

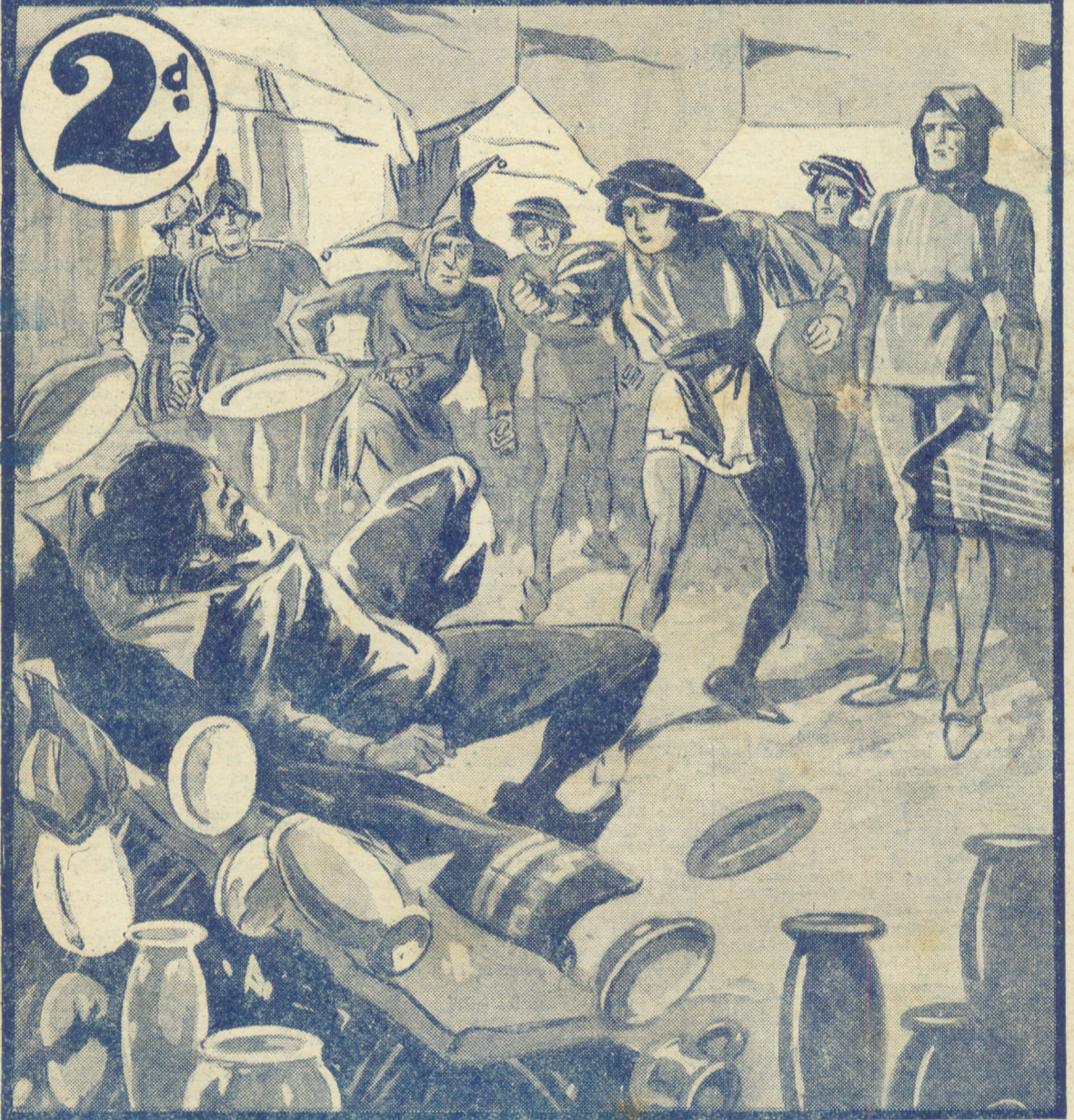
A GREAT STORY OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL IN THIS NUMBER.

EVERY TUESDAY.

The POPULAR

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“THE TROUBLE AT STOURBRIDGE FAIR!”

An amazing episode from the Grand Long Romance of ROBIN HOOD the Outlaw, in this Issue.

GUNNER'S VENGEANCE!

Cuthbert Gunner stirs in a pan in his study?

For whom is the fearful-looking mixture—the black ink, treacle, and oil, that Peter



Gunner's Special Mixture!

A Rollicking Long Complete Story of
JIMMY SILVER & CO., the chums of
Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Gunner Doesn't Care!

"BULKELEY—"

"Bother Bulkeley—"

"Bulkeley says—"

"My dear fellow," said Peter Cuthbert Gunner, of the Rookwood Fourth, "you needn't tell me what Bulkeley says. I'm not interested."

And Gunner waved a large hand at Jimmy Silver, to intimate that the matter was closed.

Gunner's study-mate, Dickinson minor, looked at Gunner in great amazement. Gunner's remarks indicated that he possessed either a very strong nerve or a remarkably thick head.

"Bulkeley says," roared Jimmy Silver, "that you're to go to his study at once."

"Haven't the time," said Gunner.

"I don't know whether I ought to take you by the scruff of the neck and walk you there," said Jimmy meditatively. "But I want my tea. I've given you Bulkeley's message, anyhow."

"Shut the door after you!" said Gunner.

Jimmy Silver suppressed his feelings with difficulty. Peter Cuthbert Gunner had many little ways that made fellows yearn to punch his head. In fact, his head had been punched fairly often since his arrival at Rookwood School. Whether cheek, or swank, or obtuseness predominated among his many engaging qualities, the juniors had not been able to decide. But he possessed all those valuable gifts in generous measure.

Jimmy decided that Gunner was likely to get enough from Bulkeley, and he forebore to give him any to begin with. He closed the study door and went on to his own quarters with his comrades.

Gunner settled down comfortably at the tea-table again in Study No. 7. Dickinson minor blinked at him, wondering where Gunner got his nerve from; but Gunner did not seem aware that he had displayed unusual nerve. He helped himself to a third egg and a fourth muffin. Gunner had a very

healthy appetite; and fortunately, he had ample funds, and tea in Study No. 7 was always a royal spread. Perhaps that was one of the reasons why Dickinson minor was a faithful and admiring follower of P. C. Gunner. Certainly Dickinson did full justice to the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

"I say, Bulkeley will be waxy if you don't go!" said Dickinson.

"Let him wax!" said Gunner.

"Yes; but prefects lick, you know."

"They don't lick me," said Gunner.

"I'm not exactly like the other juniors here, Dickinson. Properly speaking, I should be in the Fifth. It's only the Head's crass stupidity that keeps me in the Fourth. I told him so—"

"You told the Head so?" ejaculated Dickinson minor.

"Not exactly in those words," said Gunner.

"Oh!"

"But I've got to stick in the Fourth," said Gunner. "Rotten, if you like—fellow like me in a junior Form, and having to chum up with scrubby little beggars like you, Dickinson."

Dickinson minor coughed.

"I've got to stand it," said Gunner.

"Can't make the Head see sense. Getting a bit old, I think—hardly suitable for headmaster of a school like this. The governors don't seem to see it—but that's my opinion. But there's one thing I won't stand—I'm not being hectorated by prefects. Properly speaking, I should be a prefect myself. If Bulkeley of the Sixth wants to speak to me, let him come to my study. As for a licking, I should refuse."

"But—"

"Pass the muffins," said Gunner. "Don't talk so much, Dickinson. Fellow can hardly hear his own voice in this study."

"Oh!" gasped Dickinson.

There was a tap at the door as Gunner negotiated his fifth muffin, and Mornington looked in.

"Bulkeley wants you, Gunner!" he snapped.

"He can come here if he likes," said Gunner.

"Didn't Silver tell you—"

"Oh, yes!"

"Well, now you're to go! Hook it!"

"Rot!"

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Mornington. "Bulkeley's told me to bring your answer."

"Right! Tell him that if he wants to speak to me I'm willing to receive him in my study. I haven't time to come down at present."

Valentine Mornington blinked at the new junior.

"You want me to tell that to the captain of the school?" he ejaculated.

"Certainly."

"Well, I'll tell him," said Morny, with a grin.

"Do!"

Mornington departed, and Gunner cracked another egg. Dickinson minor regarded him almost with awe. Certainly there was no other junior at Rookwood who would have ventured to send such a reply to Bulkeley of the Sixth.

The door opened again quite suddenly, and Tubby Muffin's fat face grinned in.

"Bulkeley's coming for you, Gunner!" chortled Tubby.

"Let him come!" said Gunner calmly.

"He's got his ashplant."

"What does his ashplant matter to me?" said Gunner, with a superb indifference.

"Lots, I should think!" chuckled Tubby; and he rolled away as a heavy tread sounded in the Fourth Form passage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Gunner is Sorry!

BULKELEY of the Sixth stood in the doorway of Study No. 7, and gazed into the study—at Gunner. Dickinson minor was on his feet, nervous and uneasy. Not so Gunner.

He looked cheerily at the prefect across the tea-table, and waved his egg-spoon towards a vacant chair.

"Trot in," he said. "Sit down, Bulkeley."

The captain of Rookwood came in, but he did not sit down. His rugged face was angry and grim. It did not please him to have to negotiate two flights of stairs in quest of a recalcitrant junior. His ashplant was under his arm, and he let it slide down into his hand.

"I sent for you, Gunner!" he said gruffly.

"I know."

"Why did you not come?"

"Having tea."

"Don't you know that a junior has to obey an order from a Sixth-Form prefect?"

"That hardly applies to me," said Gunner calmly. "I hope you don't look on me as a fag like Silver, or Mornington, or Dickinson?"

"He, he, he!" came from the passage. Tubby Muffin was there, looking in for the entertainment. Some more members of the Classical Fourth were gathering round, with grinning faces. They seemed to expect to derive some entertainment from the sight of Peter Cuthbert in conflict with authority.

"I was going to cane you, Gunner, for boxing the ears of Snooks of the Second Form," said Bulkeley.

"What utter rot!" said Gunner.

"Why shouldn't I box a cheeky fag's ears? I considered that it might do Snooks good."

"But now," continued Bulkeley, "I shall cane you for molesting Snooks, and cane you also for cheeking a prefect."

"You won't!" said Gunner.

"Get up and hold out your hand!"

Gunner got up; but he did not hold out his hand. Much to the astonishment of the Sixth-Former the burly junior seemed to be preparing for warfare.

"You hear me, Gunner?" snapped Bulkeley.

"I'm not deaf!"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered the Rookwood captain.

"Rats!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Dickinson minor, almost overcome by that reply to the captain of the school.

Bulkeley of the Sixth said no more. It was a time for action, not for words. He strode at Gunner and grasped him by the collar with his left hand, and with his right he wielded the ashplant.

Whack!

"Yoooop!" roared Gunner, struggling.

Gunner struggled round on the prefect and drove his clenched fist full at Bulkeley's chin. Bulkeley uttered a sharp exclamation as the hard knuckles landed there. Gunner was game, at least, as well as being much too obtuse to realise the seriousness of his line of action.

Bulkeley's grasp tightened on the rebellious junior till it seemed like the grip of a vice. Gunner found himself lifted helplessly across the end of the table, face down. Then the ashplant rose and fell with vigour and rapidity, and the dust rose from Gunner's trousers, and a series of demoniac yells rose from Gunner.

Up to that moment Gunner had flattered himself that he could put up a fight even against a Sixth-Former. Gunner's confidence in his own powers was unbounded. But, as had often happened before, when the pinch came, Gunner found that his confidence was

misplaced. Burly as he was, he was an infant in the hands of the stalwart prefect, and he was held helplessly on the table, while the ashplant lashed and thrashed.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yoop! Yoooooooohoop!" roared Gunner. "Leggo, you rotter! Oh, my hat! Whooooooop!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Now," said Bulkeley, pausing in the castigation. "I think you're too big a fool, Gunner, to understand quite what a cheeky young idiot you are. Otherwise, I should take you to the Head. I'm trying to make you understand."

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!"

"If you're sorry for playing the goat, I'll let it go at this," said Bulkeley. "Are you sorry?"

"No!" roared Gunner.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Are you sorry now, Gunner?" inquired Bulkeley grimly.

"N-n-no!" gasped Gunner, wriggling helplessly in the powerful grip that pinned him to the table.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-woooooop!" roared Gunner. "Stop it!"

"Are you sorry, my boy?"

"Oh dear, yes!"

It was out at last!

"Very good," said Bulkeley, releasing the rebel of the Fourth. "I hope this lesson won't be lost on you, Gunner. I don't want the trouble of licking you again."

He tucked his ashplant under his arm and walked out of the study. Peter Cuthbert Gunner rolled off the table, wriggling painfully.

"He, he, he!"

Gunner made a jump for the doorway, and Tubby Muffin made a jump to escape. He eluded Gunner's large boot by the fraction of an inch as he fled. Gunner slammed the door savagely on the grinning crowd outside.

"Hard lines, old chap!" murmured Dickinson minor.

Gunner groaned.

"Oh dear! I'm hurt! Ow!"

He sat down heavily in his chair, but jumped up again with a howl. He decided to lean on the mantelpiece instead of sitting down. Dickinson minor bent his face over his tea-cup to hide a grin. Gunner's glorious defiance of constituted authority had ended rather ignominiously, and his study-mate saw a comic side to the affair. Gunner did not.

"I've been licked!" said Gunner, with a deep, deep breath. "Me, you know. Licked—just like a fag!"

"Well, you are a fag, ain't you?" said Dickinson innocently.

"Don't be cheeky, Dickinson. I don't want any back-chat from you," said Gunner wrathfully.

"No-n-no! Certainly not, old chap."

"I've been licked!" resumed Gunner. "Bulkeley of the Sixth has had the cheek to handle me. Me, you know! I can't lick Bulkeley!"

"Of course you can't!" agreed Dickinson minor, grinning at the idea.

"There's no 'of course' about it!" said Gunner frowning. "Nothing of the sort. Bulkeley happens to be a bit too hefty for me, that's all. I can't lick a fellow above the Fifth! But I'm not going to take this lying down!"

"Bulkeley's licked me!" went on Gunner darkly. "I've got to get my own back. I shall leave everything else aside till I've got my own back. I'm going to make Bulkeley sit up—sit up and take notice, you know. I'm going to make him sorry for himself."

"I—I say, you'll get into an awful row if you jape a prefect!" said Dickinson minor in alarm.

"I don't want any advice from a fag, Dickinson."

"Oh!"

"I'm going to make him sit up, and you're going to help me!"

"Oh, am I?" exclaimed Dickinson warmly.

"Yes, or else I'm going to give you a jolly good licking!" said Gunner, pushing back his cuffs and advancing upon his study-mate.

Dickinson minor backed round the table.

"I—I say, Gunner——"

"Are you going to back me up?" roared Gunner.

"Ye-es, old chap; of course!" said Dickinson feebly. "I—I was going to all along, you know!"

"That's all right, then!" Gunner said, placated. "Now shut up! I keep on telling you that you talk too much! Now shut up and listen while I explain what's going to happen to Bulkeley!"

And Peter Cuthbert Gunner proceeded to explain in grim, concentrated tones, and Dickinson minor listened, with his eyes growing larger and rounder at every word.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Vengeance!

JIMMY SILVER looked up from his prep with a smile as Gunner came into the study. Gunner was limping a little—he seemed still to be feeling the effects of the drastic lesson he had received in discipline. There was a grim, determined expression on his rugged face. Gunner had let the sun go down upon his wrath.

"You fellows got any treacle in this study?" asked Gunner.

"There's some golden syrup, if you want any," said Jimmy. "Half a tin."

"Thanks."

Gunner crossed to the study cupboard. The Fistical Four looked at him with smiling faces.

"Mind if I take this blacking?" asked Gunner. "I'll square for it, of course."

"Help yourself," said Jimmy.

"What the thump do you want treacle and liquid blacking for?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell, puzzled. "Not going to mix them for supper, are you?"

"Not for supper," said Gunner darkly. "I'm going to mix them though."

"Mix them?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Yes."

"What on earth for?"

"Bulkeley!"

"Wh-a-at?"

Gunner left the study without replying, taking the liquid blacking and the tin of golden syrup with him. The Fistical Four looked at one another blankly.

"Is that silly fathead going to jape Bulkeley?" asked Raby. "I should have thought he'd had enough trouble with Bulkeley already!"

"Gunner never has enough!" chuckled Newcome. "He's always hunting for more!"

Jimmy Silver looked a little worried. "If that howling chump japes the captain of the school he will get it fairly in the neck," he said uneasily.

"Let him!" said Lovell. "No bizney of ours."

"No. But——"

"Oh, let him rip!" said Arthur Edward. "The more lickings he gets the better for him. He needs 'em. In fact, he seems to be pining for 'em. Let him rip."

Jimmy Silver nodded and went on with his prep. But he did not wholly dismiss Gunner from his mind.

"Uncle James" of Rookwood had a tender heart, and, exasperating duffer as Gunner was, Uncle James was feeling a little concerned for him. He finished work before his chums, and quitted the study and went along to No. 7.

He found Gunner there. Apparently the end study was not the only one Gunner had visited in search of supplies, judging by the collection on his table; he had made a regular round, collecting all sorts and conditions of liquids. There were several bottles of ink—red and black and purple—there were two or three kinds of boot-polish, there was a large bottle of mahogany furniture stain, and several cans of cycle oil, as well as other things. And there were empty bottles, the contents of which Gunner had poured into a large pan, mixing with a cricket stump as he did so.

Jimmy Silver looked at him, and looked at the ghastly concoction he was stirring with the cricket stump.

"What on earth's that for?" he asked.

"Bulkeley!"

"Gunner, don't be such a howling ass!" said Jimmy, almost gasping. "If you chuck stuff like that at a prefect it will mean a flogging at least!"

"Let it!" said Gunner tersely.

"But—you awful ass!"

"Flogging or not, Bulkeley won't get this stuff off in a hurry!" said Gunner. "He will be piebald for a week, after he gets this fairly over his napper. I can stand a flogging, if it comes to that. This will be a lesson to Bulkeley. Flogging me afterwards won't get this stuff off him, will it?"

"N-no. But—"

"There's too much Sixth in this school," said Gunner. "Too much prefect! If the Fourth choose to make me captain, instead of a silly, incapable ass like you, Silver, things would be a bit different. But when they choose a dummy like you— You don't mind my mentioning that you are a dummy?"

"Not at all," said Jimmy. "We can't all have your powerful intellect, old bean."

"That's it," assented Gunner. "I don't brag of having more brains than the average fellow; it just happens to be the fact, and there you are. More pluck too—more determination! More character, as it were, you know. You've got practically no character. Silver—a sort of nincompoop, if you don't mind my saying so!"

"Carry on," said Jimmy politely.

"After I've stood up to the prefects, and shown them I don't care a rap for them, the Fourth may decide to back me up," said Gunner. "I shall be in my rightful place as Form captain—like the king coming into his own again, you know."

"Oh! Like that?" gasped Jimmy.

"Just," said Gunner. "Now, where's that fathead Dickinson got to? I told him to be here not later than nine to help me, and it's turned nine now, and he's not here."

Jimmy Silver grinned. If it was a question of swamping that weird concoction over the captain of the school, it was extremely probable, to Jimmy's mind, that Dickinson minor would not turn up at nine, or after nine. Dickinson minor was likely to be scarce and rare, so to speak, when the great event came off.

"I'll punch his head if he doesn't come soon," said Gunner. "But you

can help me, if you like, Silver. Have you got the nerve?"

"I think I've got the nerve," said Jimmy blandly. "But I haven't got the fatheaded stupidity, old bean."

"Queer that I'm the only fellow in the Fourth with any pluck to speak of," said Gunner amusingly. "It just happens, I suppose."

Jimmy Silver was silent. He knew already that it was useless to argue with Peter Cuthbert Gunner, and now he realised it once more. Gunner added the rest of his ingredients to the pan, and stirred away industriously with the cricket-stump. There was more than a gallon of the stuff now, and it looked and smelt horrid. The thought of it swamping over Bulkeley's unsuspecting head made Jimmy feel quite dazed.

"If that ass Dickinson doesn't turn up, I shall have to carry on on my own," said Gunner. "Fancy his forgetting that I told him nine! Fool, you know."

"Not such a fool as if he remembered, perhaps!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Eh? I don't follow," said Gunner. "He ought to remember, I shall punch his head for forgetting. I'll let you help me, if you like."

"Thanks! Nothing doing."

"It's simple enough!" explained Gunner. "Bulkeley's in the gym now, and he'll come in in time to see lights out for the Fourth. When he comes in, you get him into conversation—"

"Do I?" grinned Jimmy.

"Yes; as near the big staircase as possible—easy enough. I'm on the staircase with this pan; while he's

talking to you, I get my chance. See?"

"I see!" chuckled Jimmy.

"You may get a splash or two of the stuff," said Gunner. "That won't matter."

"Not at all—as I sha'n't be there," said Jimmy Silver. "Will you listen to a friend's advice, and drop the stunt, Gunner?"

"Not likely! Where's that chump, Dickinson?" growled Gunner. "If you haven't the nerve to help, cut along and look for Dickinson, and tell him I'll smash him if he doesn't come at once. I'll smash him, anyway, as a warning!"

"I fancy you won't see Dickinson minor again this side of dorm," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "And I won't look for him, Gunner. I advise you to chuck up this rot. Bulkeley licked you because you asked for it, and Bulkeley's a good sort, and you're not going to jape him. You can chuck that stuff over Carthew of the Sixth, if you like, or Knowles of the Modern side. Leave Bulkeley out."

Gunner did not even trouble to reply. He gave his mixture a final stirring.

"You hear me!" demanded Jimmy.

"Don't worry!"

"Look here, Gunner—"

"Oh, get out!" said Gunner. "I've got to find Dickinson, and I've no time to waste on you, Silver. I can't be bothered by silly fools. Go and eat coke!"

Jimmy Silver breathed hard. Gunner was no respecter of persons, evidently. The captain of his Form and the captain of the school were mere nobodies to Gunner. Jimmy Silver made a step towards the cheerful Peter Cuthbert.

"No larks!" said Gunner. "I've no



CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP! Gunner shoved open the study door and tore in. Crash! "Wowoooooop!" A wild cry rang down the passage. Gunner staggered in the doorway of his study. The pan of terrible mixture had fairly bonneted him. Bulkeley came to a sudden halt and he blinked at the new boy. Gunner had got his own mixture—on his head!
(See Chapter 4.)

time to thrash you at present, Silver; but if you butt in here I shall give you some of this mixture. There'll be enough left for Bulkeley."

"You silly ass!" roared Jimmy. "I tell you—"

"Back out!"

Gunner jerked the cricket-stump out of the concoction and waved it at Jimmy Silver. The captain of the Fourth jumped back as he caught several splashes of ink, treacle, blacking, cycle-oil, and other delectable things, on his coat.

Gunner grinned.

"Come and have some more!" he said invitingly.

Jimmy Silver paused for a moment, and then he walked out of the study. Gunner chuckled.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Being Kind to Gunner!

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL hurled his Latin grammar across the end study and rose from the table with a sigh of relief.

Prep was over. Jimmy Silver came in just as Arthur Edward was thus testifying his appreciation of the classics.

"Just done!" said Lovell. "How's the prize idiot going on?"

Jimmy Silver explained, and there was a chortle in the end study.

"Dickinson won't turn up!" grinned Raby. "Let's hope the silly ass will chuck the idea."

"He won't," said Jimmy. "He's going to look for Dickinson, and rope him in—if he can."

"Dickinson's most likely under a bed in the dorm, if Gunner wants him to help swamp Bulkeley."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"He won't find Dickinson," he assented. "But he's going to look for him. Let's watch him go."

"What on earth for?" asked Newcome.

"Because your Uncle James tells you to!" said Jimmy Silver severely. "Don't ask questions of your avuncular guardian and keeper, but do as he tells you."

"Oh, rats!" said Newcome.

But Jimmy Silver had his way; and the Fistical Four posted themselves outside the study door, and watched the passage. A few minutes later Gunner came out of Study No. 7 with a black frown of wrath upon his face. He was going to look for his recreant supporter—not with much chance of finding that sage youth. He did not even glance at the Fistical Four as he went.

"Well, there he goes!" yawned Arthur Edward Lovell. "What next, uncle?"

Jimmy smiled.

"He won't find Dickinson, or anybody else to help him in such a potty jape," he said. "Then he'll carry on on his own. Bulkeley's a good sort, and we don't want him japed—not to that extent, anyhow."

"Not particularly," assented Lovell. "It's a bit thick, certainly!"

"And we don't want Gunner flogged," said Jimmy. "He can't help being a silly owl. Silly owls are born, not made. He might even be sacked for a fool jape like that."

"All the better for Rookwood."

"Myes; but a jolly serious thing for Gunner," said the considerate Uncle James. "I really think it's up to us to be kind to Gunner, and save him."

"Rot!" said Lovell tersely. "Kindness is wasted on a silly chump like Gunner. Besides, how can we be kind

to him? He won't take any advice from us. Let him rip!"

"I'm surprised at you, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver severely. "Kindness is never wasted. I'm determined to be kind to Gunner, and you fellows are going to help. Come along."

"But what—"

"Follow your uncle."

"Oh, all right!" said Lovell resignedly.

Peter Cuthbert Gunner had gone along the studies without finding Dickinson minor. Now he had gone down the stairs.

As soon as he disappeared, Jimmy Silver started along the passage, followed by his puzzled chums.

He entered Study No. 7, where the large, flat tin of evil-smelling concoction stood upon the table.

Lovell whistled as he looked at it.

"My only hat! Is that it? The potty duffer is thinking of chucking that over a perfect! Oh crumbs!"

"Now here beginneth the first lesson," said Jimmy Silver, taking the tin pan from the table. "You cut down to the staircase, Raby, and whistle if you see Gunner coming—I don't want him to spot us when we're being kind to him—he might miss the kindness."

"But what—"

"Give your chin a rest, old bean, and hook it."

"Oh, rats!" grumbled Raby, but he went.

"You lift a chair into the passage, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver, as he balanced the tin pan in his hands. It was nearly full, and Jimmy did not want any of Gunner's concoction over his clothes.

"A what?" ejaculated Lovell.

"Chair!"

"What for?"

"Fathead!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"How can we be kind to Gunner without a chair to stand on?"

Lovell gave it up, it was too much for him. In silence he picked up a chair and lifted it into the passage. Jimmy Silver followed him out with the tin pan in his hands. Newcome came last, and drew the door shut.

"Not quite shut," said Jimmy.

"Leave it about a foot open, and turn out the light."

"What for?" asked Newcome.

"Ass! Do it!"

"Oh, all right!" said Arthur Newcome.

The light was turned out, leaving the study in darkness. Newcome held the door a foot open.

"Put the chair close to the door, Lovell."

"What for? Oh, I see!" exclaimed Lovell quite suddenly. "Ha, ha, ha!" he roared.

Both the juniors comprehended now. Lovell placed the chair close to the door, and Jimmy mounted on it. He carefully balanced the tin pan on top of the study door.

"Bit shutter," he said. "Careful."

Newcome drew the door closer, till Jimmy gave the word to stop. Jimmy released the pan at last. It was nicely and skilfully balanced on top of the door, against the ledge over the doorway, and absolutely certain to fall upon the head of anyone who opened the door.

"That's about O.K., I think," said Jimmy, stepping off the chair.

Jimmy Silver lifted the chair out of sight into the next study. There was a warning whistle from Raby at the other end of the passage.

Gunner came tramping along the passage. He seemed in a hurry, and was looking a little excited. He paused out-

side the study, and the chums of the Fourth watched him with almost fascinated interest.

"Can't find that silly ass!" he said. "But I'm carrying on; I've just shied an orange at Bulkeley over the banisters."

"Wha-a-at?"

"He's after me," said Gunner, with considerable calmness. "That's my game, you know. On my own! Bulkeley's after me—and he'll chase me into my study. Then I'll meet him with that giddy concoction, you know, and let him have it fairly in the features. Catch on?"

"Oh, is—is that it?" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"That's it! Take him fairly by surprise, you know," explained Gunner. "He won't be expecting that—what? Here he comes—ashplant and all! Looks ratty, don't he?"

Gunner eyed him warily as he came up. Bulkeley was about seven or eight feet distant when Gunner acted. His plan was cut and dried. He was going to rush into his study, grasp the pan of mixture, and heave the ghastly contents fairly into Bulkeley's face as he followed in. That amazing scheme would certainly have been carried out but for the kindness of Jimmy Silver & Co.—up till now unsuspected by Gunner. The kind action of the Fistical Four dawned upon him suddenly as he shoved open the study door and tore in.

Crash!

The sudden yell that rose from Peter Cuthbert Gunner rang over half Rookwood. It brought all the fellows out of the Fourth Form studies with a rush.

"Yooooooooooooooooop!"

Gunner staggered in the doorway of his study. The pan, tilting as it fell, had fairly bonneted him. It was still on his head, upside down, as he staggered; and the contents streamed all over Gunner.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came to a sudden halt. He blinked at Gunner. There was a wild howl from the Fourth-Formers swarming along the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooooooh! Oopoooooh! Gug-gug gooooooog—oooooop!"

Crash! The pan went clattering to the floor, and Gunner's head was revealed. But it was not recognisable. Gunner's nearest and dearest relative would not have recognised him then. His hair, his features, his ears, even, had disappeared under a sticky, smelly flood, which rolled and oozed over his clothes and down his neck most horribly.

He staggered and spluttered.

"Goooooh! Ooooooh! Mmmmm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What—what—what does this mean?" stammered Bulkeley, quite forgetting that he was there to cane Gunner.

"I think somebody thought it would be only kind to Gunner to let him have his own mixture, Bulkeley!" murmured Jimmy Silver demurely.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

Bulkeley stared—and then he burst into a laugh. He tucked his ashplant under his arm and walked away, still laughing. He left the Fourth Form yelling with merriment, and Peter Cuthbert Gunner yelling in quite a different way. Only Peter Cuthbert was dissatisfied at the outcome of his deep, deep scheme for japing Bulkeley.

He had got Gunner's Special Mixture himself—and he was not grateful!

THE END.

(Another rollicking long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood and Gunner of the Fourth next week, entitled, "Gunner's Prisoner!" Don't miss it!)