

Splendid Stories and Many Money Prizes!

The BOYS' FRIEND

No. 730, Vol. XV, New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending June 5th, 1915.



An Amazing Scene in A. S. Hardy's Great Story of Tom Belcher, the Boy Boxer.

FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story, introducing
TOM BELCHER, THE BOY BOXER.

BY ARTHUR S. HARDY.

The 1st Chapter.
 "Line 'n and a Little 'Un."
 Ben Adams' boxing-booth.
 "The crowd gathered
 around, yokes and townsmen
 had assembled in force,
 and whose evident intention
 was to see the troupe of boxers who
 had lately performed for the
 public.
 The platform set in front of the
 booth stood Ben Adams himself,
 a lad who had never
 before shown yet, and whose
 presence was based on a solid
 foundation.

And standing near were Tom Belcher, the diminutive boxer who was gradually but surely building up a reputation for himself as the smallest and cleverest had known to the ring to-day, Bob Saunders, Sam Whitaker, Joe Clouette, and Sam Walcott, the black.
 Mrs. Adams was seated in the pay-box, from out of which she peeped at the surging crowd, her face lit up with a smile in anticipation of another crowded house. The booth was doing excellent business at Strafford Fair.
 Ben, with arms set akimbo was looking down at a well-built but dull-looking countryman who'd issued a

challenge to fight any of the lads employed in the travelling show; and whose friends were grinning as they urged their champion on.
 "It was night, and the flickering flares of the naphtha lamps cast moving shadows on the gaudy colouring of the elaborately-carved screen which hid the huge tent beyond.
 "So you want to have a slap at one of my boys, do you?" said Ben, eyeing the challenger critically. "Well, all right; they're quite willing to accommodate you. But, first of all, I want to know who you are."
 "My name's Chudley," answered the challenger—"Bob Chudley. And I live here."

"Oh, you live here, do yer, Bob?" answered Ben serenely. "All well and good. But of course you know that we bar all professionals. Ever fought for a money prize in the ring?"
 "Noa."
 "Ever fought as an amateur in any big competition?"
 "Noa."
 "Where have you done your fighting, then?"
 "In the street," answered the yokel, with a grin that stretched his mouth from ear to ear. "They reckon I'm a champion in Strafford."
 "Oh, they reckon you're a champion, do they? That's hard on my lads, isn't it?"
 "You say that your boxers are ready to fight anyone," returned the yokel. "Why do you say that if you don't mean it?"
 Ben beckoned the man up.
 "Just step along up here," said he, "and let's have a look at you."
 The yokel obeyed the summons with alacrity. He laboured heavily up the steps, and took his stand in the bright light of the lamps. He stood about five feet six inches high, and was awkwardly put together.
 His weight must have been about a hundred and thirty pounds. He had good shoulders and a deep chest. He stood

in a peculiarly awkward attitude, and Ben, a very good judge of a fighting man, either stripped or clothed, came to the conclusion that he would be easy to most of his lads.
 "H'm!" said he. "Now, which of my lads would you like to box?"
 The yokel pointed at Tom Belcher.
 "Him," he said.
 "Oh, you like 'em small, do yer?" retorted Ben, amidst a roar of laughter from the crowd. "Well, I don't blame you. Here, Tom 'd, you haven't been very hard worked since we came here. What do you think? Would you like to have a try at him?"
 Tom leapt up instantly. His boyish and alert face beamed, his eyes sparkled. He was what one might term seven stone of concentrated muscular energy, a little piece of human quicksilver whose like it would have been difficult to find.
 He faced the yokel. As they stood side by side the crowd gasped. It seemed a shame to pit such a child against the bigger and more powerful countryman.
 "Shape up at him, Tom," said Ben, with a smile; and Tom, setting himself in a boxing attitude, made a feint as if he intended to strike his challenger.
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ROOKWOOD'S REVENGE!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale, introducing Everybody's Favourite Characters:

JIMMY SILVER & COMPANY.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.
The Mighty Fallen.

Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Moderns were wheeling out of the shed when the Shell bore down upon them.

The captain of the Shell was looking at Tommy Dodd & Co. with a gleam in his eye, and he was frowning behind his eyeglasses.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were looking at the captain of the Shell with a look of surprise.

"Well, you've found us," said Tommy Dodd.

"Yes," said the captain of the Shell.

"What! Would you mind getting out of the way of my bike?" asked Tommy Dodd politely.

"Hold on a minute! I've got something to say," snapped the captain of the Shell.

"I'm not a cricket captain—"

"I wanted to be in the team," said Tommy Dodd cheerfully.

"I wasted an awful lot of soft wax on you, Smythe. But you've been kicked out of that now. I'm your cricket captain now. So I don't say more soft sawdust to you. You're not worth it now."

"Jimmy Silver would have got in if I hadn't backed you up," said Tommy Dodd.

"Yes, you'd have done anything to get Jimmy Silver out," said Tommy Dodd.

"Would you mind getting out of the way?"

"I've just read the list you've put up," said Smythe, unheeding.

"I'm not out," said Tommy Dodd.

"You can't play cricket, you know," said Smythe.

"When we're playing matches with Bagshot I'm going to put you in. Likewise, when we're playing hop-scotch with them."

"And crosses. Or bezel-games. Or anything else you like to play."

"I don't want any of your cheek," said Tommy Dodd.

"I've simply got to be in the team for the match to-morrow."

"A Modern cad can't have the cheek to jump on me, considering I was a cricket captain up to a couple of weeks ago."

"And a precious muck you made of it," said Tommy Dodd.

"Sorry, but it can't be did. I'm not a Modern cad."

"I'm going in, and so's Tracy and Howard and—"

"Are you getting out of the way?"

"No!" roared Smythe. "I'm not getting out of the way. I'm tellin' you— Oh, you young villain! You!"

Three bikes were suddenly wheeled forward, and as Adolphus Smythe was directly in the way, of course they wheeled into him.

Smythe's "bags" were a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. There wasn't a fellow at Rookwood, Classic or Modern, who had more beautifully-crafted bags than Adolphus Smythe of the Shell, or a lovelier creel. Three somewhat muddy wheels crashed on those beautiful bags, and Smythe gave a roar of wrath and horror.

He staggered back from the shock, and sat on the ground.

The three Moderns did not stop. Smythe of the Shell was still in the way, and perhaps they did not think of going round him. At all events, they didn't go round him. They wheeled their bikes over him. Per-



The last man in looked quite desperate as he faced the bowling. The hapless fag hadn't the ghost of a chance, however, for Tommy Dodd made a spread-eagle of his wicket. A tremendous roar of laughter went up from the spectators.

haps it was by accident that Tommy Dodd trod upon Smythe's handsome waistcoat in passing. It might have been chance that Doyle waded a boot on his hair.

Be that as it may, Smythe did not look much like a nut when Tommy Dodd & Co. had passed.

He looked like a wreck—a very disreputable wreck.

Three grinning juniors wheeled their bikes onward to the gates, and Smythe sat up dazedly and gasped.

"Oh, by gad! Ow—ow! My hat! Yoop! Yah! The cheeky young cads! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. vanished. Smythe sat gasping for breath. He was still sitting outside the bike-shaped gasping for breath, when Jimmy Silver & Co. came down for their bikes. They also were going out for a spin that pleasant afternoon. They stared at the sight of Adolphus.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Is that Adolphus? Can it be? Or do my aged eyes deceive me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Been mud collecting?" chuckled Lovell.

Smythe staggered up.

"You cheeky young reptiles—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smythe of the Shell made a furious stride towards the Fistical Four. Then he stopped. There was not one member of the Classical Four who could not have knocked the dandy of the Shell into a cocked hat. Discretion was the better part of valour.

of the Classical side and captain of Rookwood. And other seniors took their cue from the two leaders. So it may be imagined that the hatchet was seldom buried among the juniors.

The Classical Four of the Fourth Form knew that many of Tommy Dodd's followers would urge him to play all, or nearly all, Moderns in the junior eleven. Smythe, a Classical, had favoured his own side in the most barefaced way. And so Jimmy Silver & Co. had been uneasy.

But Tommy Dodd had set their fears at rest. Tommy was a good cricket captain. He meant to have a change in the Rookwood record. Bagshot would come over smiling as usual to lick Rookwood juniors hands down. And Tommy Dodd carefully selected for his eleven the very best players on both sides. The Fistical Four, Silver and Lovell and Raby and Newcome, were all put in the team, and so was Flynn or Fournel, the most rabid Classical had to admit that Tommy Dodd was playing the game.

"It's a win to-morrow," Jimmy Silver chuckled, as they rode away—"a giddy win for us. The first one this season. Bleed the top players—"

"Us!" grinned Lovell.

"Exactly! And Dodd and Cook and Doyle are ripping, though they're Modern worms, and the rest are pretty good. The best of it is that Bagshot will expect to walk over us the same as when that as Smythe was skipper, and it will be a thumping surprise for them."

The Fistical Four chuckled gleefully.

They really couldn't blame fellows for grinning at Rookwood cricket, considering what it had been like under the egregious Jimmy's leadership. Rookwood junior eleven had been simply comic. Fellows could play them with their hands in their pockets, so to speak.

But though they couldn't blame fellows for grinning, it had made the Classic heroes very sore; and they anticipated, with a certain amount of store for Bagshot when, instead of eleven hopeless slackers, they had to play a team that was hard as nails, and thoroughly up to the game.

"I met Pankley, the Bagshot skipper, yesterday," said Raby. "The silly ass was swanking no end! They're expecting to walk over us as usual!"

"Blessed are those who don't expect!" said Jimmy Silver. "Hallo, Modern cads!"

The Fistical Four had ridden into the village, and outside the tuckshop they beheld Tommy Dodd & Co. alighting from their machines. The three Moderns disappeared into the shop.

The Classical Four leaned their bikes against the old tree outside Mrs. Wick's little establishment, and followed the Moderns in. The three Moderns were discussing ginger-beer, and talking to a somewhat lanky youth in Etons, with a Bagshot cap. It was Pankley, of the Fourth Form at Bagshot School.

Pankley was grinning.

"You fellows will be seeing the match to-morrow, Duddy?" he asked.

"Tommy Dodd stilled."

"Seeing it? Oh, yes!"

Pankley was not aware of the tremendous change that had taken place in the junior cricket club at Rookwood.

"It will be worth seeing," said Pankley.

"I fancy it will!" grinned Tommy Dodd, thinking of the surprise that was in store for Pankley's team.

"Quite worth seeing!"

"Funniest and most usual," said Pankley with a chuckle. "The way you junior cads play cricket is always funny; but this time—"

"Well, it won't be quite the same as usual, that's a cert," said Tommy Dodd.

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver invitingly.

Smythe shook his fist and stamped away. When he got back into the School House, his natty chums, Tracy and Howard, greeted him with a stare.

"By Jove, you do look muddy!"

Smythe snorted.

"Those Modern cads, they really mean to leave me out of the eleven," he gasped. "I'd have thrashed 'em all round, only—"

Smythe did not finish. He stamped away to the dormitory to get himself clean without explaining why he had not thrashed Tommy Dodd & Co. all round. Tracy and Howard grinned. They thought they knew.

The 2nd Chapter. A Little Scrap.

Jimmy Silver and his three chums mounted their bicycles outside the school gates, and rode away cheerfully towards Coombe. Afternoon lessons were over, and the Fistical Four were going down to the village to purchase one of Mrs. Wick's celebrated cakes for tea. They were in high good-humour. For all four of them were booked to play in the Bagshot match on the morrow.

Glad as they were to be rid of Smythe as cricket captain, they had been a little uneasy. Rivalry was celebrated cakes for tea. They were in high good-humour. For all four of them were booked to play in the Bagshot match on the morrow.

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ROOKWOOD'S REVENGE!

(Continued from the previous page.)

...the captain was led...
...the study was thick with it.

...magnificent speed under the onslaught of the juniors.
...The food was so good indeed that Smythe and Tracy quite forgot that they could only stay a short time.

...Then there was a patter of retreating footsteps.
...The smoke was steadily pouring out into the study now.

...Oh dear! By gad! Oh, you silly fags!
...Smythe staggered away, black as a sweep, his elegant clothes in a shocking state.

...Fire! asked Tommy Dodd into- come.
...Bulkeley granted and turned away, Tommy Dodd & Co. moved off arm-in-arm, smiling sweetly.

...Here are our dear boys!
...I'm afraid we shall be able to stay longer, but we will give you a look in, if possible.

...The whole room swam with black.
...The juniors were all on their feet now, gasping and coughing, and rubbing their smarting eyes.

...There was a shout from the quadrangle below.
...The smoke was pouring from the window over the bunch of juniors crammed there.

...The juniors were all in their barracks, and the pitch had been rolled to a noisy, and all was ready, but Bagshot had not yet put in an appearance.

...The juniors were all in their barracks, and the pitch had been rolled to a noisy, and all was ready, but Bagshot had not yet put in an appearance.



As the three Tommies sprawled over the Bagshot junior, Jimmy Silver picked up a siphon of soda from the counter and let fly at the gasping heap. "Whizz! Fizz! Squishhsh!"

...now. The juniors could hardly see one another.
...A flood of soot descended into the pattering fire and whisked over the study.

...A flood of soot descended into the pattering fire and whisked over the study.
...The juniors were simply swamped with it.

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