

THE CLUE OF THE PIERCED WATCH! AN AMAZING STORY OF THE SCHOOL-
MASTER DETECTIVE IN THIS ISSUE!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

OUR MOTTO IS: "PLAY THE GAME!"

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending September 23rd, 1916.



KNOCKS ALL ROUND FOR THE NUTS OF ROOKWOOD!

THE COLONIAL SCHOOLBOY!

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

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Too Much Self Denial.

"What do you Modern bounders want?"
"What do you Classical bounders want?"
Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd asked one another those questions simultaneously.
They had just arrived outside Mr. Bootles' study.
It was close on time for afternoon lessons at Rookwood.
Jimmy Silver & Co., of the Classical Fourth, came down the passage from one direction; Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, came from the

other. And they met just outside Mr. Bootles' study.
Classicals and Moderns eyed one another suspiciously.
"You cut off," said Jimmy Silver authoritatively. And his chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, chimed in emphatically:
"Cut off!"
To which Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle answered in chorus:
"Rats!"
There were four of the Classicals. But the three Tommies stood their ground. They were quite ready for a scrap, even just outside their Form-master's door.

"None of your butting in here!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver wrathfully. "I can jolly well guess what you're after!"
"I think I can guess what you're after, too!" grinned Tommy Dodd. "We're going to ask Bootles—"
"Exactly! And we're going to ask Bootles—"
"About the new chap?"
"Exactly! About the new chap."
"We're going to get off lessons, and go to meet him!" roared Jimmy Silver.
"Ha, ha! So are we!"
"You're jolly well not! Bootles won't give leave to seven chaps!"
"You cut off, then!"

"Rats! You cut off!"
"Bow-wow!"
"Now, look here," said Jimmy Silver darkly. "We don't want any of your Modern rot. You'll cut off, or we shall shift you!"
And the three Tommies replied cheerily:
"Go ahead!"
"I give you one minute!"
"Rats!"
Jimmy Silver took out his silver watch with a determined air to time them. The Fistical Four, of the Classical Form, meant business.
But so did the three Tommies. There was a great deal at stake. A new fellow was coming to Rook-

wood that afternoon—a new boy for the Fourth Form. Whether he was going to be on the Classical or the Modern side, the juniors did not know. But they knew he was coming.

Not that new boys, as a rule, mattered much. New boys could come and go in flocks and herds, as a rule, without attracting much notice from Jimmy Silver & Co.

But this particular new boy was something special.

His name was Van Ryn, and he came from South Africa. As Jimmy Silver said, it was a long, long way from South Africa to Rookwood. The new fellow, it was understood, had met friends in London, and they had put him in the train for Coombe. But, according to Jimmy Silver, the new kid, though only a new kid, had a right to expect somebody at the station to look after him after such a tremendous journey. Jimmy Silver, with great self-denial, was prepared to "cut" lessons that afternoon, and go down to the station for that kind purpose.

His chums, equally self-denying, were prepared to let geography and English history and the French lesson "slide," all for the sake of looking after a perfect stranger.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, could not fail to be touched by such self-denial on the part of his pupils, Jimmy Silver considered. He was really bound to give them leave to carry out their generous purpose.

An afternoon out of doors, in the sunny summer weather, would be quite a sufficient reward for the self-denying juniors. Indeed, it was barely possible that the Fistical Four were thinking more of the afternoon out than of the comfort of the new boy, of whose existence they had only heard that morning.

Unfortunately, the same thought of self-denial had come into Tommy Dodd's active mind, and the three Moderns had arrived at Mr. Bootles' study with exactly the same purpose in view.

It was really a contest of self-denial, and neither party had any intention of giving way.

Jimmy Silver watched the big hand on his watch grimly.

The three Tommies occupied the interval of waiting by pushing back their cuffs, ready for combat.

"Time's up!" announced Jimmy.

"Go on!"

"Are you going?"

"I don't think!"

"Then go for the Modern bounders!" shouted Jimmy.

There was a rush of the Classicals.

"Back up!" roared Tommy Dodd.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Punch! Pommel! Punch! Yell!

The expected new boy was quite forgotten now. Classicals and Moderns closed in deadly strife.

"Yah! Oh!"

"Yaroo! Take that!"

"Yoop! Classical rotter! Yow-

ow!"

"Grooh! Modern cad! Yow!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The study door opened. The

juniors had forgotten Mr. Bootles.

The Fourth Form-master was generally a good-tempered little

gentleman. But there was wrath in

his face as he threw open his study

door.

"Boys!" he thundered.

"Yaroo!"

Bump, bump!

"Boys!" shrieked Mr. Bootles.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy

Silver. "Chuck it!"

The combat ceased suddenly.

Tommy Dodd and Raby were

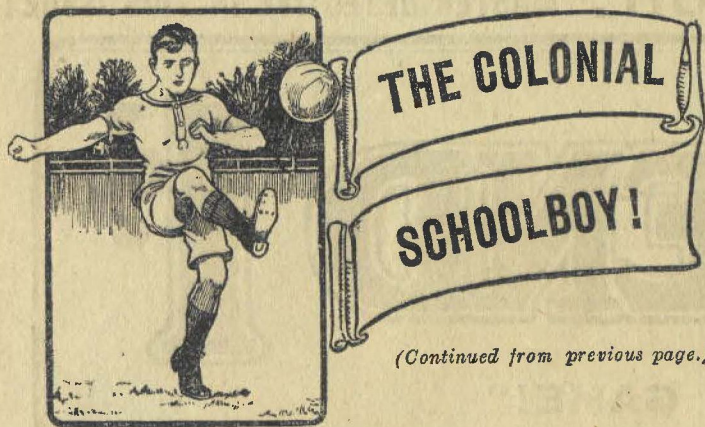
sprawling on the floor. They sat up

and blinked at the Form-master.

"Silver! Dodd! Lovell! How

dare you fight in the passage!"

(Continued on the next page.)



(Continued from previous page.)

"Ahem!"
"Grooh!"
"I am ashamed of you! You will take two hundred lines each!"
"Oh!"

"And stay in an hour after lessons to write them out!"
"Oh!"

"And now go into the Form-room at once!"

"Oh dear!"

"If you please, sir—" began Jimmy Silver, remembering his self-denying intentions.

"Not a word!" rapped Mr. Bootles.

"If you please—" began Tommy Dodd.

"Go!"

"The—the new kid, sir," stammered Jimmy Silver. "We were going to ask leave to meet him at the station."

"What—what!"

"He's bound to feel a bit lonely, coming all the way from South Africa—I mean South Africa!"

"And we wanted—" began Tommy Dodd.

"Sure, we were thinking—" stuttered Doyle.

"If you please, sir—" "You see, sir—" "Silence!" thundered Mr. Bootles.

"Do not deafen me with clamour!"

"Ahem! Certainly not! But—"

"But, you see, sir—" "It's like this, sir—" "The new chap—" "Silence!"

"I had intended," rumbled Mr. Bootles, "to send some members of my Form to meet the new junior and bring him to Rookwood. But I shall certainly not send such noisy, rowdy, and disorderly members of the Fourth Form as yourselves. Go into the Form-room at once, or I shall cane you!"

And the rivals of Rookwood, dabbling their noses and setting their collars straight, went—dolorously. There was no self-denial for the heroes of Rookwood that afternoon.

The 2nd Chapter. The Schoolboy from South Africa.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were looking quite "down" when Mr. Bootles came majestically into the Form-room a little later.

Tommy Dodd & Co. looked glum.

It had been a good idea for getting an afternoon off—a ripping idea; but, unfortunately, the old saying, that great minds run in grooves, had proved true again. That ripping idea had occurred to both Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, and the result had been disastrous.

Instead of an afternoon off, the heroes of Rookwood had an hour's detention. It was exceedingly hard cheese.

Most of the Fourth, however, when they learned of the disaster, seemed to see something comic in it, for they were grinning at a great rate when the Form-master came in.

Townsend & Co., the nuts of the Fourth, seemed especially amused.

Mr. Bootles glanced at the seven damaged juniors, who showed very plain traces of the scrap outside his study. But he did not speak to them. There was no hope for the delinquents.

"Townsend! Topham!" said Mr. Bootles.

The two nuts of the Fourth rose in their places.

"I am about to ask you to render me a service," said Mr. Bootles.

Towny and Toppo exchanged cheery glances. They could guess what was coming, and they rejoiced. They were not particularly "gone" on lessons, and they welcomed the prospect of a free run for the afternoon.

"A new boy arrives at Rookwood this afternoon," said Mr. Bootles. "I should like two boys to meet him at Coombe Station and bring him to the school. I have selected you, Townsend and Topham, because you are quiet and well-behaved."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Towny.
"Thank you, sir!" said Topham.
"Oh, what luck!" growled Jimmy Silver.

And Tommy Dodd snorted.

"The new boy," pursued Mr. Bootles, "is named Van Ryn. He comes from a great Colony—South Africa. I wish you to meet him, Townsend and Topham, and conduct him to Rookwood, and treat him with great civility. He will be quite a stranger to our ways, and I am sure I can depend upon you to refrain from any absurd jokes, such as are sometimes, I believe, practised on new boys, and to give him a very good impression of Rookwood manners."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Topham.

"You can rely on us, sir," said Townsend; "we shall be delighted!"

"Very good! You will be excused from lessons for the purpose," said Mr. Bootles.

"Thank you, sir!"

"Van Ryn arrives, I understand, by the three o'clock train at Coombe. If he should be later, however, you will wait for him."

"Certainly, sir!"

"You will take him to my study when you return. You may go!"

And Tommy and Toppo left the Form-room in great delight. Then the afternoon lessons began for the rest of the Fourth. Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd gave one another quite a dispirited look. It was really hard luck.

And, as a matter of fact, Mr. Bootles would have done better to choose Tommy Dodd or Jimmy for that mission.

It was quite possible that those cheery youths would have "pulled" the new fellow's leg in a humorous way, but they could have been depended on to treat him well. That was not quite the case with Townsend and Topham. But Mr. Bootles did not know Towny and Toppo quite so well as their Form-fellows did.

Townsend and Topham grinned at one another as they took their straw hats and went out into the quadrangle.

"What a little bit of luck!" grinned Townsend. "No blessed lessons this afternoon! Mornington would have liked to come, too. He tried to catch Bootles' eye."

"Never mind, Morny," said Topham. "We're off! Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd dished one another. Ha, ha! And we've bagged the holiday!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two nuts of the Fourth started down Coombe Lane in great spirits.

"We can have a bit of a run this afternoon," remarked Townsend. "I suppose we'd better drop in at the station, and just speak to the new cad."

"Oh, yes! Bootles will want to know."

"I wonder what he's like," remarked Townsend. "He's got a Dutch name, and he comes from South Africa. Must be a Boer."

"Some rough-and-ready rotter, I expect," said Topham, with a sniff.

"If Bootles thinks we're goin' to pal with him, Bootles is jolly well mistaken! But he comes in useful to get us off lessons. Might rag him a bit to pass the time."

"H'm! Some big, brawny chap, I expect, with a fist like a leg of mutton," said Townsend doubtfully.

"Well, we're two to one."

"Yaas, that's so. We'll rag him," agreed Townsend.

If Mr. Bootles could have heard that agreeable conversation he might have regretted that he had not sent Jimmy Silver or Tommy Dodd, in spite of the fustical proclivities of those young gentlemen.

Towny or Toppo were not at all fustical in their tastes, it was true. But they were quite ready to rag a new-comer who did not know the ropes, when it was quite safe for them to do so.

They arrived at the station in very good time, and improved the shining

hour by extracting packets of cigarettes from an automatic machine. That was one of Towny's and Toppo's pleasant little ways.

Then the train came in.

"Look out for some beefy boulder in a slouch hat," grinned Townsend. "And number eleven boots," chortled Topham.

But there was no one in a slouch hat and number eleven boots among the passengers who alighted from the train.

There was only one boy among the passengers, and he was in Etons and a silk hat.

Evidently this was the new boy. Townsend and Topham glanced at him in surprise.

He was a lad of their own age, and somewhat slimly built, though his limbs were solid and strong. His face was darkly sunburnt, and he had thick, dark, curly hair. His eyes were a deep blue, and very keen and strong in their glance. The expression on his face was sunny and good-tempered.

Towny and Toppo had had a vague idea that all Boers were big-boned, heavy, and lumbering. But the new-comer, as he stepped from the train, looked as lithe and as active as an antelope.

He glanced about the platform, and his eyes fell on the two Rookwood juniors.

Mr. Bootles had told the nuts of the Fourth to treat the new-comer with great civility, in order to give a good impression of Rookwood manners. But Towny and Toppo had their own ideas about carrying out those instructions.

"That's the cad," said Townsend, loud enough for the new boy to hear.

"Yaas, that's the rotter," said Topham.

The new-comer flushed under the tan on his cheeks, and looked at them harder.

"A dashed Boer!" said Townsend. "Nearly as black as a nigger, too. I dare say he is a bit of a nigger."

"Looks like it, by gad!" agreed Topham.

"I wonder whether he speaks English," pursued Townsend calmly.

"I suppose he talks some kind of broken lingo."

"Like a Hun," agreed Topham.

"Well, he is a kind of Hun."

"Yaas, that is so."

Every word of those cheery remarks was perfectly audible to the new boy. The nuts grinned as they saw his handsome face flush with anger. Having made themselves agreeable to this extent, Townsend and Topham walked towards the new boy.

"New kid for Rookwood—what?" yawned Townsend.

"Van Tromp, or Van Bomp, or something—what?" asked Topham.

Van Ryn looked at them without replying.

He seemed puzzled what to make of them.

"We've come here to meet you," explained Topham. "Our Form-master sent us. As you probably don't speak English, you want lookin' after."

The new boy grinned.

His keen, clear eyes had taken the measure of Townsend and Topham. There was a peculiar glimmer in his eyes as he nodded.

"Me speak some little Engleesh," he said.

Townsend and Topham chuckled.

They had not really supposed that the new boy could not speak English; that was only their exquisite nutty humour. But the supposition seemed to be well founded, after all.

"Excuse me!" gasped Townsend.

"What did you say?"

"Me speak some English."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Vat for you laff?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Me soon learn speak him at Rookwood, ain't it?" pursued the new boy.

"Me speak Dutch first-chop."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Topham.

"That new merchant will make 'em yell at Rookwood! Ha, ha!"

"No see why Mynheer laff," said the new boy, looking puzzled.

"Mynheer!" shrieked Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mynheer! Oh, crumbs!"

"Mynheer! That's the Dutch way of saying 'Mein Herr!' What language do you talk when you're at home, kid? Dutch or Hottentot?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Your box, sir?" said the porter.

"Send it to Rookwood," said Townsend. "This chap is goin' to walk with us!"

Van Ryn slipped a shilling into the old porter's hand, picked up a small bag, and followed the nuts of the Fourth from the station.

The 3rd Chapter. Catching a Tartar.

Townsend and Topham were in hilarious spirits. A new fellow who

came to Rookwood talking broken English was a new experience. Van Ryn was, as Townsend remarked, a real coughdrop.

"You show me way to Rookwood, ain't it?" asked the new boy, as the nuts paused outside the station.

"Not just yet," said Townsend.

"You see, we've been let off lessons to fetch you. If we go straight back we shall have to go into the Form-room again. We're goin' to let Bootles think you came by a later train!"

"Who Pootles?"

"Pootles!" yelled Topham. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mr. Bootles is our Form-master," chuckled Townsend. "Now we're goin' round the town a bit. You wait here!"

"Vy me wait?"

"Because we don't want to be bothered all the afternoon by an African savage," said Townsend politely.

"We're goin' round the town. We'll come back for you and take you to the school in a couple of hours. See?"

"No want to wait."

"It isn't a question of what you want, but of what we want. And if Bootles asks you what train you came by, tell him the half-past four!"

"Me come by tree o'clock train."

"Yaas, I know you did, you fat-head! But if Bootles knows that he'll expect us to get back before lessons are over. You'll tell him you came by the half-past four, and then if we get back to Rookwood by five it will be all serene!"

The new boy's eyes gleamed for a moment.

"No tell lies," he said.

"You cheeky cannibal!" growled Townsend. "You'll do as you're told!"

"No tell lies to Pootles."

"I'll Pootles you if I have any of your cheek!" said Townsend angrily. "Now you stay here, and we'll come back for you at half-past four. If you don't do as you're told, you'll get a hidin', you silly Hottentot! Savvy?"

Townsend and Topham turned away. It was a glorious opportunity for sneaking into the Bird-in-Hand by the back way, and enjoying the society of their sporting friends there. The nuts of the Fourth did not mean to miss that opportunity.

But as they started off in one direction the new boy started off in another. He did not apparently want to spend an hour and a half waiting outside the village station.

Townsend swung round.

"Come back, you Kaffir!" he shouted.

Van Ryn looked round.

"Me go to Rookwood," he said.

"Haven't I told you you're to stay here?"

"You goes and eats coke, isn't it?"

"Well, my hat! You cheeky rat—"

"Look here," said Topham. "We're goin' to leave you here, and if you don't wait for us you'll get a hidin'!"

"Rats!"

"Do you want the hidin' first?" growled Townsend.

The new boy grinned.

"No wait," he said.

"Then we'll jolly well give you a lesson to start with! Collar him, Toppo, and bump the cheeky cad!"

Townsend and Topham were exasperated.

The afternoon off would be quite spoiled if they had to carry out Mr. Bootles' instructions. They did not see why the new boy could not wait at the station till they condescended to return for him. Apparently the new boy did.

Townsend and his chum grasped Van Ryn, with threatening looks.

"Now, are you goin' to do as you're told, or are you goin' to have a jolly good bumpin'?" demanded Townsend.

"You take dem hands off me!"

"Yes or no, you Hottentot?"

"No!"

"Bump him!" growled Townsend.

They dragged at the new boy. Van Ryn promptly returned grasp for grasp, and, to their surprise, Towny and Toppo were dragged together, and their heads came in contact with a resounding crack.

Crack!

"Oh, by gad!"

"Yow-oh!"

Then Towny and Toppo sat down suddenly on the pavement.

The new boy grinned down at them good-humouredly.

"I tinks tat you not pump me," he remarked.

"Yow-ow-ow! You beastly Boer!"

"Yooop! You rotten Dutchman! Oh dear!"

"You gets up and haves some more, isn't it?" grinned Van Ryn.

Townsend and Topham got up, but they did not want any more. They regarded the new boy with mingled rage and alarm, but they showed no desire to come to close quarters again.

"What a rotten strong beast!" growled Topham.

"You puts up der hands, isn't it?" said Van Ryn, advancing on them.

"Keep off, you savage!" yelled Townsend, in alarm.

"Hands off, you Dutch rotter!"

The nuts of the Fourth backed away in alarm.

"No want to scrap, Mynheer?"

"No, you beast!"

"Keep your distance, you rotter! I want nothin' to do with you!"

groaned Topham, rubbing his head.

"Den you takes me to Rookwood, I tink."

"You rotter! We're not goin' back to Rookwood yet. Look here, you can come with us if you like," said Townsend. "You—you needn't wait at the station if you don't want to. We let you off that."

"Thank you!" grinned Van Ryn. "Thank you for nothin', mynheer!"

"Well, come on!" growled Townsend ungraciously. "We're goin' to have rather a good time, and you can come."

"But Pootles expect us."

"Blow Bootles! You can tell him you came by the four-thirty."

"No tell lies!"

"Jolly particular for an African savage, ain't we?" sneered Townsend.

"Well, you can jolly well tell Bootles what you like, but we're not goin' back yet. You can come with us if you like. Do you smoke?"

"Nein, nein!"

"Oh, what a washy waster!" snorted Townsend. "Do you know how to play nap?"

"Nein."

"Then we'll teach you. You'll have to keep it dark, of course. Come on!"

"No come."

"Then go and eat coke! Come on, Towny; we'll chance it."

Van Ryn stepped forward and grasped Townsend's arm with one hand and Topham's with the other. They glared at him.

"Let go, you cad! What do you want?" howled Topham.

"No know way to school. You come and show."

"Catch us!"

"Me caught you," said Van Ryn cheerfully.

"Leggo!"

"You gum wiz me, ain't it?"

"Will you let go?" said Townsend sulphurously. "We'll point out the way."

"No good enough. You tell lies."

"Why, you cheeky Hottentot—"

"Gum on!" said Van Ryn cheerfully.

He had linked his arms with those of the two nuts, and, wriggle as they would, Townsend and Topham could not unlink them.

They exchanged furious looks across the Boer.

They were two to one, and Van Ryn was no bigger than either of them. But they were aware that he was a decidedly tough customer—their heads were still ringing from the late concussion. Towny and Toppo sincerely repented by this time that they had started ragging the junior from South Africa. They had caught a Tartar, as they realised too late.

"Look here, we're not comin'!" said Topham feebly.

"I tink you gum."

"Will you let us go?" shrieked Townsend.

"I tink not."

"You rotten Dutchman! Yow-ow-ow! Don't twist my arm like that, you ruffian!" yelled Townsend.

"You gum?"

There was no help for it. Towny and Toppo had to "gum," as the new junior expressed it.

With feelings that were too deep for mere words, the nuts of the Fourth started for Rookwood, their arms linked in those of the new boy.

Van Ryn walked along cheerfully between them, heedless of their black looks and mutterings of vengeance.

And he did not let go their arms till they arrived at the school and walked in at the gates of Rookwood.

The 4th Chapter! Not a Hun!

feeling a deep and bitter animosity towards the new boy. Mr. Bootles glanced at them as they came sullenly in. They had no choice but to turn up in the Form-room, as they had come back to Rookwood.

"You have met the new junior?" asked Mr. Bootles.

"Yes, sir. Left him in your study."

"Very good!"

Townsend and Topham went to their places. Some of the juniors looked at them anxiously. It was trouble.

"What's the giddy Colonial like?" whispered Higgs to Townsend as the latter sat down.

"A rotten beast!" growled Townsend.

"Been scrapping?"

"Ye-es. He's a rotten Hun."

"And speaks broken English like a German pedlar!" grunted Topham. "A rotten, rank outsider!"

"I believe he's a rotten German!" muttered Townsend. "He talks like one!"

"If he's a Hun, we'll jolly soon make Rookwood too hot to hold him," said Higgs. "I'll see that merchant after lessons and talk to him. He's got a Dutch name."

"Might be a Hun, all the same. He wouldn't come here with a German name, of course."

"Very likely," said Higgs.

Townsend knew very well that the South African junior was not a German, but it was his idea to put the bully of the Fourth on Van Ryn's track. There was only one fellow in the Fourth who could stand up to Higgs, and that was Jimmy Silver. If Higgs started on Van Ryn, the new boy was likely to suffer severely for handling Towny and Toppy in Coombe.

"It's up to you, Higgy," whispered Topham encouragingly. "You show the cad what we think of Germans here."

"What-ho!" said Higgs.

"We had a German here once before, and Jimmy Silver took him under his wing," said Townsend. "That was before you came. But you're not afraid of Silver. Of course, he will be down on you if you call the new kid over the coals."

Alfred Higgs flushed. The mere suggestion of anybody opposing him was enough to make the bully of the Fourth angry and determined.

"You leave him to me!" he said. "I'll put him through it!"

Mr. Bootles glanced round, frowning.

"Someone is talking in class!" he said. That fact had just dawned upon Mr. Bootles.

The discussion ceased, but Towny and Toppy exchanged glances of satisfaction. They felt assured of vengeance now.

When the Fourth Form was dismissed seven unfortunate juniors had to remain behind. The Fistical Four and the three Tommies were detained until half-past five.

The rest of the Fourth streamed out. Mr. Bootles went at once to his study, where the new boy was waiting for him to be at leisure.

Several fellows gathered round Townsend and Topham to ask them how they had got on with the South African. Nobody at Rookwood had seen the new boy yet. The nuts of the Fourth did not lose the opportunity of instilling prejudice into the juniors' minds against the new fellow. From their description of him, Van Ryn might have been a hooligan of the deepest dye. And Townsend was convinced—or professed to be—that he was in reality a Hun.

"An ugly, prize-fighter beast!" said Towny. "Talks broken-English, German through and through—spy, very likely!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Dick Oswald. "Bootles said he was a Colonial."

"Wait till you hear him talk, then!"

"Wait till he comes out of Bootles' study," said Higgs. "I'll put him through it. I'll make him answer up!"

"Better let him alone," said Oswald.

"Oh, you go and eat coke!"

Quite a number of juniors gathered in the passage for Van Ryn to appear. Higgs declared that he was to be taken into the Common-room, and there put through his paces. And no one present cared to gainsay the heavy-handed bully of the Fourth.

Mr. Bootles' door opened at last, and the new boy appeared. Mr. Bootles signed to Tubby Muffin.

"Muffin, Van Ryn will share your study—No. 3. Kindly take him there. And show Van Ryn any little attentions you can, Muffin."

"Yee, sir," said Tubby Muffin.

Mr. Bootles retired into his study and closed the door. Tubby Muffin looked the new junior over critically, and as he looked pretty prosperous, Tubby decided to be friendly. A study-mate with ready money was just what Tubby wanted, and Tubby would have taken the Kaiser himself as a study-mate, with plenty of cash attached.

"Come in, kid!" said Tubby politely.

But before Tubby could proceed any further with his friendly attentions, Higgs shouldered him out of the way, and Tubby Muffin collapsed on the floor with a yelp.

Higgs strode up to the new boy with his most bullying expression on his face.

"So you're the Hun?" he exclaimed.

Van Ryn stepped back a pace.

"Listen to his English!" jeered Topham. "You'll soon see whether he's a Hun or not!"

Van Ryn grinned.

"Me not Hun!" he said. "Me Dutch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Higgs.

"What English! Haven't you ever been to school?"

"Ja, ja!"

"Ja, ja!" mimicked Higgs. "A Hun, right enough. Bring him into the Common-room!"

The juniors gathered round Van Ryn, and he was hustled down the

Van Ryn laughed.

"Of course I can talk English!" he exclaimed. "I was brought up to speak both Dutch and English at home. Those two fellows met me at the station, and before even speaking to me, said that I should speak broken English. So I spoke broken English to pull their silly legs."

"Oh, by gad!" ejaculated Townsend.

"You spoofin' cad!" exclaimed Topham savagely.

There was a loud laugh. Townsend and Topham, in their description of the new boy, had laid particular stress on the German accent and the broken English. It was one of the chief counts in their indictment against the new fellow. And it was not agreeable to discover that the South African had been "pulling their leg" all the time.

"Well, you silly gosssoons, to be taken in by a new kid!" exclaimed Flynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you were pulling my leg, too, just now in the passage?" exclaimed Higgs.

Van Ryn nodded.

"Yes. As you seemed the same kind of silly ass, I pulled your silly leg in the same way," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's one for you, Higgy!" chuckled Jones minor.

Higgs flushed with rage. He was

came into the Common-room, followed by his chums.

The 5th Chapter.

A Fight to a Finish.

Higgs scowled at Jimmy Silver. Jimmy's detention had given him a chance of bullying without being called to account; but Mr. Bootles had been occupied so long with the new boy, that Jimmy's detention was over before the bully of the Fourth could carry out his amiable intentions. "Don't shove your oar in here, Silver," growled Higgs. "This cheeky young bouncer is going to give an account of himself."

"Right-ho," said Jimmy. "We'll see fair play."

"You'll mind your own business," roared Higgs.

"This is my business," said Jimmy calmly. "Trust your Uncle James to keep an eye on you, Alfred, my boy."

Higgs snorted.

Jimmy Silver seated himself on the corner of the big table, and looked on. Jimmy rather liked Van Ryn's looks; but even if he had been as bad as Towny's description of him, Jimmy would have seen fair play. Jimmy looked on that as his duty as captain of the Fourth.

"Now, young shaver," growled Higgs. "What's your name?"

"Richard Van Ryn."

"Oh! You're a beastly Boer; but

"Sure, it's a Daniel come to judgment," said Flynn. "It's a broth av a bhoys ye are."

"Well, we've only got your word for all that," sneered Higgs. "I shouldn't wonder if your precious father was a rebel at this minute."

Smack!

Higgs staggered back with a roar of pain and amazement. Van Ryn's open hand smote him fairly across the face.

"That is my answer to that," said the Africander coolly. "You can have some more if you want it."

"Oh, by gad!" ejaculated Townsend. The astute Towny had planned to "set" the bully of the Fourth on Van Ryn. But the South African seemed quite willing to meet the truculent Alfred half way, or more than half way.

Higgs was too astonished to do anything but gasp for a moment or two. Then he rushed at Van Ryn like a bull.

Jimmy Silver jumped between, and Higgs staggered back from a powerful shove.

"Not so fast," said Jimmy.

"Get aside!" bellowed Higgs.

Jimmy shook his head.

"Not a bit of it," he said coolly. "You asked for that, Higgs, and you've got it, and you can put it in your pipe and smoke it. You're not going to handle a kid half your size while your Uncle Jimmy is around."

"Do you think I'm going to let him punch my face?" roared Higgs.

Jimmy nodded.

"Yes, if you insult his father," he said. "If you say anything of the kind again, I'll punch your face myself, and hard."

"Get aside!"

"Bow-wow."

Van Ryn dropped his hand on Jimmy's shoulder.

"Thank you, very much," he said quietly, "but you need not protect me. I can stand up for myself."

"You can't!" said Jimmy doubtfully. "That rotter is head and shoulders too big for you."

Van Ryn smiled.

"Even if I cannot, I sha'n't allow anybody to protect me," he said. "Let him come on, and we will see."

Jimmy Silver stepped aside.

"Well, you can have your own way, of course," he said. "You can go ahead, Higgs. Sing out when you've had enough, Van Ryn."

"No good his singing out," said Higgs savagely. "I'm going to hammer him black and blue, and make him beg pardon on his knees."

"You're going to do nothing of the sort," said Jimmy Silver contemptuously. "As soon as Van Ryn's had enough, you're going to leave him alone, or you'll get such a ragging you'll remember it the rest of the term."

"Better have some gloves on," said Lovell uneasily.

"I won't have any gloves," roared Higgs. "Let the cad stand up to me, and I'll smash him."

"Gloves or not, as you choose," said Van Ryn, shrugging his broad shoulders. "It is all one to me."

"Take your jacket off, at any rate," said Lovell. And he helped the new junior off with his jacket.

Van Ryn rolled back his sleeves. It could be seen that his arms were strong and well developed. It occurred to Jimmy that he was not so bad a match for Higgs after all.

But Higgs had no doubts.

He came on like a bull, with his big fists thrashing out.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked on anxiously. They could not interfere in a fair fight; but they had a natural repugnance to seeing the Colonial knocked about on his first day at Rookwood.

But their fears were soon relieved. Higgs' heavy rush did not move the young Boer. He stood like a column of stone, immovable. His hands were up, and Higgs came to a stop against them. His weight was almost twice that of the South African, yet it had no effect upon the boy from Cape Colony. Van Ryn's fists lashed out like lightning.

Crash!

The bully went over backwards.

"Right on the wicket!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "Bravo, young 'un!"

Higgs sat up dazedly.

His nose was streaming with crimson, and he was feeling dizzy.

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With feelings that were too deep for words, the nuts of the Fourth started for Rookwood, their arms linked in those of the new boy. Van Ryn walked along cheerfully between them, heedless of their black looks and mutterings of vengeance.

passage into the junior Common-room—a quarter generally safe from masters and prefects.

The new boy seemed inclined to resist at first, but he decided to go quietly. The juniors, Classical and Modern, streamed into the Common-room after him.

"Shut the door!" commanded Higgs.

Townsend closed the door, grinning. The new boy was going to pay the piper now. Towny and Toppy rejoiced.

"Now you're going to answer up," said Higgs.

Van Ryn looked at him quietly.

"My idea," pursued Higgs, "is that you're a rotten Hun, sneaking in here as a Dutchman!"

"Nein, nein!"

"Nein, nein!" roared Higgs. "Ha, ha, ha! That's German!"

"May be Dutch, too," said Oswald.

"Oh, rats! He's a German!" said Higgs positively. "Anyway, a Boer is the next thing to a German."

"You lie!" said the new boy directly.

"What?"

"You are a liar!" said Van Ryn calmly.

The juniors stared at him. There was no trace of his weird accent in his voice now. Townsend and Topham could scarcely believe their ears.

"Hallo! You can talk English when you loike, you gosssoon!" exclaimed Flynn.

far too important a person to have his leg pulled—in his own estimation, at least.

Van Ryn was showing no sign of uneasiness, though the burly bully of the Fourth fairly towered over him.

Higgs' hands were clenched and his eyes were gleaming.

"You cheeky cad—" he began.

"Same to you!" said Van Ryn cheerily.

"You've called me a liar!"

"So you are a liar, if you say that I am anything like a German!" said Van Ryn coolly.

"Good for you," said Flynn, with a chuckle. "Let the kid alone, He's jolly well not such a Hun as you are."

"I'll make mincemeat of him," roared Higgs. "Do you think I'm going to let a blessed Boer cheek me?"

"Well, you have cheeked me," said Van Ryn. "One good turn deserves another, you know. I do not want to quarrel with you."

"You won't have much choice about that, if you don't mind your p's and q's," said Higgs darkly. "I'm going to ask you some questions, and if you don't satisfy me, you'll be put through it."

"I do not mind answering questions. But about being put through it, I should have something to say about that."

"And so should I," said a cheery voice at the door. And Jimmy Silver

you've got an English front name!" sneered Higgs.

"I am a Boer," said the new junior quietly. "Not beastly, that I know of. I have an English name because I am partly English."

"Where do you come from?"

"Cape Colony."

"And which side are your people on?" demanded Higgs. "Backing up the Huns, I've no doubt."

Van Ryn flushed.

"You are a cad to suggest that," he said. "My people fought against England in the other war. But we are one people now."

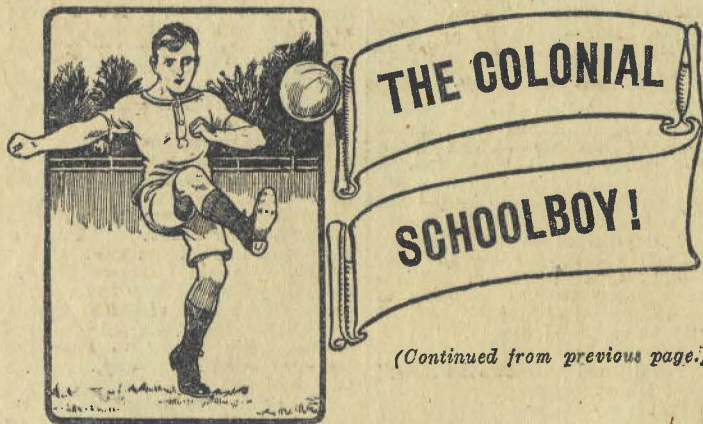
"Oh, they did, did they?" said Higgs.

"Certainly. My father was a Transvaaler, and he was with De Wet to the very last. Naturally, he fought for his own country."

"Of course he did," agreed Jimmy Silver. "We shouldn't think much of him if he hadn't."

"Hear, hear!" said Lovell.

"But now we are united, all true Boers are standing by England," said Van Ryn. "We have nothing to thank the Germans for. They promised us help in the South African War, and they were too cowardly to keep their word. We should not be likely to trust them again, even if we wanted to break off from the British Empire. But we do not want to. We are free under the British flag, and all we ever asked for was freedom."



(Continued from previous page.)

from the shock. He blinked stupidly at Van Ryn.

"Oh, crumbs!" he ejaculated. Townsend helped him to his feet. "You're not done yet," he said. "Go for him! You can lick him, Higgs!"

"Of course I can," gasped Higgs, "and I'm going to. Don't be a silly idiot, or I'll lick you, too." Higgs stood panting for breath for some moments. The whole crowd of juniors were grinning. It struck them as comic to see the bully of the Fourth catch a Tartar in this unexpected manner.

But Higgs was not finished yet. He had plenty of bulldog pluck, and the mere thought of being knocked out by a new boy made him furious. He came on again with a savage rush.

"Go it, Dutchy!" "Give him another on the boko." "Bravo!"

Van Ryn was holding his own steadily, without giving an inch of ground. But he did not get a chance of another knock-down blow.

The handsome, sun-tanned face was getting marked now.

But the South African took his punishment quietly; and all the time his fists were hammering upon Higgs of the Fourth.

The juniors looked on almost breathlessly.

It was evident that there was more in Dick Van Ryn than met the eye, and that the bully of the Fourth had once more met his match.

There were no rounds in the fight, and it was a contest of endurance; and Higgs, though as he was, was the first to weaken.

His savage attack slackened off, and he gave ground, the South African following him up grimly, hitting hard.

Higgs went down at last, with a heavy bump.

"Somebody'd better count," said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver took out his watch. He counted.

Higgs sat up. But he could not get on his feet. He sat and panted, blinking with half-closed eyes. Van Ryn waited quietly.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, out!"

Higgs was still sitting on the floor.

He had been counted out, and there was a ringing cheer in the Common-room for the victor.

The 6th Chapter.

Tubby Muffin is Hospitable.

Van Ryn leaned on the edge of the table, breathing deeply.

The fight had told on him.

And the juniors remembered that he had had a long journey that day.

Yet he had stood up to the bully of the Fourth, and licked him in a fair fight. Jimmy Silver clapped him on the shoulder.

The Fistical Four marched Van Ryn

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out of the Common-room in their midst. Higgs followed them slowly. Townsend and Topham did not offer to lend him a hand. The bully of the Fourth had been licked, and he was no further use to the nuts of the Fourth. Towny and Toppy were disgusted, in fact.

"Silly ass, to get licked by that blessed Boer!" growled Townsend. "I suppose the beast will be ridin' rough-shod over us now."

Topham rubbed the bump on his head.

"He jolly well won't," he muttered. "Higgs can't tackle him, but there's more ways than one of killing a cat. The beastly savage isn't goin' to handle us as he likes. If the rotter can't be licked, he can be ragged."

Townsend's eyes glared.

"Good egg! Half a dozen of us."

"That's the idea! We'll put him through it. And after that scrap he won't be able to put up much of a fight, either."

"Let's go and talk to the chaps," said Townsend.

And the nuts of the Fourth gathered in war council in No. 4 Study, and Towny and Toppy, and Peele and Mornington and Gower put their heads together, with the idea of making matters exceedingly warm for the junior from South Africa.

Meanwhile, Dick Van Ryn was bathing his damaged face in a bathroom. Jimmy Silver & Co. lent him what aid they could. Van Ryn looked the better for it, but there was a dark shade about one of his eyes, and his nose looked red and bulbous, and there were bruises on his face. His good looks had been sadly marred for the present. He had a good many aches and pains, too; but he bore them quietly.

Tubby Muffin joined him when he had finished.

"You haven't seen the study yet," he said. "We're going to have tea there. I suppose you're hungry—what?"

Van Ryn looked at the podgy junior with a good-humoured smile. Tubby was not exactly the study-mate he would have chosen, but he was prepared to be friendly.

"We shall have the study to ourselves," went on Tubby. "There were two chaps with me, but they've changed out. They said the grub went too fast with me there. I hope you're not that kind of mean beast, Van Ryn?"

"I hope not," said Van Ryn, laughing.

"Then we shall get on," said Tubby, with much satisfaction. "Come along to the study. We're going to have a topping spread."

"I say, Van Ryn's coming to tea in the end study," said Jimmy Silver.

Muffin shook his head.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, you're not going to collar my study-mate. I'm standing him a spread on his first day here."

"Oh, all serene!" said Jimmy.

"You'll give us a look in another time, Van Ryn."

"Thank you," said the new junior. And he followed Tubby Muffin.

They met Higgs in the passage. Higgs had been repairing damages, but he still looked decidedly damaged. The two late opponents grinned at one another rather ruefully as they passed. Higgs of the Fourth did not seem to bear malice for his defeat.

He could respect a fellow who could knock him out as Van Ryn had done.

"How's your eye?" he asked.

"Horrid. How's your nose?"

"Rotten!"

"Come on, Dutchy," said Tubby Muffin. "Here's the study. Ripping, ain't it? You sit down in the arm-chair while I get the things in for tea."

They were going to have rather a spread.

"You're awfully good," said Van Ryn.

"Not at all! Backing up the giddy Empire, you know," said Tubby affably.

"I'm jolly glad to have a Colonial in my study. Look what the Boers are doing in East Africa now—"

"East Africa," said Van Ryn, laughing.

"Yes, I mean East Africa—I knew it was East somewhere. You sit down and take a rest, and leave it to me."

Van Ryn was glad to rest.

Tubby bustled out of the room, and scudded along to the end study, where the Fistical Four were getting tea.

"Ain't you fellows coming?" asked Tubby.

"Eh? Where?"

"I'm standing a spread to the new chap in my study. As you're friendly with him, I thought you'd like to come."

"Hallo! Are you growing hospitable in your old age?" asked Lovell, in surprise. "First time I've heard of you standing a spread, Tubby."

"Ahem! You see—"

"We'll come," said Jimmy—"we'll come, if it's only to celebrate the fact that you're standing a spread, Tubby."

"Come on," said Tubby.

The Fistical Four followed him. It was rather a surprise for Tubby to be standing anything, as he was generally hard up, and what cash he ever had generally went at once to the tuckshop.

In the passage, Tubby tugged at Jimmy Silver's sleeve, and stopped him as the Co. went into No. 5.

"Hold on a minute, Silver," whispered Tubby mysteriously.

"Well, what's the row?"

"I want to do the thing rather decently, you know, as I've got guests," said Tubby, blinking at him.

"It's rather a big occasion, isn't it?" Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Awfully important," he agreed.

"What about it?"

"Well, can you—ahem—"

"Can I what?"

"C-c-can you lend me half-a-quid?"

Jimmy stared.

"The fact is, I'm run right out of tin," said Tubby confidentially. "Merely temporary, of course; but it comes rather awkward just at this moment."

"Why, you spoofing villain!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"You've asked five chaps to tea, and you've nothing to give them. Why couldn't you let Van Ryn come with us?"

"Ahem! You see—"

"I see that you're a spoofing porker!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Here's five bob, you fat boulder! I suppose we may as well pay for our tea in your study as in ours. It comes to the same thing."

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, if you put it like that—"

"Well, I do put it like that," growled Jimmy.

"All serene! I'll cut off to the tuckshop," said Tubby cheerfully.

"I don't care how you put it—anything to oblige."

And Tubby cut off, and Jimmy, grinning in spite of himself, followed his chums into the study.

Tubby Muffin returned laden with good things, and in great spirits. He was standing a hospitable spread, and he was booked for the lion's share of it, and it did not cost him anything, so he had reason to be pleased.

But it was a very pleasant tea in No. 5 Study, and by the time the Fistical Four left, they were on excellent terms with the new boy. Jimmy Silver & Co. were of opinion that Van Ryn was one of the best—an opinion in which most of the Classical Fourth soon came to concur.

The 7th Chapter.

Pals!

"There he comes!"

It was a whisper in the darkness, as Dick Van Ryn came out of his study late in the evening.

The gas had been turned out in the passage, and all was dark.

Van Ryn heard the whisper, and stopped, peering about him.

It was close on bed-time, and most of the fellows had finished their prep, and gone down to the Common-room. A rush of feet followed the whisper.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Van Ryn.

"What—"

He had no time for more.

Hands seized him on all sides in the darkness, and he was brought to the floor with a heavy bump.

He realised that it was a ragging, and he struggled fiercely.

But he was down, and fellows he could not see were swarming over him. There were at least four or five, and he had no chance.

"You rotters!" panted Van Ryn.

"Let me up—oh!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Tubby Muffin blinked out of the study.

"Help!" gasped Van Ryn.

But the fat Classical was not a fighting-man. He only blinked. The light from the study glimmered on the struggling mass on the passage floor. Van Ryn was in the hands of Townsend & Co., and they were ragging him mercilessly.

There was a heavy tread further down the passage, and Higgs of the Fourth came along.

The Fourth-Form bully stopped, to stare at the peculiar scene.

"Hallo!" he ejaculated. "What the thunder—"

"Lend a hand, Higgs!" panted Townsend. "We're putting the cad through it!"

"Pile in, Higgs!" shouted Mornington. "Come and give him one while you've got the chance!"

Higgs piled in.

But his "piling in" came in quite an unexpected manner to the merry raggers.

He rushed at them, hitting out right and left. Townsend & Co. had naturally expected that the bully of the Fourth would be glad to lend a hand, in revenge for his defeat at the hands of the South African junior. But that was not in Higgs' mind. It was upon Townsend & Co. that his terrific punches fell.

"Let him alone!" roared Higgs. "I'll mop up the lot of you! Take that! That's for you, Morny, you cad! Five to one, by gum! That's for you, Peele! You can take that, Gower! And that—and that—"

Higgs was hitting out like a steam-hammer.

The yelling raggers rolled right and left from his terrific drives, amid a chorus of howls and groans.

Townsend and Topham were floored, Mornington rolled across them, Peele was hurled headlong along the passage; and Gower fairly fled, barely dodging Higgs' heavy fist.

Higgs, like Cæsar of old, came and saw and conquered.

In about a minute, the nuts were strewn about the passage, and Higgs was glaring at them, ready to knock them down again as soon as they rose. But they did not rise; they sprawled and blinked at Higgs in anguish and fury.

Higgs gave a snort of contempt, and stooped down to help Van Ryn to his feet.

The South African junior staggered up, considerably dazed, and more surprised than hurt. The rescue astonished him more than it did the nuts of the Fourth.

"Have they hurt you?" asked Higgs.

"Ye-es—a bit!" gasped Van Ryn.

"Help me kick 'em along the passage."

"Good!"

There were furious yells from Townsend & Co. as two pairs of boots started on them. The unhappy nuts—no longer dreaming of ragging anybody—scurried out of the way, and dodged, and fled. They did not stop till they were at the bottom of the stairs.

"There!" panted Higgs. "That's a lesson for the cads! They won't rag you again in a hurry, young 'un."

"I think not," said Van Ryn, laughing. He looked curiously at Higgs.

"It's jolly good of you to come and help me like that, after—"

"After our scrap?" said Higgs.

"What rot! I like a chap who can stand up for himself. You can."

"I'm much obliged."

"Oh, rot! Of course, you didn't exactly lick me in that scrap. If I'd been—well, more ready for you, it would have gone a bit differently."

"Any old thing," said Van Ryn, smiling.

"Still, you put up a good fight, and I had my hands full," conceded Higgs good-temperedly. "The fact is, I rather like you, young 'un, and if you want a pal in the Fourth, you needn't look any further for one. I can't say fairer than that."

"Done!" said Van Ryn at once.

THE END.

The Classical Fourth hardly knew what to make of it. The next day Higgs changed into No. 5 Study; No. 4 being quite pleased to get rid of him, as a matter of fact. But he was very welcome in No. 5. Jimmy Silver & Co. could not help thinking that Dick Van Ryn had a queer taste in pals. But they agreed that a fellow who could take a licking as Higgs had taken his, could not be a bad fellow in the main, and the bully of the Fourth rose in their estimation. It was probable that difficulties would arise in No. 5 Study; but for the present all was peace and harmony in the quarters of the Colonial Schoolboy.

THE END.

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