

The Prefect's Guests!



A fine long complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Rollicking chums of Rookwood.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fag Wanted!

FAG!" Carthew of the Sixth was lounging at the corner of the passage, with his hands in his pockets. He called "Fag!" as Jimmy Silver & Co. came down the staircase.

A dozen of the Third and the Fourth had passed Carthew, and he had not called to them. Evidently he had been waiting for the Fistical Four.

The four juniors looked at one another, but they did not look at Carthew. They went on.

"Fag!" called the Sixth-Former again. "You'll do, Silver!"

Jimmy Silver compressed his lips.

The chums of the Fourth were going down to football practice, and Jimmy Silver, as junior captain of Rookwood, was wanted on the scene. It was particularly exasperating to be called upon to fag just then; and Jimmy knew, just as well as if the bully of the Sixth had told him, that Carthew was calling on his services just because it was particularly exasperating.

"I think you hear me, Silver!" said Carthew, coming forward with an agreeable smile upon his face.

"Bother you!" was Jimmy's reply.

"What!"

"Look here, I'm just going down to the footer!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "You can get another fag, Carthew."

Carthew shook his head.

"A prefect must be just!" he said. "I can't allow you to shirk and put it on somebody else, Silver."

"Look here," broke out Arthur Edward Lovell, "you can go and eat coke, Carthew! Jimmy's wanted on Little Side."

"Cut for it, and chance it!" whispered Raby.

The Fistical Four made a rush for the doorway.

Carthew was shoved aside, and the juniors fled. But the Sixth-Former was rushing after them in a moment, and his grasp closed on Jimmy Silver's collar. Lovell and Raby and Newcome dodged out into the quadrangle, but the captain of the Fourth was a prisoner.

"Leggo!" roared Jimmy.

"Come with me, you cheeky young rotter! Ah!"

Jimmy Silver jerked his collar away.

Carthew was between him and the doorway now, and Jimmy dodged up the passage. "Stop!" roared Carthew.

Jimmy stopped—not because Carthew shouted, but because Mr. Bootles, the

master of the Fourth, suddenly loomed up before him in the corridor.

Mr. Bootles blinked at him over his glasses.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. "What—what—what is the matter?"

"I have just asked Silver to fag for me, sir," said Carthew smoothly. "He was bolting instead."

Mr. Bootles frowned at the junior.

"That is a highly improper proceeding on your part, Silver!" he said, with severity.

Jimmy breathed hard.

"I'm wanted at the footer, sir," he answered.

"Oh, if it is for a football match, Carthew will excuse you!" said Mr. Bootles. "It is understood, Carthew, that on the occasion of a match, a player cannot be called away for fagging duties."

"It's not a match, sir!" said Carthew.

"But Silver says—"

"It's football practice, sir," explained Jimmy.

"Oh, in that case there is no reason why you should not do as a prefect requires you, Silver. You will obey Carthew."

"But, sir—"

"You hear me, Silver!" said Mr. Bootles; and he rustled on.

Jimmy Silver clenched his hands.

It was rather a risky proceeding to disobey a prefect of the Sixth; but it was impossible to disobey a Form master.

"Are you coming?" asked Carthew, with a grin.

"I'm coming!" said Jimmy shortly.

"Get a move on, then!"

Carthew strode away to his study, and Jimmy Silver followed him, with a sombre brow.

Even football practice could have been put off cheerfully to fag for a popular senior like Bulkeley or Neville; but with Carthew it was quite different. Jimmy more than suspected that Carthew had lain in wait for him, not because he wanted him specially, but on account of the old grudge between them. A prefect had many ways of making his dislike felt by a junior, and this was one of them.

But there was no help for it, and Jimmy did his best to live up to his own maxim, and "keep smiling."

Carthew, at least, found it easy to smile. He was feeling very satisfied.

Jimmy followed him into his study.

"What do you want?" inquired the junior.

"Don't scowl at me!" said Carthew.

"I'm not scowling!"

"You are!"

Jimmy suppressed a retort.

Carthew's hand was on a cane, and it was

pretty clear that he only wanted an excuse to use it.

"What I want in a fag," pursued Carthew, "is obedience! Understand that!"

"Oh, rats!" broke out Jimmy.

"What!"

"Rats!" said Jimmy recklessly. "You don't even want a fag this afternoon. You're only trying to muck up my half-holiday because you're a cad!"

Carthew picked up the cane.

"Is that the way to talk to a prefect?" he asked.

"Yes—your sort of prefect!"

"Hold out your hand!"

Jimmy Silver put his hands behind him.

Carthew came closer to him, with a grip on the cane and a glitter in his eyes.

"Will you hold out your hand, Silver, or shall I march you in to the Head?" he asked.

Again there was a struggle in Jimmy Silver's mind; but he had put himself in the wrong in his exasperation. He knew what the Head would think of a junior who called a prefect a cad for fagging him; and the Head assuredly would never even suspect that so great a person as a Sixth Form prefect was capable of owing grudges to a junior, and wreaking them in an underhand manner.

Jimmy's hand came out at last reluctantly.

Swish!

"Now the other hand!"

Swish!

"That's better!" said Carthew. "You're the cheekiest fag in the Lower School at Rookwood, Silver; but we'll break you in the long run. Got anything more to say?"

Jimmy Silver had a great deal more to say, most of it personal and emphatic; but he did not say it.

"Nothing more?" smiled Carthew. "Good! Now I'll tell you what I want you to do."

And the hapless Fourth-Former waited to hear what his master wanted him to do.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Fagging for Carthew.

CARTHEW of the Sixth picked up a sheet of paper from the table, and glanced over it, then he handed it to Jimmy Silver.

"Read that!"

Jimmy read it.

It was evidently an invitation to tea for somebody. It ran:

"M. CARTHEW will be glad of the company of — to tea in his study at five o'clock."

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The blank was left for the name of the guest to be filled in.

"I want six of those done," said Carthew. "You'll take that paper to Mr. Mooney's study, and give him my compliments, and ask him to allow you to use his typewriter on my account. Understand?"

"Yes."

"Type six of those invites, and put in the names. Here's a list of the names."

Jimmy Silver took the list. It contained the names of Knowles, Frampton, Catesby, of the Sixth, and Lumsden, Hansom, and Talboys, of the Fifth.

Evidently Carthew was giving a spread in his study upon a grand scale.

Jimmy grinned a little.

It was usual enough for masters, on occasion of asking a number of fellows to tea, to borrow Mr. Mooney's typewriter, and type out the invitations, to save time. It was extremely unusual for anybody but a master to do anything of the kind.

Carthew was "putting on side," so to speak, in adopting that little custom.

He was standing an unusual spread, and he was going to do it in unusual style.

Moreover, his little scheme would keep Jimmy Silver busy for some time, and spoil his half-holiday, in repayment for many instances of "cheek" to lofty members of the Sixth Form.

It was really very deep of Carthew.

"Anything else?" asked Jimmy Silver, suppressing his feelings.

"Lots!" answered Carthew cheerfully. "When you've typed out the invitations, put them in these envelopes, and take them round to the chaps named. Mind you deliver them all. And mind you type them well, without any mistakes. I happen to know that you can use the typer. You've done your footer reports and things on it, by Mr. Mooney's permission. That's why I've selected you to do this, of course!"

"Rot!"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, is there anything else?"

Jimmy's palms were smarting, and he did not want any more. He knew why Carthew had selected him for duty. But it was useless to argue; he was in for it.

"Plenty more," said Carthew coolly. "After you've delivered the notes, come back here."

"What for?"

"To fag!" answered Carthew agreeably. "I'm having a little party, and the study's got to be got ready."

"Look here——" began Jimmy hotly.

"Are you going to argue again?" asked Carthew, picking up his cane.

Jimmy suppressed his feelings once more. "I shall miss all the footer this afternoon, at this rate," he said.

"Awfully sorry—quite grieved, in fact," said Carthew, smiling. "I'm afraid it can't be helped though. Off with you!"

Jimmy Silver left the Sixth-Former's study with feelings that were almost too deep for words.

He came down the passage with a black brow.

Lovell & Co. met him at the corner, and Mornington and Erroll and several other juniors were with them.

"Finished already?" asked Lovell.

Jimmy snook his head.

"Only just beginning," he answered.

"What's on then?" asked Raby.

Jimmy showed the papers he carried.

"The silly ass!" exclaimed Lovell. "What does he want his silly invites typed for, like Bootles or Mooney?"

"By gad!" said Mornington. "It looks to me like a trick to muck up Jimmy's afternoon!"

"That's what it is," said Jimmy Silver.

"Why not hook it?" said Lovell.

Jimmy made a wry face.

"I've been caned once," he said. "I don't want another dose from the Head or Mr. Bootles. Can't be helped."

"It's rotten!" said Erroll.

"All in the day's work," said Jimmy Silver, as philosophically as he could. "You chaps had better get off to the footer. You don't want to lose the light."

"Any other fellow could do that for Carthew, if he really wants it done!" exclaimed Lovell. "It's just mean!"

"Caddish!" growled Newcome.

"It would serve him right——" began Mornington.

"Anything would serve him right!"

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granted Jimmy Silver. "But what are you thinking of, Morny?"

"You've got to type the names of the invited chaps, and take the invitations to them."

"That's it!"

"Well, I know what I'd do in your place," said Mornington.

"Well, what?"

"I'd put in the wrong names, and deliver them to the wrong persons!" grinned Mornington. "It would be rather a lark on Carthew."

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"My hat! What a wheeze!" he exclaimed.

"It would mean a licking afterwards," remarked Erroll.

Jimmy set his lips.

"It would mean that anyway, most likely," he said. "I've been licked once, and Carthew will find an excuse to give me some more. Besides, as he's always down on me, it's not much good trying to keep the peace. I'm blessed if I don't do as Morny suggests!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver—feeling much more cheerful now—made his way to Mr. Mooney's study, while his grinning chums started for the football-ground.

Jimmy tapped discreetly at the door of the Shell master's room.

"Come in!" called Mr. Mooney.

The captain of the Fourth entered.

Mr. Mooney was seated by his study fire, reading, and he glanced up as the junior presented himself.

"Well, Silver?"

"Carthew sends his compliments, sir, and would you allow me to type some notes for him?" said Jimmy Silver primly.

"Certainly!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Mooney returned to his volume, and Jimmy stepped to the desk where the typewriter stood.

He removed the cover, and sat down to the machine.

Carthew had given him a number of little cards to type the invitations upon, and Jimmy slid the first into the machine. He began to type, and paused to reflect.

Knowles was the first name on the list Carthew had given him; but Jimmy Silver had no intention of using that list. His mind was quite made up on that point.

Jimmy grinned as he thought of a name for the first invitation.

Mr. Mooney, reading his volume with interest, heard the click of the typewriter without heeding it. The master of the Shell would have been very much astonished if he had known that Jimmy was typing an invitation from Carthew of the Sixth to Mack, the school porter. Fortunately, he did not know.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Invitations.

"MR. CARTEW will be glad of the company of J. Mack to tea in his study at 4.15 o'clock."

So ran the first invitation card. Jimmy Silver surveyed it when he took it from the machine, and suppressed a chortle. There was no doubt that old Mack, crusty as he was, would be pleased and honoured by an invitation to tea from a prefect in the Sixth Form. It would be quite an honour for old Mack, and he was sure to put on a clean collar and brush his coat, and adopt his sweetest smile for the occasion. Whether he would get any tea in Carthew's study was another matter. If he did, it would be all right, and if he didn't it would be a reward to him for reporting juniors of the Fourth not wisely but too well.

"Now for the sergeant!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

And the next card was typed in the name of Sergeant Kettle, the tough old soldier who kept the tuckshop at Rookwood.

Whatever happened to Mack, it would serve him right; and whatever happened to the sergeant, that tough old gentleman could take care of himself. It was all right so far, but Jimmy had to consider about the next victim.

He decided upon Adolphus Smythe of the Shell.

That dandified youth had many tastes in common with Carthew, and had had tea with him, and would not be surprised at receiving an invitation. He would be able to talk "geegees" with Carthew, if he found

the latter in a polite mood. Probably he wouldn't, but that was Adolphus' own lookout.

Fourth on the list came Cyril Peele, the cad of the Fourth. Jimmy Silver did not like Peele, so it was really kind of him to include that shady youth in the list of invitations to a tea-party in the Sixth Form passage.

The fifth on the list was Jobson of the Fifth Form. Tobias Jobson was the poorest fellow at Rookwood, and much looked down upon by snobbish fellows like Smythe and Peele and Carthew. He was always shabby, and generally short of school books, which he sold when he was especially hard up. Jobson was not a clever fellow, but he had one saving quality; he was a hard hitter with his bony fists. If there was trouble in Carthew's study, it was Carthew who would get the butt-end of it, in dealing with Jobson of the Fifth. Jimmy was quite satisfied with that selection.

He considered a good deal before he typed out the last card. Finally he decided upon Mr. Bootles, and again he came near interrupting Mr. Mooney's peaceful perusal with a chortle. But he suppressed it in time.

Mr. Bootles had given him the job of fagging for Carthew that afternoon, so it was only fair that Mr. Bootles should have some of the benefit of his fagging. That was how Jimmy Silver looked at it.

In each of the invitations Jimmy had specified a different hour. He did not want all the invited guests to arrive together. Certainly they would have become suspicious if they had met in the passage on the way to Carthew's study.

The first invitation was for four-fifteen, and Jimmy timed them at fifteen-minute intervals, so that Mr. Bootles, the last on the list, would arrive at half-past five.

Satisfied with his work, Jimmy Silver rose from the typewriter at last, and covered the machine. He slipped the cards into the envelopes, and left the study quietly.

It remained to deliver the invitations.

Jimmy Silver found Smythe of the Shell first, with Peele. The two nuts were chatting in the passage with Howard and Tracy and some more of the merry society of the "Giddy Goats" of Rookwood.

Adolphus Smythe put his eyeglass into his eye, and bestowed his usual supercilious glance upon Jimmy Silver as the latter came up to the nutty group.

"Here you are!" grunted Jimmy.

"Begad; what on earth's that?" yawned Adolphus.

"Invitation to tea."

"My dear little kid, I don't come to tea with fags of the lower forms," said Adolphus loftily, and his nutty friends chuckled.

"It's from Carthew, fathead! I've got the job of delivering them!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, hand it over!"

Adolphus Smythe took his invitation, and Cyril Peele took the next. Jimmy Silver walked on to deliver the rest.

"Carthew's doin' it rather in style—what?" remarked Adolphus. "Bit of a silly ass, you know. Who ever heard of typing invitations to tea? I'm goin', all the same. It pays to be civil to the Sixth."

"Jolly good spread, most likely," remarked Peele.

"Might have asked the rest of us, while he was about it," grunted Tracy.

"Well, he can't ask everybody," said Adolphus. "Quarter to five will suit me all right, I suppose."

"Mine says five o'clock," remarked Peele.

"That's rather odd."

"Look at it!"

"I dare saw Carthew would like a bit of a chat with me before tea," remarked Adolphus thoughtfully. "That's it. I suppose. I'm rather friendly with Carthew."

"Swank!" said Townsend.

"Well, he's asked me earlier, anyhow," said Adolphus, with dignity. "Comin' out to watch the kids at footer? Ought to encourage the young beggars a bit, you know."

And Adolphus & Co. sauntered away to encourage the junior footballers with their lordly presence.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver arrived at the porter's lodge, where he found old Mack in his usual crusty temper, with a surly eye.

But old Mack looked a little less surly when he opened the envelope and found Carthew's gracious invitation within.

"My heye!" said Mr. Mack.
 "Any answer?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a grin. "I've got another note to deliver to the sergeant."

"Say I'll come, and werry pleased," said Mr. Mack.
 "Ta-ta!"

Jimmy Silver walked on to the school shop. Tubby Muffin was flattening his fat little nose on the window panes, hungrily eyeing the forbidden fruit within.

"I say, Jimmy, can you lend me a bob?" Jimmy walked in.
 Sergeant Kettle came out of his little parlour, and Jimmy handed him the note across the counter.

The sergeant seemed a little puzzled as he read it.

"This 'ere is rather queer," he said. "I ain't never been asked to tea with one of the young gentlemen before. I s'pose it's all right. Say I'll come, and werry glad, Master Silver."

"Any old thing," said Jimmy cheerfully; and he strolled out of the shop.

"I say, Jimmy, if you've got a tanner——" Jimmy dodged Tubby Muffin, and hurried on. He had still two invitations to deliver. He found Jobson of the Fifth in his study.

Jobson had a study to himself. Nobody of the Fifth cared much for his company; besides, Jobson could never by any chance have stood his "whack" in a study tea. He generally had his tea in Hall, excepting when some good-natured fellow asked him to a feed. Jobson seldom or never refused invitations of that kind.

But Jobson was very touchy about his poverty, and he had been known to cuff fags on the bare suspicion that they were looking at his old clothes.

Jimmy Silver had been one of the unhappy recipients of a thump from Jobson on that suspicion. Jimmy did not care twopence whether Jobson's clothes were old or new, and he had been looking at the pigeons on the occasion when Jobson supposed he was looking critically at Jobson's old trousers. Naturally, these manners and customs on the part of the shabby Jobson did not make him popular.

"What the thump do you want?" inquired Jobson politely, as the Fourth-Former entered his study.

Jimmy threw the envelope on the table. "Waiting for an answer," he said.

The shabby Fifth-Former opened the envelope, and his frowning face cleared as he saw the contents.

"Tell Carthew I'll come with pleasure," he said. "Well, you young idiot, what are you staring at? Do you think I want a fire in the study?"

Jimmy did think so, as a matter of fact; but it was no business of his, and he dodged out without arguing the point with the touchy Fifth-Former.

Last on the list, he arrived at Mr. Bootles' study.

The master of the Fourth raised his eyebrows a little as he glanced over the typed invitation.

"What—what? Ahem! However, I will come. You may tell Carthew that I shall come, Silver."

"Yes, sir!"
 And Jimmy retired.

He was strongly tempted to join his chums on the football-ground now that his round of deliveries was over; but he turned his footsteps towards Carthew's study. The bully of the Sixth eyed him when he came in.

"Well?" he snapped.

"I've done it!" said Jimmy Silver.

"You've delivered all the notes?"

"Yes, and they're coming."

"Good! Now pile in and get the study tidy. I'll keep an eye on you, and touch you up if you require it. Don't try to scamp through. You're not going till the guests arrive."

Jimmy Silver set to work without a word. But his mind was made up on one point—to dodge out of the study as soon as the first guest arrived. After the arrival of the guests it was probable that Carthew of the Sixth would be dangerous at close quarters.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Carthew.

"H M!"
 Mr. Mack's cough could be heard in the Sixth Form passage before the arrival of Mr. Mack at Carthew's door.



PEPPER IN THE JAM!—There was a sudden explosion at the table. Mr. Bootles leaped to his feet, spluttering and coughing and sneezing. "Groooop! Ooooch!" he spluttered. "Wretched boy! You—you dare to ask—ask me to tea—ooch!—and place pepper in the—jam—oooch!" (See Chapter 6.)

"H'm!"

Footsteps stopped outside the study.

Tap!

"H'm!"

Jimmy Silver was giving the finishing touches to the study under Carthew's malevolent eye. Quite a handsome spread was there. Carthew was in funds, and he was doing the thing in style.

Carthew kept an eye on the good things, and Jimmy could not carry out the little schemes that occurred to him with reference to them. He would have been very pleased—in the circumstances—to put ashes in the butter, and ink in the teapot, and salt in the candied fruits. But all he found an opportunity to do was to mix pepper in the jam. However, he put in the pepper with a liberal hand, unseen and unsuspected. It was little, Jimmy considered; but he consoled himself with the reflection that it was little but good.

"H'm!"

Jimmy had done all, and more than all, that a fag could possibly be required to do before old Mack's cough was heard at the door. But Carthew was still keeping him busy. It was his amiable desire to keep Jimmy busy until it was too dark for football.

"Come in!" rapped out Carthew, as the school porter tapped rather timidly at the door.

"I'll open the door," said Jimmy Silver, rather hurriedly.

"You needn't!"

But Jimmy did. He wanted to be near the door when explanations began.

Jimmy Silver threw the door hospitably wide, and old Mack was disclosed to view—a very prim and brushed old Mack.

He was wearing his Sunday coat, his collar was clean, and his tie was almost neatly tied. He wore gloves, and his face was shining from recent soap and water.

Old Mack was quite a new Mack, and Jimmy gazed at him with admiration in his gaze. He had never supposed that an invitation to tea would rejuvenate old Mack in this way.

Carthew stared at his visitor.
 He concluded that Mack had come with some message from the Head, and he was

irritated. He did not want to be bothered with the Head just then. He was not expecting his tea-party till five, but he was going to keep his hapless fag polishing and garnishing till that hour.

"Well, what is it?" snapped Carthew.

Old Mack blinked.

"Which I've come, Master Carthew," he replied.

"I can see you've come! Silver! Come back, Silver!" roared Carthew, as Jimmy dodged out of the study.

The junior considered it judicious to be deaf to that summons.

"Silver!" yelled Carthew.

Jimmy vanished round the nearest corner.

The prefect stared angrily towards the door; but he paused as old Mack coughed again. If there was a message from the Head, that message had to be attended to before Jimmy Silver.

"What is it, Mack?" he demanded. "A message?"

"I've come to tea, sir."

"What?"

"Tea!" said Mr. Mack, in surprise.

"Are you potty?" asked Carthew blankly.

"I 'ope not, sir!" said Mr. Mack, with dignity. "I've come 'ere to tea, and I certainly 'ope there's nothin' potty in comin' to tea."

"You silly old ass——"

"Hay?"

"Do you think I have school-porters to tea in my study?" shouted Carthew, amazed and enraged. "Get out!"

Mr. Mack jumped.

"Get out!" he repeated.

"Yes, you cheeky old donkey!"

"My heye!" said Mr. Mack. "You don't want me to tea, Master Carthew?"

"Are you drunk?" was Carthew's counter-question.

"Which I ain't touched a drop!" exclaimed Mr. Mack indignantly. "If you think I've been drinking, Master Carthew——"

"You must have, to play the idiot like this. Anyhow, get out! I'll report this to the Head if you don't go at once!"

Mr. Mack was a dignified old gentleman

in his way. He drew himself up, and looked at Carthew of the Sixth with scornful reproval.

"If them's the manners of a gentleman, Master Carthew, I thank my stars I was born in a 'umble spear!" he said. "I don't need telling twice, sir! I come 'ere perlit and civil, not because I wanted your tea, Master Carthew. Don't you think it! You're a low feller, Master Carthew!"

"What?" yelled Carthew.

"And I'd say the same before the 'Ead himself!" said old Mack, warming up. "I called you a low feller, Master Carthew, and I repeat them words—low feller! You're no gentleman, sir, to hact like this 'ere!"

And old Mack walked out of the study, leaving Carthew of the Sixth rooted to the floor with astonishment and rage.

With great dignity, Mr. Mack retired to his own quarters, greatly shocked at Carthew's want of hospitality towards an invited guest.

"My hat!" muttered Carthew, at last. "Is the man mad? What on earth made him think I'd have a dashed servant to tea? Drunk, I suppose."

Carthew looked into the passage, and shouted for Jimmy Silver. That cheery young gentleman was already on the football-ground.

The prefect debated in his mind whether to hunt for him or not; but he had a premonition that Jimmy Silver would prove elusive, and he decided to postpone vengeance till the juniors came in at lock-up.

He returned to his chair by the fire, and sat down to smoke a cigarette and look over a racing paper—a favourite amusement of the estimable Carthew. After all, he did not need Jimmy any more; he had only been inventing tasks for him.

He thrust the cigarette hastily into the fire, and slipped the racing paper under a cushion, as a knock came at the door.

"Come in!" he grunted.

It was Sergeant Kettle who entered. It was half-past four.

Like Mr. Mack, the sergeant was in his best bib and tucker, so to speak. He had been surprised by an invitation to tea in a Sixth Form study, and he had done honour to the occasion. Very neat and prim the sergeant looked in his carefully brushed black coat, with his creased trousers and shiny boots. Seldom had Mr. Kettle been seen to look such a dandy on week-days.

"Well?" said Carthew.

"Well, sir?" said Mr. Kettle.

"What do you want?"

This was so surprising a question to be addressed to a gentleman who had been asked to tea, that the sergeant raised his eyebrows, and stared at the Sixth-Former. Mr. Kettle was a stiff old gentleman, and dignified as Mr. Mack was, his dignity, compared with that of the sergeant, was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine. Mr. Kettle had lorded it in his day over squads of "bally recruits," and he had not forgotten it. He stiffened irritably.

"If you come to that, sir," said the sergeant tartly, "I don't know that I want anything."

"You don't want anything! What the thump have you come here for, then?"

"I came because I was asked, and I'm sorry I came," said Mr. Kettle. "If this is your idea of a joke, Master Carthew, I'd like to have you in the old barrack-square for half an hour, and I'd teach you something funnier. You're no gentleman, Master Carthew!"

And the indignant sergeant right-wheeled to the door.

"You thundering cheeky old fool!" shouted Carthew. "How dare you speak to me like that?"

Sergeant Kettle left-wheeled.

"You're a young gentleman in this school, Master Carthew," he said, "and I'm school sergeant. But I don't take the rough edge of any man's tongue, or boy's, either! I've had your sort on the parade-ground, and I've tamed them, sir, till they'd feed out of my 'and! You'll apologise!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Apologise!" thundered the old warrior, towering over the shrinking Carthew. "And at once, before I lay you over my knee, Master Carthew, and spank you!"

"S-s-spank me!" stuttered Carthew.

"That's the word, and sharp!"

Carthew jumped back as the irate sergeant towered nearer.

"I—I apologise!" he spluttered.

It was only in time. Amazing as it was, THE POPULAR.—No. 259.

the sergeant evidently meant to suit the action to the word.

Snort!

That was Mr. Kettle's acknowledgment of the apology. Then he right-wheeled once more, and tramped out of the study.

Carthew sank into his chair in utter amazement.

Outside, a group of smiling juniors watched Sergeant Kettle tramp back to the school shop with a purple face. Jimmy Silver closed one eye at his comrades.

"The merry visitors are coming!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Quests Galore!

ADOLPHUS SMYTHE tapped at the door of Carthew's study at a quarter to five, and opened it.

Smythe of the Shell was wearing his best and brightest waistcoat, his eyeglass, and his best and brightest smile.

But Carthew did not smile as he looked at him.

"Good-afternoon!" said Adolphus, by way of graceful greeting.

Carthew gave a grunt.

"You needn't come in!"

"Eh?"

"I'm expecting some fellows to tea soon," said Carthew. "You can buzz off! Shut the door after you!"

Adolphus blinked so widely that his eyeglass dropped to the end of its cord. He was as surprised by Carthew, as Carthew had been by old Mack and the sergeant.

"But—but I've come to tea!" babbled Adolphus.

"You cheeky young cub!"

"Eh?"

"I'm having some of the Fifth and Sixth to tea. Do you think I want silly fags along with them?" snapped Carthew.

"I—I—I've come—"

"Get out!"

"You—you—you don't want me to stay to tea?" burred Adolphus.

"I think I've said so. Are you getting out, or shall I shy this cushion at you?"

"Oh, gad!"

Adolphus stood hesitating at the doorway. He felt that there was a misunderstanding somewhere.

"You—you've forgotten—" he began. Whiz! Crash!

"Yoooop!"

The cushion smote Adolphus under the chin, and he disappeared into the passage. There was a loud bump as he landed there.

"Chuck that cushion in and clear!" snapped the Sixth-Former.

Adolphus scrambled up, with wild wrath in his eye. Adolphus was not a warlike youth. But even the worm will turn. A reception like that, after an invitation to tea, was too much even for Adolphus.

Carthew had asked him to "chuck" the cushion in; and Adolphus chucked it—not quite as Carthew meant.

His wrathful and indignant face gleamed in at the door, his hand whirled up with the cushion, and it flew. Crash! It landed fairly upon Carthew's nose, flattening him back in his chair. And the moment the cushion flew Adolphus flew, even faster than the cushion.

"Gr-r-r-r!" spluttered Carthew.

He leaped to his feet and leaped to the door; but Adolphus Smythe was vanishing round a corner like a racehorse.

"Come back!" raved Carthew.

Adolphus Smythe was not blessed with much sense, but he had too much sense to obey that command. He vanished.

"I—I—I'll—" gasped Carthew.

He turned back into the study, and grasped a cane, and rushed out into the passage. But there he paused. His guests were almost due, and it was no time to chase the fleeing Adolphus. With muttered remarks of an emphatic nature, Carthew re-entered the study in a frame of mind that would have done credit to a Prussian Hun.

He calmed himself a little as five o'clock approached. His guests were due at that hour—if Jimmy Silver had typed the invitations and delivered them as commanded. And Carthew did not dream, as yet, that he hadn't.

Prompt at five o'clock came a sound of footsteps in the passage. Carthew rose to his feet and worked up an agreeable smile to greet his guests, and as a tap came at the door he called out very cheerily:

"Come in, old chap!"

He started as the door opened and revealed Cyril Peele of the Fourth. Peele had been in his study for the last half-hour, garnishing himself, and he certainly looked very nice—worthy to join any tea-party in any study. He smiled almost affectionately at Carthew, very pleased to be addressed as "old chap" by his host.

Carthew did not smile affectionately. He glared.

"You!" he grunted.

"Yes, old chap," said Peele, thinking that he might use that friendly expression as Carthew had set the example.

"What! You impertinent little mongrel!" exclaimed Carthew. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, I—I—"

"I'll old chap you, you shiny little beast!" said Carthew.

"I—I— Oh!" stammered Peele. "I—I say, isn't Smythe here yet?"

He glanced round the study for Adolphus. "Smythe's been here," said Carthew. "Did you expect to see him here?"

"Yes, of course. I—"

"Is my study a place for you to make appointments with your faggy friends, you little sweep?" exclaimed Carthew, in angry amazement. "By Jove! I don't know what the fags in this school are coming to! Still, as you're here, you can fag at cooking. That young cub Silver has bolted. I want a fag to dish up the eggs. You can get on with it; my guests will be here any minute now."

Peele blinked at him.

"My hat! Did you ask me here to fag, then?" he exclaimed indignantly.

"I didn't ask you at all; but now you're here, you can fag!"

"Look here, I've come to tea! Yarooop! Leggo my ear, you beast!" wailed Peele dolorously.

"You've come to tea, have you?" said Carthew grimly. "Blessed if I ever heard of such cheek! Look after those eggs!"

"B-b-but I— Yarooop!"

"Do you want me to begin on your other ear?"

"Yow-wow! No!"

"Then shut up, and pile in!"

And Cyril Peele, with a face like a demon, began to fag for Carthew. And he was still fagging away, with a demonic expression, when fresh footsteps sounded in the passage, and Carthew rose once more to greet his guests as Jobson of the Fifth walked in.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Peppery!

JOBSON of the Fifth nodded genially to Carthew. Carthew stared at Jobson of the Fifth.

"Not late, old scout?" asked Jobson genially.

"Late for what?" snapped Carthew.

"Tea, of course!"

"Tea?"

"I see you haven't started," said Jobson, rather puzzled that his host did not ask him to sit down. "All serene!"

"I'd like to know what you're driving at!" said Carthew tartly. "I've asked some Fifth Form chaps to tea—"

"Then I'm the first arrival?"

"Yes, and the sooner you clear the quicker!"

"What?"

"When I want a scarecrow to tea, I'll get one out of a field!" said Carthew. "There's the door!"

"You cheeky cad!" exclaimed Jobson, his face crimson. "You asked me to tea, and I've come! Don't try to come the prefect over me, Carthew! You can't scare a Fifth Form chap—not me, at any rate! I'd wipe up the floor with you as soon as look at you! You asked me to tea!"

"I didn't!" roared Carthew.

"You did! I've got your note here!"

"My—my note!"

Jobson threw the invitation-card on the table. Carthew glanced at it, and then the expression on his face became extraordinary.

He began to understand.

"S-S-Silver brought you this!" he stuttered.

"Yes, he did."

"The—the young villain! I—I catch on now! That's why the fellows haven't come! That young villain's taken the invites to the wrong people!" gasped Carthew.

"I—I—I'll skin him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peele.

Carthew made a jump at the Fourth-

Former, whose ill-timed merriment was not agreeable, and Peele made a jump for the door and escaped. Jobson stepped in Carthew's way as the bully of the Sixth was pursuing.

"Hold on!" he said. "Never mind Peele now! You asked me to tea, Carthew, and now you treat me in an insulting way—" "I never asked you to tea!" raved Carthew. "It was Silver's doing! I don't want shabby outsiders at my table, I can tell you! You'd better get some new clothes before you come here—Yaroooh!"

Carthew did not have time to continue his hospitable remarks. He had touched Jobson of the Fifth upon the tenderest spot, and Jobson had him by the neck before he could get further.

"Leggo! Help! Yoop!" howled Carthew, as his head went into chancery, and a bony set of knuckles beat a tattoo on his nose.

"Shabby boulder—hay?" said Jobson, thumping away as if he mistook Carthew's hapless features for a punchball. "New clothes—hay? Yah, you snob! Take that—and that—and that!"

"Yoop! Yawp! Help! Yah! Oh! Leggo!"

Thump, thump, thump!

The two seniors went trampling wildly round the study in a deadly grip, Carthew's head still in chancery, and Jobson's bony knuckles beating drum-taps on his nose.

Carthew's foot went into the dish of eggs on the fender, and there was a crash. There was another crash as Jobson kicked over a piled plate of toast.

"Yow-ow-ow! Woop! Leggo!"

"Take that—and that!"

"Yurrrghh!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed a shocked voice at the door. It was the voice of Mr. Bootles.

The last guest had arrived! "Bless my soul! What—what—what—" stuttered Mr. Bootles.

Jobson of the Fifth hastily released his victim. It was possible that Carthew had had enough punishment for his reference to the Fifth-Former's old clothes. He looked like it, at all events.

"Oh! Ah! Sorry, sir! Only a game!" gasped Jobson.

And he melted out of the study.

Carthew stood mopping his nose.

Mr. Bootles blinked at him.

"Really, Carthew—"

"Ow, ow! Groogh! Hoooh! Ow! Wow!"

"You should not play these rough games in the study, Carthew!" said Mr. Bootles mildly. "A certain amount of horseplay is permissible among the juniors, but in a senior's study—a prefect's study—"

"Grooogh!"

"This is not the way to receive a guest, Carthew!"

Carthew jumped.

He realised that it was another guest.

"You—you—" he stammered.

"I have come to tea, Carthew, as you

desired!" said Mr. Bootles, with dignity. "But, really—Ahem! Hem!"

An exclamation trembled on Carthew's lips, but he restrained it. He hadn't asked Mr. Bootles, but to tell him now, now that he had come, would place the Form master in too ridiculous a position. Any other uninvited guest could have been dealt with, but not a Form master. Carthew could prove that he was not to blame for the misunderstanding, but that would scarcely disarm Mr. Bootles' resentment for being made to look ridiculous.

"Oh! Ah! Yes, yes, sir! P-p-pray sit down, sir!"

Mr. Bootles sat down.

It was clear to Carthew now that none of his expected guests had received invitations, and that he need not expect Knowles & Co. That did not matter so much, now that he was landed with Mr. Bootles. It was always Carthew's policy to make himself agreeable to the masters, and he proceeded to do his best in that line with Mr. Bootles.

It was not easy to preside at a hospitable board with grace and ease, and at the same time to make surreptitious dabs at his nose with his handkerchief. But Carthew did his best.

"I—I'm afraid the eggs are done for, sir!" he stammered. "And—and the toast! Will you try the shrimps, or the sardines? Or—or perhaps you'd care to try the jam, sir?" "Thank you, Carthew! I will take jam!" said Mr. Bootles.

The little Form master smiled genially over the festive board as he helped himself to jam, blissfully ignorant of what Jimmy Silver had done to that jam.

But he soon made the discovery.

There was a sudden explosion at Carthew's tea-table. Little Mr. Bootles leaped to his feet, spluttering and coughing and sneezing with amazing vim.

"Groogh! Ooooooh! Atchoo—choo—schooh! Groooh!"

"What-a-at—" stuttered Carthew.

"Groogh! Ooooh! Yurrrghh!" spluttered Mr. Bootles. "Wretched boy! Rascal! Ooooooh! You—you dare—you have dared—oooooh—to ask me to—oooooh—to ask me to tea and place pepper—grooch—in the—ow—jam! Yurrrgh!"

"I—I didn't—I haven't—I—"

"Gr-r-r-r! Give me that cane, Carthew!" shouted Mr. Bootles, utterly outraged and wrathful. "I have never—oooooh—heard of such a—grooch—insolent—ow—dastardly trick—grooch—unworthy of a small boy—ow—and you a prefect in the Sixth Form! Ooooooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooh! I didn't—I never—I wasn't—Yaroooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"There!" panted Mr. Bootles. "You will not—oooooh—play such a trick upon a Form-master again! Atchoo—atchoo—choo! Wretched boy! Atchoo!"

And Mr. Bootles swept out of the study. Carthew of the Sixth remained alone, groaning.

Afterwards there was trouble.

Jimmy Silver had expected that, and he was not disappointed.

But the Fourth-Formers agreed that it was worth it; only Jimmy Silver seemed to have any doubts upon that point. The Rookwood Fourth chortled loud and long over the story of Carthew's Tea-Party.

THE END.

(There will be another rollicking tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the famous chums of Rookwood, entitled "The Boy from Nowhere!" in next Tuesday's fine bumper issue.)

THE BOUNDER MAKES GOOD!

(Continued from page 18.)

Mr. Prout looked at his fellow-master, and coughed.

"Under the circumstances, Mr. Quelch—I do not want to interfere, of course—but Vernon-Smith has acted very well, I think. I hope it will be possible not to visit his faults too severely upon him. He has done what he could to atone for it."

"I have been thinking so," said Mr. Quelch. "I must see the Head at once, and I will say what I can for him."

And the two masters returned to the School House.

Mr. Quelch "did" very well for the Bounder. What took place between Mr. Quelch and Dr. Locke, and subsequently Dr. Locke and the Bounder, no one ever knew.

But Vernon-Smith knew that Johnny Bull himself had pleaded with the Head. The result was that the Bounder was given yet another chance. Dr. Locke was understood to have told the Bounder that by his trapping of the German he had made good—the thing now was to remain good.

Vernon-Smith vowed that he would—there would never again be a final plunge. This one had been too costly.

Mr. Quelch paid a visit to Uncle John Bull, and brought back a message to the effect that uncle was coming to Greyfriars to meet nephew Bull.

Johnny was furious.

"I'll tell him a thing or two!" he raved, brandishing his fist. "Blow his millions! Blow everything! I'll give him send a secretary to see what I'm like! Just you wait!"

The juniors waited for the arrival of Uncle John Bull—a good deal more eagerly than they might have done with any other uncle!

The Removites considered there would be some fun. Doubtless they were right—but there was to be trouble, too!

THE END.

(You must not miss next week's sensational story of Greyfriars, entitled "Uncle Johnny Bull!" by Frank Richards.)

THE SCHOOL IN THE BUSH.

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