



IN THIS ISSUE :
MAGNIFICENT SPORTING STORY by A. CONAN DOYLE,
 ANOTHER GRAND NEW SERIAL,
"THE BOY KING OF ROATURA!"
 By MAURICE EVERARD,
 And COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES, FOOTBALL ARTICLE, etc., etc.

The **BOYS' FRIEND** **1^d**
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THREE HALFPENCE.

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



BEFORE TRAFALGAR—LORD NELSON RECEIVES HIS SAILING ORDERS!

(For Opening Chapters turn to next page.)

Under Orders!

Thinking, as I did, that Nelson was speaking of our own old Queen Charlotte, I could make no meaning out of this; but my father told me afterwards that both Nelson and Lady Hamilton had conceived an extraordinary affection for the Queen of

Naples, and that it was the interests of her little kingdom which he had so strenuously at heart. It may have been my expression of bewilderment which attracted Nelson's attention to me, for he suddenly stopped in his quick quarter-deck walk, and looked me up and down with a severe eye.

"Well, young gentleman!" said he sharply.

"This is my only son, sir," said my father. "It is my wish that he

should join the Service, if a berth can be found for him, for we have all been King's officers for many generations."

"So you wish to come and have your bones broken?" cried Nelson roughly, looking with much disfavour at the fine clothes which had cost my uncle and Mr. Brummell such a debate. "You will have to change that grand coat for a tarry jacket if you serve under me, sir!"

I was so embarrassed by the abruptness of his manner that I could but stammer out that I hoped I should do my duty, on which his stern mouth relaxed into a good-humoured smile, and he laid his little brown hand for an instant upon my shoulder.

"I dare say that you will do very well," said he. "I can see that you have the stuff in you. But do not imagine that it is a light service which you undertake, young gentleman,

when you enter his Majesty's Navy. It is a hard profession. You hear of the few who succeed, but what do you know of the hundreds who never find their way? Look at my own luck! Out of 200 who were with me in the San Juan expedition, 145 died in a single night. I have been in 180 engagements, and I have, as you see, lost my eye and my arm, and been sorely wounded besides. It chanced that I came through, and here I am

OUR GRAND, COMPLETE, SCHOOL STORY.



The 1st Chapter.

Monsieur Monceau's Masterpiece!

Monsieur Monceau, the excitable little French master at Rookwood School, rapped sharply upon the desk with his pointer.

"Zat you attend, Peele!" he exclaimed vehemently. "Zat is ze second time I see you yawn wiz yourself!"

The class of juniors, the Classical Fourth Form at Rookwood, was proving somewhat of a trial to the French master this sunny spring afternoon. Monsieur Monceau was doing his best to drive into their heads the salient facts of the great French Revolution—a subject of absorbing interest to himself, but apparently of small moment to the Fourth-Formers. The scarcely-concealed yawns of Peele had thoroughly exasperated the little Frenchman, and had caused him to call the offender to order with unusual sharpness.

Peele, however, seemed in no way abashed by the rebuke. He rather seemed to enjoy Monsieur Monceau's exasperation.

"Was I yawning with myself, sir?" he asked, in a tone of mild surprise. "I'm sorry, sir, of course!"

Monsieur Monceau eyed him sharply, while the form suppressed its chuckles.

"Zen zat will do, Peele! Attend, s'il vous plait!"

"Certainly, sir! I thought I was only just yawning, sir!"

"This time there were several audible chuckles from the Form, and Monsieur Monceau gazed round wildly.

"Silence! Keep quiet wiz yourselves!"

He turned to his book again, looking decidedly flustered.

"Yaw-w-w!"

Monsieur Monceau bounced from his seat.

"You are yawning again wiz yourself, Peele!" he shrieked.

Peele looked at him coolly, and shook his head.

"Excuse me, sir, I was not yawning with anybody, sir. I think you are mistaken, sir!"

Peele was an adept at pulling the little French master's leg. It was a fairly safe pastime, as a rule, for Monsieur Monceau was a mild, if somewhat excitable little gentleman in class.

But this time Peele had gone too far. Monsieur Monceau sprang down from his desk, and ran across to where Peele was sitting, grasping his pointer.

"Zat you hold out your hand, Peele!" he gasped. "Such insolence I nevaire see!"

Peele looked rebellious for a moment, then he held out his hand.

Monsieur Monceau aimed an energetic blow at it, and there was a wild howl.

"Ow! Ah! Mon Dieu!"

The howl did not come from Peele, it came from Monsieur Monceau! For at the critical moment Peele had withdrawn his hand, and the pointer had come down upon Monsieur Monceau's leg with a sounding thwack.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a shout of laughter from the Fourth-Formers. They could not help it. The sight of the little Frenchman hopping round and round, grasping

The Missing Manuscript!

A Magnificent, Complete Story of Jimmy
: Silver & Co., at Rookwood School. :
By OWEN CONQUEST.

ing his injured leg, and exclaiming energetically in voluble French, was too much for their gravity.

"Garçon!" he shrieked. "Villain! Zat I trash you wiz myself!"

Grasping the pointer, he made a rush at the grinning Peele. Peele, alarmed, dodged—but too late!

The next moment the little Frenchman's grasp was upon his collar, and the pointer was making rapid play upon his back.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Ow! Help!" roared Peele lustily.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Yow! Draggimoff!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Ow! Yow! Yaroo!"

Peele tore himself loose at last, thoroughly sorry by this time that he had ever embarked upon the leg-pulling game.

Monsieur Monceau marched back to his desk gasping.

"Zat you behave yourself now, Peele!" he gasped severely. "Ze next boy zat speak, I send him in to ze 'eadmaster!"

Monsieur Monceau had no more trouble with his class during that lesson.

The Fourth-Formers felt that, thanks to the way Peele had baited him, he was not in a reasonable frame of mind, and it would be highly unsafe to make any more attempts to rag him.

He took them through the highly complicated history of the French Revolution without further untoward incident.

Monsieur Monceau was particularly interested in this period of French history. He was, in fact, writing a book upon it, which was, in Monsieur Monceau's opinion, destined to become a standard work upon the subject. It was his great hobby, and he regarded the partly-finished manuscript of his "masterpiece" as his most cherished possession. It was now almost completed, and Monsieur Monceau was looking forward with pride to the time when it would be published to the world, and he would be hailed as a genius.

It is to be feared that the Fourth-Formers, for the most part, regarded the French Revolution simply as a bore. But one or two of them took a genuine interest in history, and of these Jimmy Silver, the junior captain of the Fourth Form, was perhaps the best-informed. For this reason he was regarded with particular favour by Monsieur Monceau.

When the clock struck the welcome hour of dismissal, Monsieur Monceau's class shut their books with an air of relief.

"Zat you are dismissed, garçons," said Monsieur Monceau, perhaps equally relieved. And the class trooped from the room.

As Jimmy Silver passed the master's desk, with his book under his arm, Monsieur Monceau beckoned to him with a smile.

"Perhaps you would like to see my so rare books about ze Revolution, Silvaire?" he said kindly. "You take ze interest—not like zat Peele—is it not?"

"Certainly, sir; thank you very much!" said Jimmy Silver brightly.

The French master was known to have a number of rare books dating from Revolution times, which only the most privileged of his pupils were allowed to see.

Jimmy Silver was due at tea in the end study in five minutes, but he would not have hurt the kind-hearted little Frenchman's feelings for worlds, and he was genuinely interested to see the famous books, too.

"Zen follow me to my study, Silvaire."

Jimmy Silver spent the next quarter of an hour looking at Monsieur Monceau's old books with great interest. The French master took great pride in displaying them, and he even allowed the junior, out

of the kindness of his heart, a glimpse of the manuscript of his great work upon the Revolution.

"Zare it is, Silvaire, my masterpiece, ze beloved child of my brain!" he exclaimed dramatically; and Jimmy Silver looked at the mass of closely-written pages with something like awe.

The little French master discussed volubly upon his favourite theme for a further ten minutes, at least, before the precious manuscript was carefully wrapped up and returned to the private drawer in his desk.

Jimmy Silver, who, greatly interested as he was, was also hungry, seized the opportunity to take his leave.

"And thank you very much, sir; it was awfully interesting," he finished, genuinely grateful.

Monsieur Monceau waved his hand gracefully.

"It is nozzing, Silvaire! But you have seen ze masterpiece, zat no vun else has seen! But you are a bon garçon, Silvaire, and you have ze proper understanding of ze great French Revolution, is it not?"

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir!" gasped Jimmy, and made his escape hurriedly.

But Jimmy Silver's interest in the French Revolution received, it is to be feared, scant sympathy in the end study.

"Sorry I'm late, chaps," he said, as he swung into the study. "Monsieur Monceau has been showing me his old books and things, and I couldn't get away before."

There was a chorus of grunts from his chums, Raby, Lovell, and Newcome.

"Lot of rot!" grunted Raby.

"Your eggs are cold now."

"Doing the 'good little Georgie' stunt in your old age, Jimmy?" inquired Lovell, with heavy sarcasm.

"Oh, rats!"

"Forgot all about your tea, I suppose, in the excitement of the French Revolution," said Newcome, with a grin.

"Don't be asses, you chaps," said Jimmy, unruffled, setting to work on his tea. "Monceau's a good little ass, and he showed me some awfully interesting books, including his precious manuscript," he finished, with a smile.

"My hat! Did he show you that?" said Lovell. "I thought it had never been seen by any human eye but his own."

"Well, your Uncle James has seen it, anyway! Pass the salt, Raby."

"Here you are."

"And chuck those sardines over, Newcome. I'm hungry!"

And Jimmy Silver, his appetite sharpened, apparently, by his extra dose of the French Revolution, proceeded to make an excellent tea.

The 2nd Chapter.

Mossoo on the Warpath.

"Pass, Raby!"

"Here you are!"

"Punt it in!"

It was the following morning, a quarter of an hour before morning school began, and Jimmy Silver & Co., with Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern Fourth, were punting a football about in the quad, by way of filling in time before the school bell went.

Jimmy Silver was dribbling the ball up towards the goal, and Tommy Dodd was running to tackle him, when there was a sudden shout from Lovell and Tommy Doyle together.

"Hallo! What on earth—"

"Be jabbers! What the dickens is—"

From out of the door of the School House an extraordinary apparition had suddenly burst, and was dashing towards the group of juniors with extraordinary speed.

"My hat!"

"Look out!"

"It's Mossoo, on the war-path!"

All the juniors, with the exception of Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, who were engaged with the football, were now gazing at the apparition with startled eyes.

And well might they be startled! For the apparition was none other than Monsieur Monceau, the French master, commonly known as Mossoo. But it was quite a different Mossoo from the mild little French gentleman the juniors were accustomed to.

His hair was literally standing on end; his gown was flying behind him as he pounded along; he was shouting at the top of his voice, and in his hand he brandished a stout stick!

Mossoo was certainly on the war-path, or else he had gone out of his mind!

Straight for the group of juniors the French master dashed.

"Aha, Silvaire! You wicked villain of a garçon! I will trash you! I will flog you! Mon Dieu! Ven I catch you, Silvaire!"

Jimmy Silver, all unknowing, was dribbling the ball cleverly past Tommy Dodd, when he was startled by loud yells of warning from all sides at once:

"Look out, Silver!"

"Mossoo's gone mad!"

"Mind your eye, Jimmy!"

"Look out—quick!"

Jimmy Silver paused and glanced round. Then he almost fell down.

There, only a few paces from him, was the frantic form of the French master, bearing down upon him with glaring eyes and wildly-waving stick!

"My hat!" gasped Jimmy.

He did the only thing possible under the circumstances. Dodging a blow from the stick which would probably have brained him had it caught him upon the head, he took to his heels and fled incontinently.

"Go it, Jimmy!"

"Hop it, Silver!"

"Buck up!"

With a shriek of rage Monsieur Monceau dashed in pursuit. He pounded along at a great pace, but Jimmy Silver could run like a hare, and he did not mean to get within striking distance of that wildly-brandished stick.

Round the quad they flew, and round again, amidst cheers from the excited and amazed crowd of juniors.

"Hurrah!"

"Keep it up, Jimmy!"

"Go it, Mossoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

No one had the slightest idea what was the matter with Mossoo, least of all Jimmy Silver. But it was quite obvious that he was in a very excited, not to say dangerous, frame of mind, and that it would be highly unwise on Jimmy Silver's part to stop and attempt to argue with him. Such an idea did not enter the junior's mind, even.

The extraordinary scene was attracting a great deal of attention by now.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came out of the School House and stood transfixed at the amazing spectacle.

"What—what on earth's the matter with Monsieur Monceau?" he gasped.

"Goodness knows!" said Lovell excitedly. "He dashed out of the House straight at Jimmy, waving that stick."

"He—he must be mad!"

"Anyway, Jimmy didn't stop to argue. He just bolted!" grinned Newcome. "He's safe enough. Mossoo will never catch him!"

"Look at that!" yelled Raby.

"Good boy, Jimmy! That's done him!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Jimmy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver, having gained considerably on his pursuer by an extra spurt, had suddenly stopped at an angle of the wall, where the carpenter's shop joined on to the gymnasium. Before Mossoo realised the meaning of this move, Jimmy had grasped the rainwater-pipe which ran up to the roof of the carpenter's shop, and swung himself nimbly up it.

In a moment he was perched upon the low roof, gazing down upon his panting pursuer eight feet below.

There was a rush to the spot, where Monsieur raved, gasped, and choked. The crowd of juniors, excited as they were, took particular care not to get within reach of Mossoo's stick, however.

"Ah, mon Dieu! Ven I catch you, Silvaire!"

Bulkeley, with a grim brow, was hurrying across to the scene, when the bell went for school.

"In you go, kids, all of you—and sharp!" he shouted. "Any of you who are late will get reported to the Head!"

There was a rush for the School House door. In a buzz of excitement and speculation, the juniors streamed into their classrooms.

Bulkeley strode up to the panting Mossoo.

"Monsieur Monceau, what is the meaning of this, sir?" he said sharply.

Bulkeley was the captain of Rookwood, tall and stalwart, and much more than a match for the little Frenchman. If the latter were mad, as Bulkeley really thought must be the case, the school captain was prepared to tackle him.

Monsieur Monceau turned to Bulkeley with a wild look, almost sobbing.

"Ah, Bulkeley, you do not understand! Zat perlide garçon—my so precious masterpiece—mon enfant!"

And poor little Mossoo quite broke down, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

Jimmy Silver, wide-eyed and embarrassed, looked down upon this amazing scene in silence.

"Come, Monsieur Monceau, sir, let me take you to your room!" said Bulkeley laying his hand upon the master's shoulder. "Silver, come down from there now. I'll see you in your study about this."

Poor Mossoo allowed himself to be led into the School House without resistance, and Jimmy Silver scrambled down from his perch with his head in a whirl.

He was almost dazed with surprise. Unless Mossoo were mad, or had been drinking, he could think of no possible explanation of his amazing conduct.

He made his way to the end study in a state of stupefaction. His chums were in school, of course, and Jimmy Silver sat down to await Bulkeley and to try and think.

He was not left long in suspense. Ten minutes later Bulkeley came in.

"You're to come with me to the Head, Silver," he said briefly.

"What is it all about, Bulkeley?" said Jimmy. "I'm absolutely in the dark. Is Mossoo off his dot, or what?"

"The Head will explain. Follow me!" was Bulkeley's only reply.

Two minutes later Jimmy Silver stood before the Head.

Bulkeley stood beside him. Monsieur Monceau was not there.

The 3rd Chapter.

Up Against It!

Jimmy Silver met Dr. Chisholm's stern gaze fearlessly. He had no idea what he was about to be accused of, but as far as anything to do with Monsieur Monceau was concerned he had a perfectly clear conscience.

Dr. Chisholm cleared his throat, and began to speak in his impartial, direct way.

"I have just been made acquainted with the facts of a very peculiar and distressing matter, Silver, in which you appear to be implicated," he said. "I have learned from Bulkeley something of the—ah!—unprecedented scene that has just taken place."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy Silver demurely.

"I have also seen Monsieur Monceau," continued the doctor. "He is very much—ah!—distracted, as doubtless you are aware, and has retired to his room. From what he has told me, you are probably well aware of the reason for Monsieur Monceau's distress, Silver."

"I have not the least idea of it, sir!" said Jimmy Silver as calmly as he could.

Dr. Chisholm looked at the junior long and searchingly with his keen and penetrating gaze, and Jimmy Silver did not shrink from it.

The good old doctor's face took on a somewhat puzzled expression as he went on gravely:

"Listen to me, Silver! I gather from Monsieur Monceau that he showed you only yesterday the manuscript of his partly-completed work upon the French Revolution."

Jimmy Silver started slightly, and the doctor's brow became a trifle sterner as he noted it.

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy wonderingly, "that is so, sir."

"He replaced the manuscript, in your presence, in the private drawer where it is usually kept. He assures me that he has never shown it to any other boy in this school—that you, in fact, as far as he knows, are the only person who knows where it is kept."

"Yes, sir?" queried the junior.

"This morning," continued the doctor gravely, "Monsieur Monceau found that the manuscript, which is to him of irreplaceable value, is missing!"

"Missing, sir?" cried Jimmy Silver, startled.



THE MISSING . . . MANUSCRIPT!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Yes, missing!" said the Head sternly. "The manuscript which represents many months—even years—of patient work on Monsieur Monceau's part, has disappeared! Someone has obviously taken it. And suspicion, I am bound to tell you, Silver, points to you as the probable culprit!"

"Me, sir?" cried Jimmy Silver, staggered.

"You are, as far as is known, the only person who knows where Monsieur Monceau is accustomed to keep the manuscript. You saw it as recently as yesterday. Tell me, Silver," went on the doctor earnestly, "do you, or do you not, know anything of this matter?"

Jimmy Silver took a deep breath. "Absolutely nothing, sir, on my honour!" he said quietly.

Dr. Chisholm looked somewhat nonplussed as he searched Jimmy's open countenance with his keen glance.

"I am bound to say," he went on, "that Monsieur Monceau gives you a very good character, Silver—indeed, you appear to have been hitherto a favourite pupil of his. For my part, also, I have always found you a truthful boy. I am therefore all the more reluctant to believe you guilty of such a despicable action."

"I should never be guilty of such a cad's trick, sir!" said Jimmy Silver hotly. "I like and respect Monsieur Monceau very much."

"We must face the facts, however," said the Head a trifle drily. "Monsieur Monceau himself appears to have no doubt at all that it is you who, for some reason best known to yourself, have removed his precious manuscript. His chief—I may say his only—anxiety is to regain possession of it. The question of the punishment of the offender is, to him, a comparatively unimportant detail. I have therefore decided to postpone further inquiry into the matter until to-morrow morning, in the hope that the missing manuscript may turn up—or be returned—within the next twenty-four hours. I need hardly appeal to you, Silver, if you have any knowledge of the whereabouts of the manuscript, to lose no time in returning it to Monsieur Monceau, and thus relieving the terrible distress of mind which is at present prostrating him."

"If the manuscript has not turned up in the next twenty-four hours it will be my duty to institute the fullest possible inquiry into the whole affair, and to take very drastic action indeed against the culprit, if he should be discovered. Have you anything to say, Silver?"

"I have already said, sir, that I know nothing about the matter!" said Jimmy Silver proudly.

"Very well. You may go, Silver." And Jimmy Silver quitted the Head's study, leaving Dr. Chisholm in close consultation with Bulkeley.

After school there was earnest council taken in the end study. Jimmy Silver had told his chums the whole facts as far as he knew them. In fact, the news had spread all over the school somehow that Mossoo had lost his precious manuscript, and that Jimmy Silver was suspected of knowing something about it, and had twenty-four hours in which to return it.

"Of course, the whole thing is ridiculous. As if Jimmy would be likely to do a caddish thing like that!" said Lovell indignantly, for the twentieth time.

"Quite so," said Newcome, who had a very clear head. "At the same time, there's only one thing to do to save Jimmy any further unpleasantness—and that is to find the beastly manuscript before to-morrow."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's so," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "That's the problem this study's up against for the next twenty-four hours. Now, let's have a hard think."

"Right-ho! You start," said

Lovell, who had great faith in Jimmy's thinking powers.

"Well, the manuscript is gone. I did not take it. But someone did. The only question is—who?"

"Yes, that's the only question, of course, fathead!" growled Raby.

"Shush! Now, there aren't many people at Rookwood capable of doing a dirty trick like that. There oughtn't to be any, of course," said Jimmy Silver. "But let's put down the names of every possible candidate we can think of."

"Good!" said Newcome. "There's Peele, for one."

Jimmy Silver sprang up suddenly and paced rapidly to and fro in the study, his hands in his pockets. His chums watched him in patient silence.

It was clear that Uncle James was thinking!

At last he sat down again.

"I think I have it, you fellows!" he said quietly.

"Newcome mentioned Peele. I don't think we need look much further than Peele for the culprit, as a matter of fact. Look

The 4th Chapter.

Uncle James' Plan.

Half an hour later the Fistical Four—as the chums of the end study were called—strolled calmly into the junior Common-room arm-in-arm.

The whole room was full of juniors, in a buzz of talk on the subject, of course, of Mossoo's missing manuscript.

At the sight of Jimmy Silver & Co. there was a shout and a rush.

"What's the latest, Jimmy?" asked Conroy & Co., the Colonial juniors, anxiously, and in a breath.

"Are you going to be expelled?"

"Where's Mossoo?"

"What are you going to do?"

Questions rained upon Jimmy Silver from all sides, but Jimmy only smiled.

"Perhaps you've found Mossoo's manuscript?" said the sneering voice of Peele, who was standing with his pals Lattrey and Gower, of the Fourth, and Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell. "You're supposed to know where it is!"

Jimmy Silver smiled sweetly.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I have found it, Peele!" he said. "At least, I think I have!"

"What?" roared a score of voices.

The Fistical Four kept their eyes on Peele. His face went white, and his eyes almost started from his head at Jimmy Silver's cool announcement.

He took a step forward, and peered closer at the title-page.

"By gad!" he muttered. "That's it! How—how the dickens—"

"How the dickens do you know that's it, Peele?" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "Have you ever seen it before?"

"Yes—I—I mean, no, of course not! What do you mean?" said Peele, startled and stammering, while a frightened look came over his face.

"Oh, nothing!" said Jimmy carelessly. "But we want to have a word with you in the end study, please, Peele! Come along!"

The Fistical Four closed round him, and Peele struggled.

"Here, Lattrey, Gower, Smythe! Rescue!"

"Look after those cads for us!" said Jimmy Silver over his shoulder to the Colonial Co. And the next moment Van Ryn's powerful grasp was upon Lattrey; Pons had Gower by the collar; while Smythe went staggering from a push from the sturdy Conroy.

Peele was conveyed to the end study.

"We know you did it, Peele," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "We have proved to our own satisfaction that you've seen the manuscript before—this is the dummy copy of it, and you recognised it. That means you probably looked through the key-hole when Mossoo was showing it to

dozen more, while the others keep you here. See?"

Peele ground his teeth in helpless fury.

"Hang you, Silver—"

"Over with him!" said Jimmy Silver sharply.

In spite of his struggles, Newcome and Lovell and Raby between them had no difficulty in persuading Peele to adopt an attitude convenient for the reception of corporal punishment. He was held as in a vice, tightly stretched over the edge of the table, face downwards.

Jimmy Silver swished the limber ash-plant through the air.

"This is really all for your own good, Peele!" he remarked magisterially. "For you are an awful cad, you know; but we'll try and thrash some of your caddishness out of you for you."

Then Uncle James got on with the job in hand.

Peele was no Spartan, and long before the first ash-plant was used up he plainly intimated his readiness to give Jimmy Silver the required information.

That junior completed the round dozen strokes, well laid on, before Peele was allowed to alter his position and make his miserable confession.

It was just as Jimmy Silver had suspected. Peele had lurked outside the French master's study, determined to get his own back on him for his liberal use of the pointer in class that afternoon, while the precious manuscript was being shown to Jimmy Silver. He had managed to observe where Monsieur Monceau placed it in his private drawer. Later, while the French master was at tea, he had extracted the manuscript and thrust it up the chimney in Monsieur Monceau's own study, where it rested upon a ledge well out of sight.

And there it was subsequently found, to Monsieur Monceau's inexpressible joy, blackened, but fortunately otherwise undamaged.

Peele had to confess to Monsieur Monceau that he was the author of the cruel "joke"—for he attempted to pass it off as such—and in due course the truth of the matter came to Dr. Chisholm's ears. Peele's subsequent interview with the headmaster was one which he is not likely to forget. Dr. Chisholm told him just what he thought of his action, and made no secret of the fact that, but for Monsieur Monceau's urgent intervention, a public flogging, followed by expulsion, would have been his portion.

"You appear to be possessed of a natural and most unfortunate perverseness of character, Peele," said Dr. Chisholm in conclusion. "Such boys are, fortunately, rare in my experience. But when I have met them I have invariably found that there is only one effective way to appeal to them, and that is by thrashing them soundly."

Dr. Chisholm was, of course, quite unaware that this conclusion was much the same as that which had also been arrived at in his wisdom by Uncle James of Rookwood a short time previously.

"I must therefore ask you, Peele," went on the doctor, selecting a stout cane from the stock he kept in his study.

But here Peele broke in: "Please, sir, I've been thrashed already!" he said sullenly. "Silver thrashed me with an ash-plant!"

Dr. Chisholm stepped across the study and rang the bell.

"Request Sergeant Kettle to come here, please!" he said to the maid who answered it.

A minute later Sergeant Kettle made his appearance.

"Sir?"

"Kindly prepare Master Peele here, for the birching I am about to administer, sergeant!"

Dr. Chisholm was a just but somewhat severe headmaster, and Peele's present offence was one that he regarded very seriously. Consequently he did not err on the side of leniency in laying on the birch.

When, ten minutes later, Peele crawled from his study he was sore in mind, and still sorer in body, and for many days after it was observed that he could not sit down with any degree of comfort.

He had had more than one severe lesson in the course of his career at Rookwood, but the one, perhaps, that in after years he was least likely to forget was that which he received as a reward for his share in the remarkable episode of the Missing Manuscript.

THE END.

(Another long, complete story of Rookwood School in next Monday's Boys' Friend, entitled: "Bagging Beresford, Bags!" By Owen Conquest.)



MOSSOO ON THE WARPATH! Round the quad flew Jimmy Silver, with Monsieur Monceau in hot pursuit—and round again! There were cheers from the excited and amazed crowd of juniors. "Hurrah! Keep it up, Jimmy!" "Go it, Mossoo!"

how Mossoo pitched into him yesterday.

"My hat, yes!"

"There's the motive right off—revenge. It would be just like Peele to do a caddish trick like that, too. And there's another thing, too."

"Go ahead, old man!"

"When I got away from Mossoo's study yesterday, I bolted down the passage, as I was in a hurry to get here to tea, and I remember now that I passed Peele quite close to Mossoo's door. I thought he must have just come from Lathom's study."

"By Jove! He'd been listening outside Mossoo's, and looking through the keyhole, probably," said Newcome excitedly.

"Of course; clear as daylight!" said Lovell. "It was Peele!"

Raby got up.

"Come on!" he said.

"Where to?" said Jimmy Silver impatiently.

"To rag Peele baldheaded, of course!" said Raby.

"Sit down, ass! We must go carefully with Peele, he's a cunning boulder!" said Jimmy Silver. "We have no proof at present, though I feel pretty certain about it."

"Rather! It's a cert!"

"Well, I've thought of a plan to put our suspicions about Peele to the test," said Jimmy. "Listen while I expound!"

And, as usual, they listened while Jimmy Silver expounded.

Then he stepped forward, his fists clenched convulsively.

"I don't believe it!" he said, with a sneer. "Let's see it, if you've found it!"

"Right-ho!" said Jimmy Silver calmly. "Here it is, I think!" And he tugged at a fat wad of papers which was bulging out of the pocket of his Eton jacket.

Beneath his calm exterior his heart beat fast as he tugged.

The moment for the testing of Peele had come. The wad of papers he was tugging at was, as a matter of fact, a wad of old impositions, cut to approximately the same size as Mossoo's manuscript. The top sheet was a replica, as far as Jimmy could remember it, of the title-page of the manuscript.

Now for the test!

The wad came out of Jimmy's pocket at last, and he held it up for all to see.

There, in large red-ink capitals, was the title:

"LA REVOLUTION FRANCAISE,
Par GUILLAUME MONCEAU."

"My hat! Is that it?"

"That looks like it!"

"Are you sure?"

There was a babel of voices speaking at once, but the Fistical Four kept their eyes on Peele.

He seemed unable to believe the evidence of his own eyes.

me, and saw where he put it. He gave you the pointer in class yesterday—you wanted to get your own back on him. Also, it suited you to have me suspected of such a caddish trick. Am I right so far?"

Peele gritted his teeth.

"Find out, hang you!" he snarled.

"Right! We're going to! And we are also going to find out what you've done with the missing manuscript, my lad! Now, will you tell all these little secrets?"

"Rats!"

"That's not a proper answer at all, Peele!" said Jimmy Silver chidingly. "You see, until you recognised Mossoo's manuscript—we all saw plainly that you did, didn't we, chaps?"

"We did!" chorussed the Co.

"Until you recognised it we couldn't do anything, as we weren't sure of our ground. But now we are sure of our ground, Peele, so we are going to do something."

"Lemme go!"

"Not just yet. You see these two ash-plants, Peele? I've just cut them half an hour ago, for your special benefit!" said Jimmy Silver blandly.

"What are you going to do, you fool?" asked Peele, alarm growing in his face.

"Your Uncle James is going to thrash you with one of the ash-plants until you confess, or the ash-plant breaks. If it does I shall use the other. If that also breaks before you confess, I shall go out and cut half a

OUR SPLENDID STORY OF COLONIAL SCHOOL LIFE.



FRANK RICHARDS' TRUST!

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of the Chums of the School in the Backwoods.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

A Surprise for Cedar Creek!

"Hallo! That's some galoot in a hurry."

Clatter, clatter, clatter! Frank Richards & Co. were splitting logs in the playground of Cedar Creek School, partly in order to make themselves useful, and partly to keep themselves warm.

The winter snows were over, but the weather was still very cold; the trail that ran past the school gates was frost-bound and as hard as iron.

There was a stack of logs inside the school fence, at which the chums of Cedar Creek were working away cheerily. The sudden beat of horse's hoofs outside the high palisade made them pause in their work.

Clatter, clatter! The hoofs rang and echoed on the hard ground as a horseman passed at a furious gallop.

The three chums looked up. The timber palisade was too high to allow them to see the horseman riding past outside; but they caught a glimpse of a Stetson hat as it whisked by.

Whiz! At the same moment something was tossed over the wall from without, and there was a sudden howl from Frank Richards.

The "something," whatever it was, had landed on his head, with a sharp rap.

Frank Richards staggered, and clapped his hand to his head. The object that had struck him rolled at his feet.

"Oh! Ow!" ejaculated Frank. "What silly ass—"

Clatter, clatter! The hoof-beats died away up the trail, as the horseman galloped on. The echo rang among the trees for a few moments, and then all was silent.

Frank Richards rubbed his head. The unseen rider was gone.

"Well, by gum!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "What galoot was that, I wonder, and why was the pesky jay shying things over the wall—"

"Ow!"

"Hurt your cabeza, old scout?"

"Well, it was a thump!" said Frank Richards ruefully. "I'd like to get near the silly ass who chucked it over! Somebody larking, I suppose."

Vere Beauclerc shook his head. "He couldn't have seen you from the other side of the wall, Frank. The thing hit you by accident, I think."

Frank Richards grunted. "I'd hit him—not by accident—if I was within hitting distance!" he said. "Bother him!"

"What was it he chucked over?" asked Bob, looking round.

"Here it is."

Beauclerc picked up the object that had fallen to the ground.

The three chums gathered round it rather curiously.

It was a small leather pouch, evidently containing something weighty. It was fastened by a thin strip of buckskin, used as a cord, and pulled tight and knotted.

"By gum!" ejaculated Bob Lawless. "What did the jay chuck that over for? It's worth a dollar in a store, I guess!"

"There's something in it," said Beauclerc, weighing the pouch in his hand. "Feels like a chunk of rock. Are we entitled to open it?"

"I guess so!" said Bob at once. "If the galoot, whoever he is, chucks it at Frank's head, it belongs to Frank. I guess you can open it, Frank."

Frank Richards took the buckskin pouch as Beauclerc handed it to him. He could not help feeling curious; but he hesitated to unfasten the cord.

"Perhaps we'd better see whether the chap is anywhere around," he remarked. "There might be something valuable in this."

"I guess not, or the galoot wouldn't have thrown it over the wall!"

"Blessed if I understand why he did it!" said Frank. "But let's look out of the gates. He may be coming back for it."

"Well, I guess we'll look!" agreed Bob.

The three schoolboys hurried along to the gate.

The trail outside was deserted, save by Chunky Todgers, the fat youth of Cedar Creek.

Chunky was standing in the middle of the trail, seemingly rooted there, and staring up the route towards Thompson, in which direction the mysterious horseman had vanished.

"Chunky!" called out Bob. Todgers looked round.

"Did you see a galoot pass?"

"I guess so!" gasped Todgers. "He jolly nearly ran me down, the pesky jay! Rode by like thunder! Some pesky horse-thief with the sheriff's men after him, I guess!"

"Which way did he go?" asked Frank.

"Up the trail to Thompson."

The chums of Cedar Creek stared up the trail; but there was no one in sight. The rapid rider had long disappeared.

"Well, my only hat!" exclaimed Frank Richards, in perplexity. "This beats me hollow! Why the dickens did he chuck this pouch over the wall?"

Beauclerc looked grave. "If Chunky's right, and he's a thief with the sheriff's men after him, it may be stolen property that he wanted to get rid of," he suggested.

"Phew!"

"I guess we'll take it to the sheriff, in that case," said Bob. "But—hallo, here come some more!"

Up the trail from the south—the direction from which the fleeing horseman must have come—came a sudden thunder of hoofs.

Four riders came into view in the timber, in a bunch, riding hard.

Frank Richards & Co. stared at them as they came thundering up, and Chunky Todgers jumped hastily out of the trail.

The quartette were riding hard, with whip and spur.

It was evident that the four riders were in pursuit of the man who had galloped by the palisade and tossed the buckskin pouch into the Cedar Creek playground.

At a glance it could be seen that the four riders were not Canadians.

Their dark faces and black eyes told of Spanish blood, mixed with Indian. "Greasers!" ejaculated Bob Lawless.

"Mexicans," said Beauclerc, "or native Californians! What the dickens are they doing up here, on the north of the Line?"

The bunch of riders swept by at full gallop; but they perceived the group of astonished schoolboys as they passed. One of them wheeled his horse, and rode back, and drew in his panting steed within six feet of Frank Richards & Co. The others drew rein in the trail farther off, and waited for their comrade.

The man who had halted was a dark, swarthy fellow, with handsome Spanish features. But his good looks were marred by a scar that ran across one swarthy cheek, from the mouth almost to the ear. The scar was fresh, and had evidently been made by a bullet. He called out to the schoolboys as he dragged in his steed:

"Has he passed? Have you seen a horseman ride by?"

Frank Richards & Co. exchanged glances, and did not reply. They were not disposed to give information to the "Greaser" until they knew a little more about the matter. But Chunky Todgers piped at once:

"Yes, rather! I guess so! I've seen him!"

"Muy bien! Which way did he go?"

Chunky Todgers was about to reply, when Bob Lawless grasped him by the collar and shook him, and Chunky's reply was cut short. Instead of answering the greaser, Chunky gave a suffocated howl.

"Yow-ow-ow-owwwggg!"

The 2nd Chapter.

Cabrera, the Californian!

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Shut up, you silly jay!" growled Bob Lawless. "How do you know what the man wants, or who he is? Let up!"

"Ow!"

The horseman knitted his brows. "Answer me!" he exclaimed. "Which way did he go?"

"Grooogh!"

Chunky Todgers could not answer with Bob's grip on his collar. And the other fellows were not inclined to answer. Three or four of the Cedar Creek fellows had come out of gates now, and were looking on in astonishment.

The scarred man rode a little nearer to Frank Richards & Co. It was evident that he was savagely irritated by the delay in the pursuit. His swarthy hand closed hard on his riding-whip.

"Will you answer me?" he panted. "Did he ride up the trail, or down towards the creek? Quick!"

Bob Lawless looked at him coolly. "What are you after the galoot for?" he inquired. "It depends on that whether we answer you."

"That does not concern you."

"I guess it concerns us a good bit," answered Bob independently. "I don't like your looks, Mr. Mexican."

The scarred horseman scemed on the verge of a savage outburst of rage, but he controlled himself. More and more of the Cedar Creek fellows were gathering at the gate now, attracted by the strange scene. There were more than a dozen fellows on the spot now, and perhaps the scarred man realised that violence would not serve him.

"You can tell us what you're after the man for," said Frank Richards quietly. "You can't expect us to tell you anything without that."

"I have no time to waste—"

"You're wasting it now, I guess, Mister Mexican," said Bob Lawless coolly. "I guess you can take your choice. You don't get anything out of us unless we know the reason."

"I am not a Mexican—I am a Californian—"

"I guess it's the same thing."

"Listen to me. The man has something—something that belongs to me—"

Frank Richards' hand closed over the buckskin pouch he was still holding.

"What is it, then?" he asked.

"Carambo! That does not matter! It is enough that he has robbed me," exclaimed the Californian.

"Not quite, if you can't describe the stolen article," said Bob Lawless. "Looks to me as if you're more like the galoot to do the robbing."

The scarred man gritted his teeth.

But his black looks did not daunt the sturdy Canadian schoolboys.

There was a sudden call from up the trail. One of the horsemen had dismounted, and was examining the ground, evidently looking for hoof-prints. He shouted to the scarred man.

"Cabrera! Carlos Cabrera! This way!"

The scarred man wheeled his horse again.

"You have found the trail?"

"Si, si! He has ridden on."

"Muy bien!" But again the scarred man checked his horse, and called out to the schoolboys: "Where does this trail lead?"

"Thompson Town!" answered Bob Lawless.

"A town! Is it far?"

"Two or three miles."

"Madre di Dios! He will reach safety before—"

The Californian did not finish, but put spurs to his horse, and dashed on after his comrades, who were already riding on.

With a clatter of hoofs ringing on the trail, the four riders vanished.

"Phew!" murmured Frank Richards. "Now, what the merry dickens is all the row about, you fellows?"

Bob Lawless shook his head. "I give that up," he answered. "But if there's been any robbing, I guess it was that gang that's done it. They look like a crowd of rustlers. I'm glad we didn't tell them anything. That galoot they're after will have time to get safe to Thompson."

"And this pouch," said Frank. "I guess there's something valuable in it, and he chucked it over the wall because he expected those rustlers to ride him down," said Bob shrewdly. "I reckon we ought to keep it for him."

"If he's an honest man, I suppose he'll come back for it when he's clear of that gang," said Frank.

"Sure!"

"Hallo, there's the bell!"

The Cedar Creek fellows went in at the gates, and Frank Richards put the buckskin pouch into an inside pocket. Exactly what to do with it was a question, but he felt that he was bound to keep it until the owner turned up—if he ever did.

During afternoon lessons the thoughts of some of the fellows in Miss Meadows' class were wandering a little. Frank Richards & Co. could not help thinking of the mysterious horseman who had fled past the school, and wondering whether he had escaped his pursuers.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Mysterious Pouch.

Frank Richards & Co. came out of the backwoods school after lessons, and crossed to the corral for their horses. There was a thoughtful expression on Frank's handsome face.

"You fellows in a hurry to get home?" he asked.

"Nope," answered Bob. "I reckon I know what's in your mind, Franky."

"I'd like to know what became of that chap," confessed Frank. "We might as well ride home by way of Thompson, and see whether anything has been heard of him there."

"Good idea!" said Beauclerc.

And instead of taking the home-ward route, the three chums rode up the trail towards the frontier town, the way the fugitive and his pursuers had ridden some hours before.

They could not help feeling keenly curious about the strange affair, and they were interested in the fate of the fugitive.

A good many of the Cedar Creek fellows went home by way of the Thompson Trail, but Frank Richards & Co. were first. They rode at a good pace up the trail. Shortly before reaching the spot where the Hillcrest path branched off, Bob Lawless suddenly drew in his horse.

"I guess there's been trouble here," he said.

"What?"

"Look!"

Close by the side of the trail, half-hidden by frosty thickets, lay the dead carcass of a horse.

The chums of Cedar Creek dismounted at once.

The carcass was frozen hard, and on the frozen hide it was easy to see where two bullets had struck the unfortunate animal.

"Shot down from behind," said Bob Lawless, in a low voice. "This isn't one of the greasers' critters. I guess it's the critter ridden by that galoot who was levanting, Frank."

"Theu they caught him up," said Beauclerc.

"They came near enough to shoot his horse. And I guess he wouldn't have much chance on foot."

"Then what's become of him?"

"Goodness knows!"

The chums faces were very grave now.

What tragedy had taken place under the frost-bound timber while they had been seated quietly in class at Cedar Creek?

"I guessed that greasers were a gang of rustlers, from their looks,"

muttered Bob. "They shot down his horse, and—let's look."

It was not easy to pick up sign on the frosty trail. But here and there, where there was mud in the ruts, Bob's keen eye read the sign.

"There's been a struggle here," he said. "You can see where they've tramped to and fro. The larches are torn, too. The fellow put up a good fight against the crowd of them."

"But they got him," said Frank. "Looks like it."

"If there was a struggle, it shows that he has not been killed. They could have shot him as easily as the horse."

"I guess so."

"They must have wanted to kidnap him," said Frank in perplexity. "But what on earth for?"

"Ask me another!" said Bob, utterly puzzled. "We don't even know who the galoot was, or whether he was a greaser like themselves. There's no sign of him about here. They must have taken him away with them."

"Then they never went on to Thompson?"

"I guess not!"

There was a clatter of hoofs on the trail, and the chums of Cedar Creek started and spun round. But it was only Chunky Todgers who came in sight, trotting home from school on his fat little pony.

Chunky jumped down at the sight of the three chums gathered round the dead horse.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" exclaimed Chunky. "I've seen that critter before. It's that galoot's who nearly rode me down!"

"The man the greasers were after?"

"Sure!"

"That settles it!" said Bob. "We'd better get on to Thompson and let the sheriff know. You'd better come, Chunky."

And the schoolboys rode on into Thompson town, and stopped at the sheriff's house.

Mr. Henderson, the sheriff of Thompson, listened to their tale with considerable surprise.

"I guess nothing's been heard of the gang in the town," he said. "But you've done quite right to come to me. You say you never saw the man who was escaping?"

"Only a Stetson hat, over the fence—"

"I saw him!" interrupted Chunky Todgers. "I was in the trail, and he nearly rode me down!"

"What was he like, Todgers?"

"A big galoot, with a long beard," said Chunky. "He was a white man, too—not a greaser. I saw that. That's all I saw. He was past me like a flash."

"I guess I'll make inquiries about him," said the sheriff. "He may have got into the town on foot. It's queer his throwing his pouch over the school wall. Looks as if he expected to be run down, and was anxious to save it."

"What ought I to do with it, sir?" asked Frank.

"Let me see it."

Frank Richards laid the buckskin pouch on the sheriff's table. Mr. Henderson laid aside his pipe, and took up the pouch.

"I guess there may be some clue to the man inside—perhaps his name," he said. "I'll see."

He unfastened the cord and opened the pouch.

The chums of Cedar Creek watched him breathlessly.

From the buckskin pouch a shining object rolled out on the table, and Bob Lawless uttered an exclamation. "Gold!"

"My hat!"

It was a gold nugget of almost pure metal. It glimmered as it lay on the table. The sheriff picked it up and weighed it in his hand.

"Six ounces, at least," he said. "Nearly pure metal, too. I guess that nugget's worth a hundred dollars."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Chunky Todgers.

"There's something else—"

The second article from the pouch was a fragment of dressed buckskin, about ten inches square. It was of a whitish colour, and on the surface what looked like a map was drawn. The sheriff regarded it with a puzzled look.

"Nothing else here," he said. "A gold nugget and a map—that's the lot. Nothing to learn from that."

The sheriff replaced the nugget and the map in the pouch, and refastened the cord. "I guess you'd better keep this, Richards, in case the man turns up to claim it. It's pretty clear that he threw it away to save it from the greasers. Take care of it. The map may be of value, and the nugget certainly is."

Frank Richards replaced the pouch in his pocket in great wonder. The schoolboys took their leave of the sheriff. The matter was in his hands now, and there was no doubt that immediate search would be made for the hapless rider who had fled from the Californians.

"I say, Franky—" Chunky Todgers began, as the schoolboys rode past Gunten's store in the main street of Thompson.

"Well, Chunky?"

"Old Gunten would buy that nugget. He buys from the miners, you know—"

"It's not mine, ass!"

"The man chucked it at you, you know," said Chunky argumentatively. "He hasn't come back for it. So it's yours, you know."

"Pathead!"

"But if you ain't satisfied that it's yours—"

"I'm not!"

"Then you can hand it to me," suggested Chunky Todgers. "You can keep the old map. I don't want that. You hand me the nugget—"

"What?"

"And I'll take the whole responsibility," said Chunky Todgers generously.

Frank Richards laughed.

"I'll keep the nugget and the responsibility, too!" he remarked.

"Now, look here, Richards—" began Chunky persuasively.

But the chums of Cedar Creek turned into the homeward trail, and rode away, and Chunky's persuasions were lost on the desert air.

The 4th Chapter.
An Unexpected Visitor.

Frank Richards & Co. thought a good deal about the strange affair during the following days.

They were keen for news of the long-bearded man Chunky had seen, and of the four greasers who had pursued him.

But there was no news.

Beyond the body of the horse, frozen in the trail, not a trace remained of either pursued or pursuers.

The sheriff had investigated the affair, so far as he could. It was certain that Carlos Cabrera and his followers had not entered the town. Since they had ridden away from the gates of Cedar Creek School no eye seemed to have fallen on them.

Neither had the long-bearded man been seen.

The horse remained, dead in the trail, but the rider had vanished.

Every day Frank Richards expected the stranger to arrive at Cedar Creek to reclaim the buckskin pouch he had tossed over the school wall in his flight. But no one came.

The pouch, with its contents, was safely locked up in Frank Richards' room at the Lawless ranch. There it awaited the claim of its owner.

But the owner had disappeared as completely and mysteriously as the swarthy rascals who had run him down.

The woods had been searched for a good distance on either side of the trail, but without result.

If the fugitive had fallen in his fight with the greasers, his body should have been found, but there was no trace of it.

Amazing as it seemed, it appeared certain that the long-bearded stranger had been seized and kidnapped by the swarthy quartette. With their prisoner, they had vanished from the Thompson Valley.

Whence and why they had come, and whether they were gone, remained a mystery.

After a week had elapsed Frank Richards & Co. debated whether they had a right to look upon the buckskin bag as their own, and to examine the map, which excited their curiosity a great deal. Bob Lawless suggested that it might be the map of the claim where the nugget had been found, and Bob's suggestion seemed probable enough. But, after some discussion, the chums decided that the unknown ought to be given a chance of reclaiming his property. Mr. Lawless was also of that opinion.

"Keep it for a month, Frank," the rancher said to his nephew. "If the man doesn't turn up in that time, I guess you can consider that he's not coming back."

And Frank Richards assented.

After the first week, however, there was news, though it was vague enough. A settler near Silver Creek had been awakened in the night by a bunch of horsemen riding past his log cabin, and he had looked out, and seen five riders in the moonlight, two of them mounted on one horse. They had ridden on and disappeared, and nothing further seemed to have been seen of them.

"It was the greasers, and they had the man with them, a prisoner," was

Bob Lawless' opinion. "If they passed Silver Creek, they were going south—back towards the border. They're over the line, in the States, long before this. The puzzle is, what they ever came up into Canada for. I guess we shall never know."

"The chap may have belonged to this section," said Frank. "May have been a Canadian. But what did the greasers want with him?"

"The map!" said Beauclerc quietly.

"If it's the map of a gold-mine down in California—" said Bob Lawless breathlessly.

"It's likely enough."

"And the greasers wanted to jump the claim. I shouldn't wonder! By gum," said Bob, "if the galoot doesn't turn up, we're at liberty to look at the map, and use it, if there's any good in it! But we'll give him time, as the popper says."

Another week passed by, and the affair had been almost forgotten by most of the Cedar Creek fellows. But it was suddenly brought back to their minds.

Cedar Creek was at lessons one morning, when there was a clatter of hoofs in the playground, and a rider halted at the door of the schoolhouse. A few minutes later Black Sally opened the school-room door, and her ebony face looked in.

me is in this school, and I have come to claim it!"

"I do not understand you!" said Miss Meadows tartly.

"I will explain, seniorita," said Cabrera smoothly. "Two weeks since a buckskin pouch was thrown over the school wall by a horseman in passing. Doubtless it is still here. It is my property, and I have called for it!"

"Oh! Richards!"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Come here!"

Frank Richards came out before the class. Miss Meadows had heard, of course, the story of the buckskin pouch.

"You heard what this gentleman has said," exclaimed Miss Meadows. "You have the article in question, Richards?"

"Yes, Miss Meadows."

"Please give it to the owner, then!"

"I've been waiting for the owner to claim it, Miss Meadows," said Frank quietly. "But this man is not the owner."

"How do you know that?"

"The man who threw it over the wall was escaping from this rotter and his friends!" exclaimed Frank. "This man is Cabrera, the Californian, the man the sheriff wants!"

stride towards Frank Richards, his hand diving into his hip-pocket. His hand came out again with a revolver in it, and Frank Richards gave a start as the deadly tube looked him in the face.

"Hand over the pouch, Seniorita Richards!" said the Californian, with a sneering grin. "I am not to be trifled with. Hand it over!"

The 5th Chapter.
Cabrera's Defeat!

Miss Meadows stood transfixed. Frank Richards' face paled a little, but he faced the swarthy ruffian calmly. The class looked on spellbound. It was an amazing scene in the school-room of Cedar Creek, a scene from a lawless Californian mining-camp, transferred to the quiet school-room. The boys and girls in Miss Meadows' class could scarcely believe their eyes. But the Californian was in deadly earnest. His eyes glinted savagely at Frank Richards, over the levelled revolver, and his dusky finger was on the trigger.

"Hand it over! You hear me!"

"I could not hand it over, if I wished," answered Frank Richards quietly. "It is not here!"

"You lie!" exclaimed Cabrera savagely. "Where is it?"



HOT ON THE TRAIL! Up the trail from the south came a sudden thunder of hoofs, and a few moments later four horsemen came into view riding hard. At a glance it could be seen that they were not Canadians. Their dark faces and black eyes told of Spanish blood, mixed with Indian. "Greasers!" ejaculated Bob Lawless.

Miss Meadows glanced round impatiently.

The Canadian schoolmistress did not like interruptions in lesson-time.

"Generalman to see missy!" announced Sally.

"Tell him I cannot see anyone at present!" answered Miss Meadows sharply. "He may call after twelve o'clock!"

But Black Sally was pushed aside the next moment, and a swarthy man, with a scarred cheek, strode into the school-room.

Frank Richards started from his seat.

"The Californian!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"By gum!" murmured Bob Lawless. "It's Carlos Cabrera come back!"

The chums of Cedar Creek stared blankly at the scarred Californian.

They had been half-expecting the owner of the buckskin pouch to turn up at the school sooner or later, but certainly they had not expected to see Carlos Cabrera there. But here he was.

Cabrera did not glance at the chums. He did not observe them among the crowd of boys and girls in Miss Meadows' class. He took off his sombrero politely to Miss Meadows.

"Seniorita—" he began.

Miss Meadows interrupted him.

"You have no right to enter the school-room, sir! I can't see you during lessons. Kindly retire at once!"

The Californian smiled.

"My business will not wait, madam!" he answered. "But I shall not keep you more than a few minutes. Something that belongs to

He wouldn't dare to show himself in the street at Thompson."

"I guess not!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

Miss Meadows looked perplexed.

"This man has called for it," she said.

"How does he know that it was thrown over the school wall?" exclaimed Frank. "He did not know when he was here a fortnight ago."

"The man it belongs to has told me, and has sent me for it," said the Californian smoothly, though his black eyes glinted at Frank Richards. Frank's lip curled.

"It's pretty well known that you and your gang kidnapped the man, and that you've taken him away from this section," he answered. "Let the man speak for himself. Where is he?"

"That is not your business, nino. Your business is to hand me the pouch."

"I will do that when the sheriff tells me you are entitled to it," answered Frank. "You can call on Mr. Henderson."

"He will be glad to see you!" grinned Bob Lawless.

"I am here for the pouch," said the Californian, setting his teeth. "I shall not leave without it, now that I know in whose hands it is!"

"You won't get it from me!" answered Frank Richards disdainfully.

Miss Meadows nodded assent.

"You are right, Richards. This man evidently has no claim to it. You will keep it!"

"Yes, Miss Meadows."

"Go back to your place!"

"Stop!"

The scarred Californian made a

"Locked up at home."

"Carambo! And where is your home?"

"At the Lawless Ranch."

Cabrera muttered a savage oath. He could see that Frank Richards was speaking the truth, and it was an unexpected check.

"I must have it!" he said. "You will come with me, nino. I shall hold you till the pouch is delivered up to me! Your people, perhaps, will be glad to make the exchange."

Frank stared at him.

"You are not in California now," he said. "You are in Canada, where rustlers of your sort are soon rounded up! You had better get out while you have the time!"

The Californian did not reply, but he stepped towards Frank Richards, the revolver still in his dusky hand. It was evident that the desperado was in deadly earnest, and that he counted upon the fear of his weapon to prevent interference.

But in that he was mistaken.

Bob Lawless, at his desk, had gripped a heavy ruler. As the scarred ruffian stepped towards Frank, Bob's hand came up with the ruler in it, and the next instant it was whizzing through the air.

It struck the ruffian on the side of the head with a crash.

Cabrera uttered a yell, and staggered blindly, half-stunned by the sudden crashing blow.

He was not given time to recover. Bob Lawless was upon him with a spring like a lynx, and Beauclerc was only a second behind.

Almost before the ruffian knew what was happening, Bob's grasp was on his arm, dragging it down so that he could not use the pistol. Beauclerc

seized his other arm. Frank Richards was prompt to back up his chums. As they grasped the reeling ruffian, Frank sprang forward, and struck out with both fists, planting them fairly in the swarthy face.

The Californian lurched back, and went with a crash to the floor. Bob and Beauclerc clinging to him like cats.

"Good heavens!" panted Miss Meadows.

"Pile on him!" gasped Bob Lawless. "I've got his shooter! Pile on the skunk!"

He wrested the revolver from the nerveless grasp of the ruffian, as he sprawled on the floor.

"Carambo!"

"Collar him!" panted Frank.

Three or four fellows rushed out from the desks, and Mr. Slimmy and Mr. Shepherd, who had been gazing spellbound at the scene, came rushing up.

The Californian was assailed on all sides.

He struggled desperately in the midst of his assailants.

"Pile in!" roared Bob Lawless.

With a desperate effort Carlos Cabrera dragged himself to his feet, and wrenched away from the grasp of the excited schoolboys.

He made a bound for the open door of the school-room, evidently thinking now only of escape.

"After him!" yelled Bob.

"Boys—" gasped Miss Meadows.

But for once the voice of the Cedar Creek school mistress was unheeded.

In a yelling mob the Cedar Creek fellows rushed in pursuit of the panting Californian.

He reeled in the doorway, and their grasp was almost upon him. He recovered himself, and bounded out into the porch.

"After him!"

The Californian's horse was standing outside the porch, where he had left it. Fortunately for him, it was not tethered.

With a breathless leap, Cabrera threw himself into the saddle, and whirled the horse round.

The mob of schoolboys rushing out of the porch, backed away from the lashing hoofs, as Cabrera whirled round his horse. The next moment he was riding for the gates.

The gate had swung shut after his entrance, and now it was closed.

"We'll have him yet!" panted Frank Richards. "Come on!"

But the Californian did not attempt to open the gate. His horse rose to the leap, and cleared the gates with a bound. The hoofs clattered down on the frosty trail outside.

The next moment the ruffian was riding away furiously up the trail into the timber.

Bob Lawless dragged the gate open, and the schoolboys rushed out. But the scarred ruffian was already twenty yards distant, and riding fiercely.

For a moment or two the fleeing rider was seen, and then the timber swallowed him up from sight.

Carlos Cabrera was gone!

That day and the following days armed men were searching up and down the Thompson Valley for the scarred Californian.

But he was not found.

Evidently he had ridden, without stopping to rest, on the southern trail for the border, and he was gone.

He was not likely to return. His description was known far and wide in the valley, and he would have met with short shrift if he had reappeared on the banks of the Thompson River.

His desperate attempt to possess himself of the mysterious map was not repeated. The map remained in the hands of Frank Richards, and its possession was to lead Frank into the strangest adventure he had known since his coming to the school in the backwoods.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY'S
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