

GREAT BARRING-OUT STORY! See Below!

The BOYS' FRIEND Id.

"FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOLDAYS!" "THE BOYS OF THE 'BOMBAY CASTLE'!" "TALES OF THE DORMITORY!"

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending February 2nd, 1918.

REBELLION AT ROOKWOOD!

A MAGNIFICENT NEW LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Before the Storm.

"Morny's wanted!" Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, looked into Study No. 4 as he made that announcement.

Mornington and Erroll were in their study.

Erroll was reading aloud, his blind study-mate moving restlessly in the armchair as he listened absently to Erroll's low, clear voice.

Mornington, once the dandy of the Fourth, had little taste for books.

But the misfortune that had fallen upon him had deprived him of nearly all his usual occupations at a blow.

He was glad to have someone to read to him. But his mind wandered. He was thinking of the football-field, of the river, of the outdoor sports from which he was now hopelessly barred.

Erroll laid down his book and looked round as Jimmy Silver spoke. Morny looked round, too, though he could not see.

The discontented, rebellious expression vanished at once from Mornington's handsome face.

Morny was game to the backbone, and he prided himself upon "taking his medicine" unflinchingly.

Never, if he could help it, should an eye at Rookwood detect how he suffered and chafed under his grim affliction.

"Hallo, Silver!" Morny's voice was as drawing and careless as of old. "Is that nunky below?"

"Your uncle's come, Morny. Are you going away with him?" asked Jimmy.

"Oh, yes! The old sport is goin' to take me to see some very special specialist in London, and he hopes for the best." Mornington shrugged his shoulders. "It will be a change, anyway."

"You won't find Lattrey here when you come back," said Jimmy. Mornington laughed.

"Dear old Lattrey! I owe him this! And he's got the cheek to stick at Rookwood as if nothin' had happened. Some fellows have a nerve. But are you fellows really goin' ahead with bottlin' him out?"

"We are!" answered Jimmy grimly.

"You'll have all your work cut out. The Head's bent on lettin' him stay, an' you're all booked for a floggin' to-morrow mornin' for turnin' him out of gates."

"We're up against the Head!" said Jimmy Silver. "Lattrey's going. That's quite settled. It means a barring-out."

Morny sighed.

"Shouldn't I have enjoyed it!" he said regretfully. "If a chap could only see—" He broke off abruptly.

"Never mind! I shouldn't be of much use. But I shall be glad to hear about it when I come back. Erroll, give me a hand downstairs,

will you? Last time I shall bother you for some time!"

"You will never be a bother, Morny!"

"No; I really believe so!" said Mornington. "All the same, I'm goin' to give you a rest. By gad, how I shall miss that barrin' out!"

Morny, with his hand on his chum's arm, quitted the study, and went downstairs, where Sir Rupert Stacpoole was awaiting him.

Jimmy Silver looked after him, a grim frown gathering on his brow.

Pluckily as Valentine Mornington faced the inevitable, Jimmy knew very well that under his cool, careless exterior the blow was a hard and bitter one.

And Lattrey of the Fourth, whose brutal hand had dealt the blow, was still at Rookwood, keeping in the Head's house at present, away from his indignant schoolfellows.

Jimmy's heart was heavy for Morny, his old enemy, but of late his friend, as he watched him go, his head still proudly erect, his step firm and unhesitating.

"Doesn't he stand it well?" murmured Lovell, as he joined Jimmy Silver in the passage. "He's got lots of grit!"

"Heaps of it!" said Jimmy. "I wish there was a chance for him—of getting back his sight, I mean. Poor old Morny!"

"Let's see him off!" suggested Raby.

"Yes, rather!"

The Fistical Four went downstairs. Most of the Classical Fourth gathered in the dusky quad to see Mornington off.

Other fellows gathered round, too. There were few fellows at Rookwood, in any Form, who did not feel the keenest sympathy for the sightless junior.

It was not always safe to express sympathy to Morny, who did not welcome it, but they felt it all the same.

Mornington II. of the Second Form joined Jimmy Silver & Co.

The fag's face was dark and saddened.

"Master Morny's going away," he said.

"I know, 'Erbert, old son!" said Jimmy Silver. "There's a chance that the specialist chap may be able to do something for him, kid!"

"Don't I wish he would!" said 'Erbert wistfully.

It was some time before Mornington came out. The station cab was waiting.

He came at last with his uncle, and the stiff old face of the baronet was unusually kind and gentle.

Kit Erroll was with his chum to take him to the cab.

Mornington looked round so strangely as if he could see, that it was difficult at the moment to realise that he was blind.

"'Erbert here?" he asked lightly.

"'Ere I am, Master Morny!" exclaimed 'Erbert, his little face



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brightening at this proof that his cousin had not forgotten him.

Wealthy as the one-time waif of Rookwood now was, Morny was still to him the same superb and magnificent patron as of old.

"Good-bye, kid!" said Mornington kindly. "Back in a few days, I expect. Now, pitch me in, Erroll!"

Erroll helped him into the station cab by the side of the white-whiskered old baronet.

"Good-bye, Morny!" exclaimed fifty voices at once.

Morny smiled. "Hallo! The whole family here?" he exclaimed. "Good-bye, you fellows!"

The cab drove away. It disappeared out of the school gates, and Mornington of the Fourth was gone.

Erroll turned into the house, his brow black.

He caught Jimmy Silver's eye. "Isn't it too utterly rotten?" he muttered. "A splendid chap like Morny bowled over like that, and by a sneaking cad like Lattrey!" He clenched his hands. "Oh, I could—I could—"

He paused abruptly.

"I know how you feel, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver softly.

Erroll set his lips.

"And Lattrey's still here, hiding in the Head's house!" he said bitterly. "Why hasn't Dr. Chisholm sacked him, at least, Jimmy?"

"Goodness knows!"

"I can't understand it. How can the fellow stay here—how can the Head let him? It beats me!" said Erroll. "But—but we won't stand it! We've kicked him out once, and we'll kick him out again."

"There's a flogging all round in the morning for doing it," remarked Rawson.

"That flogging won't come off!" said Jimmy Silver quietly. "Something else is going to happen before that."

"A barring-out?" said Erroll.

"Yes; to last until Lattrey goes. We can't touch him in the Head's house. But the school is going on strike till the Head turns him out."

"Good!" said Erroll, with a deep breath. "The Head's fairly asked for it, and now let him have it!"

Erroll, the quietest and most thoughtful fellow in the Fourth Form, was as deeply in earnest as the most reckless fellow at Rookwood. But he was not more determined than Jimmy Silver.

"Uncle James" of Rookwood had quite made up his mind.

"Some of the fellows will be against it, I rather think," remarked Newcome. "They're all down on Lattrey, and want him to go—even his old pals Peele and Gower. But they don't like the risk."

"Let the slackers stand out!" snorted Lovell contemptuously.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"There's no room for shirkers at Rookwood," he said. "We've got to stand together and face the music. A few could be expelled, the whole Fourth Form couldn't be. It's a case of all-in!"

"But Townsend and Topham say—"

"Towny and Topsy will line up with the rest. Pass the word round for a meeting in the Common-room—every fellow present. I'll explain the matter to them, and if they don't join up of their own accord they'll be made to join up whether they like it or not."

"Good egg!" said Lovell, his eyes gleaming. "After all, why shouldn't they take the risk with the rest? No blessed conscientious objectors need apply."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I don't think Towny & Co. are specially conscientious," he remarked. "As for their objections, they'll be squashed. The Moderns are backing us up, and we can't let a Classical fup follow where a Modern is

willing to go. Call them to the meeting, and see that they come."

"What-ho!"

From which it appeared that there was a bad time in store for the slackers of the Rookwood Fourth.

The 2nd Chapter. Getting to Business.

Prep was supposed to be going on in the junior studies.

But the Rookwood Fourth were thinking of anything but preparation.

The studies were deserted.

Only a few fellows, who regarded Jimmy Silver's plan with alarm, remained in their quarters, and evinced no desire to attend the general meeting.

The nuts of the Fourth backed up the Form-captain to some extent, but they did not want to go to the length of defying the Head.

They lacked the nerve for that extreme proceeding.

The spirit was willing, but the flesh was decidedly weak.

Townsend and Topham had joined Peele and Gower in the latter's study.

The four nuts were looking very uneasy—too uneasy even to console themselves with their customary cigarettes.

Lovell threw open the door and strode in, followed by four or five Classical juniors.

"Out you go!" he rapped out.

"We're goin' to do our prep, Lovell," said Townsend feebly.

"You're not!"

"Look here, Lovell—"

"Meeting in the Common-room. Go down!"

"I'm not goin'!" muttered Peele.

"Chuck them out!" said Lovell briefly.

Peele & Co. decided to go without being "chucked."

Several of the juniors accompanied them to make sure that they did not dodge away into secluded corners.

(Continued on the next page.)



Lovell and Raby and Newcome looked into No. 2 next, where they found Tubby Muffin.

"Get!" roared Lovell.

The fat Classical blinked at him pitifully.

"I—I say, Lovell, I can't come," he stammered. "I can't back up against the Head, you know."

"Kick him out!"

"I—I mean I'm ill!" howled Tubby. "I'm fearfully ill, Lovell! I've got pains inside!"

"I'll give you some outside," remarked Raby; and he did so—with his boot.

And Tubby Muffin forgot his inside pains, and rolled out of the study yelling.

"We've rounded them all up, I think," remarked Lovell, with a grin. "Look in the other studies, though."

The juniors scouted along the passage. Rawson was found working in his study, but he joined up quite willingly.

Then Lovell & Co. descended to the Common-room.

That apartment was crowded.

The Modern Fourth were all there, even including Clarence Cuffy, the duffer of Rookwood, and Albert Leggett, a fellow of rather shady ways, who was not of the stuff of which rebels were made.

"Take the roll-call, Lovell!" called out Jimmy Silver.

Lovell called the roll of the Fourth, in the manner of Mr. Bootles in Hall.

All the Fourth answered to their names, with the exceptions of Mornington and Lattrey.

Mornington was gone, and Lattrey, the outcast of Rookwood, was still in the headmaster's house.

"All here!" announced Lovell.

"Shut the door!"

Slam!

"Look here, you fellows," exclaimed Townsend, "we'd rather be left out of this, you know. We don't care for it."

"Not a little bit," growled Peele. "If you fellows want to play the giddy ox, go ahead, and leave us out."

"Just what I think!" exclaimed Leggett eagerly.

"Shut up!" roared Lovell.

"Yah! Funks!"

"Funks or not, I'm not backin' up against the Head!" exclaimed Topham angrily. "It's not good enough."

"Bump him!"

"Order!" called out Jimmy Silver. "Gentlemen, there is a precedent to be followed in such cases. Conscientious objectors and funks and things are allowed to apply to a Tribunal for exemption. Whether they get it or not is another matter. But they're allowed to apply."

"Rats!"

"There seem to be some objectors in our ranks. Well, they will be allowed to state their objections; that's only fair. It's a free country, you know."

"Bow-wow!"

"Everything's got to be run on fair lines," said Jimmy Silver firmly. "We're not Prussians. A Tribunal will be appointed, and any fellow who objects to joining in the barring-out can state his grounds for objection, and if he makes out his case, he will be let off."

"Oh, all right! It will be fun, anyway," remarked Lovell.

"Fathead! This is a serious matter."

"My mistake!" grinned Lovell.

"Frinstance, there's Rawson," said Jimmy Silver. "He risks more than we do, as he might have his scholarship taken away from him. Rawson would be entitled to exemption."

Rawson grunted.

"I sha'n't claim it," he said. "I'm going with the Form."

"Bravo!"

"Well, even a funk ought to be allowed to state his case," said Jimmy Silver. "Funks are born, not made; and a fellow who is afraid is no good to people who have got to put up a fight. You can't do worse for an army than put cowards in it; same with a barring-out. We want to comb out the slackers, and leave the funks to stew in their own juice."

"I suppose nobody will admit he's a funk, anyway," grinned Oswald.

"Then he'll join up."

"Well, get on with your merry Tribunal!" said Van Ryn.

"Pick 'em out, Jimmy."

Jimmy Silver selected the Tribunal.

It was composed of six members—Lovell, as chairman, Flynn, Tommy Dodd, Van Ryn, Conroy, and Pons.

The last three, the Colonial chums, were selected as representing widely-different parts of the Empire, as Jimmy explained.

Jimmy himself kept off the Board. He was going to act as Military Representative.

The door was locked, and then, as Lovell put it, the proceedings proceeded.

The six members of the Tribunal sat in great state, and the "public" formed a crowd round them, looking on.

"Every chap who claims exemption will get aside, here, and apply in turn," called out Jimmy Silver.

Townsend & Co. exchanged glances.

They could see that they were in a small minority, and they did not like to be shown up in public in this way.

But there was no help for it.

They wanted very keenly to keep out of the Form revolt, and certainly they could not do so without permission.

It was a matter for the Form to settle.

Peele set the example, and he walked into the space indicated by Jimmy Silver, amid discouraging groans from the crowd.

"Yah! Funk!"

"Cold feet!"

Gower followed him, however, and then Townsend and Topham.

Leggett, the Modern, joined them, followed by ferocious scowls from the three Tommies.

Clarence Cuffy, after a few moments' hesitation, followed, and Tubby Muffin scuttled into the space reserved to objectors in a great hurry.

"Any more?" demanded Jimmy Silver. Nobody else came forward.

"That's the lot, then. The Tribunal will now get to work!" said Jimmy Silver, with dignity.

And the Tribunal got to work.

The 3rd Chapter.
Before the Tribunal.

"Cyril Peele!"

Dick Oswald, who was appointed clerk to the Tribunal, called out the name, and Peele lounged forward.

There were grim glances of condemnation at the applicant from the "people" in court, but Peele did not seem to mind.

He had a careless manner and a sarcastic smile, which were intended to imply that he regarded the Tribunal as more or less humorous nonsense.

Naturally, that attitude put up the backs of the Tribunal members immediately.

"Name?" rapped out the chairman.

"Can't you remember it?" asked Peele.

"Answer!"

"Rats!"

"Exemption refused!" roared Lovell.

"Look here—"

"Here, hold on; we're members of this Tribunal!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd warmly. "Not so much of your Classical bunkum!"

"You Modern ass—"

"You Classical chump—"

"Order!" roared Dick Oswald. "Members of a Tribunal are not allowed to rag one another during a sitting. They are only allowed to rag conscientious objectors."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, kindly keep your tempers!" said Jimmy Silver. "Put it to the vote, and don't waste time."

The chairman stared at him grimly.

"I understand that you are military representative at this Tribunal, James Silver!" he rapped.

"You've got it."

"Well, then, kindly keep your place."

"What!"

"This Tribunal is an independent body, and is not to be treated with the methods of Prussian militarism!"

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

"Oh, come off!" said Jimmy Silver.

Lovell glanced at the clerk of the court.

"Mr. Oswald, is a military representative allowed to tell the chairman of the Tribunal to come off?" he demanded.

"Certainly not!"

"Then the military representative is called upon to apologize. Otherwise, the Tribunal will indefinitely adjourn!" said Lovell, with crushing dignity.

"You can't adjourn intirely!" exclaimed Flynn. "Sure, we're all goin' to be flogged to-morrow morning unless we're on the war-path."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That statement by a member of the Tribunal quite destroyed the gravity of the court.

"How long is this game goin' on?" inquired Peele, interrupting the laughter in court.

"Order! Silence!"

"Gentlemen—"

"The Tribunal is waiting for the military representative to withdraw his offensive expression, and to apologize for its use!" said Lovell, with great and lofty dignity.

"Look here, Lovell—"

"At present I am chairman of the Tribunal, and I refuse to look there."

"Oh, I withdraw the expression!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "Now, for goodness' sake, get on with the washing!"

"The Tribunal accepts your apology, and will allow the case to proceed. Peele, on what grounds do you claim exemption?"

"It's a mug's game," explained Peele. "I don't want a hand in it."

"You know the cause we are fighting for?" demanded the chairman severely. "We are fighting to crush headmasterish militarism—"

"Oh, crumps!"

"And we shall never sheathe the Maxim gun, which we have not lightly drawn, till Lattrey is expelled from Rookwood! Do you understand that?"

"My hat!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Refused!" was the answer to the applicant, after a brief consultation among the members of the Tribunal. "I'm not goin' to have a hand in it, I tell you—"

"Remove that Bolo!" commanded the chairman.

"I'll punch your nose if you call me a Bolo!" howled Peele.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rawson and Higgs and Jones minor seized the angry applicant, and jerked him away.

Peele stamped away towards the door, but found that the key had been removed from the lock.

He had to stay in and see the proceedings to a finish.

"Gower!"

Cuthbert Gower came forward.

"Here I am," he said sulkily.

"You demand exemption from barring-out service?" inquired the chairman, with a snort.

"Yaas!"

"On what grounds?"

"It isn't good enough, in my opinion," said Gower. "We sha'n't make a success of it, and some of us may get sacked. Leave me out."

"Exemption refused!"

"Look here—"

"Remove him!"

"Cecil Townsend!" rapped out Oswald.

Towny of the Fourth came lounging up to the bar, with his hands in his pockets, and his most supercilious expression on his rather handsome face.

His expression did not please the Tribunal at all.

"State the grounds of your claim, Townsend."

"Same as my pals," answered Townsend, in a drawl. "Lot of rot a barrin' out, you know. Don't play the goat. What?"

"Are you aware that we are fighting for freedom, and to make the school safe for democracy?" demanded the chairman.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order!"

"And that we shall never sheathe the sword, which we have not lightly drawn—"

"Gag!"

"Cheese it!"

"Till the Head's militarism is crushed to the merry dust!" roared Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you understand that, Towny?"

"I understand that you're talkin' out of the back of your neck," said Townsend. "I've got my prep to do, too. Would you mind ringin' off?"

"I object to the exemption of this man," interjected the military representative. "He is not a funk, but a slacker, and he can be bucked up by means well known in the Army. I claim him."

"Exemption refused!"

"Look here, I'm not goin' to have anything to do with your silly rot!" shouted Townsend angrily.

"Bump him for contempt of court!" rapped out the chairman.

"Bump, bump, bump!"

"Yah-ab-oooop!"

Townsend crawled away, looking much less arrogant than before.

Then Topham's name was called. But Harold Topham had taken warning by the fate of his chum.

"I withdraw my claim!" he rapped out hurriedly.

"Withdrawal of claim allowed," grinned the chairman. "We're getting through the cases. Only three more."

Rap!

"Hallo!"

There was a pause, as a loud knock came at the door of the Common-room.

The 4th Chapter.
The Conscientious Objector.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were silent for the moment.

They wondered whether the Head had received some hint of the intentions of the Fourth, and had come there to take a hand in the proceedings.

But their uneasiness was relieved the next moment.

It was the voice of Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell, that came through the door after the rap.

"By gad! What have you got the door locked for, you fellows? Let a chap in, you know!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver impatiently. "No entrance for asses just now!"

"What's goin' on?"

"Buzz off!"

"But look here—"

"Get on with the washing, and let him jaw!" suggested Erroll.

"Hear, hear!"

"Reginald Muffin!" called out the clerk of the court. "The Tribunal will hear your claim."

"Oh, gad!" came Smythe's voice from without. "The Tribunal! What kind of a game is this?"

But no one heeded Adolphus, save that Peele whispered to him through the key-hole.

Outside many footsteps were soon heard and a buzz of voices.

The fact that the Fourth Form were planning a revolt in the school, and making all the Form join up for the purpose, was startling news to the other juniors.

A crowd of the Shell and the Third collected outside the door of the Common-room to listen.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. did not waste any attention upon them.

Tubby Muffin was before the Tribunal, and his case was being considered.

"Does the Army claim this man?" inquired the chairman, in quite a professional way.

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"He wouldn't be much use," he confessed. "But it's a case of all in, and Muffin's got to join up."

"State your grounds, Muffin."

Tubby gasped.

"Grub!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"What are we going to do for grub if we have a barring-out?" gasped Tubby Muffin. "We shall get hungry! Think of it! Cold weather, too! I'm jolly well not going to be hungry if I can help it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We shall have to lay in a stock of

provisions," said Jimmy Silver. "If we run short we shall have to raid supplies from the enemy."

"Oh!" ejaculated several juniors.

"I—I say, I'd rather be exempted!" gasped Tubby. "I'm afraid there wouldn't be enough to eat."

"Upon the whole, I withdraw my objection to this man's exemption," said the military representative. "He would eat us out of house and home, and he would be no good in a fight. Let him go."

"Exemption granted."

"Oh, good!" ejaculated Tubby Muffin in delight. And he rolled away, feeling greatly relieved that he was not called upon to "back up" against the Head.

"Albert Leggett!"

Leggett of the Modern Fourth looked very uneasy as he came to the front.

Tommy Dodd especially greeted him with a savage frown. Tommy was ashamed of a Modern fellow asking for exemption.

"Well?" rapped out Lovell.

"I claim exemption on the ground of—of—of being unfit," mumbled Leggett. "I've lately suffered from severe pains in—in my back."

"Where?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"There?"

He indicated the spot by giving Leggett a terrific thump on the shoulder. The Modern junior yelled.

"Yaroooh!"

"Hallo, you've got a powerful voice for an unfit fellow," said Jimmy, amid howls of laughter. "But perhaps I didn't touch the right spot. Is it there?"

Thump!

"Yooooop!" roared Leggett.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps, on second thoughts, you are not so unfit as you supposed?" suggested Jimmy Silver. "If you would like to withdraw your claim—"

"Look here—"

"Otherwise I shall have to look after that pain of yours, and I shall try place after place till I find it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I withdraw!" gasped Leggett, looking daggers at Jimmy Silver.

"Withdrawal of claim duly noted!" grinned Oswald. "Now, then, Cuffy, you're the last! Get a move on!"

Clarence Cuffy came forward, blinking benevolently at the Tribunal.

"Last man in!" said Lovell. "Go it, Cuffy, and talk sense if you can!"

"My dear Arthur Edward—"

"Eh?"

"I shall endeavour to speak with such wisdom as Nature has placed at my disposal," said Cuffy.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I do not desire to take part in a barring-out, and claim exemption as a conscientious objector."

"What?" roared the Tribunal.

Cuffy was the first claimant on those grounds.

"My conscience will not allow me to rebel against the authority of the Head," said Cuffy, blinking at the Tribunal. "I have always been taught to be very conscientious when I was at home at Gander's Green."

"Oh, crumps! It's a pity you didn't stay at home at Gander's Green, Cuffy!" ejaculated the military representative.

"I trust, my dear James, that I find as useful a sphere at this scholastic establishment," answered Cuffy. "Owing to conscientious objections, I regret that I cannot take part in the suggested barring-out. Therefore—"

"You are open to argument, I suppose?" inquired Tommy Dodd.

"Certainly, my dear Thomas!"

"Argue with him, you chaps!"

"Hear, hear!"

Three or four pairs of hands seized Clarence Cuffy, and he was bumped on the floor.

The roars of the unhappy duffer of Rookwood rang through the Common-room and the corridors outside.

"By gad! Are they killin' a pig in there?" ejaculated Adolphus Smythe. And there was a chortle.

Bump, bump, bump!

"Have you still a conscience, bedad?" roared Tommy Doyle.

"Oh, dear! My dear Thomas— Ow, ow!"

Bump, bump!

"Any conscience left?" grinned Higgs.

"Yow-ow-wooop!" howled Clarence.

"Upon the whole, I—I will withdraw my claim, as—as upon further reflection— Yaroooh! I—I— Oh, dear! Yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The last claim had been disposed of. Tubby Muffin was the only slacker exempted.

Jimmy Silver threw open the door of the Common-room. The preliminaries having been settled, it was time to get down to business.

The 5th Chapter.
Dig In.

Adolphus Smythe jammed his eyeglass into his eye and stared at Jimmy Silver & Co. when he was allowed to enter the Common-room at last.

"Cheeky young sweeps!" he remarked. "I say, I suppose it's all gas you've been sayin' about a barrin'-out, isn't it?"

"No, fathead!"

"You really mean bizney?" exclaimed Adolphus.

"Yes, ass!"

"Oh, by gad! You'll toe the line fast enough when the Head gets on your track, I opine!" Adolphus grinned.

"Kats!"

"But I say—"

"Bow-wow! Come on, you fellows!"

"Whither bound, O chief?" asked Conroy.

"Into the quad, first of all."

"I say, we're not goin' to have a barrin' out out of doors, I suppose, in this weather?" asked Townsend, sarcastically.

"You've hit it. We are."

"In the open?" shouted Topham.

"Why not?"

"Oh, by gad!" said Topham hopelessly. "You're potty!"

"I say, Jimmy—"

"Follow your leader!" said Jimmy Silver concisely.

He led the way into the quadrangle, and the Fourth-Formers followed.

Jimmy had been consulting with Tommy Dodd, the leader of the Modern juniors.

Jimmy was captain, but he had judiciously selected the Modern leader as his first lieutenant.

The full, round moon was sailing over Rookwood, and the quadrangle was quite light.

A good many glances were turned on the moon.

"Lovely night for an air-raid!" grinned Lovell.

"Never mind air-raids now!" answered Jimmy Silver. "We've no time to bother about Huns. We've got to get to work. Now the thing's being chattered about we've got no time to lose."

"Quite so. But—"

"Look here, I'm goin' in!" growled Townsend.

"Knock him down if he goes, and sit on him!" said Jimmy, without even looking round at the discontented nut.

"You bet!" said Van Ryn grimly. "I've got an eye on him."

"It's jolly cold out here," mumbled Peele.

"Dry up!"

"Now, Jimmy, what's the game?" asked Erroll.

The Fourth-Formers had gathered round Jimmy Silver under the beeches. They were curious to know what the plan was.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"We're in for it," he said. "We've promised a flogging all round in the morning for kicking Lattrey out. The barring-out has got to take place at once, if it takes place at all. We can't bar out the School House; that means a row with the Sixth to begin with. We can't seize Mr. Manders' House; too many Modern seniors there, to say nothing of Modern masters."

"That's so!" said Tommy Dodd.

"There was a barring-out once in the old clock-tower," remarked Flynn.

Jimmy nodded.

"That was a small affair—a Classical row," he said. "There wouldn't be anything like room for the whole Form."

"Thru for you."

"But where—"

"The allotments!" said Jimmy.

"What?"

"I suppose you know how modern warfare is conducted," said Jimmy Silver loftily. "You select a spot, and dig yourself in. Well, that's what we're going to do."

"Dig ourselves in!" murmured Townsend dazedly. "Oh, he's potty!"

"Entrench?" shouted Oswald.

"Yes."

"Oh, great pip!"

"The school allotments are the place," continued Jimmy Silver. "The junior allotments are within the school walls, and within a stone's-throw of the house. The weather's mild now, and the earth's pretty easy for digging, and most of us have had plenty of digging practice, when we were getting the potatoes in early. The allotments are empty now, excepting for the cabbage patches, and the potato ground needs digging over, ready for the spring planting, so all the digging we do will be so much to the good."

"Hear, hear!"

"There's the shed where we keep the spades and things; that will be the headquarters," resumed Jimmy. "We shall make dug-outs for shelter."

"Dug-outs!" murmured Townsend, wondering whether he was dreaming. "Us make dug-outs?"

"Yes; same as the boys at the Front."

"Oh, dear!"

"We shall all be soldiers some day, so we may as well get into the way of it," grinned Jimmy Silver.

"I—I say, it's cold! I'd rather go in."

"Cheese it! Come along, now, and start," said Jimmy Silver. "Any slacker trying to dodge the work will be given Field Punishment No. 1."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wha-a-at about our clothes?" stammered Townsend.

"Bother your clothes!"

"I'm not goin' to spoil my clobber!" shrieked the Classical dandy.

Jimmy reflected.

"Might as well put on our oldest clothes," he admitted. "I hadn't thought of that. Of course, I'm open to suggestions. I don't set up to be the strong, silent man who can run everything off his own bat. We'll get in and get our allotment clobber."

"Well, that's a good idea," agreed Erroll.

"And our coats," remarked Raby.

"And all the rugs we can lay hands on, if we're going to camp out to-night," said Lovell emphatically.

"Camp out!" gasped Peele, in horror. "Camp out in winter! The fellow's mad! I'm jolly well not goin' to camp out!"

"Aren't the soldiers camping out at the Front?" demanded Conroy.

"We're not soldiers, ass!"

"Yes, we are," said Jimmy Silver. "Fighting men, at least. And we shall never sheathe the sword till—"

"Bow-wow! Let's get a move on," said Van Ryn.

In a few minutes the juniors were in their quarters, seeking their oldest—their very oldest—clothes and boots.

If Jimmy Silver's extraordinary scheme was carried out, their old clothes were not likely to be of much use afterwards. Mud and clay were no respecters of clobber.

But though Townsend & Co. were stricken with dismay at the prospect, most of the fellows were very keen on it. The bare idea of "digging" themselves

in was novel and exciting. And there was great faith in Jimmy Silver.

Townsend & Co. were in a state of dumb fury. But they changed their clothes with the rest.

Jimmy Silver & Co. went quietly into the quad again, and joined the Moderns from Mr. Manders' House.

The whole Fourth proceeded to the school allotments, almost as light as day in the brilliant moon.

Of all the Form only one fellow was lacking, and that was Tubby Muffin.

The shed was well supplied with implements for cultivation.

Jimmy Silver handed out spades and garden forks to his followers, implements most of them had well learned to handle since the allotment movement had started.

The ground had been trenched once for potatoes.

More digging was likely to do more good than harm.

Jimmy marked out the site of the camp.

A fence was hauled down—it was no time to stand on ceremony—and the palings stuck up to mark out the proposed entrenchments.

Then the digging began.

It was hard work.

But most of the Rookwood juniors were not afraid of hard work.

The Fistical Four, and the Colonials, and the three Tommies set a splendid example.

They worked untiringly.

There were many and deep groans from Townsend & Co. over the labour.

They had never soiled their hands on the allotments at all, if they could help it.

They were paying for slacking in unfitness.

But they had to work.

They rested on their spades occasionally, but when they rested too long a whizzing clod or two would spur them on to renewed efforts.

"By Jove! I wonder what the Head would say if he knew of this?" Lovell remarked, as nine o'clock rang out.

"They'll know soon, anyway!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Suppose we're caught before the trenches are dug?"

"No good supposing. Keep on with the work, dear boy."

"I'm getting blisters on my hands," moaned Topham.

"That's because you've never done any honest work before," chuckled Jimmy Silver. "You'll get horny hands soon that will stand anything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Topham shuddered.

"Hallo!" murmured Van Ryn. "Here comes Bulkeley!"

Work was suddenly suspended, as the captain of Rookwood was seen striding towards the entrenchments in the moonlight.

The 6th Chapter. No Prefects Wanted!

"So you're here!" said Bulkeley grimly. He stared at the deep-breathing juniors as they stood resting on their spades and forks, and looking at him.

"Here we are, Bulkeley," answered Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"What are you doing here?"

"Digging."

"I can see that, you cheeky young ass! Why aren't you doing your prep?" demanded Bulkeley.

"Too busy."

"Look here, Silver, tell me what you are up to at once? You're not simply digging the allotments for the next sowing."

Jimmy chuckled.

"No fear!" he said.

"Then what are you at?" exclaimed Bulkeley.

"Digging ourselves in."

"Wha-a-at?"

"It's what the military writers call 'consolidating the position,'" explained Jimmy Silver calmly. "We're entrenching now. We've got the dug-outs to make later. Anything else you'd like to know, Bulkeley?"

"Are you mad?" exclaimed Bulkeley, in astonishment.

"Not a bit. Are you?"

"What?" shouted Bulkeley.

"Oh, get on with the washing!" exclaimed Conroy. "We've no time to argue with Sixth Form fellows."

"Right enough! Excuse us, Bulkeley!" Bulkeley stared at them, not knowing what to do.

The juniors were resuming work.

"Look here, this won't do!" exclaimed the captain of Rookwood.

"Sorry!" answered Jimmy Silver politely, and without pausing in his work.

"You are not thinking of sticking out here, surely?" exclaimed the prefect.

Form has declared a barring-out until Lattrey is expelled from Rookwood."

Bulkeley clenched his hands. Without answering, he leaped across the still narrow trench, and grasped Jimmy Silver by the collar.

"Rescue!" shouted Jimmy. There was no need to call.

Instantly a dozen pairs of hands were laid on Bulkeley.

The captain of Rookwood was a good fellow, and very popular with the juniors. But they could not afford to stand upon ceremony now.

Bulkeley could scarcely help being against them, from his position in the school.

But if he was against them, he had to be dealt with—and the rebels were quite prepared to deal with him.

So Bulkeley found.

He was dragged off Jimmy Silver, who grasped him in his turn.

Struggling, and almost dazed with astonishment at finding himself handled by juniors, George Bulkeley was hurled headlong into the trench.

He collapsed there, gasping.

"Arrah, pelt the spalpeen!" yelled Flynn.

"Hurrah!"

Clods flew on all sides, and in a couple of minutes Bulkeley, struggling dazedly in the trench, was half-buried.

"Hold on!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "Stop it, you fellows! Let Bulkeley clear off!"

The Rookwood captain clambered breathlessly out of the trench, at last, as the heavy clods ceased to fall on him.

He was gasping, and his clothes were in a shocking state, caked with earth from head to foot.

"Goodbye, old scout," said Lovell. "Sorry to hurt you—but we mean business, you know. Tell the Head we'll serve him the same if he comes bothering us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes—but he said Manders was looking for the Modern chaps. Pile in—we want the trench ready at least, before we can be tackled."

And the juniors fairly slaved at their work, and the trench, every minute, grew broader and deeper, and every minute the earth parapet on the outer rim grew higher and higher.

The 7th Chapter. Passing the Rubicon!

"Bless my soul!"

"Goodness gracious!"

The first exclamation came from Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, the second from Mr. Manders, science-master, and senior master on the Modern side of Rookwood.

The Form-master and the science-master were looking for the lost sheep, so to speak.

Mr. Manders had missed the juniors from his House, and Mr. Bootles had missed the Classical Fourth.

They had set forth together in search of them—kind-hearted Mr. Bootles feeling alarmed and distressed, and Mr. Manders feeling angry and savage.

Mr. Bootles had had a grim foreboding of trouble to come, if Mark Lattrey was allowed to remain in the school.

And when he met Bulkeley in the quad, and learned where the Fourth-Formers were, he felt that the trouble had arrived.

The two masters stopped at the trench, or rather, at the parapet, now a couple of feet high, that barred them from the trench, in which the juniors were working actively.

Most of the fellows went on working; there was no time to waste.

Mr. Bootles looked blankly at the busy hive of juniors.

"Not at all, sir," said Tommy Dodd respectfully.

"Go in at once, then!"

"Sorry, sir," said Tommy Dodd imperturbably.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Manders' face was purple. He made a movement towards Tommy Dodd; but a three-foot parapet, with a muddy trench beyond, lay between.

Tommy was out of his reach, slogging away with his spade in the bottom of the trench.

Mr. Manders laid his hands gingerly on the parapet, and withdrew them. His clothes were likely to suffer if he attempted to cross.

He remained nonplussed, breathing hard with fury. Mr. Bootles took up the tale, as it were.

"My dear boys," he said gently. "You are—ahem—acting in a reckless and insubordinate manner. I beg you to return to the House immediately, and if you do so I will pardon you, and I am sure Mr. Manders will do the same."

"Nothing of the sort!" shouted Mr. Manders. "Every boy here belonging to my House shall be punished most severely."

"Ahem!" said the unfortunate Mr. Bootles.

"Dodd—"

"Silver!"

"Yes, Mr. Bootles," said Jimmy meekly. "Dry up a minute, Mr. Manders, please—my Form-master is speaking to me."

"Silver!" gasped Mr. Bootles. Mr. Manders did not even gasp; his breath was quite taken away.

"You were speaking, Mr. Bootles?" said Jimmy politely.

"Yes!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "Silver, you are, I presume, the leader in this—this movement, what—what? I advise you to reflect. I fear, Silver, that the Head may decide to expel you from the school."



"On what grounds do you demand exemption from barring-out service?" inquired Lovell, the chairman of the Tribunal. "It isn't good enough, in my opinion," said Gower. "We sha'n't make a success of it, and some of us may get sacked!"

"Ha, ha!"

Bulkeley glared at the rebellious Fourth, gasping for breath. It was evidently useless to try force again.

Since the habit of obedience was broken, one Sixth-Former could do nothing against the whole Fourth.

"I shall have to report this!" he gasped.

"Go ahead!"

"Dr. Chisholm will come here!"

"Let him come!"

"Oh, you insane young duffers!" gasped Bulkeley.

And the captain of Rookwood strode away towards the School House, breathing hard, and wondering blankly what was to come of this extraordinary situation.

He had remembrance of a former barring-out at Rookwood, but that had been a mere trifle compared with this—a revolt of the Classical Fourth against Mr. Manders, the Modern master, in the absence of the Head.

But this was a rebellion of the whole Fourth Form, and against the Head himself!

What would come of it?

Surely the young rascals would return to their obedience, at the frown and thunderous voice of the Head himself, when he came on the scene!

Mr. Manders glared at them as if trying to understudy the celebrated basilisk.

"Bless my soul!" the Form-master murmured feebly.

"What does this mean?" thundered Mr. Manders.

Nobody answered.

"Dodd!" shouted the Modern master.

"Yes, sir!"

Tommy Dodd rested obligingly for a moment on his spade.

"It is nearly your bed-time. Go into the House at once—all the Modern boys here!"

"Sorry, sir!"

"Obey me!"

Tommy Dodd did not answer. He turned to his work again, and Mr. Manders stared at him speechlessly.

"Did you hear me, Dodd?" he exclaimed, at last, in a gasping voice.

"Yes, sir!"

"I shouldn't go alone, sir."

"What—what?"

"If one goes, we all go, sir!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "And we're not going very meekly, either! We're holding out till the Head consents to peace by negotiation. Our war-aims are, the expulsion of Lattrey from the school."

"Hear, hear!"

"My—my dear boys—" murmured Mr. Bootles feebly.

"Mr. Bootles, I am surprised at your bandying words with these disrespectful young rascals!" shouted Mr. Manders. "I decline to do so, sir! For the last time, I order you to return indoors. Fail to do so, and I shall use force."

"Go on!" remarked Conroy.

"Wha-a-at did you say, Conroy?" stammered Mr. Manders.

"Go on, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you insolent young—young ruffian—"

"Oh, draw it mild, old scout!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. Mr. Manders' face looked simply extraordinary, in the moonlight, as the Australian junior answered him.

He was in so great a rage that he thought of nothing but of getting to close quarters with the rebel juniors.

In that respect he soon had his wish. He arrived at close quarters in less than a minute.

In less than another minute he had good reason to wish that he had been disappointed.

For as he sprawled furiously over the earthen wall he slipped down into the mud of the trench, and he never had a chance of getting up again.

Half a dozen boots, caked with mud, were planted on him, pinning him down on his back at the bottom of the trench.

He gasped faintly for breath, as dampness and mud oozed all over him.

Conroy playfully dropped a chunk of soft mould upon his long, sharp nose, and Mr. Manders spluttered frantically.

"Gerroooh! Gurrrooh!"

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Bootles, scarcely believing the evidence of his spectacles, as he gazed over the parapet at this extraordinary scene.

"Gerrooh! Groooh! Help!"

"My—my boys," stammered Mr. Bootles, blinking over the parapet, in horror. "I—I beg you, pray release Mr. Manders—"

"Yaroooh!"

"I—I fear that you are—are incommoding him seriously by—by treading upon him."

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Cover him in, intirely!" roared Flynn.

"Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "I beg of you—"

"Yaroooh! Help! Police! Yooooooop!"

Mr. Manders struggled frantically.

A dozen heavy clods were pitched in on him, and he almost disappeared from sight.

He sat up, and another clod landed on his head, and he lay down again, gasping and spluttering at a terrific rate.

"Groooh! Gurrrooh! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear—dear boys"—Mr. Bootles almost wept—"I—I beg of you to release Mr. Manders!"

"Certainly, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "Put him out, you fellows."

The juniors grasped Mr. Manders, and dragged him up.

The Modern master, wet and muddy and clayey, hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels.

"All together!" shouted Jimmy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The astounded master was taken by his heels and his shoulders, and swung to and fro, spluttering.

"One—two—three—go!" rapped out Jimmy.

And Mr. Manders went.

He swung up from the trench, and landed on top of the parapet, and rolled down on the outer side.

There he rested at Mr. Bootles' feet.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles faintly. "Oh, dear! What—what ever will the Head say? Bless my soul!"

He helped Mr. Manders to his feet.

The Modern master did not speak; he could not.

He limped away, gurgling, and leaning heavily on Mr. Bootles' helping arm.

In the entrenched camp, the juniors looked at one another and grinned.

"First round to us!" said Jimmy Silver. "We've fairly broken the ice now."

"And jolly nearly broken Manders?" chuckled Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's the merry sack now, and no mistake, unless we win!" said Raby.

"We shall win!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We shall never sheathe the sword—" began Lovell.

"Pile in!" interrupted Jimmy Silver. "Consolidate the position. Work's the word!"

And the rebels of Rookwood piled in with renewed energy to strengthen their defences. For they knew that the coming of the Head could not be long delayed, and then—

What was to happen then?

Even Jimmy Silver did not know what to think.

But upon one point Jimmy Silver was immovable—Lattrey was to leave Rookwood before the rebel Form came to terms.

And if the Head did not give in—and it was not likely that he would—then it would be a fight to a finish!

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"STICKING IT OUT!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

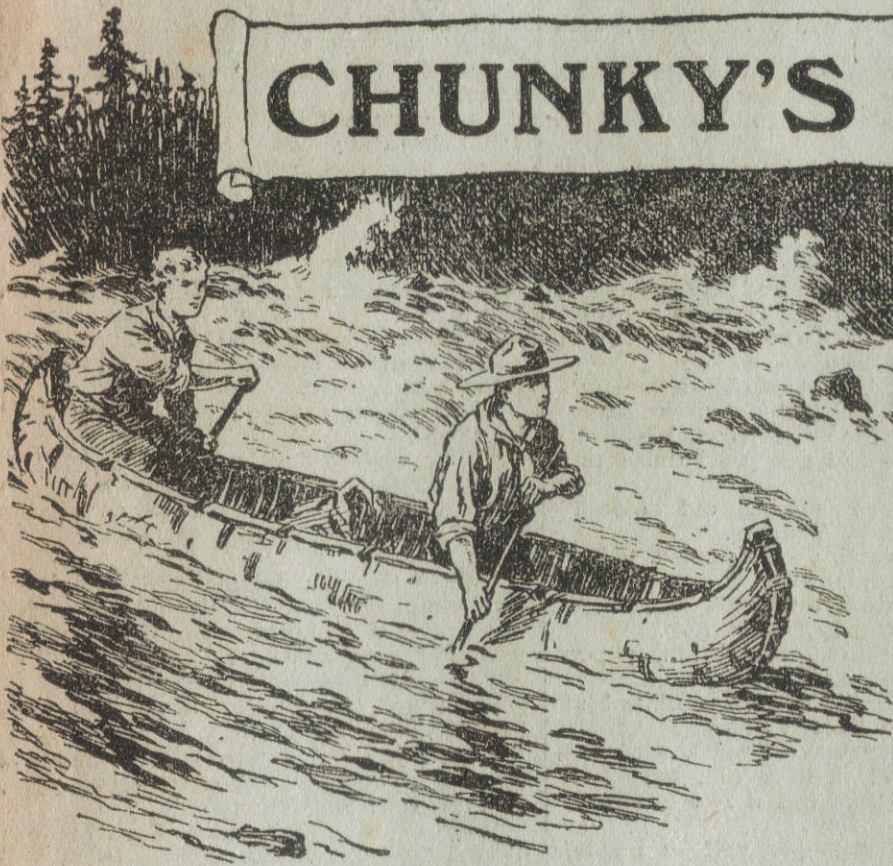
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CHUNKY'S GOLD-MINE!



A Magnificent Long Complete Story, dealing with the Schooldays of Frank Richards, the Famous Author of the Tales of Harry Wharton & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

The Chance of a Lifetime.

Richards, old chap!" Frank Richards grinned. Chunky Todgers spoke in so affectionate and wheedling a tone, that it was clear that he wanted something.

"Sorry, Chunky, I haven't any!" was Frank's reply.

"Eh! Haven't any what?"

"Maple sugar."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless, greatly tickled by the expression, more of sorrow than of anger, that came over Chunky's plump, chubby face.

"I wasn't going to ask you if you had any maple sugar," said Chunky reproachfully. "I wasn't even thinking of maple sugar."

"My word! You must be ill!" said Bob Lawless.

"Look here, Richards, old chap—"

"Well, what is it?" asked Frank good-humouredly. "I can manage twenty-five cents."

"Both your twenty-five cents!" said Chunky indignantly. "Do you think I want to borrow twenty-five cents?"

"Well, don't you?" asked Frank, in surprise, and Bob chuckled again.

"Nope!" growled Chunky Todgers. "Look here, Richards, old chap, I'm talking to you because—because you're a good chap, a real white man, and I like you. I want a hundred dollars."

Frank Richards jumped.

Bob Lawless, apparently quite overcome, leaned against the gate of the lumber-school, and gasped for breath.

Vere Beauclerc stared blankly at Todgers.

"A hundred dollars!" yelled Frank.

"You bet!"

"Not a million dollars?" gasped Bob Lawless. "Not a billion? Not a waggon-load of thousand-dollar bills?"

Frank Richards & Co. were surprised and amused.

A hundred dollars was a sum far beyond the means of any fellow at Cedar Creek School.

Even Gunten, the son of the rich store-keeper at Thompson, never had a hundred dollars.

"I want it!" said Chunky firmly.

"Are you going to buy the school?" inquired Bob.

"No, you chump. I'm going to buy a gold-mine."

"A which?" shouted Frank.

"A gold-mine!" said Todgers impressively. "That is to say, half a claim. The galoot naturally won't part with the whole of it for a hundred dollars."

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bob.

"It's pretty cheap, a half-share in a gold-mine for a hundred dollars, isn't it?" exclaimed Todgers eagerly.

"Awfully cheap, if there's any gold in the mine," grinned Frank Richards.

"There's heaps!"

"How do you know?"

"I've seen it."

"You've seen the gold-mine!" ejaculated Beauclerc.

"You bet! I guess I'm not the antelope to buy a gold-mine I've never seen," said Todgers disdainfully. "It's Frisco Jo's claim in the Thompson Range. Simply reeking with gold."

"Rot!" said Bob Lawless tersely. "If it was reeking with gold, Frisco Jo wouldn't be selling a half-share for a hundred dollars. Don't you begin buying gold-mines from Mexicans, Chunky. You'll get left."

"I tell you, I've seen it!" exclaimed Chunky. "I rode over there on Saturday. Frisco Jo's hard up, and he's sold his tools in Thompson, to go on a tear. The claim's all right, but he's sold his tools without raising the wind. I heard him making the offer in Thompson, to a galoot who wouldn't have anything to do with it, and I asked him; and he was jolly civil, for a Greaser, and offered to show me over the claim."

"And you looked at it?" asked Vere Beauclerc.

"Yep!"

"And saw the gold?" chuckled Frank Richards.

"Sure! It was there right enough; you could fairly scrape it up from the rocks with your paws!" said Chunky Todgers impressively. "Now, I haven't got a hundred dollars; in fact, I've only got two cents."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it's a big proposition," said Chunky, his round eyes glistening. "My idea is to take you fellows into it. You find the money, and I take equal whacks in the half-claim, for introducing the business. See? That's fair."

"Fair enough, if there was anything in the mine," remarked Beauclerc. "But the Mexican must have been fooling you, Chunky."

"Think I'm the kind of antelope to be fooled?" demanded Todgers scornfully. "That's what Eben Hacke said when I asked him. So did Lawrence and Dawson. I thought you chaps had more sense. I tell you, it's the chance of a life-time. The mine may be worth thousands of dollars."

"Thousands of rats!" said Frank Richards. "If there was anything in it, Frisco Jo could sell it in Thompson for more than a hundred dollars."

"They won't listen to him," explained Chunky. "He's got rather a bad reputation, through being tipsy and going on benders, you know. He was on a bender when he sold his tools. It's hard on him, you know—havin' a first-class gold-claim and not being able to raise the money to work it. We shall be doing him a good turn by taking half-shares."

"I guess so!" agreed Bob. "He would be able to go on another bender if he corralled a hundred dollars."

"What on earth is a bender?" inquired Frank Richards, who had not yet quite mastered the picturesque language of the wild and woolly West.

Bob Lawless laughed.

"A tear," he explained—"a regular scorching tear!"

"Oh, a razzle!" said Frank. "I see! Well, Chunky, if it depends on our hundred dollars for Frisco Jo to go on his next bender, he will have to remain a law-abiding citizen for the rest of his life."

"It's a big proposition," pleaded Chunky. "Bob could get something from his pepper, and you've got some duros saved up, Richards, old chap. You could sell your ponies—"

"Great Scott!"

"And with a hundred dollars we get a half-share in the Golden Fortune Mine!" urged Chunky. "It's the chance of a dog's age!"

"You young ass!" said Frank. "It's a swindle, if it's anything at all!"

"A catch from Catchville!" said Bob emphatically.

"I say—"

"Hallo! There's the bell."

Frank Richards & Co. started for the school-house as the bell rang for lessons, and Chunky Todgers followed them sorrowfully.

Evidently Chunky had a firmly-fixed belief in the Golden Fortune Mine, and he was grieved and disappointed to find his way to golden fortune barred by the unhappy lack of a miserable hundred dollars.

But even if the chums of Cedar Creek had possessed that sum among them, they would not have put it into the dusky, slithery hands of a character like Frisco Jo, the tipsy "Greaser" of Thompson.

It really looked as if Chunky Todgers would have to miss that chance of a life-time.

The 2nd Chapter. Chunky Means Business.

There was an expression of settled gloom upon the chubby face of Chunky Todgers that morning.

The Cedar Creek fellows grinned when they looked at him.

Chunky's magnificent offer of a "whack" in the Golden Fortune Mine had been made to half the school, before Frank Richards arrived that morning.

Nobody seemed inclined to make an effort to raise the necessary cash.

Most of the fellows had heard of Jose Lopez, otherwise known as Frisco Jo, because he came from the great city on the Pacific Slope.

Frisco Jo had a reputation that you could crack nuts with, as Eben Hacke put it.

He was generally intoxicated, and in his intervals of sobriety he played poker when he had any money, and at rarer intervals did a little work.

He had been "fired" from half the ranches in the Thompson valley for laziness or dishonesty, and he had spent a good portion of his time in the lumber-gaol.

Once or twice he had brought gold nuggets into the town, and sold them at Gunten's store, with the explanation that he had won them prospecting in the Thompson Range.

Unkind citizens hinted that he had been prospecting in other people's pockets when he had obtained those nuggets.

Frisco Jo was a very unlikely fellow

to go through the hard work of prospecting and locating a claim in the hills, especially in the winter, and nobody but Chunky Todgers put the slightest belief in his claim.

Even Chunky's statement that he had actually seen the gold with his own eyes only elicited chuckles from his school-fellows.

Chunky was well known to be a very imaginative youth.

Todgers was in hot water several times that morning with Miss Meadows. The schoolmistress of Cedar Creek did not know what was occupying the chubby youth's mind, but, anyway, she certainly wouldn't have approved of reflecting on the subject of gold-mines and sudden fortunes in lesson time.

More than once Chunky was called sharply to order, and he was very glad when morning lessons were over.

"Run for it!" exclaimed Bob Lawless, as they came out of the schoolhouse and Chunky headed at once for the three chums.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" shouted Chunky Todgers. "I say, I want to speak to you fellows!"

But the three were running, and Chunky was left behind.

Frank Richards and his comrades occupied the time till dinner in sliding on

the frozen creek, and Chunky was unable to get to close quarters with them.

But he was waylaying them just inside the gates when they came in to dinner.

Chunky was a determined youth.

"Richards, old chap—Bob, old fellow—oh, dear!" said Chunky, as the three rushed past, and escaped, laughing, into the dining-room.

Chunky gave them reproachful looks at the dinner-table.

When dinner was over, Chunky was the first out, and he stationed himself in the porch to waylay the chums again. It was evident that Chunky regarded the three as his last resource.

Other fellows had expressed their opinion of his gold-mine in language more forcible than polite.

Chunky had a long wait in the porch, however, for Frank Richards & Co. did not come in until it was time for afternoon lessons, and they dodged Chunky and got into the schoolhouse.

Chunky gave them a glare when he joined them in class.

He was determined that they should not escape him again, and when Miss Meadows dismissed the school, Chunky caught hold of Frank Richards' sleeve as the latter rose from his desk.

He kept hold while the fellows poured out of the schoolhouse, and he was still holding on in the school grounds.

This time Chunky was not to be shaken off.

"Leggo, Chunky!" exclaimed Frank. "I've got to get off."

"About that gold-mine, Richards—"

"Oh, rats!"

"I really thought I could depend on you, Richards," said Chunky, almost tearfully. "It's too bad to treat me like this, when I'm only trying to do you a good turn."

"You ass!" exclaimed Frank. "I tell you Frisco Jo's mine is a swindle!"

"I've seen the gold."

"Br-r-r!" said Frank.

"Look here," said Chunky brightly, "I'll tell you fellows what. Come with me and see the mine on Saturday, and if you're not satisfied with it, I won't say another word about it."

"Work to do on Saturday," said Bob.

"You can get off—just to oblige a chap, you know," urged Chunky.

"You young ass!" said Frank.

But Frank looked inquiringly at his chums. He always found it difficult to say "No."

And Chunky Todgers was in almost tearful earnest.

"Well, a ride in the hills wouldn't hurt us," said Bob. "I don't mind. What about you, Cherub?"

"I couldn't come," said Beauclerc. "I've got work to do at the shack. No reason why you fellows shouldn't go, though. You can convince Chunky that he is being taken in, and make an end of it."

"It's a go, then!" said Frank. "Saturday morning, Chunky, and we'll meet you here, and you can guide us."

"Right-ho!" said Chunky, with great satisfaction. "You won't be sorry for this. That mine is going to make us all rich."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Cedar Creek chuckled as they parted from the hopeful Chunky.

They were quite convinced that his hopefulness would not survive their visit to Frisco Jo's famous claim.

The 3rd Chapter. Frisco Jo's Bonanza!

Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin rode away from the Lawless Ranch bright and early on Saturday morning.

It was a clear, frosty morning, and the chums enjoyed the sharp gallop from the ranch to Cedar Creek.

As they came in sight of the school by the creek, Chunky Todgers' rotund figure met their glance.

He was early, and waiting for them, holding on to a fat pony.

"You are very welcome, senioritos," he said, with the soft, lisping accent of the South. "Seniorito Todgero he say that you come to see the mine."

"Well, we were going with Seniorito Todgero!" grinned Bob.

"I am guide."

"I guess I couldn't find my way without Frisco Jo," said Chunky Todgers. "Jo is going to guide us there."

"Oh, all right," said Bob.

The Mexican jumped upon his horse, a sorry-looking beast, which Frisco Jo had probably borrowed for the day in Thompson.

The Mexican's own horse had gone the way of his pick and axe, and mostly everything else he possessed when he was on a "bender."

Frank and Bob remounted, and Chunky climbed into the saddle, and the Mexican led the way.

"Is it far, Chunky?" Frank inquired, as they rode down the trail at an easy gallop.

"Not much on a good boss," said Chunky. "The claim's in the foothills. I ain't taking you on a trip up the Rockies, you know."

"Ha, ha! I suppose not."

"I guess we shall do it in a couple of hours. I—I say, have you brought the money with you?" ventured Todgers.

Bob roared.

"No fear! No fear! There won't be any money wanted, you jay!"

"But the mine's all right."

"I'll eat all the gold we find there," grinned Bob.

"Well, you'll jolly well see what you will see!" said Chunky Todgers warmly.

"No doubt about that," said Frank Richards, laughing. "Let's get on, and see what we shall see."

The quartette rode at a good speed, and the valley settlements were left behind.

Frisco Jo was following a rough trail that led into a rocky spur of the Thompson Mountains, visible in the distance on a fine day from the town.

As the riders entered the hills, progress became slower.

There was snow piled in the crevices and gullies, and sometimes drifted in masses on the trail. But they kept steadily on.

That the Mexican had been mining in the foothills in that hard weather, the schoolboys did not believe for a moment.

Frisco Jo was evidently "spoofing" Chunky Todgers, doubtless being ignorant of the strict limitations of Chunky's cash resources.

Or perhaps he had schemed for the simple Chunky to draw better-off fellows into the affair, as in fact Chunky had done.

But though they were "in the affair," they had not yet parted with any dollars.



Chunky Todgers eyed his companions triumphantly. "What do you say now?" he demanded. Bob Lawless could only gasp. "Gold!"

and they certainly had no intention of doing so.

Their object in visiting the claim was simply to convince their schoolfellow that the Mexican was swindling him.

On that point they had no doubt whatever.

Frisco Jo's dark face was calm, almost expressionless, as he led the rough way onward.

Frank had to admit that the Greaser did not look like a swindler who was about to be bowled out.

The Mexican looked back, and waved his hand at last.

"Are we there?" asked Bob.

"Si, senior!"

"This is the place," said Chunky Todgers, with much satisfaction.

Frank and Bob looked round them curiously.

The Mexican had led them into a rocky "gulch" in the foothills, a deep ravine shadowed by great rocks.

It was a spot where possibly quartz-mining could have been undertaken, but that, of course, would have required expensive machinery.

Still, if Jose Lopez had located a paying lode there, there was no doubt that



(Continued from the previous page.)

money and machinery would be forthcoming as soon as the fact was proved.

It remained for the dusky adventurer to prove it.

The Mexican jumped off his horse on the bank of a little stream, which flowed out of the firs at the upper end of the gulch.

"Dismount here, senores," he said. "Right-ho!"

The schoolboys left their horses. The animals were tethered to a tree, and they followed the Mexican on foot over the rocky ground.

Bob Lawless cautiously kept one eye on the tethered horses as they went. He would not have been surprised if some "pard" of Frisco Jo had appeared in sight, and made an attempt to run off with the horses.

Frisco Jo had certainly, in his time, made more money by horse-stealing than by gold-mining.

But the Mexican did not lead them far. He stopped in a deep, rocky gully, and, with a lofty gesture, pointed to the crevices in the surface of the weather-beaten rock.

Here, there were plain traces of a pick having hewed at the rock.

Frank and Bob looked at it, and they started.

In the clear, wintry sunlight there came yellow, precious gleams from every crevice in the surface.

Bob's expression changed. "By Jerusalem!" he muttered.

Frank Richards did not speak. He stared at the rocky wall of the gully with wide-open eyes.

For the yellow grains were visible to the eye wherever the pick had hewn the rock.

They gleamed and glittered in the light, and Frank, running his finger over the rock, gathered up three or four yellow specks.

Chunky Todgers eyed his companions triumphantly.

"What do you say now?" he demanded. Bob Lawless could only gasp.

"Gold!"

The 4th Chapter. Golden Prospects!

"Gold!" repeated Frank Richards breathlessly.

Frisco Jo nodded and smiled. "Si, senor!"

"Didn't I tell you so?" chirped Chunky Todgers. "I told you I'd seen it! I can tell you this, you chaps, if this was known in Thompson, half the town would be rushing here."

Bob Lawless drew a deep breath. He had not placed the slightest faith in the Mexican's story of a gold-mine, but he could not doubt the evidence of his own eyes.

"By thunder, Franky!" said Bob, almost huskily. "There's enough of the yellow stuff there to make us rich for life!"

"Looks like it," said Frank, in awed tones. "But—but what the dickens is Lopez selling half of the claim for?"

Bob turned to the Mexican. "The stuff's there, Jo," he said.

"Si, senor!"

"You're asking a hundred dollars for a half-share in this claim?"

"Si, si!"

"You know a half-share must be worth thousands of dollars?" exclaimed Frank.

"Quite that!" said Chunky Todgers jubilantly.

"Well, why are you doing it, Lopez?" demanded Bob. "You've staked out the claim, I suppose, and registered it?"

"Si, senor! But I am poor!" said Frisco Jo. "Bad men, they lead me to drink and to play, and I lose my money and my tools and my horse. I have nothing, I cannot even pay the register fee for the claim. I must have money, or I can do nothing."

"Well, there's something in that," admitted Bob. "But if we took a half-share in this claim for a hundred dollars we should be robbing you."

equal parts among us—Frank, Chunky, self, and the Cherub," said Bob firmly.

"Oh, all right!" said Chunky resignedly. "I guess you're an ass, though, Bob."

"Is that a go, Lopez?"

The Mexican nodded. "Si, senor; as you wish!"

"And it's a jolly good spec—a regular bonanza," said Bob Lawless. "You can get your claim registered, and pay the fee, Frisco Jo, and sign the paper making over our share to us. We'll raise the money somehow."

"I've got a dollar towards it," said Chunky Todgers hopefully.

"I've got ten, at home," said Bob thoughtfully. "You got any, Franky?"

"Fifteen, at home."

"That's twenty-six. We shall want twenty-four dollars more. No good asking the Cherub; he's on the rocks, I guess."

Bob knitted his brows. "What about your pater?" asked Frank.

"If he knew—"

Bob shook his head. "He'd think it was a gun-game, same as we did, and he wouldn't go a red cent," he answered. "I guess he wouldn't ride over here to see the mine, either. No good asking popper."

"Then it looks as if we're fixed!" said Chunky Todgers dolefully. "I've spoken to my popper, and he told me not to be a young idiot."

Bob grinned. "No good telling you that. You can't help it," he remarked. "But about the drocks. We can raise it. Billy Cook will lend me twenty-four dollars if I ask him. I can fix that."

Chunky brightened up. "Hurrah! We're all rich for life!" he chirped.

"We'll take a nugget of this rock back to Thompson to be assayed," added Bob thoughtfully.

Frisco Jo started. "Not till the money is paid over, senor!" he exclaimed. "Until the money is paid my claim cannot be touched."

is paid my claim cannot be touched." Bob's eyes flashed.

"Can't you take our word?" he exclaimed.

"The registering is not yet completed!" protested the Mexican. "It would be possible for any Gringo to jump my claim if it was known. Until you pay me the money I cannot complete the registering, and it is not safe that anyone should know."

"That seems right enough, Bob," remarked Frank.

"I guess so. We'll be getting back, Jo. I'll take a nugget away for assaying, and give you my word not to show it to a single soul until the money has been paid to you. That suit you?"

The Mexican hesitated, looking keenly into Bob's candid face.

Probably he read there that the Canadian had could be trusted.

"I agree, senor," he said at last. "But I am in fear that my claim will be jumped before I can complete the legal steps. You will promise me to keep the nugget in your pocket, and not even bring it out into the light of day until you have paid me the fifty dollars?"

"On my word!" said Bob sharply.

"Very good, senor. I agree."

"That's fair!" said Chunky Todgers. "I shall be jolly glad to hear what the assayer has to say about it. Thousand dollars to the ton, I shouldn't wonder."

Bob Lawless examined the gold-gleaming surface rock again. Golden grains gleamed and winked at him from every inch of it.

In his mind's eye the schoolboy could already see the mining gear installed in the gulch, the great stamps crushing the rock, and turning out the precious metal in a stream of wealth.

It was not easy to detach a specimen nugget from the rock, but Bob accomplished it at last by crashing a heavy stone upon a jagged portion.

A big chip of the gold-impregnated rock broke away.

Bob picked it up. It weighed about two pounds, and from its look it should certainly have contained at least three ounces of pure gold.

And for yards the rocky surface was similarly threaded with yellow.

It meant a colossal fortune when the mine was worked.

For when the specimen had been assayed, and its value proved, there would be no lack of capitalists to take shares in so promising an enterprise and instal the necessary machinery.

near Cedar Creek they parted with Frisco Jo.

"When shall I see you, senors?" asked the Mexican.

"In a couple of hours," said Bob Lawless. "We're going straight home for the money, and we'll come on to Thompson and settle with you. Where shall we find you, Frisco Jo?"

"My shack is opposite Gunten's store. I will wait you there," said Frisco Jo. "And you have promised no eyes shall see the specimen till you have come to me and the papers are signed."

"That's a cinch!"

"Adios, senoritos!"

Frisco Jo rode on to Thompson, and Frank and Bob started for the Lawless ranch. Chunky Todgers waved a fat hand to them.

"Call for me at Gunten's store when you come to Thompson," he said. "I'm going to stick Gunten for a dinner."

"Right-ho!"

Frank Richards and his cousin, in great spirits, galloped home to the ranch.

The gold of Golden Fortune Mine fairly dazzled them.

A dozen times Bob Lawless tapped his pocket, in which the specimen nugget reposed, to make sure that it was safe.

They arrived at the ranch a little tired, but extremely cheerful and satisfied.

The 5th Chapter. Salted!

The chums made a very hasty dinner. They were late for it, but Mr. Lawless did not make any inquiry as to where they had been.

Bob was glad of it. He knew that the rancher would scout the story of the bonanza in the Thompson foothills, as he and Frank had scouted it at first.

True, he had only to produce the specimen from his pocket to convince anyone; but that he had promised not to do.

The nugget was not to be shown until Frisco Jo had legally made good his title to the claim—a very reasonable stipulation on the part of the Mexican.

Bob chuckled as he thought of the rancher's surprise later, when he should tell him that he had become a part-owner of one of the most valuable gold-mines in British Columbia.

After a hurried dinner, Frank and Bob secured their little savings and disposed the dollars about their persons in safe buckskin bags.

Then Bob interviewed Billy Cook, the foreman of the ranch.

"Bob was very friendly with that gentleman, and Billy Cook, though surprised

by a request for the loan of such a sum as twenty-four dollars, lent him the money without demur.

Bob simply explained that he wanted to make a purchase in Thompson, and did not care to ask his father for the money just then. The good-natured cattleman was willing to oblige.

With the money in a buckskin bag along with his own, Bob jumped on his pony, and rode away from the ranch with Frank Richards.

He led a pony with him, to lend to Vere Beauclerc, who had no horse.

The chums rode at a gallop for the shack by Cedar Creek, where they found Beauclerc.

Beauclerc's work for the day was done, and he was resting in the doorway of the shack when his chums rode up.

He jumped up, his face brightening as he saw them.

His father, the remittance-man, was away, and Vere had been alone all day.

"You fellows come to supper?" he asked cheerfully. "I'm jolly glad to see you!"

"No fear. We've called to take you to Thompson," answered Bob.

"You're going to Thompson this evening?"

"You bet!"

"Anything on?" asked Vere in astonishment.

"Jump on that pony, and I'll tell you as we go."

"Right you are!"

Vere closed the door of the shack, and put on his hat and jumped into the saddle.

The three chums rode away for the town, and as they trotted along the darkening trail Frank and Bob eagerly explained.

Beauclerc listened in amazement. "But you thought the whole thing was a swindle!" he exclaimed.

"So we did," admitted Bob. "But it was the real white article all the same. I've got a nugget in my pocket to prove it, too!"

"Oh, all serene!" said Beauclerc, with a smile.

The remittance-man's son had his doubts still, as a matter of fact; but he would not attempt to dash the high hopes of his chums.

Not that he could have shaken their faith if he had tried.

Seeing was believing, in Bob's opinion—a maxim that is not always quite reliable.

The three chums arrived in Thompson, and called for Chunky Todgers at Gunten's store, and then crossed over to the shack where Frisco Jo dwelt.

They found the Mexican at home, and quite sober—the latter circumstance being due to the fact that his prospective partners had not yet handed him any money.

"Here we are again, old scout!" chirruped Chunky Todgers.

Frisco Jo bowed with Spanish politeness to his visitors.

"Pray be seated, senores," he said.

"Shell out, Franky," said Bob.

The fifty dollars, mostly in paper, were poured out on the table.

Frisco Jo's black eyes scintillated at the sight of the money.

"Ah! You keep your word, senores," he said. "Look! I have ink, paper, all ready. It will take but a few minutes."

"Go it!" said Bob.

"I suppose that paper will be legal?" remarked Beauclerc.

"What a chap you are for raising difficulties, Cherub," growled Bob Lawless. "We'll call in a couple of witnesses, if you like."

"I have some friends without," said Lopez.

Frisco Jo's friends were called in. They proved to be Euchre Dick and Dave Dunn, two of the most ruffianly characters in Thompson.

Still, that did not matter to the chums of Cedar Creek; they were not there to tell Frisco Jo that evil communications corrupt good manners.

Besides, Frisco Jo hadn't any good manners to be corrupted, if it came to that.

The transfer was duly drawn up and signed and witnessed, and the four schoolboys became the legal owners of a one-eighth share in the Golden Fortune mine, staked out and registered by Jose Lopez.

The Mexican proceeded with such facility that one might have guessed that he had "been there before," so to speak.

And with great keenness, Frisco Jo picked up the fifty dollars and counted it.

"That's done," said Bob, taking up the precious document. "You won't lose any time in getting the claim registered, Jo?"

"Early on Monday morning, senor."

"Why not to-day—the office isn't closed yet?"

"Muy bien!" said the Mexican. "I shall be to-night. And you—on Monday you will have the nugget assayed."

"No fear! I'm going down to Mr. Penrose's now with it," answered Bob promptly. "I want to take his report home for my popper to see."

Lopez started a little.

"You are going now to the Senor Penrose?"

"You bet!"

"Then in ten minutes, senor, you will know the value of the nugget."

"Exactly!"

"Come on, Bob," said Chunky Todgers eagerly.

"Good-night, Lopez!"

"Adios, senoritos!"

The schoolboys left the shack, and Frisco Jo looked at his two friends.

They held out their hands expressively. Evidently understanding, the Mexican dropped a five-dollar bill into the hand of each of his precious friends, and they grinned and left the shack.

Frisco Jo followed them out.

Two minutes later, he was mounted, and riding out of Thompson in the deep dusk, a smile upon his face, and forty dollars in his pocket.

"Look here, will you assay the dashed thing for us?" asked Bob Lawless warily. "We want to know what it's worth."

"At your service," said Mr. Penrose, still chuckling, as he laid down the forme he was handling. "Let's see the precious nugget. If I was a betting man, I'd lay you a million dollars to a spavined mule that Frisco Jo has sold you a pup."

Bob slammed the specimen down on the bench.

"Look at that!" he said.

Mr. Penrose looked at it, and burst into another roar.

"How much did you pay Frisco Jo?" he asked.

"Fifty dollars!" said Frank.

"Great Rockies! The scamp ought to be arrested—I advise you to go to the sheriff at once, before he gets out of town."

"What are you driving at?" exclaimed Bob indignantly. "I tell you it's a real mine, a real bonanza, and we've seen it with our own eyes. I chipped off that nugget as a specimen, to have it assayed. Why, there are ounces of gold in that nugget alone."

"Can't you see it yourself?" demanded Chunky Todgers. "You've got eyes, haven't you, Mr. Penrose?"

"My dear boys," said Mr. Penrose kindly. "You've been done. Don't tell me the rock was fairly shining with gold—I know it was. Salted mines are always like that."

"Salted?" ejaculated Bob.

"Salted, sonny. Did you think Frisco Jo had a real gold-mine to sell?"

"But—but—but what the dickens does salted mean?" exclaimed Frank Richards, in bewilderment.

"It means salted, my lad. There's various ways of doing it—judging by this specimen." Mr. Penrose grinned. "Frisco Jo has squirted gold dust on the rock, to make it show golden in all the crevices. There's other ways, but that's the easiest way."

"Oh!" said Frank faintly.

"But—but how much is that nugget worth?" stammered Chunky Todgers, in dismay.

"That depends. If you're building a railway, and want a solid foundation, it might be worth a thousandth part of a dollar, as material."

"Wha-a-at?"

"In short, it's worth exactly as much as any other piece of rock you might pick up on the trail."

"Oh, dear!"

Chunky Todgers fairly groaned.

"But—but—but there's gold in it!" stammered Bob Lawless. "Dash it all, you can see the gold in it with your own eyes."

"My eyes are not good enough," chuckled Mr. Penrose. "I can see traces of bronze powder squirted into it, that's all. I'll willingly eat all the gold there is in it, Bob Lawless."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" said Bob.

"It's too bad," said Beauclerc. "That swindling rascal ought to be put in the calaboose!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Chunky Todgers. "Oh, dear! My dollar! My dollar's gone for nothing! Oh, dear!"

"You fat coyote!" shouted Bob. "What about our forty-nine dollars?"

But Chunky did not heed.

Apparently the dollar that was his was more important in his eyes than the forty-nine dollars that were not.

He groaned dismally, mourning, like Rachel of old, for that which was lost, and would not be comforted.

"And—and I've borrowed twenty-four dollars from Billy Cook!" mumbled Bob. "Oh, great snakes! The villain—the swindler—oh, dear!"

"Buzz away to the sheriff, and he may be stopped before he gets out of town," smiled Mr. Penrose.

He had started type-setting again, having no time to lose, and the four schoolboys left the office, with dismal faces.

Chunky Todgers started for home, still groaning.

But Frank Richards & Co. were not thinking of home.

"That Greaser villain's got our fifty dollars!" said Bob Lawless, breathing hard. "Let's look for him—and we'll have our money back, or else his scalp."

"Yes, rather!"

The dazzling prospect of boundless wealth had vanished; it was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream.

All the chums had to show for fifty dollars was a piece of paper entitling them to an eighth share in a mine which was just as valuable as any other heap of rocks in the foothills—and no more.

NEXT MONDAY.

THREE ON A TRAIL!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!