

For Good School Stories You Can't Beat This Paper!

The POPULAR

2^d

EVERY TUESDAY.
Week Ending
November 13th,
1926.
New Series.
No. 407.



Something New in Form Masters!
... SEE THE GREAT ST. JIM'S STORY INSIDE ...

"UNCLE JAMES" AGAIN! Sandy Smacke, the new boot-boy, finds himself up against the cads of the school, until Jimmy Silver chips in, and takes him under his wing!



Jimmy Sees Fair Play!

A SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE STORY
OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE CHUMS
OF ROOKWOOD.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Kindness of Uncle James!

CHEEK!
Old Mack, the porter at Rookwood School, pronounced that word with emphasis.

And Jimmy Silver, who was coming in at the gates, glanced round to see what it was that had roused the ire of Mr. Mack.

"Cheek!" repeated Mack.

"But—"

"Cheek!" said Mack, for the third time.

Old Mack was standing in the doorway of his lodge, with a frown upon his crusty brow. Before him stood a lad of about Jimmy Silver's own age and size—a rather striking-looking youth.

He had a slim, well-knit figure. But his face was of a sandy complexion of a pronounced kind; and his hair was a sandy shock. Under his cap it showed a sandy rim.

There were sandy fellows at Rookwood; but this fellow was really remarkably sandy—of the sand, sandy, so to speak.

He was not a new boy for the school, that was clear.

He was dressed in cheap, ready-made clothes that fitted him far from well; his boots were clean, but very worn; his wrists emerged from sleeves too short for him.

Jimmy Silver could not help wondering who and what he was. It was no business of Jimmy Silver's, of course. But Uncle James of Rookwood had a kind heart; and the poorly-clad fellow rather touched it. Jimmy Silver always had a soft corner for a fellow who was down on his luck.

So instead of passing on his way, Jimmy Silver paused. He paused, although it was tea-time, and he knew that Lovell and Raby and Newcome had tea ready in the end study.

"You oughtn't to come to this 'ere gate!" said Mack sternly. "I said 'cheek,' and I mean cheek! A-sticking of your tin trunk down in front of my lodge!"

"I'm sorry—"

THE POPULAR.—No. 407.

"I should 'ope so!" said Mack.

There was a small trunk, of the tin variety, lying beside the lad as he stood before the annoyed porter. It was locked and secured by a strap, and had apparently been borne hither on the shoulder of the shabby youth. Obviously, it contained the personal goods of the youth, indicating that he had come to the school for some employment or other. And that reminded Jimmy Silver that he had heard—and forgotten—that a new boot-boy was expected in the lower regions of the School House.

Apparently this was the new boots. "I didn't know," said the youth apologetically. "Someone on the road told me this was Rookwood School, so I came in."

"Cheek!" said Mr. Mack. "Boot-boys coming to my lodge! Like me to show you in to the 'Ead, I suppose."

"Where am I to go, sir?"

The "sir" placated Mack a little. "Well, you ain't to butt in 'ere!" he said. "What's your name, young shaver?"

"Smacke—Timothy Smacke."

"Well, young Smacke, you clear out of this, and go round to the servants' hentrance," said Mack. "You'll find it—if you look. Look till you find it—see? Then you ask for the 'ouse-keeper, Mrs. Maloney. And don't you show your sandy 'ead at these 'ere gates agin, or you'll 'ear of it!"

And with that old Mack withdrew into his lodge, and closed the door with a bang, almost on the nose of Timothy Smacke.

Jimmy Silver came across to Master Smacke and tapped him on the shoulder. Smacke turned round to look at him.

"I'll show you the way, kid, if you like," said Jimmy.

"You are very kind, sir!"

"Bosh! Come along with me."

The youth picked up his tin trunk and set it on his shoulder. Townsend and Topham of the Fourth came in at the gates, and they stared at Jimmy and his companion. Townsend extracted an eyeglass from his pocket and adjusted it in his eye, to bestow upon them a second and more scrutinising stare.

"By gad!" said Townsend.

"My hat!" chortled Topham. "Who's your friend, Silver?"

"Go and eat coke!" was Jimmy Silver's polite reply. "This way, Smacke!"

"Smacke!" repeated Topham. "Ye gods, what a name! Relation of yours, Silver?"

Smacke turned to the two juniors and touched his cap.

"If you please, gentlemen, I'm the new boot-boy!" he said.

"Oh, gad!" said Townsend, almost overcome. "A Fourth Form chap chummin' with a boot-boy! Just like those bounders in the end study, what?"

"Oh, just!" said Topham, with a nod. "Come on, Smacke!" said Jimmy Silver, without heeding the nuts of the Classical Fourth.

Peele of the Fourth had followed Towny and Topy in at the gates, and paused to listen to what was said. Now he chimed in.

"What's the cad doin' in the quad, if he's the boot-boy? Why don't you kick him out, Silver?"

Townsend and Topham, with lofty looks, walked on. Jimmy did not heed them; the minds of Towny and Topy were as lofty as they were vacant, and as vacant as they were lofty. They were not worth the trouble of knocking their heads together. But Cyril Peele, being offensive as well as lofty, deserved some little attention from Uncle James—and received it on the spot.

"Dear man," said Jimmy Silver, approaching Peele with a cheery smile. "I think I'll kick somebody out—and I rather think that it will be you, Cyril, old bean!"

"Look here—"

Jimmy's grasp was upon him the next moment.

Timothy Smacke, with his tin trunk on his shoulder, stood and looked on with a rather curious expression upon his sandy face.

Jimmy Silver spun Peele round in a grasp that Peele simply couldn't resist, and let out with his right boot.

Crash!

Peele went flying out of the gates. He dropped on his hands and knees in the road with a roar.

"Come on, Smacke!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

"Yes, sir!"

The boot-boy followed Jimmy. Cyril Peele sat up in the dust and blinked after them.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Oh! Ow!"

With a face of fury Peele picked himself up and limped in—possibly repenting him of his bad manners.

Jimmy Silver, dismissing Peele from his mind, led Smacke round to the servants' gate and rang the bell there. Tupper, the page, came to open the gate.

"New chum for you, Tuppy!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "This is Smacke, the new boot-boy."

"Ho!" said Tupper, eyeing the newcomer. "You can come in, Smacke!"

Tupper's manner was a little lofty; his position in the Rookwood establishment was superior to that of the new boot-boy, and Tupper's desire was that Smacke should understand that at the start. Jimmy Silver noted it, and grinned. Snobbishness was not confined to the dandies of the Fourth Form, by any means; it cropped up in the servants' hall—in his own way, Tupper, the page, was a smaller edition of the superb Towny of the Classical Fourth.

However, Tupper led Smacke on his way, and both of them disappeared from the view of Jimmy Silver. The captain of the Fourth hurried away—his little act of kindness had made him late for tea.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Mysterious!

"SILVER!" Jimmy Silver did not groan, but he felt like it. He was scudding into the School House, in a hurry to get to the end study to tea, when Bulkeley of the Sixth called to him in the corridor.

After keeping the study tea waiting while he looked after Master Smacke, it was rather hard cheese to be called on like this. Tea was ready in the end study, and Jimmy Silver, after a tramp on Coombe Heath, was more than ready.

However, Bulkeley was captain of the school, and Bulkeley's word was law. So Jimmy stopped in full career, turned round, and said as sweetly as he could:

"Yes, Bulkeley?"

"Erroll of the Fourth is wanted," said the prefect.

"Thank goodness!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm glad Erroll's wanted, and not little me," said Jimmy, with a grin. "I'm late for tea already."

"You young ass!" said Bulkeley, laughing. "Tell Erroll he's wanted in the Head's study, and he's to go at once."

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy was taking two steps at once up the staircase, when Bulkeley spoke to him again.

"Silver—"

Again Jimmy manfully suppressed a groan. He wondered resignedly whether he ever was going to get any tea!

"Yes, Bulkeley?"

"You may as well give Erroll a tip," said Bulkeley. "If he knows anything about Mornington, he'd better be quite candid with the Head."

Jimmy Silver jumped. For the moment he forgot tea—hungry as he undoubtedly was.

"Mornington?" he repeated blankly. "The chap who was expelled last term," said Bulkeley, with a nod. "Have you seen anything of him since, Silver?"

"Yes," said Jimmy wonderingly.

"We dropped on him during the vacation, when we were on tramp in the country—haven't seen him since that."

"Did he say anything about coming back to Rookwood?"

Jimmy made an effort to remember.

"I dare say he did," he answered. "I knew he'd like to come back—and I dare say he said so."

"You've not heard from him since."

"Not a word."

"Well, give Erroll my message. The Head wants to see him, and if he knows anything about Mornington, he'd better be candid," said the captain of Rookwood; and he turned away with that.

In great wonder, Jimmy Silver went up the big staircase and into the Fourth Form passage. He stopped at Study No. 4, which belonged to Kit Erroll. Erroll had that study to himself since the expulsion of Valentine Mornington from the school.

Jimmy tapped at the door and entered.

Kit Erroll was sitting at his table, with his books before him and a cloud of thought on his brow. He smiled faintly as the cheery face of Jimmy Silver looked in.

Jimmy gave Bulkeley's message tersely, and Erroll rose from the table, a strange expression on his face.

"I'll go," he said.

"If there's anything up, come along to the end study and tell us when you're through with his nibs!" said Jimmy Silver.

Erroll nodded, and left the study. Jimmy Silver went on to his own quarters, where a savoury aroma of fish and chips greeted him—also three severe faces. Lovell, Raby and Newcome had waited tea—it was rather a special tea—and they were peckish.

"You ass!" was Arthur Edward Lovell's friendly greeting.

"Late—as usual!" said Newcome.

"Fathead!" remarked George Raby. "We've kept the stuff hot. It would have served you right if we'd scoffed it."

"Sorry, old nuts!" said the captain of the Fourth. "Trot it out! Famished. Don't waste time talking."

"Here you are, fathead! What makes you late?" asked Lovell.

"Doing deeds of kindness to benighted boot-boys, and carrying messages for old Bulkeley," explained Jimmy Silver, as he sat down to tea.

"Boot-boys!" repeated Lovell blankly.

Jimmy Silver explained—without delaying operations on the fish and chips. Fish and chips, at the time, were really of more importance than explanations.

"Well, you're an ass!" said Raby.

"But I'm glad you kicked Peele."

"Peele wasn't," said Jimmy. "But I hope it will do him good. But never mind the giddy boot-boy; there seems to be news of old Morny."

And Jimmy explained further—and his chums were interested at once.

It was odd enough, considering that he had thoroughly deserved expulsion from the school, that Valentine Mornington had left so many friends behind him.

He had sinned, there was no doubt about that; but, then, he had repented, if only at the eleventh hour.

The Fistical Four remembered that he had been a good sportsman, except when his perverse and passionate temper overcame his judgment, and

they were rather prone to remember his good qualities than his bad.

And at that meeting during the vacation they had been very chummy with Morny, outcast from Rookwood as he was, and on the whole they would have been very glad if the Head had allowed him to return to the school.

But that, they knew, was impossible.

Dr. Chisholm's decision, when once he had come to it, was like unto the laws of the Medes and Persians—there was no change to be expected.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were rather keen to see Erroll when he came back from his visit to the Head's study. They had finished tea, when a tap came at the door, and Erroll came into the end study.

"Well?" Four voices uttered that interrogatory monosyllable at once.

Erroll's handsome face was very grave.

"Something's up?" asked Lovell.

"Yes. The Head's heard from Sir Rupert Stacpoole—Morny's guardian. Morny's cleared off from Stacpoole Lodge."

"Phew!"

"The awful ass!" said Jimmy Silver. "I thought that he was on quite good terms with his guardian now."

"It seems that he is," said Erroll. "They haven't parted on bad terms. Morny left a letter saying that he hoped to get a chance to return to Rookwood."

"But that's impossible."

"I know," Erroll nodded, with a troubled look. "I don't catch on to it. Goodness knows I want old Morny back, but I know there's no chance. He deserved what he got—I can't deny that, though he's my chum. There's no reason why the Head should pardon him—and he won't. Yet, in a letter I had from Morny a few days ago, he said practically the same thing. I had to show the Head the letter. He thought that, as Morny's best chum, I might know something of his movements—that's why he sent for me."

"But you don't?" asked Jimmy Silver.

Erroll shook his head.

"Nothing, I'm worried about it. It's impossible for Morny to come back here, and he oughtn't to have left his uncle's house, especially as they're on good terms at last. But there it is: that's what the Head told me, and I can't make head or tail of it. I wish I knew where Morny was."

"I suppose the jolly old baronet is rather upset," remarked Newcome.

"I suppose so. He's written to the Head to ask whether anything has been heard of Morny here. The Head can't tell him anything, of course. It's made him waxy again with Morny. He thought he'd heard the last of him—and he hasn't."

Erroll nodded to the chums of the Fourth, and left the end study, evidently very much troubled in his mind.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Trouble Below Stairs!

"LOOK here, Sandy!"

Thus Tupper.

The scene was the boot-room, two or three days after the arrival of Master Timothy Smacke, the new boot-boy. Smacke was engaged upon boots—there were endless, innumerable boots to keep Smacke busy; indeed, it was amazing how one youth of about fifteen could deal with so many boots. Tupper, resplendent in buttons, regarded the boot-boy, in his apron and shirt-sleeves, with loftiness and reproval. Smacke looked up.

"Who are you calling Sandy?" he asked.

"You!" said Tupper.

"Cut it out!" said the boot-boy.

"No cheek!" said Tupper, wagging a podgy forefinger at the boot-boy. "I don't want any of it, Smacke! If you don't want to be called 'Sandy,' don't go around with a mop that colour and a face that colour! Why, you're so sandy you look as if you'd put the sandy colour on specially, like the young gents in their private theatricals. What are you grinning at?"

"You, old bean!" said Smacke affably. "What's biting you, Tupper? You ain't a good-tempered cove!"

"Good-tempered enough, when my inferiors know their place and keep it!" said Tupper.

"Got any?" asked Smacke.

"Any what?"

"Inferiors."

"Look 'ere!" roared Tupper. "I've said I don't want any cheek, young Sandy, and I don't want any back-chat! Hasn't the 'ousekeeper told you that you're under me, 'ere?"

"Right on the wicket!" said Smacke.

"There you go—talking like the young gents!" said Tupper aggrieved. "Jest as if you was a young gent yourself!"

"My mistake!" said Smacke amicably. "But what's wrong, Tuppy? Don't I clean all the boots, and clean 'em clean?"

"Which you don't!" said Tupper severely. "I'd 'ad a complaint. Mr. Dalton's boots this morning was a disgrace."

Smacke started.

"The master of the Fourth? I turned out his boots in tip-top style, Tuppy, I did, really!"

"So you say!" sneered Tupper. "Well, Mr. Dalton's complained about his boots being dirty. Mrs. Maloney told me to speak to you."

"If Mr. Dalton's boots weren't clean, they were tampered with after I left them at his door, Tupper," said Smacke quietly.

"There you go again! Tampered with! Nice language for a boot-boy to use!" sneered Tupper. "Think you're a gent, I suppose, because you've got a job in a gentleman's school! You mind your p's and q's, young Smacke!"

With that, Tupper flung out of the boot-room in great wrath.

Timothy Smacke went on polishing the boots, with a thoughtful expression on his face.

Later in the day, there came a tap at the door of the end study, and Jimmy Silver, who was there, called out cheerily:



"UNCLE JAMES" of Rookwood.

"Trot in, fathead!"

It was a sandy-haired, sandy-faced youth who "trotted in." Jimmy Silver stared in surprise at Master Timothy Smacke. He had not expected a visit from the boot-boy.

"Hallo, old scout!" said Jimmy, kindly enough. "Anything I can do for you?"

"Yes, sir," said Smacke, "if you'll be so kind."

"Give it a name!" said Jimmy.

Jimmy Silver looked curiously at the new boot-boy.

"Have I seen you before, somewhere, kid?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; the day I came."

"I mean before you came to Rookwood?" Jimmy looked at him quite intently. "There's something quite familiar about your face."

"Sandy people are very much alike, sir, I think."

"That's the odd thing about it!" said Jimmy, eyeing him. "You seem to be like somebody I've known, who wasn't sandy. But I suppose I've never seen you before, as you say so. What is it you want?"

"You were kind enough to chip in, sir, the day I came, when a boy of this school was rude to me—"

"Peele?" said Jimmy. "Never mind him, kid; there's black sheep in every flock, and Peele's one of our black sheep."

"I don't mind him, sir, but he minds me," said the boot-boy. "Master Peele has made himself very unpleasant several times; and in my position, sir, of course I cannot say anything."

"Oh!" said Jimmy.

He was not surprised to hear it, though he wondered why the boot-boy had come to say this.

"I think, sir, that you would like to see fair play," said the boot-boy. "Mr. Dalton's boots were meddled with after I left them at his door, and it was done to get me into trouble. I think it must have been Master Peele. It's a serious thing for me, Master Silver, to have complaints made. I thought, perhaps, you would see fair play."

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy.

In such a case, Jimmy Silver was the very fellow to see fair play. But he could not help wondering how Smacke knew it.

How on earth did Timothy Smacke know that Jimmy, among the crowd of Rookwood fellows, was just the chap to come to in such a case? Certainly it showed amazing perspicacity on the part of a fellow who had seen him only once in his lifetime.

"You're sure of what you say, kid?" asked the captain of the Fourth, after a pause.

"I'm sure the boots were meddled with to cause me trouble, sir, and I think it was Master Peele."

"Leave it to me, then!" said Jimmy Silver. "If Peele's playing a sneaking game like that, taking it out of you because I kicked him, I'll jolly soon put a stop to it!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Timothy Smacke quitted the study, leaving Jimmy very thoughtful. As the boot-boy went down the Fourth Form passage, Peele and Lattrey and Gower looked out of their study with grinning faces. The three eads of the Fourth had seen Smacke pass, on his way to the end study; and they were waiting for him to return.

"Hold on there, Smacke!" called out Peele.

"Yes, sir!" said Smacke, stopping.

"What are you doing in our passage?"

"I came to speak to Master Silver, sir."

"Like your cheek!" said Peele. "You're an impudent young black-guard, Smacke!"

"Yes, sir," said Smacke.

"And a dirty little ruffian!" said Gower.

"Thank you, sir!"

"A horrid little toad!" said Lattrey.

"Much obliged, sir!" said Smacke, unmoved. "Is there anything else, sir, or may I go now?"

Peele gave him a scowl. It seemed impossible to "draw" Master Smacke. His manner was perfectly respectful, yet, at the same time, there was an inflection of scorn in his voice that cut Peele to the quick. It was as if a grubby boot-boy had the unexampled cheek to despise Cyril Peele of the Classical Fourth; and if that was the state of affairs, it was almost time for the skies to fall.

Jimmy Silver's kick had lingered in Peele's memory. He did not care to tackle Jimmy on the subject; so he "took it out" of the boot-boy, as it were—any victim being welcome so long as he could not retaliate. It was rather unfortunate for Smacke that he had attracted Peele's notice; Peele had a long memory and a malicious nature.

"Kick him out of the passage!" said Gower.

Smacke made a movement to pass on. Peele suddenly reached out at him, to catch him by his shock of sandy hair.

His outstretched fingers touched the shock of hair, and in another instant that sandy shock would have been pulled. But in that instant the boot-boy's right came up, catching Peele on

TWO FINE ANNUALS FOR YOU!

The Greyfriars'

HOLIDAY ANNUAL

The famous Story Book for Boys and Girls.

Every Boy's

HOBBY ANNUAL

A remarkable New Book of Hobbies.

NOW ON SALE—Price 6/- each.

the jaw in a clean upper-cut, and Peele, with a yell of surprise and rage, went spinning back into the study, where he landed on his back.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Painful for Peele!

"COLLAR the cad!"
"Rag him!"
"Hold him for me!" panted Peele, struggling to his feet.

Smacke backed away across the passage, putting his hands up, his eyes gleaming over them. There was a rush of feet, and Jimmy Silver came along the passage at top speed, just in time to throw himself between the boot-boy and the cads of the Fourth.

Peele & Co. jumped back with ludicrous haste as the captain of the Fourth interposed. They were not looking for hard hitting from Jimmy Silver.

"Cut off, Smacke!" muttered Jimmy in a low voice. "It's more than your place is worth to get into a row with the fellows here."

"Thank you, sir!"

Timothy Smacke hurried on to the stairs, and disappeared.

He left the matter in safe hands. Jimmy advanced on Peele & Co. as they backed into their study.

"You're looking for trouble, Peele, old man?" he asked. "Here's some—as much as you want."

"Get out of my study, Jimmy Silver!" roared Peele furiously. "I'm going to the Head to complain of that cad! Do you think a boot-boy is going to be allowed to punch a fellow's face?"

"Certainly—if the fellow lays hands on him!" said Jimmy Silver coolly. "And if you lay a complaint against Smacke, I shall chip in and explain just what happened—so you'd better think twice, old scout."

"You meddling rotter—"

"Thanks! Where will you have it?" asked Jimmy.

Peele, apparently undesirous of "having it" anywhere, dodged round the study table.

"Get out of my study—"

Jimmy Silver followed him round the table. Peele made a break for the door, and Jimmy made a jump for Peele.

"Back up!" roared the cad of the Fourth; and Gower and Lattrey, reluctantly enough, backed up, and the three closed on Jimmy Silver.

Uncle James of Rookwood grinned. He did not think his hands were too full, with three slackers like Peele & Co. And he was right. Lattrey went in one direction and Gower in another, under a rapid left and right from the captain of the Fourth. Cyril Peele put in one blow which made Jimmy's nose feel a little painful; and then Jimmy Silver put in a blow which made Peele's nose feel very painful indeed. Peele sat down on his study carpet with a bump.

"Nuff all round?" asked Jimmy Silver, glancing down at the three on the carpet.

"Ow! Ow!"

"Grooogh!"

Jimmy smiled and sauntered out of the study. Peele staggered to his feet, dabbing his handkerchief to his nose.

"Rotten bully!" mumbled Gower.

"Ow! Wow!"

"I'll make that boot-blackin' cad sorry for it!" muttered Peele, between his teeth. "It's all through him!"

"Ow! Wow, wow!"

Jimmy Silver smiled genially when he met the three in the junior Common-room that evening. Peele & Co. scowled, but they did not seem to be looking for

CAUGHT IN THE ACT! Leaning over the banisters Jimmy and Lovell could see quite clearly what Peele was doing. The cad of the Fourth had taken one of Mr. Dalton's boots and had rubbed mud and dust on it. Having finished one boot Peele proceeded to deal with the other; and when he had finished, Mr. Dalton's boots looked as if they had passed through exceedingly slovenly hands. This was Peele's revenge on the new boot boy. (See chapter 5.)



vengeance—not upon Uncle James of Rookwood, at all events.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act!

JIMMY SILVER moved his head slightly upon the pillow, and a sleepy smile glimmered on his face.

The first grey dim light of dawn was creeping in at the high windows of the Fourth Form dormitory.

Rising-bell had not sounded yet; it was not due for a quarter of an hour. But in the Fourth Form dormitory, one fellow at least was stirring—one fellow who was about the last member of the Form to be suspected of a desire for early rising.

Jimmy—wide awake, although he seemed to sleep—watched Cyril Peele from his pillow.

Peele, moving quietly, almost noiselessly, dressed himself quickly, occasionally glancing along the beds to assure himself that the other fellows were not awake. It was unlikely that they member of the Fourth would awaken before the rising-bell clanged out, but Peele was cautious by nature.

Satisfied that all were sleeping, and that he was unwatched, Cyril Peele quitted the dormitory, closing the door softly behind him.

Then Jimmy Silver showed activity. With a jump, he was out of bed, and in a few seconds he had shaken Arthur Edward Lovell into wakefulness.

Lovell awoke with a start.

"Ow! Wharrer marrer?" he murmured.

"Turn out, old top!"

"Grooh! 'Tain't rising-bell!" mumbled Lovell.

"It's little me—more important than rising-bell," said Jimmy. "Peele's just sneaked out of the dorm."

"Blow Peele! Bother him!"

"We're going to bother him," grinned Jimmy. "Turn out, slacker."

Arthur Edward Lovell granted emphatically, and turned out of bed. It was a cold morning, and Lovell shivered and grabbed his clothes.

A few moments later the two quitted the dormitory.

The two juniors went down the staircase quietly. They halted on the stairs and looked over the banisters, which gave them a view of the corridor in which Mr. Dalton's room was situated.

Early as the hour was, while all Rookwood slept, the boot-boy had been stirring. Mr. Dalton's boots, beautifully cleaned and polished, stood outside his bedroom door, left there by Timothy Smacke.

Peele of the Fourth was just bending over them as Jimmy and Lovell sighted him.

Peele picked up one of the boots and drew a rag from his pocket. Evidently Peele had come prepared.

He proceeded to rub blacking on the inside of the boot, and mud and dust on the outside.

"The awful rotter!" breathed Lovell.

Jimmy made his chum a sign to be silent.

Having finished with one boot, Peele proceeded to deal with the other, and when he had finished, Mr. Dalton's boots looked as if they had passed through exceedingly slovenly hands. The Fourth Form master was rather particular about his boots, and there was no doubt that there would be another complaint—more serious this time. A boot-boy who left boots in such a state was not likely to retain his situation long at Rookwood.

Peele stood and regarded his handiwork for a moment or two with an evil grin. He was turning away when Jimmy Silver and Lovell appeared in

the corridor, and the cad of the Fourth met them face to face.

Peele started back, the grin dying away from his face. He stared at the two juniors blankly.

"You!" he stuttered.

"You rotter!" roared Lovell in great wrath. "Playing tricks on a boot-boy—to get the poor beast, the sack! Ain't you jolly well ashamed of yourself?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Peele.

"Have you finished with Mr. Dalton's boots?" asked Jimmy Silver with calm politeness.

"I—I—I—" mumbled Peele, utterly taken aback. "I—I—I— It's no business of yours, Jimmy Silver!"

"Your mistake, old bean!" said Jimmy Silver. "It's just exactly my business. You see, I've made it my business. Pick up those boots!"

"I—I won't!"

"You're going to take those boots to Mrs. Maloney, and tell her exactly the trick you've played!" said Jimmy Silver.

"I won't!" howled Peele.

"You'll tell her you played the same trick before, and that you did it to get Smacke into trouble, because I kicked you for insulting the kid the day he came."

"I—I won't!"

"Or else," said Jimmy calmly. "I shall call Mr. Dalton here and now, and report the matter to him."

Peele gritted his teeth.

"You can't prove I touched the boots, you interfeer' rotter!" he panted at last.

"Our word against yours, if you deny it," said Jimmy Silver scornfully; "and I fancy my word's a bit more trustworthy than yours, Peele."

"Pick up the boots and come along!" snapped Lovell. "You're going to be shown up to the housekeeper, so that you can't play any more dirty tricks on a poor kid who's got his living to get."

Peele clenched his hands.

"I won't come!" he said between his teeth. "And you can wake Mr. Dalton. I shall deny the whole thing!"

"We'll wake him fast enough—"

The door of Mr. Dalton's room opened.

"No need to wake Mr. Dalton," said a quiet voice, as the young Form master, in dressing-gown and slippers, appeared in the open doorway. "I am not a heavy sleeper, my boys, and your voices had already awakened me."

"Oh!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

The master of the Fourth fixed his eyes on Peele. The cad of Rookwood almost tottered back. Denying his rascality was not of much use now; he could see that Mr. Dalton had heard all, or almost all, that had passed. "Dicky" Dalton's brow was dark as he fixed his eyes on Peele.

"So you, a Rookwood boy, have been playing a trick on a lad employed in this school!" he said. "A wretched trick, which might have cost him his place. Why have you done this, Peele?"

"I—I— He was cheeky!" muttered Peele with dry lips.

"That will do, Peele. I shall report this matter to Dr. Chisholm, and request him to deal with you," said Mr. Dalton.

"I shall also speak to the housekeeper, in order that you may have no future opportunity for such dastardly trickery. Peele, you may go now!"

Peele almost limped away.

"Thank you very much for interfering

as you did, my boys," added Mr. Dalton, and with a kind nod to Jimmy and Lovell he went back into his room and closed the door.

That morning, before lessons, Peele of the Fourth had a caning in the Head's study that was quite a record. All that day Peele looked as if he did not find life worth living, and it was probable that the cad of the Fourth would give the new boot-boy a wide berth afterwards. Jimmy Silver looked for Timothy Smacke after morning lessons, and found him in the boot-room.

"All serene now, kid!" said Jimmy. "There won't be any more tricks with the giddy footgear. You're all right!"

"Thanks, Jimmy, old top!"

Jimmy Silver jumped.

"Wha-a-at?"

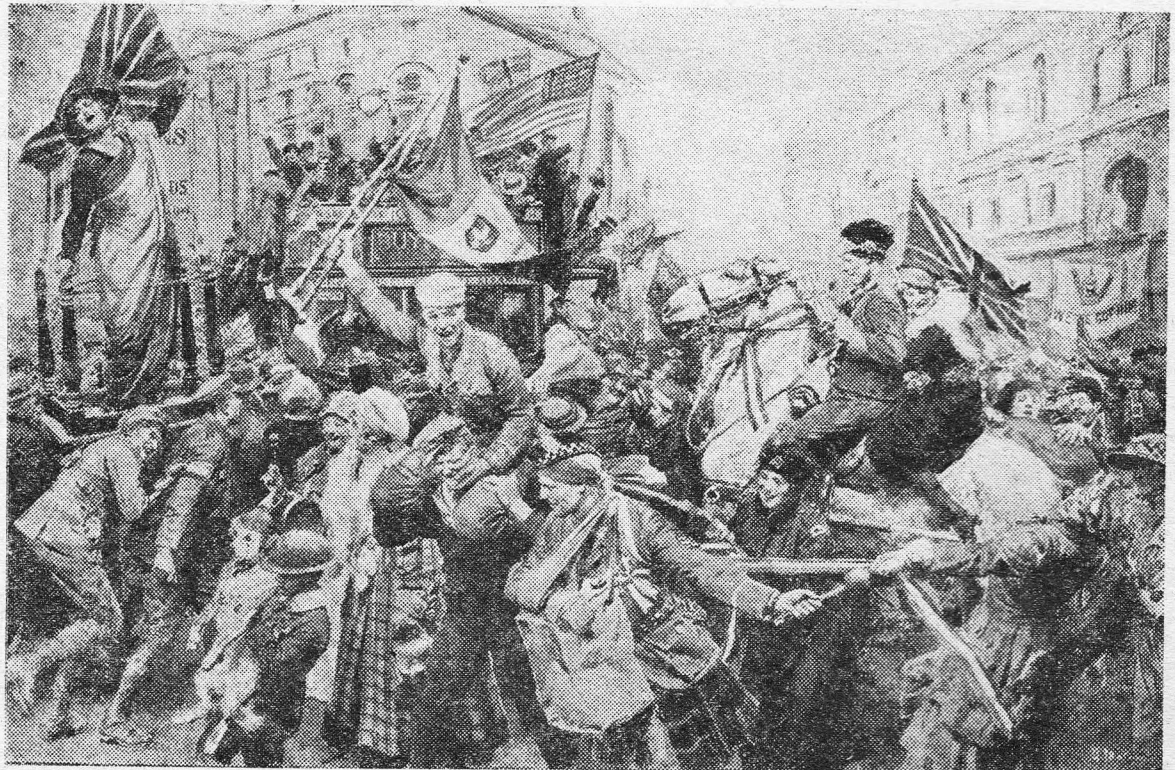
The boot-boy's face crimsoned. "Excuse me, sir!" he gasped. "I—I—I mean I am much obliged to you, sir, for interfering so kindly!"

"Right-ho, sonny!" said Jimmy Silver good-naturedly; and he left the boot-room with utter wonder in his face.

For the boot-boy's voice, as he had spoken impulsively, unthinkingly, had sounded familiar in Jimmy Silver's ears. It recalled to him a voice he remembered—the voice of Valentine Mornington, the expelled junior of Rookwood! Jimmy Silver went up the stairs in a state of utter amazement.

THE END.

(Look out for "Swindling The School!" next week's top-hole long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood.)



VICTORY! The amazing scene at Piccadilly Circus on the morning of the first Armistice Day. A remarkable reproduction in full colours, after the original black and white sketch by F. Matania, is presented Free with every copy of this week's UNION JACK—2d.