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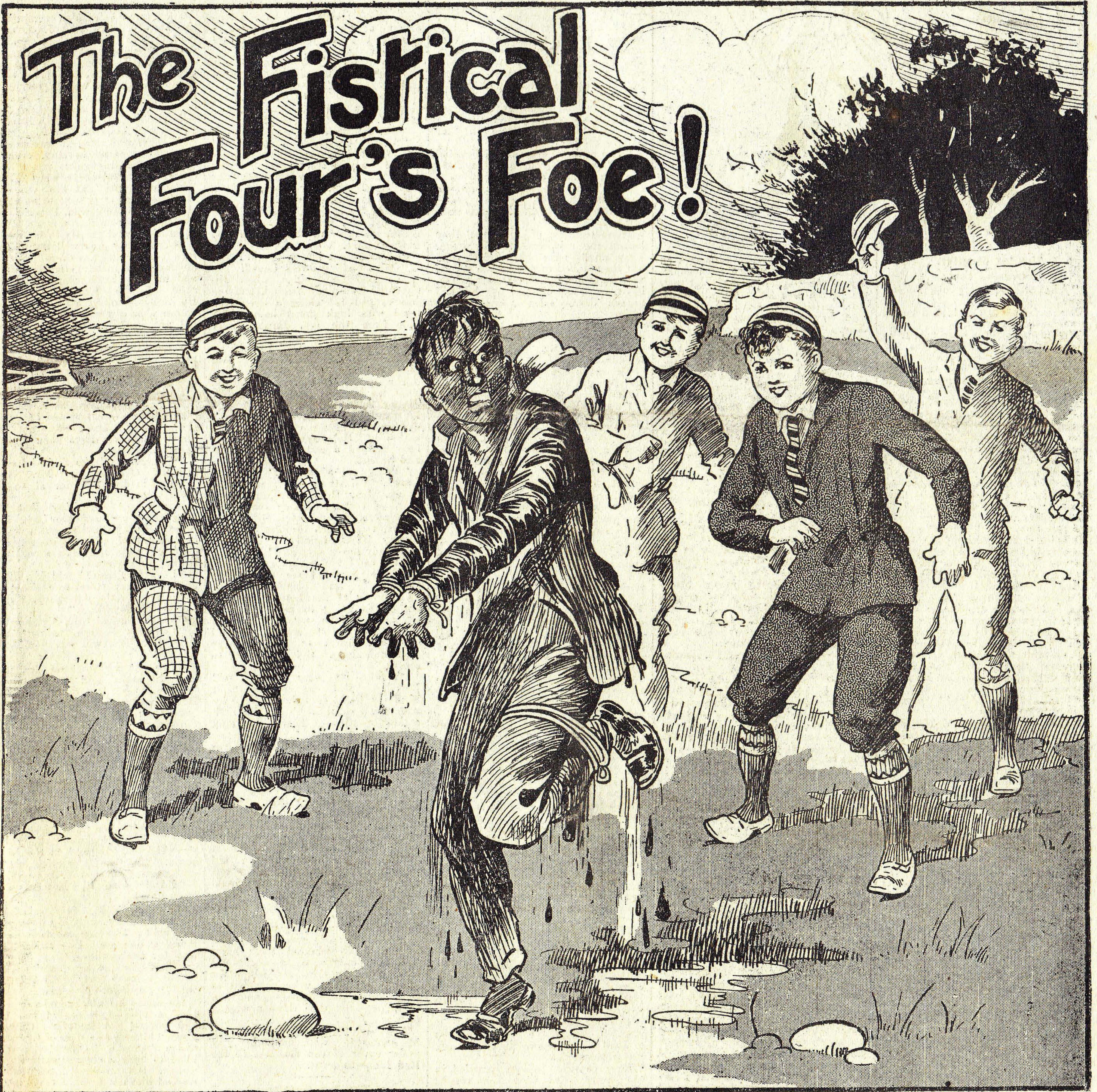
TWELVE PAGES!

TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending September 3rd, 1921.]



THE FISTICAL FOUR'S REVENGE!

Carthew, with his face blacked and one leg tied up, was indeed a humorous object. He was wild with rage, but he was only too glad to get away from the juniors, even on one leg. He departed in a series of hops, Jimmy Silver & Co. yelling with laughter as they watched him go. It dawned upon the Sixth-Former that it was not at all wise to carry out his bullying little ways even in the holidays!

A LONG COMPLETE YARN OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The Fistical Four's Foe!



The 1st Chapter.

Ordered Off!

"What are you young rotters doing here?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked round in astonishment.

They were many a long mile from Rookwood School, and it was the middle of August. So naturally they had not expected to hear the sharp, unpleasant voice of Carthew of the Sixth.

Four bicycles were stacked together, and four juniors were taking it easy in the deep grass on Plymptre Common. A shady old oak kept the blazing sun off the four. In the distance could be seen the red and thatched roofs of the Hampshire village. The Fistical Four of Rookwood had done their twenty miles that morning, and they had camped on the common and lunched luxuriously, and now they were "lazing," as they felt entitled to do on holiday. And the very last person they expected to see was Mark Carthew of the Sixth Form at Rookwood.

But there he was! Carthew came from the direction of a little inn on the border of the green common. Jimmy Silver & Co. had not seen him, but certainly he had seen them. The bully of Rookwood was scowling as he came up, and he addressed the Fistical Four in his most unpleasant tones as he stood staring down at them.

"Carthew, by Jove!" yawned Arthur Edward Lovell.

"And what are you doing here, Carthew?" asked Jimmy Silver, cheerily.

"Mind your own business."

Jimmy laughed.

"Same old Carthew—same old delightful manners," he remarked. "You asked us, you know; and I didn't say you ought to mind your own business—only thought it."

"I'm staying in Plymptre," said Carthew abruptly. "And I don't want a gang of fags hanging about." "We don't want a Sixth Form bully hanging about!" remarked Lovell.

"If you're on a cycling tour, you can get on your way," said Carthew.

"You understand?"

"Quite."

"When are you starting, then?"

"When we choose," said Jimmy Silver, coolly. "We hadn't decided really, whether to hang on here a bit. Now you've ordered us off, we'll decide—we hang on."

"What are you up to, that you don't want Rookwood fellows to see, Carthew?" chuckled Raby.

"You cheeky young rotter—!"

"No need to ask him that," said Jimmy Silver, drily. "There's a race-course a mile out of Plymptre."

"Oh, that's it!" said Lovell. "Carthew, dear old scout, what would the Head say if he knew how you spent your vac?"

Carthew gritted his teeth.

"Hallo, here's another giddy old acquaintance," chuckled Lovell.

The Fistical Four were sitting up

in the grass now, with wary eyes on Carthew, quite prepared for trouble. Across the common came a fat man with a red face and a glaring waistcoat, and a cigar stuck at an acute angle in a corner of his wide mouth. Jimmy Silver & Co. knew that gentleman by sight; they had often seen him hanging about the Bird-in-Hand, near Rookwood, in the term. It was Mr. Joseph Hook, bookmaker, tout, sharper, and several other things. And Jimmy Silver & Co. guessed at once that he was there with Carthew, which explained, on the spot, why the Sixth-Former did not want Rookwood fags hanging around Plymptre. Carthew did not want his peculiar way of spending the vacation talked of later at Rookwood.

Mr. Hook puffed and blew as he came along, evidently feeling the heat.

"Looking for you, old bean!" he said, as he came up. "Hallo!" He glanced at the juniors sitting in the grass, and then at Carthew. "Friends of yours, Master Carthew, eh?"

"A set of cheeky young blackguards," said Carthew, between his teeth. "I'm goin' to shift them."

Jimmy Silver & Co. rose to their feet. The trouble they were ready for was apparently coming.

"Are you clearing off?" shouted Carthew.

"Nix."

The bully of Rookwood made a furious stride towards the juniors. Jimmy Silver & Co. stood ready to receive him.

"Old on!" exclaimed Mr. Hook, and he caught Carthew by the arm.

"What's the good of a row?"

"I'm going—"

"More ways than one of killin' a cat," said Mr. Hook. "You come alonger me jest now." Perhaps Mr. Hook realised that the Fistical Four were quite equal to dealing with Carthew, with himself thrown in. "Don't 'ave a row with the young rascals! You come along."

Carthew paused. Certainly the Fistical Four looked rather a tough handful to tackle; and it was an occasion when discretion was the better part of valour.

"Oh, come on!" said Lovell, invitingly. "Awfully pleased to give you a jolly good hiding, Carthew—and Joey Hook too, if he likes."

Carthew gritted his teeth, but he turned away without replying, and walked off with Mr. Hook, the latter speaking to him in a low tone as they went. Jimmy Silver & Co. smiled at one another. It had been a complete back-down on the part of their old enemy of Rookwood, and the Fistical Four felt victorious. Lovell threw himself into the grass again and chuckled.

"Dear old Carthew bit off more than he could chew, as usual!" he remarked. "We're staying on, what?"

"You bet!"

That question was quite settled. It was Carthew of the Sixth, in fact, who had settled it.

The 2nd Chapter.

Rough on the Rookwooders!

A tin kettle filled from a water-bottle, bubbled and sang on the spirit-stove. Lovell sorted the tin cups out of the ruck-sack. Raby sliced a loaf, and Jimmy Silver opened the salmon-tin, while Newcome peeled the hard-boiled eggs. The Fistical Four had enjoyed their rest, and now they were getting tea, in the shade of the oak on the common. It was a couple of hours since they had seen Carthew, and they had almost forgotten him. Tea was of more importance to four hungry cyclists.

"The natives seem to be interested in us," smiled Lovell, with a nod towards a bunch of men who were coming across the wide common towards the oak.

Jimmy Silver glanced at the newcomers.

There were six of them, and they looked the roughest of the rough. They might have been stablemen, but they looked more like the roughs who hang about racecourses, and relieve race-goers of their watches and purses. Jimmy's brows contracted a little.

"Blessed if I like the look of that gang!" he said. "Keep your eyes open, you fellows. This looks like trouble."

"They won't worry us," said Lovell.

"They're coming from the inn, yonder," said Jimmy; "and that's the way Carthew went with Hook."

"My hat! Do you think—"

"I think they look like the kind of blackguards that Joey Hook consorts with. Keep your eyes open."

The six roughs came up to the cyclists' camp, and the Fistical Four drew together. Now that they were close at hand, there was no doubt that the racing roughs meant trouble. Their looks showed as much.

"These are the blokes," said one, a burly fellow with a broken nose, apparently the leader of the gang. "Now, young fellers, you're not wanted 'ere! You shift! Got that?" "Mind your own business," snapped Jimmy Silver. "We're staying here as long as we like."

The broken-nosed man grinned, and took a flying-kick at the spirit-stove and kettle.

Crash! Stove and kettle flew through the air together.

"You cheeky rotter!" roared Lovell.

"Nuff of that!" said the broken-nosed gentleman. "You shift!"

"We're not going to shift!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, savagely.

"Then we'll jolly soon shift yer."

There was a rush of the roughs. Jimmy Silver & Co. were hopelessly outnumbered and outweighed; but they were not the kind of fellows to be "shifted" without a struggle.

They stood together and hit out. Jimmy landed a terrific drive on the broken nose, which made it feel as if it had been broken a second time, and its owner rolled in the grass, yelling. Lovell got in a hefty blow before he was swept away by the rush.

The broken-nosed man leapt up, swearing furiously.

"Give 'em beans!" he roared.

"Buck up!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four resisted desperately.

But they had simply no chance against the odds.

The four juniors were knocked right and left, though the roughs received a good many severe knocks during the proceedings.

Four panting juniors sprawled in the grass, and then the roughs brought their boots into play.

Jimmy Silver & Co. scrambled out of reach. They were defeated, and

there was no use in blinking at that undoubted fact.

The broken-nosed man stamped methodically on the stove, the kettle, the salmon-tin, and everything else loose about the camp. Jimmy Silver & Co. had to look on, furious but helpless, panting for breath. They collared their bicycles, as the broken-nosed man shouted to his grinning followers: "Smash up the jiggers!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. jumped on their machines, and pedalled away over the common, bumping and jolting in the grass.

A roar of raucous laughter followed them.

"You come back 'ere and you'll get some more!" yelled the broken-nosed man. "You ain't wanted 'ere."

"Arter 'em!" yelled another of the gang.

Jimmy Silver & Co. rode as hard as they could over the rough ground. Fortunately, they soon turned into a path, where riding was easier. Three or four of the roughs had rushed in pursuit, but the juniors easily out-distanced them now.

They came off the common into the high road, leaving the victorious roughs in possession of their camp—and engaged in smashing up all the things that had not been smashed already.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lovell.

"There's Carthew!" gasped Raby.

The cyclists passed the red-roofed inn, which had the sign of the Red Lion. At an upper window Carthew was standing, looking out, with a derisive grin on his face.

Jimmy Silver freed one hand as he rode by, and shook his fist at the grinning face of the Rookwood Sixth-Former.

Carthew burst into a laugh.

"Come on!" growled Lovell.

The Red Lion and Carthew disappeared from sight behind, and the juniors pedalled along a deep lane lined with high green hedges. A mile from the inn, Jimmy Silver slowed down.

"Get off, you chaps!" he said.

"They're not after us!" said Newcome, looking back.

The juniors dismounted and leaned their machines against the hedge. Jimmy Silver dabbed his nose with his handkerchief—Lovell caressed an eye round which a purple ring was gathering. Raby and Newcome ruefully rubbed a collection of bumps and bruises.

"What an afternoon!" groaned Lovell. "Carthew wins, after all! It was Joey Hook put him up to that, of course! Fancy setting a gang of roughs on to us! Ow!"

"We've all been through it," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "But the end study never says die!"

"We can't tackle that crowd—"

"Quite so; but we can tackle Carthew," said Jimmy Silver.

"Carthew's at the bottom of this; and we're going to make Carthew sit up and take notice. The cad thinks we've been scared off, and he won't expect to see us near Plymptre again. But he's going to see us."

"That's all very well," said Lovell. "But we simply can't handle a gang of roughs, Jimmy—and they'd maul us no end for half-a-quad a time. There's nothing doing, old chap!"

"Lots!" answered Jimmy Silver coolly. "We're not beaten. We've lost the first round, that's all. Carthew thinks we've cleared off; and he can think so—all the better. But we're not going; we shall camp in one of these fields, and deal with Carthew when he hasn't a gang of roughs to help him."

"Ow! My eye!"

"Never mind your eye now, old chap. Let's look for a camp—out of sight—in case those rotters should come this way!"

The Co. were still feeling dubious; but "Uncle James" of Rookwood had his way, as he generally did. And as the sun was setting, the Fistical Four wheeled their bikes into a footpath in a wood, and camped among the trees—where for some time they were occupied in attending to their damages, and then to supper—and then came a council of war.

And then Jimmy Silver, leaving his chums in camp, made his way under cover of the darkness to the Red Lion—to scout.

The 3rd Chapter.

Carthew's Catch!

"Whisky?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And soda?"

"Not too much soda!" said Mark Carthew, with an air that made Mr. Joseph Hook smile in his sleeve.

Carthew's idea was that he was

very much a man of the world on his present stunt; but probably Mr. Hook's idea of him was quite a different one. But Mr. Hook kept that to himself.

He was doing quite well out of his young friend, and he was all civility and respect and admiration—at least, so long as Mark Carthew's holiday funds should last. After that it was likely that Mr. Hook would grow suddenly tired of his sportive young friend's company, having other fish to fry.

The night was hot and close. The Red Lion was closed. It was half-past ten, but Carthew was not thinking of bed. Now that he was on his own in the vacation, he seldom went to bed before twelve. His "people" supposed that he was passing a week or two with Knowles of the Rookwood Sixth, and would no doubt have been considerably surprised if they could have seen him at that moment.

There was a wooden veranda at the back of the Red Lion, overlooking the gardens; and on the veranda Carthew sat with his friend Joseph Hook. There was a swinging lamp overhead, and it shone on a bottle and glasses and syphon on a little table, and on the glimmering cards. Carthew was enjoying himself—in his own way. He had come down to Plymptre with Mr. Hook to be near the races—it was as near as Carthew cared to stay, even in the vac. The racecourse was a short drive away, and there were several "sporting gents" at the inn, and Carthew lived at present in an atmosphere of betting and boozing and blackguardism—which was an atmosphere he found greatly to his liking.

But Carthew was well aware that such proceedings, even in the holidays, required circumspection; and he had been alarmed at the sight of the Fourth-Formers of Rookwood camping on the common within view of the inn windows. He did not want it related at Rookwood that he had been frequenting the races in company with a well-known sharper, and smoking and betting with "sporting" men at a disreputable inn.

He dealt out the cards. The two rascals were playing poker, and for high stakes. Carthew was in funds; if he hadn't been, certainly Mr. Hook would not have been playing poker with him.

"You have all the dashed luck!" growled Carthew, as Mr. Hook scooped in the pot for about the tenth time.

It was not surprising that Mr. Hook had most of the luck, considering that he had an extra supply of aces and kings in his sleeve. But Carthew was not aware of that trifling circumstance.

"Luck will turn!" said Mr. Hook affably. "You stand to make a bit to-morrow on the one-thirty, Master Carthew. Your deal."

Carthew pushed back his chair. "I've had enough poker! You think Blue Bell will win to-morrow, Hook?"

"I've got my shirt on 'im, in a way of speakin'," said Mr. Hook. "If he don't win, I'm down and out! But I reckon he will. 'Ow much have you put on 'im, Master Carthew?"

"Ten pounds, at two to one."

"I reckon you'll bag twenty of the best," said Mr. Hook. "Who's your man?"

"The man you introduced me to—Stackey."

"He's a good man—he pays," said Mr. Hook. "Pr'aps you'd better give the whisky a miss, Master Carthew." The Rookwood bully had stretched out his hand to the bottle again. "You've 'ad enough, sir."

Carthew gave a scoffing laugh. "I know when I've had enough!" he snapped.

"Oh, all right, sir!" said Mr. Hook amicably. "Elp yourself! You ain't got to turn out early in the morning like me. I've ordered the trap for twelve-thirty."

"That's lots of time, and we can get some lunch first," said Carthew, squirting soda into his glass.

He sipped his whisky-and-soda, and took a fresh cigar out of his case. But he did not light it. Carthew fancied himself as a man of the world and a "sporting" character, and he liked to have a cigar sticking in his mouth. But an inward premonition warned him not to light that cigar.

There was a sudden growl of a voice in the dusky garden.

"Hallo! What are you doing here?"

Carthew and Mr. Hook both looked down from the veranda. A stableman came into the radius of lamp-light, holding somebody by the collar. That somebody was struggling.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

Carthew sprang to his feet. "Silver!" he shouted. "Found 'im hanging about, sir," said the stableman, looking up. "Nearly ran into him in the dark." "That young scallywag!" ejaculated Mr. Hook. "I thought he had cleared."

Carthew's eyes glittered. "Bring him up here, Dick," he said. "Hook, get your stick, and I'll give him a larruping."

"Certainly." Joseph Hook grinned and went into a room that opened on the veranda. The stableman jerked the wriggling junior up the wooden steps, and landed him before Carthew.

Jimmy Silver breathed hard. "You young rotter!" said Carthew between his teeth. "What were you doing here?"

Jimmy met his eyes coolly. "Scouting!" he answered. "Spying, you mean!" said Carthew savagely.

"Scouting, you cad!" answered Jimmy.

"What for?"

"Find out!"

"I'll make you sorry you came back!" said Carthew grimly. "Hold him tight, Dick!"

Mr. Hook appeared in the doorway with a heavy malacca cane in his hand, and came towards Carthew.

Jimmy set his teeth. His luck had failed him, and he had fallen into the hands of the enemy; and Carthew's look showed how little mercy he had to expect. And, sturdy as he was, the Rookwood junior was an infant in the muscular grasp of the big stableman.

"Are you are!" grinned Mr. Hook, handing Carthew the malacca.

Carthew's grip closed upon it, and he showed his teeth in a savage grin. "Now he's going through it!" he muttered.

Jimmy Silver's eyes fell on the soda siphon on the table close to him. His collar was in the strong grasp of the stableman, and he could not tear himself loose. But his brain acted quickly. He made a sudden grasp at the siphon.

Squizzzzzzz! The soda shot in a blinding stream over his shoulder fairly into the face of Dick, the stableman.

"Grooooooogh!" The man staggered back, spluttering and coughing, and released his grasp on the junior, blinded and choked by the sudden stream of soda-water in his face.

Carthew sprang forward, and Jimmy turned the nozzle on him instantly.

Squizzzzzz! "Yurrgggghh!" Carthew jumped back, spluttering, as he caught the stream with his face. Jimmy made a bound to the steps.

"You young rip!" gasped Mr. Hook, springing after the junior.

Jimmy turned the siphon on him, but only a squeak answered as he pressed the lever; it was empty. He hurled it at Mr. Hook's fat legs, and the bookmaker tumbled over, with a howl.

In a flash Jimmy Silver had leaped down the wooden steps, and vanished into the darkness of the garden.

"Gurrrgh! Gug-gug!" spluttered Carthew, gouging at his eyes and nose. "After him! Collar him! Groooooogh!"

"Ow-ow-wow!" gasped Mr. Hook, sitting up dazedly. "Oh, my eye! Ow! The young limb! Wow!" "After him!" yelled Carthew furiously.

There was a rush down the steps, but it was too late. Jimmy Silver was already over the garden fence, and speeding away. Carthew and Mr. Hook were still savagely searching for him, when Jimmy Silver, panting and breathless, rejoined his chums at the camp in the wood.

The 4th Chapter. Caught in a Trap!

"Here he is!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Any news, Jimmy?" asked Raby and Newcome together.

Jimmy Silver sat down on a projecting root, and gasped for breath.

"Had to run for it?" asked Lovell.

"Yes!" gasped Jimmy.

"Lot of good your going on a scout!" remarked Lovell, with a shake of the head. "Better have let me go."

"Fathead!"

"Look here, Jimmy—"

"What's happened?" asked Raby.

Jimmy Silver explained, rather breathlessly.

"Nothing doing!" said Lovell.

"You were going to find out Carthew's room, so that we could raid him and give him a lesson. Instead of that, you let them collar you."

"I couldn't help that brute blundering on me in the dark—"

"Of course you couldn't," agreed Lovell, with a nod. "That's why you should have let me go. I could have helped it, I think."

"Ass!"

"Well, it's all up, anyhow!" said Raby. "We shall have to let Carthew off. We'll take it out of him next term at Rookwood somehow."

"We're not letting him off," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I've found out something. He was jawing with that blackguard Hook on the veranda. They're going to the races to-morrow."

"Pair of rotters!" grunted Lovell. "They're leaving at twelve-thirty in a trap!" added Jimmy.

"What about that?"

"Lots! We know the way from Plymptre to the race-ground. It's a long lane, with trees along it," said Jimmy. "I fancy that four chaps about our size are going to be there—"

"At the races?" ejaculated Lovell. "No, ass—in the lane! We shall meet those two rotters on their way to the races, and they won't have a gang of roughs with them," said Jimmy Silver. "There'll be those two in the trap, and we can stop the trap—"

"Phew!" "We had a thumping good licking to-day," said Jimmy, rubbing his nose. "Carthew is going to have one to-morrow, and a little over. Catch on?"

Lovell grinned. "It might work!" he said.

which ran directly from Plymptre Common towards the race-ground, a mile away.

"Carthew starts in half an hour!" remarked Jimmy Silver. "Lots of time."

The juniors sat on a grassy bank and ate their cold lunch. Then they prepared for action.

A good many vehicles passed along the lane, bound for the races. Jimmy Silver & Co., sitting on the grassy bank, were partly screened from the road by clumps of blooming gorse and broom; but they had a clear view of the road, and they watched it carefully in the direction of Plymptre. At the spot Jimmy Silver had selected for the ambush the road rose on a hillside, and vehicles coming up from Plymptre had to slow down, most of the horses walking slowly up the hill. Traps and waggonettes and farmers' carts passed, and the chums of Rookwood still watched.

Jimmy Silver uttered a sudden exclamation at last.

"Here they come!" The juniors peered through the gorse.

A good distance away as yet, a trap appeared in sight. Mr. Joseph Hook was driving, and he was walking the horse up the hill.

Mark Carthew sat beside him in the trap, with a cigarette between his lips.

"Clear for action!" grinned Lovell.

"Careful, now," said Jimmy Silver. "You've got to collar the horse's head, Lovell, and hold on like grim death. We three are going to rush

"You young demons!" yelled Carthew.

He rolled over in the trap, struggling frantically with the two juniors.

Mr. Hook was standing up, gasping and spluttering, and cutting at Raby with his whip. But Raby's stick gave good returns, and did quite as much execution as the whip. The horse, startled by the din, plunged and backed, and Lovell had plenty to do to hold it from bolting. The plunging of the trap, and a jab from Raby, upset Mr. Hook's balance, and he fell back into the trap on the struggling trio there.

"Yooooop!"

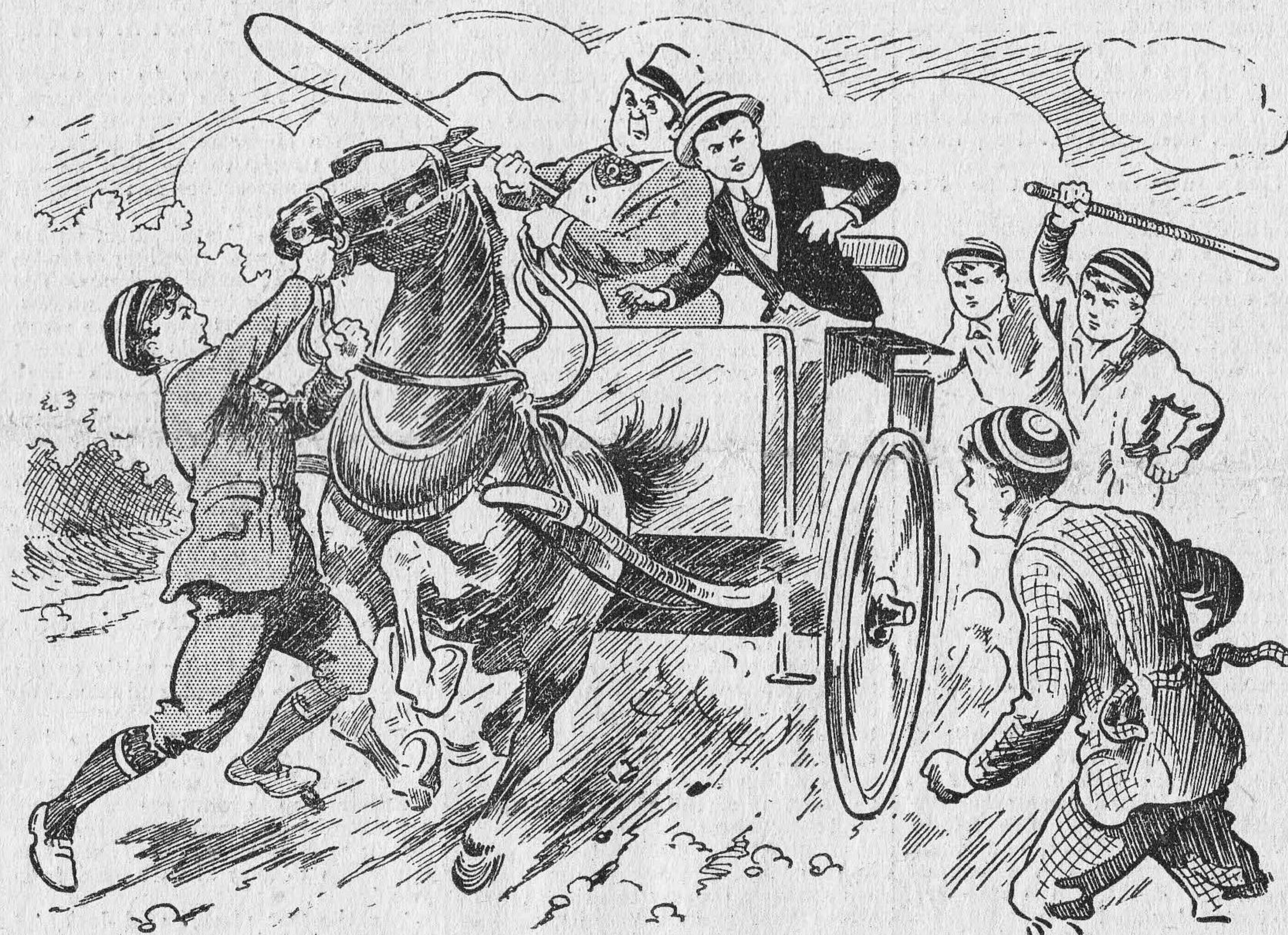
"Help!" yelled Carthew.

Lovell backed the trap to the grass by the road, as a crowded waggonette came by. The crowd in the waggonette yelled and cheered, evidently under the impression that the trap contained a gang of racing rowdies who had fallen out among themselves.

Raby whipped round and opened the tail-board, and the struggling heap of combatants bumped out on the grass. Jimmy Silver and Newcome rolled on Carthew and pinned him down. Lovell threw the loose reins over a low branch, to tether the horse, and he was now able to join in the scrap. Raby and Mr. Hook were struggling together, and the fat bookmaker was getting the better of it, till Lovell came to the rescue. Arthur Edward gripped the fat man by the back of the collar with both hands, and dragged him over.

"Into the ditch!" he gasped.

"You bet!" panted Raby.



CAUGHT IN A TRAP!

Lovell leaped to the horse's head and held the animal. "Why—what—" ejaculated Carthew. "Leggo that 'orse!" roared Mr. Hook. Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome rushed the trap. They were determined to have their revenge on the Sixth-Former.

"It will work!" said Jimmy Silver decidedly. "So, you see, my scouting has turned up trumps, after all!"

"It's jolly late!" Jimmy Silver rose and yawned. "Let's get to sleep."

Camping out in the wood was pleasant enough on that hot night. The Fistical Four unrolled their ground-sheets, and slept peacefully enough under the trees, with the moon peeping through the foliage overhead.

The chums of Rookwood were up with the lark in the morning. In the depths of the wood was a rivulet, at which they bathed, and then they quitted their camp, and cycled away in search of breakfast.

They were very careful not to go near Plymptre. Carthew certainly was not likely to suspect the scheme they had in mind, but it was prudent to give his quarters a wide berth until it was time to act; and the chums had some shopping to do that morning, too, to replace the articles the roughs had smashed the previous day.

At a village five or six miles distant they breakfasted and shopped, and purchased supplies for a cold lunch. It was towards noon that they turned again in the direction of Plymptre.

The bicycles were concealed at a little distance from the road, in a coppice, and the chums of Rookwood approached the lane on foot. Twelve o'clock rang out from somewhere in the distance as they entered the lane,

the trap, and I fancy we'll have 'em out fast enough."

"What-ho!"

The trap came slowly on.

Mr. Hook, and his young "sporting" friend, evidently hadn't the faintest suspicion of danger ahead. They were chatting as the trap came slowly up the hill, doubtless discussing the chances of Blue Bell in the one-thirty! The trap was nearly abreast of the Rookwooders when Jimmy Silver gave the signal.

"Go it!"

With a sudden rush the Fistical Four came out into the road.

Lovell leaped to the horse's head, and held the animal. The trap stopped.

"Why—what—" ejaculated Carthew.

"Leggo that 'orse!" roared Mr. Hook, raising his whip.

Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome rushed the trap. Mr. Hook slashed at Raby, who was clambering on the step, and Raby yelled. But he drove his stick at Mr. Hook in return, and the end of the stick jammed on Mr. Hook's well-filled waistcoat. There was a gasp of anguish from the fat gentleman. Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver and Newcome swarmed over the back of the trap before the astonished Carthew quite knew what was happening. He whirled round on them, and they grasped him together.

"Out with him!" panted Jimmy.

"Ow! Oh! Oooooogh!" spluttered Mr. Hook, as he was rolled over helplessly by the two juniors.

Splash! There was a foot of water in the rather deep ditch, and plenty of mud, and a good allowance of stinging-nettles. Mr. Hook rolled down the slope and landed in mud and water and nettles. He sat up blindly, squelching and yelling.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Lovell breathlessly.

He rushed to help Jimmy Silver. Carthew was down, but he was not out, and he was still giving trouble. But as Raby and Lovell collared him, he was quite overpowered. Each ankle and each wrist was grasped, and then Carthew was helpless.

"Bring him along!" panted Jimmy Silver.

"All together! Ha, ha, ha!"

By his ankles and wrists Carthew was yanked bodily along. The four juniors plunged through the ditch with him—with shocking results to their cycling stockings and Norfolk bags. But Carthew, who was being dragged, sustained still more shocking results. When he was yanked up the farther side of the ditch, he was smothered.

The juniors plunged through a gap in the hedge with their prisoner.

"Groogh! Help! Hook, help!" raved Carthew.

But Mr. Hook, struggling painfully and breathlessly out of mud and

stinging-nettles, was not in a condition to help his young friend. Jimmy Silver jerked a whipcord out of his pocket, looped it round Carthew's wrists, and tied them together. Then another cord was knotted round his ankles, and Carthew was left gasping helplessly in the grass.

The juniors gathered round the captured bully of the Sixth.

Carthew glared at them with helpless rage.

"You—you young fiends!" he stutted. "Let me go at once! I—I—I'll—"

Carthew's feet were loosened so that he could walk, and the Fistical Four led him away.

They marched him, wriggling and resisting and swearing, across a field to the coppice where the bicycles had been left.

There they halted.

"You—you—" gasped Carthew. "What are you going to do, you little fiends? I'll smash you for this! I'll—"

"You'll see what we're going to do, dear boy," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "You set a gang of roughs on us yesterday, and wallopped us and smashed up our pots and pans. Now you're going to pay for it."

"Yes, rather!" grinned Lovell. Jimmy Silver took out a tin from his pocket, and Carthew watched him apprehensively. "Best blacking" was inscribed on the tin.

"I shopped this, this morning, specially for you, old top!" said Jimmy.

"If—if you dare—"

"Better keep your mouth shut, unless you like the taste of blacking in—"

"I—I—I'll— Grooooooogh!"

"I warned you!" said Jimmy calmly, as Carthew spluttered out blacking.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a rag and blacking, Jimmy proceeded to adorn Carthew.

"You see, as you're such a giddy blackguard, you ought to go around in your true colours!" explained Jimmy Silver.

"Grooogh!"

In a few minutes Mark Carthew had been transformed into an excellent imitation of a native of the Congo. The remnant of the blacking was carefully mixed into his hair, and the tin was slipped down his back. Then his left leg was bent upward at the knee and tied in that position.

"There!" said Jimmy Silver. "I think that will do! Now if you're willing to apologise for cheeking the Fourth, Carthew, you can hop it."

"I—I—"

"Do you apologise?"

"I—I'll smash you—"

"Give his nose a tweak, Lovell, and—"

"Yarooooogh!"

"Another—"

"Yooooowooooop! I—I apologise!" shrieked Carthew.

"Good! Now you can hop it!"

"I—I can't walk like this; I—"

"Of course you can't," agreed Jimmy Silver. "But you can hop!"

"Hop it, dear boy! Start him with your boot, Lovell."

"Ow, yow!"

Carthew hopped it.

He was only too glad to get away, even on one leg. In a series of hops he departed, the Fistical Four yelling with laughter as they watched him go. Carthew vanished from sight—still hopping.

"Oh dear!" gasped Jimmy Silver, wiping his eyes. "I really think we're even with Carthew now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I think we'd better clear!" grinned Lovell.

"Not a bad idea!" agreed Jimmy Silver.

And the Fistical Four of Rookwood wheeled out their bicycles and cleared.

Carthew, with his black face, and hopping on one leg, caused great merriment among the racegoers on the road when he hopped into public view. It was quite some time before he found a Good Samaritan to let him loose; and then he hurried back to the Red Lion for a much-needed bath.

There Mr. Hook joined him later, with the pleasant news that Blue Bell had come in last in the one-thirty. Evidently it was not Carthew's lucky day. Whether the blackguard of Rookwood sought for them, Jimmy Silver & Co. never knew. That afternoon they were in the next county, continuing their cheery cycling tour in the best of spirits.

THE END.

("A Visit to Trimble Hall" is the title of the long, complete Rookwood School tale appearing in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Don't forget that Jimmy Silver & Co. appear also each week in the "Popular" out on Friday.)