

NEW ADVENTURE & DETECTIVE STORIES IN THIS ISSUE!

# The BOYS' FRIEND I!

OUR MOTTO IS: "PLAY THE GAME!"

No. 797, Vol. XVI. New Series.]

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending September 16th, 1916.



## THE RED RAIDERS!

The Opening Chapters of a Thrilling New Story of Adventure in the Wild West.

By **DUNCAN STORM.**

### The 1st Chapter. Bound for the Wild West.

"Go West, my lads!" said 'Cisco Bill, a tall, bronzed man from America. "Go West—to the land of the Setting Sun. Dig out for the heart of the sunset where there's elbow room in the world, and the air ain't been breathed three times over and left for the next chap."

Ted and Sid Bligh, and their chum Stringy Larries, at the bean in veneration. They knew he was advising them to go to America, but he might as well have advised them to go to the moon. They had barely a penny in the world between them.

The man laughed. "I see you are looking for the bridge," said he. "D'ye know Shed 45 of the Victoria Nyanza Docks?"

"Yes, sir," replied Stringy. "There ain't a corn docks I don't know."

"Well," continued the American, "if you want to go West and make your fortunes, just you slide aboard the Ringarooma to-night at ten o'clock, and stow yourselves away on the main deck. She sails for Galveston, Texas, at midnight, and she drops her Channel pilot off Dungeness and takes the mid-Channel course. Then you show up on deck, and I'll see you through. When the captain sends for you, as he will, you just pass the word for 'Cisco Bill, the cattleman. That's me."

The boys looked at one another, and the resolution seemed to take them altogether.

"We'll do it, sir," said Ted. "That's the music," replied 'Cisco Bill approvingly. "Nuthin' like jumpin' into the game straight away. Don't forget, ten o'clock sharp."

"We sha'n't forget, sir," said Ted cheerfully. And the boys did not forget. As ten o'clock was striking from a neighbouring church, they managed to creep aboard the Ringarooma, and hide themselves on the deck. Not a soul witnessed their act, and when, a little later, the Ringarooma left dock, their presence on board had not been observed.

For over twenty-four hours the boys remained quietly in their hiding-place, and then, about one o'clock in the morning, a Mexican, a villainous-looking man who was a member of the crew, came sneaking towards a huge pile of hay bales. Suddenly he lighted a match, and threw it into the hay, causing it to flare up at once.

The boys immediately darted from their hiding-place, and commenced a fight with the flames. Stringy located a hose, and turned the water on the burning mass. The boys worked like Trojans, and when they had got the flames under control, rough hands gripped them, and they were dragged up to the bridge, and thrust unceremoniously into the chart-room to face the captain.

"What does this mean?" he demanded. "Setting my ship afire on the high seas!"

"Please, sir, we didn't set your ship afire!" said Stringy. "We put it out!"

"Where are the men?" demanded the captain. "Half a dozen of the Mexican grassers flied in."

"Where is the head horsekeeper?" shouted the captain angrily. "He's responsible for the deck! That fellow 'Cisco Bill, or whatever he calls himself!"

'Cisco Bill's big, square figure showed at the door of the chart-room.

"Now, you, 'Cisco Bill," demanded the captain shortly, "what have you got to say about this affair?"

"These boys are right enough," replied 'Cisco Bill, chewing easily at a straw. "I invited 'em to stow away myself, by the right of the owner!"

The owner?" gasped the captain. For answer 'Cisco Bill produced a bundle of papers, which he threw on the table before the captain. "Thought I'd come and see for myself how things were run on my ships in the North Atlantic trade," said he. "Seems

## THE SMOKE INDIANS ON THE WAR-PATH!

(A thrilling scene from Our Great New Story of Adventure in the Wild West.)

(Continued on the next page.)







I would like all my readers to look upon me as their real friend, someone to whom they can come for help and advice when they are in doubt or difficulty. It is never "too much trouble" to me to be of use to my boy and girl friends if they feel they would like to write to me.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS:  
 "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d. Every Monday.  
 "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Monday.  
 "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Wednesday.  
 "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.  
 "THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.  
 "CHUCKLES," PRICE 1d. Every Friday.

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of THE BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

**A REALLY GREAT SERIES!**

I AM quite expecting to receive hundreds of letters praising our great new series of stories introducing Derrick Brent, the Schoolmaster Detective, and Tom and Teddy Rawdon, his two boy assistants.

At any rate, I shall be extremely disappointed if I don't, for I consider that Victor Nelson's stories are the best of their kind that have ever been written. They are full of thrill and excitement, and the plot of each yarn is a deep and well-thought-out one.

I have read countless exciting stories in my time, but in my opinion not one of them is worthy of as much praise as "The Great Boxing Mystery!" which appears in this issue. It is a well-written story, with an ingenious plot, and I am sure that it will meet with the approval of all my chums.

Next Monday's issue of the Boys' Friend will contain another rattling fine story, introducing Derrick Brent and his two assistants. The title of this story is

**"THE CLUE OF THE PIERCED WATCH!"**

and from start to finish it is an amazing story. The clue which Derrick Brent receives is a most slender one; but, bringing his great detective powers into action, he is successful in bringing a most desperate criminal to justice. Will you tell all your chums about this grand new series of stories? I want every British boy to make the acquaintance of Derrick Brent and Tom and Teddy Rawdon, for they are characters everyone will like.

Needless to say, next Monday's issue of the Boys' Friend will contain another magnificent story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Rookwood chums. The title of this grand tale is

**"THE COLONIAL SCHOOLBOY."**

For many months now my readers have been writing to me, asking me to persuade Mr. Owen Conquest to introduce a South African boy into the Rookwood stories. I talked the matter over with Mr. Conquest, and he readily consented to adopt the suggestion. The result is that in next Monday's splendid story of Jimmy Silver & Co. a South African schoolboy makes his appearance at Rookwood.

Townsend and Topham meet the new boy at the station, and attempt to rag him. However, the Colonial schoolboy proves one too many for the cads of Rookwood. Arrived at the school, Higgs, the bully, comes into contact with the new fellow, with disastrous results to Higgs. A stand-up fight takes place, and Higgs experiences the discomfort of being soundly defeated.

The Colonial schoolboy is a real good sort, and you, like Jimmy Silver & Co., will, I feel sure, take a great fancy to him. At any rate, you should not miss reading this splendid tale of the Rookwood chums.

Next Monday's issue will also contain the third article in our great series of articles on the Air Service. The title of this article is

**"THE INITIAL FLIGHT,"**

and it gives you some more useful information about the life of an airman.

There will be another thrilling long instalment of

**"THE RED RAIDERS!"**

By Duncan Storm, in next Monday's number, and the instalment of

**"TREASURES OF THE DEEP!"**

By Maurice Everard,

is quite one of the best which has appeared so far. If you want to make sure of reading this grand budget of fiction, you should pop round to your newsagent and order your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND in advance. That is the only safe way of avoiding disappointment.

**THE "BOYS' FRIEND" TUCK HAMPER COMPETITION—No. 20.**

The correct reading of the twentieth BOYS' FRIEND picture puzzle is as follows:

One day a mother crab scolded her daughter, and with rage ordered her to walk less awkwardly. "Well, mother," said the small crab, "I walk as gracefully as I can; but if you would have me go otherwise, then please teach me by your own example how you would have me walk."

One competitor sent in a perfectly correct solution, and thus wins the First Prize of £1:

LEONARD WILSON,  
8, Princess Avenue,  
Blackpool.

Tuck Hampers have been awarded to the following six competitors in order of merit:

John Collins, 7, Tower Street, Harrogate, Yorks.; Thomas Edwards 43, May Street, Cathays, Cardiff; Cecil H. Parker, 25, Montague Avenue, Barking, Essex; Richard Stoyles, 3, Alexandra Road, Torquay; Cecil Townsend, 5, Queen's Road, Stirling, Scotland; J. J. Hayes, 11, Co. Waterford.

**BOOKS FOR ALL.**

Once again I would draw my chums' attention to the magnificent issues of the BOYS' FRIEND Library which are now on sale. The charge made for these books is only three-pence, and each one contains an 80,000-word complete story as good as a three-and-sixpenny novel.

Here are the titles of this month's issues of the BOYS' FRIEND Library:

No. 345.  
**"BLACK AND WHITE!"**

A Splendid Long Complete Story of the Boxing Ring.

By Arthur S. Hardy.

No. 346.

**"SONS OF THE EMPIRE!"**

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Adventure in the Wild West.

By Brian Kingston.

No. 347.

**"THE PRIDE OF THE POLICE!"**

A Grand Long Complete Story of the Metropolitan Police Force.

By Andrew Gray.

No. 348.

**"THE CAD OF THE FIFTH!"**

An Enthralling Story of School Life.

By Henry St. John.

Don't forget the price of these books is only three-pence each, and they are on sale at all newsagents'.

**BRIEF REPLIES.**

6713 Pte. A. Wardrobe, 73 Coy., M.G.C., B.E.F., France, would

greatly appreciate the gift of an accordion or a mouth-organ! Will one of my chums oblige this needy Tommy?

Back numbers of the companion papers are needed by Sea Scout J. Bird, 38, Wensleydale Terrace, Blyth, Northumberland. Perhaps some of my chums will send on their old copies to Master Bird.

Miss P. Moore (London).—As space is so limited, I am afraid it is impossible for me to publish a longer instalment of Mr. Duncan Storm's serial. However, I am very pleased to learn that this story makes such a strong appeal to you.

F. W. Smith (Luton).—For the information you require you should apply to your nearest recruiting-office.

A. E. Marchant (Forest Gate).—Write to the Civil Service Commissioners, Burlington House, Burlington Gardens, London, S.W. for the information you require.

"Glowboy."—Write to Messrs. Hugo, 35, Gracechurch Street, London, E.C., for the text-book you require on the French language.

B. A. Laffen (Golder's Green).—Have taken careful note of your complaint. I am afraid, however, it is impossible for me to adopt the arrangement you suggest. Why not purchase an extra copy of the BOYS' FRIEND? This is the best way out of the difficulty.

H. F. A. F. (Shepherd's Bush).—Very sorry, but "Pete's Boyhood" is out of print.

"Spanish."—I should advise you to learn the French language, as I think it will be of more use to you than a knowledge of the Spanish language.

R. Webster (Derby).—Will consider your suggestion with regard to re-introducing Dan, Bob, and Darkey. Your suggestion concerning Mornington shall be conveyed to Mr. Owen Conquest. Rookwood is in Hampshire. Cannot say whether there are any boys from Derbyshire at Rookwood. Your suggestion concerning a B.F.C.C. shall be considered.

G. Clarke (West Australia).—Garnett Bell was entirely an imaginary character. The same applies to Jimmy Silver & Co. The boxer you mention is eighteen years of age. Do not think Dan and Darkey remember their surnames. You see, their parents died when they were quite young. Which is the best paper—"The Gem" or "Penny Paper"? Why not try them, and judge for yourself?

W. Sullivan (London).—Higgs is, I think, the oldest boy in the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

G. Pellender (Kingston).—I note your remarks concerning the Tom Belcher series. Sincerely trust our new series make a stronger appeal to you.

A. Spearay (Canada).—The characters you mention are entirely imaginary.

Private C. Oakes, 5568, B Coy., 5 Platoon, 23 Worcester Regt., B.E.F., France, is in need of a set of boxing-gloves. Would one of my chums oblige this needy Tommy?

**TUCK HAMPERS AS PRIZES!**  
GREAT NEW COMPETITION!

1st Prize, £1. SIX OTHER PRIZES AS TUCK HAMPERS.

I enter THE BOYS' FRIEND Tuck Hamper Competition No. 26, and agree to accept the published decision as absolutely binding.

Signed.....

Address.....

Write carefully.

**READ THESE RULES VERY CAREFULLY.**

This week your Editor is giving the above splendid prizes, which will be awarded for the best efforts in the following simple little task. Adjoining this you will find an attractive picture-puzzle, and I want you to try to make it out for yourselves. I myself wrote the original paragraph, and my artist drew up the puzzle. The original paragraph is locked up in my safe, and the first prize of £1 will be awarded to the reader whose solution is exactly the same as my "par." The other prizes, which consist of tuck hampers crammed full of most delicious "tuck," will be awarded to the readers whose solutions are next in order of merit. If there are ties for the money prize, this will be divided, but no reader will be awarded more than one share.

Should more than six readers qualify for the tuck hamper prizes, these will be added to.

You may send as many solutions as you please, but each must be accompanied by the signed coupon you will find on this page.

Write your solutions in ink on a clean sheet of paper, fill up coupon on this page, and pin to this, and address to "26th Tuck Hamper Competition, the Boys' FRIEND, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.," so as to reach that address not later than Tuesday, September 19th, 1916.

Remember that your Editor's decision must be accepted in all matters concerning this competition as absolutely binding.

The result will appear in the BOYS' FRIEND as soon as possible; but readers should remember that, apart from the time required for properly judging the competition, each week's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND goes to press nearly three weeks before the date of publication.

Can you read this Picture Puzzle Fable of the Lion and the Four Bulls?

Your Editor

# THE ROOKWOOD CO-OPERATORS!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

### The 1st Chapter. War Profits.

"Tuppence-ha'penny! Tubby Mullin of the Fourth Form, made that remark, in tones of sulphurous indignation, as he came into the junior Common-room at Rookwood.

"Tuppence-ha'penny!" he peated. "Do you hear?" Jimmy Silver looked round. "Ask next door!" he suggested. "Eh?" "Don't you what Shakespeare says—"

"Blow Shakespeare," "Shakespeare says 'either a borrower nor a lender be,'" said Jimmy Silver severely. "Shut up!" "You silly ass!" hooted Tubby Mullin. "I'm not trying to borrow tuppence-ha'penny. Ginger-pop has gone up. It's tuppence-ha'penny at the tuckshop now."

"Oh!" "Tuppence-ha'penny!" repeated Tubby, in tones of thrilling indignation. "Old Kettle says it can't be sold for less. Fancy old Kettle joining the war profiteers! I say, something ought to be done, you know."

"Looks as if we shall be done," remarked Lovell. "Old Kettle is going it rather strong, though, with tarts twopence each, and ginger-pop twopence-ha'penny."

"Everything's gone up," said Tubby lugubriously. "I don't think they ought to have a war at all, when it makes the price of grub go up. Of course, I want to mop up Germany as much as anybody, and colour their colonies red on the map, and all that, but when it comes to paying tuppence-ha'penny for ginger-pop, it's really time to call a halt, you know. I don't suppose Asquith foresaw that in 1914."

"I don't suppose he did," grinned Raby. "You know what these politicians are. They never think of the really important things."

"That's all very well," grunted the fat Classical. "But look here, what's going to be done? We shall starve at this rate."

"You look like starving," said Newcome sympathetically. "I'm growing thin," said Tubby, with pathos in his voice. "I'm losing flesh. I know I am. We don't get enough to eat here. Bootles makes faces at a chap if he asks for a fourth helping—"

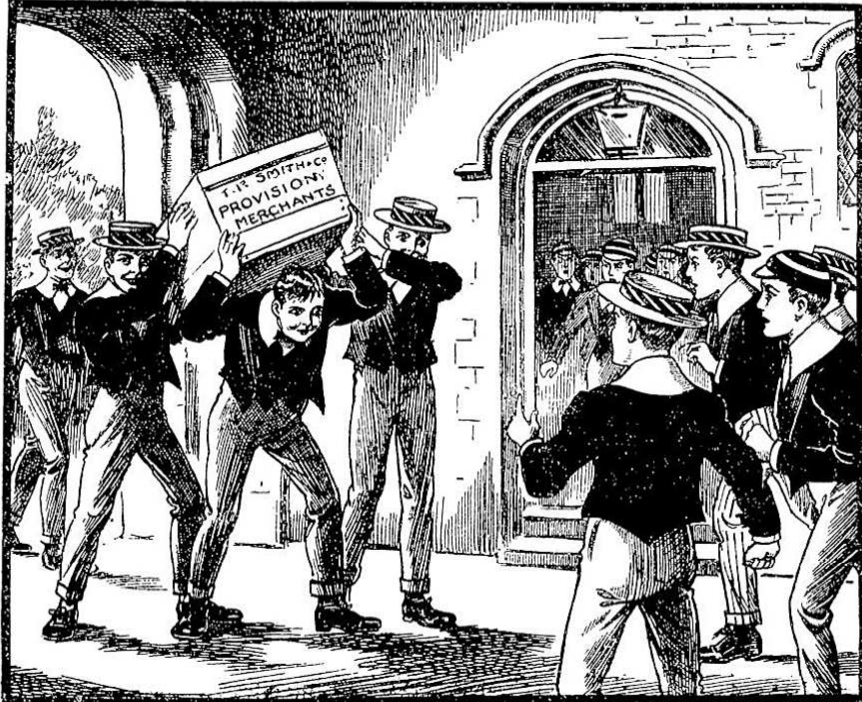
"Ha, ha, ha!" It isn't a laughing matter, said Tubby warily. "A chap used to be able to eke it out at the tuckshop; but with prices going up all round, what's a chap to do? We might as well be blockaded like Germany. If rotters are going to be allowed to charge us double for our grub it comes to the same thing."

"Well, something ought to be done," he remarked. "We ought to put our foot down, you chaps."

"Can't be helped," said Lovell, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I believe war profiteering is catching, like measles. Old Kettle's caught it."

"Chap naturally wants to make hay while the sun shines," remarked Leggett of the Fourth. "I'd do the same."

"Yes; I've no doubt you would," said Jimmy Silver, with a scornful glance at the end of the Fourth. "But you can't call it honest."



"Jimmy Silver, Raby, Lovell, and Newcome, following him, saw the sergeant's interest in the packing-case. "I'm sorry, but the sergeant's grumpy," grunted Jimmy. "Oh, you can't do!n Classics, you know," said Jimmy Silver coolly.

not faggin' down to the village every time I want a bun to save a ha'penny."

"The ha'pennies mount up in the long run."

"I dare say you're short of ha'pennies," said Topham loftily. Jimmy Silver did not heed that remark.

"Hands up for boycotting the school shop for a week!" he called out. Lovell and Raby and Newcome put up their hands. Oswald and Flynn followed suit.

But the rest of the Classical juniors only grinned. "Too much fag!" said Peelo. "Silly rot!" remarked Mornington.

Jimmy Silver granted. "Well, if you're not willing to help yourselves, you must expect to be swindled," he said. "By the way, we'd better get our supper before the shop closes," grinned Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Go down to the village for it," chuckled Townsend. "Perhaps Bulkeley will give you a pass out of gates—perhaps!"

"And perhaps it's worth a mile there and back to save tuppence," said Peelo. "I suppose it is, if you're hard up for twopence."

"Oh, come on," said Jimmy Silver gruffly. And he left the Common-room with his chums, leaving a general chortle behind him.

"Have the Germans captured the jam factories?" "And bioater paste penny—"

"I suppose the German submarines have been capturing the bioaters?" said Jimmy Silver sarcastically. The sergeant did not seem to hear.

"And cheese is another 'apenny," he remarked. He set out the goods on the counter, and made a calculation. "Two and threepence for that lot, Master Silver."

"One and twopence," said Jimmy Silver. "Two and threepence, please."

"One and twopence," roared Jimmy Silver. The sergeant shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, shell out, and let's get off, Jimmy," said Lovell. "I'm hungry, and it's close on bedtime."

"I'm shocked at you, sergeant," said Jimmy Silver. "You're an old soldier, too, and so you ought to know better."

"Prices have gone up, Master Silver," said the sergeant, unmoved. "Buck up, Jimmy!" Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"We're not taking any," he said. "Is that lot one and twopence, sergeant?" "No, it ain't. It's two and threepence."

"Yes; don't be a silly ass, Jimmy," urged Lovell. "You fellows can please yourselves," said Jimmy. "I'm not taking any. You ought to back me up."

"Are you taking them things?" asked the sergeant stolidly. "No."

"Please yourself, Master Silver." "Oh, you're an ass!" growled Lovell. "Let's get out. I suppose we've got to back you up, you howling duffer!"

The Fistical Four left the tuckshop; Tubby Mullin followed them out, and caught Jimmy by the sleeve. "I say, Silver—"

"Well, fatty?" "You're not going to spend any money at the tuckshop—"

"No!" growled Jimmy. "Then I've got an idea!" "Well?" "Lend it to me."

"Eh?" "You won't want it, you know, as you're going without your supper. I'd rather not go without mine, so you can lend me the tin—yarcocoon!"

Tubby Muffin found himself sitting down suddenly in the quad, and the Fistical Four walked on and left him there.

### The 2nd Chapter. Co-operative.

"I've got it!" Jimmy Silver uttered that exclamation suddenly at tea in the end study the next day.

His eyes were glistening. Evidently a wheeze was working in the fertile brain of the captain of the Fourth.

"Well, what is it?" yawned Lovell. "Pass the jam first."

"If you want a thing don't, it's always best to do it yourself," said Jimmy. "That's what we're going to do."

"Take what out of their hands, fat-head?" "Shopkeeping."

"Shush-shush-shopkeeping!" stuttered Lovell. "Exactly."

Jimmy Silver's chums stared at him. "Ave you thinking of opening a shop?" demanded Lovell at last, with crushing sarcasm.

Jimmy Silver nodded calmly. "Yes."

"Opening a shop?" yelled Raby. "Certainly."

"You howling ass!" "For goodness' sake don't be so funny, Jimmy!" urged Newcome. "If you must say these funny things, send 'em to 'Chuckles,' and get half-a-crown for 'em!"

"Lend me your car, my sons," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "I'm not talking out of my hat. I've been thinking it out. Old Kettle is bitten with the war-profit fever, and he's beginning to wish us. Well, all we've got to do is to open a stores."

"On co-operative principles." "Co-operative principles."

Just so. We buy the things wholesale—it only needs money—"

"Only!" ejaculated Raby. "Only money! Why don't you suggest that we all become millionaires and peers—it only needs money—only that!"

"The money having been raised, we can—"

"But how are you going to raise the money?" "For goodness' sake don't waste time discussing small details, Raby. We can settle that afterwards. The money having been raised, we order the goods from a wholesale firm, and they come down in a big consignment. We open the shop—say, in the box-room."

"The Box-room Co-operative Stores, Limited," suggested Lovell sarcastically. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Rookwood Co-operative Supply Stores," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "Everybody takes shares in the—"

"Tuck?" "No, ass—the business. You come and buy your own goods, you know, and all profits are divided in the form of dividends at the end of the financial year. My dear children, there are co-operative stores all over the country, and they flourish, too. You save all the middlemen's profits—that's why middlemen are so down on them. You eliminate the middleman."

"You what him?" "Eliminate him."

"You've been reading that in a paper or something," said Lovell suspiciously.

"Ahem! I may have seen an article about co-operative stores," said Jimmy. "What does a chap read for, except to learn things? Why, if everybody joined a co-operative stores, all the middlemen who make profits would have to work for their living. I dare say they could be put on munitions, and help on the war. Suppose we buy a jam-tart wholesale for a ha'penny—"

"You can't buy one jam-tart wholesale. That's retail," said Lovell, with a shake of the head.

Jimmy Silver glared. "Fathead! I'm putting that as a case. You buy a jam-tart wholesale for a ha'penny, or, say, three-farthings in war time, and in your co-operative stores you sell it at a penny. The purchaser saves the other penny he would give to the common or garden shopkeeper, and there's a farthing also to be whacked out in dividends."

"That wouldn't be much for each chap."

"B-r-r-r The whole business won't consist in selling one jam-tart, you Prussian-headed chump!" howled Jimmy Silver. "We may have a ten-over of thousands, perhaps millions."

"Make billions," suggested Raby.

"Why not trillions?" said Newcome heartily.



# THE ROOKWOOD CO-OPERATORS!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Look here, it's a jolly good idea," roared Jimmy Silver, "and it will mean no end of kudos for the end study, starting the Rookwood Co-operative Stores."

"Somebody will have to manage the shop."

"Of course, I shall be manager."

"What about shop-assistants?"

"That's where you come in."

"Oh!"

"The shop will open every day for an hour after lessons, and on half-holidays. We can find the time. I don't say we're going to keep it up permanently—it would interfere with footer. But we shall bring old Kettle to reason by not dealing with him for a few weeks. He's got a lot of perishable stuff that will go mouldy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm glad to see you can see something in it," said Jimmy. "We'll call a meeting of the Fourth, and put it to them. We shall have to raise five pounds capital."

"My hat!"

"In shares, say, of half-a-crown each. That will be forty members. A half-crown won't hurt a chap. And, mind, we shall get as much tuck wholesale for five quid as we get from old Kettle for ten."

"Something in that," agreed Lovell, "and it will be one in the eye for the greedy old Hun, anyway."

Jimmy Silver jumped up.

"Buck up with your tea," he said. "We want to get this going. Strike the iron while it's hot, you know."

Lovell & Co. grinned at one another. It was a rule in the end study to back up Uncle James' schemes, whatever form they took. Lovell & Co. were of opinion that Uncle James was biting off more than he could chew this time; but they were prepared to back him up.

And immediately after tea a meeting of the Fourth Form was called in the Common-room to hear Uncle James expound his views.

**The 3rd Chapter.**  
**A Difference of Opinion.**

"What the dickens is it all about?" yawned Mornington.

"Some rot of Jimmy Silver's," said Townsend.

"We won't go," remarked Peck. Mornington shook his head.

"Yes, we'll go, and heckle him."

"Good idea!" chorused the nuts of the Fourth; and Mornington & Co. proceeded to the junior Common-room, where Classics and Moderns were gathering in force.

Tommy Dodd & Co. had come over from the Modern side on hearing of the Fourth meeting. They had the impression that it was something to do with football. All the fellows excepting the end study were in the dark, so far.

The room was crowded with Classics and Moderns when Jimmy Silver and his chums came in.

Jimmy Silver jumped on a chair.

"Gentlemen of the Fourth—" he began.

"Hear, hear!" bawled Co. loyally.

"This meeting has been called to deal with an important matter, affecting Classics and Moderns alike. The country is at war with Germany—"

"You don't say so!" ejaculated Tommy Dodd with a look of surprise, and there was a chuckle.

"Shut up, you Modern bounder! Owing to the state of war, lots of rotters have been putting up prices!"

"Go hon!"

"Old Kettle, who keeps our shop, has followed the lead of the ship-owners and other nefarious characters—"

"Tuppence-ha'penny for a ginger-pop!" interjected Tubby Muffin.

"And it's time he was brought to his senses," said Jimmy. "It's no good blaming people for doing these things. It's in the air at war-time,

and everybody's doing it. But it can be stopped!"

"And how?" asked Tommy Dodd, with interest.

"By forming the Rookwood Co-operative Stores, and buying our own tuck in large quantities!"

"Great pip!"

"That is the business before the meeting," said Jimmy Silver. "Every chap who objects to being swindled can join the company, put up his share of the capital, and receive all the advantages of the stores, and an equal whack in the profits—if any."

"My hat!"

"The capital—"

"If any?" said Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The capital will be expended in the purchase of tuck at wholesale prices. I know a place in Rookham where we can get the stuff. All members of the company will subscribe half-a-crown!"

"What rot!" said Mornington.

"Bloated millionaires needn't apply," said Jimmy, with a glance of disdain at the dandy of the Fourth. "Fellows who aren't reeking with money can join the company."

"Not a bad idea," said Tommy Dodd approvingly. "I suppose you want a Modern chap to manage the concern?"

"So jolly fear!"

"You don't mean to say you think a Classical chap could run it?" exclaimed Tommy, in astonishment.

"Shut up, you Modern ass," roared Lovell.

"Order!"

"The manager will have to have some sense, you know," explained Jimmy Silver. "Under the circumstances, no Modern need apply for the job!"

"Rats!"

"Yah!"

"Go home!"

The Moderns in a roar at once.

Tommy Dodd jumped on a chair.

"Gentlemen, I put it to the facting that the management is placed entirely in Modern hands!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Shut up!"

"Go it, Tommy!"

"Get down!"

"Hooray!"

"Yah!"

Moderns and Classics were evidently divided upon that point. Lovell dragged Tommy Dodd off the chair, and they rolled on the floor together.

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle rushed to the rescue, and Jimmy Silver & Co. piled in, and in less than a minute a terrific combat was raging in the Common-room.

The object of the meeting had unfortunately been lost sight of in the general excitement.

Instead of the establishment of the Rookwood Co-operative Society, the affair had become a rag between Moderns and Classics.

Mornington & Co. strolled out of the Common room, grinning. Rags were not in their line.

But a dozen or more juniors were engaged in deadly strife, and there was a terrific uproar of shouting and yelling and trampling of feet.

In the midst of the din Mr. Bootles rustled in.

"Cease this disturbance at once!" shouted Mr. Bootles.

"Oh!"

The combat ceased.

Dusty and dishevelled youths glared at one another, and blinked at the master of the Fourth.

Mr. Bootles surveyed them with a grim frown.

"Every boy present will take two hundred lines!" he rapped out. "Now disperse to your studies at once, and remain there till bedtime!"

The meeting was over!

**The 4th Chap.**  
**Going Strong!**

Jimmy Silver was not easily discouraged. The next day he was as keen as ever on the subject of the Rookwood Co-operative Society. The Moderns were "out of it," but the fact that Tommy Dodd & Co. had ragged on the subject made the Classics all the more ready to follow Jimmy's lead.

The Classical Fourth agreed that they would carry out the scheme, if only to show the Moderns what was what, and who was who.

In the end study, after lessons, details were arranged.

The Fistical Four were the first shareholders in the new concern. Oswald and Flynn and Rawson and Hoaker and James minor and Dickinson came next, and Higgs and Tubby Muffin, the last-named borrowing the necessary cash from Jimmy Silver. Other fellows followed suit, only Mornington & Co. keeping out. The lofty Mornie declined to follow anybody's lead but his own, and the nuts generally sniffed at Jimmy Silver's co-operative society.

Jimmy Silver expounded the co-operative principles most eloquently to his followers, and his followers loyally agreed that it was a ripping idea, and more especially that it would be one in the eye for the Moderns if it was a success.

That it would be a success was a foregone conclusion, according to Jimmy Silver, on the principle that the end study never made mistakes.

There were fifteen shareholders to begin with, and each of them subscribed five shillings, which made a sum of three pounds fifteen shillings. This was quite a moderate capital for a co-operative society, but Jimmy Silver considered that it was sufficient for a beginning.

Later, when the profits rolled in, the dividends could be invested in the business, and it could be conducted on a larger scale.

Indeed, the ambitious Jimmy was already scheming to make the Rookwood Co-operative Stores a permanent institution, with a man in charge, and tuck at reasonable prices till the end of the war.

Out of the huge profits an attendant's wages could be paid, as Jimmy explained to the somewhat sceptical end study.

Lovell & Co. had their doubts, but they were obliged to give their heads, as Lovell expressed it. Indeed, Jimmy had to be given his head, anyway.

Fifteen fellows had put down their names as shareholders for a subscription of five shillings each, and the Fistical Four had actually handed in the money, with an extra five shillings from Jimmy as Muffin's share.

But the rest of the subscriptions were a little difficult to collect.

Fellows who entered quite keenly into the scheme found that they were a little short of tin, and several shareholders showed a disposition to invest on the same lines as Tubby Muffin.

But the energetic Jimmy dunned them without mercy, and the money was gradually shelled out, in some cases the shillings being extracted like teeth.

It was a proud moment for Jimmy Silver when the three pounds fifteen—an imposing sum—lay on the study table.

That same day Jimmy Silver cycled over to Rookham, to make his arrangements with the wholesale firm there.

He came back in cheerful spirits. Tommy Dodd & Co. met him as he wheeled his bike in at the gates.

"Well, how's the co-op society going on?" Tommy Dodd asked affably.

"Ripping!"

"You don't want a Modern manager?"

"Thanks, no! We want it to be a success, you know."

"How many terms will it take you to raise the capital?" Tommy Dodd wanted to know.

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"The capital's raised, my son, and spent," he said. "I've just done the trick, and to-morrow afternoon we get the stuff."

"Gammon!"

"Well, you'll see," said Jimmy. "Three pounds fifteen worth of best tuck; you get it by the carrier to-morrow afternoon, and Smith & Co. pay for delivery. What do you think of that?"

"You're really making it go!" said Tommy Dodd admiringly.

"And we sell at half tuckshop prices," said Jimmy. "Fifty per cent. on the prices for non-members; but you'll save money by dealing with us. You can take shares if you like under the best Classical management."

"Bow-wow!"

**The 5th Chapter.**  
**Contraband!**

Tubby Muffin looked anxiously from the school gates.

It was Wednesday afternoon, and that afternoon the carrier from Rookham was to deliver the supplies for the Rookwood Co-operative Society. Half an hour before tea-time the stores were to open in the box-room, with the Fistical Four in charge. The carrier was not expected to arrive till half-past two at the earliest; but immediately after dinner Tubby Muffin was on the watch, like Sister Anne, at the gate. The packing-case would be impervious to Tubby's greedy fingers, except by his cap, at least, he could feast his eyes upon it. He hoped, too, to be enlisted to help set out the goods in the box-room stores. In that case, some of the goods were certain to disappear before the shop opened.

While Tubby was watching the road, the three Tommies came out with Towle, another Modern. The four Moderns grinned at the fat Classical and Doyle playfully knocked his cap off, and they walked away up the road towards Rookham.

Tubby Muffin snorted and fielded his cap, and looked after the Moderns. They were grinning and talking together as they walked up the road.

Tommy Dodd's plan was already cut and dried; it was simple and efficient, as became the plans of a great general.

A quarter of a mile from Rookwood the four Moderns stopped in the leafy lane, and waited.

The carrier's cart, from Rookham came rumbling along at last.

Tommy Dodd detached himself from a grassy bank, stepped into the middle of the road, and held up his hand.

Old George, the carrier, his ancient horse to a halt.

"Stop!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Good-afternoon, George!"

"Rats."

Jimmy Silver wheeled his bike on, and the three Tommies looked at one another.

"Looks like being a success, after all," said Tommy Dodd thoughtfully. "Those Classical asses will be crowing over us if it turns out all right."

"This is where we take a back seat," remarked Tommy Cook.

"No, we don't!" said Dodd emphatically. "We've offered Jimmy Silver to come into the firm, under Modern management. We couldn't say fairer than that. Well, it's up to us to knock it on the head."

"But how?" said Doyle. "I can tell you the Modern chaps will all be dealing with them soon. They won't pay higher prices at the tuckshop if they can help it."

"It will be a regular corker," said Cook. "We ought to have thought of it, Tommy. We're put in the shade this time."

"It won't be a success," said Tommy Dodd decidedly. "Under Modern management it might be. But those Classics can't manage anything. Suppose they have to open their giddy stores without any tuck?"

"But it's coming to-morrow."

"The carrier's going to deliver it," said Tommy Dodd. "Suppose he delivered it to the wrong chaps?"

"Oh!"

"For example?"

"Oh!"

"That's the idea," said Tommy Dodd. "They can't run a co-operative stores without anything to sell."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We take possession of the tuck," pursued the Modern leader. "We let Jimmy Silver have it back on condition that there is a majority of Moderns on the managing committee to ensure success, you know; ha! doesn't agree—"

"Ha, ha! He won't."

"Well, if he doesn't, we confiscate the tuck—"

"Confiscate it!" ejaculated Cook.

"Certainly. In war, you know, you seize the enemy's supplies when you can. Well, we're at war with the Classics, I suppose?"

"Of course we are," said Tommy Cook heartily. "Why, it would make a stunning feed for all the Modern Fourth."

"Exactly. We'll give Silver a chance first to do the sensible thing. If he refuses, we confiscate the grub, as—contraband of war, you know."

"Yes, ha, ha!"

The three Tommies chorused over the little plot. Needless to say, they did not mention it in the hearing of the Classics.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were looking forward keenly to the delivery of the tuck on the morning afternoon, which was a half-holiday. The three Tommies were looking forward to it with equal keenness.

Afternoon. Master Dodd! What's the matter?"

"We've come to meet you, George," said Tommy Dodd affably. "You've got a case for Rookwood in that cart, I think?"

"Yes."

Addressed Jimmy Silver—

"What?"

"Yes, Master Dodd."

"That's right! It's been decided not to have it sent to the school, after all; we've come to take charge of it."

Old George blinked at the junior.

"That ain't allowed, Master Dodd," he said, in his slow way. "I got to deliver that there packing-case at the porter's lodge, and 'ave a receipt for it."

"I'll give you a receipt, George."

"That's the same thing, Mast' Dodd."

"The fact is, said Tommy seriously, "that packing-case contains contraband of war, George."

"Loramusy!" said George, in astonishment.

"Fact, I assure you." While Tommy Dodd was talking Cook and Doyle and Towle were climbing into the carrier's cart from behind, old George being quite ignorant of that circumstance. "You're liable to heavy penalties, George, for running the blockade in this way, with supplies for the enemy."

"Lawks!" said the George.

"In fact, you're liable to be tried by a court-martial of Moderns, under the Offence to Classics Act, and severely bumped for a period not exceeding three months, without the option of a fine."

"Haw, haw!" said George.

"Under the circumstances, as you have broken the blockade in ignorance, George, we shall let you off, but the contraband goods must be handed over at once."

"You perrott of the way, Mast' Dodd, and lemme drive on!" said old George, grinning. "I got to take that there packing-case to Rookwood."

"Bump!"

Old George started round in astonishment. Cook and Doyle and Towle had found the case, and coolly bumped it over the tail-board into the road.

"You young raskils!" roared the carrier. "You put that there case into the cart ain't you 'ear me?"

Tommy Dodd stepped aside.

"If you refuse to hand over the goods on the voluntary principle, George, compulsion will be applied," he said. "You don't want to be bumped, I suppose?"

Old George blinked at him. Certainly the ancient carrier would not have been much use in "scrapping" with four juniors.

"Look 'ere—" he began.

"Here's your receipt," said Tommy Dodd.

The old carrier mechanically took the paper Tommy passed up to him. It ran:

"This is to certify that a consignment of contraband goods, intended for the enemy, has been taken possession of, according to the laws of war, by the Modern Forces."

(Signed) THOMAS DODD,  
Commander-in-Chief  
Modern Forces.

"My heye!" gasped old George.

"Hand that to Jimmy Silver, and he will understand," said Tommy Dodd cheerfully. "Now drive on!"

Tommy started the old horse, and the carrier's cart rumbled on, old George sitting there in a state of dazed astonishment.

The Moderns gathered round the packing-case in great glee.

"This is where we smile!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, it's jolly heavy!" remarked Towle.

"We haven't got to carry it, fat-head. We'll shove it into the trees and hide it while we're making terms with Jimmy Silver. If he doesn't agree to our terms—"

"Ha, ha!"

"Then we'll bring out the Modern Fourth to a picnic."

The four Moderns yelled with laughter at the idea. They seized the big case, and, by combined efforts, dragged it out of the road into the wood, where they proceeded to conceal it. And they were so busy that they did not observe a pedigree youth who was watching them from a distance, with eyes wide open with astonishment and wrath.

**The 6th Chapter.**  
**Tommy Dodd Does Not Score.**

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at the gates to meet the carrier when he arrived. Jimmy's fever's feelings

when Tommy Dodd's "receipt" was handed to him can be more easily imagined than described.

"The Moderns have scoffed the tuck!" he roared.

"Oh, my hat!" said Lovell. "You Jimmy!"

"You fathead!" said Raby and Newcome together.

"How could I help it, you duffers?" exclaimed Jimmy indignantly.

"Well, you're manager, ain't you?"

"Oh, rats! Look at that!"

The Classical chums looked at the receipt signed by the commander-in-chief of the Modern forces.

"The cheeky beast!" growled Lovell.

"The Modern worm!"

"The awful rotter!"

"What on earth will the chaps say?" gasped Lovell. "The co-operative society will have something to say to you about this, Jimmy. Those Modern beasts will scoff the lot!"

"Wot about it, Master Silver?" asked old George. "Is it ort right, or am I to go to the 'Ead about it?"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Jimmy Silver hastily. "This—this receipt is quite in order. Nothing to worry about."

"You put that down in writing," said old George cautiously.

Jimmy Silver did so, and the carrier went on his way satisfied.

"Must play the game," said Jimmy, as his chums glared at him. "It's only what we might have done to the Moderns if they'd had the brains to think of starting a co-operative stores."

"What's the good of a co-operative stores without any grub?" demanded Raby.

"I—I say, Silver—"

Tubby Muffin came, panting and perspiring, down the road.

"Oh, go and eat cake!" said Jimmy crossly.

"Don't you bother now, Tubby!"

"I—I say, the Moderns—they've got it!" gasped Tubby.

"I know that!"

"They're hiding the packing-case in the wood!"

Jimmy Silver jumped.

"You've seen them?" he exclaimed.

Tubby panted.

"Yes, rather. I trotted along to meet the carrier, as he was late, and saw the beasts. They're sticking the packing-case in the wood, and covering it up with branches and things. And I know just where they're putting it," cried Tubby triumphantly.

"Varooh! Wharrer you say?"

Tubby sat down suddenly as Jimmy Silver gave him a tremendous thump on the shoulder.

"Yow-ow-ow! Wharrer you punching me for?" he roared.

"That wasn't a punch, you ass—that was a token of admiration!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Yow-wow!"

"Call the chaps!" rapped out Jimmy. "We'll have that packing-case back before the Moderns know where they're at. Get a dozen chaps, and we'll mop them up!"

"Hurrah!"

In a few minutes Oswald and Flynn and Higgs and three or four more fellows were gathered. The indignation of the Rookwood co-operators knew no bounds when they learned that their supplies had been seized by the enemy as contraband of war.

Jimmy Silver led the way, and the Classics started up the road, with Tubby Muffin as guide. Tubby had done the distance once at top speed, and he grunted and gasped as Jimmy urged him on. But as Jimmy had hold of his fat ear, it was impossible for Tubby to slacken down.

Jimmy Silver & Co. reached the wood, and Tubby Muffin led them triumphantly to the spot where he had watched the raiders concealing the packing-case.

The case was certainly well hidden, and but for Tubby's guidance, the Classics would certainly have had no chance of unearthing it.

As it was, however, they found it without difficulty, and the branches and twigs were dragged away, and the prize revealed.

"Good luck!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "You're worth your weight in currency notes, Tubby! Jolly lucky you have such a nose for grub!"

"I—I say, we'd better open it!" said Tubby eagerly. "I'm hungry."

"Get it up on your shoulders, said Jimmy. "We can carry it among us."

"I say, Jimmy—"

"Shurrup! I'll stand you half a dozen tarts when the shop opens," said Jimmy. "Now, get under this case, and shut up!"

The case was big and heavy, but there were plenty of carriers. In great triumph, the Classics bore it down the road to Rookwood.

There was a howl as they carried it in at the gates.

Tommy Dodd and nearly all the Modern Form were coming down from Mr. Mauders' House, just ready to start out for the picnic.

Tommy Dodd could scarcely believe his eyes as the Classics marched in with the packing-case, and dumped it down at the porter's lodge.

"They—they—they've found gasped Tommy.

"How did you find it, you rotters?" roared Cook.

"Ha, ha, ha

"Oh, you can't dish the Classics, you know!" said Jimmy Silver coolly.

"We simply walked straight to the place and picked it up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Somebody must have stutered Tommy Dodd.

"He, he, he," cackled Tubby. "You're done, you rotters! I was watching you all the time. He, he, he!"

The Moderns looked at one another in a sickly way. The picnic was off—very much off. The packing-case was safe in the porter's lodge, and there it could not be raided. And old Mack, with the assistance of Jimmy Silver & Co., bore it away to the box-room on the Classical side.

"Done!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"And what about the picnic?" demanded Lezgett.

"Oh, go and eat," said Tommy Dodd crossly.

The picnic was off, and for some minutes the disappointed Moderns

snack," said Tubby. "Still, if you like to lend me a bob, Morny—"

"Bow-wow! Why don't you help yourself?" suggested Mornington. The dandy of the Fourth winked at his chums. "You're really entitled to it."

The nuts grinned. If Tubby Muffin could be started on the tuck, there was not likely to be much left for the co-operative stores at tea-time.

"I can't get at it," sighed Tubby. "The beast has got the key in his pocket."

"Unjust, I call it!" said Mornington seriously. "We ought to help Muffin somehow, you chaps. We ought to see him righted."

"Just what I think!" said Tubby eagerly. "Suppose you lend me a bob—"

"Old Mack has keys to all the rooms," said Mornington. "Juniors ain't allowed to lock up the box-rooms and take away the keys. If you mentioned to Mack that somebody has locked the Fourth box-room, he'd lend you a key."

Tubby shook his head.

"Not unless I tipped him," he said, "and I'm stony."

"Well, I think we ought to see you through, Tubby," said Mornington thoughtfully. "I'll go and speak to Mack, if you like."

"Good egg!" said Tubby heartily.

Mornington sauntered away to the porter's lodge.

And he hardly realised that the whole supply was gone before he had finished the last one.

"Actually, Tubby was thirsty.

Ginger-pop was soon popping merrily.

The number of bottles of ginger-pop Tubby found himself able to consume was extraordinary.

Then a big, fruity cake tempted him, and he fell.

After that, he made no further effort to resist temptation. He was no more capable of temperance than a pig in clover.

It was the chance of a lifetime for Tubby Muffin, and he set himself to the task of travelling through the packing-case with heroic determination. And the progress he made was really astounding.

The 8th Chapter.

Nothing Doing!

Jimmy Silver & Co. came in warm and ruddy from the river.

It was close on tea-time, and a good many fellows were waiting for Jimmy to come in. It was high time the Co-operative Stores opened in the box-room.

"Waiting for you," growled Higgs. "I'm ready for tea. When is that dashed shop going to open?"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" moaned Tubby. "I'm dying! Wow!"

"You've scoffed our grub!" yelled Oswald. "All the blessed lot! What are we going to have for tea?"

"Bump him!"

"Scalp him!"

"Squash him!"

"I—I say, call a doctor," groaned Tubby. "I haven't eaten too much, but something doesn't agree with me! Ow! Ow! Perhaps it was the tarts—or the doughnuts—or the cake—or the ginger-pop—or the lemonade—or the plums—or the oranges—or the apples—or the candy—or the chocolate—or the ham pies—or the savoyes—or— Yow-wow-wow!"

The infuriated Classics gathered round Tubby Muffin. But Jimmy waved them back.

"Better call Bootles," he said. "The fat beast is ill. I shouldn't wonder if he's going to be seriously ill. Don't touch him."

And the juniors, realising that the gormandising youth was undoubtedly ill—as was not to be wondered at— forbore to take vengeance. Mr. Bootles was called, and he gazed at Tubby in horror.

"The disgusting boy has over-eaten himself!" he exclaimed. "But how did such a quantity of food come to be here, Silver?"

Jimmy Silver explained, and Mr. Bootles listened in amazement to the story of that great scheme of a junior co-operative society.

"Bless my soul!" was all he said.

The groaning, moaning Tubby was taken at once to the school sanatorium, and Mr. Bootles telephoned for the doctor. And then the shareholders of the Rookwood Co-operative Society grimly inquired of Jimmy Silver where their tea was to come from, a question which Jimmy found himself entirely unable to answer. From words the enraged shareholders proceeded to deeds, and when Jimmy escaped to the end study, and locked himself in, he was very dusty and dishevelled. And even then furious shareholders bawled opprobrious remarks to him through the keyhole.



Tubby Muffin was stretched across a trunk, groaning from the depths of his heart. The bulk of the supplies of the Rookwood Co-operative Society had vanished inside Tubby's capacious stomach. "That fat villain's scoffed the whole blessed lot!" gasped Lovell.

were busy in telling Tommy Dodd what they thought of him. And the three Tommies could only hide their diminished heads.

The 7th Chapter.

The Chance of a Lifetime.

Tubby Muffin grunted discontentedly.

Tubby was dissatisfied.

It could not be denied that Tubby had been instrumental in rescuing the property of the co-operative society from the hands of the enemy.

Yet Tubby was hungry, and the supplies were locked up in the box-room, and the key was in Jimmy Silver's pocket.

It was in vain that Tubby had offered to stay in the box-room with the tuck and mind it, in case of any further attempts on the part of the enemy.

He joined Mornington & Co., when the nuts of the Fourth came out to get a little fresh air after playing bridge in the study. They grinned heartily when Tubby told his tale of woe, and replied unanimously. "Rats!" when Tubby suggested that a small loan would tide him over till tea-time.

"And I saved the tuck from the Moderns," said Tubby mournfully, "and now that awful beast Silver has locked it up. Just as if I couldn't be trusted with it, you know!"

"And, of course, you could!" grinned Mornington.

"Well, I think I'm entitled to a

He came back in a few minutes, and handed the key to Tubby.

"It's got to be taken back," he said. "You'd better open the door, and give me back the key."

"Right-ho!"

Tubby Muffin's feet fairly flew on the way to the box-room at the end of the Fourth-Form passage.

He unlocked the door, and leaving the key in the outside of the lock, bolted in.

Mornington coolly locked the door after him, and extracted the key.

"I'll take this back to Mack," he remarked. "Isn't it a pleasure to make a dear schoolfellow happy, you fellows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the nuts.

Within the box-room there was a sound of cracking wood. Tubby Muffin was already busy on the packing-case.

Tubby, to do him justice, intended to take only the six jam-tarts Jimmy Silver had promised him.

But to Tubby Muffin six jam-tarts were simply as six drops of water in the deep ocean.

They vanished almost

Then Tubby eyed the packing-case hungrily. He decided that he would be justified in trying the doughnuts. The Co-operative Society could put them down to his account. Surely he was, as a shareholder, entitled to run an account! Tubby honestly intended to take only three dough-

unpacking the case, and the stores will be open in two jiffies."

And a crowd of Classics proceeded to the box-room.

Jimmy Silver stopped at the door, and felt in his pocket for the key. He was not in any doubts about the safety of the tuck. Old Mack had duplicate keys, but he would certainly not have given to any of the Moderns a key to a room on the Classical side. And Jimmy had not given a thought to Tubby Muffin. But, as he felt for the key in his pocket, he jumped as a weird sound came from the box-room.

Groan!

It was a deep, anguished groan, like that of a person in terrible suffering.

Jimmy jumped back a little.

"What the dickens!" he exclaimed.

"Somebody's in there," exclaimed Lovell, in astonishment.

Groan!

"But the door's locked!"

Groan!

"And nobody could get in at the window," said Jimmy. "My hat! If some cad has got the key from Mack, and—"

faith, exclaimed

Groan

Jimmy Silver hurriedly unlocked the door. He hurried it open, and

the crowd of Classical juniors rushed in.

A heartrending sight met their gaze.

Tubby Muffin was stretched across a trunk, with a face like chalk, his round eyes staring wide, groaning from the depths of his heart. Tubby was evidently in a bad way.

The juniors looked at the packing-case.

A few bottles of ginger-beer, a few fragments of cake, a few small articles remained.

But the bulk of the supplies of the Rookwood Co-operative Society had vanished!

They gazed at the raided packing-case, and at the unhappy Tubby transfixed. Lovell found his ice first.

"That fat villain's scoffed the whole blessed lot!" he gasped.

"He—he can't have!" stammered Jimmy Silver. "A—a—a—ba-con-strictor could hardly have done it!"

"But he has!" yelled Raby.

"Tubby, you villain!"

"Muffin, you fat scoundrel!"

Groan!

Jimmy Silver grasped the fat Classical by the shoulder, and shook him. Tubby Muffin looked at him with lank-lustre eyes, and groaned deeply.

"Tubby!" gasped Jimmy.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" moaned Tubby. "I'm dying! Wow!"

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Tubby Muffin was missing from the Fourth-Form room for a fortnight; and in the sanatorium he had ample leisure to reflect upon his sins. The Rookwood Co-operative Society was also, as Lovell said, on the sick-list. When Jimmy Silver proposed to raise a fresh subscription and carry on the ripping scheme, the shareholders fell upon him and bumped him till he roared.

The Classical Fourth seemed to be fed up with co-operation. But the matter having come to Mr. Bootles' knowledge, the Form-master reflected on it, and mentioned it to the Head, who in turn had an interview with the sergeant, and that enterprising old gentleman's quest of war-profits came to a sudden end. Prices at the school shop ruled the same as in the village, and Jimmy Silver claimed that it was a triumph for the end study, in which Lovell and Raby and Newcome heartily agreed with him, if nobody else did.

THE END.

**NEXT FRIDAY!**

**THE COLONIAL SCHOOLBOY!**

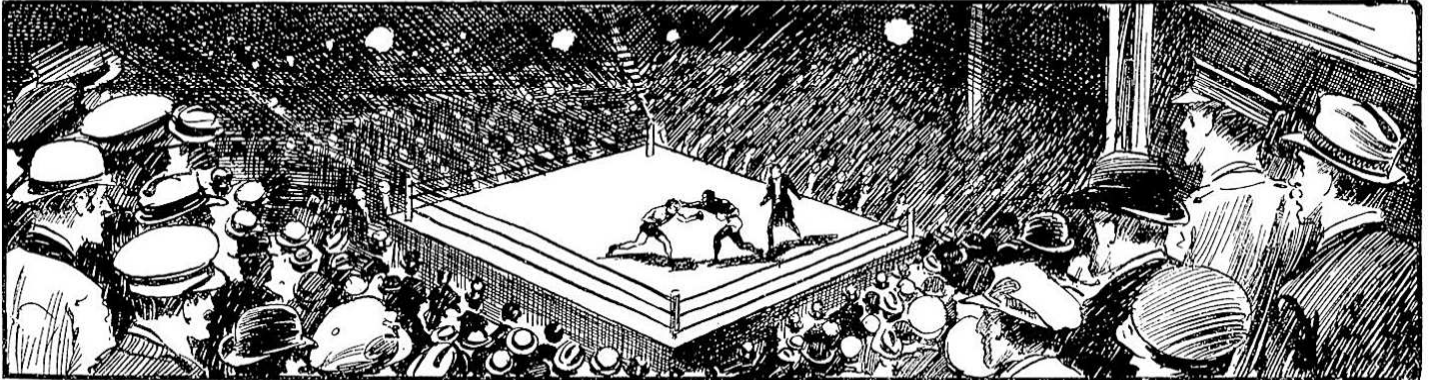
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By POPULAR VICTOR NELSON.



### The 1st Chapter.

#### The End of a Fight—Seaman Young.

A dead silence, the spectators in the tier upon tier of seats seeming to hold their breath. The timekeeper, watch in hand, stepped forward, and commenced counting:

"One—two—three—four—  
Knocked out, his legs badly out, his body flecked with blood, the well-known heavy-weight, Jack Aymoss, who, until the advent of the negro now standing over him, had carried all before him, did not move until eight was counted. Then it was only to feebly turn over, attempt to rise to his knees, and fall back upon his side, his swollen eyes closing and his head sagging limply to an outstretched arm.

"Nine—ten—  
Sam Jackson, the white man's adversary—not a big man for a black and a heavy-weight, but superbly made and possessing the muscle and agility of a panther—allowed a contemptuous little smile to curl his thick lips as he heard the roar from his followers and saw them making a rush for the ring. In innate conceit he stood waiting for their praises, fresh compared with the white man, although he had fought ten ding-dong rounds.

"I somehow thought he'd win," said Teddy Rawdon to the rather pale-faced gentleman seated beside him in the front row near the Press-box. "Look at poor Aymoss! He's unconscious now, and it's only sheer gut that has kept him up during the last two rounds."

Derrick Brent—until quite recently better known as Mr. Brent, Fourth-Form master at St. Cyprian's School—smiled down at the flushed young face of his companion as he, too, rose. "Jackson has not been beaten since his first appearance in this country nearly a year ago, my lad," he replied. "Yet it should not be hard for a boxer who fights with his brain as well as his hands to beat him. He lacks science, and wins his bouts by sheer brute force."

"He does hit, and no mistake, sir!" Teddy's twin brother Tom, who was on the other side of Mr. Brent, remarked. "Are you going, sir?" he asked, glancing up into his late master's strong, clean-shaven face. "There'll be some more scrapping, won't there?"

"Yes; but it will not be worth seeing, comparatively speaking, after this," Brent answered. "And, even now, it will be very late before we arrive home."

Tom looked regretfully towards the ring, out of which the knocked-out Aymoss was being borne by his seconds; but he made no further protest, and followed the master as he began to push his way through the crowded hall.

The twins were at evening with Derrick Brent at his country house, situated in view of Hayes Common, in Kent. He had taken a liking to the two boys since they had been associated with him in the clearing up of the deep mystery of St. Cyprian's School, and had invited them to spend a week or two with him on discovering that an unfortunate investment on the part of their widowed mother had made it im-

possible for them to remain at the school.

A fortune rather unexpectedly left him by a deceased relative made it unnecessary for Derrick Brent to follow any fixed profession, and during the time the boys had been in his care he had taken pleasure in showing them the sights of London, and making sure that they enjoyed their holiday with him to the full.

They were at the National Sporting Club to-night on Derrick Brent's suggestion. The noble art appealed to the late schoolmaster, and he had seen no reason why they should not accompany him to see this fight between Aymoss and the negro Jackson, about whom so much had been said in the boxing world of late. Derrick Brent held that boxing was a noble art, and that, on the whole, that only the setting, but sometimes is attached to it was wrong.

"Hallo, Tomlinson!"  
Mr. Brent had felt a hand upon his arm as they neared the exit, and, turning, found himself confronted by a promoter with whom he was fairly well acquainted, he being a frequent visitor at the N.S.C. when at leisure.

Bill Tomlinson, as he was known to his intimates, was accompanied by another man of somewhat morose appearance, with a perpetual frown upon his heavy face and a shock of bright yellow hair.

"How is the world using you?" Mr. Brent queried. "I've been reading that you've found a man to put up against Jackson next week at the Paxton Music Hall, Brixton. Have you three sets left?"

"No; but I'll squeeze you and your friends in, Mr. Brent," the promoter answered, as they shook hands. "I want to introduce you to my protegee. This is Seaman Young, the chap who's going to fight the dandy on Thursday week. Mr. Young—Mr. Brent!"

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Young!" Derrick Brent said, extending his hand. "Do you think you'll put him to sleep?"

Seaman Young shrugged his broad shoulders as he just touched the tips of Mr. Brent's fingers.

"Can't say yet," he said. Then, a curious look creeping into his eyes: "I shall be better able to say a bit later to-night, if you wants to have a bet on my chance?"

"Thanks, but I never bet!" Mr. Brent said, a trifle stiffly, for he was not prepossessed by the fellow's manner. "But why will you be more certain later on?"

Seaman Young's light blue eyes looked for a moment into those of the ex-schoolmaster, then he laughed curiously, and half-turned away.

"That's my secret, I reckon!" he said bluntly. "Where'll you be in half an hour, boss?"

"At the usual cafe in Agar Street," William Tomlinson replied. "Where are you going, Luke?"

"Got an appointment!" Seaman Young growled. "But I'll join you at the restaurant in about half an hour, and have some supper. S'long!"

He pushed his way unceremoniously through the crowd, and passed through the exit. Tomlinson turned to Mr. Brent, and made a grimace. "Come and have some supper," he

said—"you and your two friends. I want to have a chat with you, sir."

"I'll come with pleasure!" Derrick Brent answered.  
They were soon in Agar Street, and Tomlinson led the way to a quiet little Italian restaurant, at which he seemed to be well known. He ordered supper for himself and guests, then he began to discuss the coming combat.

"It was at the Paxton Music Hall, about five weeks ago, when the nigger was giving a show of exhibition sparring there, putting down everyone who came up against him, that I made this challenge, Mr. Brent," he said. "Cyrus O. Langworthy, the Yankee who is running Sam Jackson, was boasting about what he could do, and as good as saying that he would put a white

man to be found to stand up against him. The way he spoilt himself got my monkey up, and I immediately told him to take a back seat, so to speak, because I'd produce a man within six weeks to fight the black, and beat him!"

"Well, he accepted my challenge right away, as he put it, and guessed he'd give a thousand pounds to any charity I liked to name if I'd produce a man in that time to put the nigger to sleep in a dozen rounds. Well, I've done it, I think; but I'm worried, sir, and that's straight!"

"Why?" Mr. Brent asked curiously.

"Well, what do you think of a boxer who goes an' gazes into crystals and fools about in that way?" Tomlinson asked disgustedly.

"But surely Seaman Young doesn't do that?" Brent asked, in surprise.

"He does, the idiot!" Mr. Tomlinson growled. "I knew where he was going to-night, though I asked him and pretended not to. It's common knowledge amongst his pals that before he enters for a bout he goes to some stupid old woman in Shaftesbury Avenue to know how he's going on. The old hag gazes into a crystal thing, and Young pays her his hard-earned money for telling him a lot of fairy-tales!"

"Well, seamen are alw... superstitious, my friend," Derrick Brent remarked, "so you must not attach too much importance to Young's idiosyncrasies. I shouldn't let it trouble you."

"I can't help it, Mr. Brent, sir," the promoter said, shaking his head. "I don't like this crystal-gazing business. It ain't natural for a boxer to do anything so silly! I'll wager he has gone to Shaftesbury Avenue, and is fooling around gazing into the thing now, and only bad can come of it!"

And could Mr. William Tomlinson been gifted with second-sight and have foreseen how prophetic his words were to prove, he would not have attacked his supper so heartily. Indeed, it is doubtful if he would have touched a morsel, for surely it would have choked him.

### The 2nd Chapter. At the Crystal Gazer's—Starting News.

Seaman Young pushed aside the heavy curtain hanging before the parlour of the dingy shop in Shaftes-

bury Avenue as a cracked voice bade him enter.

William Tomlinson had been correct in thinking that the man he was putting up against the negro Sam Jackson was bound for the abode of the seer, in whom he possessed such superstitious faith, for when he had left the National Sporting Club, Seaman Young had hailed a taxi and been driven to within a few steps of the tobacconist's kept by the clairvoyant's daughter.

This was done more as a blind for the benefit of the police more than anything else, the art of "seeing" now being adjudged illegal and punishable as tricky by the law. The girl in the shop had seen the boxer many times in the past, and knew him well; and immediately he had appeared, she had gone to the darkened room at the

side of the shop who sat there, fanning a

Seaman Young did not see the peculiar smile that flitted across the young woman's face as he thrust aside the curtain and entered the presence of her mother, or he might have felt that he was treading dangerous ground. As it was, he went into the semi-darkness without hesitation, straining his eyes to pick out the huddled, shawl-clad figure he knew was seated in the gloom.

"Well, my son," the cracked voice said, "so you have come to me again to learn your fate?"

"Yes, mother," the boxer growled, as he felt her skinny hand touch his. "I am fighting on Thursday a negro—"

"Called Samuel Jackson, the old woman in the gloom finished. "I know, my son. There is no need to tell me more. You wish me to look into the crystal and learn for you its mysteries."

"Yes," the pugilist answered, sinking into the seat to which the fortune-teller guided him. "Be quick about it, too. I've got to meet someone in twenty minutes."

"All in good time, my son," the old crone mumbled—"all in good time."

And then with a suddenness that caused the boxer to start, she flung some description of highly-scented powder into a brazier, and a red flame sprang up towards the cracked and dirty ceiling, revealing the clairvoyant in all her scullie hideousness.

She must have been of a great age, for her face was the colour of parchment and a mass of hollows and wrinkles, the cheek-bones seeming in danger of protruding through the skin. A few wisps of grey hair struggled from beneath her shawl, and a solitary tooth protruded over her leering lower lip. The huge cat upon her shoulder—a curiously evil-looking beast—raised its back and spat viciously at the visitor as though it resented his intrusion.

The woman hobbled to a table covered with a long green cloth, upon which stood a ball of opague glass. The fire in the brazier died down, but the flickering light that remained glowed curiously on the crystal as the old woman stooped and crooned over it monotonously. That Seaman Young was impressed, was proved by the awed look that had stolen into his heavy face. He sat tense and rigid,

his hands, ripping hard upon the

of his chair.  
For fully three minutes the fortune-teller stood resting upon her stick and gazing into the crystal, then she suddenly recoiled, uttering a blood-curdling wail, ripping her stick, and covering her face with her fleshless hands.

What the Young exclaimed his chair.

"The vision the crystal reveals to me!" the old crone moaned, dropping into her chair and rocking herself to and fro. "My son, you must not fight this opponent, you must not fight him, or you value your life!"

"Why?" the sailor-boxer demanded, taking a step forward and standing over her. "Speak, woman! What have you seen?"

"I have seen death—death for you if you meet this negro!" she answered with a shudder. "Be warned, my son! Be warned! An old woman who is private look into the future!"

"Tell me what you have seen!" Seaman Young cried hoarsely, beads of perspiration breaking out upon his brow. "I demand to know, old woman! Speak!"

"I have seen death—she repeated with a moan. "Look yourself if you disbelieve."

Seaman Young hesitated in superstitious awe, then slowly he advanced towards the crystal and peered into its glowing depths. At first he could see nothing, but suddenly two glowing balls of light appeared in the crystal's depths, and, as he placed his eyes close and level with them, he uttered a low, gasping cry.

He saw as though afar off, and enveloped in a filmy haze, the centre of what was undoubtedly a boxing-ring. A black man, gloved and clad in the usual costume, stood over a white man who lay prostrate upon his side. The white man's face was turned away, but his hair was bright yellow, and instinctively Seaman Young seemed to know that it was a vision of himself.

Ah! Here were the timekeeper and the referee springing into the centre of the ring; now a frock-coated man wearing a top-hat and carrying a small black bag.

This latter knelt quickly beside the white man whom Young believed to be himself, felt his pulse and his heart, then—  
"Merciful heavens! How grave his face was! And what was that his lips were forming? Dead? Yes, that was what he had told the others, and now he was removing his hat with a reverence there was no mistaking!

Seaman Young staggered away from the crystal like a drunken man. He had seen himself lying dead, killed by a blow from the black man he was to have met on the following week. Shaking with dread, he tossed a coin towards the old woman, and groped blindly for the curtain leading to the shop.

"You have my sho asked gravely.  
"Yes," he choked. "Thank Heaven I came to you! I—I can avoid this by not fighting?"

"Yes; but you cannot change your fate if you disregard what you have seen," she answered.



THE GREAT BOXING MYSTERY!

By VICTOR NELSON.

(Continued from the previous page.)



and Young reeled into the shop and passed into the street.

It was some half an hour later that a grimy urchin pushed open the swing doors of the restaurant in which Derrick Brent and Tom and Teddy Rawdon were seated with Mr. Tomlinson.

A swarthy-skinned waiter made to immediately eject him, but the urchin thrust a dirty note into the Italian's hand.

"For a Mister Tomlinson, monkey-face," he sated impudently. "A gent guy me a shillin' ter bring it along."

He immediately vanished through the swing-doors, although Tomlinson, who had overheard the message, called to him to stop. The waiter knew the promoter by name, and, with a bow, brought him the note, which, with a word of excuse, Tomlinson at once unfolded.

There came a loud crash as he started and sent a bottle thudding to the floor. He seemed to reel in his seat, and the note fluttered from his hand into Derrick Brent's lap.

"My heavens! Read it!" the promoter cried, in a shaking voice. "Read it, sir! What did I say? That tomfool crystal gazing has done this. I'll vow! He's—he's backed out—backed out and left me in the lurch with only a little over a week to go!"

With a sharp exclamation of surprise, Derrick Brent secured the note and scanned it quickly, and this was what it read:

"Dere Mr. Tomlinson,—For a very good reason, I can't fight the black nex week. If you only knew why, you'd understand and be sorri for me. Don't try to find me; it won't be no use.—Yores regretfully,

"LUKE YOUNG."

There was nothing else, save the figure "8" and a capital letter "X" in the top right-hand corner, as though the writer had, from sheer force of habit, started to pen an address he was accustomed to writing. The pen had been run through these characters several times, and they were only just discernible.

"What shall I do?" the promoter groaned, almost beside himself with agitation. "Mr. Brent, this means ruin for me!"

"Unless you can find him," the ex-schoolmaster suggested hopefully, "and induce him to reconsider what he has written."

"Or find another man to take his place?" the promoter exclaimed, new hope for a moment springing into his eyes.

"Would that be allowable?" Derrick Brent asked quickly. "Yes, a saving clause in the contract, the words 'or a substitute' are inserted after his name. I fixed it up before I really knew how Seaman Young would shape!"

"Then cheer up, Tomlinson!" Derrick Brent said, placing his hand upon his shoulder. "I am at present a very idle man, and I mean to help you because I know you to be a straight sportsman, and do not like to see such men come a cropper. It is too late to do anything to-night, but to-morrow I will call upon you, and go into this matter with you. I will give you a promise. Either I will find Seaman Young, convince him that anything he may have been told at this clairvoyant's is a pack of untruths, and get him to meet his man, or I will produce a boxer to meet the negro on the appointed night!"

The promoter turned in his seat and gripped his hand. "You mean this, he asked eagerly.

"You have the word of Derrick Brent," the late schoolmaster replied simply.

"That's more than enough!" the promoter said, with a sigh of relief. "I don't know how to thank you sufficiently for promising to stand by me!"

The 3rd Chapter. Derrick Brent's Clue—Seaman Young's Startling Story—Mr. Brent's Plan.

Derrick Brent called upon the promoter the next morning, in company with Tom and Teddy Rawdon.

"You had better tell me," he said, when they were closeted with the promoter in his private sitting-room, "all you know concerning Seaman Young's private life. For instance, is he a married man, and where does he live when he is not in training?"

"He is a widower," Tomlinson replied, "and has a daughter of about fourteen, I believe, who is a chronic invalid."

"What is wrong with her?"

can you think of beginning with the letter X?"

"By Jove, I never thought of that!" the promoter exclaimed. "There can't be many thoroughouts the United Kingdom, but to find the one we want would be a tidy job, I'm thinking."

"Well, let us try to narrow down our field," Derrick Brent continued. "You say this child of Young's is suffering from consumption, and is at a seaside resort, where you think he frequently visits her."

"As this is so, he would be likely to choose a seaside town near London; and as Southend and its neighbouring towns are noted for the beneficial air they provide for those with chest trouble, we will begin with the south-east coast."

"Rawdon"—signing to Teddy—"you have heard what I have been saying. Run over to the library across the road, and endeavour to see the directory, or directories, including south-east coast towns. Find out if there are any roads or streets beginning with X, and, if so, make a note of them!"

"Very good, sir!"

Teddy snatched up his cap and disappeared. He was absent for about twenty minutes, and when he returned his face showed that he had met with some kind of success in his mission.

"There's only one, sir, so far as I can discover," he reported. "It's at

ing utterly confused and at a loss for words.

The promoter noticed how ill and worn he looked. He might have received some awful shock that was playing havoc with his nerves, and there was a look curiously suggestive of fear in his eyes.

"The gov'nor!" he gasped huskily, after an awkward pause. "I—I'm sorry for this, Mr. Tomlinson!—I—"

He broke off, stammering so that he could not voice his words; and now Bill Tomlinson's temper got the better of him, and he shook his fist in the pugilist's face.

"So I've found you, you waster!" he growled angrily. "What the thunder are you doing down here when you ought to be in training? Do you think it'll be funny to see me lose money? Have you come dotty, or have the other side bribed you to play this low-down trick? Out with it, man! What's wrong?"

"I can't tell you, boss! You'd think I was a—a fool, or raving mad!"

"Rot! Something has upset you; I can see that! To tell me you're afraid of the nigger is all nonsense, and I won't believe it!"

"Yet it is true!" Seaman Young cried, a strange, furtive look upon his face. "Hang it, boss"—with sudden vehemence—"you'd be afeared if you'd seen yourself a-lying dead, with that son of darkness standing over

but you cannot believe that this ball of glass could really reveal to you the future, Young?"

"I only knows what I saw, sir," the boxer answered, shaking his head. "It made my flesh creep. I'll say again that, sorry as I am for Mr. Tomlinson, and much though I respects him, I can't agree to fight the nigger! It would mean death!" he concluded hoarsely. "Mark my words!"

"Nonsense, man!" Derrick Brent exclaimed, a trifle impatiently. "You have been duped! I am sure of it! Tell me did you make an appointment to see this crystal-gazer?"

"Yes," Young answered, "I risk her being out!" "Ah," Derrick Brent murmured, smiling grimly, "I thought so! You were cleverly tricked. That is all. I am sure of it!"

"Do you mean you think it was some trick of Langworthy's to prevent him standing up against Jackson?" asked Tomlinson.

"Yes," Derrick Brent replied, with conviction. "I believe Young saw the 'vision' right enough. It was cunningly arranged. Possibly Langworthy knew of Mr. Young's habit of going to this seer, bribed her heavily, and arranged to produce a 'vision' to order. It is a clever trick, but I will expose it, and make them sorry for their underhanded work before many hours have passed. Look here, Young!" he added, turning to the boxer. "Give me a chance to expose these tricksters. Write to this seer, and say you mean to fight unless the crystal again tells you not to do so. Say you will be there at ten o'clock to-morrow morning!"

"But I sha'n't be!" Seaman Young protested, a look of horror in his eyes. "I wouldn't look on that sight again for anything! No, you can't make me go there again!"

"But you have no objection to my going?"

"I don't follow you, sir. My plan is quite simple. I shall borrow a suit of your clothes—the same garments, if possible, as you appeared in when you went to this seer's on the last occasion. A fair wig, a photo of you, and a few sticks of grease-paint ought to do the rest!"

"Great Scott! You mean you are going to make up as Young here, and go in his place, sir?" Bill Tomlinson cried.

"Precisely," Mr. Brent answered. "And I shall have near at hand several officials from Scotland Yard, if I can interest my friend, Inspector Lawson, sufficiently to gain his cooperation. Where does this seer carry on her sittings, my man?"

"At No. —, Shaftesbury Avenue. It's a ground floor shop, and the room where she sees you is at the back. Her daughter's in the shop, and they pretend to sell tobacco and fags and things, as a blind, because their business is sort of illegal."

"Very illegal, when they lay themselves out to frighten strong men like you out of their wits," Derrick Brent replied drily. "But write the letter, Young, and let us post it at once. If they fall into the trap, they shall be exposed, as sure as I am a living man!"

The 4th Chapter.

At the Seer's—Tom and Teddy Rawdon Come in for Some Excitement—Derrick Brent's Surprising Offer.

At about ten o'clock upon the following morning a tall, fair-haired man, dressed in a sweater and a suit of rather glaring checks, strolled down Shaftesbury Avenue.

He would have been taken by any member of the boxing world for Seaman Young, the man who was believed to be fighting Sam Jackson at the Paxton Music Hall next week.

Feeling secure in the thoroughness of his disguise, Brent entered the tobaccoist's shop where Mother Carey held her sittings without the slightest show of hesitation.

He nodded to the girl behind the counter, and jerked his head towards the curtain before the door of the room beyond.

"I'll go and tell mother," the young woman said, and came round the counter and went into the room. Brent heard her conversing with someone, then, as she reappeared, a harsh female voice bade him:

"Enter, my son!" Derrick Brent drew back the curtain and entered the darkness beyond; and out in the street the three arguing men, who were in reality plain-clothes detectives, the two lads and Mr. William Tomlinson crossed the road.

"So you disbelieve, you foolish



Crash! With all his force Derrick Brent brought his heavy walking-stick down upon the crystal, smashing it into a thousand pieces and scattering splinters of glass upon every side.

"Consumption, I've heard. When her father isn't training for some bout, he spends his time with her, if one can judge from what he says. But he's a morose sort of chap, and I only know that he is deeply attached to her in his rough way, and that he keeps her at some seaside resort."

"Humph!" Brent ejaculated. "It is possible that he is with her now, then?"

"Yes; I thought of that myself. But, as I've never heard, so far as I can recollect, where she is staying, what is the use of thinking that, sir?"

"With the clue his letter furnishes," Mr. Brent said, as he lit a cigar, "it ought not to be difficult to find him if he is with his child."

"But there is no clue in his letter, so far as I can see."

"On the contrary, there is a distinct clue," Derrick Brent persisted. "You will recollect he started to put an address; then, when he thought of what he was doing, he struck out the figure 8—which is, of course, the number of some house—and the first letter of the street—namely, X. Now, how many streets

Leigh-on-Sea, called Xervia Parade."

"Good!" Derrick Brent said, rising and picking up his hat. "I propose, Tomlinson, that we make for there now, taking the risk that we are upon a wild-goose chase. We can but try our luck, and if we hurry there is just time to reach Fenchurch Street and catch the eleven-fifteen down."

Derrick Brent, with the twins and Bill Tomlinson, caught the train, and, arriving at Leigh just over an hour later, they had no difficulty in finding the boxer's house. Just as they approached the gate a broad-shouldered, fair-haired man stepped on to the pavement, turning and waving his hand to a pale-faced, wistful-eyed child seated at one of the open upper windows of the house.

"It's him!" Mr. William Tomlinson breathed ungrammatically. "You were right, sir!"

As they came up with the man he turned and faced them; then, a sharp cry of surprise and dismay leaving his lips, he took a step backwards, seem-

ing you, and the doctor takin' off his hat sort of reverent."

"Done what?" Bill Tomlinson burst out explosively. "Have you gone out of your senses, Luke? How the dickens could a fellow see 'issel lying dead anywhere or anyhow?"

"Supposing," Mr. Brent said quietly, "you tell us the whole story, beginning at the beginning? May we come inside?"

The boxer nodded mechanically, and led the way to the front door, opening it with a latchkey, and conducting them to a small sitting-room upon the ground floor.

And then he told them exactly what had happened at the clairvoyant's abode in Shaftesbury Avenue, speaking in a low tone that convinced them he himself believed every word he uttered.

"I can only say I'm sorry, boss," the boxer concluded; "but I can't take on the fight."

"Yet surely you must realise that this is some trick, supposing you really saw this vision?" Derrick Brent put in. "You may be superstitious,





