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# The BOYS' FRIEND

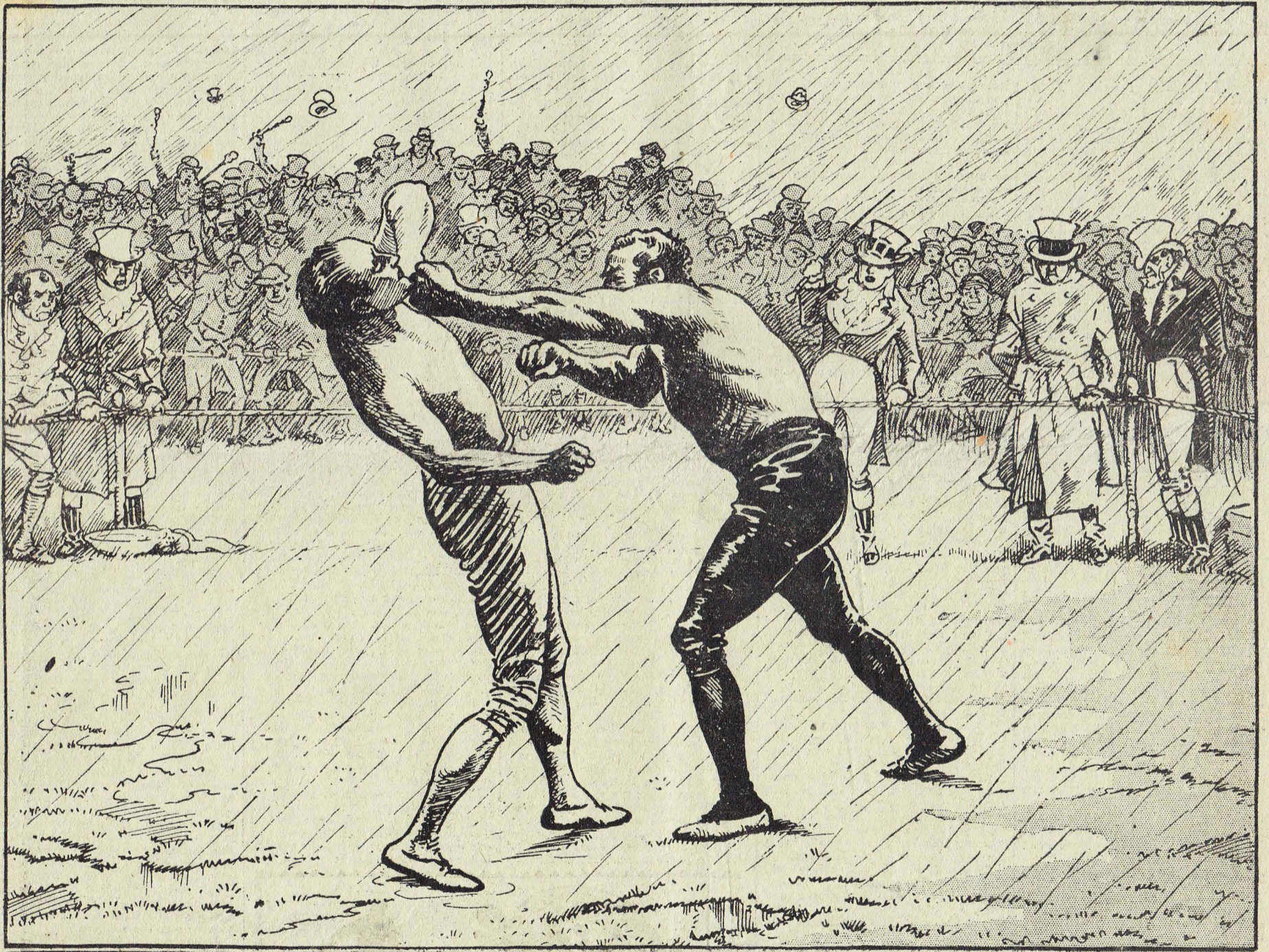
TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 10th, 1920.

"RODNEY STONE."—By SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.



## A FIERCE FIGHT!

Harrison went in in such a fashion that no man who saw him do it will ever forget it. Crab Wilson, as game as a pebble, met him with a flush hit every time, but no human strength or human science seemed capable of stopping the terrible onslaught of this iron man. The rain lashed down upon them, pouring from their faces and their bodies, but neither gave heed to it.

(For Opening Chapters turn to next page.)

### The Smith's Last Battle.

It was a magnificent sight to anyone who had not lost his sense of appreciation of the noblest of all the works of Nature. Both men fulfilled that requisite of the powerful athlete that they should look larger without their clothes than with them. In Ring slang, they buffed well.

And each showed up the other's points on account of the extreme contrast between them; the long, loose-limbed, deer-footed youngster, and the square-set, rugged veteran with his trunk like the stump of an oak.

The betting began to rise upon the younger man from the instant that they were put face to face, for his advantages were obvious, whilst those qualities which had brought Harrison to the top in his youth were only a memory in the minds of the older men. All could see the three inches extra of height and two of reach which Wilson possessed, and a glance at the quick, cat-like motions of his feet, and the perfect poise of his body upon his legs, showed how swiftly he could spring either in or out from his slower adversary.

But it took a subtler insight to read the grim smile which flickered over the smith's mouth, or the smouldering fire which shone in his grey eyes, and it was only the old-timers who knew

that, with his mighty heart and his iron frame, he was a perilous man to lay odds against.

Wilson stood in the position from which he had derived his nickname, his left hand and left foot well to the front, his body sloped very far back from his loins, and his guard thrown across his chest, but held well forward in a way which made him exceedingly hard to get at.

The smith, on the other hand, assumed the obsolete attitude which Mendoza introduced, but which had not for ten years been seen in a first-class battle. Both his knees were slightly bent, he stood square to his opponent, and his two big, brown fists were held over his mark, so that he could lead equally with either.

Wilson's hands, which moved incessantly in and out, had been stained with some astringent juice with the purpose of preventing them from puffing, and so great was the contrast between them and his white fore-arms, that I imagined that he was wearing dark, close-fitting gloves until my uncle explained the matter in a whisper.

So they stood in a quiver of eagerness and expectation, whilst that huge multitude hung so silently and breathlessly upon every motion that they might have believed themselves to be alone, man to man, in the centre of some primeval solitude.

It was evident from the beginning that Crab Wilson meant to throw no chance away, and that he would trust

to his lightness of foot and quickness of hand until he should see something of the tactics of this rough-looking antagonist. He paced swiftly round several times, with little, elastic, menacing steps, whilst the smith pivoted slowly to correspond. Then, as Wilson took a backward step to induce Harrison to break his ground and follow him, the older man grinned and shook his head.

"You must come to me, lad," said he. "I'm too old to scamper round the ring after you. But we have the day before us, and I'll wait."

He may not have expected his invitation to be so promptly answered; but in an instant, with a panther spring, the west-countryman was on him.



## OUR LONG, COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY.



# Arthur's Uncle!

A Long, Complete Story of  
Jimmy Silver & Co., intro-  
ducing Arthur Beresford-Baggs.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

## The 1st Chapter.

### Many Pals!

"Money makes the mare go!" Lovell of the Fourth made that sapient observation. Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome grinned assent. The Fistical Four, of the Fourth, had come out of the School House on their way to the gates, and Lovell's observation was called forth by the sight of Arthur Beresford-Baggs, the new junior at Rookwood.

Beresford-Baggs had been about three weeks at Rookwood now, and he had fallen cheerily into his place there.

With the more worldly-minded of the juniors he had been popular from the start. The son of a millionaire had many recommendations to fellows like Peele and Gower and Townsend and Topham. While Tubby Muffin had been prepared to worship the ground he walked on.

But his own really good qualities recommended him to better fellows than Peele & Co. He was good-natured and good-tempered, and if in unguarded moments he dropped an "h" or two, that was not exactly a crime.

Besides, he was entertaining. Three years of an expensive tutor had prepared him for a public school, and when he was on his guard nothing could exceed the careful primness of his speech.

In careless moments he dropped into an accent and pronunciation that contrasted wonderfully with that primness, and the contrast was undoubtedly amusing.

Even Mornington, the most fastidious fellow at Rookwood, had come round to like the new fellow, and gave him a cheery nod whenever they met. At the present moment Arthur, Beresford-Baggs was sauntering in the quadrangle in a very elegant manner.

Smythe of the Shell sauntered on one side of him, Tracy of the Shell on the other.

The two nutty youths were airing their very best manners for the benefit of Beresford-Baggs.

Evidently the son of the munition millionaire was a fellow whom Adolphus Smythe & Co. delighted to honour.

They graciously overlooked the undoubted fact that, in earlier youth, he had "swept" out a shop, as he had described it to Rawson in his own language.

Certainly, there was something shocking, to Adolphus' mind, in a fellow earning his daily bread by the sweat of his brow; but in Arthur's case Adolphus was prepared to overlook it. Generous tolerance could not go further.

The Fistical Four could not help smiling at the sight of Arthur sauntering gracefully between the two nuts of the Shell. Undoubtedly, as Lovell had remarked, it was money that made the mare go.

Without his ample cash, Arthur Beresford-Baggs would have received the stoniest of marble eyes from Smythe & Co. From an honoured Beresford he would have declined into a despised Baggs.

Talboys of the Fifth was strolling across the quad from another direction, and Jimmy Silver noted that he was bearing down upon Arthur and his nutty comrades.

The Fistical Four slowed down a little, interested to see what would happen. Talboys of the Fifth was a most expensive and haughty youth, and as a rule he regarded mere fags of the Fourth as if they were not!

But it was clear that Talboys of the Fifth was going to relax his accustomed hauteur in favour of this gilt-edged fag.

Talboys came out into the gravel path just in front of the sauntering three, and stopped.

He nodded graciously to Arthur Beresford-Baggs.

Smythe and Tracy gave him a rather warlike look. They divined at once that the lofty Fifth-Former was after their prize.

"I've been lookin' for you, kid!" said Talboys, in his most genial tone.

"Well, here I am, dear boy!" answered Arthur.

Talboys winced slightly. Even from a gilt-edged fag he did not quite like "dear boy." But he smiled determinedly.

"I've been goin' to ask you up to my study for some time," said the dandy of the Fifth. "Hansom wants to see you, too. Come along now, will you?"

Arthur glanced at his two companions. Such an invitation from a senior of the Fifth Form was a great honour, and he had been long enough at Rookwood to learn that much. Few, if any, of the Fourth could boast of invitations into the Fifth Form studies.

Smythe and Tracy looked rather green.

To have their prize bagged under their noses in this way was disconcerting; in fact, exasperating.

But Arthur shook his head. Loyalty was one of his good qualities, and it showed up to advantage now.

"Thank you very much, dear boy," he began.

"Well, come along!" said Arthur cheerily. "I'm jest—I mean, I'm just talking to these chaps."

Talboys of the Fifth stared at him. For the moment he could not quite believe his ears.

But he had to believe them, for Arthur, with a cheery nod, walked on with Smythe and Tracy, who were grinning now.

Talboys stood rooted to the ground. His invitation to a Fifth Form study had been declined, or, at least, put off, by a fag of the Fourth!

"Well, by gad!" Jimmy Silver & Co. heard the Fifth-Former murmur as they passed him.

And Talboys walked rather quickly away, with wrath and indignation in his eye.

Smythe and Tracy sauntered on with Beresford-Baggs, in a very happy humour. At that moment they quite liked their new friend, apart from his millions.

"What did I say?" grinned Lovell, as the Fistical Four turned out at the gates. "Money makes the mare go, and no mistake. Even the Fifth are ready to swallow young Baggy, and be nice to him."

"He's not a bad sort!" remarked Raby.

"Not at all!" chuckled Lovell. "But I don't really think that it was for his good qualities that Talboys was so kind to him."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Well, plenty of cash is a good quality," remarked Newcome, with a laugh. "That kid has more pound notes than another chap has tanners. I don't know whether his father ought to have made millions out of munitions, but at least he shells out to young hopeful Tubby Muffin has been in clover ever since he came to Rookwood."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver glanced back from the gateway. Townshend and Topham had joined Arthur & Co. in the quad, with their kindest smiles on. Towny and Topy were Arthur's study-mates, and there had been a little tiff in the study; but Towny and Topy had got over that.

They felt that, as his study-mates, they had first claim on the millionaire, and they did not intend to take a back seat.

Peele and Gower and Lattrey came scudding up to join the circle of admirers, and Leggett of the Modern Fourth was hovering in the offing, evidently desirous of joining up.

Jimmy Silver grinned as he turned from the gates, and started up the road to Coombe with his chums. Arthur Baggs had begun life in the humblest circumstances, but he was on the best of terms with the most expensive and nutty set of fellows at Rookwood, and on quite good terms with the rest, including Jimmy Silver & Co., who did not care for his money at all.

And there was no "swank" about him. He was quite good-natured and unassuming, only enjoying the good things that came to him with a cheery zest.

He was, as Jimmy remarked, a lucky bargee. Nothing, apparently, could deprive him of his happy prospects but the bankruptcy of J. Baggs, Limited, which was not likely to happen.

## The 2nd Chapter.

### Arthur's Uncle.

"Skuse me, young gents!" Jimmy Silver & Co. had nearly reached Coombe village, when the stranger met them in the lane and addressed them.

The Fistical Four politely stopped, regarding the stranger with some interest.

He was a middle-aged gentleman, with a fat, shiny, good-natured face, which seemed, somehow, familiar to the chums of Rookwood, though they were not aware of having met the gentleman before. He was dressed in what was evidently a "best suit," somewhat loud tweeds, in which, as in Joseph's celebrated coat, many colours were mingled. The many creases in that best suit hinted that it had been recently unpacked, and was seldom worn. No doubt it had been donned for some special occasion.

Round the fat gentleman hung a fishy odour, which was accounted for by a large rush-bag he carried. From the rush-bag, such as fishmongers use, protruded a tail. It was the tail of a big fish. In his other hand the fat gentleman carried an umbrella, of the gamp type. That umbrella, with its gold knob and its ample waist, was a striking object in itself.

It was a rather warm spring day, and the fat gentleman did not seem much used to walking, and he was plainly feeling the heat. Perspiration bedewed his shiny face. His bowler-hat, with a very curly brim, was pushed back on his head, displaying a ridge of well-oiled hair below.

"Skuse me!" he repeated, stopping. "P'raps you young gents can tell me whether I'm on the right road for Rookwood School?"

"Right as rain!" answered Jimmy Silver, wondering what the shiny gentleman could want at Rookwood.

"Keep straight on!"

"Fur?" asked the shiny gentleman.

"Ea?"

"Fur?"

"I—I don't quite catch on," said Jimmy, in perplexity. The mention of fur, especially on a warm spring day, was puzzling.

The shiny gentleman blinked at him. Jimmy was perplexed, and the happy stranger seemed perplexed by his perplexity.

"I asked you, is it fur?" he said. "Is what fur?" ejaculated the astounded schoolboy.

"That there place, Rookwood."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jimmy, comprehending suddenly. "No, it isn't far. I—I didn't catch your meaning for a moment. It's not very far; less than a mile from here."

"Oh crimes!"

A mile was not much to the Rookwood juniors, but it seemed a good deal to the fat gentleman, who, moreover, was carrying a rather weighty bag, not to mention the weight of the umbrella, which must have been considerable.

"I s'pose there ain't a keb to be 'ad?" asked the dismayed stranger.

"There's sometimes a cab at the station, in the village," answered Jimmy. "Not always."

"There wasn't when I got out'er the trine."

"The—the trine! Oh, the train! I—I see! Well, I'm afraid you'll have to walk it," said Jimmy Silver.

"There's a stile along here, if you'd like to rest a bit."

"Thank you kindly, sir!" said the fat gentleman, brightening up. "I ain't used to the country. I'm used to jumpin' on a 'bus at the street corner, you see. Walkin' ain't much in my line. This here cod weighs a bit, too!"

The fat gentleman hooked his umbrella over his right arm, and with his left hand extracted a large pocket-handkerchief. It was a very handsome handkerchief, of a scarlet hue, contrasting somewhat with the hues of his coat, but matching, on the other hand, the colour of a very brilliant necktie. He dabbed his perspiring forehead with relief, and then blew his nose with a report like a pistol. The Rookwooders looked on at these operations with gravity. Politeness forbade them to smile.

"Where's that there stile?" asked the fat gentleman, at length.

"This way. I'll show you," said Jimmy.

"Thank you kindly, sir!"

"Not at all."

Jimmy Silver turned obligingly, and his chums turned with him. They did not mind losing a few minutes for the sake of a stranger in distress. The juniors led the way to the stile, which was a little off the road.

"You young gents know Rookwood?" asked the shiny gentleman affably, as they proceeded.

"Well, a little," answered Jimmy, with a smile. "We belong to Rookwood, you see."

"Blow me, you don't say so!" exclaimed the fat gentleman.

"Oh, yes!"

"My eye! Then p'raps you know my nevv?"

"Your—your nephew?"

"Yes, young Art."

"I—I—I don't think—I—I'm not sure—" stammered Jimmy Silver blankly. "Is he at Rookwood School?"

"You may say so!" answered the shiny gentleman impressively. "You may lay to that. I'm going to see 'im, and takin' 'im a present. Look 'ere!" He opened the rush-bag, and displayed a half of a very handsome cod. "Look at that there! Ain't he a beauty?"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Jimmy.

"That's for Art!" said the fat gentleman proudly. "Ari a cod. A present from his Uncle William. Won't Art be pleased? Not 'arf!"

And the fat gentleman smiled expansively.

The Fistical Four looked at one another. Who "Art" might possibly be they did not know. But it seemed scarcely credible that this shiny gentleman was the uncle of a Rookwood fellow, and was taking him a present of half a codfish, even of such a handsome codfish. There seemed to be a mistake somewhere.

"Are—are you sure you've got it right, sir?" asked Lovell, very politely. "Your nephew is at Rookwood?"

"You may lay to that."

They had reached the stile now, and the fat gentleman sat down on the step, with evident satisfaction. He laid the bag and the umbrella at his feet, and had recourse to the scarlet handkerchief again, mopping his damp brow with considerable vigour.

"What's the chap's name, if you don't mind telling us, sir?" said Raby.

"His surname, I mean."

"Same as mine—Baggs!"

"Oh!" The Fistical Four ejaculated "Oh!" in chorus. They understood now. This was a relation of Beresford-Baggs, of the Fourth, evidently not on the Beresford side of the family. That was why his plump features had seemed familiar at first sight. Now they looked at him more attentively they could see a distinct likeness to Arthur. And their immediate feeling was one of concern for Arthur. They could not help wondering what effect the arrival of this relative would have upon him, and upon the nutty pals they had left surrounding him.

## The 3rd Chapter.

### A Good Turn!

Mr. William Baggs continued to mop his manly brow, with satisfaction to himself. Now that he was comfortably landed on the stile, there was no reason for Jimmy Silver & Co. to linger, but they lingered. Mr. Baggs was in a genial and conversational mood, and they did not feel that they were intruding.

"You know Art?" inquired Mr. Baggs, in an interval of the mopping. "We know him," said Jimmy. "He's a new fellow. He's been only a few weeks at Rookwood."

"That's it. Any of his folks been there to see 'im yet?"

"His father came with him—Sir Japhet."

"My brother Jap!" assented Mr. Baggs, the genial good humour of his face clouding for a moment. "Sir Japhet in these days, and awfully grand. P'raps I shall be Sir William one of these here days, if I make a fortune in the fish line. Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Rookwood smiled, as the shiny gentleman laughed with great heartiness.

"Ain't his Aunt Sarah been to see 'im?" asked Mr. Baggs.

"I—I think not."

"Nor his Cousin 'Erb?"

"N-no."

"Poor ole Art!" said Mr. Baggs, with deep commiseration. "He will be feelin' lonely and lef'. It's 'ard on 'im, so it is. 'Owsundever, his old uncle ain't going to give 'im the go-by. Not 'arf! Won't he be pleased to see me, with that there cod, too?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. had very extensive doubts on that point. There was nothing, so far as they knew, snobbish about Arthur Beresford-Baggs, but the least snobbish fellow might have been dismayed by a visit from such a fishy uncle at a school like Rookwood. But it was not their business to cloud the happy satisfaction of Mr. Baggs, who clearly was paying that visit from the kindest and most affectionate of motives.

"Since Jap got on so well," continued Mr. Baggs, "I ain't seed him so much. Jap 'as grown 'aughty. He was always the clever one of the family, he was—shary as a needle! We always knowed he'd get on. Why, bless your 'eart, when I was still pushin' a fish barrer, Jap was in business for himself, and makin' money 'and-over-fist. Proud of 'im, we was, when his business was turned into a limited company. It went bust arterwards, and lots of folks lost money in it. But not Jap. Jap 'ad sold out afore the bust came. Sharp as a needle, he was," said Mr. Baggs admiringly. "And then when he got on to the contractin'—When the war came I says to my old 'oman, I says, 'You see, I says, my brother Jap will make a good thing of this here! And didn't he? You believe me?"

Mr. Baggs paused to attend once more to his perspiring brow.

"You believe me!" he pursued. "Why, Jap 'ad his own factories goin', and contracts—you believe me! Now he's a baronet, Jap is, but you mark my words, some of these here days he will be a dook."

And Mr. Baggs nodded emphatically.

"Does your nephew expect you at Rookwood?" asked Jimmy casually.

The shiny gentleman smiled.

"Not 'im," he answered. "This here is a pleasant surprise for him. You see, Sir Japhet—my brother Jap—don't see us much now, nor tell us things. Liberal enough with money, if it comes to that; but we move in different spears now, he says, and I dessey he's right. I never knowed Art was at Rookwood at all till he wrote to me. Art ain't forgotten the old days when he swept out my shop, and when the family was glad if Uncle Bill dropped in with 'arf a salmon or a few pence as a present. He's a good boy, and he's got a good 'eart. He ain't puffed up, and he told me so in that there letter. Ain't forgotten his own folks, he ain't, and says he's sorry he never sees us now, and I know it's the truth."

"Then I 'ad an idea. I says to the old 'oman, 'Maria, I says, 'young





## ARTHUR'S UNCLE!

(Continued from previous page.)

### The 4th Chapter. Very Nice for Arthur!

"Seen Baggs?"  
Tubby Muffin of the Classical Fourth, was the first fellow the juniors encountered as they came trotting in at the big gates. Jimmy Silver paused to ask the hurried question.

Tubby looked at him.  
"If you mean my pal, Beresford-Baggs—"

"Yes, yes!"  
"Then don't call him Baggs!" said Tubby reprovingly. "Call him Beresford-Baggs if you speak to me about him! He's my pal!"

"You silly ass, where is he?" roared Jimmy Silver. "It's important!"  
"Is it?" Tubby's eyes glistened. "Is it a hamper?"

"What?"  
"Has something come for him—a hamper, or—"

"No!" howled Jimmy. "Where is he, fathead? I want to see him at once."

"A visitor, perhaps?" asked Tubby.

Art's stuck all by himself in a big school, feelin' lonesome, I'll be bound. What price droppin' in to see 'im, casual like, and takin' him a little present out of the shop, I says, 'like as it was in the old days afore Jap made 'is pile?' I says. 'Jest like you to think of it, William,' she says to me, says she. So I takes this here afternoon off and 'umps along, and I've brought 'arf a cod—that there cod—for a present for young Art! Won't he be pleased!"

"My hat!" murmured Lovell.

Jimmy Silver was silent.  
To say a word that would hurt the feelings of the kind-hearted old gentleman was impossible. Besides, it was no business of his.

But he could not help thinking of poor Arthur, when this astounding relative landed on him under the eyes of all Rookwood.

Mr. Baggs' good faith was a touching thing to see.

Apparently it had not crossed his mind that there was any objection of any sort, to his paying a visit to Rookwood.

Indeed, he had evidently dressed up in his best clothes in order to do proper credit to his nephew.

By this time the shiny gentleman had sufficiently rested himself. He rose from the stile, and gathered up his umbrella and the rush bag.

"Straight on—eh?" he said.

"Yes," gasped Jimmy. "Follow the road, and you'll land right at the school gates."

"Thank you kindly, sir."

And the cheery gentleman tramped on.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

"Well!" ejaculated Lovell, at last.

"He's a good old sort!" said Jimmy.

"Yes, rather, but—"

"But—"

"But—ahem—"

"I—I suppose Baggs will be glad to see him, as he's his uncle. But—"

"What on earth will Adolphus say?"

"And Towny—and Topsy—"

"Poor old Baggs!"

Jimmy Silver's brows were wrinkled as he glanced after the shiny gentleman trotting away cheerfully in the direction of Rookwood School. While his chums were exchanging comments Jimmy was thinking.

"It's a bit rough on Beresford-Baggs," he said, at last.

"All the more because the chap isn't a snob, you know. If he'd known that his uncle was coming, I dare say he could have met him somewhere outside the gates of the school. It would have been—ahem—better. Look here, Baggs isn't a bad sort—perhaps we could help him out!"

"I don't see—"

"There's a short cut across the fields. We could get to Rookwood a long way ahead of that merchant; he's a slow walker, and going by the road."

"And warn Baggy of the wrath to come?" chuckled Lovell.

"Well, yes; put him on his guard, you know."

"We were going to Coombe—"

"Never mind Coombe; it would be too rough for that cheery old merchant to take Baggy by surprise, with his merry codfish, too."

"Oh, all right," said Lovell. "This is going to be our self-denial afternoon, I can see. When Uncle James says turn, we all turn. Come on!"

"Any old thing," yawned Raby; and Newcome nodded assent.

So Jimmy Silver & Co. plunged through a gap in the hedge, and started across the fields at a rapid trot. While Uncle William was progressing slowly by the road, his young acquaintances were covering the ground in rapid style by the short cut; and the gentleman with the half cod was still at a good distance, when the Fistical Four arrived breathless at Rookwood.

cheery Co. were not wanted in Adolphus' elegant quarters. And Smythe & Co. were intending to enlighten Arthur as to the joys and pleasures of the game of banker that afternoon.

"Oh, you're here, kid!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Want me?" asked Arthur, with a pleasant nod.

"Yes; I want to speak to you!"

"Go ahead, old scout!"

"Will you come along with me for a minute?" asked Jimmy. He felt that it would not serve Arthur's interests to explain about the fishy gentleman in Smythe & Co.'s presence.

Adolphus interrupted at once.

"Let Beresford-Baggs alone!" he snapped. "Beresford-Baggs is our guest this afternoon. You fags can buzz off."

"It's important, kid," said Jimmy Silver.

Arthur looked puzzled.

"Can't you tell me here?" he asked.

"I'd rather not."

"Beresford-Baggs has no secrets with you, Silver," said Tracy. "What do you want to come and bother the chap for?"

Arthur rose to his feet.

"You chaps excuse me a minute or two?" he said. "I won't be long."

"Oh, all serene!" said Smythe, as graciously as he could. "Come back, you know."

"But—of course—" Arthur hesitated. "Of course, it—it isn't exactly the thing for him to visit me here, under the—the circus. Father said so, and I s'pose he knows. I felt 'orrid mean not asking him to come when I wrote. But, poor old Uncle Bill, he doesn't mean any harm. He'd cut off his 'and rather than 'urt me."

The chums of the Fourth were silent.

They liked Arthur for his evident regard for his rough old uncle, and at the same time they understood his feeling that Rookwood School was not precisely the place for the old gentleman, kind-hearted as he was. Arthur had had three years of an expensive tutor since the days when he had swept out his uncle's shop. Mr. Baggs had not had that advantage. It made a deal of difference.

"I'm much obliged to you chaps," said Arthur. "I'm glad to know he's coming. Is he far away?"

"He ought to be here in about ten minutes, I think," said Jimmy. "I thought I'd give you the tip, old chap."

And the Fistical Four walked away, having done what they had come back to Rookwood for.

Arthur stood in the passage, with a deep wrinkle of thought in his brow. He was evidently troubled.

Not for a moment did the good-hearted lad think of failing in his duty and affection towards a relative who

gold," said Arthur. "I wouldn't 'ave wrote to 'im if I was ashamed of 'im. And I ain't, nor I won't never be. It's jest the kindness of his 'eart that 'ave made him come 'ere. I—I say, 'ow do you think my friends, Towny and Topsy, will treat 'im?"

"H'm!"

"They won't speak to 'im—nor won't Smythe," said Arthur miserably. "Course they won't! And his feelin's will be 'urt. He ain't no fool, Uncle Bill ain't, and he'll see. He'll think he's done me 'arm 'comin' 'ere. And—and I wonder what the 'Ead will think of 'im?"

Jimmy Silver was sharing that wonder.

"P'raps you could advise a bloke?" said Arthur helplessly.

"What would you do, Silver?"

In that extremity the heir of Baggs, Limited, did not think of appealing to his nutty friends. But an instinct warned him that Uncle James of Rookwood, was the fellow to help him out.

"You'd like me to advise you?" asked Jimmy, hesitating.

"Yes, yes."

"Well, I—I think it would be wiser, all round, for Mr. Baggs not to show up here," said Jimmy.

"Ow's he to be stopped without 'urtin' his feelings? I'd rather he showed up all round than 'urt his feelings."

"Good man!" said Jimmy. "I wouldn't hurt his feelings for worlds. He's a jolly decent old chap, in my opinion. But suppose you met him outside the gates, and introduced him to some friends—"

Arthur shuddered.

"I daren't let Smythe see 'im—nor Towny nor Topsy, neither!"

"Well, we'll be your friends for the afternoon," said Jimmy, with a smile. "We like your uncle. Don't we, you chaps?"

"Hear, hear!" murmured the Co.

"We'll all gather round him, and take him to tea somewhere," said Jimmy. "That will be nice for him, and he won't be hurt at all. We'll all see him off after tea, and—and there you are!"

Arthur brightened up.

"Thank you!" he said. "You're a good sort, Jimmy. You're more a gentleman than all them 'igh-class blokes what wouldn't back-up a chap. You're more 'igh-class than all of them, if you ask me!"

"Many thanks," duckled Jimmy.

"Come on! No time to lose!"

"Git a move on, then," said Arthur.

And the five juniors hurried out of the House together.

### The 5th Chapter. Looking After Uncle.

Jimmy Silver and his comrades scudded down to the gates. There was no time to be lost, if the visitor was to be headed off. But as they came by the porter's lodge Jimmy paused.

"You fellows get on," he said.

"I'll follow!"

And Jimmy ran into the lodge.

Arthur hurried out of the gates, with Lovell and Raby and Newcome. Some idea had evidently come into Jimmy Silver's head, but they did not stay to inquire what it was. Uncle William was sure to be drawing near to the school by that time.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Raby suddenly, as they scudded down the road.

A hundred yards from the school gates was Uncle William, umbrella and fish-bag and all. But he was not alone. He had halted under the trees by the road, and was mopping his brow again, while he conversed with Tubby Muffin!

Arthur suppressed a groan.

Of all the Rookwood fellows, the chattering Tubby was the one he would least have desired to speak to Uncle Bill.

But Tubby was there! He had guessed, from what Jimmy Silver had said, that a visitor was coming for Beresford-Baggs, and it was not hard for him to guess that there was something unusually interesting about the visitor.

So Reginald Muffin had rolled out of the gates to see who was coming.

The fat Classical grinned at the juniors as they came up.

"I say, here's Baggs' uncle!" he exclaimed. "I say, Baggs, you didn't tell us your Uncle William was coming! He, he, he!"

Arthur did not heed him.

Mr. Baggs dropped his fish-bag, and extended a damp and fishy fist for his affectionate nephew to shake.

"Allo, Art!" he exclaimed.

"Hallo, uncle!"

"My word!" said Mr. Baggs, surveying him admiringly. "What a swell you look, Arthur!"

"D-d-d-do I?"



**LEFT BEHIND!** There was a very supercilious expression on Muffin's face as he watched the party stow themselves in the trap. He was about to emit a scornful exclamation when Jimmy Silver's whip—by design or accident—caught him under the chin. So what Tubby actually emitted as the trap started was a flonkish yell. "Yaroooh!"

"Is it his pater? His pater gave him two tenners when he was here last. I saw him. Real tenners, you know—I know a tenner when I see one. If his pater's coming—"

"It's not his pater, you fat duffer!"

Jimmy caught Tubby Muffin by the shoulder and shook him. "Where is Baggs?"

"Ow! Leggo! I don't know where he is!"

"You—you—you— Couldn't you tell me that at first, you burbling jabberwock?" shrieked Jimmy Silver.

He sat Tubby Muffin down in the quadrangle, and ran on towards the School House with his chums.

Teddy Grace of the Fourth was coming out, and Jimmy called to him.

"Putty! Seen Baggs?"

"With Smythe, I think," said Grace. "They went to Smythe's study some time ago—"

"Thanks!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. hurried on to the Shell quarters.

There was a sound of cheerful voices in Smythe's study. Smythe & Co appeared to be entertaining a guest there. Jimmy Silver rapped on the door and opened it at once.

Smythe, Tracy, and Howard were there with their guest. The three nuts of the Shell were smoking cigarettes. Arthur Beresford-Baggs was reclining gracefully in an armchair, evidently enjoying being made a fuss of by the three elegant young gentlemen; but he was not smoking. Adolphus had pressed him in vain to try one of his expensive gold-tipped.

Smythe frowned at the sight of the Fistical Four in the doorway. The

Arthur nodded, and followed Jimmy Silver from the study.

Jimmy led him along the passage, out of the hearing of possibly inquisitive ears.

"Well, what is it?" asked Arthur, in great surprise. "You're jolly mysterious, Silver."

"It isn't exactly my business," said Jimmy. "But I thought I'd tell you that your uncle is coming."

Arthur gave a start.

"My uncle! Which uncle?"

"Uncle William—Mr. Baggs."

"Comin' 'ere?" In his surprise Beresford-Baggs dropped into his ancient mode of speech. "Ole Uncle Bill comin' 'ere?"

"Yes. We met him coming up the road from Coombe."

"My eye!"

"He's bringing half a cod, in a bag, as a present for you, old chap!" said Lovell solemnly. "A jolly good fish! We've seen it."

"We have—we has!" murmured Newcome.

Arthur stared blankly at the Fistical Four.

"You—you—you're sure?" he stammered.

"We had a talk with him," said Jimmy. "Of course, we don't want to interfere; but I gathered from him that it's a surprise visit, so I thought that—"

"Thank you!" said Arthur, in a low voice. "I'm glad to know. I wrote to the old boy from here. I wasn't going to turn him down, you know. He's always been a good uncle to me."

"Good for you, old top!"

had been kind to him in the days when he needed kindness. But—

There was a big "but." For the shiny gentleman, with his fishy gift, to roll into the Rookwood quadrangle, amidst a crowd of well-dressed fellows—

Poor Arthur could imagine the snobbish horror of Smythe & Co., the supercilious sneers of Towny and Topsy.

It would not be agreeable for the old gentleman himself. He was coming in good faith, unsuspecting; but he would not be long in learning how some of the Rookwooders, at least, regarded him—in realising that he had done harm to his nephew in his new surroundings.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were on the stairs when there was a patter of feet behind them. Arthur overtook them breathlessly.

He had forgotten about the nutty party in Smythe's study now. There was more important matters to think of at this juncture.

"Old on!" gasped Arthur.

"Yes, old top?" The Fistical Four stopped. "Anything we can do?"

inquired Jimmy Silver.

"I—I 'ope so." In his trouble poor Arthur had quite dropped the Beresford, and was undisguisedly all Baggs.

"I—I say, I'm in a 'ole. Don't you blokes think I'm lockin' down on my uncle—my own flesh and blood. I ain't! But—but I'm fair in a 'ole, ain't I?"

"Ahem!" murmured Lovell.

"Some of the blokes will sneer at 'im. I know that. I wouldn't 'ave 'is feelings 'urt for the world—not 'arf! Uncle Bill's got a 'eart of



**ARTHUR'S  
UNCLE!**

(Continued from previous page.)



"You do, and you may lay to that," said Mr. Baggs. "Blessed if I shouldn't be ashamed to meet you, Art, only I thought of puttin' on my Sunday clothes to come. I wouldn't disgrace you afore your swell friends."

"Oh!" gasped Arthur. There was a cachinnation from Reginald Muffin, which was suddenly cut short by Lovell grasping his collar. "Shut up, you little beast!" said Lovell, in a ferocious whisper.

"You-ow-ow-ow!" "Look 'ere, Art, what I got for you!" continued Mr. Baggs, opening the fish-bag. "Arf a cod, my boy! Ain't he a beauty?"

"Ripping!" stammered Arthur. "The best thing I 'ad in the shop this morning," said Mr. Baggs impressively. "I says to your Aunt Maria, I says, 'I ain't selling that there.' I says, 'Not if they offers me its weight in quids,' I says. 'That there's for young Art,' I says. And here it is, Art!"

"Thank you!" gasped the new junior of Rookwood. "You're awfully good, uncle!"

"Don't mention it!" said Mr. Baggs, with a wave of a shiny and fishy hand. "I ain't forgot my nevy, you may lay to that. Your father, Art, 'avo growed a bit 'aughty since he's been a big contractor; but there's nothing of that there kind about you. You're the same old Art, and s'long as you're the same old Art, I'm the same old Uncle Bill—wot?"

There was a clatter of hoofs on the road, and a trap dashed up, with Jimmy Silver driving. He halted by the group in the road.

Then his comrades understood why he had stopped at the porter's lodge. A liberal tip to old Mack had induced him to lend the trap. Jimmy Silver was a driver who could be relied upon; and a ten-shilling note had overcome old Mack's objections.

Mr. Baggs glanced at Jimmy, and then at the other juniors. He was rather surprised at meeting them again, after having left them so far behind him on the road.

Jimmy smiled down to him. "I've borrowed the trap, kid!" he called out to Arthur. "I thought you'd like to give your uncle a drive and take him to tea. We'd all like to come, if Mr. Baggs doesn't object."

"Object!" said Mr. Baggs, in his hearty way. "No fear, my boy! The more the merrier. Werry glad I am to see young Art getting on so well with high-class friends."

"Arthur's very popular in the school, Mr. Baggs," said Lovell solemnly. "He would be," said the admiring uncle. "My Art would make 'is way anywhere. I don't say as I'd object to some tea, too. Is there a place handy? I dessey there's some difficulty about getting tea for visitors at the school, you being a nipper in a low standard, Art."

"It's not tea-time yet at Rookwood, you see," explained Jimmy Silver. "My idea was a bit of a drive round, to show you our country. We're rather proud of our scenery in this part, you know. And there's a jolly little place by the river where we can have tea, if you like."

"I'm game!" said Mr. Baggs. "My eye! What would the old gal say if she could see me a-driving round the country with you high-class young gentlemen in a pony-trap! My eye!"

"Jump in!" said Jimmy. "Help your uncle in, Arthur!"

"Right-ho!" gasped Arthur. Mr. Baggs sat down in the trap with great satisfaction. He had had quite enough walking—too much, in fact. And the feeling that he was being made much of by Arthur's high-class schoolfellows was very gratifying to the old gentleman.

"And in that there bag," he said, "Don't you drop it! That there cod is a beauty, and mustn't be spilled!"

"Here you are!" said Newcome. The fish-bag was handed in, and safely disposed of by Uncle William. It was a roomy trap, and there was

space for the five juniors with Uncle Bill. But there was no room for Tubby Muffin.

Neither was Tubby, for once, eager to join up. Even tea at a jolly little place on the river would not have compensated the aristocratic Tubby for "being seen" in company with Uncle Bill. Tubby Muffin believed in drawing a line somewhere, and he drew it at Uncle Bill.

The fat Classical was also eager to get into Rookwood to spread the description of Uncle William there. It was an item of news that he could not possibly have kept to himself—and he forgot the numerous loans he had extracted from Beresford-Baggs during the past few weeks. Gratitude for favours rendered never troubled Reginald Muffin very much.

There was a very supercilious expression on Muffin's fat face as he watched the party stow themselves in the trap.

He was preparing to emit a scornful cachinnation as the trap started; but as Jimmy Silver cracked the whip, the lash caught Tubby under his fat chin—by accident or design. So what Tubby actually emitted as the trap started was a fiendish yell. "Yaroooh!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were off, bowling away at a good speed, and Tubby Muffin was left rubbing his fat chin. He shook a fat fist after Jimmy Silver as the trap disappeared round a bend in the lane, and then rolled away into the gates—full of news!

**The 6th Chapter.  
A Happy Afternoon!**

That half-holiday was a very interesting one to Jimmy Silver & Co.

They enjoyed the drive. A drive on a sunny spring afternoon, with tea at the Angler's Rest, was quite enjoyable, and the presence of Uncle Bill did not make it less so.

True, the waiter at the Angler's Rest was very much surprised at finding such a fishy gentleman as Uncle Bill in company with Rookwood juniors, and was rather stand-offish in his manner. But the waiter's disapproval did not worry the cheery Co. They felt that they could survive it.

Arthur enjoyed himself, too. In fact, he fairly benned in the company of his affectionate uncle; and there was no doubt that he regarded the old gentleman with very affectionate feelings.

Three years of a high-class tutor, and three weeks of a high-class public-school, had possibly had a slightly oppressive effect on "Art"—much as he was elated by his good fortune.

With his uncle he was his old self; and he inquired with great eagerness after Aunt Maria and Aunt Sarah and cousin 'Erb.

As for Uncle William, he was beaming with satisfaction all the time.

It transpired that he had had some slight doubts as to whether Art's new friends at the big school would think him "good enough." For that reason he had been careful to put on his very best clothes, and had bought an entirely new necktie, in order to disarm all possible criticism.

Any doubts he had had on the subject were entirely set at rest now by the kindly attentions he received from Jimmy Silver & Co.

Perhaps those cheery gentlemen took Uncle Bill as a huge joke; but they were very careful to maintain a due decorum of manner.

They did not even wince when Uncle William ate jam with his knife, and picked his teeth with a fork. It was a free country, and Uncle Bill had a right to do as he liked with his cutlery. Arthur gave them more than one grateful glance during the happy meal. He was fervently thankful that Jimmy Silver & Co. were with him, and not Adolphus Smythe, or Topsy and Toppo. He had a feeling that even his ample cash resources would not have compensated for Uncle Bill in the eyes of the Nuts of Rookwood. He had observed that even in Tubby Muffin.

The sun was setting when the juniors rose from tea in the garden of the Angler's Rest. Uncle William's train was at 6.15, and there was just comfortable time to drive to the station.

The merry party piled into the trap again, and Jimmy Silver, who drove, sagely selected a route which did not

run by Rookwood School. He did not want to drive Arthur's uncle through crowds of Rookwooders cooping in for call-over.

Mr. Baggs chatted genially all the way to Coombe Station. The Rookwood juniors learned, without inquiring, a good many particulars concerning the fish business, and the earlier life of Sir Japhet Beresford-Baggs, baronet. They wondered how pleased the baronet would have been if he could have listened also.

Glad as Arthur undoubtedly was to see his uncle again, it is possible that he was a little relieved when the trap stopped at the station in Coombe.

He alighted to accompany the old gentleman to the platform, the Fistical Four waiting with the trap outside.

"Take care of that there 'arf cod, Art!" said Mr. Baggs, as he received his umbrella from Lovell. "I s'pose you can get it biled all right at the school—eh?"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Arthur. "Don't you young gents put your feet on it in the trap."

"No fear!" said Jimmy Silver. "You wouldn't get a cod like that in this here neighbourhood. You see, being in the business, I know what's what."

"Better get in, uncle," murmured Arthur.

"Right you are! Good-bye, young gentlemen!" said Mr. Baggs, shaking hands all round with the juniors, with a large, damp, and fishy hand. "Werry pleased to 'ave made your acquaintance, and to 'ave 'ad such a 'appy afternoon. If you ever find yourself in Camden Town, you give me a look in. Me and the old woman will be always pleased to see yer."

"Thank you very much, sir!" said Jimmy. "Good-bye, sir!"

And the shiny gentleman rolled into the station at last, piloted by his dutiful nephew.

The Fistical Four looked at one another and smiled.

"What a merry afternoon!" murmured Lovell. "I—I say, he's a good old sort. I—I rather like him!"

"A hearty old gentleman," said Jimmy Silver. "No deception about him. I can't say there's no cod—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors heard the train roll away, bearing Uncle William to London. The old gentleman was departing well pleased with his visit to Rookwood. Arthur came out of the station, and his face was a little red as he climbed into the trap.

Jimmy Silver cracked the whip, and they started for Rookwood.

It was a rather silent drive. Arthur seemed busy with his thoughts, and the Co. did not interrupt him. Rookwood was in sight when Arthur spoke at last.

"I—I needn't ask you fellows what you think of my uncle," he said, in a low voice. "He's a good man, and I'm fond of him; but you wouldn't think of him as I do. I—I suppose you—won't jaw at Rookwood about—about—"

"Of course not, you duffer!" said Jimmy.

"But Tubby—" said Lovell dubiously.

"That's all right," said Jimmy Silver. "If Muffin has said anything unpleasant about Mr. Baggs, we can bear witness that Tubby doesn't know anything about it. We've had an afternoon out with Mr. Baggs, and if we're pleased with him, Muffin doesn't matter."

"You're awfully good," said Arthur.

The trap stopped. Beresford-Baggs insisted upon indemnifying Jimmy for the tip to Mack, as was but just. The five juniors crossed the quad together, and they did not fail to note that some curious glances were turned upon them by fellows in the quadrangle. Reginald Muffin had not allowed his startling news to grow cold.

Quite a little crowd gathered round the doorway of the School House, as the chums came in. For once, Arthur's nutty friends did not give him an effusive greeting. They seemed to be in a state of doubt.

Arthur passed quickly through the crowd, and went up to his study. But the Fistical Four had to stop. They were surrounded by questioners.

"I say, Silver—"

"Muffin says—"

"Is it true—"

"Beresford-Baggs' uncle—"

Jimmy Silver burst into a laugh. "One at a time!" he said. "Now, then, what's up?"

"I've told the chaps about that awful old guy!" chortled Tubby Muffin. "He, he, he!"

"Muffin's spun us a queer yarn,"

said Conroy. "I suppose it's his gas, as usual."

"Just tell us how the matter stands, Silver," said Smythe, of the Shell anxiously. "We've rather taken up young Beresford-Baggs—"

"In a way—" said Tracy.

"And if it's true—"

"You might tell a chap," said Townsend. "I don't want to be hard on Beresford-Baggs, certainly; but if his people are anythin' like Muffin's description— Oh gad!"

"What is he like, Silver?"

"Like!" said Jimmy reflectively. "Well, he's a man, you know—genus homo, species sapiens—"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Is he an awful blackguard?" asked Adolphus Smythe irritably.

"Certainly not."

"Oh, he isn't! What is he, then? You've really seen him, as Muffin says?" asked Adolphus.

"We've had a drive with him, and tea with him at an inn, and seen him off at the station."

"Oh! Then he can't be such an awful—"

"Such a fearful—"

"Such a—"

"I can't say I found him fearful or awful. He's just Baggs' uncle—that's all. Rather like Baggs to look at."

"Well, Baggs looks decent, whatever he came from!" remarked Topham judiciously.

"Did you like the man, Silver?"

"Oh, yes! I think he's a good sort."

"Did he bring a codfish as a present? Muffin says he did."

"He brought his nephew a very handsome and expensive present of fish," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "It's left at the porter's lodge just now; if you want to see it. I dare say Baggs will get the cook to handle it, and stand a fish supper."

"Well, a fish supper is all right," said Smythe. "It looks to me as if that lying porpoise has been pulling our leg about Beresford-Baggs' uncle! I said so all along, in fact."

"So did I," said Tracy.

"Bump the cod, and teach him not to spin yarns about the relations of friend of ours," continued Adolphus.

"Yes, rather!"

The Fistical Four walked on, grinning, while Adolphus & Co. closed round the hapless Tubby. Wild yells from Muffin followed them.

"You-ow! Leggo! I tell you he was an awful character— Yoop! Reeking with fish! Ow-ow-wow! Dropping his—ow!—atches— Yaroooh!"

Bump, bump, bump! And Tubby Muffin's voice died away in a dolorous howl.

Arthur Beresford-Baggs had a short period of doubt; but he was soon reassured. His nutty friends proved as friendly as ever—in fact, more so, if possible. Jimmy Silver & Co. kept their own counsel, and Tubby Muffin's almost frantic asseverations were disregarded. The fish supper came off, and Adolphus & Co. were present in all their glory.

Uncle Bill had come and gone; and Arthur Beresford-Baggs was as cheery as ever, and held his head as high as ever in the nutty society he found so agreeable. Possibly a doubt smote him at times, whether Aunt Sarah or cousin 'Erb might follow Uncle Bill's example, and look him up at Rookwood. But sufficient for the day was the visitor thereof.

THE END.

**CINEMA  
SNAPSHOTS.**

**"In Old Alsace."**  
"In Old Alsace," which will shortly be showing in this country, is the sensation of Paris, writes a correspondent, where it is now being featured at ten first-week-run houses.

"In Old Alsace" is founded on "L'Ami Fritz," by Eckmann-Chatrian, the author of the late Sir Henry Irving's great stage medium, "The Belshazzar," which was known formerly as "The Polish Jew."

The action of this charming, old-world Alsatian story, filmed by M. Rene Hervil, of Paris, took place seventy years ago, and has an added interest for the present generation in the fact that Alsace, which at the time of the story was in German possession, has once again changed hands.

**"An Eccentric Spendthrift."**  
Particularly attractive elements in the story are the machinations of a match-making old Rabbi, a delightful character impersonated by the premier comedian of France, M. de Max, of the Comedie Francaise.

M. de Max, who has played several times on tours in England with Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, is acknowledged also to be the greatest tragedy artiste in France. He has outwitted all his critics by his interpretations, which at times seem strange, but are always original.

He is a typical Bohemian, spends his money recklessly, dresses in a most eccentric fashion, with fingers always loaded with rings, and wears a bracelet round his wrist, from which the most varied coins hang.

Of Roumanian origin, during the war M. de Max was entrusted with a propaganda mission for the Roumanian Government, and his influence contributed greatly to sway Roumania to take the Allies side.

He is held in very high esteem by less fortunate comrades, whom he always defends, and frequently helps. He has had numerous quarrels with Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, though he always had the greatest admiration for her. She once said of him: "He is a madman, but he has a wonderful talent."

A word should be said for Mlle. Huguette Duffes, who enacts the part of the pretty Suzel, the fascinating farmer's daughter, who works havoc with the hero's bachelor notions in Rene Hervil's screen version of "In Old Alsace."

Mlle. Duffes, who is the juvenile lead at the Comedie Francaise, has been said to be the prettiest girl in France, and is fairly claimed to be the Gladys Cooper and the "postcard queen" of that country.

The Essanay Chaplin comedies—fourteen in all—are being re-issued again, one per fortnight, and commenced on December 29th, 1919.

The recent death of that famous actor, H. B. Irving, recalls his one and only appearance in the film, "The Lyons Mail" was an ideal production from the famous play in which his father made such a big success upon the speaking-stage.

Doubtless if H. B. Irving had lived he would have appeared in more screen productions.

It is reported from the States that the British film, "Her Greatest Performance," featuring Ellen Terry, is meeting with enormous success wherever shown. Who says British films are not liked in America?

If you like good, wholesome British melodrama, go to see "The Further Exploits of Sexton Blake," when it comes your way. The popular detective and his assistant, Tinker, appear in some fine scenes on the deck of one of our largest liners, and in some stirring stunts on the telegraph-wires above Charing Cross.

A visitor from "Lil' old New York" tells me that the "vamp," or screen villainess, of the future will be a blonde. At present, however, we still live in the Dark Age.

It was announced a short time ago that the Queen of the Screen—Mary Pickford—is in receipt of a salary of £300,000 a year. Now we hear that the King of the Ring—Jack Dempsey—is to get no less than £37,000 for appearing in one photoplay production. Phew!

**Next Monday's Long  
Complete Story of  
Jimmy Silver & Co.,  
at Rookwood**

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**"ARTHUR'S  
AUNT!"**

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## THE GOLDEN ARROYO!

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of  
Frank Richards & Co., of Cedar  
Creek School.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

### The 1st Chapter.

#### The Fate of Frank Richards.

"Frank! Franky!"  
Bob Lawless' face was white as he shouted the name of his chum.  
The rocks of the deep and gloomy canyon, in the shadow of mighty Mount Shasta, echoed back his shout. But the voice of his chum did not answer.  
"Frank!"  
Vere Beauclerc came panting up.  
"Bob! Is he—is he—" He could not finish.  
"Gone!" muttered Bob Lawless huskily.  
Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch, stood on the verge of the mountain torrent, staring at the waters that raced by at his feet. Ahead of him the torrent foamed into a cleft of the canyon's rocky side, and disappeared from view under an arch of rugged basalt. The ranchman's face was set.

Beauclerc caught him by the arm.  
"Where is Frank?"  
"I guess he's gone under the stream," said Billy Cook, in low tones. "I reckon he fell in with Carlos Cabrera, and both of them have gone under. They've gone with the stream under the rocks yonder."  
The three adventurers stood silent. Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc seemed almost stunned by the catastrophe. With their chum, they had come to the rocky wilderness of Northern California to seek the lost bonanza from the far-off Thompson valley in Canada. And now—where was their chum?

The hoarse roar of the torrent, as it was engulfed beneath the rocks, was the only answer to that question. Frank Richards had been swept away; he had vanished under the basalt cliffs with the scarred Californian, his rival in the quest for gold. He had gone to his death.  
For a long time they stood in silence.

Billy Cook was the first to speak.  
"I reckon there's a chance—just a chance," he said slowly. "That water must have an outlet lower down the mountain. It depends on how far it flows underground. It's possible—just possible—that Frank might come through."  
"It's possible," muttered Bob, "but—"

"I've been thinking," said the ranchman. "We've followed Bronze Bill's map to this hyer canyon, and the Golden Arroyo is marked on the map, but nary an arroyo can we see hyer. I guess it's possible that the way lies with the stream—under the basalt—and the Golden Arroyo is on the other side of them bluffs. That accounts for the bonanza never being discovered yet, though I reckon prospectors have been over this ground many a time. If the arroyo lies on the other side of the bluffs, that's the way Bronze Bill and Juarez went when they found it, and if they came through alive, I guess Frank Richards has a chance."

Bob and Beauclerc brightened a little. It was a chance that their chum was still living; though but a bare chance.

Bob made a step towards the torrent.  
The ranchman's hand gripped his shoulder and pulled him back.

"Nope, you don't!" said Billy Cook. "I guess I've got to answer for you to your father, Bob, and you ain't going the way Frank Richards went. We've got to get round the bluffs, and strike the stream lower down, and if Frank came through we'll find him."

"But—"  
"Don't you be a young jay, Bob Lawless. Come!"  
"Come, Bob," said Vere Beauclerc heavily. "If Frank is alive we shall find him. Come!"  
Bob Lawless nodded, and they turned from the torrent.

Bill Cook glanced up at the

towering rocky wall that shut in the canyon, crowned with pines.

"I guess it won't be an easy game clambering over these bluffs," he remarked, "but it's got to be done. We'll have to leave the horses, I reckon. We'll turn them loose, and they'll find their way back to Cinnamon Bar. Get a move on!"  
In grim silence they started.

The horses were turned loose, and then the three adventurers assayed the ascent of the canyon-side.  
The red sunset was glowing over the canyon as the sun sank lower towards the Pacific.

Darkness came upon the adventurers while they were still ascending the rugged rocks. In the darkness it was impossible to proceed, and with reluctance, fatigued as they were, they stopped. They rested in a hollow of the rocky slope, but there

Billy Cook glanced dubiously at the precipitous slope, with stunted trees and mesquite jutting out here and there among the rocks.

"I guess this won't be easy," he said, "but that's our way!"  
"Come on!" said Bob.  
And the three adventurers began the perilous descent into the arroyo.

### The 2nd Chapter.

#### From the Jaws of Death.

Frank Richards gave himself up for lost as the torrent swept him away into deep darkness under the basalt.

He had caught a momentary glimpse of his foe, Carlos Cabrera as he was swept under; but he hardly noted the Californian.  
The rivalry of the gold-seekers had

He sank under again the next moment; but now he realized that he was beyond the barrier of rock, and he struck out for his life.

He came to the surface again and swam, his senses in a whirl, and swimming by instinct rather than by thought.

But the fresh, free air revived him, the wild throbbing of his heart calmed, and he was able to look about him.

The stream that bore him onward flowed between high, almost perpendicular sides of rocky basalt, evidently the continuation of the passage through the mountain-side, formed in prehistoric days by volcanic action.

There was no landing-place for a gopher, and he allowed himself to float on with the current.

Behind him dark rocks closed in the view, save where the torrent emerged from its outlet in a whirl of foam.

High overhead a black vulture sailed across the narrow strip of sky.

As he floated on the current, swimming easily, Frank Richards drew in deep breaths of the fresh mountain air, with a deep thankfulness in his heart.

He had come through the very valley of the shadow of death, and he yet lived.

But he thought of his comrades with a heavy heart.

Only too well he could picture their horror and dismay at the fate that had fallen upon him, and the faintness of their hope that he might yet survive.

And then the thought of Cabrera came into his mind.



**OUT FOR VENGEANCE!** A sudden sound from the entrance of the cave drove the thought of the bonanza from Frank Richards' mind. He spun round and his hand went to the knife in his belt. The opening of the cave was darkened by the form of the scarred Californian, who was limping painfully, and dragging himself along with efforts that evidently cost him dear. "At last, senorito!" said Cabrera, between his teeth.

was little sleep for them that anxious night.

At the first gleam of dawn they were on foot again.

As the sun rose higher they gained the summit of the bluffs that shut in Coffin Canyon, and, exhausted by the long climb, they lay down to rest in the noonday sun.

But the repose was brief.  
In half an hour they were pushing on again by rugged declivities, and at last the sound of tumbling waters in the distance fell upon their ears. Billy Cook raised his hand as he bent his head to listen.

"I guess we're on the right track," he said. "Unless I'm out in my reckoning, we're due north of Coffin Canyon now, and the stream ran due north. It comes out somewhere, and I guess it must come out about hyer. Kim on?"

The weary trio pushed on.  
A quarter of an hour later they halted on the verge of a deep ravine or arroyo. Deep and dark, almost like a cleft in the rocky ground, the arroyo opened at their feet, and from the shadowy depths there came a murmur of rippling water.

ended in what seemed like certain death for them both.

The water closed over the schoolboy's head; black darkness surrounded him, and a deafening roar was in his ears.

Instinctively he shut his teeth hard, holding his breath as he was whirled under the water. For even at that terrible moment, the thought was in his mind, that, unless the buckskin map had deceived him, the way to the Golden Arroyo lay by the underground torrent. If it was so, it was possible to pass through even this fearful danger and live.

Once, as he was whirled onward, he crashed on a smooth surface of rock, and whirled off again with the rushing water. His senses were swimming, suffocation held him in its grip. A minute—two minutes—he could not tell—had passed, and he was hardly conscious now.

Then suddenly the blackness gave place to light.

His head shot up above the surface of whirling waters in a mass of foam; and his wet face was in open, free air.

He gasped for breath.

His glance swept the turbid surface of the torrent round him. The arroyo through which the water flowed was so deep and abrupt that a kind of twilight reigned there even in the full sunshine. He could see no sign of the scarred Californian.

Carlos Cabrera, perhaps, had not been so fortunate as his schoolboy rival, and Frank could not regret it if the swarthy ruffian had found his death in the depths of the subterranean stream.

It was more than two miles from the outlet of the buried torrent that the arroyo widened and it was possible to obtain lodgment on the bank of the precipitous cliffs.

Frank Richards dragged himself from the water at last.

There he sank down in exhaustion. For a long time he lay without movement, while the gloom deepened in the arroyo.

But he dragged himself to his feet at last.

Night was coming quickly on, and the chill of evening made him shiver in his drenched clothes.

He wrung the water out as well as he could, and set out to tramp down

the rocky, uneven bank by the side of the torrent.

Further on the arroyo widened still more, and a wide stretch of stony soil lay between the water and the precipitous side of the ravine. Here and there on the barren soil stunted masses of mesquite grew.

Darkness was thickening in the arroyo, and Frank Richards stopped at last.

He had had a hope of climbing out of his rocky prison, and struggling across the mountain to rejoin his comrades in Coffin Canyon, but that hope had to be abandoned now.

In the darkness he was helpless, and he was aching with fatigue.

He selected a dry spot in the midst of the mesquite to lie down to sleep. He had not forgotten the possibility that the scarred Californian might have survived, although he had seen nothing of him.

Sleep was not easy to the schoolboy of Cedar Creek in his strange surroundings.

He was cold, and his clothes were still damp, and many times during the night he rose and moved about to keep off the chill.

He was glad when the rays of the morning sun glimmered into the arroyo and the stream glistened in the dawn.

He quitted the thicket of mesquite, and, moving about in the growing warmth of the sun, munched a biscuit from his wallet. It was all the breakfast he had.

But his spirits rose as the sunlight strengthened.

He glanced at the rocky sides of the arroyo and shook his head. The climb to the uplands was a long and difficult one, and he knew that he could scarcely hope to find his way back to the canyon over the rugged, unmarked mountain-side.

The thought had come into his mind, too, that his comrades would seek to strike the stream lower down to search for him.

He started to tramp along the stream, keeping his eyes well about him, with the thought of the scarred Californian still in his mind.

He stopped at last.  
Far ahead the sun glimmered on the torrent, where it fell, amid a whirl of foam, in a deafening cataract.

That was the outlet of the arroyo, a waterfall which no man could hope to pass and live.

Where the torrent rushed and foamed to its lower level the arroyo narrowed again, and the walls of rocks approached the water, the stream filling the ravine from side to side.

Frank Richards was a prisoner in the arroyo!

The only way of escape lay by climbing the precipitous rocky walls, a height of several hundreds of feet. He sat on a boulder to rest.

Were his comrades seeking him? It seemed certain, though he could not guess how long it would take them to reach the arroyo over the mountain-side.

Round about him were many signs that the torrent at other times filled the whole ravine from side to side, as it did at the narrow exit. In the rainy season the rocks where he was resting were hidden beneath many feet of turbid water. But at that time of the year there was no danger of flood. The stream was now at its low level.

As he looked about him, and consulted the buckskin map, which he still retained, Frank Richards felt more and more assured that this ravine was indeed the Golden Arroyo marked on Bronze Bill's map.  
It was here that the "bonanza" lay—the mine of precious yellow metal for which the rustler had slain Jose Juarez, and had in his turn fallen by the hand of Carlos Cabrera in far-off Canada.

The thought made Frank's heart beat.

His comrades were seeking him, he was assured, and by climbing out of the arroyo upon the trackless mountain he could only miss them. It was wiser to wait till they came, if they were coming. And he was in no condition at present to attempt the difficult climb. The corn-biscuits in his wallet, soaked with water, were sufficient to keep him in life for a couple of days at least. Before that time he was sure that Billy Cook and his comrades would be in the arroyo looking for him.

He resolved to seek the bonanza while he waited, and after a brief rest on the boulder he commenced his search. With the roar of the distant cataract in his ears he moved along the arroyo, his eyes well about him. In the narrow strip of stony ground between the stream and the ravine wall there was no great space; the





## THE GOLDEN ARROYO!

(Continued from the previous page.)

down the slope, the Californian rolling helplessly with it.

The boulder rolled and bounded on till it reached the water's edge, and plunged splashing into the torrent. Carlos Cabrera landed on the bank, where he lay groaning.

Frank Richards, panting, looked down at him.

The Californian made an effort to rise, but sank back again upon the ground, with a groan.

It was evident that he was hurt.

He raised himself upon one knee at last, his swarthy face pale with pain, and, holding on to a rock, raised himself to his feet.

Frank Richards, twenty yards above him, watched him warily. The Californian's knife was in his hand, and suddenly his hand was drawn back, and the knife flew.

Clatter!

The missile was well-aimed, but it fell short, and disappeared in the cavities of the ascent.

Frank Richards laughed breathlessly.

"Try again!" he called out.

The scarred ruffian answered with a curse.

He sank down on a boulder to ease his injured leg, and drew a revolver from his belt. For a moment Frank's heart misgave him. But it was soon evident that Cabrera had no cartridges.

He took the revolver by the barrel to use as a weapon at close quarters, and sat still, waiting, his eyes fixed with deadly hatred on the schoolboy.

Evidently he feared that Frank would take the offensive now that he was disarmed.

But Frank had no such intention. He was only too glad to see the ruffian forced to keep his distance.

For some time the foes remained watching one another, Cabrera seated on the boulder by the stream, Frank standing on the ledge at the top of the acclivity.

The schoolboy's heart was light now.

He realised that he had little to fear from his savage enemy so long as he remained on the ledge. Leaving it meant a hand-to-hand struggle with the scarred Californian, his hunting-knife against the clubbed revolver.

That would have served Cabrera's purpose. He was a man against a schoolboy if it came to a struggle. But Frank Richards did not intend to leave the ledge.

He sat on a rock to rest, and Cabrera ground his teeth with helpless rage as he saw the schoolboy consulting the buckskin map. Like a lynx watching for its prey, the ruffian waited and watched, and suddenly from the ledge above he heard Frank Richards utter an exclamation.

"Eureka!"

### The 4th Chapter. The Last Fight.

"I've found it!"

Frank Richards leaped to his feet, his face full of excitement.

On the buckskin map a cross was marked where, according to the tale the dying rustler had told at the Lawless Ranch, lay the skeleton of Jose Juarez, a ghastly indication to the bonanza.

Close by the cross was the word "kaiv," which had puzzled Frank Richards and his comrades.

But Frank thought he understood now.

Behind him, as he stood on the ledge, the cave opened in the rocky side of the arroyo, and the thought was in his mind that this was the "kaiv" written down by the hapless rustler.

He glanced hastily towards Cabrera. The ruffian was still in his position, and it was doubtful if he would be able to attempt to climb to the ledge again.

Frank Richards left the ledge, and stepped into the gloomy cavern.

A dim twilight reigned within.

The floor was level and sandy, and several fragments of driftwood lay there, proving that in flood time the cave was filled with the waters of the stream now flowing at the bottom of the arroyo.

Frank glanced round him, his heart beating.

He advanced further into the cavern, in his eagerness almost forgetting the deadly foe who lurked in wait for him without.

Suddenly he stopped, with a sharp exclamation.

Something that was whiter than the sand or the driftwood glimmered from the shadows of the cave.

A feeling of sickness came over the boy for the moment.

It was a skeleton that lay almost at his feet.

The bones had been picked by bird or beast as they lay in the cave, and they glimmered white and terrible from the shadow, the hideous skull seeming to wear a ghastly grin.

"Oh!" muttered Frank.

For some minutes he stood, not caring to go near to the ghastly object.

But he advanced again at last. His eyes searched the dusky recesses. The skeleton lay close by the wall of the cave, and there was no sign of the gold nuggets of which Bronze Bill had told, and for which Jose Juarez had fallen.

For ten yards or more the cave extended into the cliff, and Frank explored its whole extent without making a discovery.

Outside, the sun of noonday blazed on the arroyo, but in the depth of the cave all was chill and shadowy.

Frank approached the skeleton at last, though he did not venture to touch it, after exploring the recesses of the cave. But near the ghastly relic of the gold-seeker there was no sign of the bonanza—no clue. The skeleton lay with one arm outstretched, the grisly fingers pointing to the wall of the cave.

Frank felt a sense of bitter disappointment. The thought came into his mind that, perhaps, since Bronze Bill had drawn his map of the Golden Arroyo, some prospector had found the bonanza, and "lifted" the golden prize.

Yet it was hard to believe so. Only by chance could Jose Juarez have penetrated into the arroyo—he must have come by way of the subterranean torrent, and by accident, as Frank had come.

Bronze Bill, watching him, had sought him there, and found him, doubtless by a roundabout route, descending into the arroyo from above.

But without a clue the boldest gold-seeker would hardly have undertaken the risk and fatigue of descending into the arroyo—which, viewed from above, was merely a dangerous ravine split in the masses of basalt.

Yet if the treasure had not been lifted, where was it?

A sudden sound from the entrance of the cave drove the thought of the bonanza from Frank Richards' mind, and recalled the enemy he had forgotten in his eager search.

He spun round, his heart thumping, and his hand on the knife in his belt.

The opening of the cave was darkened by the form of the scarred Californian.

Cabrera was limping painfully, and dragging himself along with efforts that evidently cost him dear.

The long absence of the schoolboy from his sight had encouraged him to make the attempt, and he had dragged himself to the ledge, trailing his injured leg.

Frank set his teeth hard.

He had been reckless, and his recklessness had to be paid for now.

The Californian's eyes glinted at him, and the dusky hand closed harder on the clubbed revolver.

"At last, *sonorito!*" said Carlos Cabrera between his teeth.

He limped towards the schoolboy. Frank Richards breathed hard.

He was not afraid, but he knew that he was in terrible danger now, in spite of Cabrera's injury.

He backed away as the Californian advanced, his eyes on his foe, Cabrera followed him, keeping between the schoolboy and the opening of the cave, and giving Frank no opportunity of dodging past him and escaping into the open.

Crack!

A sudden rifle-shot rang through the arroyo, awakening a thousand echoes.

Crack, crack, crack!

Cabrera started, "My friends!" gasped Frank, his heart thumping.

"Carambo!"

Crack, crack, crack!

Somewhere along the arroyo a rifle was being discharged at regular intervals.

It was evidently a signal, and it could only mean that Frank Richards' comrades had arrived in the arroyo, and were firing as a signal to him if he yet lived.

Cabrera understood it as well as Frank.

"They have come too late, *sonorito!*" he said, with a bitter sneer.

"We shall see!" muttered Frank, and then he shouted:

"Help! Help!"

Crack!

"Help!"

The Californian, gathering all his strength, made a savage rush at the elusive schoolboy.

For a moment it seemed that he would have Frank pinned against the side of the cave.

But the active schoolboy dodged nimbly, and eluded him—barely escaping a sweeping blow from the clubbed revolver as he dodged.

Cabrera, with a curse, panted after him.

But Frank was past the ruffian now, and he ran for the opening of the cave.

Whiz!

Frank Richards felt rather than heard the missile that whizzed after him, and he threw himself forward.

The revolver shot over his head and rolled on the ledge outside the cave.

Frank had fallen on his knees, and before he could rise, the Californian was upon him with a savage spring.

He struck out blindly with his hunting-knife, but fortune befriended the scarred Californian; the blind blow struck upon a rock, and the knife was jerked from the schoolboy's hand.

Frank grappled fiercely with his enemy.

Both were disarmed now, and they struggled furiously for the mastery.

In a deadly grip they rolled out of the cavern upon the rocky ledge. There was a shout in the distance, a ringing of footsteps on the stones.

Three figures were in sight running hard along the stream. But Billy Cook, Bob Lawless, and Beauclerc were still at a distance, and Frank Richards was in the grasp of his foe.

On the ledge, they rolled over, and the Californian came uppermost. His knee was on Frank's chest, and his dusky hands clutched at the schoolboy's throat.

Frank made a terrible effort, and threw him off, but the scarred ruffian was still grasping his throat. Together they rolled from the ledge and crashed down the rugged slope.

Over rock and stone and tearing thicket, they rolled, to the bank of the torrent, still gripping and struggling, and from the sloping bank they slipped into the stream.

There Frank was loose from his enemy's grasp at last, as Cabrera plunged under the water.

He struck out and came to the surface. Cabrera was a dozen feet from him, fighting for his life in the torrent.

His injured leg weighed the ruffian down, and the rapid current bore him away, and Frank Richards swam, and caught a jutting rock, and held on for his life.

"Hold on, Frank!"

It was Bob Lawless' voice.

"Frank!" shouted Beauclerc.

The two schoolboys were racing to the spot, Billy Cook close behind.

Frank Richards, exhausted by the deadly struggle, had barely strength to hold on, while the current tore at him.

The Californian, struggling feebly, was whirled away—away towards the distant cataract. And but for the aid of his comrades, Frank Richards would probably have followed him.

But Bob and Beauclerc reached the spot together, and they grasped him, and dragged him breathlessly up the bank.

"Frank!" gasped Bob. "Oh, Frank, old fellow! Thank heaven we have found you alive! We—we thought—"

"I guess this is a sight for sore eyes!" drawled Billy Cook. He shaded his eyes, and stared along the stream. "That cuss was Cabrera, Frank?"

"Yes," gasped Frank.

"Good! I guess he's a gone coon."

The gold-seekers stared along the stream. Carlos Cabrera, still feebly battling with the racing current, was swept away towards the cataract, and as they looked, he disappeared into the whirl of foam where the water roared and fell.

Frank Richards shuddered.

"He is gone!" said Vere Beauclerc in a low voice.

"I guess so!" said Billy Cook composedly. "I kinder reckon he's a gone coon before he reaches the bottom of the fall. I calculate nobody will ever see Carlos Cabrera again."

And the ranchman was right.

### The 5th Chapter. The Bonanza.

It was a joyous party that gathered in the cave behind the ledge, when Frank Richards had recovered a little from the effects of that last desperate struggle with the Californian.

He had told his comrades of the discovery of the skeleton of Juarez, and they were eager for the search.

"But the gold isn't there—at least, I wasn't able to find it," said Frank ruefully.

"Oh, we'll find it," said Bob Lawless cheerily. "We haven't come all the way from the Thompson Valley for nothing."

"We'll find it if it's there," said Vere Beauclerc, with a smile. "And it must be there, unless Bronze Bill was a dreamer of dreams."

The explorers spread over the cavern, searching. They gathered at last round the skeleton, upon which Billy Cook fixed his eyes in a thoughtful way.

"I reckon you was told that that skeleton was the sign to the bonanza, Franky," said the ranchman slowly.

"Yes," answered Frank.

"You see that his bony fist is kinder pointing," remarked Billy Cook. "I guess that was Bronze Bill's idea; he left his man with his hand pointing—"

"But it points only to the rock—"

"I guess we'll see."

Billy Cook, following the direction of the skeleton's outstretched arm, stepped to the rock wall of the cave, and examined it carefully.

"Thunder!" he ejaculated.

"What is it—"

"Look!"

In the cave-wall was a narrow rift. It was close to the ground, and in the shadow Frank Richards had not observed it in his previous search, when he was interrupted by the attack of the Californian.

Billy Cook thrust his arm into the rift, and groped.

"I guess there's something—"

He drew out his hand, holding a buckskin sack, half-rotten, that fell to pieces as he dragged it out.

Clink, clink! Crash!

A dozen large nuggets rolled on the floor of the cave.

"The nuggets!" shouted Bob Lawless, in great delight.

"Gold!" gasped Frank.

"I guess there's more here."

The rift was hurriedly searched and cleared. A pile of twenty nuggets of varying sizes was the reward of the search. Evidently they had been stacked in the hidden rift for safety, and the rustler, who was compelled to leave them there, had laid the body with the hand pointing to the rift—

of which there were dozens in the basalt walls. And the grisly hand of the skeleton had remained pointing to the hiding-place of the golden treasure.

"Cedar Creek wins!" gasped Bob Lawless. "Billy, old scout, how much is that lot worth?"

The ranchman cocked his eye thoughtfully at the pile of nuggets.

"I guess it's nearly pure ore," he said. "I rather reckon there ain't much less than half a hundredweight, more or less, of gold in that lot."

"Phew!"

"And how does it work out in dollars?" asked Frank Richards.

"I don't say it's quite correct; but you can reckon on at least twelve thousand dollars."

"Great Scott! That's over two thousand pounds English!" exclaimed Frank Richards breathlessly.

"Hurrah!"

And the cave rang with the triumphant shout of the schoolboy goldseekers.

The next morning Frank Richards & Co., with the nuggets divided among them for carrying, set out to ascend the rugged cliffs of the arroyo. It was a toilsome climb, but they made it with light hearts; and that night they slept at Cinnamon Bar, to take the homeward trail the next day for Canada and Cedar Creek.

THE END.

THERE WILL BE  
ANOTHER LONG  
COMPLETE

STORY

OF

FRANK RICHARDS  
& CO.,  
NEXT MONDAY

entitled:

"WELL WON!"

BY

MARTIN CLIFFORD.