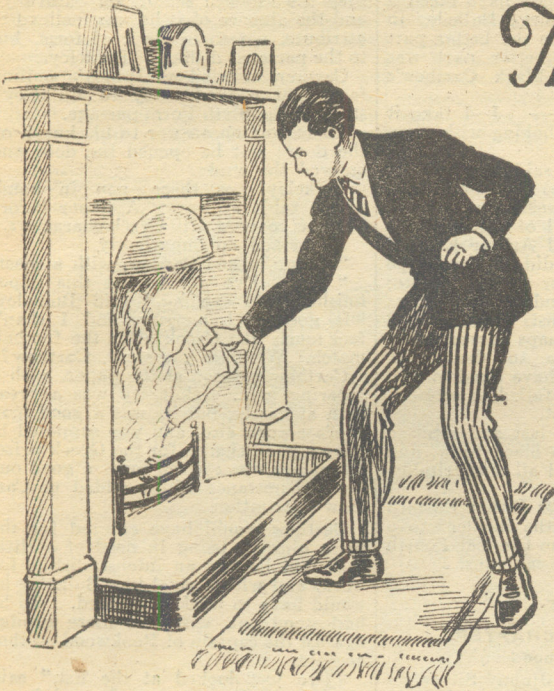


PLOTTING THE DOWNFALL OF BULKELEY!

Mark Carthew resents the interference of Bulkeley with what he calls his duty, and plots to be revenged on the captain of the school—but he reckons without Arthur Edward Lovell!



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Cap Fit, Wear It!

"ROTTER!"

Mark Carthew started. He was coming along the Sixth Form passage at Rookwood School when that opprobrious epithet fell upon his offended ears.

In one side of the passage was a big window with a seat in the recess—sometimes a lounging place for Sixth Form fellows. There were no seniors there now, however. A junior of the Fourth Form was sprawling on the window-seat, with a bunch of papers on his knees and a stump of pencil in his hand. It was Arthur Edward Lovell of the Classical Fourth.

He was staring straight at Carthew with a faraway look in his eyes. Lovell, as a matter of fact, hardly saw Carthew, and did not notice him, specially, at all. Having found a quiet and secluded spot, he was deep in a crossword puzzle, seeking in the recesses of his powerful brain for the elusive words he wanted to complete the puzzle, and which would not come. Lovell had lately taken up crossword puzzles very strongly.

At the present moment he was in need of a word of six letters, beginning and ending with "R." Possibly the sight of Carthew acted subconsciously upon his intellect. At all events, it was just as the bully of the Sixth appeared in the office that the word "rotter" flashed into Lovell's mind, and he uttered it aloud in tones of satisfaction.

Carthew stared at him grimly. That he was generally regarded as a "rotter" by the Lower School was no secret to Carthew.

If the Rookwood juniors had ventured to tell a prefect of the Sixth Form what they thought of him, undoubtedly the word "rotter" would have leaped to their lips at once.

So Carthew's misapprehension was quite natural. Being blissfully ignorant of crossword puzzles, and of Lovell's pursuit of the same, the bully of the Sixth did not dream for one moment that Lovell was speaking to himself, merely

"You cheeky young sweep!" said Carthew. "So that's how you talk to a Sixth Form prefect, is it?"

"Eh?"
"Come to my study!"
"What am I to come to your study for?" demanded Lovell.

"Because I've left my cane there. You're going to have six," said Carthew. "And next time you feel inclined to call a prefect names perhaps you'll think twice about it."

Lovell stared at him. He was, according to what he had often told his chums, a brainy fellow. But it could not be denied that his brain worked rather slowly. Besides, his thoughts were concentrated on his puzzle. He really did not grasp Carthew's natural misapprehension.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed testily. "I wasn't calling you names Carthew."

Carthew grinned unpleasantly. "It's a bit too late for that," he said. "You see, I heard you. Are you coming?"

"No, I'm not! I tell you—Leggo you beast!" shouted Arthur Edward, as Carthew grasped him by the collar and jerked him off the window-seat.

"This way!" grinned Carthew.
"Leggo!"

Lovell's precious papers were scattered round him, and he wriggled in Carthew's grasp.

"Will you let go?" he roared. "I tell you I wasn't calling you names. I never spoke to you."

"Well, of all the lying young scoundrels!" exclaimed Carthew. "I'll give you two extra for that! Come on. I tell you!"

Juniors of the Fourth Form were supposed to obey the order of a Sixth Form prefect without question or hesitation. But Mark Carthew's order was not obeyed. From Lovell's point of view the bully of the Sixth had simply picked on him without cause or pretext, owing to his long-standing feud with the comrades of the end study, and Lovell was not going to take "six" for nothing.

repeating a word he wanted and had happily found.

"What's that?" exclaimed Carthew. "Rotter! That's it!"

So he struggled desperately.

"You young sweep!" roared Carthew. "Leggo, you bully!" yelled Lovell.

A door in the Sixth Form passage was flung open. George Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, stared out, with a pen in his hand and a frown on his face. Bulkeley of the Sixth had been hard at work in his study, deep in a Greek paper for the Head's Prize, and he did not seem pleased by the sudden uproar almost outside his door.

"What's that thumping row?" exclaimed Bulkeley warmly.

"This cheeky fag—"
"Leggo!" howled Lovell. "Bulkeley! I say, Bulkeley—"

Bulkeley of the Sixth came out into the passage. His glance at Carthew was not pleasant. More than once the head prefect of Rookwood had had trouble with Carthew, and he was strongly inclined to suspect that this was another case of bullying.

"Stop that!" he snapped. "Now, what's the matter?"

Carthew gave him a rather evil look. "I can attend to it without help, Bulkeley," he almost snarled. "This young rascal has cheeked me, and I'm going to give him six."

"I haven't!" roared Lovell. "I never spoke to him at all, Bulkeley. You know he's always down on my study."

"Enough of that, Lovell!" said Bulkeley sharply. "That's not the way to talk!"

"Well, ask him what I've done," exclaimed Lovell. "I haven't done anything. He can't say I have."

"Well, what has he done, Carthew?" asked Bulkeley impatiently.

"He called me a rotter to my face!" snarled Carthew.

"I didn't!" howled Lovell.

"That's a bare-faced lie!" said Carthew passionately. "If you take that young rotter's word against mine, Bulkeley—"

"Lovell is rather a young ass, but I haven't noticed him telling lies, that I remember," said Bulkeley. "Do you mean to say, Lovell, that you never spoke to Carthew at all?"

"Not a word!" said Lovell promptly. "You deny using the word rotter?" shouted Carthew.

"Rotter! Oh—oh, yes!" Light broke
THE POPULAR.—No. 522.

The Captain's Enemy!

A STIRRING LONG COMPLETE STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

BY

OWEN CONQUEST.

on Lovell's mind then, and he grinned involuntarily.

"It's not a laughing matter," said Bulkeley sharply. "You just now denied speaking to Carthew at all."

"Yes!" gasped Lovell. "You see, I—I— Ha, ha, ha! It's a mistake! I wanted a word of six letters, and—"

"Six letters!" repeated Bulkeley blankly. "Wha-a-at?"

"Beginning with 'R'—"

"Eh?"

"And ending with 'R.'"

"What do you mean, if you mean anything?"

"It's just a crossword puzzle," explained Lovell. "Look at this paper. I'm working it out."

"A—a—a puzzle?"

"Just look. You can see I want a word of six letters, beginning and ending with 'R.' The word flashed into my mind—Rotter! See? I didn't even notice that Carthew was there when I spoke. I wasn't speaking to him at all. I couldn't make out why he jumped on me. Of course, if the cap fits, he's welcome to wear it."

Bulkeley looked at the scrawled paper, marked with squares, some of them filled up with horizontal and vertical words. Undoubtedly there was a set of spaces that required a word of six letters with "R" at the beginning and the end.

Bulkeley's face broke into a grin.

"I—I see," he said.

"I just came here to work it out quietly, because the fellows are chattering in my study," said Lovell. "No harm in that, I suppose?"

"None at all. Cut off!"

"Right-ho, Bulkeley! I—I say, Carthew, it's honest Injun. I give you my word I wasn't speaking to you," said Lovell earnestly. "I hadn't any idea why you flew out like that."

"I don't believe you!" snarled Carthew.

"Then you can jolly well do the other thing!" retorted Arthur Edward independently, and he marched off.

Carthew made a movement as if to follow. His face was pale with anger and chagrin. As a matter of fact, Carthew realised that Lovell was speaking the truth, and realised that he had made an egregious ass of himself. For that reason, he was keener than ever to "take it out" of Arthur Edward Lovell, and would certainly have done so for the presence of the captain of Rookwood.

"Hold on, Carthew," said Bulkeley quietly, but with the ring of authority in his voice. "Lovell has explained, and the matter ends."

"I don't believe a word of it," hissed Carthew; "and I won't stand your interference, Bulkeley!"

"You will," said the Rookwood captain tersely. "The fact is, Carthew, you've made a fool of yourself, and you know it. You shouldn't have been so jolly quick to suppose that you were being called a rotter. All the Fourth will be cackling over that story soon, and it's a bad thing for the school for the prefects to be laughed at."

Carthew gritted his teeth.

"It's your fault and your doing, you meddling cad!"

In his rage the bully of the Sixth did not measure his words.

"What's that?" Bulkeley looked grim, and came a stride nearer to Mark Carthew. "You called me a—"

"I'm fed-up with your meddling!" hissed Carthew.

"You've called me an unpleasant name," said Bulkeley. "I can't let that pass. It's rather infra dig for two Sixth Form prefects to hammer one

another, but unless you care to apologise—"

Carthew backed away, breathing hard. He would almost as soon have faced a lion in his den as George Bulkeley in the ring. Discretion is the better part of valour, and that better part was highly developed in Mark Carthew's composition.

"I—I didn't mean—I—I take it back!" he muttered, choking with rage.

Bulkeley nodded.

"Good enough!" he said, and he went back into his study and shut the door.

A minute later Bulkeley was deep in Greek again, forgetful of the existence of Mark Carthew and Arthur Edward Lovell. But Carthew did not forget the incident so easily. For several minutes he stood by the window, staring at Bulkeley's door, his fists clenched and his eyes glinting. Perhaps he was screwing up his courage to deal with Bulkeley as he would have liked to deal with him. If so, he failed to screw it up to the sticking-point.

He turned away at last and went to his own study, with a black brow, and hatred and malice and all uncharitableness in his heart.

In those same minutes Arthur Edward Lovell was detailing the incident to a crowd of juniors in the Classical Fourth passage, amid roars of laughter.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bitter Blood!

"THE list's up," Jimmy Silver remarked, coming into the study a few days later.

"Eh? What list?" asked Lovell, as the captain of the Fourth made his announcement.

"Bulkeley's footer list, you know—the First Eleven in the House match."

"Blow the House match! It's only a senior match, anyhow, and doesn't matter to us."

"Ass!" said Jimmy. "I suppose we want to see Classics beat Moderns?"

"Well, yes," agreed Lovell, showing some faint interest at last. "I'd like to see Bulkeley mop up Knowles and his crowd on Saturday. I don't feel so jolly sure about it. Bulkeley has been swotting lately at Greek, instead of sticking at footer. Not much of a catch if he bags the Greek prize and loses the House match."

"Oh, Bulkeley's all right!" said Jimmy. "The Greek papers have to be handed in Saturday evening, so Bulkeley must be nearly through now. He was at practice this afternoon, and in great form. A little swotting doesn't hurt a chap."

"Rot, all the same," said Lovell. "Bit more sense in it if he was doing crossword puzzles!"

Jimmy chuckled.

"Carthew's not in the team," he said. "Another come-down for jolly old Carthew."

"Like his cheek to think of butting into the first eleven," said Lovell indignant. "Slacker like Carthew!"

"All the same, he was jolly keen on it," said Jimmy Silver. "Everybody in the House knows that he was trying to butt in. Of course, he's not good enough, though I don't suppose he will see that himself. I could have told him, but he never asked me."

Jimmy Silver went downstairs and smiled as he noted Mark Carthew, of the Sixth at the notice-board, reading down the list for the House match, with a corrugated brow.

Carthew was a good deal of a slacker, and was more than suspected of smoking cigarettes in his study, which was not

the way to get into the Rookwood First Eleven. But he had been very keen to see his name in the team that was to play the Modern seniors on Saturday; and the absence of it he was inclined to attribute, not to his lack of form, but to the personal dislike of Bulkeley.

Carthew scowled at Jimmy's smiling face, and walked away to Bulkeley's study in the Sixth Form passage.

There was no answer to his knock on the door; but he opened the door and entered the study.

Bulkeley was there, pen in hand, at his table at work. A paper before him was covered with Greek characters.

He looked up impatiently.

"Busy?" asked Carthew, with a sneer.

"Yes. I've got to get this paper finished this evening," said Bulkeley.

"It goes in to-morrow, and I shan't feel much like Greek after the football match. What do you want, Carthew?"

Carthew glanced at the paper, with a sneering grin. Bulkeley was a great man at games, but he was a good man at class-work also, and was supposed to have a good chance for the Greek prize. His paper was certain to be a good one—a circumstance which added to Carthew's irritation.

Carthew would have entered for the prize himself, being in need of a little cash, but he had an intense dislike for work, and with a rival like Bulkeley he would have to work very hard. So he had stood out, with one more grudge against the captain of Rookwood on that account.

"I've just looked at the list," said Carthew. "You seem to have left me out, after all, Bulkeley."

"What did you expect?"

"Well, I expected to play for the House!" snapped Carthew. "No reason why I shouldn't, that I can see."

"No reason—if you kept yourself fit and in good form!" answered Bulkeley. "But you're not up to the weight of the Modern team, and you know it, Carthew—or ought to know it."

"I notice that your own friends are all in the team."

"Well?"

"I call it rotten favouritism!"

"You can call it what you like, but not here," said Bulkeley. "Shut the door after you!"

Angry words trembled on Carthew's lips, but he restrained them. He could see that Bulkeley was at the end of his patience. With a black brow, he swung out of the study and slammed the door.

Bulkeley shrugged his shoulders and returned to his Greek paper, dismissing Carthew from his mind.

Carthew, as he walked moodily away from the study, was thinking of that Greek paper.

His mood was black and bitter, his grudges against the Rookwood captain were innumerable. Bulkeley had left him out of the football; Bulkeley had interfered between him and the fags; Bulkeley was going to win the Greek prize, which would have come in so useful to settle some little debts that were troubling Carthew; Bulkeley, in fact, was the fellow who stood in his light all the time, in every way.

Openly, in the light of day, Carthew dared not make any attempt to pay off those grudges. But he was thinking now that there were other means.

On the morrow Bulkeley would be on Big Side with the Classical senior team; every fellow would be out of the House, watching the game. That Greek paper would be in Bulkeley's study.

He was not likely to lock it up. Such an idea would never occur to an unsuspecting mind like Bulkeley's.

What would be easier than to step

into his study, unseen in a deserted House, and—and—

Carthew's eyes glittered at the thought

Who would or could suspect a Sixth Form prefect of playing such a trick on the captain of the school? That was impossible.

If the Greek paper were destroyed its destruction would be set down, as a matter of course, to some mischievous or resentful fag—some thoughtless

gotten that there was a House match on at all, and did not want to be reminded of it.

"I'll tell you fellows what," said Lovell. "Cut the match, and help me with this puzzle."

"Ass!"

"I want a dic," went on Lovell. "The study dic isn't any good—not enough words in it. Do you think you could nip into the Head's study and bag his big dictionary?"

Classicals urged on their football champions.

From a little distance Mark Carthew watched the opening of the game.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Bulkeley!"

Carthew set his lips, and walked away towards the House.

He had not yet quite made up his mind. Like Atticus, "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike," he hesitated. But that roar from the 'football-field



CAUGHT! "What are you doing here, Lovell?" demanded Mr. Greeley sternly. "I—I only came to—borrow a book, sir!" stammered Lovell. "Did you have Bulkeley's permission to enter his study?" "No, sir!" "Disgraceful!" retorted the Fifth Form master. "If you were in my Form, Lovell, I would cane you for this act of impertinence!" (See Chapter 4.)

junior who had lately felt the weight of Bulkeley's ashplant for some sin of commission or omission.

The papers had to be in the Head's study by six o'clock; there was absolutely no chance of Bulkeley doing his work over again. And as for Carthew being suspected, that was out of the question—the thought would never cross Bulkeley's mind at all.

Carthew had plenty of food for thought that evening, while Bulkeley was finishing his Greek paper, and the rest of the House were chiefly occupied in discussing football prospects for the morrow.

THE THIRD CHAPTER— Carthew's Revenge!

"YOU'RE coming!"

"I'm not!"

"Fathead!" said Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome in emphatic chorus.

Really, they were getting out of patience with Arthur Edward Lovell. Lovell at his accounts was bad enough, but Lovell at crossword puzzles was worse.

Saturday afternoon was bright and fine—glorious weather for the Senior House match. Every fellow in both Houses was going to turn up on Big Side to cheer. In Mr. Manders' House Tommy Dodd was rounding up the Modern juniors; even Leggett, the slacker, and Cuffy the amiable duffer, had to roll down to Big Side to cheer the Modern footballers. In the School House Jimmy Silver was equally keen to gather a swarm of fellows to yell for the Classicals. And Arthur Edward Lovell, deep in crosswords, had almost for-

"Oh, my hat! Not quite!"

"You nip in!" suggested Raby.

Lovell shook his head.

"Might get nailed," he said. "I don't want to risk detentions, with this job on my hands. I wonder whether Bulkeley would lend me his dictionary? He's got a good one."

"Blow dictionaries, and blow silly puzzles!" said Jimmy Silver crossly. "You've got to come down to the match."

"Blow the match!"

"Look here, Lovell—"

"Cut off, old chap! Good chance for a fellow to work, with all you noisy kids out of the House. Cut off!"

"Oh, you're a fathead!" said Jimmy Silver. "Come on, you chaps! We've got to get front places, and those Modern cads will be shoving in."

And the three chums left the end study at last, leaving Arthur Edward Lovell to his own devices.

Kick-off was timed for two-thirty, and long before that a swarm of fellows had gathered on Big Side.

When the footballers appeared there were loud cheers from the swarms of Classicals and Moderns.

Bulkeley, at the head of his men, looked very bright and fit; certainly, he did not look as if his late hard work at Greek had impaired his form.

From the kick-off it was an exciting game, and loud cheers and yells from the rival crowds of Moderns and

helped to decide him. Bulkeley was there, cheered by the whole House, gathering new laurels on the playing-fields. The most popular fellow at Rookwood, as Carthew was probably the most unpopular. And more laurels, of a different kind, awaited him—when the Greek prize was handed out. But in that direction, at least, Carthew told himself savagely he could put a spoke in the fellow's wheel!

He lounged into the House.

Not a man of the Sixth remained indoors. Those who were not in the eleven were on the ground to watch and cheer.

Carthew's heart was beating unpleasantly fast as he lounged along the Sixth Form passage.

"Safe as houses!" muttered Carthew. He stopped at Bulkeley's door.

A glance up and down the passage, and then he entered, and closed the door behind him.

His heart was beating faster, with an unpleasant throbbing. But he was cool enough.

He looked round the study and opened the table drawer.

There lay the Greek paper.

Carthew picked it up and looked at it. He ran his eyes over it, with a bitter look. It was far beyond anything he could have done. Had he entered for the Head's prize he would have wasted his time. Bulkeley would have beaten him, as he beat him at football, in popularity, in everything else.

Setting his lips, Carthew carried the Greek paper across to the fire, which was burning very low.

Bulkeley's work was jammed into the centre of the smouldering cinders, and stirred with the poker.

It burst into flame.

With a ruthless hand, Carthew stirred and stirred the burning papers, till only a few fragments were left, here and there a Greek character showing in the smouldering fragments.

He laid down the poker in the fender quietly.

His rascally work was done. All that remained now was to close the table-drawer, leave the study, and clear. He intended to get out of gates and take a long walk, not returning to Rookwood till lock-up. Above suspicion as he was, it was as well to be quite off the scene, known to be absent, when Bulkeley discovered what had been done.

And then—

He gave a sudden, convulsive start. There was no fellow in any of the Sixth Form studies. No Sixth-Former was likely to come in, at least, until the first half of the match was over. Nobody but the Sixth had any right or reason for coming along the passage. And yet there was a footfall outside the study.

Bulkeley could not be returning; he was playing footer. Even if a Sixth-Former came in, he would not come to Bulkeley's study. Why should he? It was only someone passing through the passage—it could only be that! Yet the footfall sent a chill as of ice to the quaking dastard in the study.

If—if he should be seen there, with the Greek paper still lying smouldering in the grate!

A feeling of physical sickness came over the wretched schemer.

For several long seconds he stood, while the footfalls came closer. Terror gripped him and held him helpless.

Whoever it was, he would not open Bulkeley's door. But if he should? It was a chance in a thousand, but Carthew dared not risk it. He glared round like a wild animal for a hiding-place.

A hiding-place was easy enough to find. Sixth Form rooms at Rookwood were studies and bed-rooms combined. Bulkeley's bed stood in a deep alcove opposite the window.

Carthew plunged under the bed, and lay there in shadowed concealment, palpitating—waiting for the footsteps to pass the door.

But they halted at the door; the handle turned. The one chance in a thousand had happened—the unknown was coming into Bulkeley's study. Carthew almost panted with thankfulness that he had hidden himself in time.

The door opened.

Under the bed, Mark Carthew lay motionless, trying to still even his breathing, while the footfalls crossed the study from the door.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trapped!

"O H, rotten!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell. Lovell was hard at work in the end study in the Fourth House matches did not bother him. **THE POPULAR.**—No. 522.

did not even hear the roar from Big Side, though it echoed as far as the end study. Crossword puzzles occupied all Arthur Edward's attention, to the exclusion of all other matters—all other matters being trifles light as air in comparison.

But Lovell rose from the table at last, in irritated mood, pronouncing that it was rotten. Words urgently required for his puzzle escaped him. The study dictionary was not an expensive volume. It met the requirements of the English class, but certainly it did not contain all the words that Lovell wanted. A dictionary, as a rule, was a form of literature that did not attract Lovell. Now he would have given a great deal for the biggest dictionary that ever was published—one the size of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" would have pleased him.

"Rotten!" he repeated indignantly. "A fellow's handicapped. Lots of chaps going in for this puzzle have some whacking dictionaries to help them, and I've only got that three-bob little beast. And I suppose the Head would kick up a fuss if I bagged the dic from his study. That's the one I really want. Bulkeley's might do. But you can't ask a prefect to lend you books. More likely to lend you his boot!"

Lovell grunted.

Really, it was hard cheese.

"I'm jolly well going to borrow that dic!" said Lovell at last. "After all, Bulkeley's playing footer, and he won't know. I can shove it back before he comes in. And there won't be anybody about in the Sixth."

Lovell left the end study.

Borrowing a Sixth Form prefect's books, especially without leave, was a rather serious enterprise, and even a good-natured prefect like Bulkeley was likely to introduce his asphalt into the affair, if he found it out.

So Lovell approached his destination very cautiously.

The House was deserted. Every fellow, of all Forms, seemed to be out of doors, congregated on Big Side. Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth, was sitting in an armchair by the fire in the hall reading a newspaper.

Lovell glanced at him, and moved off towards the Sixth Form passage with an air of exaggerated carelessness.

Perhaps his carelessness was a little too exaggerated, for Mr. Greely raised his eyes from his newspaper and glanced after the junior.

Possibly Mr. Greely was surprised to see a Fourth Form boy indoors at all just then, and wondered what that Fourth Form boy was going into the Sixth Form quarters for.

Lovell walked down the passage, and stopped at Bulkeley's door. He turned the handle and entered.

The bookcase faced him on the opposite wall, and in the bookcase was the big dictionary he sought.

Not for a second did Lovell dream that there was anyone else in the room.

Certainly it was not likely to cross his mind that his unexpected arrival had disturbed a Sixth Form prefect there, and that that prefect was now lying hidden under the bed in the alcove. Lovell was not a suspicious fellow; but, had he been as suspicious as Doubling Thomas of old, he would scarcely have suspected anything of the kind.

He crossed to the bookcase and took the big dictionary. He noticed that the table-drawer was open, and that there was a rather smoky smouldering going on in the grate. But, naturally, he gave no attention to such details.

With Bulkeley's dictionary in his hand, he turned back to the door. And

then he uttered a sudden dismayed ejaculation.

Framed in the doorway was the portly figure of Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Lovell involuntarily.

Mr. Greely eyed him sternly.

"What are you doing here, Lovell?"

"I—I only came to—to borrow a book, sir!" stammered Lovell.

"Did you have Bulkeley's permission to take a book from his study?"

"N-no, sir."

"Is that the book in your hand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Replace it in the bookcase at once."

Lovell breathed harder, but he obeyed. It was not feasible to argue with a Form master, even if it was not his own Form master.

"Now leave the study," said Mr. Greely. "It will be for Bulkeley to decide whether you simply intended to take a book without leave—an act of impertinence—or whether you intended to play some prank in his study. You have stolen here surreptitiously, Lovell, while everyone was out of doors, and I have my doubts, I have my doubts!"

"I—I assure you, sir—"

"You may explain to Bulkeley later. For the present, I shall see that you have no further opportunity for playing tricks here. Go!"

Arthur Edward Lovell, with feelings almost too deep for words—even cross-words—went. Mr. Greely, frowning suspiciously, drew the key from the lock and placed it outside the door. He followed Lovell into the passage, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket, in view of the junior. Having thus made it clear to Lovell that any further "pranks" in Bulkeley's study were impossible, Mr. Greely returned to his fire, his arm-chair, and his newspaper.

Lovell, in great wrath, walked out of the House. He debated in his mind whether he should make an attempt on the Head's dictionary, but his adventure in Bulkeley's study had discouraged him. He decided to give his troublesome task a miss till after tea, and refresh himself with a little fresh air, and walked down to Big Side to join his chums in the crowd there.

Meanwhile, Mark Carthew had crawled out from under Bulkeley's bed.

His feelings were indescribable.

He was locked in the study—locked in, with the Greek paper lying in smouldering ashes in the grate!

Locked in!

Carthew leaned on the table, feeling the need of support. What was he to do? He was trapped.

He dragged himself to the window at last, white as chalk, with shaking hands. The study window was in full view of the whole quadrangle; even from the playing fields it could be seen, at a distance, had anyone chanced to look that way. But it was the only avenue of escape. Dared he risk it? But if he did not—

Carthew drew back from the window with a groan.

He could not escape that way! He shuddered at the thought of the stare of surprise that would greet his appearance, climbing down from a study window into the quad.

Like a rat in a trap, he moved restlessly about the room.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! The foot-balls were coming in. He realised that the match was over. The Sixth Form passage rang with footsteps. Like a rabbit bolting into its burrow, Carthew plunged under the bed again, only thinking of staving off discovery.

The key turned in the lock, the door opened, and Bulkeley came in.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Bend Over!

GEOERGE BULKELEY had a cheery smile on his face. Classics had beaten Moderns by three goals to one, a happy result from the point of view of the Classical captain. In a cheery humour, Bulkeley had heard Mr. Greely's explanation with regard to the key, mentally deciding to let the matter drop.

But the cheery smile faded from his face, as he noticed the open table-drawer, and a moment later the absence of his Greek paper. With a startled and puzzled face, he looked through the drawer. The Greek paper was gone! And then his eyes fell on the blackened papers in the grate. With a grim, set face, Bulkeley bent down, and looked at the fragments, here and there a little piece of paper showing Greek characters, amid the ashes.

He drew a deep breath.

Who had done this?

His chance for the Greek prize was gone now. There was no time to do his work over again. Some enemy had deliberately destroyed his paper, and put him out of the running. Some malicious junior—Lovell! Lovell had been there! Bulkeley shook his head. It was not like Lovell, and he remembered that Mr. Greely had told him that he had followed Lovell to his study, and found him taking a book from the bookcase.

Not Lovell; but since Lovell's visit the door had been locked. It was before Lovell's visit that this had happened, then, soon after the House match had started. Who had done it? Peele, perhaps, or Lattrey? It was a trick they were capable of, perhaps—

It was a heavy blow to Bulkeley. All his work—hard work for weeks—had gone for nothing. His anger was deep. Someone had done this—some malicious enemy—and that someone had to be found out, and reported to the Head for a flogging.

Bulkeley threw himself into a chair, trying to think it out. He hardly noticed Snooks of the Second as the fag came into the study. Snooks was Bulkeley's fag, and it was his duty to get the fire going and make the tea.

Snooks raked out the grate, and plunged into the alcove for the firewood-box. The next moment Snooks jumped up with a yell.

"I say, Bulkeley—"

"Don't bother!"

"There's somebody under your bed!"

"What?"

"I—I just saw his boot!" gasped Snooks. "There is, I tell you!"

Bulkeley rose from his chair.

"I—I say, Bulkeley, perhaps it—it—it's a burglar!"

"Don't be a young ass!" said Bulkeley. He stooped and lifted the edge of the coverlet. "Come out, wherever you are!"

Carthew of the Sixth, with a face pale as death, almost fainting with horror at his own position, crawled out.

Bulkeley looked at him. Snooks stared at him wide-eyed. Carthew dragged himself to his feet.

For a moment or two there was a terrible silence. Then Bulkeley rapped out:

"You can go, Snooks!"

"But I haven't lighted the fire—"

"Cut!" snapped Bulkeley.

Snooks "cut" with a startling tale to

tell in the Second Form-room. George Bulkeley closed the door after him.

"So it was you, Carthew!" he said quietly.

Carthew mumbled helplessly.

"You were here, I suppose, when Lovell came in for the book-burning my Greek paper! That was how you were locked in."

"I—I—"

"You a Sixth-Former, a prefect of Rookwood!" Bulkeley's voice rang with scorn. "Well, you won't be a prefect much longer, or much longer at Rookwood, I think. Come!"

"Where?" breathed Carthew.

"To the Head, of course!"

Carthew staggered against the table.

"Bulkeley, I—I—I— It's the sack for me! I—I'm sorry. I—I never meant— I—I—" His voice trailed off. "Think of the disgrace! I'll do anything. I'll make up the prize out of my own pocket. I'll do anything you like. I—I— For mercy's sake, Bulkeley—"

His voice rose to a shrill cry.

Bulkeley made a gesture of disgust.

"Hold your tongue! You make me sick! You've dished me for the Greek prize, with as dirty a trick as I've ever heard. You, a Sixth Form prefect! I'd never have dreamed— But you know that, of course. You'd have been safe, but for Greely locking the door. You cur!"

Carthew cowered.

"For mercy's sake! It's ruin—"

"Hold your tongue!"

Bulkeley paced up and down the study. He stopped at last, fixing his scornful eyes on the cowering rascal of Rookwood.

"I won't disgrace the Sixth and the school by making this public," he said.

"My Greek paper's gone; I've got to stand that. But I can think of the good name of the Form and the school, if you do not. You've acted like a malicious fag, and you'll be treated like one!"

Bulkeley picked up his cane.

"Bend over!" he said.

"What's at?" Cardew gasped.

"Bend over!" said Bulkeley grimly.

"I'm going to give you six—like a fag!"

"You—you— I am in the Sixth;

I'm a prefect," Carthew choked. "You

—you—are you mad?"

"That or going to the Head!" said

Bulkeley icily. "Take your choice!"

Carthew read the determination in his face, and he quailed. Silent, with a white and furious face, he bent over a chair, like a fag, to receive a prefect's beating.

Lash, lash, lash!

Bulkeley, with a grim face, laid on the lashes with a heavy hand.

It was a fag's punishment, but the lashes were laid on harder than Bulkeley would have laid them on any fag.

Carthew gritted his teeth to keep back yells of pain.

Lash, lash, lash!

The whole six were administered, to the last stinging stroke. Then Bulkeley threw down the cane.

"Get out!" he said.

And Carthew, ghastly with pain and fury and humiliation, crawled from the study.

Rookwood never knew why Bulkeley of the Sixth failed, after all, to hand in his Greek paper for the Head's prize. His discovery was a secret, and what had followed the discovery was Carthew's secret—very carefully kept by the bully of the Sixth. Certainly Carthew could never have held up his head again at Rookwood had it transpired that he had had to "bend over" like a fag and tako "six" from an ash-plant.

THE END.

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