

Complete Stories of —

**JIMMY SILVER & CO. OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL**

*Every Week*

# The POPULAR

EVERY TUESDAY

2<sup>d</sup>



**JIMMY SILVER & CO'S STRATEGY AT WORK!**

# THE FIGHT FOR THE END STUDY!

Peele & Co. succeed, without a shadow of doubt, in getting their own back on the Fistical Four. But they have not done with Jimmy Silver & Co. yet!



# A Matter of Strategy!

A Rollicking, Long Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Chums of Rookwood.

By  
**OWEN CONQUEST.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Going Through It!

**S**ILVER! Lovell! Raby! Newcome!

Bulkeley of the Sixth called out the names.

And the Fistical Four of the Fourth Form at Rookwood answered in a rather dismal chorus:

"Yes, Bulkeley!"

"You're wanted!"

"What—"

"Mr. Dalton's study—sharp!"

The great man of the Sixth walked away with that. He had no time to waste upon mere juniors.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"We're for it!" he remarked.

"We are!" murmured Arthur Edward Lovell. "We is!"

George Raby rubbed his hands in anticipation.

"Oh, come on!" said Newcome desperately. "Let's get it over!"

Sympathetic glances followed Jimmy Silver & Co. as they started for Mr. Dalton's study. Almost all the Classical Fourth sympathised—if that was of any use. Unfortunately, it wasn't.

Jimmy Silver tapped at the door of his Form master's study.

"Come in," said the deep voice of Richard Dalton.

The Fistical Four entered.

Mr. Dalton was not alone in the study. With him were four fellows—three of them juniors, and one of them a prefect of the Sixth Form. The three juniors

were Lattrey, Peele, and Gower of the Fourth; the prefect was Carthew of the Sixth. Jimmy Silver & Co. had expected to see them there; they knew well enough why Mr. Dalton had sent for them. The young Form master's face was very stern as he fixed his eyes upon the delinquents.

"Silver! Carthew has made a very serious report to me."

"Has he, sir?" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"It appears," said Richard Dalton severely, "that you four juniors have assaulted Carthew, and, indeed, ejected him from a study in the Fourth Form passage with considerable violence."

"We—we persuaded him to leave, sir!" murmured Jimmy.

"We didn't want Carthew in our study, sir," ventured Lovell. "We're not on visiting terms with the Sixth, really."

"This is a serious matter, Lovell. It seems that you four juniors have taken possession of a study belonging to Lattrey, Peele, and Gower. So Carthew informs me."

"Carthew's offside, sir," said Raby.

"What?"

"I—I mean, he's got it wrong, sir. It's our study—the end study, sir—every fellow in the Fourth knows it's ours. Peele does. Don't you, Peele?"

"No, I don't!" snapped Cyril Peele.

"I know it's my study!"

"Look here, you cad—"

"Silence!" exclaimed Dr. Dalton.

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir! Certainly!"

"If you'll let me explain, sir," said Jimmy Silver meekly.

"I am awaiting for you to explain, Silver, if you have any explanation to give."

"You know, sir, that we got back late this term, owing to our being laid up with colds," said Jimmy. "We found that those cads—I—I mean, those chaps—had bagged our study before we got here. So we—we took possession, sir. I don't know why Carthew butted in. He knew that it was our study."

Mr. Dalton glanced at the Sixth-Former.

"I intervened to see fair play, as I've told you, sir," said Carthew. "Peele claimed my protection, as he had been

turned out of his study. It seems to be the rule that any boys can claim an unoccupied study at the beginning of term. Silver had that study last term—Peele has it now. I was bound to interfere, as a prefect—and these juniors actually seized me and threw me out of the room—"

"You shouldn't have butted in!" exclaimed Lovell. "You know jolly well that those rotters had bagged our study!"

"How dare you, Lovell?" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. He rose to his feet, and picked up his cane. "Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

Lovell tucked his hand under his arm and squeezed it hard. Evidently Richard Dalton was not to be trifled with.

"Whatever may be your dispute with other members of your Form, Silver, you are well aware that you have no right to resist a prefect forcibly," said Mr. Dalton. "I shall cane you all severely!"

"Oh!"

"With regard to the claim to the study," continued Mr. Dalton, "it certainly seems hard that you should lose your old quarters, but Peele and his friends are acting strictly within their rights."

"Oh!"

"I think it would, however, show a better feeling on the part of Peele and Lattrey and Gower if they would consent to return to their old quarters and allow you to have your old study," continued Mr. Dalton, with a glance at Peele & Co.

The three cads of the Fourth stood grimly silent.

Their consent would have won them the approval of their Form master; but Mr. Dalton's approval did not tempt them to give way. They were not on the best of terms with Mr. Dalton, anyhow. Mr. Dalton was rather rough on slackers; and Peele & Co. were slackers of the first water.

Indeed, so far from desiring to gratify Mr. Dalton, Peele & Co. found some satisfaction in disappointing him.

So they stood silent.

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"You do not feel disposed to do this, Peele?" asked the Fourth Form master, after a pause.

"No, sir!" answered Peele sullenly. "It's our study, sir," said Gower. "It's a better one than our old one. Why should we give it up?"

"Very well!" said Mr. Dalton quietly. "Silver, these boys must be allowed to retain the study, since they insist upon their strict rights in the matter. I cannot say I approve of their conduct, but I am bound to be just. Any further attempt to deprive them of the study by force will be dealt with very severely."

"Oh!"  
"I shall now punish you for laying hands upon Carthew of the Sixth Form!"

Peele & Co. left the study, and in the corridor they grinned at one another joyously. They had always been "up against" Uncle James of Rookwood and his chums; and at last they had succeeded, beyond the shadow of a doubt, in giving Uncle James a fall.

Swish, swish, swish!  
The study door opened, and the Fistical Four came out. Their faces were set and grim. They did not even look at the grinning trio—they marched down the passage in silence.

It was not till they reached the Fourth Form quarters, and were ensconced in their new study—Peele's old study—that they gave expression to their deep feelings. Then there was a painful chorus.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Lovell's Way!

**W**HAT'S going to be done?" Arthur Edward asked that question a few days later, in exasperated tones.

Arthur Edward had asked it, on the average, about seventeen times a day, since the return of the Fistical Four to the classic shades of Rookwood School.

Peele & Co. were victorious, the Form master's decision confirmed them in their possession of the famous end study.

But that, to Arthur Edward Lovell, was a trifle light as air.

Lovell's view was that the end study was his study; his Form master's decision to the contrary notwithstanding.

Mr. Richard Dalton was master of the Fourth, and his word was law, or should have been law. Generally it was law to the Co.; they liked Dicky Dalton, and backed him up. On this occasion, however, they considered Mr. Dalton off-side.

Lovell was the most emphatic of the four; but his chums agreed with Arthur Edward. The end study was their study; and the only doubtful point was, how to recover the stolen goods, so to speak.

There was the question of prestige to be considered, as well as that of the study itself.

The Fistical Four were great men in the Fourth, and it was simply impossible for them to accept a defeat at the hands of a set of slacking, smoky, no-account outsiders like Peele & Co.

"We shall have Tubby Muffin cheeking us next!" said Lovell bitterly.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Fellows keep on asking us if we're going to have our study back!" said Raby. "It's sickening."

"Towney and Toppo were saying to-day that they're surprised at our letting Peele knock us out!" growled Newcome. "Townsend said we were back numbers now. I punched his nose."

"Well, what's going to be done," asked

Lovell. "We've got to have our study back, I suppose. I believe you're supposed to be a sort of leader, Jimmy Silver."

"I believe so!" assented Jimmy. "Well, lead, then!" said Lovell. "Show us how we're to get those cads out of our study. We shall have all the fellows grinning at us. The Modern cads have been chipping me about it. I had a fight yesterday with Tommy Dodd, and another with Towle. Bad enough if it was anybody else, but to let a smoky slacking cad like Peele dish us—bah!"

And Arthur Edward expressed his feelings by an emphatic snort.

"Festina lente!" said Jimmy serenely.

"What?"

"That means, make haste slowly!" the captain of the Fourth kindly explained.

Another snort from Lovell.

"Do you think I want you to construe a silly Latin tag for me!" he bawled.

"Talk sense! What's going to be done?"

"We're going to be done!" growled Raby, "and Jimmy is going to take it lying down and tell us to keep smiling."

"The fact is, this Co. wants a new leader," said Lovell. "Jimmy's played out. Towney's right, he's a back number. He lets himself be licked by a cad like Peele. I'd better take the matter in hand."

"And what's your programme, old chap, if you do?" asked Jimmy.

"Well, I'd give 'em a jolly good hiding all round!" said Lovell.

"That wouldn't capture the study."

"It would be some satisfaction anyhow."

"Dear man!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Leave it to your Uncle James. I'm thinking it out."

"What with?" jeered Lovell. "I'm fed-up with leaving it to you, Jimmy. You leave it to me. I've got a plan."

Jimmy Silver smiled. His faith in the planning capacity of Arthur Edward was not great.

"A pretty good plan!" said Lovell.

"Look here! Suppose I give Peele a terrific hiding every day till he asks us to take the study back. He's a shady rotter, and thrashings will do him good. Of course, we can't openly thrash the chaps into handing over the study. Dicky Dalton would be down on that. But I can lick Peele every day, and he will understand in the long run that the study's got to be handed over."

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy.

"I'll row with him about something else, see, so that he can't sneak to Dalton and say we're hammering him for the study!" said Lovell. "That's strategy."

"Oh! That's strategy, is it?" gasped Jimmy.

"Yes. I'm a pretty good strategist."

"Great pip!"

Lovell jumped up. He had finished tea, and having this great strategic plan in mind, he was keen to put it into operation.

"But—hold on—"

"Rats!" said Lovell.

Arthur Edward Lovell stalked out of the study. Jimmy Silver sighed. When Arthur Edward took the bit between his teeth, as it were, there was no stopping him. But Jimmy was not looking for great results from Lovell's strategy. To Jimmy's mind, it somewhat resembled the strategy of a bull charging a gate.

"There'll be a row!" said Raby dubiously.

The three juniors followed Lovell. That energetic and strenuous youth had already found Cyril Peele in the quadrangle.

He was losing no time. A dozen

juniors surrounded the two, and the "row" was already in progress.

"Sneaking, smoky, shady, slacking worm!" Lovell was saying, as his chums joined the interested circle.

"Go it, Lovell!" said Mornington. "Lovell's getting eloquent! Carry on with the giddy adjectives."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cyril Peele shrugged his slim shoulders, and curled his lip. He was not the fellow to stand up to Arthur Edward in desperate combat; but he did not seem alarmed.

Perhaps some of his confidence was due to the fact that he was standing only a few yards from Mr. Dalton's study window, and that a row in the quad at that spot could scarcely fail to attract the Form master's notice.

Lovell's powerful voice, undoubtedly, must have been audible in Mr. Dalton's study; a circumstance of which the excited Arthur Edward took no heed.

"What you want," continued Lovell, "is a hiding! You're a disgrace to the Form, Peele!"

"Go hon!"

"A slacking rotter!" said Lovell.

"How often do you show up at the footer? Only when a prefect takes you by the neck and runs you down to Little Side, Yah! Slacker!"

"Carry on!" said Peele cheerfully.

"Put up your hands!" roared Lovell.

"What for?" asked Peele pleasantly.

"Are you going to fight me because I'm not keen on footer?"

There was a chuckle from the spectators.

"Lovell—"

"Dry up, Jimmy! I'm managing this!" said Lovell. "Put up your hands, Peele, or I'll dot you on the boko!"

"You won't get me out of the end study that way, dear boy," grinned Peele.

"That's for your nose!" said Lovell savagely, as Peele put his hands into his pockets instead of putting them up for defence.

Whack!

Peele accepted that punch on the nose with cheery fortitude. He knew that Mr. Dalton was now at his study window.

The window went up with a bang.

"Lovell!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" gasped Lovell, spinning round to the window, and finding himself face to face with Mr. Richard Dalton.

For once, the young Form master looked thoroughly angry.

"Lovell, you have deliberately picked a quarrel with Peele, and struck him!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "You have acted like a bully, Lovell."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Lovell. "I—I haven't struck him, sir—only punched his nose!"

"Come into my study, Lovell!"

"Oh dear!"

Arthur Edward Lovell tramped away to the door. The rest of the juniors drew a little closer to the window to have a view, from that point of vantage, of the subsequent proceedings.

Lovell entered the study dismally. He found that Mr. Dalton had his cane in hand, ready.

"Lovell, it is my duty to punish you severely," said the master of the Fourth. "There is no doubt in my mind that you have picked this quarrel with Peele, who has given no offence, solely on account of the dispute about the study."

"Oh!" stuttered Lovell, wondering how on earth Mr. Dalton had guessed that.

"Hold out your hand, Lovell! Now the other—and the other again!"

Swish, swish, swish!

Mr. Dalton laid down the cane.

"If there should be any further fighting between you and Peele, Lovell, I shall investigate the matter with great care; and if I find that you are the aggressor, I shall report you to Dr. Chisholm for a flogging," said Mr. Dalton. "You may go!"

Lovell went.

The crowd outside the study broke up, chuckling.

"I wonder what Lovell expected?" Mornington remarked. "What a brain, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the new study that evening Arthur Edward Lovell's prep was incessantly interrupted by the necessity of rubbing his hands. On the following day he did not seek out Cyril Peele for a licking. That wonderful plan was "off," and Arthur Edward Lovell, for the present at least, allowed his gifts of strategy to rest.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Caught Out!

"WAKE UP!"

"Goooogh!"

"Wake up, fathead!"

Lovell rubbed his eyes, and blinked at Jimmy Silver in the gloom of the dormitory.

The hour was late, and there was silence and slumber in the dormitory of the Classical Fourth. But Jimmy Silver was out of bed, shaking Lovell with one hand, and holding the other over Lovell's mouth by way of a precaution.

It was three days since the failure of Lovell's wonderful strategy. During those three days Jimmy Silver had been understudying the celebrated Brer Fox—lying low and saying "nuffin'." Peele & Co. were in victorious occupation of the end study, and the Classical Fourth had come to the conclusion that Jimmy Silver had accepted his defeat. They were yet to learn that the astute Uncle James was only biding his time.

Arthur Edward Lovell blinked in the gloom, yawned, and sat up.

"Don't make a row!" whispered Jimmy Silver. "Don't wake the whole giddy dormitory!"

Lovell grunted, and turned out. Raby and Newcome, already awakened and out of bed, were dressing quietly in the dark. Lovell followed their example.

"Is it a raid on the Moderns?" whispered Lovell.

"No, ass!"

"Then what is it?" grunted Lovell.

"You'll see."

Lovell gave a suppressed snort. Jimmy Silver led the way silently to the door, and the Fistical Four stepped into the corridor, leaving a slumbering dormitory behind them.

"And now where?" grumbled Lovell. "Follow your leader."

Arthur Edward suppressed his feelings, and followed his leader. Lights were all out in the upper passages, though from the big staircase there was a glow of light downstairs.

Jimmy Silver led the way to the Fourth Form passage, and, to the surprise of his chums, to the end study.

The Fistical Four entered that study, and Jimmy closed the door. Then Lovell gave a chuckle.

"I catch on!" he said. "Ragging their quarters—what?"

Jimmy Silver smiled in the darkness. "That's what you'd call 'strategy.' I suppose, old bean?" he remarked. "But I'm not looking for a licking from Dicky Dalton to-morrow!"

"Then what the thump—I say, the window's open!" ejaculated Lovell, all of a sudden.

"Quite so!" assented Jimmy. "If you'd looked round the dorm you'd have seen that three fellows were out of bed."

"Those cads?" murmured Raby.

"That's it! Peele and Gower and Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver. "The dear boys have gone out of bounds. I've been keeping an eye on them—and that's why we're here. Strategy, old chap, but a different brand!"

"Look here—" murmured Lovell.

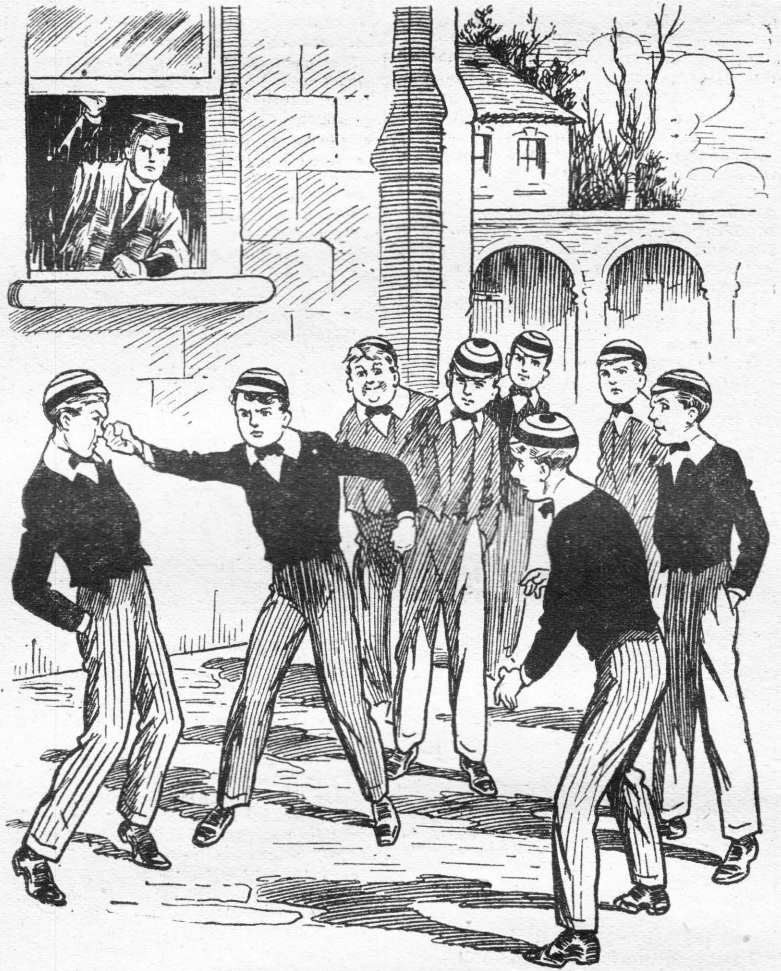
"You see, this study is specially useful for that game!" smiled Jimmy Silver. "They've got a knotted rope

them," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "I'm going to point out to them the error of their ways."

"Blessed if I can see what you're driving at!" grunted Lovell.

"You wouldn't!" assented Jimmy.

The captain of the Fourth pushed up the sash of the window a little, and reached out to the rope. The rope was fastened to the leg of the study table, stretching across to the window; outside it was completely hidden by the thick ivy. Jimmy Silver leaned out and peered into the gloom, broken by a glimmer of starlight. He pulled up the rope till the lower end was six feet from the ground, as he judged.



A SHOCK FOR MR. DALTON! "That's for your nose!" said Lovell savagely. Whack! Peele accepted that punch with cheery fortitude. He knew that Mr. Dalton was at his study window and had seen all that had happened. (See Chapter 2.)

from the window, and it can't be seen in the ivy. They've left the sash an inch up. Easy enough to get in and out—what?"

"I—I see," said Newcome. "But—" "But what?"

"I don't see what it matters to us. They're rotten cads—I suppose they've gone down to the Bird-in-Hand to play cards with the blackguards there—but we're not giving them away. May as well get back to the dormitory, so far as I can see."

"That isn't very far, old scout," answered Jimmy Silver. "We're staying here till they come back."

"What on earth for?"

"To have a little conversation with

"I—I say, that'll give 'em a start when they get back!" murmured Raby.

"I think so," assented Jimmy.

"Serve 'em right!" said Lovell. "But I don't see sticking out of bed for an hour or two to jape those shady cads! We can't keep them out."

"Leave it to your Uncle James!" urged Jimmy Silver.

Uncle James had his way, as he generally did. The Fistical Four waited, Lovell taking a seat in the armchair and nodding off to sleep. It was nearly an hour later when three shadowy figures came stealing through the gloom round the School House buildings, and

stopped under the window of the end study.

The three breakers of bounds had returned. They had not returned in a happy mood or high spirits. They had been "seeing life," as the young rascals considered it—and they had paid for the privilege to the extent of all their available pocket-money, which reposed in the pockets of Mr. Joey Hook, the billiards-sharper at the Bird-in-Hand.

"Where's that dashed rope?" muttered Gower.

"In the ivy, you idiot!" was Peele's polite reply.

"I can't find it!"

"More ass you!"

Peele groped for the rope; but he, too, failed to find it. Lattrey, staring upward, discerned the end of the rope dangling overhead. He uttered an exclamation of affright.

"It's been pulled up!"

"Oh gad!"

Peele & Co. stared up at the rope. It was out of their reach—just out! For the moment their hearts stood still.

"Can't be a master or a prefect!" gasped Peele. "They'd have taken the rope in. It's some beast found we're out, and japing us!"

"Wha-a-a-are we going to do?" stammered Gower.

"Climb on my shoulders and grab the rope; you can reach it."

"Oh, good!"

Gower climbed on Peele's shoulders. But as he grabbed at the rope it was jerked from above, and danced out of his reach.

"S-s-somebody's pulling it!" gasped Gower. "I—I can't catch it!"

He jumped to the ground again.

Peele gritted his teeth savagely, his face white with rage. He had no doubt that it was a jape on the part of some playful junior, who had discovered the absence of the black sheep from the dormitory. But the danger was great.

Breaking bounds after lights-out was a risky business at the best of times. Every minute the black sheep lingered outside the House added to the risk.

By this time three young rascals were deeply repenting that they had gone out of school bounds to see "life," as seen in the smoky back parlour of the Bird-in-Hand at Coombe.

A head and shoulders appeared over the window-sill above, and a smiling face looked down.

In the glimmer of the starlight, Cyril Peele was able to recognise the captain of the Fourth.

"Jimmy Silver!" he breathed.

"Drop that rope down, Silver!" hissed Lattrey.

Jimmy Silver let the rope fall.

"You first, Peele!" he called out.

"Hush!"

Peele clambered desperately up the knotted rope. He had reached the broad window-sill of the end study, and thrust his head and shoulders in at the window.

He stopped there, several pairs of hands grasping him and pinning him in that position, head and shoulders inside and legs outside.

Peele panted with rage.

"Will you let me in, you rotters?"

"Rotters?" Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"I hardly think we're the rotters present, Peele. You've been out of school bounds—"

"Mind your own business!"

"You smell of baccy!" grunted Lovell.

"Let me in!" hissed Peele.

"All in good time!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "I suppose it's no

good telling you that we're shocked at you, Peele—"

Peele ground his teeth.

"Serve the rotters right to shut them out!" said Newcome. "My hat! What would the Head say when they were found outside the House in the morning?"

"You—you couldn't—" panted Peele. "Look here—let me in! I—I—I'll do anything you like—"

"You've got to!" said Jimmy Silver coolly. "You're going to do exactly as I tell you, Peele."

"What do you want?"

Jimmy Silver drew the window-sash down gently upon Peele's back. Lovell and Raby held him by the shoulders, Newcome by the collar. Peele, utterly helpless, could only submit to his fate.

Jimmy pulled the study table softly under the window, and laid a pad of impot paper before Peele, and dipped a pen in the ink. He placed the pen in the hand of the amazed Peele. Then he turned on a glimmer of his electric torch.

"Write as I tell you!" he said.

"But—I—I—"

"Get going! 'Being out of bounds at eleven p.m.'—got that?"

"I—I won't! I—"

"Then good-night!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

"Hold on, you—you beast! I'll write it!"

"In your usual hand, dear boy," said Jimmy Silver. "Any tricks, and you'll simply have to write it over again. Got that? Now write—'having been to the Bird-in-Hand—'"

"I—I— All right!"

"I hereby promise to turn over a new leaf, and try to become decent, on condition of being let into the House. Got that?"

Peele scribbled desperately.

"I—I've done it! Hang you!"

Jimmy scanned the paper.

"Good! Now write it all over again, in your usual handwriting," he said cheerfully.

Peele ground his teeth with rage. But without a word he obeyed; it was evidently useless to argue with Uncle James of Rookwood.

"Now sign it!" said Jimmy Silver.

Peele signed the paper.

"Let him in!" said Jimmy.

Peele rolled into the room. He picked himself up, and fixed a look of the deepest animosity on the Fistical Four.

It was evidently in Peele's mind to make a desperate effort to re-possess himself of the paper, now that he was safe inside. But Lovell's big fists were clenched ready for him, and Cyril Peele thought better of it.

"Keep that dark!" he muttered thickly. "You know it's enough to get me the sack from the school if the Head saw it."

"I know it," assented Jimmy Silver. "You can clear, Peele."

Peele left the study, sneaking back silently to the dormitory, with a heart full of rage and all uncharitableness. Jimmy Silver looked down from the study window at Lattrey and Gower, who were staring upward in dumb dismay.

"Gower next!" called Jimmy.

Gower was very quickly up the rope. He was stopped on the window-sill, half in and half out.

"Read that paper, and sign it," said Jimmy.

"Look here, what—"

"Shut up, dear boy, and do as you're told. This is where you obey orders," smiled Jimmy Silver.

Gower read the paper with a white face. He signed his name below Peele's with a shaking hand.

"Right!" said the captain of the Fourth. "You can clear, Gower."

"I—I say—"

"Clear!" snapped Jimmy Silver, and Gower cleared.

Jimmy leaned from the window again and called to Mark Lattrey. That youth swarmed up the rope.

The process of reading and signing the paper was repeated. Lattrey realised that he had no choice in the matter, and he did not waste time in arguing.

In a couple of minutes Lattrey was on his way to the dormitory.

And the Fistical Four returned to the Fourth Form dormitory, and a few minutes later they were fast asleep. Sleep did not come so soon to Cyril Peele, however. That shady and unscrupulous youth had some thinking to do, and his thoughts were not agreeable. And when he slept at last he dreamed that he was being expelled from Rookwood by a wrathful headmaster, and in the morning Peele of the Fourth turned out of bed in a temper that was more than Hunnish.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Sold!

**J**IMMY SILVER had a smiling face the following day.

So far as Jimmy was concerned, the dispute over the possession of the end study seemed to be forgotten. When Arthur Edward Lovell raised the question, for perhaps the hundredth time, Uncle James smiled, and answered:

"Keep smiling."

"But what's going to be done?" snorted Lovell.

"Peele!" answered Jimmy.

"I don't see it."

"I should be jolly surprised if you did, old chap," was Jimmy Silver's affable response.

Which was not very satisfactory to Arthur Edward Lovell. His faith in Uncle James was strained almost to breaking point.

Peele eyed Jimmy Silver in class that morning, and after class he seemed to expect Jimmy to seek him. But Jimmy did not. He strolled out into the quad with his chums, apparently oblivious of Cyril Peele's unimportant existence.

Peele did not seem at ease that day. Lattrey and Gower seemed troubled. They had tea in the end study—still their study—and some fellows in the passage heard sounds of angry argument and recrimination from the room.

But when the three black sheep came out after tea they seemed to be in some sort of sullen agreement. They proceeded to the first study in the passage—now occupied by the Fistical Four.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were beginning prep. Jimmy kindly suspended that occupation as the visitors looked in.

"Hallo! You fellows forgotten that you've changed studies?" he exclaimed. "Or do you want to change back?"

"We're ready to change back," said Peele.

"My hat!" Arthur Edward Lovell stared at them. "Mean that, Peele?"

Peele scowled.

"You know we've got no choice in the matter," he snarled. "You've got that paper we signed—we'll let you have the study for it."

"Oh!" exclaimed Arthur Edward, a light breaking on his mind.

Jimmy Silver raised his hand.

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But they no longer flew S.S.W. They swung out to sea and set a S.W. course. The island group of the Hebrides was their objective now, but I cannot tell by what wonderful means they felt their way down the map of the world.

Then suddenly out from the frowning cliffs swept a bird. He looked to be red, and almost fawn about the head when the light caught him. His wings were long and sharp as scimitars; his tail was long, too, and forked, and he was big for a bird—about two feet. But it was his flight that arrested the eye instantly—a marvellous, graceful, effortless succession of gliding circles. It was almost as if he was suspended on an invisible wire which was slowly swinging in a vast circle and being wound upwards as it swung.

He was a bird of prey who had been nesting somewhere in the south of Sweden, and who was journeying to warmer climes.

In a few minutes he, too, finally went from sight altogether. When next he appeared he was dashing through the ranks of the waders so quickly that he was past them in a second, and was coming down. He sailed to the cliffs and settled, a lifeless redshank hanging from one of his murderous yellow claws. Then he fed.

Half an hour later he made out to sea on a course which, if followed, would land him at the Hebrides.

He did not land there, however. He passed the journeying hosts of water-birds sleeping there in the dark, and when the sun rose next morning we find him asleep, too—and snoring fearfully, it must be admitted—on a ledge of some towering cliffs on the North Coast of Scotland.

Far below him the bright green waters of a small inlet glittered. Here and there on the water were wild ducks of various species, and a big, black, and rascally old carrion crow was beating slowly along the cliffs.

Now crows have very quick eyes—almost like field-glasses. Therefore, this one might have been expected to have seen the kite, but strangely enough he did not until he was almost upon the fine-

looking bird of prey. This was probably because the sleeping kite was quite motionless. Indeed, it may well have been his loud snoring that caused him to be observed.

Anyway, the crow checked in his flight instantly, for crows love to have a claw in every wild pie. He checked with great caution, and was on the kite like a black bolt. But something went wrong with the plan of action at the last moment. Possibly it was the rush of the crow's wings that gave the crow away. Be that as it may, just half a second before he arrived the kite opened one yellow eye, struck like lightning upwards so that you could see the sable bird's breast feathers fly, and fell headlong on his back. Then he shot upwards like a rocket, and before the crow knew anything at all the kite was sailing far aloft on his wonderful flight on still wings.

The crow could not indulge in aerial gymnastics of that kind, and slowly flapped away with a vulgar "cr-r-r-a!" The kite continued to sail beautifully round and round, with one eye on the enemy and the other on the cloud-like flocks of the newly-arrived water-birds which, as you know, he had passed in the night. They were settling on the mud-banks, eager to breakfast on "lob" worms, sandhoppers, shrimps, and the like.

The waiting, watching bird of prey above suddenly shut his wings and hurtled downwards, straight at the flock of grey plovers just then about to settle. In a flash he had cut out a single bird from the flock, and was hunting it across the sky with such indescribable fury and dash that one marvelled that any bird could keep ahead of him.

The grey plover is a wonderful flyer itself, being a "world-circler," if I may so put it, twice every year; but it had never come across a bird that could follow its prey at the darting, twisting, hurtling speed of this kite. Indeed, at last its strength gave out, and it sunk helpless, to be instantly pounced upon by the hungry kite.

That evening a man in the South of Scotland, who was returning home from wildfowl shooting, fired at a rook pigeon. He killed the bird, and it fell among some boulders. The man "uncocked" his gun as he began to climb over the boulders to fetch the pigeon, and as he did so he noticed for the first time high overhead a big, reddish bird.

Ten seconds later something went whistling past his head. It was the big bird, going like the wind, and before he realised what was happening it had dipped like lightning over the boulders and was rising again rapidly, with the dead pigeon in its claws. It was the kite, of course.

"Bang!" went the gun. But the kite went gaily away. The man had missed.

The kite was hungry, but he did not stop to investigate his pigeon until he had left the man quite thirty miles behind.

Two days after we find our kite in Monmouthshire. He had journeyed down the west coast, more or less hanging on the flanks of the great flock of birds he had discovered in Norway.

He had left the wildfowl seven miles away, feeding at the mud-flats of the River Severn, where they were safe from his attacks, and had come up the River Wye, past the town of Chepstow, to try his luck among the hills.

All at once his telescopic eyes spotted a tiny white dot on the far-away common. The dot proved to be a sheep which, getting on its back in a depression in the ground, was unable to get up again. The sheep was quite dead when he found it, and, settling immediately, he prepared for a glorious gorge.

One of those wretched carrion crows was perched on a dead tree not far away, but he did not seem inclined to dispute the banquet—for a very good reason. And the kite gaily hopped on to the poor dead head to begin. Then something went snap, and the kite was a dead bird. There was a trap on the sheep's head, but it had been set for the crow, not the kite.

THE END.

## A MATTER OF STRATEGY!

(Continued from page 6.)

"If you've come here to bargain, Peele, you've come to the wrong shop," he said.

"Let's have the paper, Silver, old chap!" pleaded Gower. "I—I know you wouldn't show it to anybody; but—but if it got dropped about—if a master saw it. If—if—" Gower fairly trembled. "Silver, old man, we own up we played you a dirty trick in bagging the study while you were on the sick list. Can't say fairer than that."

Jimmy Silver reflected. His chums grinned.

"If you want to do the right thing, of course we're bound to agree, as model youths, and a standing example to Rookwood," he said gravely.

"Hear, hear!" grinned Lovell. "You'll hand the paper back—you'll promise—" began Peele eagerly.

"That's enough! I've said that I won't bargain with you!" said Jimmy Silver loftily. "If you think it right to hand back our study, go to Mr. Dalton and ask him to give his official permission. I can't trust you to play the game, Peele; but you can trust me. Take your choice, anyhow."

Peele gritted his teeth, and went, Gower and Lattrey following him with dismal faces. There was a discussion in the passage, but it was a discussion that could have only one conclusion. Peele

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& Co. proceeded to the Fourth Form master's study.

Mr. Dalton was surprised and pleased when the three erring youths explained that they felt that Silver ought to have his study back. They would be satisfied with their old quarters again.

"I am glad to hear this," said Mr. Dalton. "I think you have acted rightly. I will send a message to Silver and inform him of this, and I am very pleased that the dispute has been settled so satisfactorily."

Peele & Co. drifted out of the study. Mr. Dalton visited the Fistical Four personally to inform them of the change. When he was gone, Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged smiling looks.

Within half an hour the Fistical Four had installed themselves in their old quarters. The usurpers had been ejected at last, and from the point of view of Jimmy Silver & Co. all was calm and bright.

A little later Peele & Co. looked in. "Don't interrupt, you fellows," said Lovell. "We're busy."

"We've given you back your study," said Peele, between his teeth. "Dalton's made a note of it, and you know we can't go back on it now. Now it's up to you to hand us that paper, Jimmy Silver."

"That paper you signed last night?" smiled Jimmy.

"Yes. You—you—I mean it's up to you, Silver."

"Sorry; it can't be done. You see, I burned it with a match last night," said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

The three black sheep jumped.

"You—you burned it?" stammered Peele.

Jimmy nodded.

"Too jolly dangerous to keep about," he answered.

"Burned it?" said Lattrey blankly. "Then—then—then it wasn't in existence when—we came and offered to hand over the study for it?"

"It wasn't," agreed Jimmy. "And you—you let us—" howled Peele.

"Let you what?"

"We—we thought you still had the paper!" hissed Peele, white with rage and chagrin. "Do you think we'd have given up the study if we hadn't supposed you had a hold over us?"

"Wouldn't you?" smiled Jimmy.

"No!" yelled Peele. "You know we wouldn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Lovell and Raby and Newcome. The expression on Cyril Peele's face delighted them.

"Sold!" ejaculated Gower.

"Sold!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "And cheap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peele & Co. tramped out of the study. A roar of laughter followed them. And the Fistical Four resumed prep in the end study—their own study again—and in a mood of exuberant satisfaction that certainly was not caused by the prep.

THE END.

("The Boy Who Ran Away!" is the title of next week's topping story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood.)