

GETTING THEIR OWN BACK !



When Herr Kinkel, the German master of Rookwood, vents his vengeance on Jimmy Silver & Co. it recoils on himself in an unexpected and humorous manner.

THE FIRST CHAPTER Under Detention.

JIMMY SILVER & Co. were down on their luck.

It was really Jimmy Silver's fault.

Nature had endowed Jimmy Silver with a plentiful gift of humour. Nature had been extremely niggardly in that respect with Herr Kinkel, the German master at Rookwood. Hence the trouble.

As Jimmy Silver was on the Classical side at Rookwood, and the German master's activities were confined to the Modern side—for the Classicals did not take German—Jimmy had nothing to do with Herr Kinkel.

He might have steered quite clear of Herr Kinkel. And it would have been only prudent to steer clear of Herr Kinkel, for the Herr was not a nice-tempered man.

But that was where Jimmy Silver's humorous proclivities came in. Jimmy Silver

By OWEN CONQUEST

maintained that it was all old Kinkel's fault, and his chums—Raby and Lovell and Newcombe—agreed with him. Unfortunately, his Form-master, Mr. Bootles, did not. Mr. Bootles did not see eye to eye with the Fourth-Formers.

It came about in this wise. Herr Kinkel had lately received a copy of a celebrated German song.

Naturally, Herr Kinkel tried over the music, and his deep voice boomed out the expressive words; and the Fistical Four came along in the quad, and heard that boomerang proceeding from the window of the German master's study—like unto the roar of a megaphone.

So Jimmy Silver chimed in, without pausing to reflect, putting in a loud and prolonged squeak at every pause in the metre,

so that Herr Kinkel's vocal efforts, with Jimmy Silver's assistance, sounded like nothing on earth !

Lovell and Raby and Newcome howled with laughter. A crowd of fellows gathered round in great merriment. Even Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, who were generally up against Jimmy Silver & Co., joined heartily in the squeaking, and in the roars of laughter which accompanied it.

Herr Kinkel's song ceased suddenly. He "went off song" as he realised that there was a merry demonstration under his study window.

He leaned out of the window, his fat face crimson with rage, and shook a fat fist at the juniors.

"Ach ! You sheek me !" he howled. " You sheek me, mit you ! I reports tat to your Form-master, Silber ! "

Which he promptly did ; and Mr. Bootles, with a lack of humour which lowered him considerably in the estimation of his pupils, sentenced Jimmy Silver & Co. to detention for the afternoon.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and a glorious day.

All Rookwood was out of doors.

From the windows of the Form-room the Fistical Four could see their old rivals, Tommy Dodd & Co., enjoying themselves on the cricket-ground. They could see a cheery crowd refreshing themselves with ginger-beer at the school shop. They could see fellows reading the "Ranger" under the old beeches.

And they were detained.

They were down on their luck. Half-holidays came only twice a week, and there were so many things to do on a half-holiday—cricket, rowing, cycling, ragging the Moderns, or looking for a row with the juniors of Bagshot School.

They groaned over the lines Mr. Bootles had given them to do. And they looked from the windows. They felt inclined to sing a Hymn of Hate with Herr Kinkel as its object.

Jimmy Silver snorted.

"All because those Modern worms must mug up German instead of Latin," he said bitterly. "If there wasn't a Modern side at

Rookwood there wouldn't be a German master. It's all the fault of those caddish Moderns ! "

"Oh, it's rotten !" groaned Raby. " Think of a walk over the downs now, and tea at the old farm ! "

"Or a run down to the sea, and a bathe !" grunted Newcome.

"Oh, don't !" growled Jimmy Silver. " You make me want to go for Kinkel with a ruler !

"Let's hook it !" he concluded desperately.

"Oh ! "

"Bootles has gone out ; he'll never know. Let's chance it ! "

Lovell and Raby and Newcome looked serious. Breaking detention was a serious matter. But the blue sky, dotted with drifting clouds ; the soft whisper of the wind from the sea, seemed to call to them. They thought of the open, breezy downs, and looked round the dusty old class-room, and made up their minds.

"I'm game !" said Lovell.

"If there's a row, there's a row !" said Jimmy Silver recklessly. "I don't care ! I mean, I do care, but not enough to stick in here. It's wicked to stay indoors on a day like this ! "

"Hear, hear ! Come on ! "

Lovell hurled his Virgil across the room. Raby pitched his pen on the floor, and jumped on it. The Fistical Four made a rush for the Form-room door, resolved to make a bid for liberty and chance the results.

They came out into the deserted passage with a rush. They could have whooped with glee at the prospect of freedom.

But just as they reached the end of the passage a bulky form loomed up before them, and two little spiteful light eyes blinked at them over an enormous pair of spectacles.

"Was denn ! Where you go ? "

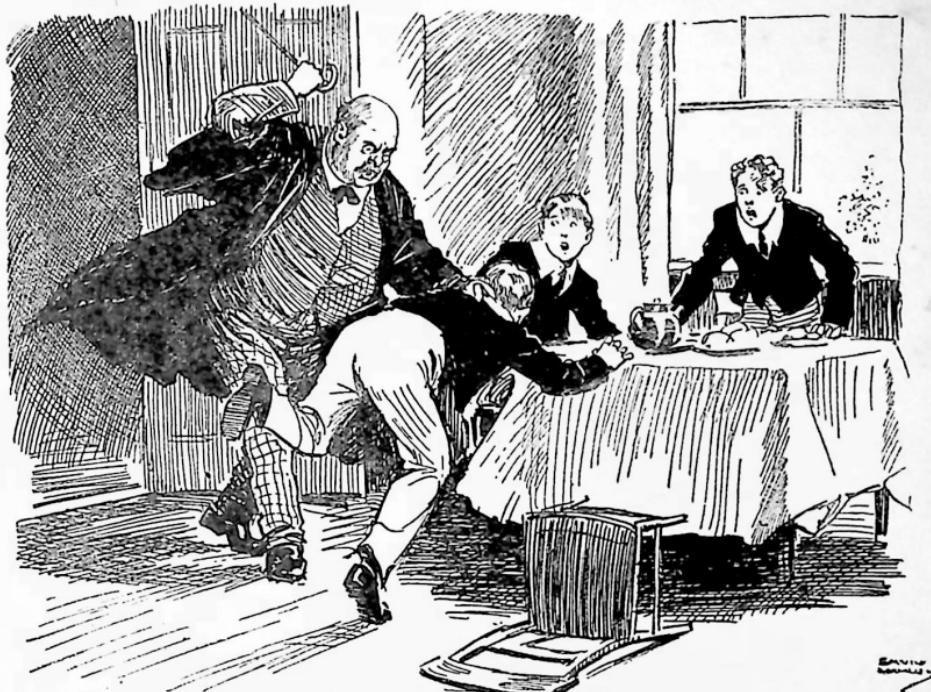
The Fistical Four halted in blank dismay. Herr Kinkel stood before them.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Keeping Watch.

HERR KINKEL blinked at the juniors.

The juniors blinked at Herr Kinkel. For a moment there was a desperate thought



The short-sighted Herr Kinkel dragged Pankley off his chair, and the unhappy junior let out a wild yell as the master's cane came down on his trousers : Whack ! Whack ! Whack !

in their minds of rushing the German master, bumping him down in the passage, and escaping over his breathless body. But they checked that wild impulse. The consequences would have been too dreadfully serious.

" You preak pounds, isn't it ? " said Herr Kinkel, with a disagreeable smile. " I tinks tat Mr. Pootles, he order you to stay in till six o'clock."

" Ye-e-es ! " growled Jimmy Silver.

" And now it is tree o'clock."

" Ahem ! " said Lovell.

" I tink you know tat Mr. Pootles is gone out mit himself, and you tink tat you preak pounds. But I tink of tat meinself, and I keeps open mein eye. You goes pack to your detention."

Jimmy Silver clenched his fists. He would have given a whole term's pocket-money to

" land " Herr Kinkel one on his nose. Instead of which, he had to go back to the Form-room.

In the lowest possible spirits the Fistical Four returned to their detention. They sat down at their desks with glum faces.

Herr Kinkel followed them as far as the doorway and blinked in at them.

" You keeps here," he said. " I tinks I keeps an eye open, hein. I smokes mein pipe at te end of te passage, and if you gum out vunce more, I see you. Den I dakes you to der Head mit you."

And Herr Kinkel waddled away.

Jimmy Silver and his comrades looked at one another with feelings almost too deep for words.

" Did you ever ? " gasped Jimmy.

" Hardly ever ! " groaned Lovell.

" The fat Hun has been spying on us in case we cleared."

"And now he's sitting by the passage window, smoking his beastly pipe, and keeping his beastly eye open, and reading his beastly German newspapers!" said Newcome.

"Oh, dear!"

With their spirits at zero, the Fistical Four settled down to do lines. But after a quarter of an hour Jimmy Silver jumped up. He could hear the cheery shouts from the cricket-field. It was simply impossible to do lines that afternoon!

"Chuck that rot!" said Jimmy Silver. "I've got a wheeze."

Lovell and Raby and Newcome looked up hopefully.

"What's the little game?"

"Even Germans have some human feelings," said Jimmy Silver. "Old Kinkel must have a heart tucked away somewhere under the layers of fat. Let's go and speak nicely to him. We'll tell him we're sorry we squeaked—we are sorry, ain't we? I've never been sorrier for anything in my natural."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's against the law to kill him, so let's try soft sawder. He must have some human feelings somewhere," argued Jimmy Silver.

"Well, he may have—appearances are deceptive," agreed Lovell. "Let's try."

Four hopeful youths quitted the Form-room and walked down the passage. Just round the corner was a big window with a deep window-seat, and there Herr Kinkel sat smoking his German pipe and reading his German paper. He blinked up severely at the sight of the Fistical Four.

"I tinks tat it is not six o'clock," he said sarcastically.

"No, sir," said Jimmy Silver, with deep respect. "We only want to speak to you, sir. We—we should like to hear you sing that nice song, sir, if you would."

"Vat!"

"And if you would kindly forgive us, sir, we will never squeak any more when you are singing so beautifully, sir," said Raby.

"And—and we've got something special on this afternoon, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "We've ordered tea in advance at the Downside Farm, and we shall have to pay for it even if we don't go."

"So if you'd let us off, sir—"

"I vill do noozing of te kind, you bad, sheeky poys. In Chermany te poys do not sheek deir masters—dey tremble at deir frown."

"Must be a spoony lot!" murmured Newcome.

"Vat!"

"I—I mean, sir, we—we don't mind trembling at your frown, sir, if—if you like."

"Go pack mit you!" thundered Herr Kinkel.

"But, sir—"

"Go pack, or I boxes you mit te ears!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Soft sawder was evidently wasted upon Herr Kinkel.

The Fistical Four went back into the Form-room dolorously.

"It's all up!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "We've got to stick it. If there's a dead, fat pig found about Rookwood some day, you'll know that Kinkel brought it on himself."

The juniors looked dolorously out of the windows. Tommy Dodd was scoring runs on Little Side, and the Moderns were cheering him. Smythe of the Shell was lounging elegantly in the quad, his eyeglass gleaming in his eye, talking "gee-gees" to Tracy and Howard.

"Hallo! Is that how you kids do your detention tasks?"

The Fistical Four spun round from the window. Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, had come in. He gave them a good-humoured smile.

"Oh, I say, Bulkeley, be a good chap and get us off!" said Jimmy Silver. "We didn't do anything—only pulled a German leg."

"Think of being shut up till six on a day like this," said Lovell beseechingly.

Bulkeley grinned.

"I saw you outside Kinkel's window," he said. "You young rascals!"

"Well, ought a blessed Hun to sing his blessed German songs here?" demanded Raby.

"Never mind that. Mr. Bootles spoke to me before he went out—"

"Eh?"

"And told me to come in at half-past three and tell you you could go."

"Oh, my hat!"

"If you've done a hundred lines each."

"Hurray!"

"He thinks that will be sufficient," said Bulkeley. "How much have you done?"

"Well, we—we've done some," said Jimmy Silver, wishing that he had been more industrious.

"Well, make it up to a hundred each, and clear," said Bulkeley.

And with a nod, the kind-hearted captain of Rookwood left the Form-room. Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged ecstatic glances.

"Isn't he a brick?" murmured Jimmy Silver. "I know he put in a word for us to Bootles, though he doesn't say so. Bulkeley's got us off, my sons. I'll always back up Bulkeley through thick and thin—and down with the Modern cads! Buck up with those rotten lines!"

Four pens worked at a feverish rate over the impot paper. Never was Latin written at so terrific a speed before.

At the end of the hundredth line Jimmy Silver leaped up with a whoop, threw his pen in one direction, and his Virgil in another, and chirruped:

"Free! Free as giddy birdlets in the sky! Buck up, you slackers. Now we'll walk past Kinkel and smile at him! He will turn pink; he will turn green; he will turn purple and blue! Hurray!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Herr Kinkel on the Track.

JIMMY SILVER paused in the doorway of the Form-room, and dragged his chums to a halt.

"Hold on!"

"Rats! Come on!" said Lovell impatiently. "I want to get out!"

"Hold on, I tell you! Kinkel's still watching there—you can see his smoke curling round the corner."

"Well, what about it?"

"That shows that he doesn't know we're let off!"

"Well, Bulkeley wouldn't mention it to

him—he doesn't like Kinkel," said Lovell. "He doesn't know the old oyster is spying on us, either. Why should he tell him?"

"No reason why he should—and he hasn't," said Jimmy Silver. "Kinkel still thinks we're detained up to six o'clock."

"He'll stop us as we go by, and we can tell him."

"That's what I'm coming to. We're not going to tell him."

"Then he won't let us pass."

"We'll sneak down to the corner on tiptoe, and make a sudden rush, and get past before the beast can stop us," whispered Jimmy Silver. "He'll think we're breaking bounds—see? He'll report us to Bootles later—to get us a licking—and then he can find out that we were entitled to scoot—see? Let the old josser put his foot in it."

"Good egg!"

"And it will be ripping to hear him rave when we scoot. He'll call us back, but as he's only a rotten Modern master, we needn't take any notice. He can't give orders on this side. Now Bootles has let us off, we can snap our fingers at him. This is where we get a bit of our own back! Come on, and not a word, mind!"

The chums of the Fourth, grinning gleefully, crept on tiptoe down to the corner of the passage. Jimmy Silver peered round the corner. Herr Kinkel was reading his German newspaper, but he was keeping an eye open. He spotted Jimmy at once.

"Silber! You——"

"Run for it!" shouted Jimmy.

The Fistical Four came round the corner like hares.

Herr Kinkel jumped up, dropping his pipe and his newspaper. But he was not quick enough for the young rascals of the Fourth.

They were past before he could make a grab at them, and they disappeared down the passage as if on the cinder-path.

"Stop mit you!" shouted Herr Kinkel. "Young rasgals tat you are! You gum pack!"

But the juniors did not "gum pack."

They kept on at top speed and vanished, and came out into the quadrangle, gasping and grinning. They had only paused in the hall to snatch up their caps, but not even to put

them on. They put them on in the quad and trotted towards the gates.

There was a shout from the cricket-field. Bulkeley was there now, and he was batting against Knowles's bowling. The Fistical Four turned towards the cricket-ground, but only for a moment. Herr Kinkel came raging out of the School House, and the Fistical Four ran on to the gates.

"Stop!"

The Fistical Four turned a deaf ear.

They were quickly out of the gates of Rookwood, and in the lane they slackened down and burst into a merry chortle.

"Hold on," said Jimmy Silver. "The old ruffian may come after us! That would be the giddy lid on! Cover!"

The Fistical Four promptly took cover among the trees beside the road. They peeped out in the direction of the school gates.

Out from the old stone gateway came a fat and ponderous form. Herr Kinkel stopped in the road, hatless, and breathing like a pair of very old bellows. He blinked up the road and he blinked down the road, and he snorted with rage as he failed to spot the juniors.

"Aber ich weiss—ich weiss!" the Fourth-Formers heard him mutter; and he went back to the gates and disappeared.

"Was he gargling, or saying something?" said Lovell. "You never can tell when it's a German."

"He was saying 'I know—I know!'" said Jimmy Silver. "Of course, we told him we were going to tea at Dowsdale Farm. I rather fancy he's gone back for something, and is coming after us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will take him some time!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "We'll have had tea by the time he gets there. It doesn't seem to occur to the old duffer that we've got leave."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four started merrily across the fields. The thought of the fat German tramping a couple of miles over hill and dale to recapture them at the farm made them yell with laughter. For, as they had leave from their Form-master, he had no authority to interfere with them there, and he would have his long tramp for nothing. Not that the

young rascals intended to give him any information on that point. They were already looking forward to leading Herr Kinkel a dance all the afternoon.

How could a half-holiday be better spent?

Jimmy Silver & Co. breathed joyously in the fresh sunny air as they walked across the green fields. They were happy to be out of doors again.

About a mile on their way was a stile they had to cross, and on that stile three youths in Bagshot caps were seated in a row. They were Pankley, Putter, and Poole of the Fourth Form at Bagshot School, who were in the habit of letting off their superabundance of youthful exuberance in rows and rags with the Rookwood fellows. They made no movement to get off the stile as the Fistical Four came up.

"Hallo!" said Pankley affably. "Been falling down, Silver?"

"Falling down?" said Jimmy. "No!"

"What's that on your face, then?"

"My face? There's nothing on it, is there?"

"Yes, rather—right in the middle of it!" said Pankley, squinting at him. "Looks like a small saveloy, or a large gooseberry!"

"Why, what?" Jimmy Silver passed his hand over his face, but felt nothing out of the usual there.

"By Jove!" said Pankley, in astonishment. "It's all right, Silver! My mistake. Only your nose."

"Why, you silly ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bagshot trio. "Only your nose, Silver! Didn't recognise it at first as a nose!"

"Shift those silly asses!" said Jimmy Silver. "Why, what are you cackling at?" he added, glaring at his comrades.

"Oh, nothing!" grinned Lovell. "We'll soon shift 'em!"

"Here, mind what you're at!" roared Pankley, as Jimmy Silver seized his ankles. "Leggo! Why, I'll—Oh, my hat! Yow-ow-ow!"

Pankley slid over the stile and alighted gently on his head in a patch of mud. Poole and Putter joined him there.

The Fistical Four vaulted over the stile



Splash ! "Ach, Gott !" The plank slipped from the stone and Herr Kinkel lost his balance and flopped down into the water.

and walked on, leaving the Bagshot juniors to sort themselves out.

"Why, the cheeky bounders are after us !" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, looking back from the other side of the field and seeing the three Bagshot juniors in hot pursuit.

"Let 'em come up !" said Lovell. "We'll soon make 'em tired of chasing us ! "

"Give 'em a run for it," said Jimmy Silver. "Old Kinkel has started already. No time to waste on them."

"Look here, I'm not going to run away from Bagshot bounders ! "

"Bog-wow ! Follow your leader ; we can lick them any time."

Jimmy Silver started, and his comrades followed him, though reluctantly. They didn't like turning their backs on the enemy. But Jimmy Silver was the acknowledged leader of the Fistical Four.

"Yah ! Stop ! Funks !" shouted Pankley. Even that did not move Jimmy Silver. He kept on at a steady run, and his comrades kept on with him.

The Bagshot juniors, much surprised to see four fellows running from three, chased them at top speed across the fields. But the Rookwooders kept well ahead, and reached Dowsdale Farm fifty yards in front of their pursuers.

Jimmy Silver paused in the doorway of the farmhouse to kiss his hand at the pursuers, and then the Fistical Four went in.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER Mistaken Identity.

"THIS is something like !" remarked Jimmy Silver.

A quiet dusky room, with little diamond-paned windows looking out on a wide stretch

of orchard and cornfield. A table covered with a spotless cloth, and the whitest of bread, the freshest of eggs, the purest of butter, and the best of home-made jam. It was really something like!

The stout, good-tempered farmer's wife brought in the tea. Jimmy Silver's face wore an expression of great satisfaction. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were not looking so satisfied. They did not like having run away from the Bagshot bounders.

Outside the farmhouse, Pankley & Co. had come to a halt. They could not very well carry the war into the farmhouse.

"Everything you want, young gentlemen?" asked Mrs. Tootle.

"Yes, thanks!" said Jimmy Silver. "This is something like. What are you fellows looking grumpy about?"

"What have we run away from those bounders for?" demanded Lovell.

"Three more cups, now I come to think of it, Mrs. Tootle," said Jimmy Silver, unheeding; and his comrades stared.

"Yes, Master Silver."

"What's the little game?" yelled Lovell.

"We're going to ask our friends outside to tea."

"Ask 'em to tea!" said Lovell sulphurously.

"Certainly!"

"What for?" howled Raby.

"Because Herr Kinkel is such a short-sighted old chap."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Which?"

"Leave it to your Uncle Jimmy," said Silver reassuringly. "You know I've got the brains of the firm."

"You've got the face!" growled Lovell.

"And the cheek! And the neck!"

Jimmy Silver stepped to the open window. He waved his hand to the three Bagshot juniors outside.

"You fellows looking for anybody?" he called out.

"Yah! Funk!" bawled Putter.

"How would you like some tea?"

"What?"

"Our treat!" said Jimmy Silver.

Helping a Fugitive

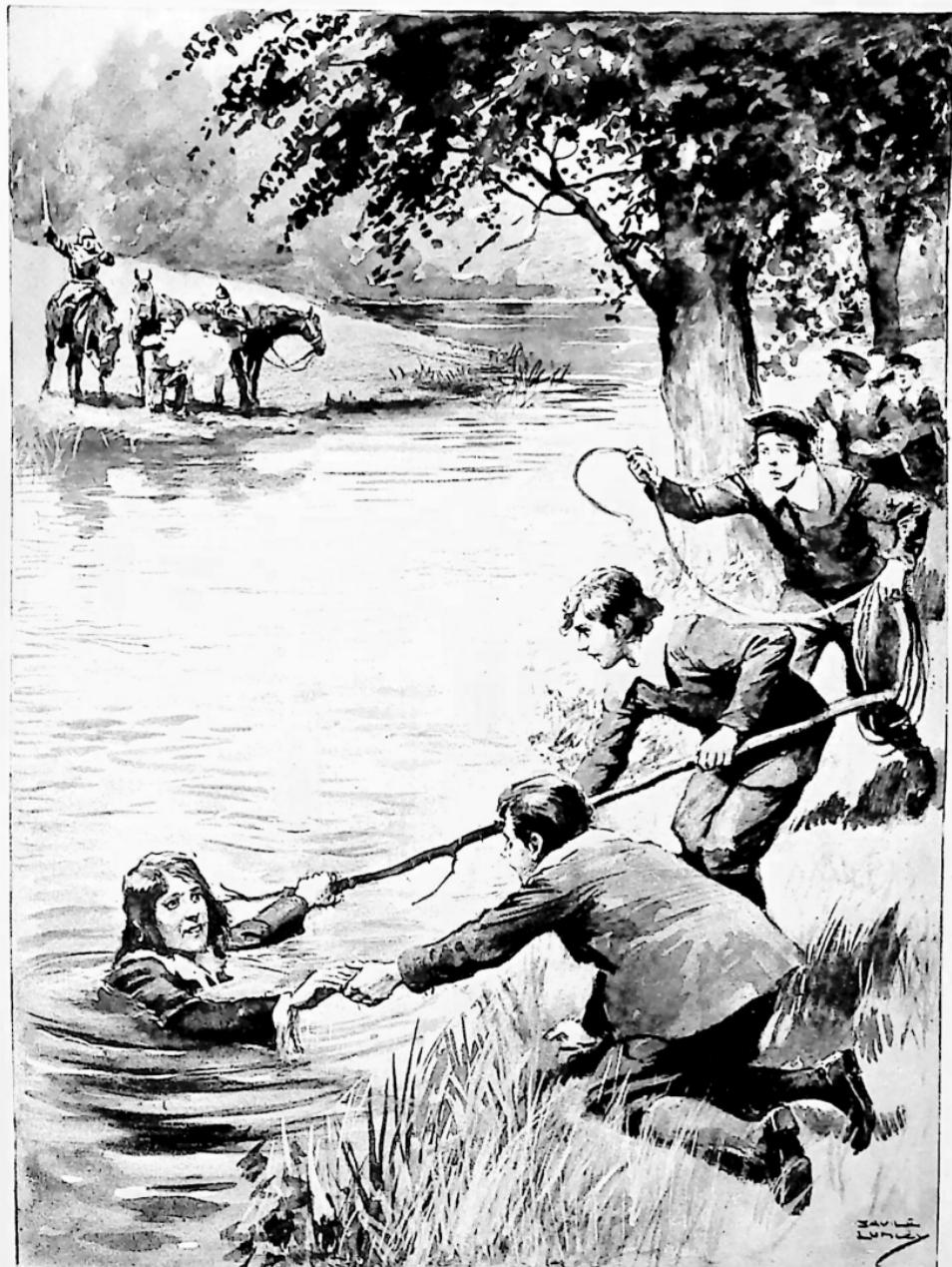
WHEN the army of Charles I was defeated at the Battle of Naseby in 1645 by Oliver Cromwell's Ironsides most of the Royalists still standing were taken prisoners. A few escaped, however, and among them was James Fairley—a staunch adherent to the Stuart cause and an old Rookwood boy.

With Cromwell's victorious soldiers following relentlessly on his heels, Fairley made in the direction of Hampshire. At the back of his mind was the hope that if he could reach the confines of Rookwood, the authorities there, whose sympathies were with the Royalists, would shelter him until it was safe to leave the country. Hunted and barried for days without a break, the fugitive, in a state of utter exhaustion, finally reached the bank of the river not far from the school. Behind him in full cry were three mounted troopers, and capture seemed certain. With the courage of despair, Fairley plunged into the water and struck out for the other side.

The shouts of the mounted soldiers brought five Rookwood juniors, who had been lounging under the trees, to their feet; and curiously enough one of the schoolboys was Fairley's own son! The first shock of that surprise meeting over, Fairley junior showed himself to be a cool hand. While he snatched up a branch and held it out to his exhausted father, one of his chums procured a rope.

Meanwhile, the infuriated troopers had dismounted and were recklessly firing their muskets at the bobbing head of their quarry. Their aim was wild, however, and after anxious minutes, Fairley senior was dragged ashore by willing hands and rushed off to the woods.

When the baffled Roundheads, who obviously could not swim, had reached the spot, after traversing four miles to the nearest bridge, there was no sign either of the fugitive or his schoolboy rescuers. Furious at their failure they thereupon gave up the chase; but a close search of Rookwood School, a mile distant, would have revealed both James Fairley and his rescuers, for it was to the old school that the former was taken and sheltered until the hue and cry had died down.



"Well, my hat!" said Pankley, in astonishment. "What's the little game?"

"Let us be peaceful on this pleasant afternoon, my young friends," said Jimmy Silver. "Little birds in their nests should agree, for if they do not they would fall out."

"Oh, come off!" said Pankley. "Still, we'll come and have tea, if you like. I'd rather have tea than a scrap!"

"Trot in!"

Pankley & Co. came in, looking very dubious. They half-suspected that Jimmy Silver had some little trap ready for them.

But Jimmy was blandness itself. Lovell and Raby and Newcome, understanding that their leader was scheming a scheme, though they could not guess what it was, played up to him loyally, and grinned as cordially as they could at the Bagshot bounders.

The festive board was graced by an additional cake and three more cups and saucers, and the Bagshot fellows sat down.

"Pile in!" said Jimmy Silver hospitably.

"Oh, go it!" said Lovell. "Jolly glad—ahem!—to see you at the festive board."

Pankley & Co. went in cheerfully. The handsome and substantial tea in the farmhouse was better than a scrap any day.

But they could not help feeling surprised at this hospitality from the Rookwood juniors, whom they had pursued with slaughterous intentions.

However, they travelled at a great rate through new-laid eggs and muffins and cake and jam and tea. Jimmy Silver was politeness itself. He listened sympathetically when Pankley related that a crowd of Bagshot fellows were laid up with influenza.

He expressed a polite hope that Pankley wouldn't catch it, and all the time he had one keen eye on the window, and he did not fail to spot a fat and ponderous form that, when tea was nearly over, came lumbering across the fields towards the farmhouse.

Herr Kinkel was arriving.

His fat face was streaming with perspiration after his long walk in the sun, and his brow was thunderous with rage. He had a stick in his hand, and every now and then he swished it through the air. It was evident

that when Herr Kinkel caught those elusive juniors, he would not be content with merely spoiling their little tea-party and marching them back in disgrace to Rookwood. Jimmy Silver had foreseen that; he knew Herr Kinkel's temper.

Silver rose abruptly to his feet.

"Time we were off," he remarked. "Don't you fellows hurry, but we've got to clear. See you again some day, if you live, Panky."

"Well, I'll finish this cake, if you don't mind," said Pankley. "What are you fellows clearing off for? It's jolly comfy here, and nice and shady after the sun."

"I'm not going yet," said Poole.

"No need to," said Jimmy Silver. "But we've got to; time's up for us. Come on, you chaps. I'll settle with Mrs. Tootle as we go out. Ta-ta, Panky!"

"Ta-ta! Lick you next time we see you!" said Pankley.

"Thanks! Ta-ta!"

The Fistical Four went out into the old flagged passage, leaving the Bagshot trio still piling heartily into that substantial tea. There was still plenty on the board, and Pankley & Co. were not inclined to hurry themselves. In the farmhouse kitchen Jimmy Silver found Mrs. Tootle, and settled for seven teas.

"We'll go out this way, as we're here," said Jimmy Silver. "Good-afternoon, ma'am!"

And the Fistical Four passed out of the farmhouse by the back door.

"Now, you burbling idiot, tell us what it's all about!" breathed Lovell. "You've run away from the Bagshot bounders, and you've stood 'em a spanking tea, and you've dragged us away before we've finished. Now, what's the little game? Sharp, before we snatch you bald-headed!"

"Follow your uncle," said Jimmy Silver, "and keep in cover!"

"What for, fathead?"

"Because Kinkel's only a dozen yards away!"

"Well, we don't care for Kinkel now!"

"Oh, shurup and follow your leader!"

Jimmy Silver, keeping under cover of the outbuildings, reached a spot where the

juniors could watch the front door of the farmhouse under cover of a mass of raspberry bushes. His puzzled chums followed suit.

Herr Kinkel was very close at hand now. He halted a minute later outside the open doorway, breathing like a grampus. The Classical Four were within a dozen yards of him, behind the bushes, and they could hear his stertorous breathing. They grinned as they watched his angry, streaming face.

Bang !

Herr Kinkel's stick knocked loudly on the door. Mrs. Tootle came along the passage through the house. The good old lady looked in surprise at the hot and perspiring German. She was not acquainted with the German master of Rookwood.

"Dose poys are here, isn't it, madam ?" said Herr Kinkel.

"Yes, there are some boys in my parlour," said Mrs. Tootle, in wonder. "They are having tea. Are you their master?"

"Ja, ja. I am deir master, and to look for dem I have gum."

Herr Kinkel strode into the house. His fat hand closed tightly on his heavy cane. Herr Kinkel was on the warpath. He rolled in at the open door of the dusky little parlour. Three juniors who were seated round the table stared at him. The Bagshot juniors knew Herr Kinkel by sight.

"Ach ! Den I find you !" shouted Herr Kinkel.

The sudden change from the brilliant sunlight to the shady parlour was dazzling. And Herr Kinkel, as Silver had remarked, was a very short-sighted gentleman. He hadn't the slightest doubt in his mind that he had found the boys he was looking for. If he had paused a minute or two, he would probably have discovered his mistake. But he didn't pause a minute or two. He didn't pause a second. Not a decimal fraction of a second. He rushed at the feasting juniors like a very savage elephant, and grasped the nearest of them by the collar, and dragged him off his chair.

"Hallo !" roared Pankley, who was the unfortunate victim. "My hat ! Oh ! Help ! Yab !"

Whack, whack, whack !

Herr Kinkel's cane came down across the unhappy Pankley's trousers as if he were beating a carpet. Pankley's wild yells might have been heard half-way to Rookwood.

"Oh, my hat !" gasped Lovell, almost rolling over in the raspberry-bushes in his delight. "You hear that ? You hear ? Ha, ha ! You hear Kinkel's taken those Bagshot bounders for us ! Oh, my sainted aunt !"

"Vicked, sheeky young rasgal——"

Whack, whack, whack !

"Yarooooh ! Yah ! Help ! He's mad ! Help."

"Ha, ha, ha !" shrieked the Fistical Four.

They rushed round the house to the parlour window. They peeped in. Herr Kinkel had no eyes for the window. He pitched the roaring Pankley aside, and seized the next fellow. The next fellow was Poole. Poole made a wild attempt to dodge the German. But the German was not to be dodged. His heavy grasp descended upon Poole, and his cane rose and fell.

Whack, whack, whack !

"Yow, yow, yow ! He's mad ! Draggim-off !" shrieked Poole.

"Peastly pad moy ! I bunishes you, isn't it ?"

"Yahooh !"

Whack, whack, whack !

"You makes me valk mit me ofer miles und miles, nicht war ! You sheeks me ! Ah ! Mein Gott ! But I bunishes you, denn !"

"Yahoooh ! Leggo !"

Herr Kinkel hurled the yelling Poole aside, and made a break for Putter. Putter dodged wildly round the table, shouting for help.

"Gum here !" roared Herr Kinkel.

"Keep off ! Help ! He's mad—a mad German ! Help !"

"Vich is tat moy Silber ? I see him not !" Herr Kinkel blinked round furiously. "Vere is he ? Dere vas four !"

"Yow ! Ow, ow !"

"Deary me ! What ever is it ?" exclaimed Mrs. Tootle, in the doorway. "What ever is happening ?"

"This mad old idiot has pitched into us !" shrieked Pankley, almost sobbing with rage.

"Why, I'll—I'll—— I'm not going to stand it! You come near me again, you old ruffian, and I'll brain you with the tongs!"

And Pankley clutched up the tongs, and stood on the defensive.

"Madam, I am sorry I startle you," gasped Herr Kinkel, blinking at the amazed Mrs. Tootle. "Dese vicked poys run away and preak detention, and I gum——"

"You silly old idiot," roared Pankley,

first time a doubt coming into his mind. "Mein Gott! You are not Silber! You are not Lovell! Who are you?"

"We belong to Bagshot, you shrieking old chump!" roared Pankley. "Did you think we were Rookwood fellows, you idiot? We wouldn't be found dead in Rookwood! Ow! My back. We'll jolly well tell our headmaster about this, and Dr. Chisholm will hear of it, I can tell you!"

"Gum down!" bellowed Kerr Kinkel. "Mein Gott, I preaks evry pone in your podies!" "Nice afternoon, sir!" said Jimmy Silver, with friendly solicitude.



"we haven't broken detention; and if we did, it's not your business!"

"Vat!"

"You thumping old chump!" yelled Poole. "You come near me again, that's all! You come here if you want a jam-jar on your silly napper, you German pig!"

"Vat! You speaks to me like tat! I know not your voice!" Herr Kinkel blinked at the juniors through his spectacles, for the

"Mein Gott! Dey are not te poys!" gasped Herr Kinkel dazedly. "Now dat I see dem, I see tat dey are not te poys! Vy for you shall not tell me tat you are not dose poys for vich I gum, isn't it?"

"You silly old josser, how should we know you were looking for them?" hooted Pankley. "How dare you lay hands on us, you dunder-headed Hun?"

Pankley did not measure his words.

"Moin Gott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a wild yell from outside the window.

Herr Kinkel spun round and blinked at the window. Four grinning faces were framed in it.

"Ach! Dere are dose poys——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herr Kinkel made a wild rush for the door, gripping his cane. Pankley caught him with a tart on the ear as he rushed out, but Herr Kinkel did not even heed. He did not stay to apologise for his mistake, which had had such painful results for the Bagshot juniors. He was only thinking of getting at Jimmy Silver & Co. But those merry youths were already on the run.

In the farmhouse parlour Pankley and Poole groaned in chorus. They were feeling hurt. But worse than the damage done was the knowledge that flashed into their minds that the astute Jimmy Silver had planted this on them.

"Oh, that deep beast!" groaned Pankley. "Oh! Ow! He knew that blind old owl was after him, and knew the silly old cuckoo wouldn't stop to talk! He planted this on us! The awful rotter! Ow! I hope that fat pig catches him—yow!—and skins him alive! Wow!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Very Wet!

"No rest for the wicked!" sighed Jimmy Silver, as the Fistical Four ran.

They were laughing almost too much to run. The Co. understood at last that deep and deadly scheme of their astute leader, and they could have hugged Jimmy Silver.

"Will you stop mit you?" roared Herr Kinkel.

The gasping juniors looked back. The German master came raging out of the farmhouse, brandishing his cane. His fat face was crimson.

With the light and graceful motion of an elephant or a rhinoceros, Herr Kinkel came thundering on the track of the Fistical Four.

They did not stop.

Herr Kinkel did not look safe at close quarters. But they did not exert themselves.

They did not need to exert themselves to keep at a safe distance from the fat and unwieldy German. They slacked down to encourage him. They were willing to give him as long a run as he liked.

"Gum pack mit you!" roared Herr Kinkel. "I preaks efery pone in your pody, isn't it."

"Not good enough," murmured Jimmy Silver. "Do you chaps want efery pone in your podies proken?"

"Ha, ha! No."

"Ach, you young rascals! Vill you gum pack mit you?" panted Herr Kinkel.

He laboured on after the elusive juniors.

The Fistical Four kept ahead. They plunged cheerfully across a ploughed field, and the fat German laboured after them, breathing like a grampus, and streaming with perspiration.

"I say," murmured Raby, "we—we shall get into a row with Bootles, you know—chaps are supposed to stop when they're told——"

"We're afraid," said Jimmy Silver.

"Eh?"

"After what happened at the farmhouse, we are in a state of terror, and dare not come near Herr Kinkel."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "That will do for Bootles."

"We fear that he is intoxicated, or has gone mad——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver looked back. Herr Kinkel was slackening down. He was not in much condition for a stern chase.

"Easy does it," said Jimmy Silver. "Encourage him a bit. Don't shake him off. This way, my infants, and easy does it."

Herr Kinkel had been about to abandon the hopeless chase, but as the juniors slacked down, his hopes were renewed. He fancied they were failing. And he was too furious to think of postponing his vengeance, if he could help it. He began to gain, and his grip closed more tightly on his heavy cane. If only he could get within hitting distance of the Fistical Four, he would show them what he thought of them.

The running juniors disappeared into a grove of trees, Jimmy Silver leading the way. But they were running with an artistically

laboured motion, and Herr Kinkel had the impression that they were at their last gasp. He came lumbering on, puffing and blowing.

A hundred yards through the grove was the bank of a little stream. The little stream was crossed by a single plank. It was an ancient plank, resting loosely on a couple of large stones, and about ten feet long. The juniors crossed it in single file, and Jimmy Silver called a halt.

"I say, we don't want him to catch us," said Lovell. "I don't like his looks."

"Oh, give him a chance!"

Silver bent over the plank, and pulled it towards him. He pulled it, till the other end rested only by a fraction on the stone. His chums gasped with merriment as they watched him. As soon as a foot was set on the plank now, it would slide infallibly from the stone—with disastrous results to the person standing on it.

"Come on!" said Jimmy.

They did not run now. They took cover in the trees, and watched. Through the trees on the other side of the brook Herr Kinkel came in sight at last, puffing and panting. He did not pause at the plank. He had crossed that plank before, and he had no doubts about it. He came on the plank at a run.

The juniors held their breath.

Splash!

"Ach, Gott!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The heavy foot of the German clumping on the plank drove it from the stone, and it slipped into the water. Herr Kinkel made a wild bound as the plank slid from under his feet. He came down into the water in a sitting posture. The water was shallow; it rose only to Herr Kinkel's neck as he sat in it. But it was very wet.

The Fistical Four hugged themselves with glee.

Wild and weird sounds came from Herr Kinkel. His fat chin went under the water as he wriggled, and his mouth filled. It was a large mouth. Jimmy Silver said afterwards that the level of the water went down when Herr Kinkel's mouth was filled. But that was an exaggeration. Herr Kinkel swallowed

enough, however, to cause him to emit wild gasps and gurgles. He scrambled up, streaming with water, uttering sputtering noises and fiery German words, for which a dictionary would have been searched in vain.

"Oh, my hat!" moaned Lovell. "What a day out for Kinkel! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

"Gurrrrrrgh! Mein Gott! Gurrrrrrrrrg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrrrrr! Gurrrrrrrrrg!"

"Oh, come on!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "I shall have a fit if I stay here and look at him. I've got a pain in my ribs already."

Herr Kinkel was scrambling out of the brook on the near side, still uttering wild and whirling words. The Fistical Four trotted on. They felt that they were done with Herr Kinkel for that afternoon. But they were mistaken! Herr Kinkel was a sticker.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Run Down!

"**M**Y only hat!"

Jimmy Silver uttered that ejaculation in surprise as he looked back when the four had crossed a field. From the wood behind them a dripping figure had emerged, still running. He was soaked with water. He squelched out water and mud at every step. But, like Charley's celebrated aunt, he was still running. Instead of heading for Rookwood to get a change of clothes, which he needed badly, he was heading for the Fistical Four.

"Blessed if he isn't sticking it out!" exclaimed Lovell admiringly. "Never thought he had so much grit. These Germans are obstinate beggars."

The Fistical Four quickened their pace. They had dropped into a saunter, but it was evidently not safe to saunter.

They were heading for Coombe, to quench their thirst with ginger-pop at Mrs. Wicks' little shop in the village. They broke into a trot, and after them came the infuriated German master, squelching.

"Must be off his dot," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "If I were in that state, I should head for home and a rub down, but let him rip."

Herr Kinkel brandished his cane in the air as he saw the juniors looking back.

"Stop mit you!" he bellowed.

"This way," murmured Jimmy Silver.

He cut across the field towards a haystack, and his chums followed. On one side part of the hay had recently been removed, and it was easy to climb the rick.

"I say, he'll corner us here," said Lovell, in alarm.

"Let him corner us," said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Follow your uncle."

Jimmy Silver clambered up, and his chums followed him. They sat on the top of the rick and looked back at the German. Herr Kinkel's wet and crimson face lighted up with ferocious satisfaction as he saw them halted at last. He came gasping up to the hayrick and shook his stick at the four juniors above.

"Gum down!" he bellowed.

Jimmy Silver raised his cap politely.

"Good-afternoon, Herr Kinkel!"

"Gum down!"

"You look wet, sir," said Jimmy Silver, with friendly solicitude. "I hope you have not been falling into any water."

"Mein Gott, I preaks efery pone in your pody!"

"Nice afternoon, sir!"

"Vicked poy! I preaks efery pone when I vunce gets hold of you! I gums up and fetches you, isn't it?"

And the fat German essayed to climb the rick. It was not so easy for him as for the active juniors. He had more weight to carry, and he was not much of a climber. But by slow degrees he came up, panting and puffing.

"Time we slid," murmured Jimmy Silver.

He slid across the rick and held on by his hands, and dropped lightly into the field on the other side. It was rather a long drop, but he alighted safely, and his chums followed him, one after another.

They sauntered cheerfully away from the rick. At a distance of about fifty yards they looked back. On top of the hayrick, outlined against the blue sky, was a fat and furious figure brandishing a stick.

"Poor old Kinkel, always getting left in

the lurch!" sighed Jimmy Silver. "These Germans ain't up to our form, you know. They're too slow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herr Kinkel, in overpowering wrath and disappointment, brandished his stick madly on top of the haystack.

Jimmy Silver & Co. broke into a trot. They were fed up with Herr Kinkel, and they wanted some ginger-beer. They disappeared from the field at a pace that gave the German master no chance, if he took up the chase again.

The first halt was in the tuckshop in Coombe. There they called for ginger-pop and quenched their thirst, and cheerfully drank confusion to Herr Kinkel. But they kept one eye on the street.

It was about half an hour later that Herr Kinkel hove in sight. He was proceeding at a walk now. He hadn't a run left in him.

Jimmy Silver threw a shilling on the counter.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Wicks! If a fat German inquires after us, give him our love!"

The Fistical Four trotted out of the tuckshop. Herr Kinkel gave a bellow of wrath at the sight of them, and broke into a feeble run. The Fistical Four dodged him round the railway station, and trotted away into the lane towards Rookwood. It was time to get within gates.

Jimmy Silver looked back in the lane.

Herr Kinkel came lumbering out of the village. After him came about a dozen village urchins, yelling. The herr had forgotten his plight when he ventured into the village, but the sight of a fat German, hatless, squelching with water, and daubed with mud, with wet hair plastered round his bald crown, had naturally excited the village youths to visibility.

"'Ere's another guy!" hooted the urchins of Coombe, as they followed on the track of the excited German.

Herr Kinkel turned furiously and shook his stick at them.

"Yah! Look at 'im!"

"'Ere's a guy!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

The enraged German charged back at the



"Save us, sir!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, as the Fistical Four rushed across Mr. Bootles' study. "What—what!" The master stood up in startled amazement as Herr Kinkel appeared in the doorway.

crowd of young rascals, laying about him with his stick. They scattered, yelling, but they did not go far. They gathered at a safe distance, and a shower of stones rattled upon Herr Kinkel.

Breathing wrath and vengeance, the German beat a retreat, and then the hooting crowd followed on his track again. They accompanied him all the way to Rookwood, with yells and jeers and occasional volleys of stones and turf.

"Oh, what a day out for Kinkel!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Let's get out of this! I'm not going home along with that disreputable old ruffian and his gang of hooligans!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four put on speed and vanished. But Herr Kinkel couldn't put on speed; he had no speed left. He was pumped.

He lumbered, gasping, along the lane, to an accompaniment of hoots and yells, with pebbles clinking on him, snorting with fury.

Not till they reached the gates of Rookwood did the cheery urchins leave him, and then they gave him a final yell before they departed. Old Mack, the porter, came out in a state of great astonishment, and he almost fell down at the sight of Herr Kinkel.

"My heye!" said old Mack. "Wharrermarrer with you, sir? 'Ad a haccident—a bad haccident?"

"Dose poys!" hissed Herr Kinkel wildly. "Dose poys! Mein Gott!"

The porter backed away. Herr Kinkel's look was wild, and his eyes were gleaming. Old Mack did not like his looks.

"Yes, yes, sir; it's all right," he said soothingly. "They will do it, the young humps, when a gentleman 'as 'ad a drop too

much. Better go in quietly, sir, afore the 'Ead sees you!"

Herr Kinkel raved. It was too much, after all his sufferings, to be supposed by this idiotic porter to be intoxicated.

"Dummkopf!" he roared. "Fool of a man! I have noting trinken!"

"For goodness' sake, sir, be calm!" urged old Mack, in alarm. "You'll 'ave a crowd round, and the 'Ead— Oh, my eye!"

Old Mack dodged into his lodge, and slammed the door and locked it. Herr Kinkel looked distinctly dangerous.

Herr Kinkel shook a fat and muddy fist at the locked door, and stamped on towards the School House, with curious eyes turning on him from all sides.

Outside the School House the Fistical Four were chatting cheerfully with Hooker and Jones minor of the Fourth. The German master gave a furious grunt as he caught sight of them, and rushed at them.

The juniors scattered in alarm. Hooker and Jones simply bolted. Herr Kinkel looked like a dangerous lunatic at that moment.

The Fistical Four rushed into the House. Herr Kinkel stamped in after them.

"Stop mit you! Now I banish you!" he roared.

"Whither, O King?" murmured Raby. "The study?"

"No, Bootles' study," whispered Jimmy Silver.

"Bootles'?" gasped his chums.

"Yes; we've got to go through it," murmured Jimmy. "And if Bootles sees the old Hun in that state, he won't be surprised that we ran away from him, and led him a giddy dance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Co. rejoiced in the sagacity of their chief. They made a run for their Form-master's study. Herr Kinkel was close behind now, brandishing his stick. Without even stopping to knock, Jimmy Silver hurled open the door of Mr. Bootles' study, and the Fistical Four rushed in.

Mr. Bootles leaped up from his table in startled amazement.

"What—what—what—" he exclaimed.

"Save us, sir!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver dramatically.

"What—what!"

"Save us!" yelled the Fistical Four, in chorus.

And they dodged behind Mr. Bootles as the pursuer, who had run them to earth at last, came thundering in at the study doorway.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Mr. Bootles Protects the Innocent.

MR. BOOTLES stared at Herr Kinkel, his eyes almost starting through his spectacles.

Never had so fearsome an object burst into Mr. Bootles' study.

With wet and tangled hair smothered with mud and dust, crimson with rage, panting for breath, dripping with water from head to foot, Herr Kinkel presented an extraordinary appearance.

"What—what!" said Mr. Bootles feebly.

"Ach! Vere are dey?"

"Herr Kinkel! Is—is that you, Herr Kinkel?"

"Ach! Ja, ja! Dose poys—I bunishes dem—"

"Save us, sir!" shrieked Jimmy Silver, with a terrified accent, which showed that he was a born actor, as the German master strode forward. "He's mad, sir. Save our lives!"

"Help!" shrieked Lovell.

"Spare our lives!" screamed Raby.

"Mercy!" wailed Newcome.

"Silence! Silence!" cried Mr. Bootles. "Goodness gracious! Stand back, Herr Kinkel! Do you hear me, sir? Do you venture to use violence towards these boys in my study, Herr Kinkel?" thundered Mr. Bootles.

"Ach! I tinks——"

"Stand back! Boys, there is nothing to fear. Calm yourselves. I will protect you. Pray calm yourselves!"

"He's dangerous, sir!" sobbed Jimmy Silver. "He's been chasing us all the afternoon, and we barely escaped with our lives!"

"Nonsense—nonsense, Silver! You are mistaken, I am sure!"

"He attacked some of the Bagshot boys violently, sir, and we heard them shrieking

for help!" moaned Jimmy Silver. "Keep him off, sir! Oh, keep him off! I know he means murder!"

"Herr Kinkel, stand back, or I will call for help!" shouted Mr. Bootles, confronting the German master with flashing eyes. "How dare you? I repeat, sir, how dare you? Have you taken leave of your senses?"

Herr Kinkel backed away, in spite of himself. He was in a towering rage, but he had sense enough left not to attack the Form-master. He was greatly inclined to hurl Mr. Bootles aside, but a remnant of common-sense withheld him.

"Now, tell me what this means, Herr Kinkel!" said Mr. Bootles, who was very angry himself. "What do you mean by chasing these boys into my study, and frightening them in this manner?"

"Ach! I follow dem all der afternoon—"

"Then Silver's statement is correct. The Head shall judge of this matter!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "I am shocked—astonished! It is unheard-of! I repeat, have you taken leave of your senses, Herr Kinkel? Or have you been drinking—yes, sir, drinking?"

"Mein Gott!"

"Look at those boys," said Mr. Bootles. "They are trembling!" The Fistical Four began to tremble violently. Whether they trembled with terror or with suppressed merriment we cannot undertake to say, but certainly they trembled. "How dare you, Herr Kinkel, throw these boys into such a state of terror?"

"Ach! I tells you, Mr. Bootles. Dey are sheeky young rascals. Dey preaks detention, and I goes after dem!"

"We didn't break detention, sir!" wailed Jimmy Silver. "We didn't go till Bulkeley came and told us, sir!"

"Ach!"

"You appear to have made a mistake in the first place, Herr Kinkel," said Mr. Bootles severely. "These boys had permission to leave their Form-room when they had written a hundred lines each. Have you written your lines, my boys?"

"Yes, sir."

"But—but—but—" gasped Herr Kinkel.

"It vas till six o'clock. Mit mein own ears I shall hear you tell dem—"

"That was rescinded, and I requested a prefect to tell them so. But if you were under the impression, Herr Kinkel, that these boys had broken detention, you could have mentioned the matter to me, and if they had been guilty I should have punished them. You had no right to take the matter into your own hands. You are a master on the Modern side at this school, sir, and have no authority whatever over Classical pupils. How dare you undertake to punish boys in my Form—to inflict corporal punishment with your own hands?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles indignantly.

"Ach! I tink tat tey preak pounds, and I goes after dem to fetch dem back," said Herr Kinkel. "Den dey plays a trick on me. I finds ozzer poys in a room zat is all in shadow—I whacks dem in mistake—"

"A very reckless and foolish mistake," said Mr. Bootles. "Their headmaster will probably make a complaint to Dr. Chisholm on the subject. I should certainly do so in his place."

"Vy dey not stop venn I call to dem, hein?" roared Herr Kinkel. "I tinks tat I am a master, and tat poys shall obey me!"

"How could we stop when he was chasing us with a big stick, sir?" sobbed Jimmy Silver, still trembling. "And we saw him assault the Bagshot boys, sir—and they hadn't done anything. They were sitting quietly having their tea when he rushed in and attacked them. After that we—we—"

"I see tat dose poys are rasgally young peasts—" roared Herr Kinkel.

"Moderate your language, sir, in this room, if you please!" rapped out Mr. Bootles. "I am not accustomed to listening to bullying, as you will find. In the first place, you made a ridiculous error, for these boys certainly did not break detention; they had my permission to go. In the second place, you have caused them to fall into a state of terror which may be injurious to their health, and have given them the impression that you are not in your right senses. I trust, sir, that upon calm reflection you will realise how utterly absurdly and unjustifiably you have acted."

"Mein Gott!"

"You will now kindly quit my study, sir!"

"Dose ploys——" stuttered Herr Kinkel.

"After all dis dey shall be punished."

"There is nothing whatever to punish these boys for," said Mr. Bootles icily. "I am hardly likely to punish them for being frightened at your actions and your wild appearance, Herr Kinkel. Certainly they shall not be punished."

"Mein Gott!"

"You may go, my boys," said Mr. Bootles. "Herr Kinkel will not touch you. If he should do so, you are under my protection. But dismiss from your minds your fear that Herr Kinkel is insane. He is only excited—very excited. Foreigners are not so self-controlled as English people, that is all. But Herr Kinkel is sane—quite sane."

"You—you are sure, sir?" faltered Jimmy Silver, as if he still had very strong doubts.

"Yes, yes, Silver! You may go."

The Fistical Four ventured out from behind Mr. Bootles. They passed round Herr Kinkel with great caution, keeping their faces towards him and backing to the door as if he were a wild animal that might spring at any moment. But Herr Kinkel did not move. He was quelled.

The Fistical Four reached the doorway, backed into the passage, and bolted. What Mr. Bootles said to Herr Kinkel after that they never knew, but it was probably couched in very plain language.

The Fistical Four were away in the

end study, where they lay on the carpet and kicked up their heels and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear! Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Classical heroes in chorus. "Good old Bootles! Bootles is a brick! Did you see Kinkel's face? Oh, dear!"

The wild yells from the end study were heard along the passage, and Fourth-Formers came crowding in to hear what the dickens was the matter.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Townsend. "What's the matter with Kinkel? I've just seen him, and he looks as mad as a hatter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you been pulling his leg?" demanded Topham.

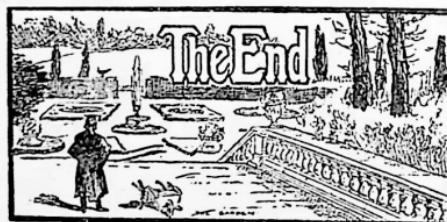
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ye howling gossoons! Tell us all about it, or sure we'll scrag yez!" roared Flynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four sat up at last and told the tale. And when it was told there was a howl of merriment from the Fourth. If Mr. Bootles had heard that roar he might have suspected that the cheery four had deliberately led Herr Kinkel a dance that afternoon, and that they had not been so alarmed as they appeared to be when they rushed into his study.

Fortunately, Mr. Bootles was not within hearing, so the Fourth howled with laughter to their hearts' content. And it was many days before the Fistical Four ceased to chuckle over the memory of that stern chase.



PROUT TELLS the TALE!



"THE Rocky Mountains, as you know,
Or, if you don't, I'll tell you so,
Were haunted many years ago
By bears," Old Prouty said.
" 'Twas in the spring of '88
When first I chanced to emigrate,
As I shall now to you relate—"
("No doubt!" agreed the Head.)

• • •

"One morning, doctor, as I strode
Along the steep and rocky road
Towards my primitive abode,
I had a fearful shock :
For standing at the doorway there,
Regarding me with fearful glare,
I came across a monstrous bear—"
("Bare what?" asked Doctor Locke.)

• • •

"Did I, dear doctor, turn and run ?
Not I ! I quite enjoyed the fun !
With careless laugh I seized my gun
And shot the creature dead.
It was a most amazing hit ;
The creature fell. I thought a bit,
Before I looked, and found that
it—"
("Was stuffed!" exclaimed the Head.)

• • •

"Well, as I cut the bear in two—
For bear-meat makes a tasty stew—
I heard an awful growl, and through
The hills there came a flock
Of other bears. I said a prayer,
But do not think I felt a scare ;
It was with rage I tore my hair—"
("What hair?" asked Doctor Locke.)

• • •

"I gave it to those creatures hot :
The leading bear I straightway shot,
Then killed two more upon the
spot—"
("Which spot?" the Doctor said.)
"But after that I gave a groan,
And stood like one turned into
stone—"
("I think I hear the telephone.
Good-morning!" said the Head.)