger who came—"

"W-w-what?"

A sickening fear crept into Tubby Muffin's mind.

"It was your Uncle Jack," said Lovell. "Awfully decent sort. He happens to be staying at your Uncle Roger's place, down at Winchester, and he thought he'd pop up to Rookwood this afternoon to see you. He was going to stand you a feed, and give you a fiver, and goodness knows what! But he was annoyed to think you were hiding from him, and at last he went off in a huff. So there's no feed and no fiver!"

Tubby Muffin almost swooned. He came crawling out of the coal-cellar, looking the picture of abject misery.

"D—do you mean to say I've missed a feed?" he almost shrieked.

"Afraid so, fatty."

"And—and a fiver?"

"Your Uncle said he would have tipped you a fiver, if he could have found you," said Jimmy Silver. "What did you want to go and hide for, you young ass!"

"I—I didn't know! I—I thought it would be Uncle Roger, for certain! and now—Oh, my hat!" groaned the unfortunate Tubby.

Gradually he digested the painful truth. That telegram had not been from Uncle Roger at all, but from Uncle Jack! Tubby had been too ready to jump to conclusions, and this was the result!

"Oh, crumbs!" he gasped. "This is about the biggest shock I've ever had in my life!"

So wretched and woebegone was the expression on Tubby's face that Jimmy Silver and Co. took compassion on him.

"Cheer up, old porpoise!" said Jimmy Silver. "What do you say to a feed at the tuckshop, at our expense?"

What Tubby Muffin did say—whether "Yes" or "No"—the reader will have little difficulty in deciding!

THE END

ROOKWOOD REFLECTIONS

Potted Pars concerning the famous Hampshire School

By JIMMY SILVER

Rookwood School ought to appeal to every money-making profiteer, because it is "a goodly pile"!

THERE are two sides to every argument, and there are two sides to Rookwood School—the Classical and the Modern. The former is far and away the most important; the latter being merely a side-show!



Sergeant Kettle "boils over"

THE Rookwood colours are purple and green. Tommy Dodd, who has an eye for colour, suggests that red, white and blue should be added, with a dash of yellow. If this were done, our footer eleven would be known as the Rainbow Rovers!

THE school tuckshop is kept by Sergeant Kettle. When anything annoys him, he has frequently been known to live up to his name, and "boil over"!



"Mack"

THE Rookwood porter is a person named Mack. Being a "Mack," he often appears to be "worn" on a wet day!

TUBBY MUFFIN, the Falstaff of the Fourth, declares he ought to be in the junior footer eleven, because the forwards are so "well fed." On the other hand, Tubby wouldn't care to be a golfer, because a golfer sometimes "misses a tee"!

MR. MOONEY, the master of the Shell, is not such a miserable gentleman as his name implies. To see him doing the fox-trot at the Rookwood Fancy Dress Ball the other evening, you would have thought him anything but "mooney"!

TOM RAWSON, the scholarship junior, confesses that his favourite hobby is devouring the classics. Tubby Muffin's pet hobby, on the other hand, is devouring jam-tarts!

MR. ROGER MANDERS is responsible for the administration of the Modern Side. About the only thing he "administers" is the cane!

THE aforesaid Mr. Manders is a martyr to indigestion. We suggest that he should chew each mouthful of food ninety-six times! We have passed on the same advice to our champion gormandiser, Tubby Muffin; but Tubby prefers to bolt his food whole!

WE know a certain Modern junior who is at the top of his form when playing footer, and at the bottom of his Form in the classroom!

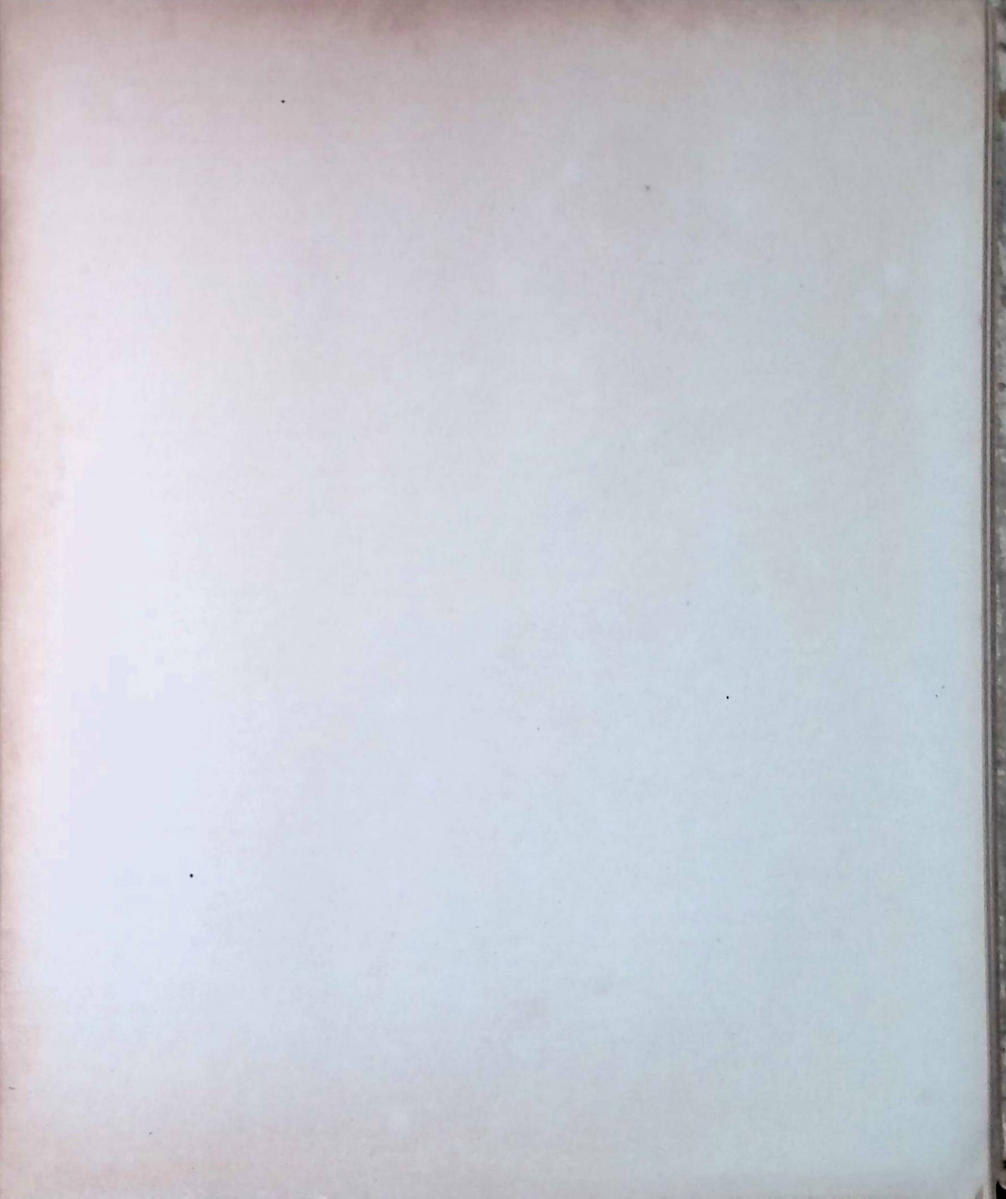
WE wonder if James Frederick Towle, of the Modern Side, always gives himself a brisk rub-down after his morning tub? And is he a rough Towle, or a soft one?

IT is hardly surprising to learn that Duff of the Fifth is a great lover of plum pudding!

LOVELL, Newcombe, Raby, and the writer of these "Reflections," are known to the world as "The Fistical Four." We delight in boxing, and are always keen on having a few rounds in the gym. Tubby Muffin wishes to state that the only sort of rounds he fancies are rounds of buttered toast!



Mr. Manders



A LANDMARK IN THE HISTORY OF A FAMOUS SCHOOL



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THE GREAT BARRING-OUT AT ROOKWOOD

THE GREAT REBELLION AT ROOKWOOD

THE French Revolution of 1789 proved infectious, for it led to acts of lawlessness in other parts of the globe. In that memorable year, Rookwood School was the scene of a great rebellion, or "barring-out."

There have been upheavals at Rookwood before and since, but none can compare with the Great Rebellion of 1789.

Those who have carefully studied the sequence of events which culminated in the Great Rebellion must confess to a sneaking sympathy with the rebels. They had a grievance, and a just grievance. It was wrong of them, certainly, to cast law and order to the winds; to barricade themselves in the building; and to defy all efforts to dislodge them; but they had every excuse for adopting these drastic methods. The Headmaster of that period—Dr. Lamb—was not nearly such a docile person as his name might suggest. He was a tyrant of the worst type. Rookwood had long groaned under his iron rule. He wielded the birch-rod far too freely; he was hard and cruel; and he had no sympathy with boys.

At that time the Modern Side had not been built; and it was the Classical Side, or School House, which the Rookwood rebels successfully held against the onslaughts of the enemy. The Head, the masters, and the prefects were "barred out," and their frantic efforts to gain admittance proved futile. Ladders were reared against the walls, only to be dashed down by the rebels. Attempts to batter down the doors were repulsed by heavy fire—and water—from above. The rebels were "top dogs," and they remained masters of the situation throughout.

The rebellion was brought to an end by the intervention of one of the school governors, Sir John Derring. This worthy gentleman made a thorough investigation of the facts, and came to the conclusion that Dr. Lamb was not a fit and proper person to have charge of Rookwood. The tyrant was turned out of office; the rebellion ceased; and Rookwood resumed the even tenor of its way.

SPORTING RECORDS OF ROOKWOOD

By GEORGE BULKELEY

(Captain of the School)

CRICKET

Rookwood has wonderful traditions as a cricketing school. The game was first introduced here in 1837—long before the Modern Side came into existence. In those far-off days, the fellows played in their "Sunday best" instead of in flannels; and the tight-fitting Etons must have been most uncomfortable!

The school started off grandly, going through two seasons without tasting defeat. Then all their best players left in a body, and a lean time ensued. But the standard of play soon revived, and Rookwood can point to a brilliant record of victories.

The highest score standing to the credit of Rookwood first eleven is 740 (all out). This huge total was put together in two days, in the summer of 1899. Lockwood, who captained the team at that period, scored 266, not out. This is also a record.

Rookwood Juniors have never compiled a total exceeding 500, but they have been wonderfully consistent. Jimmy Silver topped the batting averages last season, with the fine average of 52.

JOHN ASHWOOD, known to fame as the biggest hitter Rookwood has ever had, once hit four "sixes" in one over! On another occasion, he gave a display of hurricane hitting, and scored 135 runs in one hour!

PLAYING for Rookwood against Greyfriars, in 1905, E. P. Howell-Griffiths scored a century in each innings, his scores being 120 and 105 not out.



Bernard Barton

BOXING

BERNARD BARTON was the best boxer who ever donned gloves on behalf of Rookwood School. He went through his school career without a single defeat. Barton was six feet in height, and he towered over all his opponents. He did not, however, rely upon height and girth, but upon skill and science.

BARTON once fought a practically one-handed fight of twelve rounds, it being afterwards discovered that he had broken a bone in his wrist.

In the last Boxing Tournament, Jimmy Silver defeated three successive opponents in the first round! He eventually reached the final, where Tommy Doyle gave him a hard fight. The Irish junior was forced to retire in the fifth round.

FOOTBALL

ROOKWOOD's football record is not so lustrous as its cricketing record. Nevertheless, some magnificent performances have been given from time to time.

THE most memorable match on record was that between Rookwood and St. Clive's, in the first round of the Public Schools' Challenge Cup contest. The ground was practically under water, and this led to many mistakes by both sets of defenders. There was quite a glut of goals, the final score being a draw of seven goals each! Rookwood won the replay by two goals to nil.

ROOKWOOD has only won the Public School's Cup on one occasion. This was in 1913. On three other occasions Rookwood has reached the final only to be beaten at "the last lap."

JIMMY SILVER scored 135 goals last season for the Rookwood junior eleven.



Jimmy Silver