

TUBBY—THE HERO!

Tubby Muffin takes the credit of having saved George Bulkeley from drowning, and basks once again in the limelight!

WHO SAVED BULKELEY?

Who saved Bulkeley from drowning, and basks once again in the limelight!

BORROWED GLORY!

A Fine Story of the Famous Chums of Rookwood School,

BY

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Putty is Wanted!

SILVER!" Bulkeley of the Sixth rapped out Jimmy Silver's name sharply. Jimmy was going out with his bat under his arm, but he stopped at once and turned back. Rookwood juniors were always ready to oblige old Bulkeley; and, moreover, Bulkeley's tone indicated that delay might be dangerous. So Jimmy Silver came along promptly.

"Yes, Bulkeley?" Bulkeley was frowning. "Has Grace, of your Form, gone out, do you know, Silver?" "The new kid? I don't know." "Well, I want him." The voice of Arthur Edward Lovell came through the open doorway in loud and impatient tones: "Are you coming, Jimmy? We're waiting."

"Wait a bit, then, old scout!" called back Jimmy. Lovell's impatient face looked in at the doorway. "You must stop to talk to some silly ass when a chap's waiting for you!" he said. "You— Oh, Bulkeley! I—I—ahem!"

Lovell promptly disappeared again. "Do you want me to find Grace, Bulkeley?" asked Jimmy Silver hastily.

"Yes. Not if you're playing cricket, though," said Bulkeley, who was always considerate, even to fags. "Somebody else will do."

"Oh, that's all right—only practice," answered Jimmy Silver cheerily. "I'll look for him at once!"

"Send him to my study," said Bulkeley. "Right—ho!"

Bulkeley went back to his study, still frowning. It was easy to guess that the vials of wrath were ready to be poured out on the devoted head of Teddy Grace, the new junior in the Fourth Form.

Jimmy Silver looked out on the steps, where Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for him.

"Seen Putty?" he asked. "In his study, I think," said Raby. "Right! You fellows run along; I'll come after you. Putty is in a row again."

"Bless him!" grunted Lovell. The three juniors started for Little Side, while Jimmy Silver went up to the Fourth Form passage in search of Teddy Grace.

It was a sunny spring afternoon and a half-holiday, and most of the fellows were naturally out of doors; but Putty of the Fourth was discovered in Study No. 2.

The new junior seemed busy. Teddy Grace dabbled in water-colours, and he was now occupied in giving some touches to a sketch.

"You're wanted, Putty!" grunted Jimmy Silver at the door.

"Can't come!" "Bulkeley wants you!"

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"Bother Bulkeley!" answered Teddy Grace, without looking up.

"Fatehead! You're to go at once. Is that a picture?" added Jimmy Silver, glancing at Putty's sketch.

"It's going to be," said Putty cheerfully. "Don't you recognise the scene?"

Jimmy Silver gazed at it attentively. Putty's art was rather of the impressionist order, and so it was not really easy to guess what the picture was intended to represent.

"Battle scene?" asked Jimmy. "Ass!" answered Putty impolitely.

"Well, I suppose that's cannon smoke, isn't it?"

"Don't you know clouds when you see them?"

"H'm! Not when I see them looking like that!" said Jimmy, with a grin. "Isn't that a big gun in the middle of the picture?"

"Don't you know a bridge when you see it?" snorted Putty.

"Oh, my hat!"

"It's the little bridge over the Croft Brook," explained Putty. "Of course, it's not finished yet. I'm going there again this afternoon."

"Better go and see Bulkeley first."

"Bother Bulkeley! What does he want?" asked Teddy Grace crossly.

"He wants you, and I fancy it's a case for the asphalt!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"Some more of your monkey-tricks, I suppose."

"Well, he'll have to wait a bit."

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"You're a new kid here, Putty," he remarked; "but you must have learned by this time that the captain of the school can't be kept waiting. You're going at once."

"Rats!"

"Otherwise I shall help you along. I've got a bat here, and I'll help you—"

"Look here—"

"Like that!" continued Jimmy, bringing the bat into play.

"Ow!" roared Putty. "You silly ass—"

"And like that—and that—"

Putty of the Fourth dodged frantically as Jimmy Silver lunged with the bat. He had to dodge out of the study, and Jimmy cheerily drove him along to the stairs, still lunging.

"You silly chump!" roared Putty, turning on the staircase landing. "You howling idiot, I tell you— Yarrooh!"

"Have some more?"

"I'll—I'll—"

"You'll trot along," agreed Silver. "I'm wasting too much time on you now. There's another!"

"Yooop!"

Putty of the Fourth fled down the stairs. Jimmy Silver followed him, with his bat ready for action. The captain of the school was not to be kept waiting, even by the cheekiest junior at Rookwood.

Teddy Grace turned on the next landing, with a red and wrathful face.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, you silly chump—!"

"I'll keep it up as long as you do," answered Jimmy, lunging with the bat. "There's one—and there's another—and there—"

But the new junior had had enough; the bat was not to be argued with. He jumped back and fled down the lower staircase.

It was unfortunate for Tubby Muffin, the fattest junior on the Classical side of Rookwood, that he happened to be coming upstairs just then.

Putty came round the curve of the staircase at full speed, and met Tubby in full career. The collision was terrific.

Tubby Muffin sat down, clutching at the banisters and roaring. Putty reeled back from the shock and sprawled.

"Yarrooh!" roared Tubby. "What—what the thump— Oh! Ow!"

"Oh!" gasped Putty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you thumping ass!" spluttered Tubby Muffin, scrambling up in great wrath. "You dangerous lunatic! You're always playing tricks. I'll jolly well teach you to biff me over on the stairs!"

Tubby Muffin was not usually a fighting-man, but he was roused to great wrath by the shock he had received. He fairly hurled himself upon the sprawling Putty, punching right and left.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Go it, Tubby!"

"Ow-ow-ow! Gerroff!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"There, you silly ass—there, you chump—biffing a fellow over on the staircase! Take that—and that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Putty of the Fourth struggled wildly under the weight of the fat Classical. He was at a disadvantage, sprawling on his back on the stairs, with the fat Tubby scrambling over him. The yells of the unfortunate Putty woke the echoes of Rookwood.

Townsend of the Fourth looked up from below.

"You'd better chuck that!" he called out. "Bulkeley's coming!"

Thump, thump!

"Yoop! Help! Dragimoff!"

Jimmy Silver ran down and collared Tubby Muffin, jerking him away from his victim, as Bulkeley appeared on the scene.

"What's the thundering row about?" exclaimed the captain of Rookwood angrily.

"Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Putty, sitting up dazedly. "Oh dear—oh!"

"Biffed me over!" roared Tubby Muffin indignantly. "He's always playing tricks. Just like a monkey! Biffed me over! I'll biff him!"

"More of your pranks, I suppose, you young rascal!" growled Bulkeley, helping Putty to his feet by the collar.

"Ow! It was an accident—"

"Yes! I know your accidents, you young sweep! Come along!"

And the hapless Putty was marched off to

Bulkeley's study, with the Rookwood captain's grasp upon his collar.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
The Straight Tip!

TEDDY GRACE gasped for breath as he put his collar straight in George Bulkeley's study. The captain of Rookwood regarded him with a frowning brow.

Since he had been at Rookwood the new junior had been in hot water more times than he could count. His predilection for practical jokes of all sorts and sizes had become too well known for his comfort.

It was quite useless for him to plead not guilty. Any other fellow could have an accident, and it was an accident; but an accident in Putty's case was put down at once to his "monkey-tricks."

So he did not even attempt to explain the disaster on the staircase. He waited meekly for Bulkeley to begin.

"Well, you young rascal!" said the prefect at last.

"Oh, Bulkeley!" murmured Putty.

"You've been trespassing!"

"Eh?"

"As you're a new kid you mayn't know that Sir Leicester Stuckey objects to fellows going over his ground," said Bulkeley. "You ought to know, however, that Stuckey Croft is out of bounds."

"Stuckey Croft!" repeated Putty. "I haven't been there—really, Bulkeley! I heard that some fellows went there the other day, and there was some trouble; but I wasn't one of them, really."

Bulkeley gave him a sharp look.

"Some fellows were asked there to tea, over the phone," he said. "It came out that Sir Leicester hadn't asked them, as they thought. It was somebody playing a trick."

"Was it, really?"

"It hasn't come out who did it. I've got my suspicions. Things like that didn't happen before you came to Rookwood."

"Oh, Bulkeley!"

"Sir Leicester Stuckey was very angry, and he's made no end of complaints," continued the captain of Rookwood. "Now he's complaining again about Rookwood fellows going about his grounds without permission. You've been seen there—along the Croft Brook."

"Oh!" said Putty. "That's all right, Bulkeley. There's a footpath across, you know. Anybody can use the plank bridge."

"So long as they don't leave the footpath," said Bulkeley. "But you do—or you did. And Sir Leicester has complained."

"Well, I may have gone along the stream to sketch—"

"You had better go along some other stream to sketch, then!" answered Bulkeley.

"But I've got to finish my picture!" urged Putty. "I'm painting a really good water-colour of the brook and the plank bridge, and—"

Bulkeley picked up his cane.

"I believe you knew the place was out of bounds," he said. "Anyway, you know it now. You're not to use that footpath again, and you're not to go anywhere near the Croft Brook. The Head's waxy with old Stuckey ringing him up to complain."

"But my picture—"

"What?"

"My picture isn't finished—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Bulkeley. Swish!

"Ow!"

"That's a tip!" said Bulkeley grimly. "Now, whether you go to Croft Brook to sketch or to play monkey-tricks I don't know. But I know that if you go there again, under any circumstances whatever, I shall take you to the Head for a flogging!"

"Oh dear!"

"Keep that in mind!" said Bulkeley sternly. "If you're ever found near the place again you'll be flogged! That footpath is out of bounds for Rookwood fellows, owing to the trouble it's caused. Do you think you can remember that, or shall I give you another lick to impress it on your mind?"

"I—I think I can remember Bulkeley!" gasped Putty.

"Mind you do! You're giving altogether too much trouble for a new kid!" growled Bulkeley. "I think you'll have sense enough to keep clear of the place now, though. I hope so, for your own sake. You can cut!"

Putty of the Fourth was glad enough to "cut."

He left Bulkeley's study, rubbing his palm dolorously. As it happened, his intentions in visiting Sir Leicester Stuckey's property were quite harmless; but he was becoming a dog with a bad name, so to speak.

He returned to his study in a thoughtful mood.

Putty was a determined youth, not to say an optimistic one, and he was very keen on finishing his impressionist picture of the Croft Brook. He was conscious of good intentions, though he was not given the credit for them. And it really was selfish and inconsiderate of Sir Leicester Stuckey to wish to bar off a promising young artist from the scene of his artistic labours.

"I'm jolly well going, all the same!" murmured Putty, as he packed up his sketching materials. "Bulkeley's an ass—and old Stuckey is a beast! I'm going, all the same—"

"I say, Putty—"

The fat face of his study-mate, Tubby Muffin, looked in at the door. His eyes lingered on Putty's satchel.

"Cut!" snapped Putty.

"Where are you going, all the same?" grinned the fat Classical.

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

"Bulkeley's just gone out," said Tubby Muffin. "He's gone over to Abbeywood. I think. He's got a relation in hospital there. I—I say, wharrer you going to do with that stump, Putty?"

"I'm going to give a fat bounder a thumping good licking!"

Tubby backed into the passage.

"I say, Putty, old chap, don't bear malice, you know!" he urged, from outside the doorway. "You biffed me over, and I thumped you, so it's fair and square. You shouldn't play tricks, you know!"

"It was an accident, you fat duffer!"

"Oh, yes, I know! You're always having accidents!" grinned Tubby. "But, I say, don't be waxy, you know! I—I was jolly glad when you became my study-mate, Putty, old chap! I never went for you as Higgs did, did I?"

"You couldn't!"

"Well, I wouldn't, anyway. The fact is, I never liked a chap so much as I did you, Putty!"

"Bosh!"

"And I'll tell you what," continued Tubby confidentially, but keeping a wary eye upon his study-mate. "Now you've had a remittance, Putty—"

"How do you know I've had a remittance?"

"I happened to see you open the letter. What do you say to a real good spread in the study?" asked Tubby eagerly. "I'll do the shopping for you. I'll do the cooking. In fact, I'll do everything. All you've got to do is to stand the tin," said the fat Classical generously. "What do you say, Putty?"

"Rats!"

"What have you got in that satchel, Putty?"

"Sketching things, fathead!"

"I think it's jolly selfish of a fellow to take his tuck away and feed by himself!" said Tubby Muffin loftily. "There isn't any fun in a picnic all by yourself, Putty!"

"I'm not going on a picnic, you fat cormorant!" growled Putty.

Tubby Muffin winked.

"I'll come with you, old chap!" he said.

"Do—and I'll roll you in the brook!" answered Putty.

"If you don't want my company, Teddy Grace—" said Tubby in a very lofty tone.

"Well, I don't!"

"Ahem! He, he, he! I can take a joke with anybody," said Tubby Muffin. "He, he, he! Shall we start now, Putty?"

"I'm going to start," answered Putty. "and if I see you around I'll scalp you! It's not a picnic, and you can go and eat coke!"

Putty came out of the study, and Tubby Muffin dodged away. The new junior went downstairs, and Tubby followed him—at a cautious distance—into the quad. As Teddy Grace neared the gates he looked back, and found the fat Classical on his track.

As Putty of the Fourth was going out of bounds, with a flogging hanging over his head in case of discovery, he naturally had a strong objection to Tubby's company. Anything that happened within the knowledge of Tubby was pretty certain to become known far and wide.

Putty turned back, and charged towards

the fat Classical with his satchel swinging in the air.

Tubby Muffin gave him one alarmed blink and fled.

"Stop!" roared Putty. "I'm going to scalp you! Come back, Muffin!"

Instead of coming back Tubby Muffin put on speed, his fat little legs going like clock-work, in the direction of the cricket-field.

Putty of the Fourth chuckled, and went cheerily out of gates, satisfied that he was rid of the inquisitive Tubby for the afternoon. But that was a little mistake on his part.

Tubby gave him five minutes' start, and then rolled after him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
In Deadly Peril!

PUTTY of the Fourth was at work. For once, he was busy without being engaged upon practical jokes or "monkey-tricks" of any kind.

About a hundred yards from the plank bridge he was ensconced under the trees, busily daubing.

The greatest of impressionist pictures ever exhibited was not quite so thoroughly impressionist as Putty's work. Even the artist himself was a little puzzled at times to distinguish between his trees, his bridges, and his clouds. But he was enjoying the pursuit of his art, and, after all, that was the chief concern.

Putty had forgotten all about Sir Leicester Stuckey and Bulkeley and everybody else, like a true artist, in the midst of creative effort. He did not see or hear Tubby Muffin approaching.

He gave a jump, and dabbed a daub that was more impressionist than ever as the fat Classical suddenly tapped him on the shoulder.

"Oh! You ass!" gasped Putty.

"He, he, he!"

"You—you fat chump! What are you doing here?"

Tubby Muffin grinned.

"You're out of bounds, Putty!" he said, wagging an admonitory fat forefinger at Teddy Grace.

"So are you!" growled Putty.

"That doesn't matter so much—I'm not a tricky monkey, always getting into hot water!" grinned Tubby. "You're going to have a flogging if you're caught here. I heard Bulkeley say so."

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Where's the grub?"

"Eh? What grub?"

"The picnic?"

"There isn't any picnic, you fat duffer!" shouted Putty, in great exasperation. "I've come here to paint."

Tubby Muffin knitted his brows sternly.

"Now, look here, Putty," he said. "I'm willing to be friendly. I'm willing to join you in the picnic. I'm willing to go halves with you. I can't say fairer than that, can I?"

"Fathead!"

"It's no good trying to pull my leg," continued Tubby. "I'm pretty sharp. You have to get up very early in the morning to pull the wool over my eyes. I can tell you! It's no good telling me that you've come here to daub that silly rot—"

"That what?"

"Silly rot!" said the cheerful Tubby. "You've come here to have the feed all to yourself, and I think it's greedy—selfish, in fact. I hate selfishness. You wouldn't go out of bounds simply to play the goat with that silly daubing— Yaroooh!"

The exasperated artist lost patience. Tubby Muffin suddenly found himself sitting on the grass, without any clear idea as to how he had got there.

"Wow, wow, wow!" gasped Tubby. "Why, you rotter, I've a jolly good mind to tell Bulkeley. I believe he's coming home this way, and I'll go and meet him, and—"

"Shut up!"

Tubby sat in the grass and blinked at Teddy Grace in great wrath. He had come there for a feed, not a bumping.

"Yow-ow! You rotter! If you haven't got a feed here, you're playing some trick on old Stuckey, and bring him howling along to Rookwood again. I'm not going to let you! I'll jolly well go and meet Bulkeley—"

"Better not go over the plank bridge,"

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grinned Putty. "It's not safe. I've looked at it."

"I'm going—"

"If you do we shall lose the fattest idiot at Rookwood, and some home for idiots will be deprived of a future inmate!"

"You cheeky ass!" roared Tubby.

He scrambled to his feet and started along the brook. There was evidently no prospect of joining in the feed—if feed there were.

Putty called after him, really anxious: "Don't go on the plank, Tubby! I tell you it's not safe!"

"You can't spoof me!"

"I've looked at it, you fat idiot!" howled Putty. "I was going to the other side myself, only it wouldn't do. The wood's rotted."

"Rats!"

Tubby Muffin kept on without looking back. But he stopped all of a sudden. On the other side of the brook, coming through the trees, a stalwart figure appeared in sight. It was Bulkeley of the Sixth.

Teddy Grace, farther along the stream, was not in view, but Tubby Muffin's fat figure was fairly under Bulkeley's eyes as the captain of Rookwood came towards the brook.

Bulkeley knitted his brows as he saw him, and hurried his steps towards the plank bridge.

"Muffin!" he exclaimed.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Tubby. "I—I—I'm not here, Bulkeley—I—I mean, I've only just come—I mean, I was just going. I say, that bridge isn't safe!"

Bulkeley came striding across the plank. The plank bridge, which was seldom used, had long been out of repair, but it might have been crossed successfully with caution. But the rapid and heavy strides of the big Sixth-Former were too much for the rotted plank. There was a loud crack as Bulkeley reached the middle.

Tubby Muffin stared at him blankly, in horror.

As the plank gave way Bulkeley staggered back, the water swishing over his boots. Then he fell headlong.

The brook was not deep; but as Bulkeley crashed backwards his head struck the broken plank, and he rolled helplessly into the water and plunged under.

Tubby Muffin stood rooted in the grass of the bank, frozen with horror.

Bulkeley's head came up. His face was white and his eyes were closed. He was unconscious.

"Grace!" shrieked Tubby. "Teddy Grace! Putty!"

"Oh, shut up!"

Putty of the Fourth was at some distance, and he was busy. He had seen and heard nothing of Bulkeley so far.

Tubby Muffin ran frantically back along the bank.

"Putty—Bulkeley—in the water—drowning!" he gasped.

"What?"

"He'll be drowned!" shrieked Tubby.

Putty jumped up, forgetful even of his picture. He ran out from under the trees to the water's edge. A white face glimmered on the water as the unconscious captain of Rookwood was swept by into the deeper water below the bridge.

"Good heavens!" panted Teddy. He pitched off his cap and jacket and plunged in, without stopping a second to think.

It was fortunate that Putty of the Fourth was a good swimmer. With powerful strokes he reached the unconscious Sixth-Former and grasped him, bringing Bulkeley's head well above the water.

Tubby Muffin watched him from the bank in gasping terror.

Bulkeley was quite unconscious. But for Putty's prompt aid he would have drifted into the deep water and disappeared. But a strong grasp was on him now, and Putty, swimming stoutly, made for the bank, keeping the unconscious prefect's head well up.

It was a hard struggle for the junior, good swimmer as he was, for he was in deep water now, and the current was strong. He was white from his exertions as he struggled to the rushes.

"Help me, Muffin, you fool!" he panted.

Tubby Muffin woke from a trance, as it were, and plunged into the shallow by the bank up to his knees and lent his aid.

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Bulkeley was dragged ashore into the grass. Tubby Muffin was splashed from head to foot with water and mud, and he sank down gasping in the grass beside Bulkeley.

"Ow, ow, ow!" he spluttered. "I—I'm wet! Wow! I'm muddy! Ow!"

Putty dragged himself from the stream. He was gasping for breath, and almost at the end of his tether. And for some moments he remained in the grass, breathing spasmodically, while his strength returned.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Keeping It Dark!

"OH dear!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "I—I'm wet!"

Putty rose with an effort. He was streaming with water, and was a good deal wetter than Tubby Muffin. Bulkeley lay in the grass, his face white and set; but there was a trace of colour creeping into his cheeks, and he was stirring slightly.

The Rookwood captain was coming to himself.

"Oh, my hat! What a go!" gasped Teddy Grace.

"I'm wet, Putty—wet all over—"

"Bother you!"

"Why, you unfeeling rotter!" howled Tubby indignantly. "Suppose I catch cold—and influenza—and pneumonia—"

"Bulkeley seems all right," remarked Putty, utterly regardless of those terrible risks that fat Classical was running. "He's coming to. He'll be all right in a minute. Oh crumbs—and that means a flogging for me!" ejaculated Putty, as the precise situation dawned upon him.

"Serve you right!" retorted Tubby Muffin. "I'm as wet as anything, and you don't care if I catch—"

"Oh, dry up a minute! What the dickens am I going to do? I'm jolly well not going to be flogged, and Bulkeley's bound to report me—he always keeps his word—"

"Ow, ow! I'm soaked—"

Putty made up his mind swiftly. Bulkeley was fast coming to himself, and as soon as his eyes opened they would rest on Putty—with direful results to that disobedient youth. Bulkeley, in regard to Putty, had been acting under the Head's instructions—and even the fact that Putty had dragged him out of the water would not excuse him for leaving his duty undone. It was possible that the prefect's gratitude might save Putty from the promised flogging—but it was not by any means certain—and the junior was naturally not disposed to take the risk.

Bulkeley did not need his care, and though Putty would not have left him alone, Tubby Muffin was there, and he could remain.

Putty decided at once. He clapped the grumbling Tubby on the shoulder.

"I'm going to cut off," he said hurriedly. "You stay with Bulkeley, Muffin—you're not booked for a flogging—"

"I'm wet!"

"Don't mention my name," went on Putty. "Bulkeley saw you, didn't he?"

"Yes—I say, I'm awfully wet—"

"Well, then, you can stay; and if you don't mention that I've been here, Tubby, I'll stand you a feed in the study this evening."

Tubby Muffin looked more attentive. He even forgot for a moment that he was wet.

"What sort of a feed?" he asked cautiously.

"Anything you like!" said Putty desperately, as the prefect stirred again. "If Bulkeley knows I've been here, I'm done for. It's a flogging from the Head."

"I know that. Will there be a cake?"

"Yes, yes!"

Putty grabbed up his sketching things in hot haste.

"And tarts?" called out Tubby.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"All right, then! I say, what about one of the sergeant's pies—"

But Putty of the Fourth was gone. He disappeared through the trees, with his belongings under his arms and in his hands; and did not stop to pack them till he had sprinted across a field, and escaped into a lane. After that, he took the road to Rookwood.

He was not feeling very cheerful now. He was soaked to the skin, and his impressionist picture was indefinitely postponed. He left a track of water behind him in the dusk as he trotted along for some distance.

Near Rookwood he stopped to make himself as presentable as he could before entering the school; he did not want his state to attract attention.

Fortunately, most of the fellows were still on the cricket-ground, and Putty was able to dodge into the House unnoticed.

He pitched his satchel into his study, and hurried up to the Fourth Form dormitory to change his clothes and dry himself.

His damp clothes were tucked away safely out of sight; and in a very short time Putty of the Fourth descended from the dormitory looking as bright and clean as a new pin.

He sauntered cheerfully out of the School House, feeling none the worse for his adventure, but conscious that it behoved him to keep that adventure very carefully secret.

"Hallo! Where have you been this afternoon?" asked Higgs, meeting him in the quadrangle.

"Sketching, dear boy!"

"What rot!" said Higgs.

Putty smiled and walked on to the cricket-ground. Jimmy Silver greeted him with a frown.

"Hallo, slacker! Not much more light for practice!"

"Better late than never!" answered Putty cheerfully.

"Well, get your bat, and let us see what you can do," said the captain of the Fourth. Teddy Grace complied. He was very willing to be occupied at cricket when Bulkeley arrived, in case there should be any lingering suspicion in the prefect's mind that he had been on Sir Leicester Stuckey's land that afternoon.

Jimmy Silver took the ball, and Putty stood up cheerfully to the bowling of the Fourth Form's champion bowler, and it was some time before his sticks went down. Jimmy Silver condescended to give the new junior an approving look.

"Not bad!" he said.

"Not at all," agreed Putty. "Will you be wanting me for the junior eleven?"

Jimmy sniffed.

"I'm at your service if you do, you know," said Putty.

"The eleven isn't at your service, though," answered Jimmy. "You've got too much nerve for a new kid, Putty. I suppose you've been up to some of your tricks this afternoon."

"Tricks!" repeated Putty.

"If I find pepper in my teapot, or mustard in my cake, I shall come along to your study and bring a stump!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Hallo, Algy! What's the row?"

Jimmy's cousin, Algy of the Third, had just arrived, at full speed, breathless with excitement.

"Guess!" he gasped.

"No time—get it off your chest!"

"What about him?" asked Teddy Grace quickly. "Has the silly ass been chattering—I mean—"

"Oh, it's true!" said Algy. "I wouldn't have believed it, but Bulkeley said so himself. Come on—they're just going in! I came to tell you, Jimmy! Fancy—Tubby Muffin—that fat chump! Come on!"

And Algy cut off again.

"But what's happened?" roared Jimmy Silver, in surprise.

But the fag was gone—evidently bursting with the surprising news, whatever it was. And Jimmy Silver, in great wonder, followed him—and so did Teddy Grace.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Borrowed Glory!

GEORGE BULKELEY opened his eyes, with a gasping breath.

He gazed round him dazedly, and started as he saw Tubby Muffin squeezing the water out of his clothes.

"What—what's happened?" muttered Bulkeley faintly.

"I'm wet!"

"What?"

"Wet all over!" growled Tubby.

Bulkeley sat up in the grass, still dazed, and put his hand to his head. There was a bump, where he had struck the plank, and he was feeling sick and dizzy.

"I—I remember now!" he muttered. "I—I must have been stunned, I think. Oh, my head! But—but I fell in the water. My hat! Did you pull me out, Muffin?"

Bulkeley was looking round him; there was no one in sight but the fat Classical, Tubby, who was squeezing the water out of his jacket, blinked at him.

"I ranked you out by the collar," he answered.

"Well, my hat!" Tubby Muffin's statement was quite correct; he had dragged Bulkeley out by the collar after Teddy Grace had brought him into the rushes.

But as there was no one else on the spot, George Bulkeley naturally supposed that Tubby had done more than that. He knew he must have floated downstream after falling into the water.

"Where did you get me out, Tubby?" he asked.

"Just here." "The water's deep here," said Bulkeley, with a look of blank wonder at the fat Classical.

"And jolly wet, too!" grunted Tubby. "I never knew you were such a swimmer, Muffin."

"Such a—a what?" exclaimed Tubby, staring at the captain of Rookwood in his turn. "Oh, I—I see! Just so—quite so! Oh, I'm simply a splendid swimmer, Bulkeley—first-rate, in fact!"

Tubby was under strict injunctions not to mention that Teddy Grace had been there, and the feed in the study depended on it, so Tubby had to be very careful to keep his compact. But it dawned upon him that Bulkeley must be aware that someone had gone into the stream for him, at a very great risk. A glimmer came into Tubby's round eyes. For the first time it came into his mind that here was glory to be reaped—cheap.

Glory did not often come Tubby's way. He was distinguished for his gargantuan appetite, for his marvellous scent for a feed, and for his uncommon powers as a borrower of cash. But these distinctions could not exactly be called glorious. And here was glory—going cheap, as it were—to be had for the asking.

Almost unconsciously Tubby began to swell. His fat conscience was satisfied with the plea that he was bound to keep Putty's secret, after promising to do so. His promise suddenly assumed an unaccustomed sacredness in Tubby's eyes.

He simply couldn't go back on Putty, who trusted him! And if the alternative was to let Bulkeley believe that he—Reginald Muffin—had performed an action of great valour, what was Tubby to do?

After all, he would have done it if Putty hadn't—or, at least, he would have if he could have—so it came to the same thing, really—or, at least, Tubby tried to believe that it did.

George Bulkeley was silent for some minutes, getting his breath and rubbing his head. He was not much hurt, and he was recovering fast. More than anything else, he felt utter amazement that it was Tubby Muffin who was his rescuer.

For he knew that only a hefty swimmer, and a plucky one to boot, could have got him out of the water; and Tubby certainly was not famous for either quality.

Tubby, growing more important in his looks every moment, finished squeezing his jacket, and put it on. He was already reflecting how much Bulkeley's gratitude would be worth to him.

When this got out it would make some fellows feel small, Tubby reflected—fellows who called him a fat grampus, and a fat frog, and things like that, and never believed he could do anything but demolish great quantities of tuck.

Bulkeley's voice interrupted these pleasant reflections. The prefect had risen to his feet, and was regarding the fat junior thoughtfully.

"I'm very much obliged to you, Muffin!" "Not at all, Bulkeley! Don't mench!" said the fat Classical, in quite an airy way. "Jolly glad I happened to be on the spot, that's all. Right chap in the right place—what?"

"You must have had some trouble with me in the water," said Bulkeley. "I was quite unconscious, till I came to just now."

"Well, it was a bit of trouble," confessed Tubby Muffin. "You're rather heavy, you know."

"It beats me!" said the captain of Rookwood. "I—I mean, I'm deeply obliged to you. I should never have thought—ahem! You ran a great deal of risk coming into deep water for me."

"Never stopped to think of it!" said the cheerful Tubby. "Just tackled the job, you know, and put it through. Efficiency, you know. That's me all over."

Bulkeley smiled.

"It was plucky!" he said.

"Well, as you make a point of it, Bulkeley, I admit it was plucky," said Tubby Muffin modestly. "I'm not the chap to brag, I hope. Still, it was plucky. The Muffins are a plucky family. As for me, personally, I don't mind mentioning to you, Bulkeley, that I'm as brave as a lion."

And Tubby Muffin swelled, till he really seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

"Better get in and get these wet things off," said Bulkeley. "We may catch cold. Better run."

"Right you are, Bulkeley! I say, you're not going to report me for being out of bounds, are you?" asked the fat Classical anxiously.

"Under the circumstances, I think I can undertake to let you off for that," said

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "But Muffin—"

"I'm awfully wet, sir!" put in Tubby importantly. "Soaked to the skin, sir! But I don't mind. I've saved Bulkeley's life—haven't I, Bulkeley?"

"It's true, sir," said the Rookwood captain, as Mr. Bootles blinked at the fat Classical over his glasses in great astonishment, and several fellows gathered round curiously. "I knocked my head on the plank, I think, and lost my senses. Muffin must have gone into deep water for me, and how he got me out goodness only knows. He's much better than anybody ever thought!"

"Bless my soul!" said the amazed Mr. Bootles. "Muffin, I am very pleased with you! I should never have dreamed—ahem!"

"It was my pluck, sir," said Tubby cheerfully.



A LEAP TO SAVE HIS CAPTAIN! Tubby Muffin ran up, panting. "Bulkeley—he's in the water! He'll be drowned!" he cried. Putty jumped up. A white face glimmered on the water as the captain of Rookwood was swept by. "Good heavens!" panted Grace. He pitched off his jacket and plunged into the whirling torrent without stopping a second to think. (See Chapter 4.)

Bulkeley, with a smile. "But you mustn't do it again."

"Tisn't as if I was a bouncer always playing tricks, like Putty, for instance, is it?" said Tubby, with a grin.

"No," said Bulkeley, with a nod. "Quite different. But what did you come here for, Muffin?"

"I—I thought there was a picnic, and there wasn't," said Tubby.

Bulkeley laughed. Tubby's presence by the Croft Brook was fully explained. The captain of Rookwood was crossing the field with long, rapid strides, and Tubby Muffin kept at a trot to keep pace with him. He was soon gasping for breath, but Bulkeley would not let him slacken down. It was necessary to keep warm till the wet clothes could be changed.

They arrived at Rookwood in quite a warm glow.

Mr. Bootles met them as they came in at the gates, and he stopped and looked at Bulkeley quickly.

"What has happened?" he exclaimed. "You look—"

"An accident, sir," said Bulkeley. "The plank on the Croft Brook went, and I tumbled in."

"What?"

"Pluck, sir! I've got no end of pluck. Ask Bulkeley. He knows."

Bulkeley strode on, and Tubby Muffin trotted after him, leaving the Fourth Form master blinking. If it had been Jimmy Silver, or Lovell, or Tommy Dodd, Mr. Bootles would not have been surprised; but the idea of Tubby Muffin as a hero needed getting used to.

There was a buzz of surprise among the Rookwood fellows who had heard what was said. The news spread on all sides. Bulkeley and Tubby Muffin had disappeared into the House when Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived from the cricket-field.

But they soon learned the news. And the brief and emphatic comment of Jimmy Silver was:

"Rats!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Official!

"TUBBY MUFFIN!" "He's saved Bulkeley's life!" "Rats!" "Bulkeley says so!" "Then he's dreaming!"

"THE SPORTING SEVEN!"

(Continued from page 17.)

"If Bulkeley thinks so, it's time he woke up!" said Arthur Edward Lovell emphatically. "What do you think, Putty?"

Putty of the Fourth had quite a dazed look. The news that there had been an heroic rescue, and that Tubby Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, was the heroic rescuer, simply flabbergasted Teddy Grace. As for the credit that might have been reaped from his exploit, the scamp of Rookwood had not given that a thought; but still less had he surmised that Tubby Muffin would lay claim to that same credit.

"I think it's rot!" gasped Putty. "I'm jolly sure Tubby never went into the water for Bulkeley."

"I'll believe it if I hear Bulkeley say so," said Jimmy Silver.

"He's in the dorm, changing. He's wet, right enough," said Mornington. "Wet and muddy. So was Bulkeley. The fat bouncer says he rescued Bulkeley at the risk of his life—owing to his tremendous pluck—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's modest about it!" grinned Lovell.

"Well, that's what he says," said Mornington, laughing. "Gammon, of course."

"Spoof!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "Let's ask Bulkeley."

"Yes, rather!"

Quite a crowd of fellows went along to Bulkeley's room. Jimmy Silver knocked.

"You at home, Bulkeley?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"You've been in the water?"

"Yes."

"There's a yarn that Tubby Muffin fetched you out," said Jimmy, through the door.

"Nothing in it, of course?"

"It's true, Silver."

"Eh?"

"Quite true."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Muffin fetched me out of deep water, risking his life to do it," said Bulkeley, from within. "Never mind his swank—he did it! Now cut off!"

Jimmy Silver almost tottered away from Bulkeley's door. The news was nearly too much for him.

"It—it—it's true!" babbled Jimmy.

"Tubby—Tubby Muffin did it! My only hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"The fat bouncer—he didn't!" exclaimed Putty indignantly.

"Bosh! If Bulkeley says so, it is so," said Jimmy Silver; "and that settles it. You fellows, we haven't done Tubby justice. There's more in Tubby than meets the eye."

"And there's plenty of him that meets the eye, too!" remarked Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tubby Muffin!" said Jimmy. "Tubby—a giddy hero! Who'd have thought it? Let's go and see him, and hear all about it. Tubby Muffin—my hat!"

And nearly all the Fourth Form marched up to the dormitory to interview Tubby Muffin—Rookwood's Hero!

THE END.

(You will enjoy next week's tale of Rookwood. It's grand!)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The next event was the quarter-mile, and Jack Raymond & Co. were very careful to keep out of Baggy Trimble's way at the start.

This was a glorious race. Talbot of St. Jim's took the lead, only to have it wrested from him by Carr. Then Carr, in turn, was overhauled by Tom Merry, who travelled at top speed. In the last lap, Jack Raymond seemed to spring up suddenly from nowhere. He caught Tom Merry when Tom was half a dozen yards from the tape, and there was a sensational finish, Raymond winning by what Monty Lowther described as the width of an eyelash.

Each team had now won a couple of events.

The mile proved a great attraction. Baggy Trimble, having laid a solid foundation by eating four apple dumplings, felt confident of winning. But Baggy was left at the post.

A thrilling neck-and-neck race between Talbot and Jimmy Brown ended in a victory for the St. Jim's fellow.

Talbot collapsed at the finish, for he had made a desperate fight for victory, sparing neither speed nor stamina.

"We're losing ground," said Baggy Trimble, wagging an admonishing forefinger at his men.

"Then, why don't you win something?" said Teddy Clifton.

"I'm just going to," said Baggy. "It's the obstacle race next."

"And what are you—the obstacle?" asked Johnny Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It took a long time to arrange the course for the obstacle race. There were ladders which had to be crawled through, hurdles which had to be cleared, and large tubs of water to be jumped over, or the competitors would come to grief. Finally, there was a level stretch of fifty yards to be run.

There were yells of mirth when the race began, and Baggy Trimble got jammed between two of the rungs of the ladder. Kildare, his lips twitching with merriment, extricated the fat junior, and Baggy promptly crawled under the ladder instead of going through it.

"Hold on!" said Kildare. "I must disqualify you for that!"

But Baggy went on, blind and deaf to all other considerations save that of winning the race. He knocked down a couple of hurdles—this being simpler than jumping over them—then he ran on, until he came to one of the large, round tubs, brimming over with cold water.

Baggy hesitated for a brief space; then

he made up his mind to jump. He did—not over the tub, but into it!

Splash!

"Yarooooo! Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Baggy, foundering like a porpoise in the icy water.

"Baggy seems to think it's a swimming contest!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"First bath he's had this term!" said Manners. "I say, we're going to lose this event. Look at that fellow Raymond!"

Jack Raymond had successfully cleared all the obstacles, and he was now in the straight for home. George Figgins was hot on his track, but Raymond warded off his attentions, and won cleverly by a couple of yards.

Jack Raymond & Co. were now on terms again, having won three events to their opponents three.

Baggy Trimble crawled out of the tub. He evidently found it less comfortable than the tub in which Diogenes of old had his habitation. Baggy was soaked to the skin, and his appearance sent the fellows into shrieks of laughter.

Baggy squelched his way into the school building to get a change of attire. The high jump and the long jump were started without him. Figgins won the former for St. Jim's; and Riley won the latter for the Sporting Seven.

Kildare then called the athletes together, and addressed them.

"The two teams are level on points, at the moment," he said. "The boxing contests will decide the issue. In view of the fact that most of you are fagged out, I think we will postpone the boxing till Wednesday afternoon."

This course having been agreed to, Tom Merry invited the Sporting Seven to a feed in his study. That celebrated apartment was crowded out shortly afterwards, the St. Jim's fellows sitting on the window-sill, and giving up the chairs to their guests. But it was a very jolly spread. And the boxing tournament was the main topic of conversation.

What was to happen on Wednesday? Would one of Baggy Trimble's men triumph or would the honours go to St. Jim's?

Whatever happened at the finish, there were bound to be some thrilling tussles between the St. Jim's boxers and their friendly rivals, the Sporting Seven.

THE END.

(There will be another gripping tale of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, entitled: "Rivals of the Ring!" by Martin Clifford, in next week's bumper issue.)

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