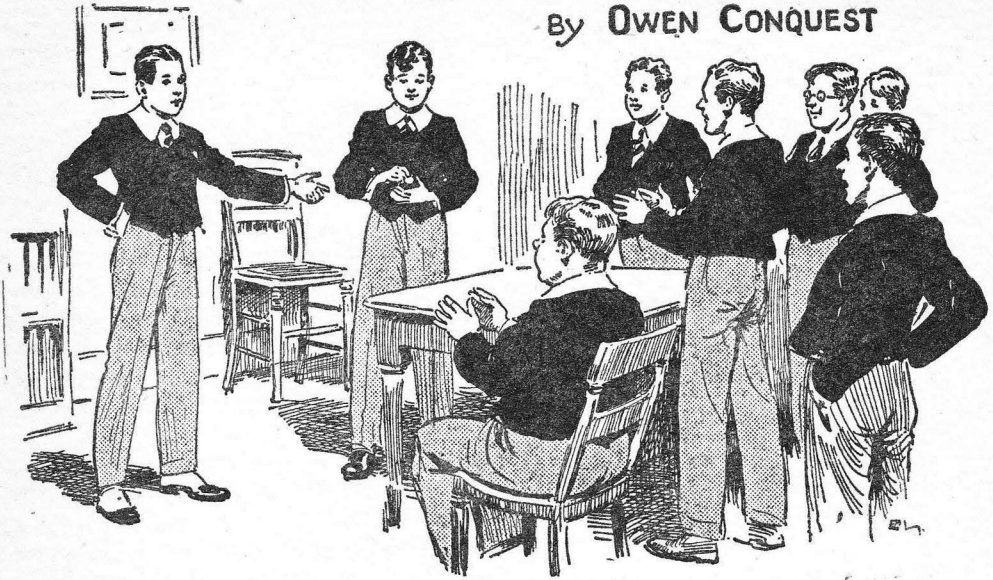


PUBLIC BENEFACTOR No. 1!

By OWEN CONQUEST



THE FIRST CHAPTER

LOVELL'S BRAIN WAVE!

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL, of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, had not spoken for five minutes.

This did not, perhaps, constitute a record. But it was unusual; and Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome wondered what was "up."

Lovell was taking his ease in the armchair in the end study. It was time for prep; and Lovell's three chums were sorting out their books reluctantly. Prep was one of the necessary evils of existence—one of the unpleasant things that couldn't be helped, and had to be stood—like bad weather, or a spill from a bike, or a Head's lecture.

Arthur Edward Lovell, however,

Arthur Edward Lovell is hailed at Rookwood as Public Benefactor No. 1 when he invents a fool-proof scheme for making lessons as simple as A B C. But Arthur Edward and his schoolfellows reckon without the fatuous Tubby Muffin!

was not bothering about prep. He was thinking!

The wrinkle in his brow showed that he was thinking, as well as his silence. Thinking was not one of Arthur Edward's customary occupations. Silence was still more uncustomary with him. Obviously, something in the nature of a sudden brain-wave was going on.

"Prep, old man!" hinted Jimmy Silver.

Lovell grinned.

"Prep?" he said.

"Mr. Dalton was waxy this morning," said Raby. "We had to scamp it last night owing to the boxing match with the Modern chaps. Better not give it a miss again this evening."

Lovell shook his head.

"I've been thinking that out!" he said.

"Thinking out prep?" asked Jimmy Silver, puzzled.

"Yes. Look here, you fellows," said Lovell, coming out of his reverie, and apparently prepared to impart to his chums the results of his deep cogitations, "it's high time something was done about this. Look at the time that's wasted in prep."

"Can't be helped."

"The question is, can it be helped?" said Lovell. "Waste of time is a jolly serious thing. Hour and a half every evening—think how that mounts up in a term. Look at the things we have to leave over, just because of prep. We might get up some boxing."

"But——"

"Or a rehearsal for our play——"

"Yes, but——"

"Or rag the Moderns," said Lovell; "lots of things in fact! We're busy chaps, and prep takes a big chunk out of every evening. Think of the whole life of a schoolboy, from the Second Form to the Sixth, and figure it out how much of that time is wasted in prep. It makes a chap's flesh creep to think of it."

"Horrid!" yawned Newcome. "But it's got to be did! Talking won't make any difference."

"Talking won't!" agreed Lovell. "But thinking might! I've thought this matter out, right from alpha to omega, and I know how to deal with it. I'm going to tell you fellows the secret, because you're my pals; but we shall have to keep it rather dark. If my stunt is a success, we're practically rescued from prep for the whole time we're at Rookwood."

"Great pip!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. blinked at Lovell.

Never had they suspected that youth of being an inventive genius. Lovell was a good half-back; quite a good boxer with a very hefty punch; good on the cycle-track, and good at swimming. But inventive genius had never been supposed to be one of his gifts.

But if Lovell thought of a stunt for enabling a fellow to steer clear of prep during his whole school career, it was obvious that Lovell was an inventive genius of the first water.

The discovery of printing, of steam, of the aeroplane sank into insignificance beside such a discovery as this. Lovell would be entitled not only to the gratitude of his chums, but—when the discovery became widely diffused—of all Rookwood school, and, indeed, of all other schools in the kingdom, if the discovery were communicated to them.

"Gammon!" said Raby, after a pause of astonishment.

"Lend me your ears, old fellow!" said Lovell. "I tell you I've thought it out," Lovell was speaking with a calm, earnest enthusiasm. "Dicky Dalton is taking us, at present, in the seventh book of the 'Æneid.'"

"Don't we know it?" groaned Newcome.

"He's down on cribs!" went on Lovell. "Fellow can't smuggle a crib into the Form-room without Dalton jumping on his neck. He bagged Peele the other day with a crib."

"The silly ass shouldn't have taken it into the Form-room," said Jimmy Silver. "Too risky."

"All very well," said Lovell. "Of course, a crib is useful in the study. But it's in the Form-room that you really want it. Look at what happened to Putty Grace the other day. He cribbed enough to see him

through, as he thought—and he was put on to a different place, and was all at sea.”

“Hard lines!” said Raby. “But I’m blessed if I see what you’re driving at. You’re not thinking of taking a translation of the whole giddy ‘Æneid’ into the Form-room tomorrow morning, are you?”

“Not quite. We’re doing the seventh book this term,” said Lovell. “A translation of the seventh book will see us through all possible contingencies.”

“But how?”

“You see, I’ve got the crib,” explained Lovell. “My idea isn’t to mug it up here in the study—the old-fashioned, slovenly way. My idea is to do it in a modern, efficient way. When we’re called on to construe, we’ve got the English translation right under our eyes all the time. Instead of having had to worry the thing out of grammar and dics, like a dog worrying a bone, we’re ready to hand out a perfect construe without any preparation at all. See?”

“But how?”

“Dalton will be pleased, too—and he’s a decent chap, and I’d like to please him,” said Lovell benevolently. “So long as a chap hands out a really good construe, Dalton hasn’t anything to grumble at, has he?”

“No. But——”

“I’ll work it out, and show you!” said Lovell.

The great inventor came to the study table, and took pen and ink and paper.

And Jimmy Silver & Co.—quite forgetful of prep now—watched Arthur Edward, while that inventive youth worked out the brilliant scheme which was to revolutionise school-work at Rookwood.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

TRYING IT ON THE DOG!

ON the following afternoon there were traces of suppressed excitement in several members of the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

That afternoon Monsieur Monceau, the French master at Rookwood, was taking his class in the Fourth Form room.

Four members of the Fourth, at least, were prepared to deal with Monsieur Maximilien Monceau in the most efficient manner.

Lovell’s wonderful scheme was to be tried.

Wonderful as the scheme was, the chums of the Fourth hesitated to try it on Mr. Dalton, their Form master. Dicky Dalton was well known to be a “downy bird.” It was feared that his extremely keen eyes might see through even the most wonderful scheme.

So the great wheeze was to be tried first on Monsieur Monceau, who was a good-tempered and unsuspecting little gentleman, not likely to be on the watch for “ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain.”

If it answered with Mossoo, then it could be tried, with more assurance of success, upon Mr. Dalton the next day.

“You see,” said Lovell, with great wisdom, “a fellow can’t be too careful. If you’ve got some medicine you’re doubtful about, you give some to a dog and watch the effect. That’s the idea now. Trying it on Mossoo is practically trying it on the dog, see? If he takes it all right, we’ll give Dicky Dalton a dose to-morrow.”

And Lovell’s chums chuckled, and agreed that it was wise.

So that afternoon they were going to try it on the dog—Monsieur Monceau being the dog.

If success followed, prep practically was a thing of the past; indeed, a fellow would be able to keep up in class without the slightest worry.

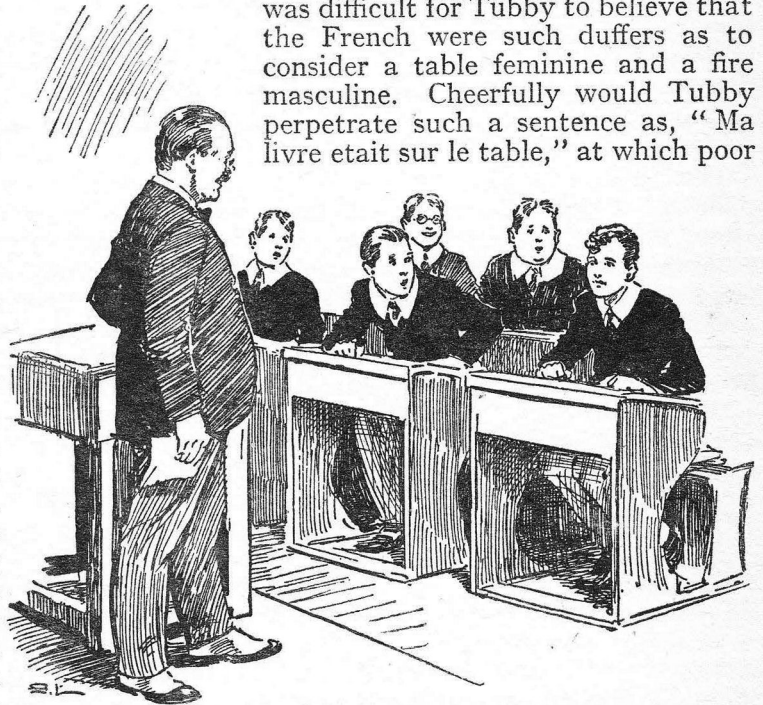
That this was not an excellent method of acquiring knowledge was a circumstance that escaped the notice of the juniors just then. They were too keen on the wheeze to think of details like that. Such reflections might occur later—especially when examinations came round, and they found their minds a beautiful blank on the subjects concerned. For the present they were not looking ahead.

The French lesson was rather popular with the Fourth, Mossoo being so patient and good-tempered that no fellow was in danger of putting an undue strain on his intellect. Besides, Mossoo could make even French instruction interesting. The Fourth at present were dealing with a very carefully edited edition of "Gil Blas," which they found entertaining.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were quite pleased to see Monsieur Monceau come in, and bow to his class in his polite way, with his sweet and agreeable smile.

Mossoo always began with a sweet smile, though often that smile faded away and was replaced by a troubled frown, especially when he was dealing

with Tubby Muffin and French genders. Being a conscientious little gentleman, he gave particular attention to the backward members of his class—for which those backward members were not in the least grateful. Tubby Muffin had a firm, deeply seated conviction that all languages but English were "rot," and it really was difficult for Tubby to believe that the French were such duffers as to consider a table feminine and a fire masculine. Cheerfully would Tubby perpetrate such a sentence as, "Ma livre etait sur le table," at which poor



When it came to Arthur Edward Lovell's turn to translate, he did it without a falter. "Bon!" said Monsieur Monceau. The other fellows looked at Lovell in surprise, for he was not a brilliant French scholar.

Mossoo would almost tear his hair and weep.

Muffin, being the most backward member of the Fourth Form—in French as in everything else—Mossoo gave him particular attention, with really heroic self-sacrifice. Jimmy Silver & Co. were anxious to get to "Gil Blas"; but Mossoo started with genders and Tubby Muffin. Such a sentence as "Ton oncle et ta tante

sont arrives," presented to the unfortunate Tubby difficulties that seemed insuperable. Mossou took a chalk and inscribed it on the blackboard, and went through it word by word for Tubby's especial benefit, watched by a grinning class.

"Maintenant—now—you understand, isn't it?" exclaimed Monsieur Monceau, wiping his brow.

Tubby had listened with an air of great attention; but, as a matter of fact, he had been thinking of certain new tarts that were displayed in the school shop, and wondering whether he could borrow a shilling off Jimmy Silver after lessons in order to sample those tarts.

It was irritating to be aroused from important reflections of this kind, and Tubby felt it so.

"Vous comprenez—you shall understand, Muffin?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Translate zat sentence, Muffin."

"Oh!"

"I waits for you, mon petit."

Tubby Muffin cast an appealing look round, and then blinked at the blackboard.

"Ton oncle et ta tante sont arrives!" murmured Muffin. "It—it's something about a ton of tar—"

"Comment?" shrieked Monsieur Monceau.

"I—I—I mean——"

"You shall not have listened to me, Muffin. Ecoutez! Thy uncle and thy aunt have arrived——"

"Have they?" exclaimed Tubby.

"Now you shall understand."

"Certainly, sir!" Tubby Muffin jumped up eagerly. "I'm so glad, sir!"

"Vat?"

"I'm very fond of my uncle and aunt, sir!" said Muffin.

"Comment?"

"Can I go and see them, sir?"

Tubby Muffin left his place. Monsieur Monceau blinked at him and waved the pointer.

"Muffin! Zat you sit down!"

"But, sir, my uncle and aunt——"

"Mon Dieu! Sit down viz you!"

"Oh, very well, sir!" said Tubby indignantly. "Mr. Dalton always lets us go at once, sir, if our relations come to the school!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the class. Monsieur Monceau looked at Tubby like a man in a dream.

"Vat? Vat? Is it zat your relations shall have come to Rookwood to see you, Muffin?"

"My uncle and my aunt, sir!"

"If your oncle and your tante have come, Muffin, you may leave ze class, certainly. But how do you know zat zey have come?"

Muffin stared at the French master in bewilderment.

"You've just told me so, sir."

"Vat?"

"You said distinctly, sir, that my uncle and aunt have arrived!" exclaimed Muffin.

"Silence!" ejaculated the French master, clutching at his hair. "Muffin, you are most stupid boy zat ever was! I do not tell you zat your oncle and your tante have arrived."

"But you said so, sir. All the fellows heard you!" protested Muffin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Taisez vous!" roared Monsieur Monceau. "Ze next boy zat laugh, I give him pointer!"

Sudden gravity fell on the French class.

"Muffin, I zink you are not so stupid. I zink you are lazy and you give no attention. I do not tell you zat your parents—your relations—have arrive. I translate zat sentence on ze blackboard."

"Oh!" gasped Tubby.

"Zis evening, Muffin, you write out zat sentence one hundred times, and you bring him to me to-morrow."

"Ow!" groaned Muffin.

Reginald Muffin sat crushed. Fortunately, Monsieur Monceau let him alone after that. He was a conscientious gentleman, but a certain amount of Tubby Muffin was all his constitution would stand.

"Gil Blas" came next, and at last Arthur Edward Lovell was able to "weigh in" with the wonderful wheeze.

Generally Lovell was not glad to catch the master's eye. On this occasion he was pleased.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome watched him eagerly, when he was put on to translate.

"Me voila donc hors d'Oviedo, sur le chemin de Pegnaflor, au milieu de la compagne, maitre de mes actions, d'une mauvaise mule et de quarante bons ducats."

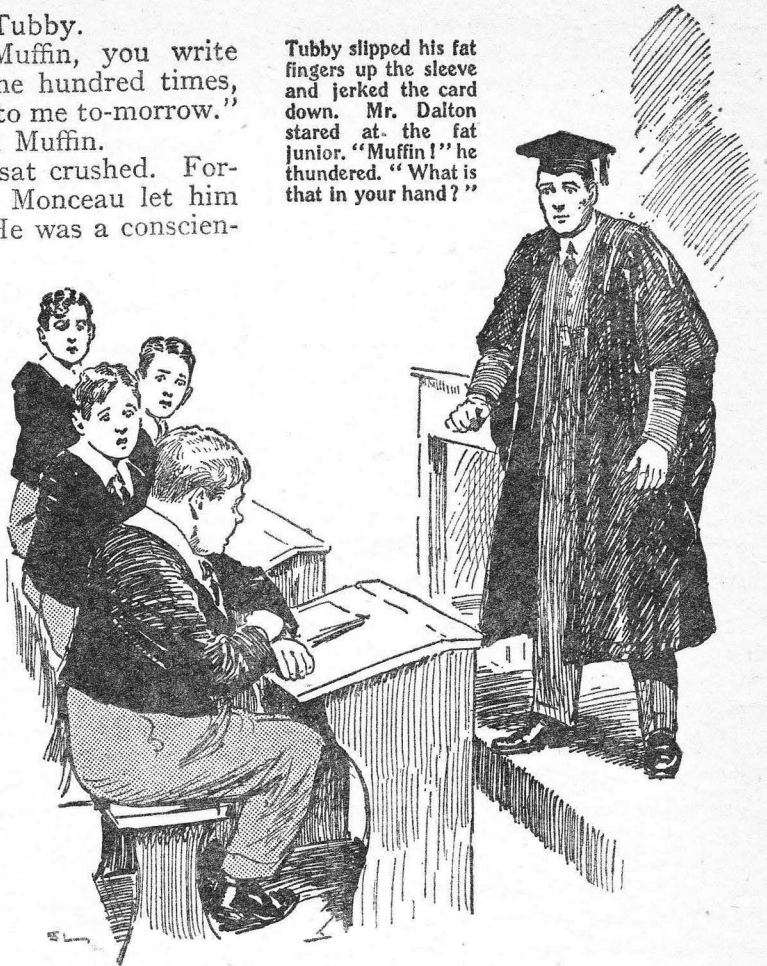
Lovell translated without a falter.

"Behold me, then, out of Oviedo, on the Pegnaflor road, in the midst of the open country, master of my own actions, of a bad mule, and of forty good ducats."

"Bon!" said Monsieur Monceau.

Mornington looked at Lovell—other fellows looked at him in surprise. Lovell was not a brilliant French

Tubby slipped his fat fingers up the sleeve and jerked the card down. Mr. Dalton stared at the fat junior. "Muffin!" he thundered. "What is that in your hand?"



scholar. Now, certainly, he seemed to read a page of French as easily as a page of the Holiday Annual.

Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome distinguished themselves in turn. Monsieur Morceau beamed on the Fistical Four.

He gave them words of praise; indeed, he almost patted Arthur Edward Lovell on the head.

French, that afternoon, was a triumph for Jimmy Silver & Co. Without an effort they had won great credit.

But after the class was dismissed there was rather a worried frown on Jimmy Silver's brow as he went out into the quadrangle with his chums.

The French master's unsuspecting praises smote Jimmy's conscience.

"Blessed if I quite like it, after all," Jimmy Silver said candidly. "It's jolly like spoofing."

"Oh, rot!" said Lovell. "Utter rot!"

Lovell spoke with great emphasis because his own conscience had a little twinge.

"Well, I felt a bit rotten at pulling old Mossoo's leg," confessed Raby.

"Rubbish!"

"It saves no end of trouble," said Newcome. "But—but—but dash it all, is it quite playing the game?"

"Bosh!"

"You see, Lovell——" said Jimmy.

"Utter trash!"

"But——"

"Rot!"

Evidently Arthur Edward Lovell was not open to argument on the subject.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

THE PUBLIC BENEFACTOR!

AFTER tea there was rather a crowded meeting in the end study.

The Fourth-Formers wanted to know, as it were.

The distinction Lovell had won in the French class, naturally, could not pass unnoticed. Many of the Fourth regarded Arthur Edward as more or less of a duffer in class. In French Arthur Edward was given to stumbling woefully. Fellows asked Lovell how he did it, and whether he had a "dodge." To which Lovell replied with mysterious hints and winks—so that in a very short time most of the Fourth were aware that there was a "dodge."

Naturally, they wanted to know all about it. So they came along to the end study after tea to inquire.

Mornington was the first, and Peele and Gower followed, and Tubby Muffin, Townsend and Topham came in, and Jones minor, and Higgs, and Oswald, and several more fellows. Fellows like Rawson and Erroll, who took their work with unusual seriousness, did not come—they, apparently, were in pursuit of knowledge, not of "dodges." But there was no doubt that the majority of the Fourth Form would have welcomed any wheeze that saved them from the peril of brain fag.

Lovell was looking pleased.

Never before had he been able to step into the limelight as a brainy fellow—as a chap who could put other chaps up to clever dodges. Naturally, he enjoyed the position.

His chums were rather lacking in enthusiasm, owing to certain twinges they were feeling in their consciences. Lovell, doubtless, had as tender a conscience as his chums, but the wheeze being his own, his enthusiasm was greater, and banished uneasy reflection.

"Let's have it, old bean," said Mornington. "If you're on to a good thing you don't want to keep it to yourself."

"Not at all," said Lovell generously. "My idea is to benefit the whole Form now it's proved a success."

"Bravo!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Lovell!"

"Will it work with Dalton in Latin?" inquired Townsend.

"Certainly!"

"Oh, good! That's toppin'!"

"Top-hole, an' no mistake!" said Mornington. "Expound, old chap—we're all ears."

Arthur Edward Lovell proceeded to explain to a very attentive audience. Wonderful as the wheeze was, in fact, epoch-making in school history, it was simple, like all great inventions.

"Take the section we've got for prep now," said Lovell. "I've got it here——"

"Æneas primique duces——" said Mornington.

"That's it. I've got the crib," said Lovell.

"Crib! Is that the wheeze?" asked Putty Grace in disgust. "Call that a dodge? There have been cribs in schools ever since there were schools at all."

"Fathead! You take the translation——"

"But——"

"Let a chap finish!" roared Lovell. "How's a fellow to explain a wonderful wheeze with silly asses interrupting him all the time? Fellows have had cribs in their studies before now. I know that; but what is wanted is a crib in the Form-room, right under the master's nose."

"Oh!"

"And one crib," said Lovell impressively, "is enough for a whole Form."

"Oh!"

"You simply take your section and copy down the translation," said Lovell, with a glare at Putty Grace. "You write it out small on a round piece of cardboard that can be held in the palm of the hand—with abbreviations to save space—like this——"

Lovell took a pen and jotted.

The juniors watched him attentively.

With the help of the English version it took Lovell no more than a second or two to turn "Æneas primique duces et pulcher Julius" into "Æneas

and his chief captains and the handsome Julius."

This Lovell jotted down as follows:

"Æ and chf captns and hndsme J."

"You see, that's plain enough for anybody," explained Lovell. "Leaving out most of the vowels saves space, and you can see the word all the same—something like shorthand, you know."

"That's so," agreed Morney. "But——"

"On those lines, in the smallest fist you can do, you get the whole section written out on a bit of cardboard no bigger than a five-bob bit," said Lovell.

"Yes, but——"

"Of course, you must keep on butting like a billy-goat," said Lovell crossly. "I haven't finished yet."

"Do you ever finish?" murmured Putty of the Fourth.

"Look here, Putty——"

"Order!" said Mornington. "Let's have it out! I'm blessed if I see anything in it so far."

"You wouldn't!" said Lovell crushingly.

"Do you think Dalton is going to let us stand with that in the giddy palms of our paws?" demanded Topham. "Think he wouldn't spot us jerking it out of our pocket as soon as we're called on to construe?"

"Of course he would!" said Townsend.

"I tell you I haven't finished yet!" roared Lovell.

"Oh! Go ahead."

"You get a length of elastic——"

"Elastic!" ejaculated Mornington.

"Elastic!" said Lovell firmly.

"What on earth for?"

"You fasten one end to the bit of cardboard, and the other end up your sleeve——"

"Oh!"

"That keeps the card out of sight. When you want it you give your sleeve a jerk, as if you were shooting your linen, you know, and down comes the card into the palm of your hand."

"Phew!"

"If Dalton noses round too near, back it goes—the elastic jerks it up your sleeve," said Lovell. "Otherwise, there you are, with the card hidden in your hand and your eye on it. You can construe as fast as you can read English."

"Great Scott!"

"My word!" said Tubby Muffin.

"Oh, great!" gasped Jones minor.

Admiration was general. Arthur Edward Lovell's frowning brow cleared, and he smiled. The great inventor was receiving his due meed of praise at last.

"You see, a chap simply can't be nailed," he said. "At the very worst, you let the card jerk back up your sleeve, and there you are—no worse off than if you hadn't got it. Generally, of course, it will be all right—a glance at the card sets you going. Mr. Dalton will be jolly pleased to find everybody so proficient."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing to cackle at," said Lovell. "I'm speaking seriously. Of course, I should like to please old Dicky. He's a good chap, though he does worry us in class. With this invention he will stop worrying us, and we shall stop worrying him. Good for both sides."

"Hear, hear!" chortled Putty.

"We tried it in the French class, as you saw," went on Lovell. "That was my idea—trying it on the dog, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That was a success," said Morny,

with a nod. "My hat! Looks as if we're on to a good thing."

"I say, though——" said Tubby Muffin.

"Well?" said Lovell.

"This won't help me with genders and irregular verbs."

"Blow your genders and irregular verbs!" howled Lovell. "Do you expect an invention to do everything? Expect it to get you up and wash you in the morning, and find your collar stud, if you've lost it? Don't be an ass!"

"Gentlemen," said Mornington, "I suggest a vote of thanks to Arthur Edward Lovell. In my opinion he has deserved well of his country. Lovell is a public benefactor."

"Hear, hear!"

And the meeting in the end study broke up with considerable enthusiasm.

That evening quite a dozen of the Fourth, instead of devoting their attention to prep, devoted it to Lovell's wheeze.

Ten minutes served their purpose, instead of an hour and a half; a saving of time that was very considerable.

Fellows borrowed Lovell's crib in turn, and round pieces were cut out of old fragments of cardboard, and upon them the required translation was written in abbreviated form.

Not a single grammar or dictionary was opened by the happy possessors of this great invention.

Prep became rather a lark than a labour.

There was a great demand for lengths of elastic. Fellows who happened to possess that commodity were able to effect sales at profiteering prices.

With great glee the juniors practised in their studies the art and

science of jerking the disc up and down the sleeve.

Juniors who were not in the secret were surprised to see fellows, in the studies and passages, engaged in "shooting their linen" with untiring industry.

Practice makes perfect, and before bedtime Lovell's followers felt quite prepared to deal with Dicky Dalton in the morning.

Before their dazzled eyes stretched the enticing prospect of a term with practically no "swotting"—Latin classes with no "lines" and no "jaw."

Uncle James of Rookwood was not wholly satisfied.

He felt that he could not say a word to dash the happy satisfaction of his chum, Lovell. But he was rather worried.

Lovell's wheeze had been adopted keenly by a dozen fellows, but with especial keenness by the slackers of

The delinquents were ranged in a row before Mr. Dalton's desk, and then one after another the unhappy culprits went through it!



Arthur Edward Lovell—on this evening, at least—was a great man in the Fourth Form. He felt that he had brought credit and distinction on the end study. With becoming modesty, Lovell bore his blushing honours thick upon him without "swanking." But if ever a fellow was entitled to swank, surely it was Arthur Edward Lovell, public benefactor No. 1!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

BLACK INGRATITUDE!

JIMMY SILVER had a very thoughtful expression when he went into the Form-room the following morning.

the Form, such fellows as Peele and Gower and Lattrey and Tubby Muffin.

When Peele & Co. approved of a thing, Jimmy Silver naturally felt that there must be something wrong with it.

It was a great invention—a wonderful wheeze. But Jimmy could not help realising—on reflection—that a scheme for dodging work was a scheme for slacking, and not nearly so admirable as it appeared to the enthusiastic eyes of its inventor.

This opinion, however, Jimmy kept to himself for the present. Moreover, he was not absolutely certain of

success. Mr. Richard Dalton was a far keener gentleman than Monsieur Monceau.

There was a thrill of excitement in the Form when P. Vergilius Maro came on the scene that morning.

Arthur Edward Lovell, as it happened, was the first fellow called on to construe.

All eyes were upon Lovell as he started at "Æneas primique duces, etc." Lovell, who was not brilliant in French, was still less brilliant in Latin, as a rule.

On this particular morning, Arthur Edward Lovell won golden opinions from his Form-master.

His construe was almost perfection.

Mr. Dalton gave him a smiling nod of approval, though there was surprise as well as approval in his smile.

Mornington was called upon to go on where Lovell left off.

Morny gave his sleeve a little jerk, as if to set his shirt-cuff, and went on cheerfully. He construed without a fault.

Peele came next.

Cyril Peele was a slacker of the first water, and was often in trouble in class. On this occasion the most critical master would have had no reason to find fault with Peele.

Mr. Dalton could not help being surprised. He was still more surprised when Raby and then Newcome gave him faultless renderings. Then Tubby Muffin was called upon.

Tubby Muffin gave his sleeve a little jerk.

The juniors waited, prepared to hear Tubby, for the first time in his life, construe without some egregious blunder.

But Tubby was not in a hurry to begin.

He jerked his sleeve, and jerked

it again, and his fat face became very red.

"Muffin!" repeated Mr. Dalton.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Tubby. "A—a second, sir!"

He jerked at his hapless sleeve, but Tubby's sleeves were tighter than other fellows' sleeves. Tubby was a plump youth, not to say podgy. His cardboard disc was there ready, attached to the elastic, but it did not come down in the palm of his plump paw when jerked.

Mr. Dalton eyed him curiously.

"I am waiting for you, Muffin," he said.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Tubby.

There was no help for it. The card was jammed in Muffin's sleeve. He slipped the fat fingers of his other hand up the sleeve and jerked the card down. Mr. Dalton's eyes, which were fixed on the fat junior, grew wide open—wider and wider.

"Muffin!"

His voice resembled thunder.

"Eh? Yes, sir!" gasped Muffin.

"What is that in your hand?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

Mr. Dalton strode towards him. Muffin jerked desperately, and this time the elastic obeyed, and jerked the little card up his sleeve.

"Hold up your hand, Muffin."

Muffin held it up—empty.

Lovell & Co. looked on, scarcely breathing with anxiety. Obviously "Dicky" was suspicious. Perhaps he had already noted that juniors had fallen into a habit of jerking their cuffs when called upon to construe. Possibly Lovell's wonderful wheeze was not so new and original as he deemed, but might have been known to Mr. Dalton in his own far-off schooldays.

"Muffin," said Mr. Dalton, "step out before the class."

"Yes, sir."

Reginald Muffin stepped out.
"Take off your jacket, Muffin."
"Mum-mum-my jacket, sir?"
"Yes, at once!"
"Oh, dear!"

Slowly and reluctantly Tubby Muffin peeled off his jacket. The Fourth Form watched him as if fascinated.

"Now turn the sleeves inside out, Muffin."

With a groan Tubby Muffin obeyed.

Mr. Dalton grimly picked out the card and the elastic from the interior of Tubby's sleeve.

"As I thought!" said Mr. Dalton calmly. "A very ingenious device, Muffin. Quite an improvement on a device known to me twenty years ago. I used only a bootlace."

"Oh!" gasped Lovell involuntarily.

Mr. Dalton glanced at him.

"Elastic," he said, "is an improvement. I am afraid, Muffin, that you are thoughtless. You have lost sight of the fact that you are sent to school to learn. Schoolboys are liable to lose sight of that fact—it is a master's duty to keep it present to their minds. On the occasion I have referred to, twenty years ago, my Form-master gave me two severe cuts with his cane, which, though painful at the time, benefited me. They caused me

to reflect. I shall try the same method with you, Muffin, and trust that it will produce an equally beneficial result."

"Oh!" gasped Muffin.

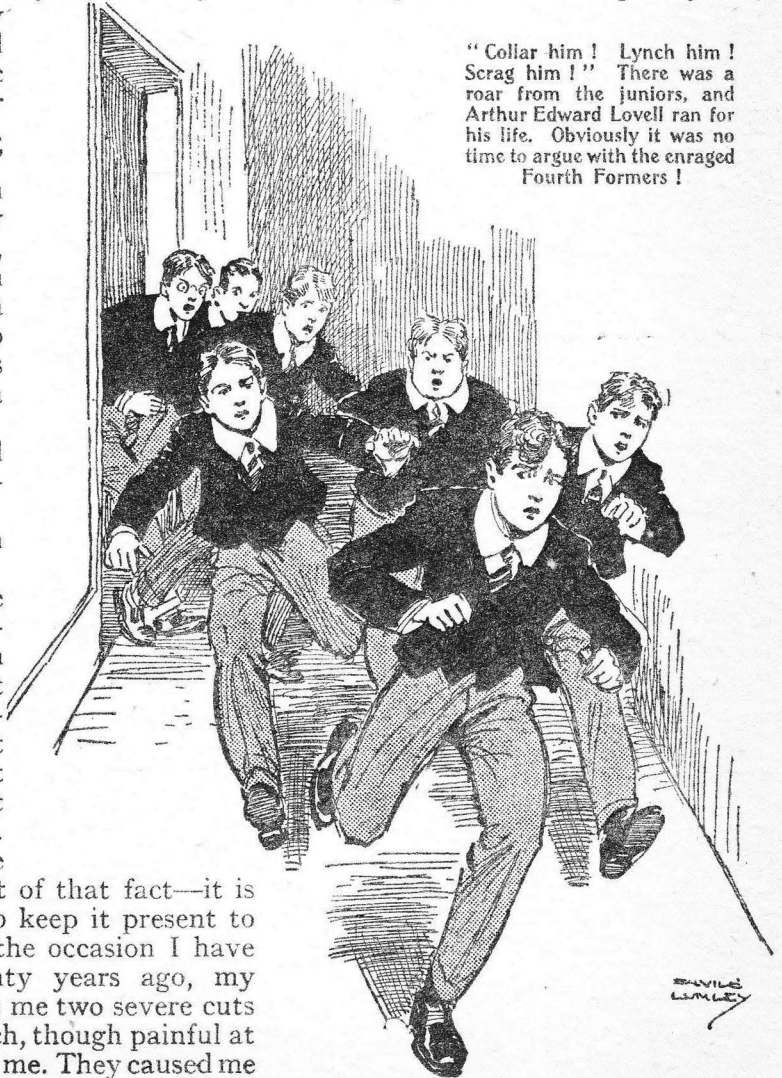
Mr. Dalton glanced over the breathless class.

"Every boy present will take his jacket off and turn out the sleeves!" he said.

"Oh!"

With glum faces the hapless juniors

"Collar him! Lynch him! Scrag him!" There was a roar from the juniors, and Arthur Edward Lovell ran for his life. Obviously it was no time to argue with the enraged Fourth Formers!



SMILE
LIMLEY

obeyed. Twelve fellows had adopted Lovell's invention, others had waited to "see how the cat jumped" as they expressed it.

Mr. Dalton took his cane.

The delinquents were ranged in a row before his desk. Mr. Dalton proceeded to deal with them one after another.

"You first, Silver!"

Swish, swish!

One after another the unhappy culprits went through it. When Mr. Dalton laid down his cane he looked a little breathless.

"We will now resume!" he said genially.

They resumed. Construes, after that, were not perfect. It was not a happy morning in the Fourth Form room. Nearly a dozen fellows were giving Lovell deadly looks. They had only one solace—the happy anticipation of dealing with Arthur Edward Lovell after lessons!

"Collar him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Lynch him!"

It was a roar in the corridor. Arthur Edward Lovell ran for his life. He did not stop to argue or to expostulate. Obviously the enraged Fourth Formers were not in a mood to listen to argument or expostulation.

There was a rush of vengeance on his track. Sounds of strife were heard in the end study. Lovell had had no time to lock the door. Then there was a sound of bumping that seemed to shake the floor. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome rushed to the rescue at last, and drove the infuriated avengers out of the study. They found Lovell sprawling on the carpet, breathless, dizzy, dusty, dishevelled.

He sat up and spluttered.

"Ow, ow, ow! Wow! Ow! Wow! Groooooogh! Catch me—groogh!—making any more inventions—ow!—to save them fag— Woooooop! Ungrateful—ooch!—rotters! I'll never—grooch!—make another—gug-gug-gug—invention, so long as I'm at—grooh!—Rookwood!"

And Arthur Edward Lovell didn't!

JIMMY SILVER

A Verse of Praise. By the Rookwood Rhymester

HATS off to the immortal James!
The loyal Classic leader,
Whose boyish japes and skill at games,
Delight each ardent reader.
He plays all those amusing pranks
That heroes in a book would;
But now and evermore he ranks
The chosen son of Rookwood.

Though Harry Wharton fills the bill,
And likewise good Tom Merry;
And hosts of loyal readers still
Bow to the charms of Cherry,
It cannot be denied that when
One's spirits are at zero,
They very soon revive again,
Thanks to this Rookwood hero!

The daring japes of Tommy Dodd
Compel our admiration;
He figures as a young tin god
In some chaps' estimation.

But even Tommy Dodd is done
When Silver takes the platform;
The Fourth Form Classics are A1—
There's nothing wrong with that Form!

And yet, despite their feuds and scrapes,
Their fierce and breathless tussles,
And all the merry fistic japes
That exercise their muscles,
The Classic chums are staunch and true,
Not merely gay and skittish;
And we're convinced they'd never do
A thing that wasn't British!

Then here's to Jimmy Silver! May he rule
Within our hearts for ever!
Supreme alike in sport and school,
Courageous, swift and clever!
And British boys are all agreed
They'd have to make a long quest
To find such ripping yarns to read
As those of Owen Conquest!