

Lee of Middlesex as **YOUR Cricket Coach!** See Page 271.

The **BOYS' FRIEND** 1^{1d}/₂

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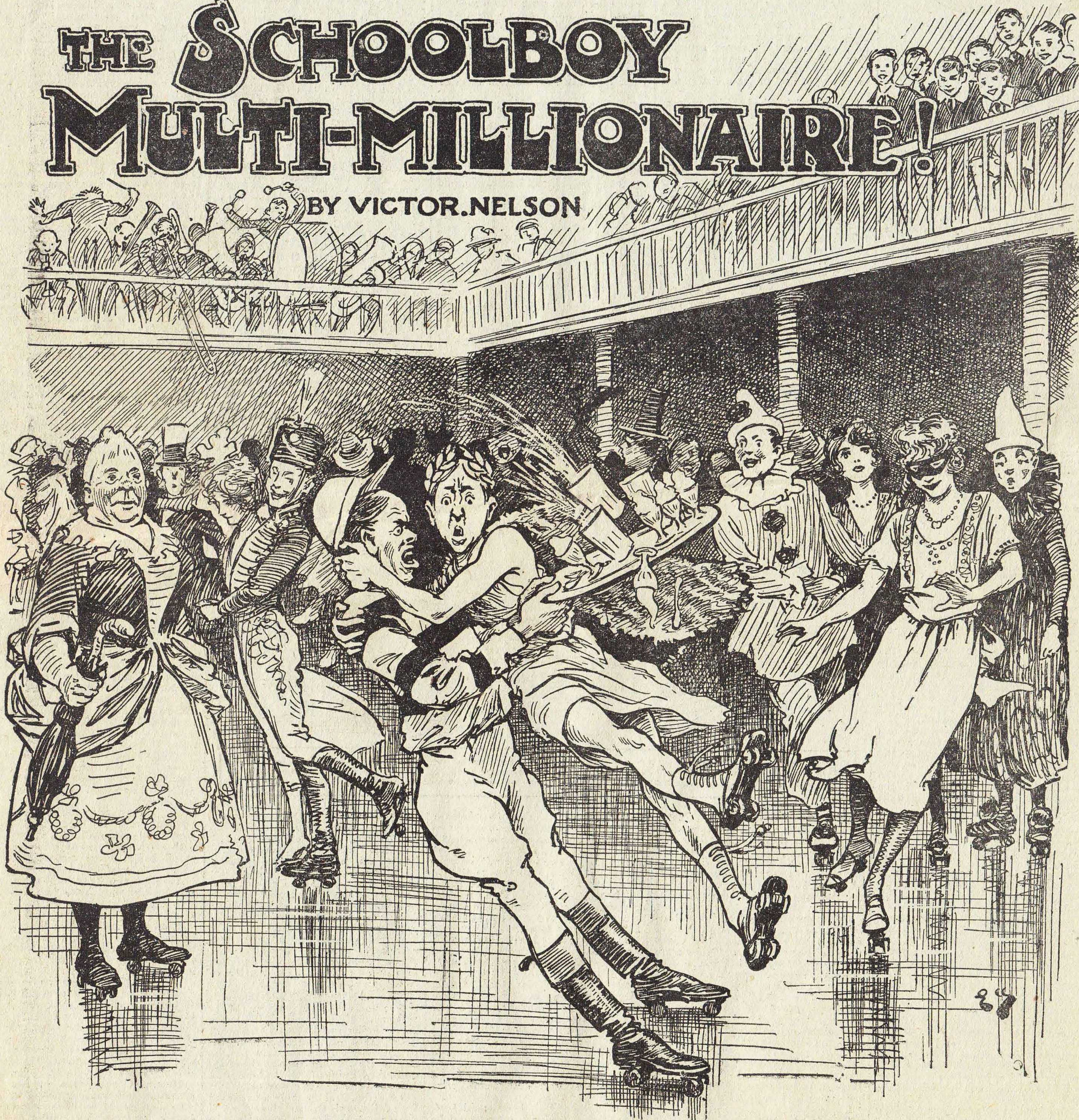
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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending June 11th, 1921.

THE SCHOOLBOY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE!

BY VICTOR NELSON



TROUBLE ON WHEELS!

A young man was returning from the refreshment buffet with a tray laden with ices, ginger beer, and other delicacies. The Boy with Fifty Millions in his guise of "Miss Darrel, the heiress from the U.S.A.," spotted him immediately, and swiftly whirled "her" partner in the young man's direction. Somehow, one of "Miss Darrel's" legs became entwined with those belonging to the councillor's son, and the result was—terrific!

A LONG COMPLETE YARN OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. By OWEN CONQUEST



The Mystery of Montmorency!

The 1st Chapter.

A Mysterious Mistake!

"George Huggins!"

"My only hat!" murmured Arthur Edward Lovell.

From Tubby Muffin came a squeak of merriment.

"He, he, he! Huggins! He, he, he!"

"What the merry thump—" said Townsend.

It was a peculiar scene.

In the little tuckshop behind the beeches at Rookwood School, Sergeant Kettle stood, with his hands resting on his little counter, staring across at Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency, the new junior in the Fourth Form.

The ancient military gentleman, who for years had kept the school shop at Rookwood, seemed petrified with astonishment.

He gazed at Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency as if Cecil Cuthbert had been some grisly spectre, instead of a handsome and elegant and very expensively-dressed Fourth-Former of Rookwood.

The tuckshop was crowded with juniors fresh from the cricket-field, and they were all staring blankly.

Even Tubby Muffin stopped a jam-tart half-way to his capacious mouth in his amazement.

Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency's eyeglass had dropped from his eye. The amazing greeting from the sergeant seemed to have stunned him.

He returned the sergeant's fixed gaze as if equally fascinated.

Townsend and Topham, the new boy's new chums, looked at one another, quite taken off their balance by the remarkable scene.

Montmorency of the Fourth had arrived at Rookwood School only that day; he was quite a stranger there.

Yet the sergeant addressed him as if he had known him all his life; and, more astonishing still, he addressed him as George Huggins.

Montmorency's wealth and elegance, and rather lofty manners, had already caused him to be remarked in the Lower School, newcomer as he was. Some of the fellows had already called him a snob amongst themselves. Arthur Edward Lovell had taken a dislike to him on account of his fastidious looks and manners.

Others, again, felt that some allowance ought to be made for a scion of the noble line of Montmorency. A fellow with a name like that might be pardoned for thinking no "small beer" of himself, Mornington had said.

In looks and manners Montmorency lived up to his high-sounding name—that was all.

Jimmy Silver was inclined to be tolerant towards the new fellow, because he had shown that he could play cricket. That was a more important matter, in Jimmy's eyes, than the blood of all the Montmorencys, though it might be as blue as the June sky.

"He, he, he!" Tubby Muffin's unmusical cackle broke the painful silence. "He, he, he!"

Townsend broke in, with a glare at Sergeant Kettle, who seemed unable to take his eyes off the new junior.

"What the thump do you mean, sergeant? What are you calling Montmorency by that idiotic name for?"

"Eh? What?" said the sergeant confusedly.

"This chap's name is Montmorency, sergeant," said Jimmy Silver.

"Oh!" said the sergeant.

Towny jerked at Montmorency's sleeve.

"What's the matter with you, Monty?" he asked. "You look fairly flabbergasted, by gad! You'll make the fellows think your name really is Huggins, at this rate."

Montmorency made an effort to pull himself together.

But the colour was wavering in his cheeks, and his struggle to regain his calmness was plain to all eyes.

"I—I don't understand—" he stammered.

"I say, sergeant, do you know the chap?" squeaked Tubby Muffin, in great delight.

Tubby was annoyed with the new junior, who had rejected without ceremony his chummy overtures that day. Tubby had been prepared to greet Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency with open arms. He had been snubbed unceremoniously. Whereupon Tubby had made up his fat mind that Cecil Cuthbert was a snob, and he was delighted to see the snob taken down like this.

"Is his name really Huggins, sergeant?" pursued Tubby. "I say, what a lark! Huggins don't sound so nobby as Mongmorangey, does it?"

"Montmorency!" stammered the sergeant, blinking at the new junior.

"That is my name."

Montmorency had recovered himself now.

His aristocratic impassiveness of manner had returned. He jammed his monocle into his eye, and took a cool and scornful survey of the astonished and confused sergeant.

"That—that's your name, sir?" stammered the sergeant.

"Yaas."

"I—I—I thought—"

"Is he like somebody you know, sergeant?" asked Jimmy, to help the painfully-confused old gentleman out.

"Yes," gasped Mr. Kettle. "That's it, Master Silver! I—I thought—"

"This man Kettle has called me by a name that is not mine," said Montmorency calmly. "No doubt I look like somebody he knows of that name. I suppose nobody here is fool enough to think that my name is Huggins? Anyone who likes can see my name entered on the school books. The Head, I suppose, must know what my name is."

"That's a clincher," said Mornington.

It was convincing enough. For a fellow to be entered on the school books under an assumed name was impossible; all the fellows knew that. A chap was not admitted to Rookwood without the Head knowing who he was and where he came from.

"Of course," said Jimmy Silver. "The sergeant's taken you for somebody else, Montmorency."

"Isn't that it, sergeant?" asked Raby.

"Here's your ginger-beer, Master Lovell."

Sergeant Kettle did not answer Raby's question. That fact was remembered afterwards by a good many fellows.

The 2nd Chapter.

The High Hand!

Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency had already attracted a good deal of attention in the Lower School at Rookwood.

His sounding name, his wealth, his elegant manners, the "whacking" car in which he had arrived at the school, had all drawn attention to him.

After the peculiar scene in the tuckshop, he was more than ever the cynosure of most eyes in the lower forms.

The incident was explained as a strange mistake on the part of the school sergeant; that really seemed to be the only possible explanation. But it was not forgotten.

It was odd enough that Montmorency should resemble a boy whom the sergeant knew so closely as to be mistaken for him by the old military gentleman.

It was, in fact, more than odd. For Montmorency was not an ordinary-looking fellow. His good looks and

aristocratic bearing would have attracted a second glance anywhere.

It was extraordinary that, among Sergeant Kettle's private acquaintances, there should be a boy named Huggins, who was so like Montmorency, that the latter could be mistaken for him.

Inquisitive fellows dropped into the tuckshop to talk to the sergeant, and ask him questions about George Huggins.

To their surprise, Mr. Kettle declined to say a word.

The subject was evidently distasteful to him.

Generally, the sergeant was a civil-spoken man; but when he was asked questions about George Huggins, his manner became extremely gruff, and he snapped almost savagely.

Not a word of information could be drawn from him on the subject.

The curious inquirers soon gave the matter up; and, indeed, interest in it soon evaporated.

In a few days Montmorency had made a good many friends in the Fourth Form.

Towny and Topy were his devoted chums—Morny was friendly—and Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome did not dislike him. Arthur Edward Lovell, certainly, did not like him. Tubby Muffin was down on him with a very heavy "down"; but Tubby's condemnation alternated with effusive overtures of friendship, all of which were rejected by Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency.

He utterly declined to believe in any connection between the families of Montmorency and Muffin; and though Tubby claimed only to be his second cousin twice removed, Montmorency would not admit even that distant relationship.

So Tubby—when he was not making overtures of friendship—expressed an opinion, with sage shakes of the head, that there was more about Monty than the fellows knew. He said that it was queer that the sergeant wouldn't say a word on the subject; and queer that Montmorency had looked so scared and startled under Mr. Kettle's eye; in fact, there was no limit to the queer circumstances Tubby called to mind.

But as it was perfectly evident that a nod or smile from the new junior would have slain all Tubby's suspicions and surmises on the spot, Tubby's opinion was not valued by anybody but Reginald Muffin himself.

On Wednesday in the week following Montmorency's arrival at Rookwood, the big Rolls-Royce snorted up to the School House, and quite a number of fellows gathered round to look at it. It had called for Cecil Cuthbert, to take him out for the afternoon, it appeared, and there were a good many fellows who envied Cecil Cuthbert. Townsend and Topham were the happy ones selected to accompany him in his drive, and Towny and Topy looked very pleased with themselves, as they came out of the house with their superb chum.

Tubby Muffin heard the car from afar, and came scuttling up breathlessly. Only half an hour earlier he had been remarking to several grinning fellows how "queer" were many circumstances in connection with Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency. But Tubby had evidently experienced one of his kaleidoscopic changes, for now he beamed on the new junior with almost adoring affection.

"Your pater's car, Monty?" he said.

"Yaas," answered Montmorency coldly, without looking at him.

"Going for a drive?"

"Yaas."

"Taking any friends?" hinted Tubby.

"Yaas, Townsend and Topham. Jump in, you fellows."

"You've lots of room for another fellow there!" said Tubby.

Montmorency looked at him at last.

"I've asked Morny, but he's keen on cricket, and can't come," he said coolly. "Get out of the way, Muffin, the door's goin' to be closed."

"I say, Monty—"

"Would you be good enough to refrain from callin' me Monty?" asked Montmorency, with polished con-

tempt. "That's my name to my friends."

"I say, old chap—"

"Get off the grass, Muffin!" exclaimed Townsend impatiently. "You're not comin' in this car! Go and eat coke!"

"Montmorency, old fellow, I'd really like to come!" said Muffin, as if that settled it.

"Go an' eat coke!" answered the youth with the noble name. He reached out and closed the door, pushing Muffin aside.

The engine snorted.

Tubby Muffin breathed hard with wrath. Once more he had offered the olive-branch; once more it had been refused with contempt. The Oriental proverb declares that contempt will pierce the shell of the tortoise. Tubby Muffin was probably thicker skinned than any self-respecting tortoise; but he was hurt.

"If you think I want to come in your car, you're jolly well mistaken," he exclaimed wrathfully.

"Good!" said Montmorency, and he signalled to the chauffeur to get a move on.

"Yah!"

The car glided down the drive.

"Yah!" roared Tubby Muffin, all adoration and affection gone now.

"Yah! Huggins! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, greatly tickled by Tubby's change of front.

From "Monty, old fellow," Montmorency had suddenly become "Huggins," in Tubby's estimation.

"Huggins!" shrieked Tubby. "Huggins! Yah!"

The car glided away, and turned into the road to Coombe. Townsend and Topham were laughing, finding something comic in Tubby's change of front, like the other fellows. But Montmorency did not laugh.

To the surprise of his comrades, his handsome face was darkly clouded, and his well-cut lips quivered.

Towny touched him gently on the arm.

"Don't mind that fat cad, Monty!" he said. "Tubby would slang anybody who wouldn't let him sponge."

"I don't mind him," said Montmorency curtly.

"That silly ass Kettle ought to be kicked," said Topham. "Fancy his thinkin' you looked like a fellow named Huggins."

"Old chump!" said Townsend.

Outside the school-gates the car had to slow and stop, as a heavily-laden lorry came lurching along the middle of the road. The Rolls-Royce backed on the grass belt by the road to escape the big baulks of timber with which the lorry was loaded. Tubby Muffin had rolled down to the gates, and finding the car still within range, so to speak, he rolled up to the door.

He had come to taunt the new junior, in his annoyance; but the handsome turn-out, and the possibility of a motor-drive without expense to his worthy self, softened him. He was smiling by the time he reached the window.

"Too bad, those beastly lorries on the road, Monty!" he said.

Montmorency's eyes gleamed at him through his monocle.

"Will you clear off?" he said.

"I'll tell you what," said Muffin. "I'll come, and I'll stand tea for the whole party on the road. What?"

"Go and eat coke."

"You're not good enough for this little party, Tubby," said Townsend, with cheerful insolence. "Couldn't be seen with you, you know."

"Exactly!" grinned Topham.

"Oh, quite!" assented Montmorency.

Once more Tubby Muffin's mantle of beaming friendliness dropped off him.

"Jolly stuck-up, Huggins, ain't you?" he said.

Montmorency turned a look on him that startled him, so intensely savage and passionate was it. It startled Towny and Topy, too.

"If you call me Huggins again you'll get hurt, you fat cad!" said Montmorency, between his teeth.

"Yah! Huggins!"

Montmorency had a light cane in his hand. He reached out of the car window, and before Tubby knew what was happening, Montmorency lashed him with the cane, full across his fat face.

"Yaroooh!" roared Muffin, in surprise and anguish.

The car moved on at that moment, and a second slash from the cane just missed Tubby Muffin, as he staggered and sat down in the grass.

Montmorency had his hand on the door, as if to open it and jump out. His face was convulsed with rage, and did not look very handsome at that moment.

Townsend, in alarm, caught him by the shoulder.

"Hold on, Monty! The car's movin'! Don't open the door—"

"I'm goin' to thrash that cad!" panted Montmorency.

"Sit down, old chap."

Towny pushed his new chum back into the seat.

Montmorency gave him a fierce look, but it was only momentary. Then he recovered himself, and nodded.

"You're right," he said. "He's not worth lickin'."

"Not worth takin' notice of," said Towny.

"Oh, quite!"

"I say, that was rather a hefty lick you gave him, Monty," said Topham uneasily. "It's goin' to leave a mark on his chivvy."

Montmorency shrugged his slim shoulders.

"Let it!" he answered. "The low rascal wanted a lesson."

"Oh! M'm! Certainly!"

The car rolled on, leaving Tubby Muffin sitting in the grass, dazed, with a thick red mark showing across his fat cheek.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Champion of the Oppressed!

"What on earth's the matter with your chivvy?"

Jimmy Silver asked the question as the Fistical Four met Tubby Muffin on their way to cricket.

"Been busting in a door with your face, old tub?" asked Lovell.

Tubby groaned.

He was hurt, there was no doubt about that. But his groan was deep enough and anguished enough for a very serious injury. It was like Reginald Muffin to make the very most of it.

"That beast Huggins—!" he moaned.

"Do you mean Montmorency?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a frown.

"I mean Huggins!" said Tubby Muffin savagely. "I say Huggins, and I mean Huggins! Old Kettle called him Huggins—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"But did Montmorency give you that mark on your chivvy?" asked Raby.

"Yow-wow! Yes! He slashed me with his cane!" groaned Tubby.

"I say, that's rather thick, even if Tubby is an irritatin' little beast!" remarked Newcome. "Fellow ought not to hand out that sort of thing."

"Confounded brute, I think!" said Lovell. "I'd like to see him hand it out to me!"

"It is rather thick," said Jimmy Silver. "But Tubby ought to let him alone. I don't see why the chap should be insulted because he won't let Tubby sponge on him."

"Oh, I say, Jimmy—"

"Serve the fat cad right!" said Valentine Mornington.

"Oh, I say, Morny—"

Tubby rubbed the mark on his cheek. It was very painful and swollen.

"I'd give him a jolly good licking," he mumbled, "only—"

"Only you couldn't," said Mornington. "You have to take the kicks along with the ha'pence, Tubby. You shouldn't sponge."

"Yah!" snorted Tubby. "I'm jolly well going to show this to Mr. Dalton! He will make the cad answer for it."

"Don't sneak!" said Jimmy Silver, frowning.

"Dickie Dalton will see it, in any case, and inquire into it," said Lovell, as the juniors went on towards the cricket-field. "Montmorency will be called to account, and serve him jolly well right! Like his cheek to lash a fellow like a dog!"

"Muffin annoyed him," said Mornington.

"Short! from Arthur Edward Lovell. "Chap can be annoyed without actin' like a dashed hooligan," he said. "And why should Tubby's rot annoy him so much? If his name's not Huggins, he needn't mind Tubby booting Huggins at him so much. Blessed if it doesn't look—!" Lovell paused.

"Oh, rot!" said Jimmy Silver uneasily. "We know the chap's name. It's on the books, isn't it? Think the Head would enter him as Montmorency if his name was Huggins?"

"Well, then, I don't see why he should be so jolly waxy about it," said Lovell tartly.

"Bother him, and Tubby, too," said Jimmy. "Let's play cricket!"

And cricket soon drove the matter from the minds of the Fistical Four. But Tubby, naturally, could not dismiss it so easily. He had an injury, and it hurt him, and he was boiling with wrath and indignation. He paraded his mark up and down the Lower School, in search of sympathy. Some of the fellows told him that it served him right; but others, who had been annoyed by what they

considered Montmorency's "upish" ways, sympathized, and were indignant. At tea-time, Tubby marched into his study, No. 2, and displayed his injury to his study-mates, Jones minor and Higgs and Putty Grace.

"Whacked me across the face with his stick, you know, that cad Huggins!" said Tubby, thrilling with undying indignation.

"Serve you right!" said Jones minor.

"I dare say you asked for it," said Putty. "You shouldn't call a fellow by a name that isn't his."

"The sergeant said—"

"Oh, bother the sergeant!"

"I say, Higgs, you ought to lick the cad," said Tubby pathetically. "You could, you know! You oughtn't to let him treat your study-mate like this."

"That's right enough," said Higgs, with a nod. "I'll talk to him about it when he comes in."

"Look here, Higgs!" said Grace. "You let the chap alone! None of your confounded bullying!"

"I'll do as I like!" roared Higgs. The bully of the Fourth did not like being gainsaid.

"After all, he'd no right to whack Tubby like that," said Jones minor. "It was brutal. When Tubby gets too annoying, the proper thing is to kick him. That's what we do in this study, isn't it, Tubby?"

"Yah!" was Tubby's reply. "Who does this fellow think he is?" demanded Higgs warmly. "I spoke to him the other day, and he was dashed standoffish. Not that I care a rap about the fellow, but I'm not going to be looked up and down."

Apparently Higgs was one of the unfortunate youths who were kept at arm's-length by the superb Cecil Cuthbert.

Naturally, Alfred Higgs did not like that. As he could "whop" nearly all the Form, he considered himself a person to be treated with respect.

"If he thinks a Montmorency is better than a Higgs," continued the bully of the Fourth, "I'll give him some education on the subject."

"Oh, rats!" said Putty. "Lashing a kid as if he were a dog!" continued Higgs. "I'll jolly well show him that it won't do at Rookwood!"

And Alfred Higgs, after tea, was hanging about waiting for the big Rolls-Royce to come in. Higgs' intention of taking up the quarrel for Tubby, and licking the new junior, was widely known in a short time. But Higgs received no admiration in his new role of champion of the oppressed. It was pretty clear that Higgs was only looking for an excuse to exercise his favourite propensity of bullying, and it was more than suspected that he wanted to avenge the "standoffishness" of Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency. But Higgs was not to be argued with.

It was about six o'clock when the great car came rolling in, and Montmorency & Co. alighted. The car departed, and the three knuts came sauntering cheerily into the School House.

Then Higgs of the Fourth bore down upon them, with a very ugly and threatening look on his rugged face.

"A word with you, Montmorency!" he said gruffly.

The eyeglass—already celebrated in the Classical Fourth—turned loftily on Higgs.

"Yaas?" said Montmorency. "Step into the Common-room!" said Higgs.

Montmorency did not stir. "You hear me?" demanded Higgs threateningly.

across the chivvy because he calls you Huggins! Do you think I wouldn't call you Huggins if I chose?"

"Not unless you want to be served the same."

"Wha-a-t? You—you'd whack me with your cane if I called you Huggins—what?" spluttered Higgs.

"Yaas!"

"Monty—" murmured Townsend.

"Huggins!" roared Higgs. "Huggins! There! Huggins! Oh, my hat!"

Lash!

Montmorency's arm came up like lightning, and Higgs of the Fourth staggered back as the cane lashed across his face.

The 4th Chapter. Knocked Out!

There was a rush of juniors to the spot. Jimmy Silver & Co., coming in from the cricket, halted to look on at the scene in the corridor. Mornington gave a chirrup of approval.

"Well done, Monty!"

Higgs staggered, gasping for breath, scarcely able to believe for a moment or two in what had happened.

But he recovered himself and straightened up, but the look he gave Cecil Cuthbert would have made a Hun envious.

"Put down that cane!" said Higgs thickly. "Put up your hands, you cheeky rotter! I'm going to smash you!"

Montmorency handed his cane to Townsend, who took it with a feeble

hardly one of Higgs' breathless drives touched him.

But as Higgs paused, a little out of breath after his furious attack, which had not got home, Montmorency suddenly attacked in his turn, and—as the juniors described it afterwards—"fairly walked into Higgs."

His fists moved like lightning, and Higgs' clumsy defence was nowhere.

Montmorency played him almost like a fish, driving in a blow here and a blow there, almost at his own pleasure. And the blows were heavy and hard, too, and had evidently plenty of muscle behind them. Higgs was knocked right and left, and finally a terrific right-hander swept him clean off his feet, and he crashed on the floor.

There was a buzz of deep-drawn breath from the crowd of juniors as the bully of the Fourth went down.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Lovell. Arthur Edward Lovell had entertained the idea of giving Montmorency a licking for his own good. He mentally decided now that that idea was the least feasible idea he had ever thought of.

"Hefty—what?" grinned Mornington. "I fancy the esteemed Higgs has had about enough to go on with."

Higgs sat up dazedly. He gasped and spluttered helplessly. It was clear that he could not go on, unwilling as he was to give in.

"Oh! Ow, ow! Oh!" spluttered Higgs.

Montmorency, breathing hard, adjusted his eyeglass in his eye and

that. Higgs' words found an echo in the minds of all present. Higgs staggered away, leaning heavily on Lovell's arm. He had been badly licked, and he was feeling very bad indeed. Arthur Edward Lovell was frowning when he rejoined his chums in the end study for tea.

"More in that snob than meets the eye!" he remarked, evidently alluding to Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency. "He's hefty!" said Jimmy Silver.

"But Higgs is all rush and thump. There are tougher propositions in the Fourth than Higgs. Still, it was pretty good to knock Higgs out like that in five minutes. He can play cricket, too. He's got the right stuff in him, with all his funny little ways."

"He's got pluck," said Raby. "But—"

"He's a hefty boxer," said New. "But—" said Jimmy Silver, pursing his lips.

"But he's a cad!" said Lovell quietly. "There's a rotten streak in him. He doesn't speak to Rawson in his study because Rawson's people are poor. He crowed over Higgs when he'd knocked him out. He's a puppy and an upstart!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Jimmy Silver.

"He's not genuine!" said Lovell obstinately. "A gentleman doesn't snub a chap because he's poor, or crow over a fellow who's down and out. His name may be Montmorency, but he's no gentleman, and I'm going to tell him so, if ever he wants to know my opinion."

"Let's hope he won't, then," said

the whole story, with serious consequences for Montmorency.

To the general surprise, Tubby didn't.

"I—I—I got a knock on it, sir!" he stammered.

"It looks like the slash of a stick," said Mr. Dalton, eyeing him.

"Yes, sir; quite an accident, sir." "You should be more careful, Muffin."

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I will, sir."

To Tubby's evident relief, the matter was dropped there. After breakfast, the juniors came out into the quad, and Jimmy Silver dropped his hand on Tubby's fat shoulder.

Tubby was speeding towards the tuckshop, and he stopped unwillingly. "I say, don't stop a fellow," he said. "There's not much time before lessons, and the tuckshop—"

"My hat! Are you going to feed just before brekker, you porpoise?"

"Well, just a tart and some ginger-pop," said Tubby. "I never really get enough brekker, you know; and as Monty's lent me five bob—"

"Montmorency has!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes. Rather decent of him, wasn't it?" purred Tubby. "I mentioned to him that I was short of cash—"

"You weren't so jolly pally with Montmorency yesterday," said Lovell drily.

"Oh, that's all over," said Tubby loftily. "We're quite good friends now. Let a chap go, Jimmy!"

"I was going to say," said Jimmy Silver quietly, "that it was rather decent of you not to give Montmorency away about that cut on your face, Tubby."

"Yes, wasn't it?" said Tubby fatuously. "Of course, I wouldn't give a pal away."

"But it seems that he's given you five bob to keep your mouth shut," said Jimmy contemptuously.

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin warmly. "That's quite a different transaction, of course. Monty was—was rather hasty, and he was sorry for it. He didn't want the matter gone into with Mr. Dalton."

"I shouldn't have thought his noble nibs would have come down off his perch to that extent just to dodge a caning," remarked Newcome.

Lovell gave a snort. "It wasn't the caning," he said. "What was it, then?"

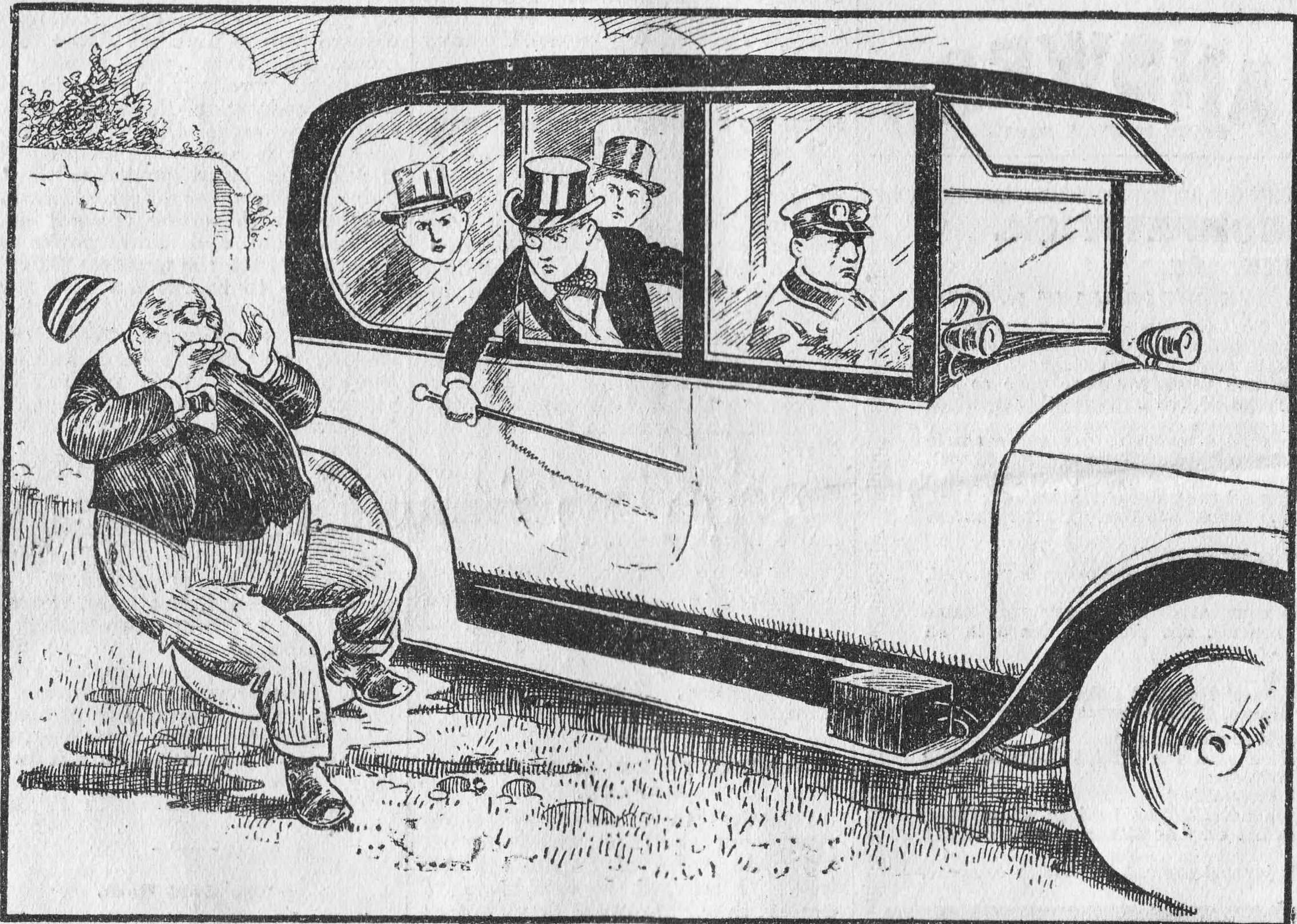
"He didn't want Tubby to yell out about his name being Huggins—about the sergeant calling him Huggins, I mean," said Lovell shrewdly. "He doesn't want Mr. Dalton to hear the Huggins story."

"Oh, dash it all!" said Jimmy Silver uneasily.

But there was a feeling in his breast that Lovell was right.

Tubby Muffin cut away to the tuckshop, where he had just time to get rid of his five shillings before lessons. He rolled into the Form-room very shiny and sticky and happy, and bestowed a genial nod and smile on Montmorency. That youth had evidently made up for all his shortcomings in Tubby's eyes.

MONTMORENCY GETS ANNOYED! "If you call me Huggins again you'll get hurt!" said Montmorency, between his teeth. "Yah! Huggins!" taunted Tubby. Before the fat Classical knew what was happening the new junior had leaned out of the car window and slashed him with his cane!



hand. The new junior did not seem dismayed by Higgs' towering wrath. He pushed back his spotting cuffs.

"Monty!" gasped Townsend. "You—you can't tackle him—that hulking brute!"

"I'm goin' to."

There was no choice about it, for Higgs was rushing on to the attack like a maddened bull.

Montmorency, with his hands up, faced him with perfect coolness.

The superb youth might be a snob, doubtless he was, but there was no doubt that he had plenty of pluck and plenty of nerve. Both were required to face Higgs' savage rush; and Montmorency faced it without turning a hair.

"By gad!" murmured Mornington. "That merchant's got the real stuff in him, by gad!"

Crash!

Higgs came on like a bull at a gate, and the next instant a furious fight was raging in the corridor.

A crowd of juniors stood round, looking on breathlessly.

There were not more than half a dozen fellows in the Fourth who could stand up to Higgs and give a good account of themselves. It seemed out of the question that the slim, elegant Montmorency could stand against him for one minute.

But he did.

He gave ground a little, but he stalled off the fierce attack, and

glanced down at him with cold scorn.

"Have you had enough?" he asked contemptuously.

"Oh! Ow! Oh! My chin! My nose! Ow!" mumbled the unfortunate bully of the Fourth.

"He's had enough!" grinned Townsend. "Monty, old man, who'd have thought you were such a holy terror? You don't look it."

"Dashed if you do!" said Topham. Montmorency smiled loftily.

"I fancy I can handle a cad like that!" he said carelessly. "If the brute's satisfied, we may as well go in to tea."

"Oh, don't crow!" snapped Lovell. Montmorency walked on with his chums without heeding that remark. Lovell gave Higgs a hand up. He did not like Higgs, but he was sorry for him just at that moment.

Higgs stood very unsteadily, mopping a streaming nose with his handkerchief, and blinking painfully with his eyes.

"Who'd have thought it?" he gasped.

"Not you, evidently!" said Mornington.

"He's too hefty for me," said Higgs. "He doesn't look it, but he is. But he's a cad, all the same, to crow when he's licked a fellow. His name may be Montmorency, but he's a cad!"

The 5th Chapter. A Short-lived Friendship!

"Muffin!"

"Yes, sir!" said Tubby Muffin, with his mouth full.

It was the following morning at the breakfast-table of the Classical Fourth.

Mr. Dalton was at the head of the table, and his eye had fallen upon Tubby Muffin, and upon the swollen red mark across his fat cheek. It was not likely to escape the keen eyes of the Form-master.

"What has happened to your face, Muffin?"

Montmorency kept his eyes on his plate. Tubby Muffin coloured and coughed.

"M-m-my face, sir?" he stammered. The juniors sat still as mice. They expected Tubby Muffin to blurt out

A SPLendid LONG COMPLETE TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS.

FRANK RICHARDS MAKES GOOD!

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD



The 1st Chapter.

"Hands Up!"

"Le Couteau!" Frank Richards whispered the name. Night had fallen on the Cascade Mountains. In a deep, shadowed valley, the flare of a camp-fire danced against a black background of pines and firs. In the circle of light from the fire, a man sat on a log. The firelight played on his dusky face, showing up the thin, cruel lips, the white teeth, the black glittering eyes. A score of yards away, Frank Richards and Bronze Bill halted. They had crept as silently as the lynx towards the lonely camp-fire in the valley; the half-breed sitting on the log had not heard a sound to cause him to turn his head.

He had a small canvas sack open on his knees, as he sat, and was running his dusky fingers through the contents—golden grains and small nuggets of the precious metal. On the canvas of the sack was a stain of blood, still wet; but that was of small account to Le Couteau, the half-breed.

With glittering eyes in the firelight he counted over the nuggets, and weighed the gold-dust in his hand.

"Cover him!" breathed Frank. "But don't shoot; there's no need to shed blood, Bill. I tell you—"

Bronze Bill ran forward into the firelight, his rifle up. His first impulse had been to shoot the half-breed dead at sight; but he yielded to his schoolboy partner.

"Hands up!" he shouted, with the rifle raised.

Frank Richards followed him fast, revolver in hand.

The half-breed started violently at the sight of the burly miner and his schoolboy comrade. His hand flew to his belt, to the handle of the long "couteau de chasse," from which the ruffian derived his nickname.

"Tough that sticker, and you're a dead man!" rapped out Bronze Bill.

The half-breed's hand did not reach the knife.

The rifle-muzzle was looking him full in the face, and the miner's finger was on the trigger.

The canvas sack dropped at his feet, as his dusky hands were raised above his head.

He fixed his black eyes, glinting with rage and hatred, upon the tanned miner and the schoolboy of Cedar Creek.

"You here!" he muttered. "I guess so, as large as life!" answered Bronze Bill. "Keep your paws up, you durned 'breed; I'm watching you. Richards, pick up that sack, sonny."

"You bet!" said Frank. He stepped forward, and stooped to secure the canvas sack.

A quiver ran through the half-breed, as he saw his prize in the hands of the schoolboy of Cedar Creek.

"So you have turned gold-thief, Bronze Bill!" he sneered. "I guess you know the owner of that sack," said the miner. "If you don't, you're going to learn. That gold-sack belongs to me and my partner. It was lifted from our camp in the gulch last night by an Injun; and we've found the Injun dead down the valley yonder. It was you that gave him his quietus, I guess."

"It is false!" muttered the half-breed. "I—"

"That's the sack, Frank?"

"That's it," answered Frank, "and the stuff is all here. We've been jolly lucky, old scout."

"It is mine!" hissed the half-breed.

"There's blood on the sack!" said Frank, with a shudder.

"The Injun's juice, I guess," said Bronze Bill. "You pesky breed, you rubbed out that Injun less'n half an hour ago, I reckon, and bagged the gold-sack off him. I guess if it wasn't for my pardner hyer, I'd drop you in your tracks, instanter."

The half-breed quivered with rage. "Take away his sticker, Frank. He's safer without that; though I reckon it would be safest to serve him as he served the Injun."

Frank Richards disarmed the half-breed, removing the knife and revolver from his belt.

Le Couteau's black eyes glittered at him.

"Now rope him up," said Bronze Bill. "Fasten his paws behind his back, and he'll keep safe till morning."

"Nom d'un nom!" muttered Le Couteau, between his teeth. "It is your turn now, scelerate! But—"

"Nuff chin-music!" interrupted Bronze Bill. "Make a safe job of it, Frank. He ain't to be trusted, any more'n a rattlesnake."

"Leave it to me," said Frank. He drew the half-breed's hands behind him, and secured the wrists together, knotting the rope with great care.

Then Bronze Bill lowered his rifle. Le Couteau had made no resistance; he could see that the big miner was ready, and anxious, for an excuse to drive a bullet through him. It was only on account of Frank that the prospector held his hand. Le Couteau's life hung on a thread.

He sat on the log again, with his hands securely bound, and black and bitter fury in his face.

Then Bronze Bill examined the gold-sack, with a grin of satisfaction on his tanned face.

"I reckon it's all hyer," he said. "All but a bit of the dust that has been spilled. I reckon this lot will figure out at a thousand dollars, and more, when we get it safe to Hard Pan, Frank."

"Good!" said Frank. "We're camping hyer to-night," continued the miner, "and I guess we'll light out for Hard Pan at sunrise. You're goin' to have our company till mornin', Le Couteau."

The half-breed replied only with a savage scowl.

The 2nd Chapter.

A Desperate Device!

Frank Richards was glad to roll himself in his blanket, with his feet to the fire, and sink into slumber.

The day had been a hard one for the wandering schoolboy, and he was aching with fatigue in every limb.

Tired as he was, he was feeling satisfied and at ease, as he lay down to sleep. The gold—the fruit of weeks of hard work at the claim in the locked gulch—had been recaptured; from the Indian gold-thief it had passed into the hands of Le Couteau, and from Le Couteau back to the owners. And Frank, who had seen a great deal of hard luck since the day he quitted his home at the Lawless Ranch, in the Thompson Valley, found fortune smiling on him at last. His half of the gold would amount to at least five hundred dollars, and that was a handsome nest-egg for the future. It was a turn of fortune's wheel that gave the schoolboy of Cedar Creek much satisfaction.

He sank into a deep slumber, and dreamed of his old home and comrades

in the Thompson Valley, and of Cedar Creek School—the backwoods school where he had spent many happy days, and upon which he had looked his last.

Bronze Bill stamped out the camp fire before he turned in.

Lonely as the valley in the cascade foothills was, it was possible that the light might be seen from afar by some wandering Indian or lawless white man, and the miner was running no unnecessary risks.

He examined Le Couteau's bonds before he rolled himself in his blanket to sleep, and left him secure.

Darkness blotted out the camp when the fire died out. But the stars were coming out in a velvety sky, and a dim light was shed on the sleeping camp.

Le Couteau did not sleep. The half-breed writhed his wrists in the cord till the skin was chafed and bleeding, but he could not get his hands loose.

An hour passed, and then he ceased, from sheer pain and exhaustion, and lay breathing hard, staring up at the glimmering stars, his perspiring face fanned by the breeze that blew through the valley.

darkness and made the watching half-breed blink.

A half-dead ember in the camp-fire stamped out by the miner's big boot had been smouldering in the heap, and it was fanned at last to a sudden blaze by the wind.

The flame leaped up and danced, casting strange lights and shadows on the forms of the sleepers and the dark trees near at hand.

The sleepers did not stir. But into the eyes of the half-breed, as he watched the flickering flame, there came a sudden gleam.

He moved silently, softly, as a panther stealing on its prey, creeping closer to the fire.

He made no sound that could disturb the sleepers.

With his back to the flicker, he held out his bound hands behind him so that the flame licked the cord that secured his wrists.

It licked his wrists also, and the agony of the burn caused the perspiration to start out on his dusky forehead in big drops.

But he set his teeth like iron, and was silent.

With the Indian blood that ran in his veins the half-breed had many of the red man's attributes. A grim and stoical endurance of pain was one of them.

No white man could have endured the licking of the flame upon his flesh without a cry. But not a sound passed the set lips of the half-breed.

Hardy as he was, and bitterly determined, the anguish forced the half-breed to withdraw his wrists from the contact of the flame.

He strained to burst the cord, but it still held.

With set teeth, he extended it over the licking flame again.

The sweat poured down his face like a stream. His heart was beating in irregular spasms. But he still endured.

And suddenly, as he strained his tortured wrists, the charred cord burst.

He was free!

The 3rd Chapter.

At Bay!

Le Couteau lay silent on the ground beside the dead fire, breathing long and slowly.

He was free, but for the time he could not move; the pain he had endured had exhausted even his iron frame.



IN DEADLY PERIL!

Down the rocky slope, grinding and roaring, came the boulder—leaping and crashing towards the two doomed trailers who stood in its fatal path

From where he lay he could see the gold-sack.

It lay between the two sleepers, partly covered by a corner of Bronze Bill's blanket.

The half-breed's eyes turned upon it again and again feverishly.

If he could but get loose—

Bronze Bill slept with his hand on his rifle, and if he had awakened and found the half-breed loose he would have shot him down like a coyote. But Le Couteau was ready to take the risk if he could but get loose. But his hands were held as though by iron manacles.

A sudden flare of light broke the

The light of the flickering ember died down and vanished. All was dark again save for the glimmer of the stars.

But the half-breed was free!

He moved at last, and softly chafed his scorched and tortured wrists. His eyes were on the sleepers, watchful as a cat's.

But they did not stir.

It was an hour more before Le Couteau felt himself able to make another move. The pain in his wrists had settled down into a dull, grinding ache, a torture that would have been almost unendurable to a white man. But the "breed" bore it in grim silence.

He moved at length, creeping stealthily closer to the sleepers.

His hand was on the gold-sack at last.

The thought was in his mind of groping for a rock and dashing out the brains of the sleepers as they lay.

But he did not dare to risk it. One, at least, of them would have awakened in time, and a bullet would have laid the half-breed dead on the ground before he could escape. And his scorched and quivering wrists were scarcely equal to the striking of a deadly blow.

The day of vengeance should come, the ruffian promised himself. Now he was thinking only of escape and of the gold.

Inch by inch, with infinite caution, he drew the gold-sack towards him till it was clear of the sleeping miners. Then he rose to his feet.

He threw the strap of the canvas sack over his shoulder and buckled it. One last look he gave at his sleeping enemies.

Again the impulse seized him to attack them before he fled, to hurl a rock at an unconscious head. But it was too risky. Bronze Bill's arm was over his rifle; Frank Richards' hand was on his revolver under his blanket. It was impossible to touch the weapons without awakening them. Vengeance upon one meant death at the hands of the other, and the half-breed restrained the murderous impulse.

With silent steps he stole away in the darkness.

In a few minutes the shadows of the night had swallowed him up.

Still the miners slept on. They were weary from the long day's trail, and they did not open their eyes until the early sunlight was creeping into the valley over the mountain-peaks to the east.

Bronze Bill was the first to awaken. He sat up as the early sun-rays glimmered on his face, and gave a deep yawn and threw his blanket aside.

His hand groped instinctively for the gold-sack at once.

Then a change came over his face as he was startled into full wakefulness.

He leaped to his feet. The gold-sack was gone, and a rapid glance showed that the half-breed was gone also.

"Gone!" stammered Bronze Bill.

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"Gone!" stammered Bronze Bill.

(Continued overleaf.)

"I did!" exclaimed Frank. "He couldn't have got loose—"
"Ain't he gone?" roared Bronze Bill.

"I can't understand it—"
Bronze Bill picked up the fragments of the charred cord. He stared at them, and held them up for Frank to see.

"By gosh!" he said, in a hushed voice. "Look at that! Injun all over! There was a bit of the fire left, I reckon, and he burned the cord through. That's Injun."

"But—but he must have burned his wrists, too," said Frank. "How could he—"

"I guess he stood that, like the durned Injun he is!" growled Bronze Bill. "I reckoned I'd stamped the fire out, but it blew up agin, I guess. Your fault—"

"Yours, you mean," said Frank warmly. "You must have left an ember—"

"Your fault, for stopping me putting a bullet through his cabeza!" exclaimed the bronzed miner savagely. "I reckon this wouldn't have happened if I'd dropped him dead in his tracks, as I wanted, you young jay!"

Frank Richards was silent. His partner was right, there was no doubt about that. But Frank could not regret what he had done.

"The fire's dead and cold hours ago!" said Bronze Bill, feeling among the ashes. "I reckon he lit out by midnight. You young jay! If you'd let me put a bullet through him—"

"No good slanging now," interrupted Frank Richards. "We're wasting time, Bill. We've got to get after him."

"Jest let me get a bead on him agin," said the big miner savagely. "I reckon I'll pull trigger instanter. Get a move on! There ain't any time for feeding. We've got to get arter the cuss afore the trail's cold."

Without a word more, the miner began to hunt for the "sign" of the half-breed, and he was not long in picking up the trail.

Le Couteau had left as little "sign" as he could, but he had not been able to avoid leaving a trace, here and there, on the soft soil of the valley bottom.

"He went up the valley!" said Bronze Bill, after a few minutes. "He's not striking out for Hard Pan. I reckon he'd be afraid of meeting us agin there. He's goin' north, to strike over the range, I guess, headin' for the rocks, where he won't leave a trail. But I'll run him down, if I have to foller his track as far as the Yukon River."

With his rifle in his hand the bronzed miner started, and Frank hastily slung on his wallet, and followed him.

Within five minutes of the awakening the camp was deserted, and the partners were pressing on swiftly up the valley.

A mile from the camp Bronze Bill halted on the bank of a stream. He picked up a great deal of sign on the bank.

"I guess the cuss was feeling that burning, some!" he said, with a savage grin. "He stopped here to bathe his wrists, I reckon. I guess he won't get over it for some time. He ain't got such a cinch on us as he figured out. He's unarmed. We know that. And he's hurt. He must have burned his wrists bad in charring off that rope. I calculate we'll have him sooner or later. Kim on!"

The "sign" of the trail led up the hillside beyond the green level. After a couple more miles there were rocks under the feet of the trailers, and the trail was harder to pick up. But it led by a steep ascent into a narrow, shadowy gorge. On either side the steep gorge was shut in by wall-like cliffs, and here the trail was certain enough, for the fugitive could not have turned either to the right or to the left.

Bronze Bill's brow was knitted as he tramped on and upward, his eyes keenly about him.

"What did he vamoose this way for, young Richards?" the miner exclaimed suddenly. "This hyer trail only leads up to the peaks. There ain't no escape for him on the hill-tops, I reckon. He's got a reason for going up this way. Keep your eyes peeled!"

"He's unarmed," said Frank. "He can't think of stopping and holding us off."

"I guess he can't be thinking of anything else, or he wouldn't mosey into a trap like this," said Bronze Bill.

"But—"

"Look out for a rock coming down the trail, you young jay!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Frank. His heart beat faster.

The narrow gorge was merely a

split in the mountainside, in some places not more than four or five feet across, with almost perpendicular walls.

The ascent was steep and rugged. A heavy rock hurtling from above would have swept through the gorge, down the steep slope, crashing from side to side. And at the thought of it Frank felt his cheek grow paler.

But there was no resource but to keep on and take the risk.

Le Couteau knew—he must know—that the miners he had robbed would follow him with unshaken determination. He was unarmed, and he was partly disabled, at least. It was only too probable that he intended to choose his own spot for turning on his pursuers. Unless he could rid himself of them he would be tracked down at long last. Was it for that reason that he had chosen to follow the steep path up the gorge?

Frank Richards felt that it was so, and he knew that with every step he and his comrade were taking their lives in their hands.

But he did not think of a halt. The gold sack was in the hands of the fleeing half-breed, and at any risk the robbed gold-seekers were resolute to keep on the pursuit.

The gorge narrowed still more as they ascended.

The cliffs on either side were lower now. In a cleft of the rock a stunted pine-tree jutted out. Ahead of them the ascent ended on a rocky plateau.

"Once there, I reckon we're clear of this!" muttered Bronze Bill. "But if I figure it out right I guess that cuss is there, ready for us. Look out!"

The words had hardly left his lips when there was a sudden, grinding roar further up the acclivity.

From the edge of the plateau above a great boulder was displaced, and it came rolling down the slope with a noise like thunder.

"Look out!" panted Frank Richards.

For an instant, far ahead, he caught sight of a dark-skinned face and a pair of flashing black eyes. It was the half-breed! But there was no time to shoot. Down the rocky slope, grinding and roaring, came the rolling boulder, crashing from side to side of the narrow gorge as it rolled, leaping, and roaring towards the two doomed trailers who stood in its fatal path.

The 4th Chapter. The Last Struggle!

Crash!
Crash!

From side to side of the narrow gorge the great rock crashed and bounded, sending rocky splinters in a shower.

For a moment Frank Richards stared at it as if transfixed. There seemed no possible escape for the trailers in the path of the rushing, leaping rock.

High above them, at the top of the gorge, a dark face grinned down, blazing with savage malice and vengeance. Le Couteau, the half-breed, had turned at bay, with some effect. He had lain in wait for the pursuers he knew would come, with the big rock ready to roll down the slope; and now it seemed certain that they must fall, crushed to death under the boulder as it roared down the gorge.

Frank Richards was white as chalk. There was no way of escape. On either side the rocky walls shut him in.

"The tree!" panted Bronze Bill.

Frank felt himself seized by a powerful hand, and lifted. He caught a branch as the big miner swung him into the tree that jutted out from a rocky ledge, three or four feet up the side of the gorge. Hardly knowing what had happened, what was happening, he clung on, dazed and dizzy, with the roar of the crashing boulder deafening his ears.

Crash, crash!

The boulder struck again the rocky side of the gorge, and rebounded, and crashed on its downward way.

Bronze Bill dragged himself into the tree beside Frank.

"Hold on!" he breathed. "Hold on for your life! There's a chance. Hold on—"

Frank clung dizzily to the branch, the bronzed miner beside him. It had all passed, so far, in a few seconds.

Crash!

The rock seemed like a thing of life as it bounded and leaped down the slope.

Had the trailers remained in its path nothing could have saved them from being swept away, crushed and shattered out of all semblance to humanity. But the tree that jutted out above had enabled them to drag themselves from the path of the rushing rock, though the stunted pine

was already sinking under their weight.

Crash!
The boulder had reached them, after what seemed an age, though it was but a few seconds.

It struck the side of the gorge, just under the ledge where the stunted pine jutted out with the two trailers clinging to it.

But they were a couple of feet above it as it crashed, though the tree to which they clung was sinking down, and evidently would only support their weight for a time that could be counted in seconds.

But it was long enough!
The boulder rolled on, crashing, grinding, roaring, on its way to the bottom of the gorge.

There was a tearing sound as the roots came rending out under the stunted tree, and the trunk sank down lower, and fell. It dropped the two trailers to the ground, in the very spot where the rolling rock had crashed half a minute before.

But the rock was past now. Far down, in the distance, its crashing echoed back to their ears.

Frank Richards reeled against the rocky wall of the gorge, panting, dizzy, almost overcome.

The fearful danger, so narrowly escaped, had unnerved him for the moment.

Crash!
It was the report of Bronze Bill's rifle that awoke the echoes of the gorge.

The bullet whizzed within an inch of the evil, dark face that peered down from the top of the ascent.

Le Couteau sprang back, with a fierce oath.

He had counted on the destruction of his enemies; he had watched and waited and planned for it, and it had seemed a certainty; it had seemed that only a miracle could save the two trailers from a terrible death. But the miracle had happened!

He barely escaped the bullet as he leaped back into cover.

"Come on, Richards!" roared Bronze Bill.

He was racing up the ascent, eager to get to close quarters with the half-breed, before another rock could be displaced and sent hurtling down.

Frank Richards pulled himself together. One fearful danger had been eluded, as if by a miracle; but the hunters were not out of the wood yet. If the half-breed had time—

But he was not given time.

He was struggling to roll a heavy rock to the verge, and set it spinning down, when Bronze Bill came tearing over the last rise, and, raising his rifle as he ran on, fired again.

There was a yell from the half-breed, following the ring of the miner's rifle.

The bullet gashed along his cheek, as he turned his head, leaving a red mark where it had torn.

"He's our meat now!" roared Bronze Bill.

He rushed on, without stopping to reload the rifle, clubbing the weapon as he ran, to crash the butt down upon the head of Le Couteau.

The half-breed sprang away, showing his white teeth in a snarl like a wild animal.

He had no weapon; and he turned to fly, as the clubbed rifle-butt whirled over his head.

Crash!

The rifle-butt came crashing down, but a desperate spring saved the lithe rascal from the blow, and the rifle struck a boulder, with a force that smashed the stock.

Bronze Bill uttered an oath.

With the swiftness almost of a hunted elk, the half-breed fled across the rocky plateau, the burly miner panting on his track.

But in a foot-race the lithe half-breed was more than a match for the Canadian miner. Bronze Bill gritted his teeth, and threw aside the useless rifle.

"Frank!" he panted.

"Coming!" gasped Frank Richards. He came up panting for breath.

"The shooter—quick!"

Without a word, Frank Richards handed the revolver from his belt to his partner.

The half-breed was already fifty yards distant, leaping from rock to rock like an elk; the gold-sack strapped on his shoulders. Bronze Bill dropped on one knee, revolver in hand, rested his left elbow on a boulder, and used his left hand as a rest for the revolver as he took aim.

Frank Richards stood panting—without speaking a word. It was no time for him to interfere, as he had done before. It was a fight to the death for the gold-sack; and already the trailers had been fearfully near to death. Le Couteau must take his chance; he had brought it upon himself. Frank spoke no word.

Crack!
The ring of the revolver was answered by a scream from the fleeing half-breed.

He had leaped from one rock to another when Bronze Bill pulled trigger, and for the moment his wild figure had stood out black against the sky; and at that instant the miner had fired. The next instant, Le Couteau was plunging headlong down the rock.

"Winged!" panted Bronze Bill. He rushed on, revolver in hand, with Frank Richards at his heels. The half-breed lay crumpled on the ground, sprawled over the gold-sack, his dark, savage face upturned.

Bronze Bill's finger was on the trigger, but the revolver was not needed.

The fierce face of the half-breed was fixed; Le Couteau, the gold-thief and murderer, had paid the penalty!

Frank Richards turned away his face.

The 5th Chapter. Hitting the Trail!

Frank Richards and his partner camped for the remainder of the day and the following night at the head of the gorge in the lonely foothills. They were almost worn out, and needed a rest before they started on the long trail to Hard Pan.

It was Frank who drove away the black vultures that gathered by the body of the half-breed. He scooped a shallow grave with his knife, in a hollow of the rocks, and Le Couteau was laid there, and Frank piled boulders above to keep off the ravaging beaks of the obscene birds. It was all he could do for his old enemy; the lawless rustler who had fought so desperately for the gold-sack, and failed.

It was with a saddened face that Frank Richards turned away when his task was done. Bronze Bill was examining the contents of the gold-sack, with grim satisfaction in his tanned visage.

But there was no satisfaction for Frank Richards at that moment. He was thinking, then of his old home in the settlement of the Thompson Valley, and feeling a revulsion against the wild, savage life of the foothills. Gladly enough he would have turned his back on the mountains, and taken the trail for the Thompson Valley, shaking the dust of the gold-mines from his feet.

But his old home was closed to him; at Cedar Creek the shadow of shame rested upon his name.

Would it ever be lifted? Frank wondered, with an ache at his heart. Bronze Bill looked up, as his school-boy partner came back to the camp, and nodded to him with a smile.

"I guess we score, this deal, Frank!" he remarked. "Thunder! You don't seem to look rosy over it!"

Frank smiled faintly.

"I'm jolly glad we've recaptured the gold-sack," he said. "I suppose we start for Hard Pan at sunrise."

"Sure! I guess it's five hundred dollars each for us," said Bronze Bill, with satisfaction. "Share and share alike, like good pards. I reckon we've both worked for this, and fought for it, too, by thunder! What are you going to do when we strike Hard Pan, Richards?"

"I don't quite know, yet," said Frank. "What are you going to do, Bill?"

Bronze Bill grinned.

"I guess it's me for a bender!" he said impressively. "I'm goin' on a regular bender, Richards, and don't you forget it! I guess if you hang on in Hard Pan you'll see your old pard painting the town red—real crimson! Just a few!"

"Then I don't think I shall hang on in Hard Pan," said Frank, with a smile.

"Nope. I reckon a bender ain't much in your line, sonny," grinned Bronze Bill. "You're a tenderfoot, you are! I reckon you'd better put your share of the dust in your grip, and hit the home-trail, and get back to your people, wherever they are!"

Frank's face clouded.

That was what he would gladly have done; and what he could not do. Not till his name was cleared at Cedar Creek.

Until they turned in for the night, Bronze Bill made frequent allusions to the "bender" he was planning, and chuckled with anticipation of the happy prospect. They turned in at last, and slept under the summer stars.

At sunrise the next morning the partners took the trail down the mountain.

It was late afternoon when they "struck" Hard Pan.

Frank Richards tramped into the mining-camp with his partner, tired but cheerful. Only a few weeks before he had struck Hard Pan footsore and almost on his "uppers," looking for a job. Now he was re-entering the camp with gold-dust and nuggets in his possession to the tune of five hundred dollars or more. It was a change in fortune for the wandering schoolboy, and Frank felt considerably elated.

At the lumber hotel, where they put up for rest and refreshment, the gold taken from the claim in the locked gulch was disposed of, and the partners divided the sum of one thousand and fifty dollars in Canadian bankbills. Frank Richards retired to his room to sew up the greater part of his money in his belt, for security, keeping only a few bills in his pocket for immediate use.

Bronze Bill did not follow his example.

After long hardship and privation in the mountains, the bronzed miner was bent upon indemnifying himself by "going on a bender," as he expressed it; and his "bender" started the same evening. With the result that after a particularly glorious evening, Bronze Bill spent the remainder of the night in the camp calaboose.

In the morning, a waggon was leaving Hard Pan on the southern trail, and Frank Richards decided to take a seat in it. He had had enough of the diggings, and with his little capital safe in his belt, he hoped to make a successful start in a more settled region. Bronze Bill was out of the calaboose in time to bid his schoolboy partner good-bye.

The waggon rolled away with Frank Richards, Bronze Bill waving a horny hand after him in farewell. Probably his bender was resumed that day—how long to last, Frank did not know; but probably till the proceeds of his successful gold-seeking had disappeared, when Bill would shoulder spade and pick, and "hit the trail" for the mountains, gold-seeking again.

Frank Richards had had luck at the diggings, but he was not sorry to turn his back on the foothills. In the creaking waggon, under a sunny sky, with five hundred dollars sewn up in his belt, he rolled away southward, and he was glad to see the green ranch-lands fresh and bright before his eyes at last.

THE END.

("Tracked by Rustlers!" is the title of the exciting complete Frank Richards yarn appearing in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

BOYS' HEROES No. 19.

In this competition the FIRST PRIZE OF £5 has been awarded to the following competitor, who sent in a correct solution of the pictures:

E. A. J. CROOK,
West Street, Banwell, Som.

The THREE PRIZES OF A TUCK HAMPER EACH have been awarded to the following competitors in order of merit.

A. Jones, Vine Cottage, Dudley Road, Ventnor; Miss I. Rosiere, 25, Altofts Terrace, Beeton Hill, Leeds; John Briggs, 23, Etherstone Street, Leigh, Lancs.

The EIGHT PRIZES OF 5s. EACH have been awarded to the following competitors in order of merit:

Philip Hickford, Mill Road,

Aveley, Pudfleet; Harold Mills, 19, Marsden Road, Redditch; Dorothy Peck, 13, Spring Street, C.-o.-M., Manchester; T. F. Love, 23, Cressington Road, Stoke Newington; George Farquhar, 11, May Terrace, Blackburn - by - Bathgate, N.B.; Annie Cave, Woodlands, Ordsall Park Road, Retford; A. Birch-rough, 274, Copster Hill Road, Oldham; Cyril Rouse, 158, The Grove, Hammersmith.

THE CORRECT SOLUTION IS AS FOLLOWS:

Hurrah for the fields and open air! Whitsun will quickly be here, and then we can all have a magnificent time at our sports.

The lucky ones will take journeys to sea and country, but, given sunshine, we shall all have a happy holiday.