

# The BOYS' FRIEND

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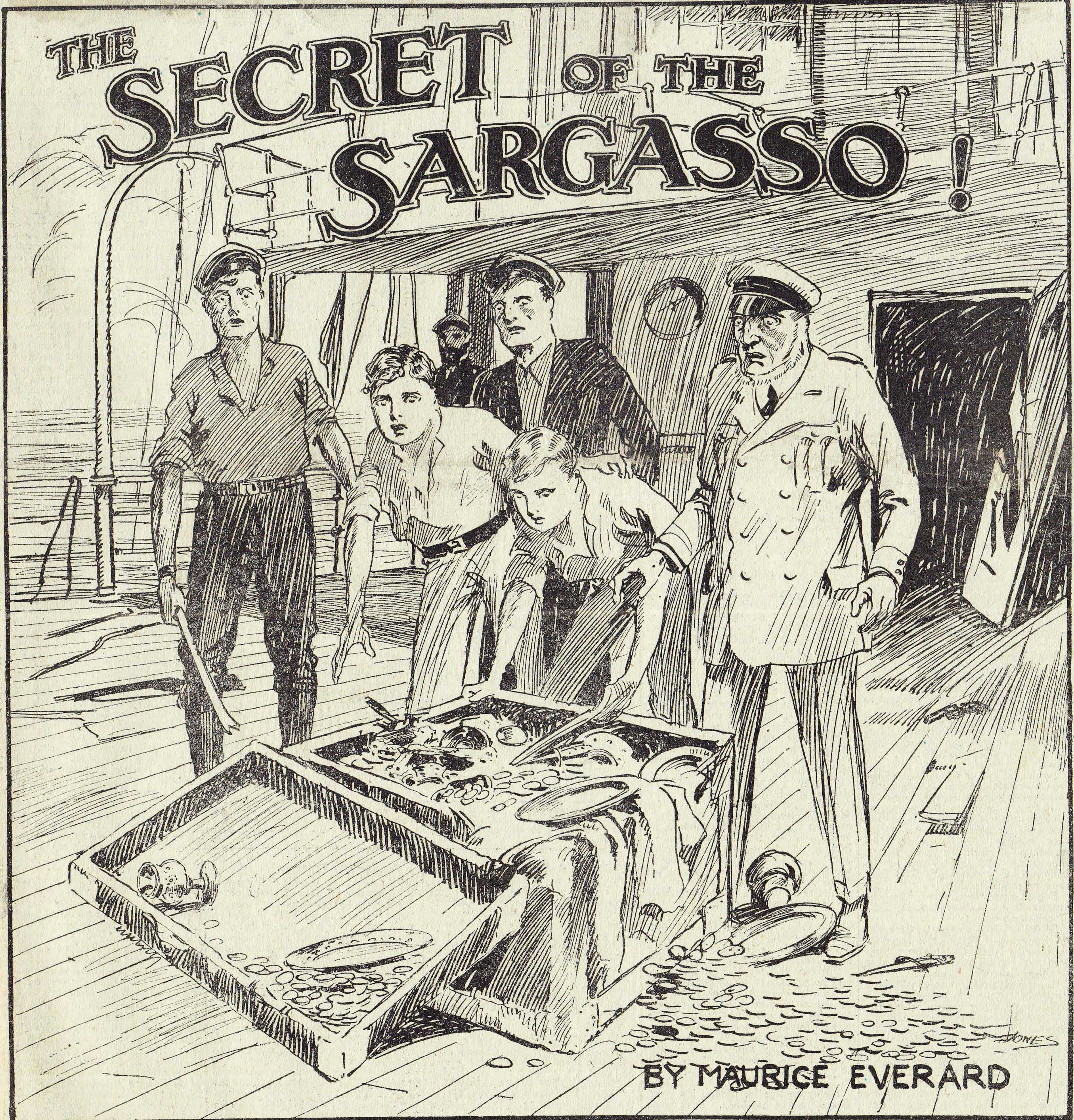
TWELVE PAGES!

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27 YEARS OLD—AND STILL THE BEST!

[Week Ending April 22nd, 1922.]



**THE TREASURE BROUGHT TO LIGHT!**

After much struggling and with the aid of crowbars, the lid of the chest flew back. The sight that met the explorers' eyes was amazing—heaps upon heaps of gold plate, jewellery, and other valuables. "We've found it!" cried Frank Polruan. "We've discovered the secret of the Sargasso."



## FURTHER ADVENTURES OF GUNNER OF THE FOURTH FORM AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL! By OWEN CONQUEST.



# A New Boy On The Warpath.



### The 1st Chapter.

#### Gunner Means Business!

"Oooooooh!"

It was Arthur Edward Lovell who uttered that sudden yell.

Arthur Edward was standing in the end study, with his back to the door. The door opened suddenly, without a knock.

Lovell was only a foot from the door, with his back to it, and he had no time to dodge.

Crack!

The door came into violent contact with the back of Arthur Edward Lovell's head. Lovell's yell might have been heard at the other end of the passage.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, my head!" stuttered Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Raby and Newcome.

"Haven't you ever heard of knocking at the door before you butt into a room, Gunner?" inquired Jimmy Silver mildly to the newcomer.

Gunner sniffed.

"I don't stand on ceremony with fags!" he answered.

The Fistical Four looked at Gunner. That cheery youth had been only a few days at Rookwood; but he had already been much remarked upon in the Classical Fourth.

Peter Cuthbert Gunner was a big fellow—properly speaking, too big and too old for the Fourth. But his brains, apparently, had not developed along with his body—at all events, he was at the bottom of Mr. Dalton's class, and seemed likely to remain there. That did not diminish Gunner's good opinion of himself, however. Gunner was the happy possessor of a self-satisfaction that was absolutely unlimited.

Nobody would have taken him for a new boy, from his manners and customs. There was nothing shy or backward about Gunner. He had an excellent opinion of himself, and did not hesitate to make it known. Upon what qualities that good opinion was founded, only Gunner knew—the other fellows, hitherto, had been unable to discover any grounds for it.

"I've come here about the cricket," he said. "I understand that you're junior cricket captain, Silver."

Jimmy raised his eyebrows.

"You understand that?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You surprise me!" said Jimmy.

"Isn't it the case?"

"Oh, yes, it's the case?"

"Then what is there surprising about it?"

"Nothing—it's surprising that you understand it," said Jimmy, sweetly. "I shouldn't have guessed that you'd be able to understand anything."

Gunner stared at him. Gunner's powerful brain worked rather slowly, and he required some moments to grasp Jimmy's remark.

"Don't be a funny ass!" he said, at last. "I haven't come here to listen to silly jokes. It's about the cricket. It seems to me utter rot for you to be junior captain; but there it is. I'm a member of the club, of course—a playing member. Rotten enough for a fellow like me to be playing among a lot of fags; but one must make the best of what can't be helped. Put my name down for the first match."

"Eh?"

"You know my name," said Gunner. "Put it down! There's going to be practice on Little Side this afternoon, I understand."

"My hat! That's another thing you understand!" exclaimed Jimmy

Silver, in astonishment. "What a brain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't it so?" roared Gunner.

"Oh, yes, it's so."

"Good. I'm turning up," said Gunner. "I may be able to show you fags some things in cricket. If I can find the time, I may be able to give you all some coaching in the game. I was the best junior cricketer at St. Bede's—my old school, you know. I shouldn't mind giving up some of my time to knocking you kids into shape."

"Thanks awfully!" said Jimmy Silver, with a deep sarcasm that was wholly wasted on Peter Cuthbert Gunner.

"Not at all," said Gunner. "I look on it as a duty really. Later on I shall be skipper, of course; but I suppose I must leave that to be settled by the junior club. For the present, you can carry on."

"Much obliged," grinned Jimmy.

"I will."

"What time practice?" asked Gunner.

"Get out of the way, Gunner!" called out Conroy.

Gunner looked round.

"I'm waiting for a bowler!" he said.

"Let him rip, you fellows!" said Jimmy Silver, with a smile. "If his cricket is anything like his jaw, he must be as good as the three Graces rolled into one. Carry on, Gunner; I'll give you a few!"

"Back up, and not so much chin!" said Gunner.

"Is that the way you talked to your captain at St. Bede's?" inquired Jimmy politely.

"Certainly! Get going, and don't waste time."

The Fourth-Formers looked at Jimmy Silver, fully expecting him to take Gunner by the scruff of the neck and walk him off the field. But Jimmy took the ball and went on to bowl. He was patient and good-tempered, and was rather curious, too, to see what Peter Cuthbert Gunner could do as a cricketer.

Jimmy was the champion bowler of the Lower School at Rookwood; and

"Ha, ha, ha! What price this for cricket?" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared Gunner. "I haven't quite got going yet. Stick those bails on, one of you kids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Send down the ball, Silver, you young ass!"

Jimmy Silver laughed and shook his head.

"No more time to waste," he said. "You can't play cricket, Gunner, and you must put in some practice before you butt in with the Form."

"Can't play cricket!" repeated Gunner. "Don't be a fool, Silver! Send down that ball, as I've told you!"

"Get away from the wicket, Gunner!" was Jimmy Silver's answer. "No more time to waste."

"Clear off, Gunner!" called out two or three impatient voices.

"I haven't fairly started yet," said Gunner calmly. "I'm staying here. I'm waiting for you to bowl, Silver."

"Clear off!" roared Lovell.

"Rats!"

"Shift him!" said Mornington.

Five or six juniors shifted Gunner from the wicket. Peter Cuthbert, in great indignation, resisted; but half a dozen juniors were not to be argued with. Gunner was whirled away and deposited in the grass, in a breathless condition.

Mornington went to the wicket, and Jimmy Silver continued to bowl. The practice went on, and the juniors almost forgot Gunner. But that youth was not content to be forgotten.

He sat for some time pumping in breath, but he scrambled up at last, with a red and wrathful face, and strode on the pitch. There was a yell.

"Keep away, you ass!"

Gunner looked round.

"What are you kicking up that row about, Silver?" he snapped. "Where's that ball? Field that ball, somebody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gunner spotted the ball, and made a dive for it. Jimmy Silver made a dive for Gunner at the same moment. Gunner was caught by the collar, whirled round, and sent spinning in the grass.

"Get off the field!" yelled Jimmy.

"What?"

"You dangerous ass! You might have brained me!" howled the captain of the Fourth. "You've jolly nearly dislocated my shoulder!"

"Eh?"

"I shall have a lump as big as an egg!" hooted Jimmy Silver.

"D-d-did the ball touch you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did it?" gasped Jimmy. "Don't you know that it did, you frabjous lunatic?"

"You shouldn't get in the way," said Gunner. "Now, then, I want that ball. I'm going to show you some bowling!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Words were wasted on Gunner, that was clear.

"Take him away!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Put him somewhere where he can't do any harm."

"Look here—" roared Gunner, as the hilarious Fourth-Formers closed round him.

"Frog's-march!" shouted Lovell.

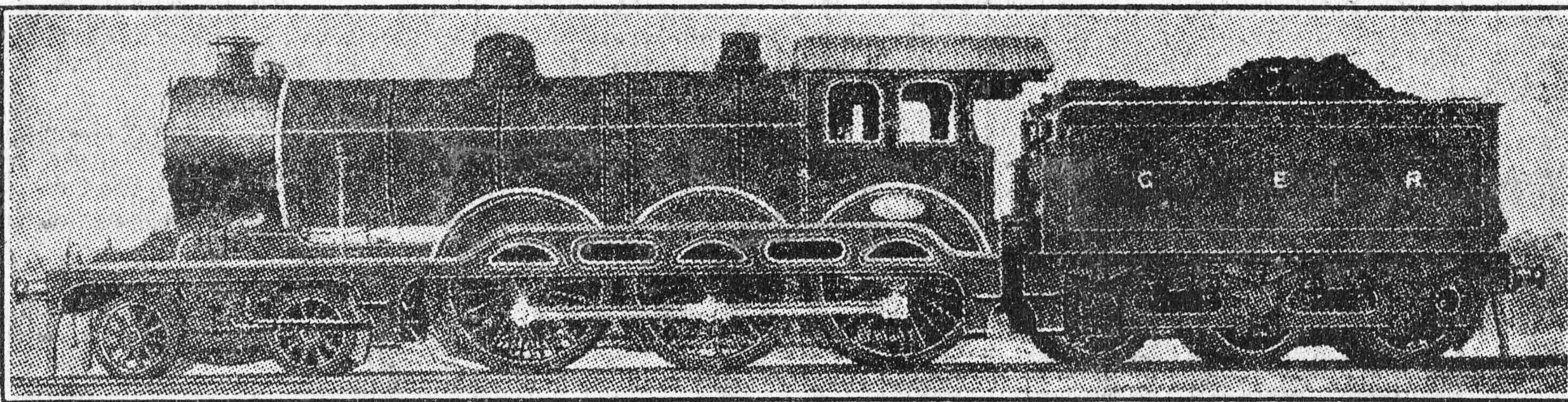
"Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Cuthbert Gunner resisted desperately. But six or seven pairs of hands grasped him, and he was frog-marched off the junior cricket ground to the accompaniment of a series of fiendish yells from Peter Cuthbert.

He was bumped down in the grass at a considerable distance with a

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"We're just going down."

"Good; I'll come, then. I'll just get my bat."

Gunner of the Fourth strode out of the end study, with his heavy stride. Lovell gave the back of his head a final rub and blinked at his chums.

"That chap will have a high old time in the Fourth, if he goes on as he's started!" he remarked.

"He will!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "I wonder what his cricket's like. Let's see."

And the Fistical Four proceeded to Little Side, where a dozen of the Fourth were gathering for practice. Gunner of the Fourth joined them there, with a very handsome bat under his arm. As a new fellow, whose proper place was the back-ground, Gunner ought really to have waited meekly till he was called upon; but there was nothing meek about Gunner. He went to the wicket, as if the wicket were his personal property.

"I'm ready!" he called out to Jimmy Silver. "Just tell your best bowler to send me down a few."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Lovell, in indignant wrath.

"Shut up, please."

"Wha-at?"

"Shut up! I've told you I'm ready, Silver."

And Gunner waited.

### The 2nd Chapter.

#### The Champion!

Jimmy Silver grinned. He was a good-tempered fellow, and he had plenty of patience—which a cricket captain needed. Gunner had apparently taken possession of Little Side and of the cricket practice; it was not to be so much Form practice, apparently, as an exhibition of what Peter Cuthbert Gunner could do. Wrathful looks were turned on Gunner from all sides, which he did not heed in the least.

"Is that funny merchant potty?" inquired Valentine Mornington.

"Kick him out, somebody, and let's begin!"

there were few juniors who could stand up to him. If Gunner could, he was worthy of a place in the junior eleven.

Jimmy sent down the ball, and he put all his skill into it. As it proved, he need not have taken the trouble.

Gunner was whole seconds late in swiping at the ball, and when he swiped, it was not even where the ball had been.

The bails went down; and Gunner stared at the wicket. There was a loud chortle from the juniors on the field.

"Jolly queer!" commented Gunner.

"Queer enough, if you mean the batting!" remarked Oswald.

"Don't be cheeky! Try that on again, Silver!"

Conroy fielded the ball, and returned it to Jimmy Silver. The captain of the Fourth tried it again.

This time Gunner was very careful. Perhaps he was too careful. Or perhaps he had over-estimated his powers as a batsman. There was a crash as the wicket went down, though the ball did not touch it. It was Gunner's handsome new bat that did it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Fourth-Formers. They were beginning to enjoy the scene now.

Even Tubby Muffin did not play cricket quite like this.

"Set that up again!" said Gunner, frowning. "And don't cackle, you cheeky fags! I've thrashed fags for cackling when I was playing cricket at St. Bede's!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The wicket was set up again, and Gunner took his stand. Jimmy Silver took the ball again, and this time he sent down a very easy one, which even Muffin of the Fourth could have played with success. But it was beyond Peter Cuthbert Gunner. The middle stump was whisked out of the ground, and there was a shriek of laughter from the field.

**ANSWERS**  
EVERY MONDAY. PRICE 2:

"Clear off!"

"Gunner, you dummy!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Gunner did not heed. He strode up to the captain of the Fourth.

"Give me that ball!" he said. "If you don't want to see good batting, I'll show you something in bowling."

"You thumping ass—"

"Give me the ball, I tell you!" snapped Gunner.

"Chuck him out!" bellowed Lovell.

"Oh, let him rip!" said Jimmy Silver resignedly. "Possibly the silly ass may be able to bowl. Let's see."

He tossed the ball to Gunner. It was an easy catch, but Gunner's rather extensive hand came up too late for it, and the ball landed on his chin. Gunner gave a yell.

"Yow! What are you chucking the ball at me for, you duffer?"

"Why didn't you catch it, you ass?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now let's see you bowl, if you can bowl," said Jimmy Silver impatiently. "Carry on!"

"I'll show you some bowling that you've never seen on this ground before," said Gunner contemptuously.

Gunner gripped the ball, Jimmy Silver standing aside for him. The new junior took a little run, whirled over a good deal like a propeller, and the ball flew from his hand.

In that direction the ball flew was a mystery—for a second. Then a fearful yell from Jimmy Silver announced where it had flown.

As Jimmy was at right angles to the line of fire, so to speak, he had considered himself safe. But Gunner was a bowler of uncommon gifts. The ball fairly crashed on Jimmy Silver's shoulder, and the captain of the Fourth staggered away yelling. He was hurt.

Mornington, at the wicket, was almost doubled up with merriment. The whole field yelled with laughter.

Jimmy Silver yelled—but not with laughter. He clasped his damaged shoulder in anguish.

"Oh, oh, oh! Ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

heavy bump, and there left to consider himself. Jimmy Silver & Co. had had enough of Gunner's cricket—too much, in fact, especially Jimmy. Practice on Little Side proceeded without any further assistance from Peter Cuthbert.

### The 3rd Chapter.

#### Wholesale!

Dickinson minor of the Fourth Form grinned.

Dickinson minor was in Study No. 7, last but one in the Fourth Form passage, which study he shared with Peter Cuthbert Gunner, the new junior. Dickinson minor was thinking of tea, and going carefully through all his pockets, one after another, and turning out all the resources in cash that they contained.

A sixpence, a penny, and a half-penny turned up, and Dickinson minor considered very seriously what sort of tea that munificent sum would stand. Whether to cut down to Hall before it was too late, and save his sevenpence-halfpenny, or whether to have the best tea in the study that could be obtained for that sum, was the problem that occupied the intellect of Dickinson minor, when Gunner came in. The aspect of Gunner banished the problem from Dickinson's mind for the moment.

Gunner sank breathlessly into the armchair—a magnificent new armchair which had been sent specially for that study for Gunner's use by Gunner's people.

Gunner was breathless, and he was dusty, and he was rumpled, and he was not in a good temper; and he glared at his study-mate as he detected the grin.

"I don't want any cheek!" he observed.

"Got plenty of your own—what?" said Dickinson.

"I've been handled!" said Gunner.

"You look it!"

"Kept off the cricket field," said Gunner. "All the louts combined to chuck me off, you know, because I was going to show them some really decent cricket. Chucked off the ground, you know."

"I wouldn't have let them."

"How could I help it?" said Gunner. "There were seven or eight



collaring me. I couldn't fight more than four or five at once."

"Oh!" ejaculated Dickinson. Gunner was certainly a hefty fellow, but Dickinson minor had his doubts about Gunner being able to tackle even four or five Rookwooders at once. Apparently Gunner had no doubts.

"Of course, I'm not taking it lying down," said Gunner. "I had cheek enough to stand when I was at St. Bede's. I'm determined not to have any of it at Rookwood. I've decided what to do. I'm going to thrash every fellow that laid a hand on me on the cricket field this afternoon. That will show them who's who and what's what, you see."

"Hear, hear!" yawned Dickinson minor. "You having tea in the study, Gunner?"

"Yes." "Then I'll tell you what," said Dickinson. "I've got sevenpence-halfpenny. You put sevenpence-halfpenny to it, and we'll do the best we can for fifteenpence—what?"

Gunner sniffed contemptuously. "Both your sevenpence-halfpenny!" he said with all the pride of the heir of Gunner's Hardware, Limited. "For goodness' sake, chuck those dirty coppers into the fender. Cut down to the tuckshop and get something for tea. There's a note."

Gunner threw a pound note on the table.

Dickinson minor looked at it, and looked at his new study-mate with a new respect. He picked up the note.

"I'll go, old top!" he said. "Leave the shopping to me. How much change do you want out of this?"

"None, of course." Dickinson's eyes opened.

"You're blowing a whole quid on a study tea!" he ejaculated. "Why not?"

"My hat! Why not, certainly, if you're rolling in it!" assented Dickinson, beginning to think that Gunner's arrival at Rookwood was one of the most fortunate things that had happened since the war. "Why, even Morny before he lost his money wouldn't have thought of spending a pound on tea."

"What rot!" said Gunner. "You cut off and get the tuck, while I make up my list."

"List of tuck?" "No, you ass! List of the fellows I'm going to lick this evening."

"Oh, my hat!" said Dickinson. "All right; I'll be your second if you like."

Dickinson minor grinned and quitted the study, with the pound note crumpled in his hand. Hitherto Dickinson had not quite decided whether he could stand Gunner in the study or not. Now he decided at once that he could.

A fellow who could throw pound notes about like that was a fellow whom Dickinson minor delighted to honour. It was all very well for Townsend and Topham and fellows like that to turn up their noses at Gunner's hardware, and to talk scornfully about bounders with money.

A pound note was a pound note, Dickinson minor sagely considered, and he blissfully reflected that Study No. 7, where a very thin time had reigned hitherto, was going to be a land flowing with milk and honey.

At Sergeant Kettle's little shop Dickinson minor dutifully expended the pound note to the last penny, and he returned to his study laden with tuck. Tubby Muffin sighted him in the passage, and joined him, with a friendly and affectionate grin, and an offer to help with carrying the parcels.

Dickinson minor's reply was more emphatic than polite. Tubby hopefully followed him to the study door, but he had to retire when that door was slammed fairly on his fat little nose.

Gunner was busy with a pencil and paper, and he did not look up as Dickinson entered. The latter proceeded to get tea. He was more than willing to contribute the labour when Gunner contributed the goods on such a lavish scale.

Gunner was pencilling a list of names. Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome, Mornington, Conroy, Oswald were on his list. Dickinson minor glanced at it when tea was ready, and Gunner laid it on the table before starting on the good things.

"What's that for?" asked Dickinson.

"The fellows I'm going to thrash this evening," said Gunner. "I want you to go round after tea and tell them all to be in the Common-room after eight. I'm going to take them on one after another, and thrash the lot, this evening. As a warning, you know."

"Jimmy Silver's rather hefty!" murmured Dickinson.

Gunner smiled.

"I could wallop him with one hand tied behind!" he explained.

"Lovell's rather tough—" "I could thrash him on my head!" "Morny's rather a hard nut, too, you—"

"You'll see that he won't last me three minutes."

"And Conroy," said Dickinson, "I say, he's an Australian, you know, and as hard as nails. He's licked Shell fellows."

"I could lick the whole Shell here, and the Fifth, too!" said Gunner. "You wait till you see me started. In fact, I think I shall lick some of the Fifth soon. They don't treat me respectfully. But I'm going through the Fourth first—putting them in their place, you know. I shall start with Jimmy Silver, as he is junior captain. Licking him will be a warning to the whole Form. It will make him understand, too, that I've got to have a place in the junior cricket eleven."

Dickinson looked curiously at his new study-mate. Gunner was a hefty-looking fellow, certainly, and looked like a fighting-man.

But whether he could lick seven Rookwood juniors, one after another, in the same evening was a still more dubious question.

Under the genial influence of an ample spread, Dickinson felt kindly towards his study-mate, and he would willingly have saved Gunner from himself, as it were.

But Peter Cuthbert was not disposed to listen to wise counsel.

"You're a fool, Dickinson!"

"Tell him not to worry about scrapping," said Jimmy. "Tell him to fill up his time by getting some tips from a Second Form fag on cricket."

"I don't think I'll tell him that. He might begin on me. I say, he blued a whole pound-note on tea! He's not a bad sort."

And Dickinson minor departed, to finish his round with the challenges. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another and smiled.

"Leave him to me," said Lovell. "I want to punch him for banging my head with the door to-day."

Jimmy looked thoughtful. "If he knows how to use his hands he will be pretty tough," he said. "He's big, for the Fourth, and he's as strong as a horse—"

"And as brainy as a donkey!" remarked Raby.

"Just about!" said Jimmy laughing. "But he may be able to box, and in that case he will be a hard nut to crack."

"I'll crack him fast enough!" said Lovell disdainfully.

"Let's hope it will blow over," said Jimmy. "We don't want to hammer a new kid, even if he is a silly exasperating ass like Gunner."

The Fistical Four turned their attention to prep, and forgot all about Peter Cuthbert Gunner. They were reminded of him when the study door was flung open and he appeared.

"I'm going down!" he said.

"Good!" said Jimmy. "Sooner the better. Shut the door after you!"

"Here we are!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "Top of the evening, dear boy."

"I've got some gloves here," said Gunner. "I thought we'd better have the mittens on. I'm going to thrash you, you know, but I don't want to hurt you too much. Mr. Dalton would make a row if seven fellows turned up with black eyes in the Form-room to-morrow morning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at in that," said Gunner. "I'm being considerate. I'm beginning on you, Silver!"

"Begin on me!" implored Lovell.

Gunner shook his head. "No. I'm beginning on Silver, as captain of the Fourth," he explained. "I'll take you next, if you like."

"What's the good of taking me next?" demanded Lovell. "There won't be anything left for me after Jimmy's done with you."

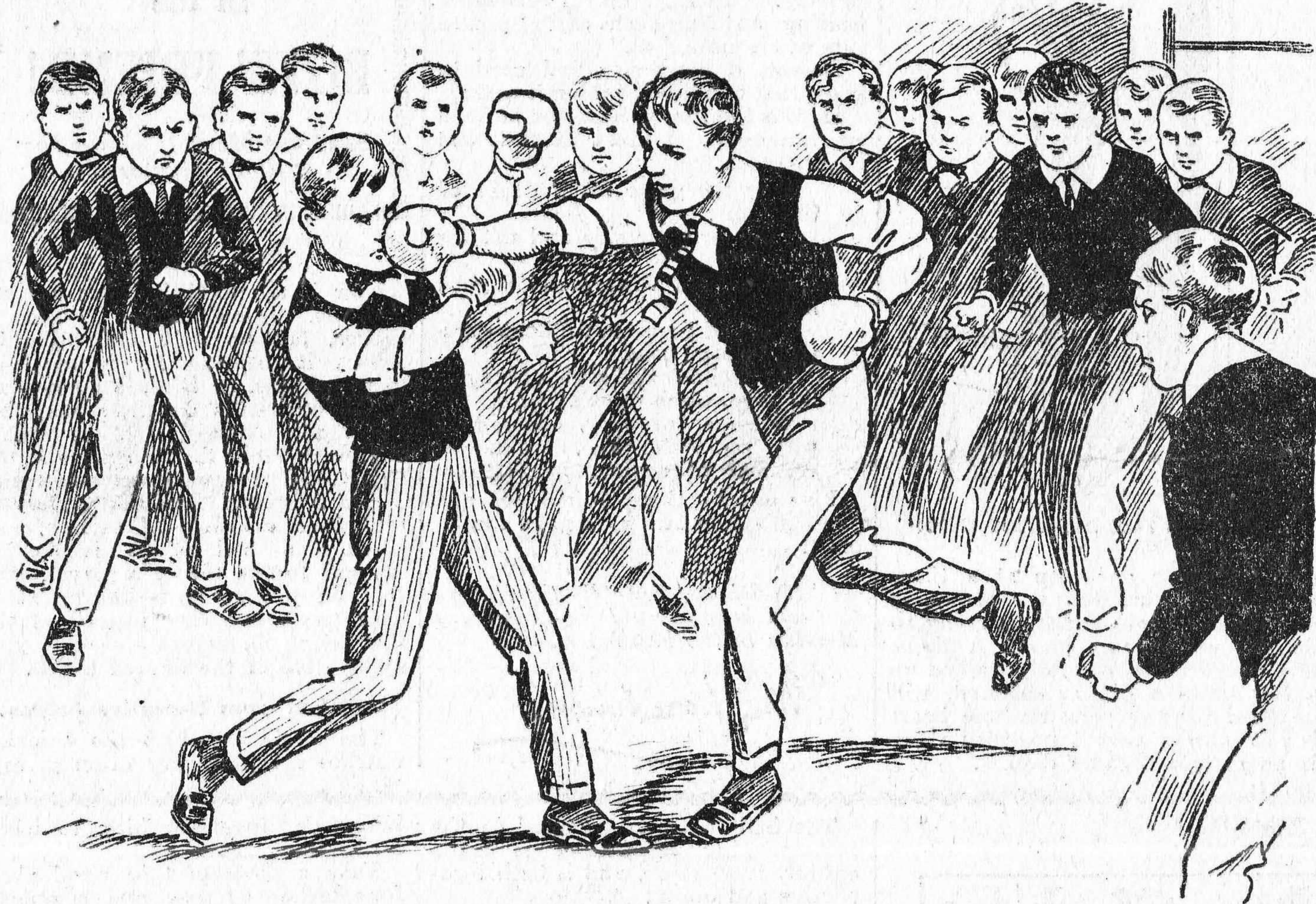
"And how much will be left for me?" asked Mornington. "Where do I come in?"

"Third!" said Gunner, referring to his list. "Conroy fourth—"

The Australian junior chuckled. "Raby fifth, Newcome sixth, and Oswald seventh," said Gunner. "But to save time, I'll take Raby and Newcome together. I think."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Raby.

"Shush!" said Gunner, waving his hand at them. "Wait for your turn! Now lock the door, somebody; we don't want any prefects butting in. Will you get the gloves on, Silver?"



Gunner sailed in manfully. He determined to lick the chosen seven juniors by bedtime!

he explained kindly. "You don't know yet the kind of fellow I am. Wait till you see me get going. Why, I scrap quite as well as I play cricket."

"Oh, my Aunt Selina!" murmured Dickinson.

And he said no more. He had not seen Gunner scrap, but he had heard about the cricket.

After tea Dickinson minor, as Gunner's second, dutifully proceeded to carry his principal's challenges up and down the Fourth Form passage. The Fistical Four were finishing tea in the end study when Dickinson came in.

As it happened, the Co. were talking about Gunner, and three of them were grinning. Jimmy Silver, who still had a painful ache in his shoulder, was not grinning. He was not able as yet to see the comic side of Gunner's cricket so clearly as his comrades.

"You fellows are wanted this evening," said Dickinson minor. "Challenge from Gunner to a scrap."

"All four at once?" grinned Arthur Edward Lovell.

"All four this evening, one after another!" said Dickinson. "In the Common-room after eight."

"So Gunner's looking for more trouble?" asked Raby. "Isn't the dear man biting off more than he can chew?"

"Three more as well!" said Dickinson. "Morny, Conroy, and Oswald. Gunner's on the war-path."

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"Does he want an answer?" he asked.

"Yes. I'm to take it back."

"Don't keep me waiting," said Gunner. "Haven't you finished prep?"

"Not yet."

"I have!" said Gunner. "I suppose I don't need to swot so much as you fellows—brains, you know. But don't keep me waiting long."

Gunner retired, slamming the door after him. Arthur Edward Lovell half-rose, but sat down again.

"Doesn't need to swot so much as we do!" said Lovell, breathing hard. "And that's the fellow who construed this morning 'in pace regebat' 'he regulated his paces.'"

The Fistical Four chuckled. Gunner's construe was a joy to listen to—to all excepting his Form-master. Mr. Dalton had seemed rather dazed by it. Certainly his statement that King Latinus had "regulated his paces," instead of reigning in peace, was a startling one. Gunner could make even the classics entertaining.

Jimmy Silver & Co. finished their prep, and adjourned to the junior Common-room downstairs. In the passage they came on Mornington, Conroy, and Oswald, the three other victims of Gunner's destructive wrath. The three were smiling, and a crowd more of the Classical Fourth wore smiles. Gunner's liberal handing-out of challenges seemed to have tickled the Form. After prep, the Classical Fourth all turned up to watch the proceedings; they were quite interested in Gunner.

"Oh, here you are!" said the junior impatiently, as Jimmy Silver & Co. came into the Common-room.

Jimmy sighed.

"I will if you want me to," he said. "But we generally scrap in the gym, Gunner, not in the Common-room."

"Might be interrupted there—seniors there!" said Gunner. "I don't want to be interrupted. I'm going to make an example of all the cheeky rotters that handled me this afternoon; and prefects won't be allowed to butt in. Just lock the door and let's get going. It's turned half-past eight, and I want to finish before bed-time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby Muffin locked the door. The Classical Fourth and a crowd of the Shell gathered round with grinning faces.

"Hefty" fellow as Gunner undoubtedly was, it was not quite credible that he could possibly stand up against seven Rookwooders one after another. Gunner had no doubts, but his sublime confidence was not shared even by his faithful second, Dickinson minor.

Jimmy Silver threw off his jacket and put on the boxing-gloves. Gunner drew his gloves on smartly and stepped up. He towered nearly a head over the captain of the Fourth, and he had at least a stone advantage in weight. But Jimmy Silver did not seem to be disconcerted. Jimmy had been through many a scrap in his career at Rookwood, and he was quite prepared to deal efficiently with the obstreperous and truculent new junior.

"Who's keeping time?" asked Lovell.

"No need to keep time—Silver won't last more than one round!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You keep time, Van Ryn," said Jimmy Silver. "You're not one of the happy victims—unless Gunner makes you eighth on the list."

Van Ryn grinned and took out his watch.

"Ready? Right! Time! Go it, ye cripples!"

And Jimmy Silver and Peter Cuthbert Gunner toed the line and "went" it.

#### The 4th Chapter.

#### The First of the Seven—and the Last

Round the two combatants the ring of juniors was thick, all looking on with keen interest. Six of them were specially interested—the six whose names were on Gunner's comprehensive list. "Scrapping" was not at all common in the Fourth Form at Rookwood; but for a fellow to challenge seven fellows to scrap in one evening was decidedly uncommon. That Gunner should expect to work through the list, and arrive at the seventh, was quite surprising; but he evidently did expect to. Nobody else did. As Mornington remarked classically, the "Seven against Gunner" was not likely to be so serious a business as the "Epta epi Thebas," or the "Seven against Thebes." At which the Classics chuckled.

There was no doubt that Gunner had plenty of pluck, at least. He did not wait to be attacked—he came on with a rush, and his powerful arms went like the sails of a windmill.

But in less than a minute Jimmy had taken his measure, and there was a smile on the face of the captain of the Fourth.

"Time!"

When Van Ryn called time Gunner was in a rather breathless condition, and he was glad to stop and get in breath. His thrashing fists had not touched Jimmy Silver—somehow—Gunner did not know how—his terrific drives had been brushed away, and he had received three or four taps on his heated countenance without knowing in the least where they came from. He stood and pumped in breath, and glared at Jimmy Silver.

"Call this fighting?" he gasped.

Jimmy shook his head.

"I can't lick a fellow that dodges all the time," panted Gunner. "Stand up to it! Have some pluck!"

"I'll try!" said Jimmy sweetly.

"Time!"

Gunner came on with a rush. This time Jimmy Silver did not retreat. Gunner did not know how his big fists were brushed away—but they were brushed away. His nose came in contact with a fist, which, fortunately for Gunner, was in a well-padded glove. It was rather Gunner's terrific rush, than Jimmy Silver's punch, that gave the force to the blow—but it was forceful. Peter Cuthbert went over backwards, and came down on the floor with a sounding crash.

"Yoooop!" gasped Gunner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Man down!" chortled Lovell.

"Leave some for me, Jimmy."

"And some for me!" chuckled Mornington.

"And a little bit for me!" yelled Conroy. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Gunner sat up. Van Ryn began to count, but the champion staggered to his feet in time. Jimmy Silver stood back to give him leisure. Gunner came on again with undiminished pluck, and then it was hammer and tongs to the end of the round.

Jimmy Silver's drives landed just where he liked—and Gunner was tapped and rapped, and rapped and tapped, on his nose, his chin, his eyes, and his chest, till he was completely bewildered. He went down at last under a terrific right-hander, and fairly crumpled on the floor.

Van Ryn counted ten—he might have counted a hundred. Peter Cuthbert Gunner lay and gasped.

"Our little win!" chuckled Lovell.

"Are you letting off the rest of the seven, Gunner?" demanded Conroy.

"Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was evident that Gunner was letting off the rest of the seven. Dickinson minor kindly helped him away to his study. He left the Common-room in a roar of merriment. On the following morning Peter Cuthbert showed a highly-decorated countenance, but he was no longer on the war-path—nothing more was heard of the "Seven Against Gunner."

#### THE END.

"The Jape of the Year!" is the title of the long, complete story of the juniors of Rookwood School appearing in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Make a point of reading it—it's good!