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outcast, remains a deep and puzzling mystery to all at Rookwood!

The whereabouts of Mornington, the



The Bootboy's Secret!

A Splendid Long Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, and Val Mornington the expelled junior.

By Owen Conquest.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Locked In!

JIMMY SILVER started. He almost jumped. Only the fact that he was standing in the presence of Mr. Dalton, his respected Form master, restrained him from uttering an ejaculation.

Mr. Dalton was talking to him seriously—not to say solemnly. In the midst of serious—or solemn—remarks from Mr. Dalton, it was impossible to ejaculate “My hat!” or “My only sainted aunt!” So Jimmy Silver repressed the ejaculation that rose to his lips.

Mr. Dalton was seated in the arm-chair by his study fire, and Jimmy stood facing him. Mr. Dalton had his back turned to the door, but Jimmy had the door in full view. So he could see what was hidden from Mr. Dalton.

What he saw was a hand creeping round the door, which was ajar.

Some fellow in the passage outside was reaching round, inside the door, to take the key out of the lock.

Such a proceeding was utterly amazing.

What a fellow could possibly want with the key of Mr. Dalton's study door was a mystery. Moreover, if a fellow did want it, the abstraction of it would have been much safer at some time when Mr. Dalton wasn't there.

The only possible theory on the subject was that some japer of unusual daring was going to lock the master of the Fourth in his study, and that was almost incredible.

“Silver!” rapped out Mr. Dalton suddenly.

“Ye-e-s! Oh, yes, sir!” stammered Jimmy.

“You are not listening to me!”

“Oh, sir!”

“Kindly look at me, Silver, when I am speaking, and do not glance round towards the door!” said the Form master severely.

“Oh, yes—quite! Certainly, sir!”

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Jimmy fixed his eyes on Mr. Dalton's face, but with the tail of his eye, as it were, he continued to observe the door. He simply couldn't help it. The proceedings of the fellow outside were of intense interest to the junior.

The stealing hand had touched the key, and—was quietly, cautiously, disengaging it from the lock. Only the hand and the wrist and a rim of shirt-cuff were visible. The shirt-cuff was rather crumpled, of a coarse check, and somewhat soiled. It was not the shirt-cuff of a Rookwood fellow. And Jimmy Silver realised that it must be one of the house servants who was thus taking away the Form master's key. It was a boy's hand, and obviously must belong to either Tupper, the page, or Timothy Smacke, the boot-boy.

It was amazing!

“Kicking a football in the Fourth Form passage,” Mr. Dalton's voice went on, “is against all the rules! You are aware of that, Silver?”

“Oh, quite!” gasped Jimmy.

Jimmy was receiving a lecture from his Form master—what he would have called a “royal jaw.” But, with the best intentions in the world, Jimmy couldn't fix his mind on that royal jaw. In spite of himself, he observed the stealing hand that was abstracting the key, and wondered.

It wasn't Tupper's hand. Tupper's hand had knobby knuckles, and this hand was remarkably well shapen and well kept for a hand that was used to manual labour. More than one Rookwooder had noticed how carefully Smacke, the boot-boy, kept his hands. It was, then, Timothy Smacke who was taking away the key. Was the fellow mad? Or what did it mean?

“Dangerous accidents might happen,” went on Mr. Dalton, blissfully unconscious of what was going on behind his back. “As head boy of the Fourth, Silver, you should know better!”

“It was raining, sir!” murmured Jimmy.

“That is no excuse for breaking the House rules!” said the master of the Fourth severely. “I must warn you,

Silver, that if this horseplay in the passage is repeated, punishment will follow! On the present occasion I shall trust that speaking to you seriously will have the desired effect!”

“Thank you, sir!”

“You may go, Silver!”

The royal jaw was over. It had lasted ten minutes by the clock. Mr. Dalton made a gesture of dismissal.

Click!

The groping hand had disappeared now.

A slight scraping sound told Jimmy that the key was being inserted in the outside of the lock. The door was closed without a sound, and then there was a second click.

The door was locked—outside!

“You may go!” repeated Mr. Dalton, raising his eyebrows a little as Jimmy did not depart.

Juniors, as a rule, were glad enough to get out of the study after a royal jaw.

“Yes, sir!” gasped Jimmy.

He knew that he could not get out of the study, but he went to the door. He turned the handle, and the door remained shut. Mr. Dalton glanced round, puzzled.

“Well, Silver?”

“I—I—” stammered Jimmy.

“Why do you not leave my study?”

“I—I can't, sir!” blurted out the captain of the Fourth, growing red in the face.

“What! Why not?”

“The—the door won't open, sir.”

“Nonsense!”

Mr. Dalton rose to his feet, and crossed to the door, and shook the handle. He jerked at it sharply.

As the key was turned, naturally the door did not open. But Mr. Dalton was surprised.

“Upon my word! What is the matter with the door?” he exclaimed.

“I think it's locked, sir,” murmured Jimmy Silver.

“Locked! Nonsense! How could it be locked?”

Jimmy Silver did not reply to that. He knew that the door was locked, and

he knew that it had been locked by Timothy Smacke, the boot-boy; but he did not want to tell Mr. Dalton so.

It was the "sack," short and sharp, for Master Timothy Smacke, if discovered in such a trick upon a member of Dr. Chisholm's staff. Jimmy naturally did not want to be the cause of that. Smacke's conduct was amazing and inexplicable; but there was enough unemployment about without Jimmy adding to it—at least, that was how Jimmy looked at it.

Mr. Dalton tugged at the door. He shook it. He jerked at it. His face, generally kind and equable, was quite cross in expression. After a royal jaw administered to a junior, this was an anti-climax. It spoiled the effect of the royal jaw; it was actually ridiculous. Jimmy tried not to smile, but there was a glimmer in his eyes. Mr. Dalton noticed suddenly that the key was missing.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed. "The key has been taken away! Some person has abstracted the key and locked the door on the outside! This is—unheard-of! If this trick has been played by one of your friends, Silver, I—"

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Jimmy hastily. "Nothing of the kind, sir! Lovell and Raby and Newcome are all out of the House, sir!"

A tap came on the outside of the door.

"Who is there?" rapped out Mr. Dalton.

"Little me, sir!"

The master of the Fourth fairly jumped.

"Mornington!" he exclaimed.

And Jimmy Silver, in utter amazement, murmured:

"Great pip!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Unprecedented!

"MORNINGTON!"
"Yes, sir!" came the cheerful voice from outside the study door. "Sorry if I've startled you, sir!"

"Have you dared to lock my study door, Mornington?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Upon my word!"

"Sorry, sir! But a chap has to take care in the jolly old circumstances," said Valentine Mornington cheerfully.

"I want to speak to you, sir, but not to let you collar me! Catch on, sir?"

"You impertinent young rascal!" shouted Mr. Dalton.

"I don't mean to be impertinent, sir. I want you to intercede for me with the Head."

"I decline to do anything of the sort!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "You were expelled from Rookwood, Mornington, as a just punishment for your conduct! Whatever influence I may have with Dr. Chisholm, I certainly should not exert on behalf of a boy in the act of playing a disrespectful trick!"

"It's the only way, sir, as the johnny says in the play!" answered Mornington. "I own up I deserved what I got; but I've repented since then—I'm now in sackcloth and ashes, as it were—turnin' over a new leaf, an' prepared to act as a shinin' example to the whole school if given a chance."

"You young rascal."

"In turnin' me out of the school," continued Mornington, with refreshing coolness, "Dr. Chisholm was losin' a valuable asset. In my unrepentant

state I should have been useful as a horrible example."

"Mornington!"

"But, havin' repented, sir, I should come out strong as a model to erring youth—a fellow whose example would come as a boon an' a blessing to unreflectin' chaps given to playin' the giddy ox!"

"Open this door at once, Mornington!"

"I haven't finished yet, sir. I sha'n't get another opportunity for a little chat with you. As you were my Form master, I thought you might be kind enough to intercede with the Head, an' ask him to give me another chance."

"I shall do nothing of the kind!"

"I left home to come back to Rookwood, sir. I'm not goin' back home. I'm goin' to play the game straight if I'm given a chance, and you can lick me for cheekin' you like this!"

"Open this door!" thundered Mr. Dalton. "Silver, how dare you laugh! Take a hundred lines!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jimmy.

And he composed his face to great gravity.

"Nothin' doin', sir?" asked Mornington.

"How dare you ask! You, an expelled boy, have dared to return to the school without leave!" exclaimed the Fourth Form master. "Last week you penetrated into the school by some unknown means, and were impertinent to the Head in his own study! Now you are giving me your insolence! You will be punished for this, Mornington!"

"In regard to that, sir, I can only recommend you to follow the cookery-book recipe for jugged hare!"

"What—what!"

"First catch your hare!" explained Mornington.

"Boy," gasped Mr. Dalton, "you—you—Silver, take two hundred lines! How dare you chuckle, sir, at this boy's impudence!"

"If there's nothin' doing, I'll mizzle!" resumed Mornington. "But I'm not goin'! I'm sure, sir, you'll be pleased to know that I'm stayin' on at Rookwood, whether I'm let back into the Fourth or not!"

"Do you mean to say, Mornington, that you have been hidden in the school since the Head saw you a week ago?"

"Exactly, sir!"

"Upon my word! On this occasion you will be discovered and ejected, Mornington!"

"I don't think!"

Mr. Dalton hammered on the door angrily. He did not expect that Valentine Mornington would open it, but he hoped to attract attention from another quarter.

There was a sound of hurriedly retreating footsteps in the passage. Mornington was well aware that that loud hammering from Mr. Dalton's study would attract notice, and he was beating a strategic retreat in time.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

A minute later footsteps were again heard. This time they were heavy and ponderous.

Thump, thump!

"Bless my soul! Is anything the matter, Mr. Dalton?" came the voice of Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth Form.

"Yes!" gasped Richard Dalton. "I have been locked in my study. Will you kindly turn the key?"

Mr. Greely unlocked the door, and the Fourth Form master pulled it open. The portly master of the Fifth blinked at him in great surprise.

"What a very extraordinary trick!"

said Mr. Greely. "If you are aware of the identity of the culprit, I should suggest—"

"It was Mornington, late of my Form!" said Mr. Dalton, crimson with wrath. "The wretched boy is still hidden about the school somewhere!"

"Is it possible?"

"You did not see him as you came up, Mr. Greely?"

"No. The passage was vacant," said the astonished Fifth Form master. "This is most extraordinary, Mr. Dalton! I can scarcely believe that Mornington has been hidden in the school for a week."

"Yet it appears to be certain now," said Mr. Dalton. "The young rascal must be found at once and sent home!"

Jimmy Silver slipped away, leaving the two masters in somewhat excited discussion. Jimmy was in a state of the greatest astonishment himself. And when Lovell and Raby and Newcome came in, and Jimmy related the amazing happening, they shared his astonishment.

"Good old Morny!" chuckled Arthur Edward Lovell. "He said he would give the giddy powers a high old time if they didn't let him back! He seems to be doing it!"

"But where on earth was he hidden?" exclaimed Raby. "The whole school was searched for him, even the abbey ruins."

"And where is he now?" said Newcome.

"It beats me!" confessed Jimmy Silver. "But he's got help in playing this game, and I fancy I know who's helping him."

"One of the fellows?" asked Lovell. "Erroll was his chum, but Erroll wouldn't join in a wild prank like this. Too jolly serious an old sobersides!"

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"One of the servants," he answered.

Arthur Edward Lovell whistled.

"Which?" asked Raby.

"Smacke, the boot-boy—the new servant," said Jimmy. "Mind, it's not to go further than this study! We're not going to get the kid into trouble for backing up Morny. But I'm going to speak to him myself; he can't go on playing these potty larks on Form masters. You chaps can come along with me, if you like, and we'll give him a royal jaw—same as Dicky Dalton was giving me when it happened."

"Lead on, Macduff!" said Lovell, with a grin.

And the Fistical Four proceeded to make their way into the regions below, heading for the boot-room, to interview Master Timothy Smacke, the new boot-boy, who, since what Jimmy had seen at Mr. Dalton's door, was proved to be the confederate of Valentine Mornington in his amazing escapade. But in the boot-room they found only Tupper, the page.

"Where's Smacke?" asked Jimmy. "In his room, I believe!" grunted Tupper. "He's done his work till he's wanted this evening. Doin' his blessed Lating, I dessay!"

And Tupper sniffed.

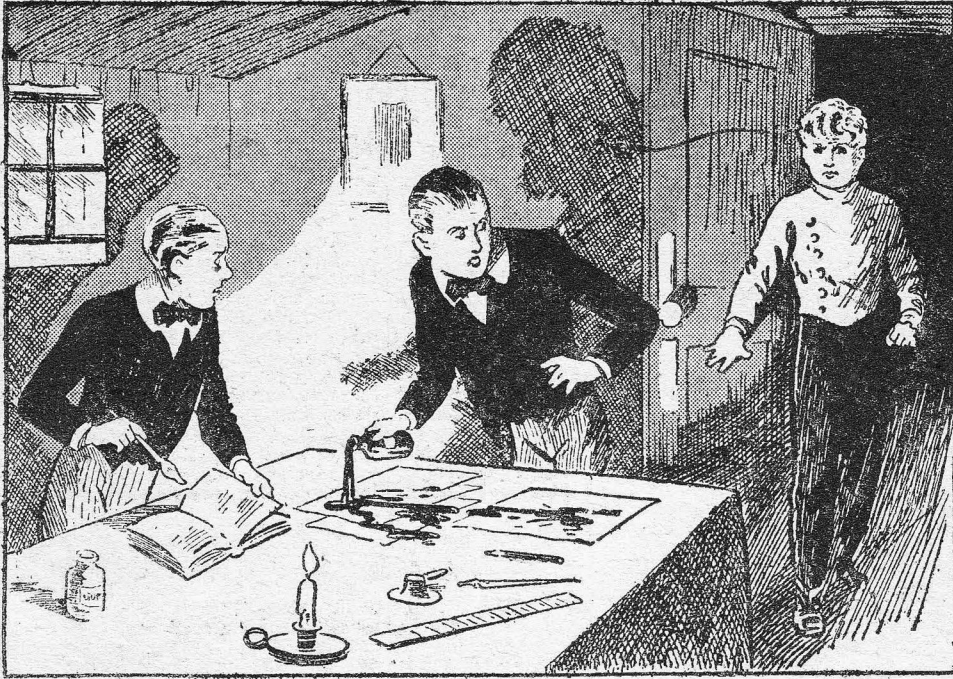
"Latin!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Another sniff from Tupper.

"Puts on gloves on his hands when he's a-doing of the boots," he said, "and reads books in Latin in his spare time, jest as if he was one of the young gentlemen!"

Lovell gave a chortle.

"Precious few of the 'young gentlemen' read Latin in their spare time!" he said. "They get enough of it in the Form-room! But you don't mean to



CAUGHT IN THE ACT! As Timothy Smacke entered his garret he caught sight of the ragers, and his sandy face grew grim. "You here?" he ejaculated. Peele gritted his teeth—the ink trickling across the sheets of foolscap was proof enough of what he and Gower had come for. (See Chapter 3.)

say that Smacke actually studies Latin?"

"He do!" sniffed Tupper. "He's got a set of books like you young gentlemen, and he does work in his room. I've seen him, Cheek, I call it! He's beneath me, and I don't take it on me to study Latin! I like a servant to know 'is place! That's what I like!" added Tupper emphatically, as if to leave no possible doubt on the subject.

And Jimmy & Co., much astonished, left the boot-room, and proceeded further to interview the surprising Master Smacke.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Rough on the Ragers!

"IT'S a bit risky!" murmured Gower.

"Rot!" said Cyril Peele decisively.

"Suppose we're caught in his room?"

"Rubbish! Come on!"

"Oh, all right!" said Gower resignedly.

Cuthbert Gower generally followed where Peele of the Fourth led.

Peele's footsteps led in a rather unusual direction. It was unusual, if not unknown, for a Rookwood fellow to penetrate into the servants' quarters. But it was thither that Peele led the way, and his destination was the garret occupied by Timothy Smacke, the new boot-boy.

Peele of the Fourth did Smacke the honour of being down upon him. He had noticed the boot-boy's carefully kept hands, and he had been punched by one of those well-kept hands when playing a trick on Smacke. Peele was loftily determined that he wouldn't, and couldn't, take cheek from a servant, and a Rookwood fellow, of course, had many opportunities of making himself

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unpleasant to a servant, if he was mean enough to take advantage of them. Cyril Peele was mean enough for that, and for most things. He disliked the boot-boy, and he had taken the trouble to persecute Smacke as much as he could.

Whereupon Uncle James of Rookwood had descended upon Peele of the Fourth to see fair play—a way Uncle James had. After which Peele was too busy attending to a darkened eye and a swollen nose to have much time to waste on Timothy Smacke.

But Peele had not forgotten. He was bound now on a ragging expedition, accompanied by Gower. It was a very secret expedition, for if Jimmy Silver had happened upon it the result would have been painful to the ragers.

The two juniors reached the little landing outside the door of Smacke's garret. The room was in one of the oldest parts of the ancient building, where unexpected passages and rooms cropped up on all sides. Smacke's room was the only occupied one on that staircase, a shadowy, old winding oaken stair.

On the little landing Peele and Gower stopped to listen. There was no sound from the room, and they felt assured that the boot-boy was not in his quarters. Peele opened the door and peered in.

"All serene!" he announced.

The two juniors entered. The garret was lighted by a little window, into which streamed the light of the moon. On the table stood a candlestick. There was no gas or electric light in the garret. Peele lighted the candle. The cads of the Fourth glanced round the room curiously.

It was very neat and clean. On the table was a little stack of foolscap, with pen and ink. There was a little shelf over the chest of drawers, and there

were books ranged on it—dog-eared school books most of them. Peele curled his lip as he looked at them.

"School books," he said, "picked up at some second-hand stall, you know. That's how the lower classes try to put themselves on a footing with their betters. Sickenin', I call it!"

"Horrid cheek!" agreed Gower.

"We'll jolly well gum the pages together!" grinned Peele. "Shove the ink over the foolscap! Not all of it. Put the rest in the bed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peele was taking the volumes from the shelf, and Gower had picked up the inkpot and splashed the ink across the foolscap, when a footstep was heard on the stair outside.

The two ragers stopped in alarm.

"What the dickens—" muttered Peele.

"Oh gad!" murmured Gower. "He's coming up, and he'll complain to the housekeeper about us ragging in his room. We shall get into a fearful row over this. You ass, Peele!"

The door opened, and Timothy Smacke entered. The sandy-faced, red-haired boot-boy was grinning as he came in. But the grin faded from his face as he saw the lighted candle, and then glanced at the two Fourth-formers.

"You here!" he ejaculated.

Peele gritted his teeth. The ragers were caught fairly in the act, and the ink trickling across the heap of foolscap was a proof of what they had come for. Smacke's sandy face grew grim.

"A rag—what?" he said.

"Nunno!" gasped Gower. "We—we just looked in to see you, Smacke."

Gower was greatly alarmed. A rag on a servant, if reported to the Head, meant at least a flogging. Dr. Chisholm would have been astonished and shocked by the bare idea of such a thing.

"Just looked in in a friendly way?" asked Smacke.

"Ye-e-es, exactly!"

"Is that why you've mucked up my foolscap?"

"I—I—I'll pay for it!" gasped Gower. "I—I'm sorry!"

Peele gave him a look of fierce contempt. Peele, at least, had the courage of his sins. He was dismayed at being caught, but nothing would have induced him to eat "humble pie" to a servant. Better a flogging than that.

"You sorry, too, Peele?" asked Smacke.

"Master Peele to you!" said Peele savagely. "Don't put on any of your airs with me, you low cad?"

"Shut up, Peele!" breathed Gower. "You know what it means if Smacke complains to the housekeeper. She'll tell the Head."

"Let her!" said Peele, between his teeth.

"Well, I'm not going to be flogged!" said Gower angrily. "You were a fool to come here, and so was I! I'm sorry, Smacke!"

"You're not sorry!" said the boot-boy coolly. "You're only afraid of a licking! I'm going to kick you out!"

Smacke threw the door open wide.

"Outside!" he said tersely.

"Look here, kid—"

"Outside!"

"I'll stand you a bob," said Gower desperately. "You know I can't kick up a row here, you cad, with a servant!"

"Exactly! Awful come-down for a young gentleman of the Fourth Form to be found fighting with a boot-boy in his garret!" grinned Smacke. "But you should have thought of that there afore you came."

"I'll stand you half-a-crown!"

"Outside!"

"Look here—"

"Do you want me to lay 'ands on you?"

Gower made a rush for the doorway. He passed through it, and Smacke kicked out as he passed.

Crash!

Gower caught the kick, and it was a hefty one. He sprawled on his hands and knees on the landing with a yell.

"Ow! Oooooop!"

"I give you one second to get down the stairs before I come out to you!" said Smacke. "Get a move on!"

The second was enough for Gower. He fairly plunged down the stairs and vanished.

Timothy Smacke turned to Peele. The cad of the Fourth eyed him fiercely. Smacke pushed back his cuffs.

"Put up your hands!" he said.

"Do you think I'm going to fight you—a servant?" hissed Peele.

"I think you're going to 'ave a licking if you don't!" said Timothy Smacke, squaring up to the Fourth-Former. "That other bloke was led into this by you! I've kicked him out, but I'm going to lick you!"

"Keep off, you low cad!" shouted Peele, as the boot-boy advanced on him with his hands up.

"Puttin' up your 'ands?" inquired Smacke.

"No!" yelled Peele.

"Then there's a one for your boko!"

Peele jumped back, putting up his hands desperately. There was no help for it. He had to fight or take a licking. The boot-boy was in deadly earnest. Certainly it was time for the skies to fall when a boot-boy laid hands on a Fourth-Former of Rookwood. But the skies showed no signs of falling, and nothing short of that could have stopped Timothy Smacke. He was coming for Peele, hitting out right and left.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Up and down the little room they went, tramping and scuffling, and fighting hard. Once he was in for it, Peele fancied that he could lick a mere boot-boy with ease. It was the want of dignity in the proceedings that troubled him. But he determined to compensate himself for the loss of dignity by giving the boot-boy a terrific hiding. Much to his surprise, he found Timothy Smacke more than he could handle.

More than that, he discovered that Timothy handled him, Cyril Peele, with the greatest of ease.

In rage and dismay, Peele realised that he had no chance against this amazing boot-boy. Smacke knew twice as much about boxing, and he was thoroughly fit, and evidently endowed with unlimited pluck and resolution. He drove Peele round and round the garret, tapping and rapping and rapping and tapping on Peele's hapless features till the cad of the Fourth was dazed and dizzy.

"Hallo! A fight!" exclaimed a voice on the landing.

"Great Scott!"

And Jimmy Silver & Co., arriving at the door of Timothy Smacke's garret, stared in utter astonishment.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Straight Tip!

TIMOTHY SMACKE dropped his hands at once.

Peele, tired and dazed, reeled back and leaned on the little window-frame, gasping for breath.

There was a stream of crimson flowing from his nose, and one of his eyes was darkening. Smacke showed scarce a mark.

(Continued on next page.)



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The boot-boy turned to the new arrivals.

"I seem to be 'aving a lot of visitors this evening!" he said. "Come in, young gents! You're welcome to my 'umble quarters!"

The Fistical Four came in.

"What on earth does this mean?" asked Jimmy Silver blankly. "What is Peele doing here?"

"Keep that blackguard off, you fellows!" gasped Peele. "I'm goin'! I—I'll get him the sack for this, by gad!"

"You're not going yet!" said Jimmy Silver quietly. And he closed the door as he spoke. "You came here for no good, Peele! You've no right in Smacke's room!"

"You've come here yourself!" sneered Peele.

"I came to speak to Smacke—you've come for a rag!" said Jimmy. "You wouldn't have come for anything else!"

"You rotter!" said Lovell, in utter disgust. "Ragging a servant—a chap who can't hit, back!"

"He seems to have been hitting back, all the same!" grinned Raby.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Newcome. "Peele's nose looks like it!"

The Fistical Four chortled. Certainly it looked as if the boot-boy had been hitting back—hard!

"All the same, I'm afraid you're booked for trouble, kid!" said Jimmy, with some concern. "I suppose you found this rotter ragging your room?"

"That's it, sir!" said Smacke.

"I wish you'd told me, and left me to handle him," said Jimmy. "You're justified, of course; but—"

"I'll get him the sack for it!" hissed Peele.

Smacke grinned.

"You don't dare to tell the 'Ead," he said coolly. "I've thought that out, Master Peele. The 'Ead would want to know what you was doing 'ere. Ragging a servant, you'll tell 'im—what? I can see the 'Ead's face when he knows that! Come off, Master Peele! That's a chicken that won't fight, and you know it!"

Peele ground his teeth. He knew it. He dared not confess to the Head why

he had come to the boot-boy's garret, and he could not complain of the assault and battery without acknowledging where it had taken place—especially now that there were witnesses.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"You seem to know your way about, young Smacke," he said. "You've let yourself in for this, Peele. Have you finished?"

"Not yet," said Smacke coolly. "He ain't licked yet. He's goin' to learn not to meddle with my books and papers! Ain't a servant a right to the privacy of 'is own room, sir?"

"Most certainly!" said Jimmy at once. "Go in and win, Smackey, and we'll see fair play!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Lovell.

Peele's face was white with rage. But there was no escape for him. The Fistical Four had their backs to the door.

"Come on!" said Smacke invitingly.

And his hands went up again as he advanced on the cad of the Fourth.

"Go it, Peele!" grinned Raby.

"I'm not going to fight with a servant!" gasped Peele.

"If you can rag a servant, you can fight him!" said Jimmy Silver.

"I tell you I won't— Yaroooooh!"

Peele had to fight, as the boot-boy came on.

"Good man!" said Jimmy Silver, as a neat upper-cut laid Peele on his back. "You'd be a good man with the mittens, Smacke! Ever had them on?"

"Lots of times, sir!" said Timothy Smacke. "I've 'anded 'arder cases than this 'ere bloke! I'd like to 'ave the gloves on with you some time, Master Silver, if I may say so without forgetting my place, sir!"

Jimmy Silver whistled.

"Oh, blow your place!" he said. "I'm not such a giddy aristocrat as Peele! It would be a bit unusual; but the fact is, I'd jolly well like to see how you'd stand up to me, kid! You've got a pretty style of your own—especially that upper-cut with the left!"

"Neat, but not gaudy!" grinned Lovell. "The only fellow I've ever seen with that upper-cut was old Morny."

"Just what I was thinking," said Raby.

Peele staggered up. He had his hand to his jaw, which was aching.

"Will you let me out of this?" he asked in a choking voice.

"You've 'ad enough!" said Smacke. "You can clear! But I want you to promise not to come ragging in my quarters again!"

Peele gave him a look of burning rage.

"I'll promise you nothing, you cad!" he said. "I can't go to the Head about this, but I'll make you smart for it! I'll get you kicked out of your place at Rookwood somehow!"

"You rotter!" roared Lovell.

"You provoked the kid into licking you, Peele," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You've been licked fair and square. Let that end it!"

"When that cur is sacked and kicked out, not before!" said Peele, his eyes glittering. He faced Smacke. "You've licked me, and you can hammer me again if you choose. That won't alter it! I'll make you sorry for it!"

Timothy Smacke gave him a curious look and shrugged his shoulders.

"You're a rotter, but you've got pluck!" he said. "I won't touch you again! You can clear!"

Peele limped out of the garret and closed the door hard. Timothy Smacke looked at the chums of the Fourth inquiringly when Peele was gone.

"You young gents came 'ere for something?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Yes, Smacke. We came to give you a tip—a warning. The way you're going on you're booked for the grand slam! I don't mean about Peele; I mean about Mornington."

Timothy Smacke started violently.

"Mornington!" he said, quite faintly.

"Yes, Mornington," said Jimmy Silver firmly, while his chums looked on in silence. "Don't take it unkindly, kid. I suppose Mornington has made it worth your while to help him?"

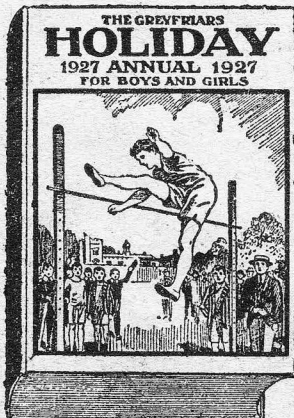
"You think he's given me money?"

"Well, if he hasn't, I suppose you're helping him out of friendship," said Jimmy, rather puzzled. "Anyhow, you're helping him."

(Continued on next page.)

BOTH Boys Were Satisfied With These Famous

GIFT BOOKS!



Tommy was a lover of stories, and Bill was a keen hobbyist and an amateur mechanic. These two brothers went to the stores with their father who was taking them to buy each a present.

"Why, here is the very book I want!" cried Tommy as he saw a bunch of HOLIDAY ANNUALS. "I bet it's full of school and adventure tales!"

"Look there!" said Bill, pointing to a pile of HOBBY ANNUALS on the next shelf. "That's a new book out, and it's an up-to-date authority on hobbies and model engineering. 'It'll suit me down to the ground!'"

"I'll get you one each!" remarked the delighted father. And he did! And now these two brothers have got a present which will last them for ages.



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"Ow do you make that out, sir?" asked the boot-boy. "Mornington talked to Mr. Dalton through his study door this evening," said Jimmy quietly. "He couldn't face him without being collared, so the door was locked first. I was in the study, and I saw the paw come round the door and take out the key. I saw the shirt-cuff." Jimmy made a gesture towards the check cuffs that were revealed where Smacke had pushed back his sleeves for the fight with Peele. "You catch on?"

Smacke was quite silent. "Oh," murmured Lovell, "I see now! You cheeky young bouncer! You locked Dicky Dalton in his study, and gave Morny the tip, and he came along and slanged Dicky through the door!"

"It—it wasn't just as you suppose, young gentlemen!" "Well, never mind just how it was," said Jimmy Silver, with a smile. "Morny has been hidden about the school for a week, and he could scarcely do that without help from some quarter. No bizney of mine. I wish Morny luck! But a cow with a blind eye could see who's helping Morny keep dark at Rookwood, after what I saw in Mr. Dalton's study!"

"I—I s'pose so, sir!" "Don't think I blame you," said Jimmy. "More power to your elbow; in fact! I only hope that Morny will make a success of it somehow, though slanging a Form master isn't the way to go to work. But there's one point, kid—no more locking Form masters in their studies! It's too thick! You would get the sack if it came out!"

"You—you see—?" "I don't see, and I don't want to!" smiled Jimmy. "The less I know about the matter the better! Only let Dicky Dalton alone after this. He's our Form master, and we don't allow him to be japed!"

"I'll remember every word you say, sir, and I'm much obliged to you!" said Timothy Smacke. "Right-ho, old bean!" said Jimmy cheerily.

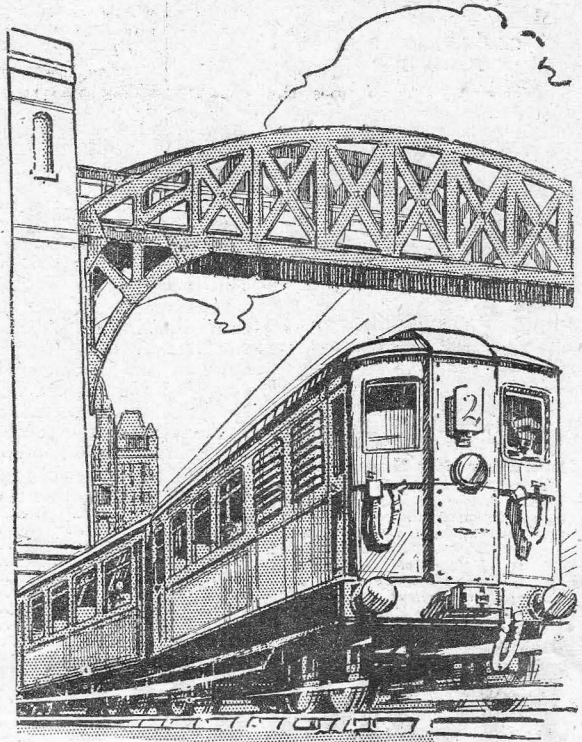
And the Pistical Four turned to the door. There was a hurried movement outside as Jimmy Silver pushed the door open. "Peele!" roared Jimmy. "You listening cad!" The next instant Cyril Peele had vanished down the staircase before the juniors could get near him. Jimmy Silver set his teeth. He realised that the cad of the Fourth, curious to know what had brought the chums there, had lingered outside the door to listen, and now he knew! Timothy Smacke looked out of the room.

"He 'eard you, sir!" "I'm afraid so!" muttered Jimmy. "Now he knows who locked Mr. Dalton in! If—if he sneaks—?" "We'll see that he doesn't!" said Lovell grimly. And the Pistical Four hurried down the stairs.

THE END.

(If you want a story with a big thrill don't miss: "The Great Mornington Mystery?" next week's fine long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood!)

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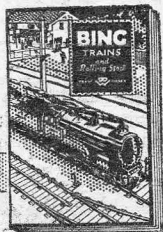
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