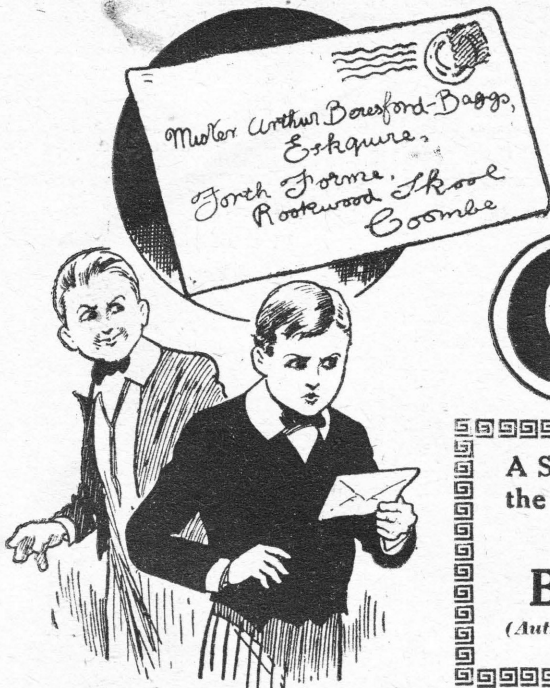


ANOTHER HUMOROUS ROOKWOOD STORY!

No one would think of calling Arthur Beresford-Baggs a snob, but he certainly does feel embarrassed when his cousin 'Erb pays him a visit. Since he came to Rookwood Beresford-Baggs has been trying to forget that he once "sweep a shop out" in the days before his family made their pile, but he is given very little chance!



Baggs' Cousin!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story dealing with the Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Chums of Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the famous stories of Rookwood now appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Letter!

LETTER for you, Beresford-Baggs!" "Here you are, Arthur!" "Beggin' letter, I should say!" remarked Smythe of the Shell. "Looks like it, begad! Look at the fist!" "And the spellin'!" smiled Townsend of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Arthur Beresford-Baggs, the new junior in the Rookwood Fourth, was coming along the passage with Jimmy Silver & Co., when his friends called to him.

It was Smythe who handed him the letter from the rack.

That letter had been in view, as it were, for some minutes, and it had excited a good deal of comment already.

Smythe's opinion that it was a begging letter seemed probably right. At all events, it did not look like the kind of letter a Rookwood fellow would receive from home.

The superscription was in a scratchy hand, and it ran:

Mister Arthur Beresford-Baggs,
Esquire,
Forth Forme,
Rookwood Skool,
Coombe.

The "Mister," in addition to the "Esquire," rather tickled the Rookwooders. It did not seem to tickle Arthur Beresford-Baggs as he glanced at the grubby envelope. His face became very grave.

"Only a beggin' letter, what?" asked Adolphus Smythe. "Some bounder has found out that your pater's a millionaire, and he's writing to you for money, deah boy."

"That's it," said Townsend. "I really wonder Mr. Bootles let the letter pass."

Arthur started. He had not opened the letter. He stood with it in his hand, and was apparently in no hurry to open it.

"Our Form master keeps an eye on the letters, of course," said Townsend. "He must have noticed that—at least, he ought to have noticed it. I wonder he didn't stop a beggin' letter."

"I—I don't think it's a begging letter."

"Must be, in that fist! Not from a relation of yours," I suppose?" smiled Townsend. "Why not?" struck in Peele of the Fourth. "Baggs has got such a queer lot of relations—"

THE POPULAR.—No. 273.

"Shut up, Peele—"
"Give us a rest, Peele!" said Adolphus Smythe severely. "We're fed up with your talkin' about Baggs' relations. Dry up!"
Cyril Peele sneered.

"Well, you know he had a weird uncle here a week or two ago—"

"That was only Muffin's yarn."
"And the terrific aunt that came along last week—"

"That was you, got up like Charley's Aunt, to pull our legs," said Smythe.

"It wasn't—"
"It was! If I were Beresford-Baggs," said Smythe severely, "I'd pull your nose, Peele."

"Not a bad idea!" remarked Jimmy Silver. "Peele is always shoving his nose in where it isn't concerned. A pull would do it good!"

"Hear, hear!" said Lovell. Beresford-Baggs did not seem to hear. He was regarding the letter in his hand with a troubled look.

Peele watched him with a malicious grin. Cyril Peele had been prepared to become the schoolboy millionaire's most devoted admirer—for a consideration. But the consideration had not been forthcoming, with the result that the milk of human kindness in Cyril Peele's breast had turned decidedly sour.

"He doesn't think it's a beggin' letter," grinned Peele. "Of course, it might be from a poor relation."

"Oh, dry up!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. Jimmy was not at all sure that Peele was wrong; but his view was that that was Arthur's business, and nobody else's.

"Let Baggs tell us whether it's from a giddy relation," persisted Peele. "Can't you speak, Baggs?"

"Eh—what?" exclaimed Beresford-Baggs, seeming to come suddenly out of a reverie. "What's that?"

"Is that letter from a relation of yours?" "I don't see that it matters to you," answered Arthur.

"That's as good as yes," grinned Peele.

"Not at all!" said Smythe of the Shell. "Beresford-Baggs is simply puttin' you in your place, Peele. I'd pull your nose!"

"So I will!" said Arthur promptly.

He made a sudden movement, and Peele gave a yell as his somewhat prominent nose was gripped between a finger and thumb.

"Yoooooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Peele jerked his nose away, crimson. He clasped it with both hands in anguish.

"Ow, oh! You rotter— Groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You asked for it, Peele!" said Raby, laughing. "You've only got what you asked for. Why can't you let Baggy's relations alone?"

"Ow, ow!"
Arthur had slipped the letter into his pocket now, and he stood with his hands ready, expecting a rush from Peele. But the cad of the Fourth, with a black brow, backed away among the crowd of juniors. He was not looking for a "scrap" with the new junior, who had already proved himself a "good man with his hands."

Tubby Muffin came along the passage and called to Arthur.

"Mr. Bootles wants you, Baggy!"
"What the thump does he want me for?" "He says you're to take your letter with you," said Muffin.

"Oh!"
"It's all right, kid!" said Adolphus Smythe reassuringly. "Bootles only wants to know who's been writin' to you. It's his duty, you know. Nothin' to be afraid of!"

Arthur Beresford-Baggs nodded, and walked away to his Form-master's study. Jimmy Silver cast a rather curious glance after him. Jimmy was aware—though most of the other fellows were not—of the facts regarding the extraordinary uncle, and the amazing aunt, that had come along to Rookwood to visit the new junior. He could not help wondering if that queer letter portended the arrival of another astounding relation. But that surmise the captain of the Fourth kept to himself.

The path of a new-made millionaire was sometimes a little thorny. It was not a case of roses, roses all the way! Arthur Beresford-Baggs was certainly experiencing the thorns as well as the roses.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Treat in Store!

MR. BOOTLES glanced at Arthur as the junior presented himself in the study. The Form master's glance was inquiring, and rather curious. Probably Mr. Bootles was aware that the antecedents of the millionaire's son were of a kind that Rookwood would have described as "weird."

"Ah! I sent for you, my boy," said the

THE POPULAR.—No. 273.

little gentleman kindly. "You are doubtless aware that it is my duty to keep—ah!—an eye upon the—hem!—correspondence of boys in my Form—what, what?"

"Yes, sir!" said Arthur.

"A letter was delivered for you by the midday post—"

"I have it here, sir."

"The superscription was—hem!—of a somewhat unusual nature," said Mr. Bootles.

"Ye-es, sir."

"Probably it was from some—ahem!—person who has no right to—hum!—communicate with you at all," said Mr. Bootles. "If so, you will hand the letter to me, Baggs. If, however, the handwriting should be known to you—"

"It is known to me, sir."

"Oh! Ah! Hem! Indeed! You are familiar with that—ahem!—somewhat extraordinary hand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then from whom is the letter, Baggs?"

"From—from a relation, sir!" stammered Arthur, colouring.

Mr. Bootles coughed.

"You are sure upon that point, Baggs?"

"Quite, sir."

"In that case, you may retain the letter, Baggs. You had better, perhaps, give me the name of the relative in question."

"My cousin 'Erb, sir."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I—I mean, my cousin Herbert."

"Oh, I see! Very well, Baggs, you may keep the letter. That is all."

And Mr. Bootles waved his fat little hand in dismissal.

Arthur left the study with a thoughtful brow. He did not rejoin the crowd of juniors in the passage, but scudded out into the quadrangle by himself. The millionaire's son wanted to be alone just then.

He cut across the quadrangle, and through the archway into Little Quad, where he stopped and sat on a bench and opened the letter.

His brow was gloomy as he read it through. It was a letter that would have excited smiles among his nutty friends at Rookwood if they could have seen it.

"Dear Art,—I seen Aunt Sarah since she came one arter seeing you at school. She says you ain't put on no side since you been at a gentleman's school, with lots of dubs in your pocket. She says as you was glad to see er, like Uncle Bill said. Praps I been ard on you, for I own I thort you'd want to give your folks the go-by now you was so grand. But, seeing as you ain't so, I'm thinking of givin you a look-in myself. I been mending the ole bike, and I ope to ave a run down to see you this week, and praps I can come along on Toosday arfternoon. I'll be glad to see you among all the swells, if you ain't ashamed for them to see your cousin.

"Yours trooly,
"ERB."

"Oh crickey!" murmured Arthur, as he came to the end of that remarkable epistle.

He sat staring at the letter in dismay.

He remembered his cousin 'Erb very well indeed. There had been a certain amount of bitterness in that young gentleman's breast on account of Arthur's great good fortune. 'Erb didn't think that it was merited and he made caustic remarks on folks that made fortunes out of the war. Certainly Sir Japhet Beresford-Baggs owed his wonderful rise in the world to the war. He was one of those acute gentlemen who know how to fish successfully in troubled waters. But Arthur knew little about that. He only knew that he had once been as poor as 'Erb, and was now as rich as Cressus, and he found the change very agreeable indeed.

'Erb—at Rookwood! Arthur had learned many things during his three years with an expensive tutor and his few weeks at Rookwood School. He was conscious that 'Erb, the companion of earlier days, would not show to advantage at Rookwood. 'Erb's clothes and 'Erb's manners, and his only half-suppressed bitterness towards his fortunate cousin! How was 'Erb to be explained away to lofty, nutty fellows like Smythe, Townsend, and Topham, and the rest?

Arthur almost groaned.

Certainly he was not ashamed of his people, or he would not have written them affectionate letters from Rookwood, thus giving away his whereabouts, which, he realised now, his father had had good reasons for not communicating to all the family.

Uncle Bill had been warded off, Aunt Sarah

had been explained away, more or less, and now cousin 'Erb was coming. Without being a snob, Arthur trembled at the prospect.

But his clouded brows cleared a little as he glanced over the letter a second time.

"Tuesday!" he murmured. "After all, the fellows will be in class. Lucky it ain't a 'arf-oliday." In speaking to himself, Arthur often dropped the Beresford for the Baggs. "Arter all, it may turn out all right. I'll get leave from Mr. Bootles to cut classes and see 'im, and nobody else need see 'im. Poor old 'Erb! I'll be glad to see him, if it comes to that. But—but the other fellers needn't. I can show 'im over Rookwood to-morrer, while all the blokes are in class, and he can't say I'm ashamed of him."

Arthur felt considerably relieved when he had come to that decision.

After some little reflection, he repaired to Mr. Bootles' study.

There he preferred his request to his Form master for leave from lessons on Tuesday afternoon, for the purpose of seeing a relation who was to be "in the neighbourhood." Arthur did not deem it wise to be more explicit than that.

Mr. Bootles looked at him very curiously, but he gave the required permission.

Arthur left the study very relieved in his mind.

Cousin 'Erb could come and go on Tuesday, and nobody would be the wiser. That was better for Arthur and better for 'Erb. 'Erb was suspicious and touchy, and if he met fellows like Smythe or Townsend it was quite certain that his sensitive feelings would be hurt. With a single curl of the lip Adolphus Smythe could have made poor 'Erb feel superlatively wretched, and there was no doubt that the lofty Adolphus would have done it. In fact, Adolphus prided himself upon his gift for keeping bounders in their place, and most assuredly he would have regarded 'Erb as a bounder of the first water.

"Toosday!" murmured Arthur, as he walked out into the quad with a clear brow.

"Toosday's all right!"

"What's going to happen on Tuesday, old top?" asked Tubby Muffin's fat voice at his elbow.

Arthur bit his lip. He had not observed the fat Classical.

Tubby eyed him inquisitively.

"'Eh? Oh, nuthin'!" stammered Arthur.

"Somebody coming to see you?" asked Tubby.

"Oh, rats!"

"Your uncle?" grinned Muffin.

Tubby Muffin had seen Uncle Bill, and he did not allow that fact to be forgotten.

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Arthur; and he walked on, frowning.

Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"I wonder what's going to happen on Tuesday?" he murmured. "I'm going to keep an eye open on Tuesday. He, he, he!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Waiting for 'Erb!

"BELL'S gone, Baggy!"

Jimmy Silver called to Arthur Beresford-Baggs, on the following afternoon, in the quad.

The Fourth-Formers were heading for their class-room; but Arthur Beresford-Baggs, sauntering under the beeches, did not seem to have observed it.

He glanced round as the captain of the Fourth called to him.

"All serene!" he answered.

"Well, aren't you coming in?" asked Jimmy Silver, in surprise.

"No."

"My dear chap, you can't cut classes," said Newcome. "Even giddy billionaires can't do that!"

"I've got leave from classes," explained Arthur.

"Oh, I see! Ta-ta, then."

The Fistical Fourth ran on towards the School House. But Tubby Muffin, who was close behind them, stopped, to turn a very inquisitive blink upon Beresford-Baggs.

Reginald Muffin had not forgotten what he had overheard the previous day. He had determined to "keep an eye" on Beresford-Baggs that Tuesday; but it looked now as if the millionaire's son was to escape Tubby's watchful eye.

"You've got leave from classes, Baggy?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," answered Arthur shortly.

"What did Bootles give you leave for?"

"For the afternoon," answered Arthur humorously.

"I say, Baggy, old fellow, I don't think you ought to keep secrets from an old pal," urged Tubby Muffin, almost burning with

curiosity. "I say, I won't give you away. If it's some of your shady relations coming to—"

"What?"

"I won't tell the fellows! After all, you needn't keep it dark from me. I've seen your uncle, you know, and I know that your relations are a set of awful corks—"

Arthur made a stride towards the fat Classical. Reginald Muffin promptly backed away.

"Don't you get waxy!" he admonished. "I'm only asking a civil question, ain't I? Look here, Baggy, if—"

Bulkeley of the Sixth came along from the gates, and he paused as he saw the two juniors under the beeches.

"Now, then, why aren't you in your class-room?" he inquired.

"I've got leave, Bulkeley," answered Arthur.

"And what about you, Muffin?" inquired the prefect.

"I—I was just talking to Baggs!" stammered Tubby.

Bulkeley took Muffin by one fat ear.

"You're late already!" he said. "Come along!"

"Yow-ow!"

Tubby Muffin went along. He had no choice about that. Bulkeley kept hold of his fat ear and Tubby had to break into a breathless trot to keep pace with the long strides of the Sixth-Former.

Arthur Beresford-Baggs chuckled as they disappeared in the direction of the School House.

He was feeling quite easy in his mind now.

The quadrangle was deserted. All the fellows were in the Form-rooms, excepting the Modern juniors, who were in the "Lab" with Mr. Manders. The whole of Rookwood was busy with the afternoon's work, and there was no one to keep an eye on Beresford-Baggs. Cousin 'Erb might have arrived, and walked all round Big Quad without any Rookwooder being the wiser, excepting old Mack at the gate, and old Mack did not matter. Old Mack had been the recipient of many liberal tips from the schoolboy millionaire, and was in a perpetual state of expecting more. If the Kaiser himself had dropped in to see Beresford-Baggs, old Mack would have looked on with a lenient eye.

"Poor old 'Erb!" murmured Arthur, as he sauntered down to the gates. "I'll jest take him for a trot round the school, and then get my bike out, and we'll have a spin, and I'll see 'im off. He can't complain of that, though he's touchy. Thank goodness 'Towney and Topy are in the Form-room, and Smythe, too! I—I—I wonder what they would think of 'Erb?"

Fortunately, the nuts of Rookwood were not likely to see 'Erb, and so what they would have thought of him was not a pressing question.

As for Reginald Muffin, Arthur did not give him another thought. The fat Classical was safe in the Form-room till four, and by four o'clock Arthur intended Cousin 'Erb to be far out of the range of Tubby's inquisitiveness. But, as a matter of fact, if he had only known it, in reckoning without Tubby, he was reckoning without his host. He had not done with Tubby Muffin yet.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Muffin Keeps an Eye Open!

"MUFFIN!"

Mr. Bootles rapped out the name as the fat Classical rolled into the Form-room, nearly five minutes late.

"Yes, sir?" gasped Tubby.

"You are late!" said Mr. Bootles sternly. "I believe I have told you before, Muffin, that procrastination is the thief of time. I have warned you, Muffin, to be more punctual. I am sorry, Muffin, that it will be necessary for me to cane you. Come here, Muffin! Bless my soul! What is the matter with the boy?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, staring at him.

All the Fourth were staring at Tubby, too. Master Muffin was doubled up, as if with an inward pain, and he had given utterance to a deep groan.

"Bless my soul! Are you ill, Muffin!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, all his wrath evaporating at once.

"Ow! Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Muffin.

"I—I—I've got a pain, sir—"

"Dear me! What sort of a pain, Muffin?"

"Like—like burning daggers, sir." Tubby had a vivid imagination when he let it go.

"Like—like red-hot carving-knives, sir—"

"Muffin, where do you feel this pain?"
 "In—in— Under my waistcoat, sir!"
 "I am afraid you have been over-eating yourself, Muffin. I have had occasion to speak to you on this topic before."

"Oh, no, sir! I—I hardly ate anything at dinner, sir!" gasped Tubby. "I—I—I only had three helpings of beefsteak-pudding sir, and—two of pie, sir. I—I was hungry when I left the table, sir."

"Nonsense! Do you still feel this pain?"
 "Ow! It's awful, sir!" said Tubby Muffin pathetically. "I—I think I'm going to die, sir!"

"Absurd! Go to the matron at once, and tell her your symptoms," said Mr. Bootles. "She will give you something for it."

"Ye-e-es, sir. Shall—shall I go and lie down if she tells me, sir?"
 "Certainly, if she tells you! Not otherwise."

"Ow! Yes, sir. Yah!"

"Muffin—"
 "Yaroooooh!"

"Bless my soul! The boy really appears to be ill!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "Lovell, how dare you laugh? Silver, you are laughing, also! This is very unfeeling! Have you no sympathy with the sufferings of your school-fellow? Muffin, go to the matron at once!"

"Yes, sir," groaned Muffin.
 He tottered to the door, and tottered out. The big door closed behind him, and Mr. Bootles looked quite concerned as he turned to his class again.

The class did not look very concerned, however. They knew Reginald Muffin better than his Form master did, and they had no doubt whatever that Tubby's sudden illness was simply a "stunt" for eluding lessons that afternoon.

If Mr. Bootles could have seen Reginald Muffin after the door closed on him, no doubt he would have been of the same opinion as his class.

As soon as he was out of sight Muffin's sufferings ceased instantly. He straightened up, and ceased to groan, and even indulged in a fat wink at space.

"All serene!" he murmured. "Silly old duffer!"

With that grateful remark Reginald Muffin rolled away, but his steps did not lead him towards the matron's room.

He rolled out into the quadrangle. There, like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way; but the quad was deserted, and there was no eye to see him.

Finding that the coast was clear, Reginald Muffin proceeded on his way with a fat grin on his face. Having "spoofed" Mr. Bootles and escaped from the Form-room, he was at liberty to carry out his intention of "keeping an eye" on Arthur Beresford Baggs.

Tubby Muffin more than suspected that another relation of Beresford-Baggs was turning up, and if a relation of the gilded youth did turn up, Tubby meant to know all about it. Beresford-Baggs was not to be seen within the walls of Rookwood. But the fat Classical guessed where he would find him. He rolled down to the gates.

The gate was partly open, and in the opening he discerned the very well dressed figure of the millionaire's son.

Arthur had his eyes on the road, looking out for an old, patched bicycle and a loudly-dressed youth, and he did not see Tubby Muffin, or hear him, till Tubby tapped him on the shoulder from behind.

Then he spun round with an exclamation, to stare into Muffin's fat and grinning face.
 "You!" he ejaculated.

"Little me, dear old top!" answered Muffin, with a friendly nod. "I thought I'd come and see how you were getting on."

"What are you doing out of the classroom?" demanded Arthur.

"I've got leave, too."

"More likely you're playing truant," said Arthur suspiciously.

"How could I, ass, when Bulkeley took me to the Form-room!" said Tubby Muffin. "I've got leave. I asked Mr. Bootles. Do you think you're the only chap in the Fourth who can get leave? I've got a lot of influence with Bootles, I can tell you. If I asked for an exeat for the whole day he'd give it to me."

"Rats!"

"Hasn't he come yet?" asked Muffin.

"He! Who?"

"The relation you're expecting."

"How do you know I'm expecting a relation, you fat fraud?"

"He, he, he!"

Arthur's hand flew to his pocket. For a moment he feared that cousin 'Erb's letter



GETTING RID OF TUBBY THE INQUISITIVE! As Tubby Muffin came up to Baggs the latter gave him a violent push. "Yarooooo!" gasped Muffin. Bump! He sat down on the carpet with a concussion that made the study shake. The next moment the door had been shut with a crash! (See Chapter 5.)

had fallen into Muffin's hands. Tubby was not supposed to be above looking at another fellow's correspondence when his inquisitive instincts were aroused.

But the letter was safe. Arthur withdrew his hand from his pocket; but the gesture had given him away. Tubby Muffin's suspicion was quite confirmed now.

"Is it Uncle Bill, the fishmonger?" he asked.

"No, blow you!" growled Arthur.

"Or Aunt Sarah, the greengrocer? He, he, he!"

Arthur regarded him with lowering brows. Tubby Muffin already knew too much of his family affairs—too much for Arthur's comfort at Rookwood. If he saw cousin 'Erb—perhaps talked to him—

Arthur cast an uneasy glance along the white high road. In the distance a cyclist appeared, coming along in a cloud of dust. The rider was too far off to be recognised, if it was cousin 'Erb.

Tubby peered out of the gate inquisitively. "Is that the chap?" he asked, with a nod towards the distant cyclist.

"Mind your own business!"

"Look here, Baggs—"

"You prying cad!" broke out Arthur hotly. "What does it concern you, anyhow? You've pulled Mr. Bootles' leg somehow, to make him let you off lessons. I've a jolly good mind to—"

He made a stride towards Tubby Muffin with his fists clenched, and a glitter in his eyes that made the fat Classical jump back in alarm.

"I—I say, keep your wool on!" stuttered Tubby. "I—I—"

"Will you clear out, you prying rotter?"

"Oh, if you don't want my company, I'm sure I don't want yours!" said Muffin, with dignity.

And he retired about six yards, where he took up his stand, grinning and watchful.

Arthur's eyes gleamed at him, but he controlled his temper. It was not much use thrashing Muffin; it certainly would not have made him less watchful. The dusty cyclist was drawing nearer on the white road, and if it was cousin 'Erb—

Evidently there was no time to be lost if cousin 'Erb was not to make the acquaintance of the chatterbox of Rookwood!

Arthur calmed his wrath with an effort, and walked across to the fat Classical.

Tubby watched him warily as he came up. "The tuckshop's open, I believe, Muffin," said Arthur.

"I believe so!" grinned Tubby.

"Could you do with five bob?"

"Yes, rather!" said Reginald Muffin promptly.

"Here you are, then! Now cut off!"

Tubby Muffin counted the five shillings that were slipped into his fat hand, and transferred them to his pocket. But he did not cut off. He disposed himself a little more comfortably against a stone buttress of the old grey wall.

"Well, why don't you go?" snapped Arthur.

"No hurry, old top!"

"Why, you—you—you fat fraud!" shouted Arthur, in great wrath.

Evidently Reginald Muffin, having pocketed the bribe, intended to remain and pry on the visitor just the same!

"I say, don't call me names, Baggs!" said Tubby, in an injured tone. "The—the fact is, I'm tired, and I'm taking a rest. I suppose a chap can lean on the wall if he wants to?"

Arthur breathed hard.

"Will you go?" he exclaimed.

"No, I won't!"

"You prying rotter—"

"Who's prying?" demanded Muffin warmly. "What is there to pry into, if you come to that? Other fellows don't mind their relations being seen when they come to Rookwood."

Arthur turned away without replying, his lips compressed. He looked out at the gates. The dusty cyclist was nearer now, and he discerned a large necktie of red, barred with green—the most prominent feature of the cyclist at that distance. He could still not recognise the rider; but that necktie warned him that it was probably cousin 'Erb. And Tubby Muffin, within a few paces, was watching with all his eyes.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trapping Tubby!

JIMMY SILVER & CO., in the Fourth Form-room, found early Roman history a little sporadic on that warm spring afternoon. They envied Beresford-Baggs, who had the afternoon free, and wasn't being worried about any boring ancient Romans. But, as a matter of fact, Beresford-Baggs would willingly have changed circumstances just then with any fellow in the Fourth.

He was sure now that the approaching cyclist was cousin 'Erb. Never could he have had a better opportunity of receiving such a visit, but for Tubby Muffin!

Everybody was in the Form-rooms or the lab. There was not an eye to fall on cousin

'Erb's flaming necktie—if only the spy of the Fourth had not been there. If an earthquake had suddenly happened, and Reginald Muffin had been swallowed up from all human ken, probably Beresford-Bags would not have shed any tears over the catastrophe.

But he was not likely to be relieved of the spy by any such heroic happening. Even kicking Muffin across the quad was no use; he would come back. And a lurid description of cousin 'Erb would be waiting for the Rookwooders when they came out of class.

Arthur reflected rapidly, as the dusty cyclist drew nearer and nearer on the road. He came back towards Tubby Muffin at last. Tubby watched him with a grin. But Arthur did not stop; he walked on towards the School House.

"I say, Bags!" called out Tubby, in surprise.

Arthur did not turn his head. He walked on quickly. Tubby Muffin promptly detached himself from the buttress and followed. What Arthur's object was he did not know; but he knew that he did not mean to lose sight of the schoolboy millionaire.

Apparently unaware that Muffin was close on his track, Arthur entered the house. Muffin followed him in, panting a little from the quick walk. He saw that Beresford-Bags was hesitating, and stopped to watch him. If Arthur had intended to slip through and escape at the back of the house, he changed his intention, and ran lightly up the big staircase.

After him Tubby Muffin came, panting.

Arthur grinned as he stepped into his study in the Fourth Form passage. Tubby was still labouring breathlessly behind, as Arthur took the key from the door and slipped it into his pocket.

A minute later Tubby's fat face grinned in at the open doorway.

"Hallo, Bags, old chap!" he said cheerily. "Here we are again!"

Arthur nodded amicably, rather to Tubby's surprise. The fat Classical was prepared to dodge a boot.

"Come in, Tubby!"

"Certainly, old bean!"

Reginald Muffin rolled in, still keeping a wary eye on the millionaire's son. If Arthur had produced a cricket-stump or a five-bat, Tubby was ready to flee. But that did not seem to be Beresford-Bags' intention.

"Like some toffee?" he asked.

"What-ho!" said Tubby.

"Try this!"

Arthur opened the table drawer, and took out a packet of toffee. More and more surprised, Tubby Muffin sampled it. He came to the conclusion that Beresford-Bags, having realised that he could not get rid of him, was planning to get into his good graces. At that thought, Reginald Muffin became very lofty and patronising indeed.

"Sit down, kid," said Arthur, pointing to the study armchair.

"I don't mind if I do, old top," said Tubby Muffin, sinking into the big chair. "I say, this is good toffee! I don't mind if I have some more."

"Help yourself, Tubby."

"Thanks; I will!"

Arthur strolled carelessly towards the door. Tubby Muffin's eye was on him at once.

"Hold on, I'm coming!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, sit where you are!" said Arthur, with his hand on the door.

Tubby chuckled.

"No fear; I'm coming!"

He jumped up, and rolled doorward as Arthur stepped out into the passage. Before the junior could draw the door shut after him, Tubby's fat paw was on it.

What happened next was like an earthquake to Tubby Muffin.

Arthur made a quick stride towards him, and his fist smote Tubby on the chest with a terrific smite.

"Yarooop!" gasped Muffin.

Bump!

He sat down on the carpet with a concussion that made the study shake.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Wow!" spluttered Muffin.

"Why, you beast—you awful rotter—you-ow-ow! I'll—I'll—ow-wow!"

Slam! Click!

The door was shut, and the key turned in the lock. Tubby Muffin struggled frantically to his feet.

He clutched at the door-handle and dragged. But the door did not come open. Outside, Arthur slipped the key into his

THE POPULAR.—No. 273.

pocket. Tubby rattled furiously at the door-handle.

"Yah! Lemme out!" he roared. "Bags, you rotter, lemme out of this room! Do you hear, you cad?"

"Caught!" came Arthur's chuckling voice through the keyhole. "You can finish the toffee, if you like, Muffin. Ha, ha!"

"Blow the toffee! Lemme out of this!" roared Reginald Muffin.

"Good-by-eee!"

"Yah! Lemme out! I'll yell—"

Arthur Beresford-Bags walked away down the passage, grinning. Tubby Muffin was safely disposed of—for the present, at least. In the study, the fat Classical rattled the door-handle, and thumped furiously on the panels.

He understood now why Arthur had returned to the house; that the junior had been leading him into a trap all the time. And the thought of how he had walked, quite unsuspectingly, right into the trap, made Tubby Muffin splutter with rage.

Arthur's footsteps died away down the passage, and Tubby Muffin ceased to thump on the door. It was pretty clear that Beresford-Bags would not come back to release him, and Tubby had his own reasons for not wanting to attract the attention of anyone else. Mr. Bootles supposed that he was ill, and was under the care of the matron, and a discovery of the facts would have led to painful results for Muffin. He was a prisoner in Study No. 5 until Arthur chose to release him, or until the juniors came out of the Form-rooms after lessons.

"Oh, the awful rotter!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "Fancy shutting a chap up like this for a whole blessed afternoon, too! Oh, dear! Just because he's got some beastly shady relation coming! Oh, crumbs! And—and I ought to go back to the Form-room before four. If Mr. Bootles finds out—Oh dear!"

Tubby Muffin's only consolation was in finishing the toffee. But the toffee was soon finished. Then the fat Classical roamed to and fro in the study, a great deal like a caged lion, or, to be more exact, like a caged guinea-pig.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

'Erb'

"THIS 'ere Rookwood?" Old Mack started. The old Rookwood porter was sunning himself outside his lodge, when a somewhat untidy head, surmounted by a rather greasy cap, was inserted in the opening of the gates.

Old Mack fixed a stern look upon the inquirer. Besides the head and the cap, he had a view of a soiled collar and a necktie that would have attracted attention anywhere within a radius of a quarter of a mile of its owner. And old Mack was not pleased with the view.

"This here is Rookwood!" he answered curtly.

"Oh, all right!"

"Don't you shove that there gate!" snapped old Mack. "The likes of you ain't allowed in 'ere!"

A round, rather pimply face looked at him in reddening wrath. The newcomer was a youth of about sixteen, very dusty from a long ride. He eyed old Mack as if he could have bitten him.

"The likes of me!" he ejaculated.

"That's wot I said!" answered old Mack stolidly. "The likes of you, young man! You get off with yer, and don't you lean that bike up agin them gates! Now, then!"

Instead of heeding the porter's injunction, the newcomer gave the gate an angry shove, and it flew open. Then he wheeled a dusty bike in.

Mack watched that proceeding with wide-eyed astonishment and gathering wrath.

"My eye!" exclaimed old Mack. "Of all the neck! Get out of 'ere, you young raskil, afore I come to yer!"

"So this is 'ow a bloke is treated when he calls on his relations 'ere," said the stranger bitterly.

"You ain't got no relations 'ere, young man," said Mr. Mack. "If you're a relation of Tupper, the boot-boy, this ain't the gate for you to come in, and you knows it!"

"Blow your boot-boy!" retorted the youth. "Do I look as if I was a relation of a boot-boy?"

"You don't look 'arf respectable enough!" said Mr. Mack. "Now, then, are you goin' out, or are you asking to be put?"

"Go and fry your features!" was the disrespectful reply of the youth with the necktie.

Old Mack flushed with wrath, and made a stride towards the newcomer. There was a patter of footsteps as Arthur Beresford-Bags came panting up to the gates.

"Hold on, Mack!" he gasped.

Mr. Mack looked round at him.

"You know this young pusson, sir?" he inquired.

"Yes—yes; he's a—a friend of mine," stammered Arthur.

Cousin 'Erb burst into a laugh—a bitter, socialistic laugh.

"Friend of 'yorn!" he ejaculated. "That's right; don't you let on to your blooming flunkeys that I'm your cousin."

"Oh!" murmured old Mack, comprehending. And Mr. Mack beat a discreet retreat to his lodge, Mr. Mack could really have kicked himself for his mistake. He wondered whether that little unpleasantness would make any difference to his next munificent tip from the schoolboy millionaire.

Arthur's face was crimson. He held out his hand to his dusty cousin, and 'Erb shook it in rather a gingerly fashion. 'Erb's touchy feelings had evidently been wounded.

"Passin' me off as a friend of 'yorn," he ejaculated. "I'm s'prised at you, Art!"

"I—I never meant—"

"Course, we ain't all rolling in oof," 'Erb satirically. "We can't all make fortunes out of the war."

"I say, old chap—"

"Some of us wouldn't if we could!" said 'Erb.

"Come on, old fellow," said Arthur. "I'll trot your bike in. This way!"

"Don't you be in too big a 'urry," admonished 'Erb. "Pr'aps I ain't good enough to come to this 'ere plice."

Mack had vanished into his lodge, for which Arthur was duly thankful. And he was deeply, deeply thankful that Tubby Muffin was safely locked up in a study, and that it was not a half-holiday. If the old Quad had been crowded with Rookwood fellows just then—

Fortunately, it wasn't! For it could not be denied that Cousin 'Erb's voice and manners left very much to be desired.

"If I ain't good enough," said Cousin 'Erb independently. "I'll go! I come 'ere quite friendly, but if I ain't good enough—"

"Of—of course, you're good enough, old fellow!" said Arthur soothingly. "Never mind the porter—"

"A bloated menial!" said 'Erb bitterly.

"N-n-not at all. He—you—"

"Liveried flunkey!" said 'Erb, with increasing bitterness. "The kind the bloke torks about on the stool at the street corners. You a-settin' of bloated menials on to your own relations. Art—I'm ashamed of yer!"

"But I—I didn't—"

"You've grown into a snob, Art!" said 'Erb, pointing an accusing and rather grubby forefinger at his dismayed cousin. "That's what's the matter with you, Art! You've grown into a snob, 'ere among swells and such."

"I—I haven't—not really—"

"Taking me for a relation of a blooming boot-boy!" exclaimed 'Erb, with breathless indignation—which seemed to hint that 'Erb himself was not quite free from snobbery.

"Won't you come in, old chap?" urged Arthur. "I'll leave your bike here—we'll go for a spin presently."

"I didn't come 'ere to go for a spin," said 'Erb; "I came to see you. You want to get me out of sight of the swells—what?"

"Oh, 'Erb!"

"Well, I ain't goin' for any old spin," said 'Erb. "I've done enough for a bit. I wouldn't mind settin' down, and pr'aps havin' a cup o' tea—"

"Come along!" said Arthur brightly. "The tuckshop's open, and we can get what we want in there."

'Erb hesitated; but he followed Arthur in, leaving his dusty bike standing against the wall. Arthur led the way to Sergeant Kettle's little shop behind the beeches. Then 'Erb stopped.

"Ain't we going into the 'ouse?" he asked.

The Children's Best Coloured Paper
JUNGLE JINKS
 Out on Thursday—Price 2d

"We can't get any tea there," explained Arthur. "It isn't tea-time yet."
 "I don't mind waiting till tea-time," said 'Erb. "I thought you'd show me the place. You got a study or something, ain't you?"

"Y-e-s—"
 "And friends 'ere, I s'pose?" said 'Erb.
 "Oh, yes! But—but it's lesson time," explained Arthur, "the fellows are all in class. I've got leave to see you, or I should be in class with the rest."

"I see. I sha'n't see your friends till they come outer class, is that it?" inquired 'Erb, watching him narrowly

Poor Arthur looked troubled. He could not explain to 'Erb that he was to go before the fellows came out of class.

"P'raps you'd rather they didn't see me?" said 'Erb, quick to take offence.

"You—you see—"
 "Aunt Sarah said you wasn't growed snobbish, like your father," said 'Erb. "I didn't quite swaller it then. Now I know."

"Never mind my father—"
 "I don't mind 'im," said 'Erb loftily. "I don't mind Sir Japhet Beresford-Baggs, I can tell you! I'd like 'im to tell me where he found the Beresfords; there ain't any in our branch of the family, I know that. P'raps he picked 'em up along of the war profits. P'raps he won't always be rolling in oof, neither. I've read in the papers that the blokes in Parlyment are getting arter the profiteers 'ot!"

This agreeable remark elicited no reply from Arthur. The hapless youth was looking very distressed. Uncle Bill and Aunt Sarah were nothing like cousin 'Erb. It was clear that 'Erb had come in a suspicious mood, and that he would have been rather disappointed than otherwise if his suspicions had not been confirmed. But they were confirmed; so he was saved from that disappointment. He was quite anxious to find his wealthy cousin a snob; and he was satisfied that he had found him one.

"Where's your 'eadmaster?" asked 'Erb suddenly.

"He—he's busy. He takes the Sixth Form, you know."

"I don't know," answered 'Erb.

He turned his back on the tuckshop and came through the beeches again. He stared up with some interest at the great facade of Rookwood.

"So the 'eadmaster's busy, and all the blokes are busy," he remarked. "There ain't nobody for me to see. I dessay the 'eadmaster won't be busy all day, though. Are you goin' to interdooce me to your 'eadmaster?"

"There—there's no need—"
 "Ain't there?" said 'Erb, with mocking sarcasm. "No, I s'pose there ain't, Art! And Aunt Sarah said you wasn't growed a snob! You pulled the wool over 'er eyes proper."

"I say, 'Erb—" murmured Arthur.
 "There's a bloke there a-watchin' of us!" said 'Erb, indicating a distant study window with a dirty thumb. Arthur started, and

glanced in the indicated direction. The fat face of Tubby Muffin was framed in the window of Study No. 5 in the Fourth.

"Let's get into the shop and have some tea!" gasped Arthur.

"You don't want that bloke even to see me?" sneered 'Erb. "I was a fool to come 'ere. I knowed what to expect, and you're jest as I expected to find you, Art. Well, I ain't goin' to disgrace you afore your swell friends. I'm goin'!"

"'Erb!" exclaimed Arthur, in great distress.

But cousin 'Erb did not heed. He strode away towards the gates, with settled determination in his lowering brow.

Arthur hurried after him.

"'Erb, old chap, you'll stay a bit and—"
 "No, I won't!" answered 'Erb, dragging his bicycle away from the wall. "I ain't wanted 'ere, and I knows it!"

"I'm glad to see you, 'Erb—"
 "Are you goin' to interdooce me to your 'eadmaster?" demanded 'Erb, with the air of a fellow propounding a "poser."

"There's no need; Dr. Chisholm won't expect to see you. Do be reasonable, 'Erb, old fellow—"

"I ain't reasonable now, ain't I?" said 'Erb. "Well, I'm goin'—if you'll horder your pampered menial to hopen that there gate."

"I'll open it—but—"

Cousin 'Erb wheeled his bike out into the road. Arthur watched him, hardly knowing whether to be more pleased at his departure, or distressed at his perversity. 'Erb stood holding his bike for a minute, while he addressed a gracious farewell to his cousin.

"Good-bye, Art!" he said. "I knowed what to expect, and it's 'appened. I don't bear no malice; and I only 'ope that you won't 'ave to go back to the fishshop when the blokes in Parlyment make your father and over the war profits. That's all!"

And, with that, cousin 'Erb threw a leg over his bike, mounted, and pedalled away.

Arthur Beresford-Baggs stood gazing after him till a turn of the road hid him from sight.

Then he sighed, as he turned back into the gateway of Rookwood School. Cousin 'Erb's visit had not added to his happiness.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

up to the Fourth Form passage to release the fat Classical.

"You—you—you rotter!" spluttered Tubby Muffin, as the door opened. "I saw him—I saw the boulder from the window! I'll tell Towny and Topsy and Smythe and—Yaroooop!"

Tubby Muffin fled from the study with the exasperated Arthur's boot behind him.

Arthur slammed the door after the fat Classical as he fled. Then he threw himself into a chair glumly.

He was thinking of cousin 'Erb and his satirical bitterness; and wondering, too, what effect Tubby's description of the visitor would have upon his nutty friends.

Undoubtedly there were thorns in the path of the son of a millionaire whose relatives had not become millionaires also!

THE END.

(There will be another long, complete story of Arthur Beresford-Baggs' amazing adventures at Rookwood School, entitled: "A Family Affair!" by Owen Conquest, next week.)

.....

HALF-MINUTE STORIES.

.....

A SHAKY DECISION.

The squire was "set" for the afternoon. Everybody could see that, although he had as yet received only a single over. For was not his trusty gardener, James, standing umpire at one end, and Jock, his head-gamekeeper, at the other?

With long steps the lightning bowler sped to the wickets. Whir-r-r-r! The ball came whizzing down. The squire snicked it. The wicketkeeper caught it.

"Howzat?" roared the field.
 Instinctively up went the hand of Umpire James.

Purple with rage, the squire began to make tracks for the tent.

"Keep in your ground, sir!" yelled the umpire, suddenly recollecting himself. "You ain't out!"

"But surely your arm went up?" gasped the squire, nipping back nimbly to his crease.

"Why, 'course it did, sir!" came the head-gardener's reply. "I was shakin' my fist at the saucy rascal wot appealed!"

Teacher: "The trunk is the middle part of the body."

Freddie: "I say, teacher, I think you'd better go to the circus and see the elephants!"

.....

BOOKS OF SPORT, SCHOOL, AND ADVENTURE
Sixty-four Pages Crammed with Enjoyment!

The Boys' Friend Library	No. 709.—PHANTOM ISLAND. A New and Original Yarn of Schoolboy Adventure, introducing NIPPER & CO. and the Juniors of St. Frank's.
	No. 710.—FOUGHT TO A FINISH. A Gripping Story of the Turf and Motor Track. By JOHN HUNTER, Author of "The Impossible Chance," etc., etc.
	No. 711.—THE SPORTING PIT-LADS. A Grand Tale of Sport and Adventure Amongst the Lancashire Coal-miners. By JAMES S. MELLALLEN.
	No. 712.—THE INVINCIBLE TEAM. A Magnificent Long Complete Yarn of First Division Football, introducing the Famous Blue Crusaders. By A. S. HARDY.
The Sexton Blake Library	No. 327.—THE CASE OF THE ECCENTRIC WILL. A Wonderful Tale of Detective Work and Thrilling Adventure in London and Constantinople. By the Author of the Popular Dr. Farraro Series.
	No. 328.—THE FARROWSHOT PARK AFFAIR. A Fascinating Story of Baffling Mystery and Wonderful Deduction, introducing the Famous Private Detective of Baker Street, London.
	No. 329.—THE THIRD KEY; or, The Clue of the HOROSCOPE. An Exceptionally Clever Story of Detective Work, and of how Sexton Blake Unravelled a Most Intricate Problem. By the Author of "Solved in Thirty-Six Hours," etc., etc.
	No. 330.—THE VANISHED MILLION; or, In the Land of the Letts. A Splendid Story, introducing GRANITE GRANT and MILE JULIE.

Now on Sale! Price Fourpence Each!

Cricket Bats and Cameras GIVEN FREE

For a few words! Postcards only!

For full particulars, see this week's

BOYS' CINEMA *Weekly*

The great weekly cinema adventure paper. On sale every Wednesday. Make sure of this week's fine issue NOW.

THE POPULAR.—No. 273.